

International Relations Theory

Mykola Kapitonenko



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This textbook shows how to think about international relations and offers insights into its most important theories and issues.

Written from beyond the Anglo-US academic environment, with attention to regional nuances, it teaches students to perceive international politics in an organized and theoretical way, thus helping them grasp the complexity of the subject and see simple ways of making sense of it. Providing a thorough introduction to the main theories and approaches to international relations, the book covers the main dilemmas, concepts and methodological issues alongside a number of neglected theoretical paradigms such as institutionalism, Marxism, critical approaches, feminism and power in world politics.

It will be of great use as a main textbook as well as a supplementary guide for related courses, including Foreign Policy Analysis, Conflict Studies, Security Studies, History of International Relations, International Organizations and Global Governance.

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Introduction

What are international relations and why study them?

Human brain is looking for regularities everywhere, even in random sequence of numbers or patterns of ink drops. International politics may sometimes look like a random sequence of events and decisions as well. But a search for regularities in it is much more promising compared to examining ink drops.

Understanding the world of international relations is not only a fascinating intellectual challenge but also an enterprise of practical importance. Machinery behind moves of states is sometimes quite sophisticated and tangled, but generally can be rationally explained and is quite comprehensible after a closer look.

'I know that I know nothing' paradox, attributed to Socrates, is something many experienced scholars of international relations can subscribe to. The deeper one gets involved into details of various approaches to international politics, the broader horizons of theoretical debates become. Things are also occasionally complicated by reality's attempts to escape being fully explained. Theories shape decision-making in foreign policy, but they often do it in indirect and unexpected ways. With that said, one can also feel the truth of another maxim, 'knowledge is power', associated with Thomas Hobbes, inter alia a distinguished figure in philosophy of international politics. In our case, persuasive theoretical perspective has the power to shape the way politics works.

The world is divided by state borders. Combined with anarchy, state borders establish fundamental rules of the game. Simply put, international relations are about interaction among a host of agents, crossing state borders. Some people believe that states hold principal agency. Others take a much broader view, arguing that not only war and diplomacy, but everything else up to football games and tourism qualify as international relations. From the very first simple questions, doubts, hesitations and debates are waiting for an IR-beginner and are threatening to stay with her/him forever.

Not much can be done about that. Methodological nuances and some specific features of genesis shaped the discipline in such a manner that several quite different ways of grasping and explaining international relations coexist simultaneously. We call them 'paradigms'. There is no way to prove any

2 Introduction

paradigm wrong and reject it altogether, and that makes things somewhat complicated for a future IR scientist.

When the word *international* has become widely used by philosophers and historians – the-then pioneers of studying cross-border political interactions – it literally meant *inter-state*. In the 18th century, when the term was coined in its modern sense by an English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, there was no ‘nation’ in today’s understanding. Nation was equivalent to a state. Cult of state sovereignty dominated the minds of politicians and philosophers, while Hobbes’s *Leviathan* has surpassed Machiavelli’s *Prince* as a desk book of kings and first ministers. The world of international politics was a world of interstate relations while all the rest were instruments of state policies.

Such a vision reigned for quite long, until the mid-20th century. Many would still say that regardless of numerous international organizations, transnational companies and other agents, states retain monopoly of political interactions crossing national borders. Realist paradigm in IR theory would be the first to defend such a viewpoint. French philosopher Raymond Aron, albeit quite distant from realist theories, once labeled international relations as represented by a soldier and a diplomat.

To end the story like that would be too simple, while IR tends to make things complicated. As one might expect, there is an influential alternative, claiming that not only relations among states are international, and that a state’s mediation is not necessary either. From such a perspective, numerous interactions other than interstate, e.g., terrorist attacks, trade, lobbying and smuggling are also forms of international relations. A soldier and a diplomat should be added with a tourist and a terrorist.

Discrepancies multiply. Some believe that material factors such as wealth, territories, armies or natural resources play a decisive role in international politics. Others underscore importance of ideas and norms. Some perceive international relations as a realm of anarchy, in which states do whatever they want or allowed by distribution of power capabilities. They are confronted by those who believe in the power of norms and institutions to constrain unlimited ambitions of states. For sure, some would disagree that ambitions of states are unlimited. These nuances matter. They indicate that academic research of international politics offers a variety of alternative explanations right from the start.

Not much has changed in that regard after a century since establishment of the first chair of international relations in Aberystwyth. The deeper students and professors dig into ongoing debates over various international issues, the more skeptical they may become of the discipline’s ability to offer an integrated vision of international politics. Its fundamental concepts like ‘national interest’, ‘power’, ‘security’ or ‘international system’ have dozens of competing definitions. Sometimes it may seem that any set of words may turn out to be a definition of some concept within a certain approach.

Concentration of middle-range theories, competing grand theories and methodological eclecticism seem to complete the picture of an ideal academic chaos.

Skepticism is well-grounded. Understanding of regularities of international politics has never been satisfactory, not to mention full. Theorists in ivory towers and abstract knowledge on the one hand are contrasted with speculative analysis and sometimes too close connections between experts and decision-makers on the other.

Paradoxically enough, with all skepticism and critical remarks, reliable theories of international politics are highly required. A better knowledge adds chances to improve security environment and make the world safer. More clarity on a theoretical level would help states get more benefits from connections beyond national borders while investing less. It would also allow leaders to better communicate decisions in foreign policy. On the top of it, knowledge of theory can help avoid unnecessary mistakes by experience.

Most debates in IR are at the level of grand theories and paradigms. They resemble religious disputes or discussions of Euclid's fifth postulate with normative assumptions being rather a prerequisite than a result of a scientific analysis. On the other hand, reliable knowledge about international politics is mostly concentrated in middle-range theories, addressing comparatively narrow issues. These theories provide precise definitions, rely on carefully chosen methods and arrive to better generalizations. To keep debates vigorous while making knowledge more reliable is a twofold challenge for IR.

There is one more thing to keep in mind. What we know and what we think about international politics to a large extent define what it really is. An image of, say, clashing civilization, if properly described, popularized and introduced into curricula, will impact decision-making thus becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. People who learned to take words 'national interests' as an absolute are much more likely to carry out a realistic foreign policy and thus bring international politics closer to a zero-sum game. Those who believe in interdependence and power of norms would invest more efforts into cooperation and institutions. Ideas about international society, neocolonialism, structural violence or sectoral integration guide decisions and define the future. In case of international relations knowledge is not only power but also a choice and a tool of transformation.

1 (Ir)rationality of international politics

People commit mistakes. Sometimes those mistakes seem so numerous, while some decisions in the realms of foreign policy and security are so difficult to comprehend, that one could doubt rationality of states or/and people altogether.

If leaders, groups of advisors, institutions or states in general act rationally – in any substantial meaning of the word – then there is much room for theoretical explanations. If, on the contrary, international relations are piling up of errors, accidental or emotionally driven decisions, theory would only be left with descriptive and normative functions, telling a lot about a parallel universe of possible adequate decisions, but being unable to explain what's happening in real international politics.

But not only rationality is the key. Explanation requires scientific methods; while science has for a long time been a tough business in dealing with international relations. Here is why.

Studying international relations: nuances of methodology and levels of analysis

Defining what we really know about international politics is challenging. This is not quite the kind knowledge we get about moving stars, falling apples or chemical reactions. It is often not about general fundamental laws, but rather about regularities, correlations and probabilities. Moreover, what we know about international politics may become irrelevant over time.

Arms races lead to wars. That's an example of how a hypothesis about international relations may look like. Examining such hypothesis is mostly what IR as a science is about. But how does one know whether it's true or false?

To test a hypothesis, one needs working scientific method. The most reliable method of science is experiment. Holding one would be the best option. Picking two states without an arms race between them, then introducing it *ceteris paribus*, and observing a war or an absence of it would be a nice way to go. However, 'ceteris paribus' is impossible in international politics: there is no way to manipulate various parameters and quietly observe. Arms races

can certainly be absent or present in relations between states at different periods of time, but a host of other variables are constantly changing as well; and these variables are out of control of a scientist. Because experiments are significantly limited in IR, it is becoming difficult to verify hypothesis and theories altogether. Notions like, 'states try to keep the balance of power among them' are becoming fiercely debated, while establishment of causal links gets much more complicated. One could speculate about shifts in balance of power as a cause of, say, the Peloponnesian War, but it is almost impossible to strictly prove the point. As a result, theories are getting less explanatory and more normative or descriptive.

But there is also some good news. If it is impossible to change a certain variable while holding others constant, one could turn to history. It is not only a fascinating subject in university curriculum of many future IR specialists but also a source of quasi-experimental data. Facts from the past emulate experiments and with certain reservations may be used for testing hypotheses. The fundamental reservation is that historical events are unique, even when they look similar. Causes of the Trojan War may resemble in some way those of the Thirty Years' War, but differences are numerous and important. Causes of all wars may be speculated about in one way or the other, while it is important to hold in mind unreliability of historical generalizations as well as impossibility to prove any hypothesis with no matter how many examples.

Overreliance on history may also lead to facts becoming hostages of theories. Plato once noted that we can't know about particular before knowing about universal. Here is a trick for an IR researcher. Following Plato's logic, theories are often constructed before collecting data and shape the way facts are observed and interpreted. They install filters and biases and may even substitute facts in a research. Not surprisingly, instead of being verified by facts, hypotheses are often tested by referring to other hypotheses or theories. That's not how a good research should look like, but that's why theories of international relations tend to get normative, and multiple paradigms coexist.

IR as a science

- Lacks experimental research
- Encompasses different competing approaches as to what should be studied
- What is known about international politics impacts the way it goes
- Studies complex and undetermined processes
- Has several major paradigms at the same time
- Demonstrates methodological plurality

A menu of choice in paradigms is accompanied by a great variety of methods applied in IR research. Theoretical and methodological plurality may seem a disadvantage and a sign of academic chaos. In order to turn it into

an advantage, there is a need for some systematization. Levels of analysis may help with that.

If asked about causes of a war or some other international event, students often tend to list as many probable contributing factors as possible instead of concentrating on defining a decisive one. Mentioning as many causes as possible may help more fully describe a war; however naming a key reason is a way to building a theory which would help explain many wars. Reasons of any specific war are truly numerous, and there is no opportunity to hold an experiment – so one starts by pointing as many as possible. World War I may have started because of colonial collisions among major powers, or a security dilemma in Europe, or, quite possibly, because of Kaiser Wilhelm's propensity to risky decisions for whatever reasons. How about Franz Joseph's deteriorating health and the way it impacted moves of Austria-Hungary before the war erupted? By carefully examining Wilhelm's biography and Franz Joseph's medical card it is surely possible to find some explanations of events in the summer of 1914. In the same way, one could hardly deny the role of Hitler or Stalin in dramatic events of the 20th century. Critical moments in history multiply the impact personal decisions are making upon world politics. Figures of Caesar, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Bismarck, Churchill and alike are gaining additional attention. It would be not easy to explain events with their participation without referring to their personal attributes.

However, that would certainly not be enough for anything going deeper than TV series about or mass media coverage of international affairs. People are not free in their decisions, even when it comes to Genghis Khan, as to explain international politics by referring to biographies and medical cards. They are constrained by a quite narrow range of possible alternatives, shaped by more stable and abstract factors. One set of them is often referred to as *national interests*. From such a perspective, it is becoming clear the World War I broke out not as a result of free decisions by emperors and kings, but because of incompatibility of interests of participating states. That incompatibility existed on a depersonalized level and was connected to colonial, economic, military or political clashes. A war has become a way of resolving these conflicts and would have happened regardless names and characters of those who declared it in the end. Such an approach is much more deterministic and has lots to do with Karl Marx's notion that man make their own history, but they do not make it as they please, rather under circumstances existing already (Marx, 1994). Monarchs and presidents take decisions about war and peace, but are always constrained by circumstances. Accordingly, understanding international politics is impossible without examining national interests and other variables at a level of state.

But even that won't be enough. States should follow, or at least take into account, signals sent by international system. The latter is a specific way of arranging relations among states and other agents, defined by a structure, i.e., by how power is distributed and concentrated. Same states would act differently when power is distributed or concentrated in different ways.

Structure constraints choices for states just the way national interests constrain personal preferences of monarchs and presidents. Even the most powerful states take structural effects into account. From such a perspective, World War I would be seen not only as a result of personal choices or even inconsistencies of national interests but as a final destination of evolution of international structure after establishment of Triple Alliance and Triple Entente. In other words, there were structural causes of that conflict.

The trick for many students is that events in international politics are brought about by numerous causes at different levels. Three of them are especially relevant: personal, state and system. Others, like dyadic or regional, may also be addressed if necessary. The point is that to deal with multiplicity of factors one would need many theories at different levels.

Theories at different levels of analysis

<i>Personal</i>	<i>State/dyadic</i>	<i>System</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rational choice theory• Prospect theory• Cognitive theories• Psychological theories• Sociobiological theories• Theory of organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Democratic peace theory• Theory of deterrence• Theory of economic cycles• Stimulus-response theory• Theory of complex interdependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hegemonic stability theory• Balance of power theory• Theory of alliances and coalitions• Regime theory• Power transition theory

Levels of analysis help keep research focused. They bring together medical cards, biographies, national interests, group thinking, balance of power and a host of other factors to arrange them in a systemic way.

Along with a diversity of many contributing factors there is also another important methodological issue. To which extent are decisions taken in international politics rational?

Irrational people and rational decisions they take. Models of decision-making in foreign policy

Most of us, fortunately or not, are not acting rationally most of the time. That makes life fascinating and full of surprises, but is also affecting the realm of international politics.

From a certain perspective, international relations may look as a sequence of decisions taken by rational agents. There are procedures of decision-making, lots of analytics involved and states appear to be more rational than people, for instance because they do not shift their priorities so often.

On the other hand, after all, decisions are taken by humans. After dealing with international politics long enough, one would finally face

a question: to what extent is a research of international politics about studying behavior of people?

'None or minimal' would be a suggestion from a realist in a mid-20th century. International politics from that perspective is about relations among states, determined mostly by the balances or imbalances of power. Wars break out and alliances are established as responses to shifts in the balance. Concepts like 'power', 'security', or 'national interests' are designed to set frameworks of perception and reduce human factor to the minimum.

Realism is not alone. Most of theoretical physics is not about trajectories of specific atoms. In the same manner, most of theories of international relations are not focusing on behavior of people. Even when physics studies many separate particles, it relies on some generalized parameters, e.g., temperature, volume or density. A realist in a mid-20th century was following the same path, referring to security, power or national interests. Most of alternative approaches also do the same by studying interdependence, cooperation, international society and a lot more. But just the way non-determinism and randomness of many processes have become evident in physics, eventual impact of individual preferences on decision-making in international politics also manifested itself. A need to develop a theory which would not neglect individual choices but incorporate them into scientific research resulted in engaging of a concept and a theory of rational choice into international studies. The whole approach which puts rationality in the center while explaining international politics, *behaviorism*, got its name because of a focus on behavior. Studying behavior of people who take foreign policy decisions requires not only historical generalizations, political economy or security studies. It also involves psychology and some knowledge about strategic interactions.

Most international relations theories hold the assumption of rationality. People are believed to act rationally, at least when facing some specific choices over important issues, and that belief is extended to actions and choices of states and other actors on international arena. But the concept of rationality is not trivial, while rationality in choices of people is not evident even in specific choices over important issues. Moreover, most of the time, as it has been noted, people are not acting rationally. It may even be the case that people are mostly surprisingly irrational, especially judging by the way some students plan their in-class activities during the semester. More clarity about what rationality is would be helpful.

Rational behavior implies ability to recognize one's goals and pick the most effective ways of reaching them. That, in turn, would only be possible if preferences are both complete and transitive. Complete preferences imply that faced with several alternatives a person can always define which one she/he likes more or they are equally attractive. Preferences are transitive if, when A is preferred over B and B is preferred over C, then A is preferred over C. No matter how simple it may look, it's quite hard to expect perfect rationality from people. How would one choose between a and a tasty dinner,

meeting a good friend and a favorite team winning a football game? Alternative options are even difficult to compare sometimes, not to mention that they tend to change their value over time. Human life is made of difficult choices, and they are often difficult exactly because of changing preferences.

The rule of transitivity is also not so easy to follow as it may seem. Preferring A over B and B over C often does not imply preferring A over C. Humans enjoy diversity. One may love apples more than pears and pears more than mangos; while still preferring mangos over apples. It looks like rationality in decisions people take is limited and conditional at best.

But there is also good news. States are different from people, and their interests are also different from interests of people taking decisions on states' behalf. Goals states pursue are fewer and less divergent. In a life of a state, there is less flexibility and surprises. That makes assumption about rationality of states operational. State's interests are more stable and can be grouped and generalized according to theoretical prescriptions. That, of course, doesn't mean states are completely rational. Just as people, they are often unable to know what exactly they want and break the rule of transitivity. A person who prefers blue sweater over black one, black one over green one, but – surprisingly – green one over blue one runs the risk of being endlessly exploited by being offered to pay a dollar for getting a blue sweater in exchange for a black one; than to pay another dollar for getting a green one; and one more for getting his black sweater back in exchange for a green. Finding oneself with the same black sweater but without three dollars may be pity, but states also face risks if they are unable to follow the rule of transitivity in defining their national interests.

Irrationality and randomness can also be dealt with by integrating them as a part of research or an element of a rational strategy, like in poker. There are also ways to address manifestations of unpredictability by, for instance, assuming worst case scenarios. In other words, states may not be absolutely rational in what they do to each other, but they are rational enough to be studied scientifically.

Rationality assumption is also in the focus of foreign policy analysis. Who else should be rational if not architects of foreign policies of states? Ideal decisions, well thought and calculated in advance, like chess moves of a grandmaster, bringing about power, influence and security – what could be more magnificent and, at the same time, more distant from reality than this image?

Attempts to address issues of rationality in foreign policy decisions are associated with three models of Graham Allison: RAM, OPM and BPM (Allison, 1971). These abbreviations are well known to foreign policy analysis students. The first one is the rational actor model – a description of how a rational decision-making should look like. Within it states act as rational unitary agents seeking to maximize their gains. In doing so they create a list of preferences, complete and transitive; calculate costs and benefits of alternative strategies; and pick the best one. Complete and transitive list of

preferences is an ideal formulation of national interests. The model is applicable to any possible case in international politics, be it Peloponnesian War, Cuban missile crisis or occupation of Crimea.

There are several underlying assumptions. It is believed that a state can not only define a complete and transitive list of national interests but also will have enough information and time to compare all alternatives and pick the best one. However, a quick glance at history of international relations would be enough to understand that states exceptionally rarely act like that. Foreign policy is mostly shaped in a different way. Two other Allison's models explain how.

Organizational process model perceives foreign policy not as a result of accurate calculations and rational choice, but as implementation of specific procedures developed by different units within states. Of course, states themselves neither look unitary agents, nor they seem rational within this model. Reaction to external challenges and laying out foreign policy in general does not come through a thorough analysis of all possible alternatives and picking the best one. It is rather a result of standard procedures, which exist in documents or traditions of institutions and offer ready solutions for any situation. OPM is much more skeptical about recommendations of rational choice theory than RAM. In practice, there is always lack of time and resources for weighting all possible alternatives. Claude Shannon once estimated a number of all possible unique chess games as 10^{120} at minimum, given that a player is choosing one of 30 variants on average each move (Shannon, 1950). It is likely that international politics has got even more variations, nuances and possible moves than a chess game.

Chess players make first moves without deeply considering all distant results, but just following theory of openings. The same may be truth about states. They apply reliable procedures and are quite fine with approximate estimations of expected results. Foreign policy of a state in this case looks not as a result of a rational decision-making, but rather as a continuation of previous practice, sometimes accompanied by a desire to minimize short-term risks.

Another manifestation of the same phenomenon is called *incrementalism*. Imagine a state has got a range of policy alternatives from A to Z, while currently strategy F is carried out. If conditions change and require policy adaptation, a decision-maker may not run through all spectrum A-Z, but would more likely pick a slight modification of F, let's say C, D, G or H. Doing that would be certainly quite far from the requirements of a rational choice.

Bureaucratic politics model also rejects assumption of unitary actors. It describes foreign policy as a result of political bargaining inside states. Within such framework national interests are turned into abstraction, while interests of various bureaucratic agents inside are becoming concrete and decisive. These interests are not always similar. Even when strategic interests are the same, various groups may lobby completely different ways of

protecting them. Moreover, agencies compete for influence and budgets. This competition would be a primary determinant of foreign policy in the end, while rational choice consideration and game-theoretic models may be left far behind.

Allison's models demonstrate how foreign policy decisions in reality may significantly differ from what is prescribed by rational choice considerations. Procedural and bureaucratic aspects could be added with group thinking syndrome, a host of biases, lack of information and other factors which further disrupt a rational actor model and fill international politics with miscalculations, irrationalities and mistakes.

Like in chess, playing international politics may be improved. Mistakes can be corrected, usual procedures may be overcome and internal compromises can be improved. No matter how numerous and considerable deviations are, rationality is still a good basis for making and studying international relations.

Expected utility theory and prospect theory

Behavior of rational agents is primarily explained with the help of expected value concept, expected utility/rational choice theory and prospect theory. These theories describe how decisions are taken under uncertainty, which is found in large volumes in international politics.

The simplest way to take a rational decision under uncertainty is through calculating expected value, which is an arithmetic mean of a large number of independent realizations of a random variable. Put forward back in the 17th century by a Dutch mathematician and statesman – what a beautiful combination! – Johan de Witt, expected value was widely used in studying of gambling. Let's follow the same path.

For just \$5 a player is offered to take part in the following game. She/he draws a card from a standard deck of 52 playing cards, and if gets a ten of higher then is paid with \$10, otherwise gets nothing. Should she/he play that game?

There are 20 cards of tens and higher in a deck. Probability of drawing one of them is $20/52 \approx 38\%$. Expected value formula is:

$$E = \sum x_i p_i$$

where:

E – expected value,
 x – quantitative result,
 p – probability.

In our case with playing cards it will be:

$$E = 10 \times 0.38 + 0 \times 0.62 = 3.8$$

Expected value of the game is \$3.8, while the price of participation is \$5. It would be rational to abstain from playing. Expected value in lottery, roulette, poker, blackjack and most of other gambling is less than the price of the game, i.e., a lottery ticket or a bet. In the long run, when one plays multiple times, she/he is sure to lose. This makes the fact that many people do gamble even more surprising.

Assuming that people gamble not only when they don't know that it's irrational, it would be useful to look into the ways they perceive such games. One of the first attempts to do that was made by a Swiss mathematician Nicolaus Bernoulli in a so-called *St. Petersburg Paradox*, which demonstrates discrepancy between prescriptions of common sense and theoretically grounded rational behavior. The paradox is also about gambling: a player tosses a coin and expecting heads. As soon as heads is tossed, the game is over and the player gets his prize. The prize, in turn, is determined by a number of moves: if the game ends after the first move, the prize equals 2^0 ; after the second turn it will be 2^1 ; after the third move – 2^2 and so on. What price is it worth paying for playing the game?

Calculation of expected value would give an answer: infinity. Paying any price will be rational, since the game has infinite expected value. However, in reality most people would not go higher than 25. They are driven by subjective assessments and perceptions. To some extent, those could be reflected within expected utility theory.

Imagine that a state leader, who's meeting general criteria of rationality, is taking a decision about launching a war against a neighbor. Examples are numerous, from Sparta in times of Thucydides to adventurous revisionist leaders in the 21st century. A leader's thinking can be formalized in the following way:

$$U(w) = p_v(V) - (1 - p_v)(L) - c,$$

where:

$U(w)$ – expected utility of war,
 p_v – probability of victory,
 V – prize volume,
 L – volume of possible loss,
 c – costs of war.

If $U(w) > 0$, launching a war is rational. In other words, two alternative strategies of either starting a war or staying at peace should be compared in terms of expected values.

Ancient Greeks didn't know expected utility theory, just like most state leaders in history who decided about whether to launch a war. They applied it intuitively or implicitly. But rational choice theory enables a stricter approach to same questions. It requires quantification of some key parameters and calculating probabilities. None of these tasks is simple.

How should one define a volume of a prize in a victorious war? That could be measured by increase of influence, weakening of enemies and competitors, territorial gains, contributions and alike. How all that could be attributed with a specific number? Skeptics of quantitative methods in IR would say there is no way to do that. However, approximations and cumulative parameters may be of some help. Covering all possible elements of a prize with some general concept, for instance *power*, may open a way forward.

Expected utility theory assumes that subjective value of results defined by statistical expectation of a player about the results of the game may differ from nominal value of these results. The theory has been first laid out by another Bernoulli, Daniel and later developed by John von Neumann and Oscar Morgenstern within game theory.

Assessing probabilities is also challenging. How should one measure the chances to win a war? Should balance of forces be assessed? Or statistics of previous standoffs recollected? In any case it will be impossible to get even close to an exact estimation. It will be far less reliable than bookmakers' forecasts of football matches, but only approximate and often mistaken. Meanwhile, assessment of chances is crucial for rational decision-making. When deciding to begin a war against Athens, Spartans believed they were stronger, i.e., estimated their own chances to win as higher than 50%. It is also likely (with an unknown probability, however) that they were attributing high value to the issue at stake, i.e., a volume of possible win or loss. Almost surely that issue was either survival or hegemony in Ancient Greece.

Better calculation of chances in a future war might have helped Athenians and Spartans to reduce individual probabilities of dying in a combat. A male Spartan faced 5%–25% probability of participating in a battle, while a male Athenian was a bit luckier with 6%–12%. We know these probabilities *a posteriori*, while Ancient Greeks faced a simple truth: big powers engage into wars quite often. War is both an experimental way to assess the existing balance of power, and a lottery. As a lottery, war also may end in an unexpected way. Those who had few chances in the beginning can suddenly win. For both assessing balance of power and playing a lottery there is a rational choice theory.

Understanding how decisions are taken under risk is also important. There are plenty of them in international politics, and even undisputable dominance can't secure the victory. Thus perception of risk becomes crucial.

From the perspective of expected utility theory, getting \$50 for sure is equal to getting \$100 or nothing with a probability of 50%. Under a choice between these two options, both decisions would be equally appealing for a rational person. However, in practice people tend to face different ways of reasoning, examined in depth by prospect theory.

Developed by psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, prospect theory has been widely applied in various fields (Kahneman, Tversky, 2000). The authors, one of whom was awarded The Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, have been for a long time observing people taking

decisions under risk. Many those decisions were quite opposite to what was recommended by rational choice theory.

For instance, a group of 95 people were offered a choice between taking \$3,000 for sure and taking \$4,000 with the probability of 80%. Calculation of expected utility demonstrates that:

$$4,000 \times 0.8 = 3,200 > 3,000,$$

Thus the latter option is preferable. However, vast majority of respondents who systemically take part in the experiment, prefer a smaller, but guaranteed prize.

Such experiments are numerous. They indicate that decisions taken by people in their everyday life deviate from ideal of rationality. In examining these deviations, Kahneman and Tversky made some important generalization, also relevant for studying international politics.

People perceive decision-making without being neutral to possible losses and wins. Faced with the prospect of winning they become less prone to risk and prioritize high chances. But facing the prospect of loss, they demonstrate a more risk-taking behavior. Value of both losses and wins tends to diminish in proportion to their volumes/quantities. Resulting effects is that people tend to overestimate their current belongings. They also tend to prefer guaranteed results over probable and pay more attention to differences than to similarities.

This is what prospect theory is mainly about. It models decision-making with taking into account people's attitudes to risks as well as to guaranteed and probable results. That's what matters for international politics. That's what mattered for Athenians and Spartans on the eve of the Peloponnesian War. They referred to risks, chances and grace of gods, but without knowing prospect theory found it difficult to explain how perception of same bets at stake can change under various circumstances. Those who know prospects can do it much easier.

Behavioral revolution in theory of international relations

In the mid-20th century, traditional ways of knowing about international politics came under criticism. Good old lengthy discussions about war in peace a la Thucydides, Hobbes or even Morgenthau, were no longer enough for making decisions and understanding deep regularities of international interactions. A more complicated reality required more sophisticated approaches.

Descriptive methods and speculative theories were criticized for inaccuracy and lack of reliability. Hypotheses were usually vague and blurred, attempting to explain universal nature of international politics instead of focusing on specific issues. Realities of the Cold War demanded more

substantial and reliable knowledge. Common sense and previous experience pointed at mathematics as a source of reliability and persuasiveness.

Cases from other branches of science were ready to hand. Economics managed to adapt quantitative methods and formal models for more precise forecasting. In Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, there were almost no numbers, not to mention formulas. In another classical work by David Ricardo, *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, published in 1817, the picture was almost the same. However, today economic science is almost unimaginable without formulas, quantitative methods and statistical data. Why can't same path be followed by IR?

Behavioral revolution is called so because it turned attention of IR scientists to behavior of those who actually declare wars, sign peace treaties, create alliances – i.e., people who make decisions about foreign policy – in an attempt to understand what drives decision-making. General abstract questions in focus of previous research gave way to specific issues, strategic dilemmas and key determinants of decisions. Rationality, risk, probabilities, price, brinkmanship have suddenly become the vocabulary of foreign policy analysis and security studies. Accompanied by a rapid development of quantitative methods, this shift has marked a significant transformation of thinking about international politics. Behavioral revolution did not turn IR into psychology, preserving its focus on political interactions; but it has radically changed methods of inquiry.

There is a book of a special significance for behavioral revolution. Thomas Schelling's *The Strategy of Conflict*, published in 1960, was dealing with strategic interaction, in which what agents think, intend and guess about intentions of others, define the final outcome (Schelling, 1981). To maximize one's outcome, it is important to play rationally. That task has been partly resolved through mathematics of game theory, laid out earlier by John von Neumann and Oscar Morgenstern (1953). But strategic interaction is not only about mathematics. Guessing about intentions of others and signaling one's own intentions is a psychological task.

To address it, Schelling introduced a concept of *focal points*, in which players don't know about one another's intentions and their mutual expectations coincide. Imagine, you and your friend need to meet each other in an unknown city, while you hadn't agreed on exact time and place, as well as have no opportunity to reach each other by phone or any other device. Where would you go?

Series of experiments proved that people would most likely arrive at central railway station at 12 p.m. and wait under the biggest clock. At least, that's what most people would do in the mid-20th century. Railway station, clock, 12 p.m. are focal points. The very existence of these points means that people are impacted in their decisions by expectations, generated by their imagination, i.e., subjective, but nonetheless very important factors. What people think about others or expect from them, no matter how reasonably, is strategically important.

Schelling points out the significance of impressions. References to mathematics of poker, made by Neumann and Morgenstern, have also been complemented with research of bluff. Threats, signals, messages are all becoming part of strategic interactions and thus should be studied by IR along with material elements of power.

Even children were not left alone. Behavior of two-year-olds is perceived as irrational, thus usual sticks and carrots don't work, often to a child's advantage. Pretending to be not-completely-rational could be useful, since it can change the way, an opponent perceives one's intentions and thus transforms his own actions. It may also be helpful to randomize some parts of decision-making and let an opponent know they are randomized. All these nuances of strategy have been brought into the center of political analysis. And they dealt a lot with how people take decisions.

Another aspect of behavioral revolution touched upon methods of research. Statistics started its triumphant intervention into study of international politics. Statistical methods systemize observations. Professors may observe students, noting overall number of them, proportion of hardworking and lazy among them, or percentage of those whose name starts with an 'A'. Students may observe professors, comparing number of males and females, liberal and strict or, say professors in glasses and without them. Computers may observe results of exams and generalize by summing up mode, mean or average. Professors, students and computers seek to generalize through quantitative data.

Is there any connection between students' grades and professors' glasses? How about between grades and a number of missed classes? Processing of large volumes of data allows finding a link between different variables and a power of it, i.e., correlation. Does the level of military expenditure correlate with the frequency of wars? How is wealth correlated with democracy? Was Immanuel Kant right about spread of republics leading to international peace? Not only grades and glasses but also questions like these are relevant for statistical analysis, which proved to be very helpful in dealing with issues of international politics.

There is a difference between correlations and causal links, and statistics is very good at showing it. Correlations demonstrate that some things are likely to be observed in combination with others, for instance arms races and wars. But they don't aim to explain why. Those who seek causation, on the contrary, tend to speculate about the nature of things. Saying that arms race is correlating with the onset of war would be not enough for them. Theories explaining why will be needed. Statistical methods are aimed at establishing correlations, not at explaining why they are there. Explanation is the realm of traditional grand theories, while statistics provides precision, reliability and non-speculative knowledge. One of the precursors to behavioral revolution was a book by an English meteorologist and mathematician Lewis Richardson, *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels* (Richardson, 1960). It dealt with variables of war.

Does accumulation of weapons make a war more likely? Are neighboring states more likely to be engaged into a war than non-neighbors? Answers to questions of this kind were highly speculative in the mid-20th century. Often they were driven by intuition or common sense. Richardson offered a different approach. He intended to verify several hypotheses against the large volume of data, i.e., cases of war. As a result he summed up factors, which could be related to wars, and examined correlations between them and wars against the set of conflicts between 1809 and 1949. The result was a complicated classification of wars, described by a logarithmic scale, where a murder of a single person was marked by a magnitude of 0 ($10^0 = 1$), and a war with a million casualties by a magnitude of 6 ($10^6 = 1,000,000$). Richardson also came up with a list of 779 deadly quarrels and concentrated on 315 wars, embracing conflicts with a magnitude of 2.5 and higher.

These relatively simple operations brought about promising results and broad perspectives. Some were simple. For instance, wars seemed to be randomly distributed over time. Some required more research. Speaking of neighbors, Richardson demonstrated that they are more likely to be engaged into a war. To do that he found out that among 92 two-sided wars, only 12 were waged by non-neighbors. A total number of states at that time period were about 60 on average, and an average quantity of neighbors was six. A random distribution of wars would give a 10% probability that any two sides to a war were neighbors. While in reality (i.e., in statistics) wars among neighbors were happening much more often. Thus, a notion that neighbors are more likely to fight than non-neighbors, got statistically proved.

Richardson used similar logic for studying a host of other factors which might have influenced wars. His approach was so new and different from traditional descriptive and comparative methodology that might have been called revolutionary. It gave way to new methodological approaches in IR and also inspired projects like *Correlates of War*, in which statistical thinking about violent conflicts has been perfected through systemic study of correlations between number of neighbors, borderlines, economic development, political regime, alliances and many other variables, and war.

Behavioral revolution marked a shift in how international politics can be studied. It promoted numbers, formulas and quantification of everything which could be quantified. It emphasized strictness of definitions, clearness of hypotheses and normative approaches. After all, it changed the substance and usual text landscape of academic journals about international relations we read.

Doubts remain and debates continue over the limits of quantitative research, just like about any other significant aspect of studying international politics. There are numerous arguments against relying too much on formal models, as well as numerous examples of how their successful application generates more reliable knowledge. IR still lacks experimental capacities and is difficult to quantify, model and forecast. People taking decisions are only occasionally rational. But generally international politics looks like

obeying some regularities and following some patterns. A combination of various methods helps better understand patterns and regularities, as well as have a broader vision of how interactions across state borders are arranged.

Recommended reading

- 1 Kahneman, D., Tversky, A. Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk.//*Econometrica*, Vol.47, No.2, 1979, pp. 263–292.
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- 7 Richardson, L. (1960). *Statistics of Deadly Quarrels*. Pittsburg, PA: Boxwood Press.
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Questions

- What levels of analysis are there in studying international politics?
- How is prospect theory different from expected utility theory?
- What is expected value?
- What are pros and cons of qualitative and quantitative analysis of international politics?
- Why Allison's rational actor model is so rarely found in reality of foreign policy decision-making?

Key words

- Levels of analysis
- Rationality
- Bias
- Expected value
- Prospect theory
- Rational choice theory
- Rational actor model
- Formalization
- Focal point
- Correlation

2 Realism

For a variety of reasons, most of the modern foreign policy decision-makers view international relations through the lens of realism. Some do it consciously after learning key assumptions of the approach, while others are guided by political common sense. Indeed, realism is well aligned with political insight, but also has a number of other strengths as well as shortcomings.

The paradigm of realism, a clomping warhorse among metatheories of international relations, offers a Hobbesian perspective on world politics as the war of all against all with no rules, mired in anarchy and egoistic interests of states defined in terms of power. The allure of such an approach lies in its conformity with intuitive perception, clear-cut notions and succinct explanations.

Realism took shape in the 1930s and 1940s, a tumultuous time for international security. Back then, international relations were a scene of permanent conflicts and heightened violence; therefore, scrupulous attention to the issues of war and power struggle seemed justified.

At the same time, explanations of wars and ways of preventing them offered by the erstwhile mainstream theories – idealism and internationalism – in the aftermath of World War I had proven untenable. Adherents of these theories, mostly lawyers and historians, including 28th U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, are often accused of all the ills of political destabilization in the run-up and during World War II. What is meant is that their recipes, such as the League of Nations, did not manage to forestall another large-scale geopolitical showdown. Yet it is uncertain whether the political calculus in the realist vein and the respective security policy would have prevented the new world war. While idealists did make their theory too normative, they can hardly be held responsible for the decisions that resulted in the major unrest of the 1930s.

The post-World War II international order was a Petri dish for spreading realist perception of world politics. By expounding on the nature of the global confrontation and regional conflicts in plain and persuasive terms, realism quickly became the dominant paradigm of international studies. The book *Politics among Nations* by Hans Morgenthau, the most influential realist, became an example of international political analysis; principles of

realism secured places in university curricula, and new generations of politicians learned to understand the world in terms of power. The dominance of realism in international relations theory turned to be unusually durable. Its modified versions still rank amongst the most influential. On the face of it, axioms of realism seem to be so correct, and the range of processes adequately explained by the theory remains wide. The position of realists in academic and political discussions appears to be robust, while most decisions in foreign and security policy are seemingly influenced by a realist vision. Most of students pick the platform of realism in classroom debates – of course, if given the choice.

Strengths of realism include clarity of thought, well-defined basic concepts and as close proximity to international political reality as possible.

The philosophy of realism

IR is a relatively new discipline, but the bulk of its theories rely on old philosophical ponderings, research or speculations about the essence of how states interact. This interplay could be most evident with a case of realism. The world around philosophers was mostly cruel, prompting some of them to describe it in a way that became an ideal groundwork for thinking in terms of power, egoism and war of all against all.

The realist theory rests upon a system of philosophical ideas. The key role in its making was played by two authors divided in time by more than two millennia: Thucydides, an ancient Greek historian and Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher. In grasping dramatic developments around them (the former lived during the Peloponnesian War, while the latter's living years fell on the Thirty Years' War), both paid attention to the egoistic drivers of political action, anarchic conditions of decision-making and the absence of means for coercing or restricting the will of political actors. The notion of power introduced into scholarly parlance by Thucydides and the concept of sovereignty developed by Hobbes laid the foundation for the realist perception of international relations.

Thucydides's *History* is possibly the first recorded example of an analysis aimed at revealing the general causes behind a full-fledged international conflict, the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides, 2009). Thanks to his departure from the then-prevailing historical tradition of no more than accurate description, the Thucydides's work prompted the emergence of a long-standing tradition of political analysis, which has existed well into the present. The latter can be conditionally termed 'realist', as it considers world politics through the lenses of egoistic interests, lack of trust, and anarchy of the international environment.

These lenses were used by Thucydides while observing the Peloponnesian War, a major geopolitical cataclysm of the time – a 27-year war between Ancient Greece's largest states, Athens and Sparta.

Let's turn to a short excerpt from *History* containing the quintessence of Thucydides's theoretical conclusions. This is an author-modeled dramatized 'Melian dialogue', in which residents of the small island of Melos argue with envoys of mighty Athens. Melos, a Spartan colony, aims at remaining neutral in the Peloponnesian War; Athens demands that Melos join an anti-Spartan coalition, otherwise threatening to wipe out the city. The parties are faced with centuries-old problems of foreign policy decision-making, hegemony, power and alliance commitments. The position of Melos is based on the desire to remain neutral without helping either side of the conflict. By making this determination plain to Athens, they convince that there is no reason for a risky and costly war, as Melos does not pose a threat to Athens anyway. However, such reasoning proves unconvincing. Even though militarily superior, the Athenians cannot trust Melos. Given the war with Sparta, they need strategic certainty and guarantees that can only be given by coercing Melos into the Athenian-led coalition. Neutrality thus becomes impossible, and the parties' intentions are less credible than their power capabilities.

EXCERPT FROM MELIAN DIALOGUE

ATHENIANS: ...You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.

MELIANS: And how, pray, could it turn out as good for us to serve as for you to rule?

ATHENIANS: Because you would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you.

MELIANS: So that you would not consent to our being neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side.

ATHENIANS: No; for your hostility cannot so much hurt us as your friendship will be an argument to our subjects of our weakness, and your enmity of our power.

MELIANS: Is that your subjects' idea of equity, to put those who have nothing to do with you in the same category with peoples that are most of them your own colonists, and some conquered rebels?

ATHENIANS: As far as right goes they think one has as much of it as the other, and that if any maintain their independence it is because they are strong, and that if we do not molest them it is because we are afraid; so that besides extending our empire we should gain in security by your subjection...

MELIANS: But do you consider that there is no security in the policy which we indicate?... How can you avoid making enemies of all existing neutrals who shall look at case from it that one day or another you will attack them?... If you risk so much to retain your empire, and your subjects to get rid of it, it were surely great baseness and cowardice in us who are still free not to try everything that can be tried, before submitting to your yoke.

ATHENIANS: Not if you are well advised, the contest not being an equal one, with honor as the prize and shame as the penalty, but a question of self-preservation and of not resisting those who are far stronger than you are.

MELIANS: But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes more impartial than the disproportion of numbers might lead one to suppose; to submit is to give ourselves over to despair, while action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect.

ATHENIANS: Hope, danger's comforter, may be indulged in by those who have abundant resources, if not without loss at all events without ruin; but its nature is to be extravagant, and those who go so far as to put their all upon the venture see it in its true colors only when they are ruined; but so long as the discovery would enable them to guard against it, it is never found wanting...

MELIANS: You may be sure that we are as well aware as you of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust.

ATHENIANS: When you speak of the favor of the gods, we may as fairly hope for that as yourselves; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods, or practice among themselves. Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can.

Thucydides

The Athenians describe the way out of this strategic dilemma by the expression, which is now a catchphrase: '... right... is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must'.

What is also telling is that Athenians themselves in a roughly similar position rejected an ultimatum issued by the Achaemenid Empire in 491 BC, 60 years before the Peloponnesian War. Persians were way much stronger, enjoying an estimated 100 times advantage in population and about 15 times advantage in military might. Athenian then have taken the risk and bet everything on the fortune of gods. All that happened long before a theory of asymmetric conflicts, describing how weaker can win wars against stronger, has been laid out.

The Athens' lack of trust in the Melians' intentions and the latter's unwillingness to join the war set a case of a security dilemma, in which parties with pre-determined negative expectations perceive each other's behavior as a threat. In the same manner Sparta, possibly the strongest state in Greece before the war, saw no other option than to fight Athens, whose wealth and power have been growing faster than those of Sparta itself. There was no way for Spartans to be sure that the might of Athens won't be used against them.

In a situation like this, conflict escalation becomes ineluctable, since there is no way out of the spiral of mutual fear. Thucydides sees this as the root cause for several incidents like the Melian one and of the inevitability of a big war in Ancient Greece. By this conclusion Thucydides laid out the philosophical foundation for the realist tradition in understanding international politics.

More than 2,000 years later, Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher, made an extremely prolific contribution in a logical follow-up to Thucydides. In his fundamental work *Leviathan*, he described the so-called ‘natural condition of mankind’, which, in his opinion, is the source of perpetual conflicts between people and nations (Hobbes, 2017). The main elements of this condition are: (1) the natural equality of human beings; (2) the consequence of such equality, i.e., a simultaneous desire to satisfy their needs; (3) and a war (violence) as the only means of resolving this contradiction. In polemics with Aristotle, Hobbes referred to humans not as social but selfish animals, thus formulating the basic question of social coexistence: what makes egoists live together? The *war of all against all*, in Hobbes’s parlance, is the natural condition of humankind. In interstate relations such a war is permanent, since there is no force that would compel a state to refrain from a beneficial war or would guarantee its security. Hobbes’s philosophy, however, is not limited to these statements. It aims to teach states how to coexist peacefully under conditions of perpetual anarchy. In dealing with this issue, Hobbes draws parallels between nations and people, pointing out that people have managed to overcome the war of all against all by introducing the institution of a sovereign state. For this comparison alone, Hobbes can be considered not only a realist but also an institutionalist. State sovereignty becomes a cornerstone of his theory, at least in what concerns domestic politics. The cure-all view of sovereignty is seen as buttressing peace within societies. But what will the world of sovereign states look like?

Creation of some sort of a global sovereign would absorb sovereignty of individual states, thus Hobbes did not arrive to such an assumption, however logical it might have seemed. Instead he put forward the idea of what may today be called a superpower responsible for maintaining peace. In addition, Hobbes pinned great hopes on what may be called good governance. From his perspective, a properly organized social life would make society more peace-loving, and a world consisting of properly organized states would be devoid of war. Hobbes also put high hopes on state sovereignty, the beating heart of his theoretical edifice. Hobbes believed, like many do today, that a war is caused by internal problems in a state. That idea was reinforced by the fact that the 17th-century international politics was still largely influenced by intersection of dynastic ties. Sovereign states were supposed to make dynasties take a backseat and put an end to unnecessary wars.

Hobbes’s idea of state sovereignty as the fundamental principle of world politics became an intrinsic element of international relations for over 300 years. His philosophical teaching also recommends to refrain from

malicious practices (what was, perchance, a simplified wording of the future concept of rational choice); seek peace by any means and have recourse to military force only as a last resort; abandon claims to anything whatsoever, while recognizing the rights of others, and adhere to treaties.

Two more figures are often classified as realist philosophers, which is not exactly the case, unless we take a too broad a view of philosophy. The first is Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian historian and politician, who authored such writings as *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, *Florentine Histories* and, of course, *The Prince*, as well as put forward a number of provocative ideas of his time about the separation of political norms from morals. This kind of reasoning reached its crescendo in the aforementioned *The Prince*, which, by virtue of its applied character, became a favorite desk companion for many generations of European politicians, diplomats and plotters. The overwhelming majority of realists would certainly agree with the dominance of political expediency over morality. There is an interesting suggestion that, in reality, Machiavelli's work was intended as a somber satire on the customs of his era, which was falsely taken by his contemporaries as a set of political advice. In any case, the dilemma of the relation between morality and political interest aroused much more curiosity in the 16th-century realities than it does today.

One more towering figure standing out for special mention in the context of the philosophical underpinnings of realism was Cardinal Richelieu, First Minister and head of the Catholic Church of France in the first half of the 17th century. Hobbes's contemporary, he lived in the era of the Thirty Years' War, but, most importantly, was also one of the key actors in this landmark conflict as well as the architect of France's foreign policy.

At the heart of Richelieu's political philosophy and practice was the desire to strengthen royal power. Echoing Machiavelli and Hobbes, he was a theorist of absolutism, but unlike them, he was able to directly bring his views to fruition. On the path of consolidating the royal power, the King of France faced not only internal rivals but also a dangerous challenge from the outside – the Habsburgs. Struggle against this dynasty, reigning in Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, was an imposed performative test for the Cardinal's diplomatic prowess and strategic vision. The upshot was a system of beliefs relying on the precise measurement of capabilities, a sober idea of the limits of the possible and the separation of interests of the state from any other considerations – a *sui generis* 17th-century *Realpolitik*. In the Thirty Years' War, Richelieu supported Protestants in German states, while simultaneously oppressing French Protestants. He argued that states, unlike humans, do not have immortal souls and have to worry about their survival at any cost – since for states there will be no life after death. Hence, interests of survival should dominate any other considerations. Realist wisdom is also found in his works, most notably *Political Testament* and *Memoirs*. His name is commonly associated with the concept of *state interests* based on a profound understanding of the differences between strategic interests, moral standards and religious dogmas. Over time, state interests

have transformed into *national interests*, and as such are known and widely used in the lexicon of realists.

Writings of realist philosophers have summarized and collated various views on a conflict as a historical inevitability and manifestation of power interaction among states seeking to guarantee their own security and, paradoxically enough, ending up in a war. Within such an outlook, the realm of international relations seems to be a dangerous place ruled by the law of the jungle. The dictum *Si vis pacem, para bellum* ('if you want peace, prepare for war'), coined in Ancient Rome by Cornelius Nepos, seems quite fair. This view, proceeding from the conventional experience of numerous wars, is perfectly in line with the common sense and well-suited in the context of political processes at different historical junctures. Its credibility was and remains so high that the school of realism, still built along these lines, continues to be the most influential in international relations theory.

Reinhold Niebuhr, Edward Carr and Hans Morgenthau: the principles of classical realism

Reinhold Niebuhr, an American theologian and the author of *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, ushered in a peculiar transition from philosophical abstract ideas in a Hobbesian spirit to the scientific exploration of the problem, which would later take center stage in the theory of realism – the problem of violence (Niebuhr, 1932). In so doing, and given the fact that the aforementioned work was published in 1932, long before other seminal works by realists, Niebuhr is reputed to be one of the pioneers of the scientific understanding of social, including international, processes in the light of force, coercion and struggle for power. The significance of Niebuhr's work lies in that he was able to separate human nature from the influence of social structures, demonstrating that even the best of intentions and natural kindness can and, more precisely, will always lead to conflicts.

Niebuhr focuses his attention on the following dilemma: if human is a moral being, why is there so much immoral violence and human-induced suffering in the world? The answer, in his view, lies in the differences of interaction between people and social groups. If in the former case norms of morality, religion and feelings play an important role; while in the latter case, all of this gives way to group interests determined by struggle for power. Thus, according to Niebuhr, the aspirations of idealists (and it was their prescriptions which prevailed in the international relations of the interwar period) for preventing wars by simply transferring the experience of relations among people to relations among states are futile. A person is moral in dealing with other people, but when groups interact, morality gives way to other considerations. Unlike the people it consists of, society is immoral. This statement is reminiscent of the contemporary rationale of Machiavelli's recipes and establishes for realists a fundamental distinction between rules of morality, religion, law and political interests. The phrase 'moral human and immoral society' has

yet another analogy in it – this time, with Hobbes’s theoretical views. Though prone to draw parallels between the lives of people and states, the English philosopher believed that there were principal differences between them primarily because states feel more secure, simply being harder to destroy than people. For this reason, according to Hobbes, states are less predisposed to violence and, unlike humans, can live relatively peacefully even under conditions of anarchy and general distrust.

Written in line with contemporary debates, Niebuhr’s work draws on the central idea about the structural nature of violence through the lenses of the then-popular dialectic of social struggle, defining states and/or classes as the principal rivals. It is mainly due to this idea that realists have neither ever confused states and people, nor considered the patterns of relations between them as identical.

All social cooperation...requires some degree of coercion.

Reinhold Niebuhr

Edward Carr’s *The Twenty Years’ Crisis: 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, which the author sent for editing in the summer of 1939, only weeks before the outbreak of World War II, became a classical text even before it (the war) ended. The book’s main thrust is a reasoned critique of utopian views on the nature of international relations and of illusions as for the opportunities to manage them (Carr, 2016). At the heart of such utopias and illusions was the idealists’ belief in the power of international law and the ability of international organizations – first of all, the League of Nations – to establish and maintain long-lasting peace.

A short review of Carr’s book, published in *Foreign Affairs* in April 1940, states that the author, a full professor at the University College of Wales, subjects utopian ideas to realist scrutiny (Woolbert, 1940). Aberystwyth College is notable for being the first to open a department of international relations, back in 1919; while Carr, though a Woodrow Wilson Professor, was sharply critical of the League of Nations, for which President Woodrow Wilson had high expectations regarding the maintenance of international security and prevention of a new war, similar to World War I.

Carr’s basic ideas revolved around juxtaposition of moral principles and political expediency, quite traditional for European political philosophy. Adherents of the former were referred to as ‘utopians’. According to Carr, utopianism is a normative approach describing what international politics should be, not what it really is. Utopians differ in that they believe in the harmony of interests and seek to impose their morally based values upon international actors. This school of thought continues the longstanding tradition of liberal philosophy, including its belief in the advancement of reason, harmony of interests and ability of complex systems to organize themselves according to the ‘invisible hand’ principle. In Carr’s view, all of these are dangerous delusions. The ideas of utopians they try to impose on the world

(the most striking example of which is the establishment of the League of Nations) are not at all in line with political realities. Hence the label of 'realism' itself, denoting an area of studies, which, unlike utopianism, corresponds to reality and takes it into account.

Among such realities, Carr lists the rule of might, a material basis of political relations. Later on, realism will be characterized by a strong emphasis on resources, balance of power defined in possession of resources, and opportunities they create. Carr sees the world of international politics as a given, invariable and independent of what researchers think of it. At the same time, he agrees that some components of world politics are to some extent constructed by international actors. By the way, the belief in the existence of objective laws of international life will subsequently play a low-down trick, this time with realists themselves.

The juxtaposition of utopianism with its belief in moral principles and rules of the game against realism dominated by power in its physical sense is a cross-cutting theme of the entire Carr's work. A reader will not find a definitive solution to this dilemma on the pages of the classic text. Carr points out the shortcomings of both approaches, considering, quite in line with Hegelian dialectical approach, the unity and the struggle between them as natural. Hence Carr's criticism of the ability of international organizations to maintain order and limit violence, i.e., to perform the functions inherent to a state or rather, in the case of international relations, to a 'superpower'. From Carr's point of view, the ratio of material resources of different countries form a specific 'basis' of world politics, while international organizations should become its 'superstructure', but only provided the right combination of the utopian and realist visions of the world.

In a complicated post-World War II security environment, Carr's ideas were sure to receive a logical follow-up. Criticism of idealist views abounded, and the book *Politics among Nations* by Hans Morgenthau, a professor at the University of Chicago, who fled Germany in 1937, summarized this experience. It outlined key hypotheses of an alternative perspective on the nature of international politics (Morgenthau, 1968). Thanks to the axioms it spelled out as well as due to its profound impact, Morgenthau's book became a model or a paradigm in studying international relations. *Politics among Nations* also had formal attributes of a paradigm-making example, as it was recognized as unprecedented, became the object of attention of a large number of adherents and followers and was used as a textbook. This work is of fundamental importance for realism as a theory of international relations. The basics of the realist paradigm are laid down in Morgenthau's dictum that international relations are a struggle for power and peace.

All history shows that nations active in international politics are continuously preparing for, actively involving in, or recovering from organized violence in the form of war.

Hans Morgenthau

Power immediately became the central concept of realism. Manifestations of power, like international conflicts, alliances and dynamics of the foreign policy of states related to their power capabilities, have been placed in the focus of a realist analysis. Exposing the nature and structure of power was supposed to make it possible to explain the problems of international conflicts. Realists have taken numerous attempts to determine the structure of power capabilities and explain a wide range of interstate interactions by referring to power. The concept of power was meant to provide assistance in the study of the foreign policy of states. Morgenthau assumed that there was a direct link between power capabilities and the type of the foreign policy a state conducts. Weak states, in his view, are more likely to resort to isolationist or neutrality policies, given the absence of an immediate threat to their security; if the latter occurs, they form alliances either with one another or with a strong state. On the contrary, strong states will try to pursue a more active foreign policy, choosing between maintaining status quo, imperialism and the fight for prestige. The concept of power also provided an opportunity to study the correlation of states' capabilities on a global scale (the balance of power), which is an indicator of the likelihood of war and a means of achieving peace.

Classical realism of Morgenthau's making proceeds from the presence of certain objective and unchanging patterns of international politics stemming from the unchanging human nature. The theory's task, in his view, is to identify such patterns, and the task of politics is to act in accordance with them. Interests formulated in terms of power are the main instrument for understanding reality and explaining its various manifestations (realists adhere to a rigid division between facts and interpretations). Generally speaking, 'interest' and 'power' are the key concepts of realism, marker words, presence of which helps recognize a realist. And, of course, Morgenthau, adhering to Machiavellian interpretations, echoes Niebuhr in rejecting the role of morality in politics, replacing it with the principle of expediency.

Morgenthau believed that he created a scientific theory of international relations with a focus on exploring objective regularities rather than imposing moral norms and values on political processes. The concept of power became its mainstay, and most of its conclusions refer to it in one way or another. States seek power to achieve security, while the balance of power determines the degree of stability. Having put the notion of power at the center of their theoretical constructs, realists, however, have failed to spell out a clear operational definition of it, often relying instead on speculations, tautology or simply contradictory assessments. As a result, captured by the balance of power, realists were not able to achieve another balance – that between the descriptive, normative and explanatory parts of their theory. When criticizing the U.S. war in Vietnam, Morgenthau could feel himself standing in idealist shoes in the sense that his theory did not so much explain what was going on as built abstract patterns standing quite far from the realities of political life.

For more than 30 years, Morgenthau's principles have enabled an adequate and comprehensive account of phenomena, processes and patterns of international relations. But given the protean object of study, hopes for their eternal prevalence in science were to no avail. In the 1970s, classical realism was confronted with new challenges and the need to adapt to the new realities of international life.

Neorealism. Kenneth Waltz's theory of international politics

Theory of International Politics by Kenneth Waltz, a professor at the University of California, broke new ground in realist thinking in 1979 (Waltz, 2010). Waltz's ideas laid the basis of *neorealism*, or *structural realism*. A distinctive feature of the latter is the focus on the system level of analysis, with particular emphasis on the structure of international systems.

As early as 1959, Waltz authored another work, *Man, the State, and War*, in which he put forward the idea of three 'images' or levels of analysis of international relations (Waltz, 2001). Accordingly, he grouped various theories of international relations into three levels: the individual, the state and the system of states. Following Waltz's logic, some part of the causes of war lies in a human nature, and these causes are explored through theories focusing on decision-making processes and psychological features of human behavior. The other part is related to the nature of controversies between states and incompatibility of their interests. These controversies exist regardless of people's choices, thus being objective. This is where neorealism shares common ground with classical realism, in which the interaction of national interests determines the nature of international politics. The third level identified by Waltz is the state system, which sets out the rules and conditions determining the interests of states. This level is related to the design of the structure of the international system and the nature of connections between its elements, and has become the decisive one for neorealism.

States in the world are like individuals in the state of nature. They are neither perfectly good nor are they controlled by law.

Kenneth Waltz

The way power is concentrated and distributed among the strongest states, often referred to by neorealists as *poles*, determines the type of organization and polarity of the international system. Different types of international systems create different conditions for states, generating, inter alia, conflicts of various types and intensity. The debate as to which type of the international system – monopolar, bipolar, or multipolar – minimizes or increases the likelihood of large-scale wars is still open. Nonetheless, regardless of the option chosen, neo-realists are united in recognizing the decisive influence of structure on the behavior of the elements. This premise seemingly runs contrary to the traditional notion that states define the rules of the game and

do not obey the rules put forward by an abstract structure. In international relations theory, ascertaining the nature of this relationship is referred to as the *agent-structure dilemma*.

Neorealists assign an important role to the concept of *anarchy*, the stance of the international system, which creates specific conditions of interaction among its elements, especially states. Anarchy is not about chaos, but rather about lack of universal rules and ways to enforce norms of behavior. The key assumption of neorealism is that states, though interacting in anarchy, cannot do whatever they want. The choice of foreign policy strategies is limited by the structures resulting from a set of individual interests and power capabilities. Anarchy does not amount to chaos; order in the anarchic international system is quite possible, but it results from the formation of structural constraints. International rules and regulations are only respected as long as they take account of such restrictions and the overall balance of power among states.

Some fundamental ideas of neorealism were set out in Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (Waltz, 2010) and Robert Gilpin's *War and Change in World Politics* (Gilpin, 1983). These two books introduce structuralism, levels of analysis, as well as shift the focus of IR research to a systemic level. Assuming anarchical nature of international politics is another characteristic feature of the neorealist mode of thinking. Under conditions of anarchy, the balance of power becomes a fundamental regulator of interstate relations, operating in a different manner within mono-, bi- and multipolar structures. Neorealism assumes a constant struggle among states for power resembling a zero-sum game, where an increase in the capabilities of some is only possible by reducing the capabilities of others. States are thus constantly vying for relative advantages.

The consistency of neorealism, its interdisciplinary focus, significant conceptual borrowings from political economy, and the attractive abstractness of structural explanations of wars gave realism in general a new breath, restoring trust to thinking in terms of national interests and power. Waltz drew attention to the systemic level of interaction, suggesting that the free interaction of selfish states, each pursuing only its own interests, leads to the emergence of a system. Structural rules, in turn, impose limitations upon all, even the most powerful, actors.

To see how structure limits choices, one can imagine a free market. Many sellers willing to sell as expensive as possible, and many buyers willing to buy as cheap as possible, form a structure, even without willing or knowing about that. Within that structure, a market price emerges in supply-demand equilibrium. The market price appears regardless of the individual aspirations of sellers and buyers and serves as a structural rule, violation of which would inflict losses and create risks for everyone, who would be trying to sell higher or buy lower than that.

Somewhat similar may be observed in the international system. There are structural rules, restrictions and imperatives, generated by anarchical

coexistence of states. Waltz believed that self-organization of the international system is a continuous process and that a successful foreign policy requires states to understand the gist of messages generated by the international system. This allowed, among other things, to see power not only as the possession of resources but also as the potential to shape systemic rules. However, states rarely draw same conclusion from the signals from the international system. They still have a choice and respond in various ways to the same structural changes, for instance, involving a possible emergence of a hegemon.

These differences in the strategies of response to changes in the balance of power are reflected in the separation of defensive and offensive realism. Defensive realism is associated with Waltz and denotes cautious policies of states in a search for power balancing. Offensive realism/neorealism, often associated with John Mearsheimer, holds that great powers may opt to buck-pass over balancing. They do not necessarily have to deter a potential hegemon; sometimes bandwagoning is a more beneficial option (Mearsheimer, 2014).

Stephen Walt drew attention to the differences between the balance of power and the balance of threats (Walt, 2013). According to him, states are not automatically balancing others. More powerful states may actually face balancing by others less often, than not-so-powerful, but perceived as more aggressive. Threats are shaped not only of power but also by geographical proximity, offensive capabilities and offensive intentions.

Similar to the previous versions of realist theories, neorealism mainly focuses on adversaries among states, particularly on wars. Nonetheless, it ironically lacks an explanation of why wars occur in international systems at all. Waltz's main hypothesis about international anarchy as a *permissive cause* for wars is too weak; it does not reveal either the necessary or sufficient conditions for the emergence of wars and leaves unattended the reasons why wars do or do not outbreak in specific cases of international interaction. In addition, neorealists have not been able to resolve the problem of defining power and means for measuring it. Waltz himself considered the inability to explain the behavior of individual states to be the most significant fault of his theory, due to its excessive attention to the systemic level. But even here, the assumption of neorealists about, say, the stability or instability of systems with different polarity is very difficult to confirm given the critical lack of historical record. Historically, hegemonic or even bipolar systems have been few to make statistical generalizations by observing their behavior.

Gilpin's theory of hegemonic war does not provide necessary answers. Its basic proposition is that in situations where a hegemon in the international system is in decline, the likelihood of a war between it and a potential successor increases. This assumption is directly based on the concept of power, for both hegemony and the process of its maintenance or disruption are determined solely in power categories. However, the problems of this approach begin even before it gives the precise definition of power, because of

historical facts. Theory of hegemonic wars explains only a minor portion of all wars, and even the wars genuinely connected with the redistribution of hegemony do not support the assumption that the struggle for hegemony is the necessary or sufficient prerequisite for their occurrence.

Key points of neorealism can be summed up as follows:

- states are rational agents acting to increase their own winnings and reduce their losses;
- states' primary goal is to maximize their chances of survival;
- international relations are relations among states;
- anarchy is the major attribute of the international system;
- the structure of the international system is the primary factor determining the foreign policy of states; and
- states perceive other states as a potential threat, thus constantly reproducing the security dilemma in international politics.

Shifting the attention of researchers to the system level or the 'third image', neo-realism left the concept of power at the heart of its analysis, while the issue of war and peace came into the limelight. The realist paradigm has overlooked the problems of non-adversarial interaction among states (and subsequently that of other international actors), non-power factors of decision-making processes, sociological attributes of participants of international relations and internal political developments.

Security dilemma

Imagine you want to taste some refined wine while reading a classical text about international relations, say by Thucydides. You already have the book, but in search for a bottle of wine decide to go to the market nearby.

For some reason, you've got real and counterfeit money in your pocket. Having come to the market, you approach the seller who, by all appearances, has got real wine and colored water. In a situation like this, which money, real or counterfeit, would be right to pay with?

States have to resolve similar puzzles almost on a daily basis. Every time they try to figure out intentions of partners and opponents, seeking to maximize benefit and minimize potential risks. Strategic considerations, whether in an arms race, crisis behavior, competition or situational alliances, structurally resemble the dilemmas people with real and counterfeit money and wine face. These strategic considerations also determine states' decisions in international politics.

Situation like this is known in IR as *the security dilemma* and is of paramount importance for the theoretical commitments of realists. Narrowly understood, it comes down to that while seeking to enhance its security by unilateral actions, a state imperils the security of others, whose actions in response guided by their interests put at risk the security of the first state.

One of the first to refer to security dilemma was John Herz, a Harvard University professor, initially in his article for the *World Politics* journal in 1950 (Herz, 1950) and then in the well-known book *Political Realism and Political Idealism* of 1951 (Herz, 1951). The emergence of the dilemma is explained not by the natural predisposition of people to either peaceful or belligerent behavior but by certain social effects. Once in a social environment, especially anarchic, states, their leaders and social groups, focused on security, seek to accumulate more power to protect themselves from hostile assaults of others. They thereby aggravate the situation for the others, even if they did not harbor any aggressive intentions. The others, in turn, take the same steps, ultimately making the situation worse for everyone. Two fundamental factors underlie the security dilemma. The first is the absence of reliable ways to signal one's intentions and lack of trust in the relations of states in general. Words cannot be relied upon, treaties can be breached and intentions are hardly predictable. The only sound option on the table is to expect the worst and take preventive steps. Back in their day, such was the decision of Spartan kings who opted for a war against Athens, a hard choice so persuasively described by Thucydides. The ever-growing power of Athens might not have been aimed against them, but how to know it for sure? Unable to come up with a better answer, Spartans opted for the war, when the advantage, as they saw it, was still theirs. Under similar strategic circumstances, same decisions were made by numerous leaders in history.

The second factor behind the security dilemma deals with power as an object of conflicts. The possession of power is never enough. This resource constantly changes its volume; therefore, even the most powerful state is bound to feel the strategic logic of this dilemma.

States would like to avoid the security dilemma but are often unable to do so. The combination of anarchy in the international system, mutual fear and suspicion as well as aspiration for security give rise to a peculiar spiral of recurring rivalry and violence, bringing about devastating wars, even when no state wants them.

But what would that have to do with wine and money?

From a game theory perspective, the dilemma of customers and sellers is as follows:

	<i>c</i>	<i>f</i>
C	5;5	-5;10
F	10;-5	0;0

where

C – the customer's strategy, under which he pays in real money

F – the customer's strategy, under which he pays in counterfeit money

c – the seller’s strategy, under which he sells real wine
 f – the seller’s strategy, under which he sells fake wine.

The first value in each cell corresponds to the customer’s outcome, while the second is that of the seller. It is clear that the best outcome for both players is giving real money for real wine. However, there is always the risk of getting a fake in response to one’s best and sincere intentions, which also means paying for the maximization of the other player’s benefit. Strategies F and f in this game are optimal because they guarantee the minimum benefit of 0, regardless of the opponent’s actions, while also giving a chance to increase it to 10 if the opponent opts for a wrong strategy. An attempt to choose strategy C and c is associated with the risk of getting –5, and it therefore irrational. The optimal behavior is to pay in counterfeit money and sell fake wine. Nonetheless, it does not bring about the best possible outcome, located on the intersection of strategies C and c, i.e., the cooperative strategies. This is where the dilemma lies.

In international relations (the same matrix can model, for instance, an arms race), it implies that the states which find themselves in the security dilemma are better off not cooperating but seeking to maximize their benefits at the expense of another player. This entails the realists’ discouraging conclusion that long-term cooperation among states is unlikely, each of them feeling the temptation to deviate towards its own interests. Robert Jervis, another renowned researcher of the security dilemma, uses in his article *Cooperation under the Security Dilemma* an analogue of a stag hunt proposed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Jervis, 1978). It says that while hunting a stag, which can be trapped only jointly, one of the hunters, tempted to catch a rabbit, abandons the others, thus leaving them without dinner. He does not because of being a betrayer, or at least not only because of that. The problem is that any of the hunters can’t be sure about intentions of others. Keeping chasing a stag may turn to be a very wrong and costly decision – and that’s the logic that would dominate decision-making of every hunter.

The game matrix clearly indicates that both players could have improved their result by finding a way to use strategies C and c without any particular risk of being deceived. Is it achievable?

At this point, influential paradigms of international relations go apart. Realists, both ‘defensive’ and ‘offensive’, stick to their positions pointing out the egoistic character of states’ interests and the impossibility of overcoming the anarchy of the international system. Neoliberals and constructivists think otherwise. From their perspective, the security dilemma is merely the result of a certain perception, which is easily altered. They see the key to mutually beneficial cooperation in the repetition of the game. If to go to the market every day, the cooperation between the customer and the seller will, sooner or later, prompt both to use strategies C and c, eventually paving the way for organizing their relations based on other principles. Such strategic

considerations are frequently referred to as *the Hobbesian trap*, implying that they are inevitably caused by adopting the perspective of the prominent English philosopher.

A repeated security dilemma may promote cooperative strategies, but can also be tricky if both players know how many times the cooperation will take place. In that case, there will be an incentive for each of the players to betray in the last round – since there will be no more rounds to capitalize on cooperative strategies. But if the other player expects that, she/he will be better off by betraying the round before, as there will be nothing to lose. This sequence of thinking will quickly lead to a conclusion that it is actually better to deceit from the very beginning, if both players know the number of rounds in a finite repeated security dilemma.

The security dilemma boasts an extremely robust explanatory effect, as it allows explaining any violent conflict in international politics, either past or present. Its significance for the theory of realism stems from a felicitous combination of the theory's basic views and tenets, particularly those about security as the highest value and states' aspiration for peace, which ironically leads to a war.

International relations in the realist paradigm

Taken to its extreme, a realist vision of international politics is rather clear-cut and cruel. It underscores egoistic interactions, relying solely on power calculus and neglecting morals or law. Power can only be curbed by another power, and the balance of power among states becomes the main factor guiding decision-making and political processes overall. Egoistic states establish and break coalitions, pursuing their primary hard power interests. They seek to avoid wars but are not always able to do so, as at times, war is the only way to strengthen one's own security or ensure survival.

Realism as a political theory has taken shape under a banner of criticism of idealist views on international relations, primarily those proceeding from the assumption that human mind and will are able to put an end to wars, limit violence and establish a just world order. Idealists particularly emphasized historical and international legal issues; history provided the painful record for studying and preventing its recurrence, while international law was supposed to become a mechanism for overcoming the anarchy of international politics, thus imposing institutional limits on foreign policy and averting war.

History has altogether become a gold mine of negative expectations and hostile perceptions. Realists interpret historical experience primarily in the sense that trusting others is possible only in exceptional cases. The only solid foundation for developing cooperation is common interest. But even common interest raises doubts when it comes to states' pursuit of relative instead of absolute advantages. Put differently, even assured benefit is not always a sufficient basis for cooperation.

Realism has criticized the core assumptions of idealists and offered its own axioms for perceiving and analyzing international politics. They can be presented as follows:

- states and persons making decisions on their behalf are the most important actors in international relations;
- domestic and internal policy are separated; and
- international relations are a struggle for power and peace.

Focusing on states allows realists to deal not with thousands of non-state actors but with couple of hundred states; the international system, as they see it, is relatively simple. What is more, realists are disproportionately pre-occupied with great powers, fairly believing that it is in their relations that the destiny of international politics is decided. Hobbesian traditions thus remain intact.

Separating internal from foreign policy is another distinctive feature of realism. Interaction of states is determined by the balance of power, heedless of the political regime, prevailing ideology or type of economic system, much the same as the trajectory of billiard balls is determined by geometry and impetus, not by color if the balls. In the mid-20th century, this realistic assessment was far from obvious, with both idealism and Marxism stressing a strong connection between domestic and foreign policy. Nowadays this interconnection is embodied in a phrase ‘foreign policy is a continuation of domestic politics’, and is ardently advocated, among others, by students, practicing politicians and neo-Marxists.

Security and survival as its specific case are perceived by realists as the primary goal of states. International system operates under condition of anarchy; thus, there is no chance of ensuring security for all. In world politics there are no supranational institutions; at the same time, both international law and international organizations play a very limited role. With this in mind, states focus on the resource which can help them achieve more security, i.e., power. Power is mostly perceived as the possession of resources. Their relative value can change over time, but among the variety of them economic, political and military play a crucial role. For realists, foreign policy is always marked by the presence of the hierarchy of interests, in which issues of the so-called hard power (strategic, economic and military) are of utmost importance. The redistribution of power in one’s own favor through preventive wars or coalitions becomes the key to a foreign policy.

Imagine an invitation to cooperate with someone, which would bring a common income of \$100. Will you accept the invitation, given you get \$40? Many would agree: there is a lot of cooperation in the world, but much less equality. Realists would warn states against such a decision. What matters for them is not that you get \$40, but what your partner gets \$60, thus gaining a \$20 advantage.

Consequently, states seek *relative advantages* in their relations with each other. For them it is important to be stronger than their potential rivals; absolute gains are secondary. Guided by seeking relative advantages and not trusting one another, states usually do not engage into long-term partnerships. Integration is assessed by realists through the lenses of coalition theory, as they cannot fully account for states' voluntary renunciation of sovereignty, supposed to be a sacred priority. In general, relations among states are dominated by distrust, suspicion and anticipation of the worst. States can never be sure of their neighbors' intentions and therefore have to build their policies based on worst-case scenarios.

Crafting their policies in such a way, states often find themselves under a security dilemma, where steps aimed at enhancing their security can undermine it. This occurs due to inability to check the true intentions of the other. Taking care of its own security, a state builds up its power potential but by doing so becomes a threat for others. Striving for balance, others also engage in enhancing their capabilities, over time triggering arms races. In such races someone always pulls up the rear, and to opt for a war today often is a more reasonable choice than to face it tomorrow, with poorer chances to win. Security dilemma explains war as a state's choice of the lesser evil, rather than an attempt to secure specific benefits. Realism is fully aware that most of wars come at too high a price, even for winners.

In designing their policies, states proceed from worst-case scenarios, attributing hostile intentions to others. Realists generally advise paying attention not to intentions but to power capabilities of other states on the premise that their intentions are always the worst. Eventually it leads to self-fulfilling prophecies: if to treat others as if they were enemies, they will become enemies sooner or later.

The issues of states' power, alliances and international conflicts delineate the conceptual core of realism and give rise to the general principles guiding further research. Scholars who adopted Morgenthau's paradigm concentrated their efforts, above all, on the issues emphasized by it and relied on the methods it provided. From the vantage point of realists, all the goals pursued by states in foreign policy can be reduced to seeking power superiority. Realists' attention to the concept of power derives not only from the abstractness or vagueness of the notion but also from the structure of the paradigm.

Realism mostly focuses on the problems of wars and other conflicts as the primary forms of interaction among states. Realists extend the experience of large-scale 20th-century conflicts to the entire history, often hardly noticing such things as diplomacy, international integration, institutional cooperation or manifestations of neo-colonialism. Tragic lessons of the past are becoming too generalized.

Theory of realism is a powerful analytical instrument, as it enables a reasonable explanation of most events in international politics, particularly those related to clashes and conflicts of various kinds. Such credibility of

realist explanations has resulted in its rapidly increasing widespread popularity. Realism has served as the basis of university curricula, analytical studies and, most importantly, foreign policy decision-making. Even today's heads of state primarily have taken a realist perspective while attending, if at all, their university courses on international relations. It is therefore natural that their outlook is predominantly realist and, most importantly, that their decisions keep a close watch on all those niceties of power thinking, relative advantages and, at times, zero-sum games. Realism, perchance, is somewhat outdated as an academic paradigm but is still at the forefront as a guideline in political decision-making, particularly in the face of a challenging international environment.

Recommended reading

- 1 Thucydides (2009). *The Peloponnesian War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2 Hobbes, T. (2017). *Leviathan*. London: Penguin Classics.
- 3 Morgenthau, H. (1968). *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for War and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- 4 Carr, E. (2016). *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919–1939*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
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Questions

- Are states powerful or great?
- Why do egoists cooperate?
- Why do wars happen?
- What are relative and absolute advantages?
- Why does the security dilemma occur?

Keywords

- Utopianism
- Paradigm
- State sovereignty
- Neorealism
- Anarchy
- Relative advantages
- Security dilemma
- Hobbesian trap
- Agent-structure dilemma

3 Is it all about power?

Realism has put power into the heart of its analysis. But the importance of this concept goes beyond any separate paradigm. Centrality of power is conditioned by the very political nature of international relations.

In the words of Bertrand Russel, power is the fundamental concept in social sciences, in the same sense in which energy is the fundamental concept in physics (Russel, 2004). Presence of power is pervasive. It is in wars and conflicts, in partnerships and coalitions, in negotiations and even in sports events – virtually in all variety of aspects of international life. Power is an essence of any politics, including international.

But power is also elusive. Although intellectual efforts to conceptualize power have extensive record and long history, numerous questions are still without answers, while referring to power triggers intense debates and polemics. Power is fundamental for explaining virtually everything, but what is it exactly? How can it be seen? Or measured? Scholars of today face same dilemmas as ancient philosophers. There's so much conventional about understanding power that sometimes it is becoming too controversial.

A combination of a huge importance of power as a concept and debates about how it should be best understood could have been normal if confined to science. But miscalculations in defining balance of power, confusion over popular phrases like 'hegemony', 'great power' and alike, pursuing dominance or equilibrium of power may all have political impact.

As Joseph Nye once noted, power in international politics is like the weather, in a sense that everybody keeps talking about it but very few understand what it is (Nye, 1990b). Unlike talks about weather, thinking about power in international politics requires conceptual clarity.

Where is power?

Understanding power in international politics remains to a large extent a matter of intuition. Lengthy philosophical treatises, historical novels and political discussions too often operate the notion of power tautologically, assuming, for instance, that whoever won a war or prevailed in a conflict was more powerful. Systemic empirical research of how power manifests

itself in international relations is comparatively new exercise. It is still filled with controversies of different kind, marked by competition among approaches and faces several fundamental questions. Along with fundamental questions, there are lots of those on a surface – but they matter.

What's the third most powerful state in the world? That question will be a tough one for students in a world where two states are obviously stronger than the rest. India? Germany? Japan or, maybe, Russia? Some states possess bigger economies, while others enjoy more powerful military or are better fit into the system of alliances. Comparing states in terms of power is often like guessing whether a whale would overcome an elephant.

International system is dynamic, and occasionally it may be just as much difficult to say which is the second most power country, like, for instance in a world between 1991 and 2003. Asking students a question like that was a sure way to secure a lecture-length discussion at minimum.

Likewise, in a multipolar distribution of power it is difficult to name the strongest state. Generally speaking, arranging states in accordance with their power potentials is always challenging, and attempts to do that by different researchers will never bring about same results. People understand power in different ways and while a single measurement is impossible to introduce, mostly rely on their common sense. This is not playing in favor of strict academic conclusions.

Today power is almost impossible to fully associate with control over territory and population, as it was before, in particular in Ancient and Medieval world. It is also hardly possible to measure power with industrial development, trade and control over communications, which have been crucial elements of a state's performance in the era of modernity. One can't even say that global reach, access to information, possession of high technologies, usually associated with power today, are fully enough. In 1513, Niccolò Machiavelli could solve the issue of measuring power without serious theoretical problems by just pointing out armies of the states, money they possessed, general quality of the military strategy and popular support. Five hundred years later, the same task appears much more complicated, not only because of significant technological and organizational changes but also because political relations in general have become much more complex and intertwined. Applying power in such a world is a different exercise; and before doing so it is better to have some educated guesses about some important questions.

For instance, is power an attribute of actors or a structural parameter? Depending on an answer to this question one may skip counting armies and money and shift to interconnections in behavior of states. Other manifestations of power in international politics, whether in wars or alliances, would also be treated differently.

Perceiving power as an attribute is a common sense. No wonder that in realism power has been treated as a goal and a tool simultaneously, something states want most in relations with each other, but can never have enough. From such a standpoint, states may have a rather diversified and extensive

wish list – including territories, economic successes, expansion of ideology or values – but for all that there is power. Whatever a state needs, power is a key resource to get it. Or in a different way: whatever it possesses, defines its power. Within such a framework it would be relatively easy to assess who has more power among states controlling similar sets of resources, e.g., divisions, budgets, population or territory. In vein of Machiavelli's efforts, it will also be possible to easily divide the states into great, middle or small powers. Finally, it will also be possible to examine existing balances of power to see the patterns of the future wars, alliances or arms races. However, power proved to be much more elusive and multifaceted. Seeing it as an attribute is not enough.

Number of divisions a state has can be compared to a number of divisions another states has. But what if another state has more money instead of troops? A better geography or stronger allies? It is important, as argued by critics of understanding power as an attribute, to know the result of interaction, not the numbers of divisions. Possessing certain resources, like population, territory, commodities, economy or military, is not equivalent to power preponderance, since power is not so much an attribute, but a factor of change in behavior. Having the best hand at the poker table does not secure a win in the end. Seen from such perspective, power can be assessed only by referring to changes in states' actions, either under coercion or due to a promised reward. In this case, however, it will be challenging to know for sure that a change in behavior was resulting from coercion or rewards by others, but not from any other possible factors. And what about perceiving power as an ability to win wars or resolve conflicts in one's favor? In that case, power will resemble selective application of resources with the view to win the highest bets, which are mostly in the realm of hard security.

Generally speaking, there are several broad ways to understand power and several possible answers to a question 'where is power?' accordingly.

The first one is that power is in possession of resources. That is also referred to as an attributive approach, since resources are attributes of states or other actors. This approach pays primary attention to materiality of power, its physical attributes. It is close to an intuitive understanding of power as a set of certain skills and possessions, and like a human's power is defined by physical condition and skills, a power of state is measured by possession of resources. State's power is in its 'muscles'.

The resources are plentiful. They may include territories, money, technologies, people and many other things which can be seen, counted and measured. A set of resources, important for exercising power in international politics, changes over time. To be powerful a state of today may need different possessions than the same state 100 years ago. But the basis of power is still material. It's like having a gun or not having it. Someone with a gun will be presumably more powerful than someone without it – and a number of theoretical approaches in IR, most notably realism, share this view on power.

The second possible answer is that power is in how available resources are used and, in particular, how effectively the use of resources can impact actions of others. Possessing resources is important, but, once again like in poker, it is more important in the end how the hand has been played. Chips on the table, players' reputation and mutual perception, bluff – all that is as important in the game as the two cards in hand. The way resources are used can be traced by observing changes in behavior of others. Due to a focus on behavior, this approach is often referred to as *behavioral* understanding of power, as opposed to *attributive* one. Not necessarily, those possessing most resources would be the ones most capable to impacting behavior of others. Holding a gun one might expect to change actions of the opponent, especially the one without a gun. But in some cases, a gun does not work the way the holder wants. Anyway, however, one might still expect a strong positive correlation between possessing resources and chances to change the way others behave.

The third answer would be about controlling not so much behavior of others, but results of interactions and probabilities of winning and losing. Within such approach, power may be seen as an ability to win conflicts, overcome obstacles and redistribute results, as was once put forward by Karl Deutsch (1967). In some respects that may seem close to the above-mentioned 'whoever won was more powerful', in particular in what concerns defining exactly why the powerful wins. An even broader definition is that power is an ability to get what one wants, provided by Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr (1985). It is too vague and leaves the question open about whether those adhering to it are unwilling or not powerful enough to specify how to distinguish between one's power and other possible variables.

French philosopher Raymond Aron defined power as an ability of a person or social group to establish such relations with other people and/or groups which best meet her/its interests (Aron, 1966). Probably, such an understanding implies not only establishing profitable or desirable relations but also avoiding those, which are not.

The fourth answer involves structure. While attributive and behavioral approaches dispelled a part of mystic cloud around power and made the concept operational, albeit in different ways; there was something in the air of relations among states that enabled some of them to impact international results without possessing considerable material resources or coercing other states individually.

That 'something' is structural power, defined as an ability to utilize existing structural limitations and opportunities, as well as shape agenda. It implies ability to define modes of normality, create frameworks for interactions among peoples, states and corporate units. Instead of coercion, the use of structural power means rather indirect impact on others' choices. It is exercised through shaping agendas, transformation of value systems or channeling international politics in the most beneficial way. In the end, international rivalry is resolved not so much through an ability to overcome

an enemy in a direct standoff or by possessing more material resources, but by the skills and power to change institutional environment in such a way as it become favorable for allies and hostile for enemies.

To define the concept of ‘power’ in a way that seems to catch the central intuitively understood meaning of the word must inevitable result in a formal definition that is not easy to apply in concrete research problems; and therefore, operational equivalents of the formal definition, designed to meet the needs of a particular research problem, are likely to diverge from one another in important ways.

Robert Dahl

Power is complex. It’s everywhere and nowhere at the same time. It hardly can be measured by a simple calculation of troops – what Joseph Stalin probably missed when supposedly asking about how many divisions the Pope had. It also strongly depends on the environment. The same set of power assets will be of totally different efficiency under various historical and political conditions.

One has to know the basis of power, i.e., its ‘quantity’, reflected in control over various groups of resources. Another important step is to understand the context, in which power is applied, including social structures, norms and institutions, since they make attempts to change behavior of others relevant.

And, for sure, power is added some special flavor by the peculiarities of international politics – anarchy, struggle for peace, constant lack of security and unusual patterns of international society.

Basics of power calculations

To calculate power of a state, one may need to look at geography, commodities, industrial capacity, quality of military, quantity of population, national spirit, quality of diplomacy and government as elements of the power of state – a rich and diversified cocktail. If realists are right in saying that states struggle for power, one might assume that states should know how to measure what they are struggling for. But that could be a tough task.

Most often scholars address the issue of power measurement referring to economic performance and military capabilities. The former is captured by the GDP, industrial output, energy consumption, trade and investment. The latter is about military spending, technical equipment, military force projection capabilities and troops. Sometimes this combination is labeled as *the war potential* (Knorr, 1979). The term was coined by Knorr in the 1950s, when nuclear weapons made war almost obsolete, but retained its probability as well as a possibility to use a threat of war. As a result, military might as such has been replaced by a combination of quite different resources, skills and qualities. By war potential Knorr implied, simply speaking, a state’s ability to mount an army of a certain size and supply it in case of war.

Correlates of War project calculated power of states by taking into account demographic (overall population and level of urbanization), industrial (production of iron and steel and consumption of energy) and military (overall defense expenditures and number of troops) factors. This aggregate measure is currently known as the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC).

All these and similar approaches perceive power as control over resources which is converted into a wide range of influences. There have been numerous attempts to take material understanding of power as a basis for further research. They came up with quite different sets of measuring parameters. Some of them make it formal, in a sense that they suggest some formula. Others are just enlisting supposed elements of state power in international politics. Some are overestimating significance of certain indicators, while others are saying nothing about how a state should allocate its limited resources if it wants to become more powerful.

Almost immediately after first attempts to calculate power of states, it has become apparent that finding a magic formula would be extremely difficult. Attributive understanding of power turned to be tricky, since possessing of resources, even correctly calculated, not necessarily turns into controlling results. Suggested formal models were also vulnerable to criticism due to their choice of variables, which has been seen by many as limited or biased. However, these models are telling and curious, both about difficulties of measuring power and applying quantitative methods in IR in general.

Here are some examples.

Ray Cline, a former executive director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and CIA analyst, offered this formula for calculating power of states (Cline, 1975):

$$P = (C + E + M)(S + W)$$

where

- P* – power,
- C* – critical mass (population and territory),
- E* – economic capability,
- M* – military capability,
- S* – national strategy coefficient,
- W* – will to pursue national strategy.

Like with some other formulas like this, the most difficult part is not so much about enlisting all major components of a state power, but to find a proper proportion. Sometimes it may seem that arithmetical operators are just not enough to express all the difficulties and volatilities in relations between power's key elements.

According to Cline's calculations, the Soviet Union, for instance, was the most powerful state in the world in 1980, about 1.5 times stronger than the

second-placed United States. One can't but think that something is wrong with this assessment (Cline, 1980). By 1980, during late Brezhnev era, the USSR has already been in a deep economic stagnation, with its global influence shrinking after an ill-fated intervention in Afghanistan. Severe political crises were looming ahead, and in just a few years socialist block in Eastern Europe was about to collapse. Olympic Games of 1980 in Moscow may have appeared as a manifestation of power, but they were a swan song of the Soviet Union's global appeal. All those aspects have not been reflected in the final result of Cline's calculation. Be it because of a wrong estimation of one or several elements, or too linear approach to accounting them, the result is not in line with the general intuitive understanding of power.

That once again brings us back to understanding the nature of power and reminds of how controversial it still is. Approaches like the one above were typical for early stages of behavioral revolution when considerable imbalances existed between quantifying everything quantifiable and reflecting realities of international politics. Numbers seeming unusual, bizarre and counter-intuitive are often found in attempts to calculate something as elusive and complex as power.

Another attempt to come up with a formula of state's power was made by Frank German (1960). He selected four key components – territory, population, industrial base and military size – and added nuclear weapons as a decisive coefficient.

$$G = N(L + P + I + M)$$

where:

G – power,
 N – nuclear capability,
 L – territory,
 P – population,
 I – industrial base,
 M – military size.

Variables in this equation are complicated. They take into account numerous factors, aiming at quantifying them and can be split down further. L , for instance, denotes not just the size of territory, but the way it is inhabited, filled with railroads, i.e., used. P is not only about the quantity of population but also share of unemployment. Measuring industrial base requires preliminary bulky calculations of five other parameters and reference to the type of economic system. Quite surprisingly, when thoroughly completed, results of all those calculations strongly correlate with the simple comparison of states' GDPs.

A nuclear capability coefficient is especially interesting in German's formula. It is 1 for a non-nuclear state, and 2 for a nuclear one. While nuclear

weapons seem to provide a holder with some advantage, it may be quite challenging to estimate it in numbers and coefficients. Moreover, there can be political contexts, under which possessing nuclear weapons may actually limit a state's influence or become a threat. Perception of nuclear weapons and the ways they can be used changed over time: from relatively simple understanding of a nuclear bomb as just another bomb, albeit very powerful; to sophisticated models of using nuclear leverage in complicated bargaining processes. In other words, nuclear component of a state's power is hard to measure, and that measurement could change over time.

Correlates of War project was applying the Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) to measure power of nations. Power measurement approach has been designed for the project J. David Singer (1963). State's power is calculated by a formula, which brings together six variables (ratios) – total population, urban population, iron and steel production, primary energy consumption, military expenditure and military personnel – and divides the sum by six. Ratios, in turn, are assessed through comparison of a country's performance to the world level.

Somewhat similar is the Comprehensive National Power (CNP) index, which is another complex assessment of a state's power taking into account its capabilities in the fields of economy, military, science and technologies, education, natural resources, as well as international influence.

Measuring power by possession of resources is, of course, important. Material capabilities may not be the only element to be converted into influence (soft power, normative power and alike may also be added), but it is the core one. It requires not only straightforward measurement: gross indicators tend to systemically exaggerate power of poor countries with large population (Beckley, 2018).

Along with controlling resources, states can also demonstrate power by controlling various outcomes: winning wars, getting an upper hand in disputes, coercing others to certain policies and alike. Apparently, control over resources does not automatically translate into control over resources. Countries with fewer resources may overcome those with much more, and do it quite often.

One of many problems in defining power as control over outcomes is that it has become difficult to observe those outcomes. For a variety of reasons, wars among major powers have been absent for decades, while classical interstate wars involving other states are extremely rare. Couple of 100 years ago one could make reliable judgments about relative power potentials of states by looking at the outcomes of wars. In the 19th century, for instance, there were four wars between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, of which Russia won three and lost one to a broad coalition of states, in which a decisive role has been played by Great Britain. In the early 20th century, an assumption that Russia was more powerful than the Ottoman Empire, based on observed outcomes, could seem reasonable.

But now wars are rare, not to mention wars between great powers. Understanding power as ability to militarily overcome an enemy may be corrected

as to take into account changes in how states interact. Power is now more about ability to coerce, threaten or punish. It certainly involves military capabilities, but in a more indirect way. States overcome each other in terms of generating and applying credible threats. Which, of course, are also rooted in possessing more resources of some kind.

Along with fewer wars in today's world, there's also an issue of their actual ending. Wars no longer look like those described in history textbooks, with solemn declarations in the beginning and peace treaties in the end. Most of the current militarized international disputes end by gradual de-escalation, with no end date specified. On the other hand, few of them which do 'end' with signing a peace treaty or armistice, actually, continue after failed attempts to implement it. Examples of numerous interventions of great powers into regional conflicts of all kinds demonstrate how difficult it may be for them to 'win' in any meaningful sense.

Attempts to calculate power of nations may be more or less complicated as well as take into account different sets of variables. In all cases, measuring power is difficult. In most cases, it is not enough to just compare the numbers of indexes. It also important to note the costs a country has to pay for fulfilling its functions – providing security to its citizens, maintaining infrastructure, arranging social services and alike. Most of the indexes above, for instance, would exaggerate power of countries with large populations – like China and India – since they don't take into account the costs and liabilities. It is difficult methodologically to measure how much power is left with a government for foreign policy after deducting all expenses, which are sure to be different for countries of different size and population.

Shortly speaking, some formulas for calculating power may be misleading. While numbers and words look more reliable in dealing with issues of power than just words, it is still important to remember biases and simplifications coming with each formula. Power is extremely difficult to measure. It is also hard to predict.

Jose Raul Capablanca, world chess champion in 1921–1927 and an outstanding theoretician of chess, once noted that holding advantage in figures, space (chessboard) and time – key elements of chess – is still not enough to win (Capablanca, 2018). He went on to note that chess consists of these elements, and the last, but the most important one, i.e., position. Like power in international politics, it can't be boiled down to a specific list of advantages; although knowing what improves a position – just like knowing what makes a state more powerful – is a key to calculations.

Great powers in international politics

Some states enjoy a special status in international relations, the one of a *great power*. A traditional image of a great power encompasses all familiar features of might: strong military, large and developed economy, successful diplomacy and international influence. Great powers are also about

prestige, recognition, and special historical missions. In other words, they are about much power.

Great powers usually get a bigger share of everything, including attention of IR scholars. Their policies, strategies and behavior in general are in focus. This is partly because great powers have been much more often involved into wars and violent conflicts than the rest of states. Great powers have got agenda-setting capabilities, i.e., they shape priorities and perceptions of others. To a certain extent the way they interact defines the structure of the international system and established international orders. This way is also an important source of empirical knowledge about regularities and patterns of international politics in general. Power plays special role both in those patterns and in the way how great powers are different from the rest.

While it is clear that great powers play a special role in international politics, it is not at all obvious which powers are great. Because of the difficulties in measuring power of states, defining a great power is challenging, and has been even more so in the past. Some states may be widely considered as great by the power of habit or tradition rather than as a result of calculations. Some states are intuitively taken as great powers, while some may have an extensive historical record of greatness, which may be projected into the present or the future. That is especially felt in Europe, a continent filled with great powers and contenders. Rapid shifts in power, unifications and dissolutions, new technologies and alliances created a kaleidoscope of great powers, which sometimes lost their greatness quicker than others might have imagined. Borderline examples of Spain, Portugal or the Netherlands in the 16th–18th centuries indicate that some strictness and clarity in defining great powers is required.

A great power is capable of performing system-engineering, game-playing functions. In a systemic sense, great powers may be referred to as poles of international system. That means that they not only possess some material capabilities but also can transform those capabilities into structural imperatives for others. Polarity of international system reflects not only the number of great powers but also the level of concentration of power resources under their control. Not only states can be poles but also *clusters* of states, i.e., groups of states united by common goals, norms or procedures. Cluster poles may sometimes better reflect constellation of forces in international politics, especially when coalitions are strong and stable. A great power can also be defined in a totally different way, as a member of at least one minimal winning coalition. Such approach, however, would require a different understanding of power itself, as an ability to control the result of interactions.

Great powers can also be defined intuitively or by a common sense, no matter how challenging it may sound. Strict undisputed definitions are very rarely found in IR; thus a state may actually be a great power if there are enough people – politicians, diplomats and scholars – who believe in its greatness.

Based on intuition or common sense, definitions of great powers usually refer to wide geography of interests, global responsibility and recognition by other great powers. The latter criterion can be reflected in historical diplomatic practices of inviting participating states to international peace congresses and conferences. The Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648 after two international congresses, in Osnabruck and Munster, where delegations from different European states were engaged into lengthy negotiations, which in the end shaped the Westphalian world order. States which dominated in most of the disputes during the congresses, for instance France and Sweden, were recognized as great. At the same time, those not present at all had considerably less chances to turn their material power into greatness, like the Ottoman Empire. Being absent from international institutions and congresses can limit influence of a great power; but, generally speaking, it can't be 'excluded' from the international system. Power will always find a way. In some sense, great powers are like invisible stars: we don't see them, but we know they are there because of a changed trajectory of light. In the 17th century France and Sweden were strong in both agenda-setting and military capabilities, while the Ottoman Empire or the Tsardom of Muskovy were yet to convert their militaries into shaping alternatives for others – but all of them were great powers.

In the same way, the Congress of Vienna in 1814–1815, gathered to lay out a new international order after era of Napoleon, nominated Austria, Britain, Russia and Prussia as great powers and later added France to the concert. The status of the Four Great States was defined by their joint opposition to France's geopolitical ambitions and contribution to the Sixth Coalition against Napoleon. France joined the highest league by virtue of its material resources, still quite large even after a defeat. All in all, the Congress of Vienna was a notable event from the point grouping the states into various 'baskets'. Along with the great powers, the Treaty of Paris was signed by Spain, Portugal and Sweden, which may be regarded as second-ranked states of the day. The rest – about 200 delegations of states and princely houses – were observing, negotiating and, of course, dancing. Vienna in 1814–1815 was the place to feel comparative power and greatness of states.

But not only Vienna, of course. The Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–1920, the Potsdam Conference in 1945 can also be examples of how great powers designate themselves to be the architects of the future international order and confirm the status of greatness to each other. At times when wars among strongest states happened often while sophisticated calculations of their material capabilities were out of reach, allied military successes could have been a good way to separate great powers from the rest. 'Greatness' could have meant not only material capabilities but also being on the right side of history.

It is often believed that a great power emerges after a military victory over another great power – a case for measuring power as control over outcomes rather than over resources. However, that may also be tricky, as powerful

nations quite often suffer defeats from smaller ones due to a variety of reasons: asymmetric tactics, lack of engagement, bad luck etc. In some cases a new great power did emerge after defeating the existing one. Russia became a great power after victory over Sweden in the Great Northern War in the 18th century; Prussia did the same after defeating Austria consecutively in the War of the Austrian Succession of 1740–1748 and in the Seven Years' War of 1756–1763; Japan gained the status by overcoming Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. On the other hand, neither the United States, nor Italy had to win wars against great powers to confirm their greatness – if not to take into account American victory over Spain in 1898 or Italy's struggle against Ethiopian tribes.

Whether gained through a decisive military victory or gradual accumulation of strength, a great power status is a general notion encompassing also such variations as *superpower*, *hyperpower* and alike. One of the first scholars to use the term 'superpower' was Nicholas Spykman (2007). He referred to it also in his lectures to mark big states capable of projecting their power globally. By the end of World War II there were three such states: the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. By the way, they also had a conference of their own in Yalta, in 1945, when the war was coming to an end, to discuss some future aspects of the global geopolitical arrangements.

An ability to project power globally has been acquired by some states long before Yalta Conference, during the Age of Discovery at latest. But sometimes the term *superpower* is referred to much more ancient states, for instance the Achaemenid Empire, the Roman Empire or the Han Dynasty. The most common usage, however, is within the context of the Cold War with reference to the United States and the USSR. In a post-Cold War world superpowers are characterized by control over vast territories, large population and effective management of interdependence. Superpowers are believed to be able to design and carry out grand strategies, although criteria for their definition remain vague.

Hyperpowers are also quite tough to deal with – in terms of definition as well. British journalist Peregrine Worsthorne was among the first to use the word in 1991. Afterward, it has been widely applied to mark American supremacy after the Cold War. Standoff of the two superpowers during the Cold War has been replaced by a domination of one, thus the word 'hyperpower' is also time-bound, mostly reflecting geopolitical realities of the 1990s. Both hyperpowers and superpowers are essentially great powers and as such are poles of the international system. They structurally arrange international relations and shape frameworks of international politics. They pursue most assertive foreign policy and are in the center of scholarly attention. Thus it is important to note, that great powers are often seen as embodiment of international politics, while there are very few of them. Vast majority of nations do not act as great powers. However, they can utilize norms and principles of foreign policy, once developed by great powers for dealing with one another. One of the most well known is the balance of power.

Balance of power theory

Should powers, including great ones, balance each other? Is balance of power good for international security? In which ways is a balance in international politics similar to and different from a balance in mechanics? These questions and much more are addressed in IR by the balance of power theory.

As one might expect, the notion of power balance has a variety of meanings. It can be established or maintained, changed or aimed for. It can also be obeyed or not. Balance of power can be a description of an international system, in particular what concerns distribution of material assets among states. It can also be a guiding principle for coalition building or, more generally, for laying out foreign policies of states. It can also be perceived as a certain norm or a principle to establish a lasting peace.

There are at least four different ways of understanding balance of power. First, it can be seen as a way to arrange foreign policy or a tool of it. Supporting a weaker side of the conflict to maintain the balance, like it was once done by Cardinal Richelieu during the Thirty Years' War; or remaining neutral, or, more strategically, pursuing a splendid isolation policy, like Britain did in the 19th century – these are examples of balance of power as an imperative driving a state's foreign policy. The second approach is normative. It defines balance of power as either desirable or non-desirable stance of international politics; as something which states should seek or avoid. The third way to perceive balance of power is to attribute it to a specific historical period. Occasionally in some places constellation of forces among states and the way they interacted resembled a balanced system. From Ancient China and Ancient Greece to the European concert in the 19th century, balance of power has become a characteristic feature of international politics from time to time. Those were times when balance of power was both a norm of international politics and a principle of foreign policies of most powerful states. Pursuing the balance they enabled a practice of flexible coalitions before and during wars, as well as applied compensations and mutual deterrence while setting geopolitical arrangements after them. From a certain perspective, everything was about the balance in, for instance, European international affairs of 18th–19th centuries.

The fourth approach brings us closer to arithmetic, defining balance of power as a situation where power potentials of states or coalitions are in a full or approximate equality, and leaving aside normative and political considerations. Being already aware of how tricky it may be to calculate power of a state from an arithmetical perspective, one can imagine all possible difficulties in dealing with the balance, involving power potentials of two of more states.

Balance of power is an old concept. Ancient Greek philosophers and Chinese thinkers applied it in their treatises while observing never ending struggle of multiple poleis in Greece and Seven Warring States in China.

Practical diplomacy, especially of weaker states, has been relying on intuitively clear principles of preserving the balance among the strong in order to increase chances for survival of the weak for ages. Understood intuitively, principles of balancing were implicitly guiding, for good or bad, foreign policies of states for centuries.

This old concept resurfaced in the 18th century in a slightly different way, this time as a more universal principle. That was a time of great wars and geopolitical shifts in international politics; but also of huge advances and a dominating authority of classical mechanics in science. The latter described material universe as a variety of objects with mechanical forces acting between them. By uncovering the laws which drive those forces it would be possible to completely know the world. Impressed by that paradigm, scholars of the social realm also started to look into similar regularities. Hence a somewhat mechanistic description of balance of power as if it should reveal the secrets of seemingly chaotic interaction of states.

References to balance of power as a foreign policy instrument increased as crises shook up international system in the late 18th century. The Seven Years' War, the American Revolutionary War and the French Revolution all seemed to endanger the balance of power, which was the basis of decision-making for many and in some way should have been restored. The concept also was used in a retrospect, to illustrate resistance to hegemonic aspirations of, say, Louis XIV of France or Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. In the view of Europeans of those days international politics should have looked like coexistence of sovereign states, a power of several – and the balance of power must be the basis of it.

Another moment of glory for the balance of power concept arrived after Napoleon was defeated. Restoring the balance, both in understanding of material equality and as a norm, was the utmost task of the Congress of Vienna. Diplomats and politicians there were trying to design such a mechanism of interaction among European powers that would help sustain dynamic equilibrium – almost like ideal clockwork. Klemens von Metternich, the architect of the Austrian foreign policy and a prominent contributor into post-Napoleonic European order, is said to have been reading *Treatise of Celestial Mechanics* by Pierre-Simon de Laplace in between the sessions of the Congress.

Recommendations by classical mechanics, however, did not help much in resolving numerous geopolitical problems. Balance of power, as victors over Napoleon understood it, didn't pass a test by national revolutions and spread of ideologies, most notably nationalism and liberalism. Unification of Italy and Germany in the second half of the 19th century demonstrated how vulnerable the balance of power has been as a principle of preserving dominance of several most powerful nations. International politics proved to be too dynamic to be sustained by a mechanistic approach to managing power constellations.

Another wave of attention to the balance of power as a principle was mostly critical. Balance of power politics has been associated with *Realpolitik* and blamed for all possible sins, in particular for not preventing or even provoking World War I. By the end of the war, the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson treated balance of power politics as an obstacle to peace which should be immediately removed. Over time, however, it has become evident that the logic of strategic interaction, generated by power, is impossible to control through institutions like the League of Nations, as well as it is impossible to remove power calculations from states' decision-making in foreign and security policy.

Before and after World War I many believed that balance of power is natural. Jean-Jacques Rousseau once noted that balance existing among various members of a European family of states is created more by nature than art. It sustains itself freely. This is another dimension to a natural stance, quite different from Hobbes's war of all against all.

Realists assumed a struggle of several states for power would lead to such a distribution which could be called balance of power; as well as generate a policy aimed at preserving it. Balance of power was believed to secure peace, while attempts to revise or undermine it were said to end in disasters.

We must remember the only in history of the world that we have had any extended periods of peace is when there has been balance of power. It is when one nation becomes infinitely more powerful in relation to its potential competitor that the danger of war arises.

Richard Nixon

Examples to illustrate such generalizations were easily found in history. However, it has been often forgotten that there is little ways to effectively prove anything with examples. In particular, all major wars in the past may be explained not only by changes in the balance of power, which is unavoidable after all, but by other factors, e.g., inability of states to adapt their policies to these changes or by inconsistencies between balance of power and balance of interests, or by things unrelated to balance of power at all.

At the same time, variability of the balance of power and numerous examples of cases when states were either incorrectly balancing or pursuing alternative strategies of bandwagoning and appeasement, provoked debates about whether balance of power is a prerequisite for peace or at least for absence of a large-scale war. It is now clear that a purposeful policy of power balancing requires accurate calculations of power potentials and building coalitions on the basis of such calculations. These coalitions should be flexible enough to maintain the balance, i.e., free from normative, ideological or value constraints – something quite easily imaginable in the 17th–19th centuries under the guidance of Richelieu or Metternich, but quite difficult to carry out in the 21st century. As we already know, power is extremely difficult to measure. States often have no idea what exactly should be measured.

Coalitions are often inertial and norm-based. Over time that leads to concentration of power, imbalances or even hegemony, something the balance of power imperative aims to prevent.

From a slightly different perspective, balance of power is perceived as an absence of a dominant power, or a hegemon, which enables survival and sovereignty for the others. As such balance of power does not imply peace; it only means that in a war, once it happens, forces and chances will be roughly equal.

Calculation of chances is important for yet another interpretation of balance of power. According to it, the probability of a war is defined by aggressor's chances to win. These chances are shaped by aggressor's power advantage over adversaries. The bigger that advantage is, the higher the chances for success are. By canceling out power preponderance, balance of power also implies cutting down the chances for a successful attack, thus enhancing peace. However convincing that logic may sound, states often fail to follow it. Most fierce and violent conflicts occur under equality of chances to win, in particular cases of balance of power, namely, bipolar. When odds are equal, gambling becomes an attractive option for risk-takers and when a prize is big enough. On the contrary, domination of a single power may help avoid wars, since it generates overwhelming chances for its victory, making resistance by smaller powers irrational. Nevertheless, smaller powers do resist quite often, and also win disproportionately high number of wars against big ones. It seems like state leaders don't follow prescriptions of balance of power theory too often.

Today's world may be different from the one of the 18th–19th centuries in that states rarely take balance of power as an imperative. Instead they often try to free-ride, bandwagon or join a winning, not a balancing coalition. European concert, orchestrated by Metternich, stands as a historic illustration to how international politics can be managed by a principle, shared by many.

As a concept, 'balance of power', as well as 'great power', reflects how challenging it is to deal with the notion of power and its manifestations in multifaceted relations among states – but as the same time how important power remains for understanding their mechanics.

Recommended reading

- 1 Baldwin, D. (2016). *Power and International Relations: A Conceptual Approach*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
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- 3 Dahl, R. (1957). The Concept of Power. // *Behavioral Science*, Vol.II, – pp. 201–215.
- 4 Kindleberger, C. (1970). *Power and Money*. New York: Basic Books.
- 5 Knorr, K. (1979). *The War Potential of Nations*. Greenwood, NY: Greenwood Press Reprint.
- 6 Nye, J. (2004). *Soft Power*. New York: Public Affairs.

Questions

- What makes states powerful?
- Can weak states overcome strong ones?
- What is structural power?
- Define 'great power'.
- What is 'balance of power'?

Keywords

- Power
- Attribute
- Context
- Convertible and cumulative
- Pole of international system
- Balance of power

4 Neoliberalism

Theoretical framework of neoliberalism is built around trust in the ability of countries and people to overcome the natural state of war of all against all through interdependence, cooperation and norms meeting everyone's interests. This viewpoint stands in stark contrast with realists' perspective and suggests a more convincing explanation for an ever-increasing range of issues. As the world becomes more interdependent and guided by common rules of the game, neoliberalism is gaining momentum. International interactions in certain regions – for instance, Western Europe or North America – or certain domains, such as economic integration and establishment of supranational institutions, are almost impossible to explain without neoliberal theories.

Neoliberalism emerged in the 1970s when the realist paradigm was struggling to overcome a crisis caused by both transformation of issues considered fundamental and unchanged by realists. These transformations included rapid globalization and, more importantly, intensification of integration in Western Europe. Realism, which considered sovereignty as the highest priority of states, failed to adequately explain the choice of some countries to sacrifice part of their sovereignty for maximizing other gains. The approach adopted by European countries, which were creating and expanding the single market and institutions of political interaction, implied violation of hierarchy of national interests worshiped by realists. That hierarchy always prioritized political interests, which included the vigorous protection of sovereignty. In turn, neoliberalism suggested a brand new perspective on international relations, power and weakness, national interests and other basic concepts by focusing on interdependence, absolute advantages and consequences of their combination for the domain of international politics.

Philosophy of neoliberalism

The philosophical tradition behind modern neoliberalism was shaped in times of dramatic historical change, which are associated, ironically, with the rise of realist approaches towards international politics. The 17th century,

when Hugo Grotius launched what can now be called a neoliberal project, saw famous philosophers and practitioners of realism, such as Thomas Hobbes and Cardinal Richelieu. The fact that the same historical events – for instance, the Reformation in Europe or the Thirty Years’ War – were perceived through the lens of opposite philosophical approaches can be interpreted as evidence of intellectual competitiveness in Europe and as a precursor for a future variety of paradigms in IR.

Emergence and rise of a philosophical worldview focused not on violence, egoism and war of all against all but rather on cooperation, common good, rules and regulations is mainly associated with two philosophers – Hugo Grotius and Immanuel Kant. Their humanistic and liberal ideas not only described the world from a brand new perspective but also paved the way for its gradual transformation.

Dutchman Grotius, the author of treatise *On the Law of War and Peace*, published in during the Thirty Years’ War, assumed that there is something more important than power in relations between states and that even war as a sheer manifestation of egoistic power can and should be regulated by law (Grotius, Neff, 2012). Being one of the leading lawyers of his time, Grotius drew such legal instruments from natural law as well as division of so-called *public wars* into just and unjust ones. He considered war a risky and vicious endeavor, instead suggesting relying on negotiation, arbitration and even a single combat or a draw to avoid war. Single combats have sometimes been reported to be decisive in history, while draws have been rare even in sports. Italy won on coin toss against USSR in 1968 European Football Championship semi-finals, but that wasn’t something many football fans enjoyed. However, with wars that might have been totally different. States engaged in a war – and especially into repeated wars – with one another may find it much more attractive to define a winner by some random event, especially if distribution of chances is roughly the same as their relative military strengths. That would help avoid unnecessary costs while keeping the result of numerous interactions equally distributed.

Interestingly, realist philosophers also emphasize both the undesirability of war and importance of international agreements; however, they never contemplate the fairness of wars. In their eyes, war stems from human nature and never-ending non-compatibility of states’ interests. Grotius supported Hobbes’s argument that states are the main actors in international relations. However, in contrast to Hobbes, he believed that states are limited (or should be limited) by common rules. Thereby he concentrated his efforts on elaboration of such rules.

Men rush to arms for slight causes, or no cause at all, and (...) when arms have once been taken up there is no longer any respect for law, divine or human.

Hugo Grotius

Grotius also shared Hobbes's opinion about the importance of state sovereignty. He went further to consider sovereignty an integral part of law regardless of the purpose or circumstances under which a state becomes sovereign. For Grotius, law was the goal and the instrument of a sovereign state as well as the foundation of stable international order, i.e., almost everything.

Grotius was aware of the political realities of the world he lived in. He did not cherish illusions about elaborating an idealistic set of international legal norms and imposing them on all states. He knew that law in relations among states was grounded on agreements, which specified common interests and relied on power calculations. Grotius was looking for solid rules of the game rather than perfect wording. In his worldview, law, sovereignty and order were complemented with power, thus forming the quartet of his key concepts.

One more concept, *just war*, put forth by ancient Roman thinker Cicero, plays an important role in Grotius's theoretical framework. In the view of the latter, a war is just if it intends to protect rights and is conducted in a lawful manner. Just reasons for a war may include self-defense, restoration of property rights, or fair punishment. The very notion of justice in international political context is telling.

The modern edition of just war theory is largely based on Grotius's theories (Table 4.1).

The ideas of Grotius, who accepted instrumental role of war but attempted to introduce the rules for its conduct and thus reduce the anarchy in the international system, were a huge step toward understanding of that system as a specific *community*. Theories of the Dutch philosopher have also influenced the shaping of the Westphalian world order.

Theories of another philosopher, Immanuel Kant from Prussia, show a different, ethical and moral side of neoliberal philosophy. His most famous treatise about the problems of war and peace is *Perpetual Peace* (Kant, 2011). The title speaks for itself: Kant did not consider the world without war as utopia. In fact, Kant was an idealist in a broader philosophical sense, as he believed in the primacy of ideas. His political philosophy was a continuation

Table 4.1 Just war theory (modern version)

<i>Jus ad Bellum</i>	<i>Jus in Bello</i>	<i>Jus post Bellum</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justifiable reasons • Legitimate authority • Right intention • High probability of success • Proportionality • Last resort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War only against combatants • Proportionality of the use of force • Respect for prisoners of war • Non-use of prohibited weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionality and publicity • Restoration of rights • Distinguishing between soldiers, civilians and leaders • Punishment • Compensation

of this logic. Kant considered war and peace as embodiment of certain ideas rather than result of balance of material resources. In other words, the main purpose of his political philosophy was to invent a perfect idea of peace and make it real.

Kant went on from a point where Hobbes, his philosophical vis-à-vis, put a full stop. While generally agreeing with Hobbes's views about the natural state of war, Kant continued in a surprising way: peace, no matter how unnatural, should be established and imposed. How could that be done?

Kant assumed, quite similar to later Niebuhr's viewpoint, that generally humans prefer living in peace to fighting wars. Numerous observed cases of violence and conflicts between states can be explained by fundamental fallacies in ways relations among peace loving people are arranged. These fallacies are manifested in relations both within and between states. Within states there is something which forces peaceful people to occasionally engage in violent conflicts. That 'something', according to Kant, is absolute monarchy. In relations between states, however, it is underdevelopment of the international system which lacks norms and regulations to restrain states, which enables violence.

According to Kant, the chaos causing wars in the international system can be addressed through the spread of the republican order and federal political ties between states. The former should limit the absolute power of monarchs which draws states into conflicts against the will or people. If people could choose between war and peace, they would definitely prefer the latter. Thus, the republican order is a domestic precondition for peace. By pointing it out Kant acknowledges a strong link between domestic and foreign policy. Notably, recognition of that link is a remarkable feature of not only neoliberalism and idealism but also Marxism. Although many students and scholars are accustomed to the axiom that foreign policy serves as an extension to domestic policy, this idea can be considered an axiom only within a specific theoretical framework. In contrast, classical realism denies that connection, which demonstrates a profound difference in the perception of states' behavior within various paradigms.

Universal federalism, according to Kant, is another pathway to peace. The absoluteness of state sovereignty is a source of war, and its restriction by means of supranational institutions can mitigate that threat.

The republican constitution (...) gives a favorable prospect for the desired consequence, i.e., perpetual peace. The reason is this: if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war. (...) But, on the other hand, in a constitution which is not republican, (...) a declaration of war is the easiest thing in the world to decide upon, because war does not require of the ruler (...) the least sacrifice of the

pleasures of his table... Peoples, as states, (...) may be judged to injure one another merely by their coexistence in the state of nature. Each of them may and should for the sake of its own security demand that the others enter with it into a constitution similar to the civil constitution... This would be a league of nations, but it would not have to be a state consisting of nations.

Immanuel Kant

Kant aimed at establishing peace not as a temporary break between wars but as a new way of coexistence of states. His treatise follows the structure of a peace agreement with its preamble, six preliminary and three main articles, a secret article and appendix. Besides the main ideas on republicanism and the 'league of nations', Kant pointed out that international relations should be governed by the rules of law and morality. He also touched upon issue of disarmament and elements of democracy, thus shaping a traditional liberal agenda for centuries to come.

Both the republican order across Europe and federalism in relatively broad terms were considered utopian in Kant's times. In the then Europe political unity could only be achieved through military conquest – something Kant was attempting to prevent. However, ideas can be powerful enough to change the reality, at least in the domain of international politics. As an idealist, Kant knew it. Rules, which may seem too abstract and vague, can gradually promote major transformations. As circumstances changed, both the republican system in Europe and the ideas of federalism were becoming more realistic. After all, Kant's idea of promoting international cooperation at a new level, embodied in the League of Nations rather than the federation, formed the basis for the world order after World War I. The fact that this order did not last long and brought about the tragedies of World War II was not the fault of the famous philosopher from Königsberg.

Later on, Kant's idea of republican peace was also further developed and today is widely known as the democratic peace theory. According to it, democratic states (almost) never wage wars with each other. It implies that an increase in the share of democratic states will result in stronger peace. Such a conclusion corresponds to Kant's reasoning, though, due to historical circumstances, the word 'republic' seemed more appropriate to him than 'democracy'.

The belief in that restriction of absolute power within states will make the relations among them more peaceful is central to Kant's perspective on the nature of international politics. Modern neoliberalism, which grew out of this worldview, provides a range of specific instruments to attain that objective. An ambition to prevent wars and shorten the chain of conflicts has prompted philosophers to seek answers in international law as well as ideas of interdependence, social restrictions in and on conflicts and correlation between goals and means of foreign policy.

Norman Angell and Woodrow Wilson: theory of idealism

World War I became a serious test for general understanding of conflicts, violence and the nature of international politics overall. Breaking the record for the number of deaths and economic losses, this extraordinary conflict created a strong demand for reliable ways to prevent its recurrence. It is especially worth mentioning that no one actually wanted a large-scale continental war, for a variety of reasons. Almost every politician in the beginning of the 20th century knew that a war among big industrialized states under total mobilization would be way too costly even for winners, while losers might have collapsed. Nevertheless, the war broke out. That appeared unexpected to many and required some additional explanations.

When IR appeared as a science in an attempt to provide those explanations, *idealism* was the dominant paradigm and played a leading role in the debate on war and peace. Pioneers of IR were guided by romanticism and faith in a better future, particularly in people's ability to resist perennial and inexplicable mechanisms of war. First professional experts in international studies were mostly lawyers and historians.

Back then, two beliefs were widespread: the assumption that detailed historical knowledge of wars would reveal the causes of violence, including non-intended; and the idea that the rules of international law could deter states from waging wars. Influenced by these beliefs, historians and lawyers developed the basic principles of the idealist paradigm. British journalist and politician Ralph Norman Angell and the 28th U.S. President Thomas Woodrow Wilson, a historian himself, have become key figures establishing new way of thinking about international politics. Notably, both were Nobel Peace Prize winners. No other paradigm in international relations theory can boast of similar achievements of its leading theorists.

Concurring with Kant's ideas, idealists believed in the possibility of imposing peace on states. They considered states as rational actors which would refrain from wars if unfavorable conditions to wage them were created. Elaboration of international legal rules was one of the ways to achieve that. Another way was through creation of international organizations. Finally, the third way was through exploitation of international trade and the structures of interdependence created by it. Most suggestions made by idealists were not profound enough, particularly compared to modern alternatives, like theories of international organizations, regimes, interdependence, or democratic peace. Moreover, such convictions did not fully catch up with the spirit of time. Idealists were mostly active during the interwar period, when foreign policies of states were determined by factors like mistrust, security dilemma and pursuit of comparative advantage, later on described in details by realists. As a result, idealism is often perceived as an exotic and hopeless intellectual endeavor, which is detached from reality and shares a big part of responsibility for the inability of international institutions to prevent World War II. Such estimates are, of course, hardly fair.

In 1909, Norman Angell, a major contributor to idealism, wrote a book originally titled *Europe's Optical Illusion* but better known under its later title *The Great Illusion*. Ironically, a few years before the then largest war in history, World War I, Angell claimed that a major war in Europe was extremely unlikely (Angell, 2017). The manner in which he supported his arguments significantly influenced the establishment of both idealism and neoliberalism. Ideas about the nature of modernization and the role of interdependence and trade in maintaining peace brought about far-reaching intellectual implications. On top of all, Angell was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1933, in particular for the authorship of *The Great Illusion*. Sticking to the best traditions of academic research, Angell recognized his theory as erroneous after the end of World War I and even specified the hypotheses which turned out to be false.

...the commerce and industry of a people no longer depend upon the expansion of its political frontiers; a nation's political and economic frontiers do not now necessarily coincide; military power is socially and economically futile, and can have no relation to the prosperity of the people exercising it; it is impossible for one nation to seize by force the wealth or trade of another... war, even when victorious, can no longer achieve those aims for which people strive...

Norman Angell

The concept of interdependence plays a key role in Angell's theoretical framework. Interdependence in international relations can be understood in a number of ways; Angell applies a concept related to classical economic theories. He compares interdependence with a leaky boat in which two men sail, one of whom is rowing and the other is bailing water out. None of them will survive without cooperation with the other, as only joint efforts can help them get out of the problem. According to early idealists, interdependence implies being in the same boat.

It does not emerge out of nothing. Interdependence stems from differences between the geographical borders of states and the global distribution of production. At some point, the most effective way to arrange the life of states would be through a constant exchange of goods, capital, profits, raw materials and markets with other states. Such a point arrived at the beginning of the modern era. Like other modernists, Angell considered the modern era a unique period with interdependence being the most effective way to organize relations between states. To some extent and in some way, modernization equals interdependence.

States of the modern era will be forced to live by the new laws of interdependence, mainly facilitated by international trade. Active development of commerce, outpacing the rate of GDP growth in leading countries, is the key to strengthening interdependence. Thus, all the parties benefit from trade, and all of them suffer from its disruption. It is more rewarding to

engage in trade than to wage a war; hence, the more actively states trade with each other, the less likely a war between them.

According to Angell, illusion, which is the keyword in both versions of the book title, refers to belief of modern states to in an opportunity to gain essential benefits by launching a war. However, it was Angell's belief in the ability of increased interdependence between states to end wars that turned out to be an illusion.

In 1914, security concerns, mutual suspicion and disruption of the balance of power suppressed the principles of interdependence. World War I broke out despite the unprecedentedly high level of interdependence between the world's superpowers. The parties to the conflict mainly focused on possible costs incurred to others instead of thinking about the price they had to pay for participation in the war themselves.

While Angell's idealism overestimated the possibility to prevent a large-scale war by increasing interdependence between states, the idealism promoted by another Nobel laureate, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, suggested erroneous methods of building a sustainable and safe postwar world order. Wilson's approach to international politics relied on his experiences as a historian and as a person whose upbringing had been strongly influenced by the religious worldview. Wilson believed in good intentions as well as the power of ideas and written law. He sought to change not just the balance of power between states but also the rules they followed. Wilson's enthusiasm for arranging the postwar settlement, including the League of Nations project, is indicative of a serious ideological conviction, as strong as the one propagated by Marxists, his tireless counterparts. The two paradigms have much in common, although Wilson is generally accused of promoting American interests on a global scale under the pretext of struggle for a better world. After all, adherents of Marxism can also be blamed for similar trespasses.

Wilson's ideas are mainly set out in two of his speeches. The first one was delivered in the U.S. Senate on January 22, 1917. It is often referred to as 'Peace without Victory', and its main message is conveyed in the following words: 'There must be not a balance of power but a community power; not organized rivalries but an organized, common peace' (Wilson, 1917).

There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries but an organized, common peace.

Woodrow Wilson

Wilson assumed that the balance of power, traditionally guiding principle of European diplomacy, could never create a solid basis for lasting peace. Thus, wars should not bring about strengthening of some states and the weakening of others, which was the primary result of major European wars. By words 'peace without victory', Wilson implies peace without humiliation of the loser and satisfaction of winner's interests at the expense of the

vanquished. Instead, these are the rules of the game which must be changed to protect equality of states and nations. Thus, on the spur of the moment, the American president expressed the main ideas of what was to become ideology of idealism: the Monroe Doctrine for all (the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other states); avoidance of long-term alliances; and governance on behalf of the people (i.e., the republican system vaunted by Kant).

Wilson's second essential speech, delivered in Congress on January 8, 1918, contains the famous Fourteen Points of postwar settlement – a novel edition of the new world order proposed by the American president (Wilson, 1918). The first two paragraphs of the speech are a pure manifestation of optimism. They refer to the advent of a new world, which is free from conquest, secret diplomacy and violation of rights. Apparently, these two paragraphs explain why the theory of political idealism is considered utopian by many.

The Fourteen Points themselves, which are the next part of the speech, present a set of specific institutions of the new world order and general principles of international politics. These basic guidelines are an extended version of the tenets of idealism. Among them, the fourth and the fourteenth principles are most important. The fourth one calls for reduction of armaments to the strictly essential minimum. This thesis resonates with the idealists' understanding of security and ways to ensure it as well with beliefs that reduction of power potentials is a prerequisite for peace and that power balancing is a closed chapter. Clearly, idealists did not have enough evidence to support these views. However, Wilson was not much concerned with the lack of evidence. He was an influential politician heading the most powerful state and believed in his ability to change the fundamentals of world politics. Due to this, idealism has remained a *normative* theory that does not so much explain the reality but rather describes how it should look like.

The fourteenth point asserts that an association of states is necessary to provide additional guarantees of security and territorial integrity for all, and that it should be guided by special agreements – remember Wilson's faith in the power of written law. This approach paved the way for the League of Nations and all the misfortunes it faced in the world full of mistrust. Enforcing this Kantian postulate has become idealists' most controversial project.

Ideas of Angell and Wilson shaped a holistic perspective of international politics, a perspective encouraged by optimism and faith in the power of law, institutions and organizations. Though such an approach did not fully correspond to realities of international politics, it inspired the development of new theories. Sixty years after the pivotal speeches delivered by Wilson, the neoliberal approach emerged on the basis of idealists' views and became one of the leading paradigms in IR. The idea about the decisive role of interdependence in global politics is the main driver of neoliberalism.

Complex interdependence theory

The idea that trade promotes peace in some way has been explicitly laid out long ago. Already in the 18th century thinkers like Charles-Louis Montesquieu or Thomas Paine in vein of the general optimism of Enlightenment were putting commerce, communication and agreements together into a cocktail for peace. Montesquieu's logic was simple: two nations in contact with each other either trade or fight. If they trade, both win; if they fight both lose – as simple as that. And that can be easily framed in the matrix of a *Prisoner's Dilemma*. Over time it became clear that the choice may not be so simple. But the overall logic was still strong.

Dependence, more or less mutual, has always been present in international relations. States trade with each other, wage wars and form coalitions, while their well-being depends on the actions of others. International politics resemble a game of strategy, the result of which is defined by the players' joint efforts. From such a perspective, mutual influences are inevitable.

There is also a more instrumental and precise definition of interdependence. American scholars Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye provided a deeper meaning for the concept of interdependence and put it into the center of the entire paradigm of neoliberalism. Their classic book *Power and Interdependence* sets out the main principles of the *theory of complex interdependence* (Keohane, Nye, 2012).

Keohane and Nye define interdependence as a situation in which states or actors in those states mutually influence one another. Their approach focuses on broad networks of interaction of numerous agents resulting from interdependence, quite opposite to the realists' understanding of international politics as interaction of just several dozens of states. Notions of *sensitivity* and *vulnerability* play a key role in the theory. The former mainly indicates the costs the parties will have to pay for damaging interdependent relations. The latter reflects the costs of coming up with an alternative. Sensitivity implies that a change in the positions, decisions, or strategies by one actor in a particular area will be affecting the interests of another. According to Keohane and Nye, the sensitivity indicates how quickly a change in one country may lead to a change in another and what costs both states will bear due to that change. It can also bring about political consequences, especially if a stronger actor can be bound by rules and regulations. Vulnerability is linked to a possible reaction to sensitivity, namely, the pace and costs of finding an alternative to damaged relations and the ability of the actor to cope with such a violation. Apparently, a less vulnerable actor will not necessarily be less sensitive, and vice versa. In combination, high levels of sensitivity and vulnerability ensure a lasting connection, damage to which is against the interest of any participant; thus, there is a dominant interest in preserving peaceful relations. That is how the theory of complex interdependence explains the emergence and development of long-term cooperation, which classical realism has for so long struggled to

understand. Under these conditions, the maintenance of cooperative relations contradicts neither assumed rationality of international actors nor the argument about their egoism. Egoistic states cooperate because they benefit from cooperation.

Typically for neoliberals, the concept of interdependence has a notable economic connotation. Interdependence implies not so much the presence of mutual influences but the alteration of the international environment so that cooperation becomes no less important than conflict. The effect is intensified by globalization and widening range of international actors by including non-state entities. The theory of complex interdependence is important for neoliberalism because it enables clear description of the role of recurring interaction in overcoming the security dilemma, establishing rules of the game, shaping international regimes and creating international organizations.

There are several key assumptions theory of complex interdependence rests on. The first one is about the assessment of the hierarchy of interests and preferences of international actors. In contrast to realists' focus on the elements of so-called *high politics*, i.e., security and military areas, neoliberals pay attention to the flexibility of priorities and their dependence on the current developments. In other words, there are periods when economic, social, environmental and other interests prevail over military or political ones. That also entails blurring of the boundaries between domestic and foreign policy as well as recognizing the mutual influence of these domains.

The second important idea behind the theory of complex interdependence concerns the way international relations are arranged, the so-called *channels* of international politics. The state's monopoly on participation in international relations is denied, while the notion of international politics expands significantly to include not only interstate but also *transnational* relations crossing state borders without state participation. Expanded set of actors is important, since it instills interdependence not only in relations between states but also within them. Numerous channels connect communities, including governments, non-government elites and transnational agents. Such interaction does not require the formal involvement or mediation of states; accordingly, foreign policy goes far beyond the traditional realist tandem of formal diplomacy and war.

The third hypothesis refers to radical reduction in the significance and effectiveness of violence due to increase of its costs. Under complex interdependence, the use of force is linked to disruption of important ties, which results in losses exceeding the benefits brought by coercion. Force partly retains importance in relations between hostile states or coalitions, but even there its use is limited due to enormous destructive capacity.

A combination of these three assumptions creates a brand new vision of international politics. Participants to the system of complex interdependence are gaining from the recurring cooperation as it ensures mutual benefits, prosperity and stability. Breaking of cooperation is associated with

additional costs, while the use of military force becomes too expensive. At the same time, smaller states and non-state actors obtain additional opportunities to pursue their interests by managing the links between different areas of interaction. Power and success in international politics are now measured not by military capacity or coercion, but by the ability to create and control structures of mutual interdependence. The theory of complex interdependence focuses on the evolution of new forms of international politics and transformation of power in accordance to the process. One of such forms is the creation of international institutions and organizations that promote integration of varying complexity and depth. That changes the context for the use of force and promotes economically integrated international systems.

Theory of complex interdependence

- Transformation of international political processes in the 1970s.
- Transnational relations and interdependence are developing, while the role of military force is declining.
- Numerous channels of interstate and transnational relations are established.
- There is a flexible agenda followed by states and other actors instead of hierarchy of interests.
- Hard security is no longer the unconditional priority for states.

Complex interdependence shapes a special environment for foreign policies of states. One of its major characteristic features is manifestation of power as control over the outcomes rather than control over resources. Such interpretation similarly refers to processes within a state as various actors and institutions also compete with each other. While realism considers foreign policy decision-making as a rational activity of unitary state actors, neoliberals interpret that process as a result of competition and mutual influence of numerous state and non-state institutions in the absence of a clear hierarchy of interests. Under such conditions, the foreign policy of states seems to be something less consistent, integral and constant.

Forms of interstate interaction also become more complicated. When various types of resources come into play in the many areas of international relations, even states with strong military power do not always succeed in imposing their will. Contrary to realists, neoliberals assume that militarily strong states are not always able to effectively convert military dominance into other benefits. They are restrained by dependence in the areas where their position is relatively weak. As a result, coercion is almost obsolete in international politics. Instead, networks of interdependence, international regimes and regulations become substantial. Foreign policies of states are aimed at managing such networks and establishing links between various domains to maximize benefits and minimize risks. Identification of issues to be included in the international agenda becomes a key challenge for state

and non-state actors. Regulation and management of networks of interdependence is becoming the key task of foreign policy.

Referring to Angell's metaphor, the two men in a boat, according to the theory of complex interdependence, can not only escape but also benefit due to continuous cooperation. Moreover, it is barely possible to be left 'alone in a boat' in the modern world, as there are almost no autonomous and isolated states or societies. They all sail in boats, in which skills to set and manage collective efforts and ensure efficient distribution of common gains become a competitive advantage.

Democratic peace theory

The link between domestic and foreign policy, underlined by the neoliberal paradigm, is most comprehensively explored by the democratic peace theory. It is usually a dyadic level theory, referring to relations between two democratic states. However, there are also attempts to extend some generalizations to foreign policies of democratic states altogether. While a dyadic version of democratic peace theory finds strong empirical support, probably the strongest along all mid-level theories of international relations; a more general one lacks it. Democracies are not at all less likely to go to a war. But they are extremely unlikely to wage a war against other democracies.

Statistics of armed conflicts between democracies, which demonstrates an impressively low level of violence, seemingly confirm Kant's views on the relationship between domestic and foreign policy. Nevertheless, the question of why that is the case requires further research and provokes usual scholarly debates.

These debates bring about some political flavor. Democratic peace as a basis for international security has been often referred to by decision-makers, while spread and support for democracies globally have occasionally become cornerstone elements of U.S. grand strategy. Democracy is more often publicly linked to security than any other set of values or political regime. Spread of values, in particular democratic, has got additional importance because could have been leveled to spread of peace. But those claims still need theoretical investigations and empirical support.

Criteria for democracies may vary, but generally speaking there are quite many democracies in the world today. Different ratings give different pictures, although 45%–50% would be a good average estimation. Most great powers are democratic. In a world of numerous democracies considerations about democracy bringing about peace at dyadic level go far beyond mere theoretical curiosity.

The end of the Cold War opened way to the global trend of *democratization*, manifested in an increase of the share of democratic states and the number of people living in them. Increased number of democracies has revived interest in the idea that internal regime transformations can make the world safer. However, this time it was all about democracy, not a republican

government, promoted long ago by Kant. Over time democratization trend can be reversed – but the interest in democratic peace is sure to remain.

The democratic peace theory assumes that democracies are less prone to wage war with one another than with authoritarian states or than authoritarian states between themselves. This hypothesis is confirmed by substantial empirical data, in particular on the set of militarized disputes since the 19th century. A strong positive correlation between democracy in a pair of states and the absence of wars between them has been found. Numerous studies have hardly diagnosed more than ten cases of wars between democracies over the past two centuries, even given expanded understanding of both democracy and war. Absence of wars between democracies is one of the few strong evidences in the domain of international studies.

The democratic peace theory suggests several complimenting (or competing) explanations. Some focus on accountability, political leaders face under democracy, in particular for bad decisions like going to war against another democracy. Others pay attention to institutions, procedures and norms. Some link peace among democracies not to democracies, but to trade or alliances. Debates among all of them are added by hot discussions about what ‘war’ and ‘democracy’ exactly mean, and whether spread of democracy by force actually leads to peace or war.

From the structural perspective, peace between democracies is rationalized by the commonality of institutions and decision-making processes. On the one hand, a democratic regime implies that the government depends on public opinion which is rarely supportive of a war, let alone a long-lasting and/or unjust war (Huth, Allee, 2002). One could easily feel ideas promoted by Kant. But they can be questioned as democracies frequently and actively wage war with non-democracies. The structural approach, which is often referred to as institutional, stipulates that voters are more likely to prefer low-intensity wars rather than full-scale ones. As a result, the world of democratic states, if ever emerges, will be a safer place (Maoz, Russett, 1993). From a rational choice perspective, along with preferring short-term wars over long-term ones, people will also more readily support conflicts that promise a high probability of victory. As democracies are more likely to win wars than non-democracies, it is more dangerous to fight against them. Other democracies are particularly vulnerable to this risk, as the cost of defeat is especially high for them. On the other hand, the institutional hypothesis builds upon positive expectations democratic governments have toward one another. Relying on common mechanisms and procedures, they can be more confident in each other’s intentions, thus avoiding situations resembling security dilemma.

The normative explanation of democratic peace focuses on the common of norms that guide democratic states in conflict management. Common procedures, regulations and strategies supposedly facilitate compromises, thus reducing the need for violence. The impact of mutual expectations is also important: democracies are not only more prone to non-violent solutions

but also expect the same from other democracies, which reduces the overall motivation to escalate a conflict. To some extent, the commonality of norms and values forms a network of allies and rivals of democratic states. This process relates to the neoliberals' idea that states mainly rely not on the balance of power but on the balance of threat and do not always shape their policies proceeding from the worst expectations. Contrary to realists' expectations, a strong neighbor with the same values is not necessarily a threat. Canada, sharing the world's longest border with the world's strongest state, neither pursues a policy of containment nor forms anti-American coalitions. Shared norms and values allow the United States and Canada to trust each other and stay allies. Realists would hardly agree with such an important role of ideology in international alliances. From their perspective, coalitions are guided by common interests, especially in the field of security; potential threats, and the balance of power. Example of NATO with its geopolitical and value-based components is particularly interesting.

There is a mutual influence of norms and institutions. They contribute to the peaceful settlement of disputes between democracies, creating and reinforcing positive expectations. Ability of democracies to convey each other's intentions through transparent democratic procedures and institutions reduces the level of strategic uncertainty in relations between them, thus minimizing the likelihood of war. Lack of such cooperation between democracies and authoritarian/totalitarian states explains the democracies' pervasive aggression toward non-democracies (Table 4.2).

Critics of the democratic peace theory mainly focus on methodological issues that refer to the criteria for separating democracies from non-democracies. This is a non-trivial exercise, especially if one looks at international politics before World War I, when it was especially difficult to distinguish between democracies and non-democracies. Even today, when, unlike a hundred years ago, there are credible rankings identifying the quality of democracy in various countries the task of accurate measurement of democracy can hardly be considered resolved. Similar methodological problems arise in defining peace and war. The threshold of military confrontation can be established in different ways, and the statistics of wars would significantly depend on that definition.

Democratic peace theory attracts significant scholarly attention and plays an important role in a neoliberal paradigm. It focuses on interconnection

Table 4.2 Democratic peace theory

<i>Supporters</i>	<i>Concepts</i>	<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Criticism</i>
Immanuel Kant Woodrow Wilson Interwar pacifists Neoliberals	Peace; war; democracy; non-democracy	Common regulations Common institutions Strategic culture Interdependence	Criteria for defining democracy

between domestic and foreign policy. States' expectations about and dependence on joint decisions are essential in both normative and structural interpretations of the democratic peace. One may feel the spirit of Kant's philosophical ideas when exploring the origins of peace between democracies, at the same time leaving open the question of why democracies are still belligerent towards non-democratic regimes.

International relations in the neoliberal paradigm

In the 1970s, international politics changed. It became apparent that along with military and political areas, there are other domains, developments in which may often have a bigger impact on the future of countries, regions and the whole international system. Enhancing and deepening of European integration, escalation of confrontation over energy resources during the oil crisis, increase in number and influence of multinational corporations and even rise in activities of terrorist groups have all marked the changing role of state and the ways international security was arranged. International political agenda has significantly expanded. As Henry Kissinger put it, the progress in dealing with the traditional agenda was no longer enough (Kissinger, 1975).

Economic competition among states, interdependence generated by trade, interaction in international organizations and regimes in the era of globalization have created a completely different vision of international politics, which has been shaping new standards for foreign policy strategies of states.

Neoliberalism emerged as a response to the need for a new perspective of international politics. This paradigm has shifted the focus from traditional security issues raised by realists to a broader agenda. Neoliberals oppose realists by focusing on cooperation, interdependence and long-term peaceful relations instead of war, conflict and constant competition. They doubt that international relations are about everlasting confrontation, pointing out at examples of lasting peace between pairs of states with certain regimes (e.g., democracies) or within certain regions (such as North America or Western Europe).

To explain these phenomena, neoliberalism suggests theories based on the following ideas:

- Not only states can fully participate in international politics. International relations are not so much relations between states as relations between societies, being carried out in different forms, while interstate interaction is only one of them.
- Agenda of global politics comprises numerous issues, and it is not a hierarchical system.
- Military power does not provide a decisive advantage, as its effectiveness is significantly limited under complex interdependence.

Instead of concentrating on states, neoliberals focus on non-state actors: multinational corporations, pressure groups, terrorist networks and non-governmental organizations. Links between them form a borderless global network. Realists believe it can be neglected and that only relations between states shape the agenda of international politics. From the neoliberal perspective, relations between various actors do not require mediation of a state to be regarded international and influence political processes and decisions.

Interstate relations, synonymous to international in the realist paradigm, are just one of the many forms of interaction from the point of view of neoliberalism. Along with interstate there is a huge variety of *transnational* relations, which open principally new ways of perceiving and managing world politics.

The agenda of this world politics is marked by diversity. According to realists, states are mainly interested in military and political issues as these issues are crucial for survival. All other realms are of secondary importance. History of international relations seen from a realist perspective would look like the history of wars, peace congresses and arms races. Neoliberal edition of the same history would inevitably include development of cooperation, supranational institutions, global networks and non-state actors.

Neoliberals offer a theoretical framework, in which different domains become more or less important under changing historical conditions and for different states and regions. The issues of survival will be a priority in regions with weak or absent institutions, low level of trust and a long history of wars. But that will not happen everywhere. Some countries are well protected by security guarantees or allies. They have not participated in wars for decades, and trust their neighbors. For them, international politics revolves around different issues: economic development, trade, investment or environmental protection. To put it briefly, for neoliberals, the history of international relations is not limited to wars and peace congresses, just as there is no single hierarchy prioritizing military and political interests. They believe that the issues of military coercion and strategic cooperation are not always the most important in international politics. On the contrary, importance of a problem is determined by numerous factors, which may be internal or external, political or economic, in other words various. Such an approach blurs the division line between foreign and domestic policy, which is inherent to realism.

Having transformed understanding of world politics and its patterns, neoliberals also re-evaluated foreign policy priorities of states. In their opinion, states seek to achieve *absolute* rather than *comparative* advantages. An advantage over potential opponents attained at any cost, so much emphasized by realists, is not the most important. Improvement of performance in various fields, i.e., absolute advantage, is the key. Issues of war and peace have got totally new comprehension under such assumptions. While realists insist that states are driven by the pressing security dilemma and are ready

to fight a war to retain power advantage, neoliberals primarily assess the costs of such a war. Thus, an international conflict follows a cost/benefit analysis. By influencing that ratio, it is becoming possible to avert or limit the most devastating manifestations of conflicts. Increased interdependence between states, so much emphasized by neoliberals, becomes the way to make wars unprofitable. Even within such a context conflicts are unlikely to be eliminated. But they will definitely take less destructive and dangerous forms.

Theoretical investigations of neoliberals were influenced by the process of integration in Western Europe. Such an unprecedented and incomprehensible, from the realists' point of view, sacrifice of national political sovereignty in exchange for long-term cooperation and postponed benefits became a powerful catalyst for changes in the form and scale of conflicts in Europe, a continent with record-high level of violent conflicts in the past. Assessing this process, neoliberals come to another important conclusion: states are can and do engage in long-term cooperation.

'World politics' is a typical keyword for neoliberal theory. It is used instead of the traditional realist 'international relations' or, which would be more precisely, 'interstate relations'. By this neoliberals underline, the change in the nature of relations – from those between states they gradually shifted to interaction between societies. These changes transform the context of world politics. What realists considered impossible or very unlikely, for instance effective functioning of international organizations, has become an important feature of the modern world – the world, moving toward an ever increasing interdependence.

Taking into account and understanding significant changes in the realm of international relations, neoliberal theorists attempted to describe another world, different from the one observed by the classics of power thinking, such as Clausewitz, Bismarck, or Morgenthau. In this new world, there is less room for the unilateral use of force and direct coercion; however the role of force has not diminished but rather changed. Numerous trends observed in the late 1970s still exist today, distinguishing the modern *post-Westphalian* international system from its predecessors.

It is not free of problems, of course. Transformations and processes emphasized by neoliberals are not evenly distributed around the world. While highly developed countries manage to avoid violent conflicts with each other due to growing interdependence and vulnerability; relations among developing nations, inhabited by more than a half population of Earth, are still dominated by anarchy and egoism. Efficiency of international organizations in what concerns preventing or limiting violence is relatively limited, while the growth of interdependence often leads to widening of the gap between the world's most prosperous nations and the rest.

Like realism, neoliberalism has numerous advocates and supporters. The paradigm is not a universal philosophy of international relations explaining everything. It allows examining a wide range of issues, while may prove

helpless in dealing with quite a few other phenomena of international politics. Institutionalism, another influential paradigm, may offer some help.

Recommended reading

- 1 Grotius, H., Neff, S. (2012). *Hugo Grotius on the Law of War and Peace. Student Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2 Molloy, S. (2017). *Kant's International Relations. The Political Theology of Perpetual Peace*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- 3 Angell, N. (2017). *The Great Illusion. A Study of the Relation of Military Power in Nations to Their Economic and Social Advantage*. New York: Andesite Press.
- 4 President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, 8 January, 1918//The Avalon Project//http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp.
- 5 Keohane, R., Nye J. (2012). *Power and Interdependence. 4th Edition*. Boston, MA: Longman.
- 6 Russett, B. (1993). *Grasping the Democratic Peace*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Questions

- What are the causes of wars, according to neoliberalism?
- By what means can cooperation between egoists be established?
- Why do democracies rarely wage wars with one another?
- How does interdependence emerge? What consequences does it have?
- Is there any connection between domestic and foreign policy, according to neoliberals?

Keywords

- Just war
- Perpetual peace
- Complex interdependence
- Sensitivity and vulnerability
- Transnational relations
- Democratic peace
- Absolute advantages

5 English school

One of the ways to get students more closely acquainted with nuances of theorizing about international politics is involving them into simple social experiments, addressing issues of security, power, rules and interests. A group of students is different from a set of states in a number of ways, but some of them are especially important. Unlike states, students don't live in anarchy. They interact within legal, institutional and moral boundaries. States, on the contrary, have to rely on themselves and stick to the principle of self-help.

By offering students to gradually remove moral and legal barriers – at least in imagination – and leave just pure egoistic interests, it is possible to emulate international politics in a way. Further on, by enhancing power capabilities of some of the students and limiting those of the others, as well as introducing such deficit resources as power or security into their interaction, it is possible to find the moment when the use of force will seem justified and/or the most appropriate course of action for most of them. It will also be evident whether students take their interests as predefined or are ready to adapt them by examining what others want. Last but not least, such an experiment would show the limits and power of negotiations and agreements in an anarchical environment.

Far from aiming to encourage violence among students, this example can help make a step toward better understanding of the English school in IR. This approach is also built around ability of actors to shape their interests according to environment and social interactions and thus limit violence; while concepts of anarchy, society and rationality are at the heart of it.

Hugo Grotius: natural law, rationality and justice

Once again let's turn to intellectual legacy of Hugo Grotius. His ideas about law, sovereignty, order and power formed a basis not only to the liberal tradition. The views of the Dutch philosopher have been important for establishing an alternative to a 'war of all against all' approach, so brilliantly described by Thucydides and later on developed by Thomas Hobbes. That approach, often referred to by the English school itself as

'international system' one, emphasizes power, structure and process as well as puts states into the center of everything. Although states themselves have been quite different in the 17th century from the states of today, the overall logic of struggle for power and everlasting war seemed just as much applicable. At times when wars seemed natural and unavoidable, it was challenging to put forward ideas of natural law, draw the line between just and unjust wars, and put absolute dominance of state interests under question. That's what Grotius's writings were about, and that's what makes him so important for today's non-realist accounts of international politics (Grotius, Neff, 2012).

Just as Hobbes is a central figure to international system approach, Grotius is of decisive influence over 'international society' paradigm, which is about institutions, identities and social norms – a paradigm the English school associates itself with.

The wind of change was felt in international politics of the 17th century. Old dynastic quarrels were gradually replaced by competing state interests. Religious norms had to coexist with national sovereignty. Monarchs and thinkers were struggling to find new strategies for competition in trade, imperial policies and enhancing security interests. Most importantly, against the backdrop of deep conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, as well as long-lasting standoff between the Habsburgs and their neighbors, ideas of Christian unity could no longer serve as a reliable foundation for international order.

Grotius was in the middle of that turbulence. His views were shaped by realities of the 17th century, and in that sense what is called 'Grotian tradition' today has to be time adjusted. Grotius was not thinking about human rights, justice or international law the way we used to think about all that today. He was rather looking for a new way of arranging relations among states, as long as international order could no longer be sustained by religious norms. And he did put forward a worldview which, if shared, was able to make international politics more rational and free from unnecessary violence. This worldview was based on several key assumptions.

The most important foundation of Grotian tradition is the concept of natural law, implying that rights are not a condition imposed and defined by law; but rather something a person or a state has. Some rights are given by nature, not by God, a monarch or any other higher authority. Rights granted by nature to all provide a different point of reference and platform for arranging social relations. They are a different type of legal source. Assuming that people and states have some set of natural rights would mean that there is a need to carefully manage their coexistence when there is no absolute higher authority. Grotius's thinking about natural law has been influenced by considerations of property rights, interdependence and common good. His ideas are powerful in what concerns demonstrating the possibility of people to live together without damaging the rights of each other.

People are rational and can learn from their experience. That provides the basis for a much more optimistic look on how relations among them may

develop. Within Hobbesian tradition, people are egoistic and are driven by their simple interests. They perceive others as threats and act accordingly. And, most importantly, that does not change. The unchangeable nature of people is a source of constant violence, while the only way to contain it is the strong suppressive power of state.

Grotius sees things differently. In his view, people are reasonable. They can negotiate and make more nuanced judgments about intentions of others than just assuming the worst. After all, war is not a necessity and can be prevented by agreements. Rationality would make people generally prefer agreements over fighting, and it will also help them seek opportunities to agree on a wide range of issues. At the same time making *pacta sunt servanda* a universal principle for all would help improve mutual trust and increase costs for breaching of treaties.

Pursuing of their predetermined interests by states and people would lead to anarchy, in the view of Hobbes. Thus, the law should limit those rights. Contrary to that, for Grotius, the task of law is to create more favorable conditions for people and states for finding agreements over their conflicting interests. People are not endlessly fighting each other, but are rather engaged into a constant process of bargaining which may help them pursue their natural rights. If the world of international politics is an arena of negotiating, but not everlasting war, then it would certainly need rules and norms, i.e., *international law*.

A notion of justice is another important element of Grotius's worldview. It's not only about just and unjust wars, but more broadly about a universal basis for politics. Before Grotius, thinkers like Machiavelli asserted that states should be guided exclusively by their pragmatic interests. The line has been drawn between relations among people within states and relations among states, with the latter being too anarchical for states to pay attention to norms of morality and justice. But in the view of Grotius, that is misleading. Justice can be a common good and provide a certain degree of unity, which would make any relations more predictable and safe.

States should not engage into unjust wars. A war should have a good cause – that is when a state in defending itself, faces imminent danger or inflicting punishment, and the use of force must be necessary and proportionate. Attacking a neighbor out of security dilemma consideration would not qualify.

Fear with respect to a neighboring power is not a sufficient cause. For self-defense to be lawful it must be necessary; and it is not necessary unless we are certain, not only regarding the power of our neighbor, but also regarding his intention; the degree of certainty which is required is that which is accepted in morals.

Hugo Grotius

Like everything else, deterrence must be just.

Grotius cites numerous examples to prove – or as we'd rather say today, illustrate – his ideas. If a neighbor is building a fortress, one should not recall the experience of the Peloponnesian War and attack. It is better to build a fortress as well. Advantage, as he puts it, does not confer the same right as necessity. Together with the doctrine of qualified neutrality, Grotius's concept of just wars was seen as a possible way to rearrange the whole international politics, especially in between the World Wars.

Taken together elements of Grotius's thinking provide not only the basis for establishing and developing relations among states but also the way of thinking about them. His emphasis of rationality, ability to negotiate and natural rights was appealing to many – including those seeking for a 'middle way' between Hobbesian and Kantian traditions.

Hedley Bull: anarchy, order and system

Ironically as it may be, the scholar, who is believed to be one of the founders of the English school, was not English but Australian. It was not until 1965 that Hedley Bull, whose *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* is regarded as a seminal work for the paradigm, became a British subject. Stylistically tough and somewhat overloaded with definitions, written in the vein of complex and prolonged reasoning about various aspects of international life, this book binds anarchy, society, order and system into a coherent whole (Bull, 1977). In a way, it reminds neorealist or institutionalist approaches, is based on well-examined ideas of Kant and Grotius and marks the beginning of an intellectual tradition in between realism and utopianism.

The centerpiece of Bull's theoretical reflection is the notion of *international society*, however, in a context different from the one of both institutionalists and constructivists. From Bull's perspective, society is shaped by common goals, institutions and norms and as such is contrasted with the then-established notion of international system.

A system emerges when states, pursuing their own interests, interact with one another, whereas an international society is something that helps reveal the existence of common aspirations and perceptions resembling common aspirations and perceptions of people within each state. In some measure, the international system defines the behavior of some states, which is why there can be observed the reproduction of a certain type of behavior. A good case in point is the confrontation between the Athens and Sparta in ancient Greece. The two states saw each other as a threat and were preparing for a showdown to eventually find themselves in the quagmire of the Peloponnesian War. Thus, they had established perceptions about international politics in general and each other's intentions in particular. Their behavior was defined by the measurement of the balance of power and mutual fear and/or mistrust. All those consideration created a strategic situation, the one of

mutual impact and joint efforts. Manifestations of such interdependence are enough to speak about the existence of an international system but not enough for the emergence of a *society*. The latter requires common values, and, from the perspective of the English school, a society of fear is not exactly a society.

These institutions serve to symbolize the existence of an international society that is more than the sum of its members, to give substance and permanence to their collaboration in carrying out the political functions of international society, and to moderate their tendency to lose sight of common interests.

Hedley Bull

Bull's views on the international system are quite different from those of neorealists. From his perspective, the balance of power in it is not invariable; an anarchic system of states is markedly prone to the emergence of a hegemon; while imperialist structures, on the contrary, tend towards autonomy of elements. Generally speaking, the English school perceives international systems in less rigid terms as compared to neorealists. They change and collapse, giving rise, in particular, to hierarchic structures, a phenomenon next to impossible for those who believe the logic of anarchy to be prevailing in international politics.

Bull's logic brings him closer to polemics with Hobbes, Grotius and Kant. Bull rejected Hobbesian view of international politics as the war of all against all. He also did not completely agree with Kant's take on the prospects for establishing a league of nations, although eventually the English school has probably proved to be closer to Kant's philosophy than first assumed. The closest to Bull's approach was Grotius's idea about the existence of an international society even under conditions of anarchy. This statement underpins Bull's theory and that of the English school as a whole.

Bull does not challenge the anarchic nature of the international environment. The lack of supreme authority and any limitations it could have imposed on states' behavior are key features of international politics. This, however, does not imply that social relations are impossible in such an environment. Anarchy is entirely compatible with the existence of a society – *anarchic society*, an idea expressed in the very name of Bull's work. This possibility is related to the fact that a state is not the only agent of establishing rules. Norms and institutes emerge on the basis of common views of members of an international, albeit anarchic, society. Among a wide range of such norms and institutions, Bull particularly distinguishes rules connected with affiliation, coexistence and cooperation. According to him, these rules embody interests and values, where the balance of forces, great powers, diplomacy and war serve as instruments for their maintenance. This means, inter alia, that war is regarded not as a phenomenon of destruction or a crime but as a tool.

Based on such a vision of the link between society and anarchy, Bull introduced yet another concept: *order*, used to denote a set of instruments and rules, with which an international society seeks to preserve itself. Why do norms, rules and institutions which promote them emerge? As far as realists are concerned, the reason is that the egoistic interests of states coincide from time to time. According to Bull, because there is a common good, which states perceive much like the way people do in a society. Just like people agree on simple things, like who's calling back if the call has been disrupted, states can also establish basic principles. Thus they channel some efforts to establishing and maintaining an *international order* that would be based on the common recognition that each state's survival and security depend on the general willingness to restrict the use of force, respect sovereignty and abide by non-interference principles and international agreements. Mindful of these priorities, states agree to exert common efforts with a view to ensuring adherence to such basic institutes as diplomacy or law. Among the major elements or manifestations of the world order, Bull mentions the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, war and great powers. Combined in a single sentence under the question of finding a common denominator, they could become a test to prove familiarity with Bull's key view on international politics.

Of particular interest is the difference between international and world order, as noted by Bull. In his view, the former refers to the interstate level of relations whereas the latter concerns all levels, including that of some people's personal interests. Such a take on international order was to integrate states' interests and human rights into a single whole. In light of this, perchance, the term 'international order' might better be rendered as 'interstate order', which is a part of the world order. To illustrate the understanding of world order, one may also pay attention to alternative ways of its construction, examined by Bull in the third and last section of his work. They contain scenarios of a world government, global disarmament and a throwback to the medieval multi-layered mode of political life. Each of these imaginary world orders provides an alternative, either realistic or not, to the contemporary international society of states existing under anarchic conditions.

An essential element of Bull's theoretical views is the concept of change. Contrary to realists, who associate changes in the international system solely with shifts in the correlation of power among states, Bull pays attention to cultural shifts leading to changes in how states perceive such issues as common interests, cooperation and coexistence. Genuine changes in the international society are connected to the broadening circle of its elements and the search for common interests. In this regard, Bull attaches particular attention to the historical developments with the most tangible and far-reaching effects, which at the same time do not necessarily concern the correlation of power among states – for example, the emergence of religions, the Age of Discovery, the Reformation or the French Revolution.

Bull's work reflected some features of its epoch. States as primary actors with an emphasis on the role and responsibility of great powers; international organizations, international law and coexistence in anarchic conditions; the balance of power and war as ways of self-preservation – all of these topics were addressed by theorists of the 1970s but predominantly in realist settings. The concepts put forth by Bull were a step to establishing a somewhat different view.

History matters. Methodological pluralism of the English school

IR is a political science discipline. It studies interaction among states and non-state actors based on security considerations, strategic calculations, assessment of the balance of power or mathematical expectation of winning a war. Realism, neoliberalism and institutionalism not often look at the past, i.e., turn to history. For understanding or making today's decisions of a state, knowledge of history seems to be redundant. Historical events are unique; thus generalizations based on knowledge of the past are often a thankless exercise.

However many students, especially in non-Western and post-Soviet worlds, take the opposite view even before they encounter various history courses in university programs on IR. The tradition to perceive international relations as deeply rooted in history remains influential, and the statement that knowledge of history is necessary for explaining current events in international politics is an article of faith for many.

Those students are not alone. The English school attaches considerable attention to history – much more than other paradigms. In his day, Hedley Bull was closely involved in the 'great debate' on the methodology of research of international politics between traditionalists and behaviorists, which commenced due to the introduction of quantitative, most notably statistical, methods to international studies. What he wrote in the article *International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach* published in the *World Politics* journal in 1966, will be to the liking of some students even today:

The student whose study of international politics consists solely of an introduction to the techniques of systems theory, game theory, simulation, or content analysis is simply shut off from contact with the subject, and is unable to develop any feeling either for the play of international politics or for the moral dilemmas to which it gives rise.

(Bull, 1966)

Pointing to the importance of thorough historical knowledge, Bull championed conservative views. In his opinion, international politics is best read as a long-standing tradition, while it is also important to be sensitive to historical conditions in general. Other titans of the English school may have

differing visions on methodological problems in international studies, but most of them note a distinctive role of the past, considering present-day realities of international politics as one of the stages of an ongoing process.

The focus of the English school on history can be explained by a strong link between the vision of the making of international society and trends in its development on the one hand, and the specific conditions under which such making takes place, on the other. Events gain significance under concrete historical circumstances. And a scholar of international politics should be aware of them.

We are accustomed to a classical set of national interests, containing sovereignty, territorial integrity, economic development, preservation of national identity, protection of human rights. More recently, these have been complemented by such components as prevention of transnational threats, improving cybersecurity, fighting global warming or environmental protection. A hundred years ago, however, national interests would have been different. Human rights issues appeared on the agenda after World War II and do not necessarily go well with the institute of state sovereignty. The environmental dimension of international politics is relatively new. There are even more recent challenges, which transform well-known institutes, such as cyber security. Nationalism as an ideology emerged at the end of the 18th century and has been consolidating its influence ever since. Colonialism vanished in the mid-20th century. International law and diplomacy as we know them are products of modernity and thus relatively new.

Interests and priorities of states in international politics arise together with norms and develop within specific historical contexts. To know how states behave is thus impossible without some knowledge of history, at least from the English school perspective. Social nature of international politics gives history a special place in studying it.

In taking a middle ground between realists and idealists, the English school applies a peculiar research methodology best characterized as *methodological pluralism*. This pluralism can be observed at several levels. First, proponents of the English school distinguish three ways of thinking about international relations. The first of them is focused on empirical facts, especially conflicts of interests, requiring unbiased research and pragmatic approaches free from moral considerations. The second way puts the spotlight on the issues of justice and universal norms, defining ethical principles in politics. The third way, referred to as *historical mind* within the framework of the English school, acknowledges the presence of moral norms as a historical phenomenon and puts them at the core of international social processes. From this standpoint, morale rather appears as a huge layer of quotidian, recognized and common practices of international life professed by all states; next to this is a thinner layer of universal moral norms perceived regardless of state borders, not by states but by people all over the world. Morale becomes historically conditioned, hence another explanation of the heightened attention to history in the English school.

Methodological pluralism is also manifested in the ‘three R’ formula – realism, revolutionism and rationalism – an inherent feature of the English school. What is meant is the coexistence of three regimes of perceiving international politics and three related methodological approaches, namely positivism, hermeneutics and the critical school. The problem with the English school is that its entire theoretical architecture relies on a concept, which is fairly difficult to clearly define and thoroughly examine – the concept of international society. Realists focus on the interests of egoistic states and the balance of power among them; neoliberals concentrate on the systems of interdependence and mutually beneficial cooperation; institutionalists zoom in on the norms emerging from shared interests; the English school is forced to examine all of these simultaneously. Consequently, the key concept of *society* proves to be taking into account all of these elements, whilst also containing important nuances which are sometimes quite difficult to strictly define. All of these aspects broaden the range of methods, while prompting many adepts of the school to construct extensive and complex classification schemes and look for a dialectical relationship between various approaches. The life of the English school theorist does not even remotely seem to be easy.

Particular attention should be attached to the role of language within the English school. The words we use matter just as much as history. Nuances of interpretation and hermeneutics, for which the ability to understand the meanings and dive into the narratives of a certain community is vital, play an exceptionally important role. Studying a society from within with a view to understanding its values, rules and interests, which change over time, is possible only by paying attention to the language used by the people. Words serve as markers of identity and the reflection of norms; methods of working with them play a significant role in the toolkit of the English school.

Methodology may be the area where the word ‘English’ in the name of a theoretical approach assumes geography-bound essence. Absorbing a large body of sociological knowledge and paying attention not to static structures and constant interests but to how they emerge and change, the English school is frequently contrasted with the major American theories of international relations precisely in methodological terms. These theories are sometimes seen as non-historical and not requiring research of the past for understanding the current developments of international politics. Instead of knowledge of history they require awareness of structural factors. On the contrary, the proponents of the English school underscore the importance of historical knowledge for studying the sociological dimension of international relations.

International society

The English school is much obsessed with the following question: why do states coexist relatively peacefully under conditions of anarchy?

The fundamental answer is rooted in the concept of *international society* – a special mode of arranging politics. Combining elements of realism and idealism, the English school demonstrates the interaction of interests and values in international relations. States' policies are defined by their interests, which might well be articulated, as Morgenthau put it, in terms of power; that said, however, neither interests nor politics exist in a normative vacuum. The context is what distinguishes international relations from ultimate fighting. That context is shaped by history and shared visions. Power calculations are complemented by rules, thus creating an international society.

According to the English school, institutions of international society operate in a slightly different manner than the logic put forth within the institutionalist approach framework. A society sets priorities for actors, generates environment for assessing all possible political alternatives, and forms a set of fundamental institutions. The latter, by interacting with each other, give meaning to events and processes. For example, in the slave-owning society of the ancient world (where slavery was the key institution), states regarded the lack of slaves as a major threat; people were not considered equal; human rights were out of the agenda and senseless, while the entire structure of state interests was very different in every respect from what it is for, let's say, modern liberal democracies. Medieval states, the sovereignty of which was attached to dynasties, paid a disproportionate, by our standards, amount of attention to the issues of succession and genealogy. Nothing of this sort is listed among the priorities of states in the contemporary society, where sovereignty is no longer tethered to dynasties. The institutions of nationalism, liberal democracy, religious fundamentalism, etc. form agendas of their own, too. The diversity of social norms becomes increasingly notable when institutions merge.

The Westphalian world, for instance, is the joint product of the institutions of sovereignty, diplomacy, international law and war – at least such is the set defined by Bull. The post-Westphalian world is the Westphalian one minus absolute sovereignty and plus integration processes. Under new conditions, usual practices or usual words acquire a different sounding. In various societies, the same processes, like arms race, democratization or illegal migration, also get totally different meanings.

As opposed to idealists and neoliberals, adherents of the English school do not see norms and institutions of international interaction as necessarily relying on shared features of identity or concurring goals. Norms emerge in response to the need for peaceful coexistence. The international system remains anarchic, but institutions and social procedures – such as international law or diplomacy – help maintain order under conditions of anarchy. Historically, therefore, international politics is not so chaotic and filled with conflicts and violence as it could have been in the complete absence of regulating mechanisms.

An international society differs from an international system. By entering into an interaction with one another, states create a system, without necessarily knowing about it. Setting up a society, however, requires that states regard themselves as its parts. Thus, the notion of identity appears on the English school agenda. To see an international system, detecting the interaction of its elements will suffice. But for determining an international society it is necessary to explore how states or their leaders see each other or themselves.

International society is characterized by institutions, i.e., deeply entrenched ideas and practices, defining rules of the game and players themselves. These rules are not always clear and change over time. The world of international politics we are currently witnessing is characterized by the role of sovereign states, diplomacy, international law, human rights and nations – in other words, everything that specifies the political frame of reference in a habitual way. This world emerged at a specific historical period. Before that, there were other forms of political life, such as those involving chivalric orders, empires or dynasties. Differently arranged societies can also exist simultaneously, sharing a number of common institutions, making the world of international politics further more diverse and complicated.

One could imagine various forms of international societies. Some of them are focusing on the issues of survival or security, while others are built around mutual cooperation or, on the contrary, war. Each of these forms would generate a peculiar order for states and people – not in terms of material capabilities but in terms of norms. In the contemporary world there are societies premised on different ideas and norms, for instance the society of advanced democracies in Western Europe, and societies of poor authoritarian states perceiving each other as a threat in a number of regions. The political frames of reference for states in such societies will differ.

International societies are changing. The proponents of the English school are mostly optimists, thus they seeing this transformation as an evolution. Regional societies can become global. Norms can spread, like they did in the course of, for instance, westernization. Various modes of international politics are interacting, and such interaction may encourage further changes.

Let us now return to the central question of the English school. Under anarchic conditions, states coexist relatively peacefully due to their ability to formulate rules, norms and institutions of interaction. Those are giving hints to states about what they could anticipate from one another. Thanks to this, the effect of the security dilemma is significantly reduced. Besides, international societies set up *securitization* channels. Depending on social conditions, states either increase or diminish the values of certain issues for their own security, which effect becomes collectively manifested. In some societies, states will believe that nuclear proliferation is the greatest peril while others will associate it with international terrorism or poverty. Norms, context and perception will influence their policies, unifying and

suggesting areas of possible cooperation. The world certainly remains anarchic in the sense that coercive means are absent on the global scale; however, this anarchic world is far more orderly and predictable – and thus far less prone to wars – than meets the eye.

Recommended reading

- 1 Dunne, T. (1998). *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
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- 3 Buzan, B. (2004). *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 4 Bull, H. (1977). *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan.
- 5 Little R. (2000). The English School's Contribution to the Study of International Relations. // *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol.6, No.3, pp. 395–422.

Questions

- Compare the views of Hobbes and Bull on international politics.
- How can the concept of 'international order' be best rendered?
- Why is history so important for the English School?
- Give examples of various international societies.

Keywords

- Anarchic society
- International society
- International order
- Order
- Institutions
- Methodological pluralism
- Securitization

6 Institutionalism

Why do states establish international organizations and instruments of multilateral relations rather than communicate solely on the bilateral level, which seems to be far easier? This simple and yet complicated question is the starting point in familiarizing ourselves with institutionalism, a paradigm of international studies, which focuses on rules of the game in world politics, ways and motives of their setting and implementation.

Institutionalism has a lot in common with neoliberalism. Both paradigms seek ways for overcoming the anarchy of the international system, making interstate relations more predictable and well-ordered as well as bringing them into a certain legal or normative fold. Neoliberals are convinced that such a fold emerges from the interdependence of various international actors, while institutionalists rely on the promise of institutions. Though not necessarily a product of a growing interdependence, the latter, much like interdependence, increase the relative importance of long-term factors in designing of foreign policies of states. Both institutions and interdependence help countries to not perceive each other as immediate enemies, thus opening way for more reliability, trust and long-term cooperation.

The two paradigms share the same philosophical basis, predominantly shaped by liberal ideas of the German thinker Immanuel Kant, such as his belief in the ability of rules to overcome the anarchy of international behavior and notably his proposal to establish a commonwealth of nations as a way to 'eternal peace'. Abstract as they may seem in the light of the modern experience, these are exactly what institutionalists need. Kant's ideas constitute a kind of a common denominator, and one of their first practical expressions, the League of Nations, is a matter of heightened attention for both paradigms. Neoliberals were focused on the peacekeeping effects of interdependence among egoistic states, while institutionalists explored the ability of norms and rules of the game to assume features of their own and define the preferences and limitations of state policies.

Up until the mid-20th century, institutionalism had developed in the vein of idealism and had virtually been its part concentrated on studying international organizations. Over time, however, the focus of institutionalists' attention broadened. The term 'institution' is currently understood as a stable

norm, rule, mode of action and not only as their specific implementation in the form of an international organization. In world politics, an example of an institution can be not just, let's say, the United Nations but also such a fairly abstract thing as sovereignty. The modern institutionalism differs from idealism to the extent that it views institutions not as international organizations but as a wide range of agreements influencing states' behavior. On the other hand, while sharing realists' general conviction on the nature of interstate relations with its inherent egoism, security dilemma and actors' rationalism, institutionalists emphasize that institutions can modify the context and patterns of relations by influencing expectations, expanding cooperation horizons and generating strong incentives for cooperation.

Obviously, such agreements can take different forms, including international organizations, supranational bodies and international regimes, all of which are considered by institutionalists. This paradigm explores the rules existing in what is *prima facie* viewed as anarchic international politics.

Institutionalism of rational choice

Let us recall the abovementioned case of trade in real wine and tinted water. Under conditions of uncertainty regarding the partner's intentions for both vendors and customers, the optimal strategy would be minimizing possible losses, i.e., paying with counterfeit money and selling fake wine, which is the safest way to go. The costs will be minimized, but there will be not much to gain, too, as both the vendor and the customer do not receive as much as they could. Wouldn't it be more beneficial in the long run to find some way of increasing the predictability of each other's choices and thus moving to a pair of other strategies? Selling real wine for real money would eventually enable each of them to receive way more – so much that a part of this income could be used for maintaining the mechanism ensuring compliance with the rules of the game. These rules, along with the mechanism of their implementation, are called *institutions*.

States establish institutions with a view to optimizing costs associated with implementing various kinds of agreements. The establishment of an institution is a simple and reliable way of spotting the so-called *focal points* of cooperation. By increasing states' confidence in each others' intentions and actions, institutions are helpful in avoiding costs related to lack of trust. From the institutionalist perspective, states seek absolute, not relative, gains in their interactions with each other. This means that the major impediment for cooperation is not the concern about the others' receiving a larger part of the common gain but the uncertainty as to whether they will comply with the rules agreed. When paying for the wine with real money, it is important to be sure in the vendor's intentions.

In this regard, institutions of international cooperation are a way of reducing costs related to mistrust. From the standpoint of this approach, international relations are generally viewed as a recurring game between state

agents, with the goal being not a one-off gain at the expense of partners but maximizing gains over the long term. What's the best way to do that? By introducing institutions.

Establishing institutions can widen horizons of possible cooperation. As a rule, states prone to treat their environment suspiciously and take up cooperation opportunities only when they bring quick benefits. The anarchic conditions of the international system make all other options too risky. Paying with fake money once to receive fake wine at worst and real wine at best is beneficial. The same principle applies to international trade, the exchange of security guarantees or the establishment of international coalitions. There can even be concluded treaties on peace or cooperation with the ultimate goal of breaching them at the right time. When all states apply this logic, cooperation in international politics comes down to narrow spheres and short terms. It can, however, be broadened and prolonged if the anarchy of the international system is partially overcome or limited. The wording and implementation of the game rules paves the way for: (a) a higher probability of payment with real money and sale of real wine and (b) opportunities to extend cooperation to other areas.

In today's world, one of the most vivid examples of international institutions is the European Union, both as a set of rules and as an organization created for their implementation. The process of European integration, which started out as cooperation in a relatively narrow sphere of coal mining and steel production, was later successfully extended into related areas: energy, economic cooperation and financial integration. That's how the horizons of cooperation have been widened. From the viewpoint of rational choice institutionalism, it was made possible by building trust, which took place among the parties at the very beginning. The common experience in mining coal and producing steel rendered irrational the strategies which could ruin this interdependence and opened the way to cooperation in other areas. Strengthening rules of the game with institutions was therefore in line with long-term interests of all.

Institutions can also be used for informing a state about the others' behavior and intentions, as well as assessing whether they meet expectations. Just as realists, institutionalists view states as rational unitary agents and expect them to be neither altruist nor benevolent. States act in accordance with their interests but often find themselves in a situation when these interests are better promoted with exchange of reliable knowledge about the real state of affairs than by concealing the truth. Even in a relatively simple situation like buying or selling wine, the reliable knowledge of the parties on each other's intentions can fundamentally change behavioral strategies. When it comes to such international situations as, for instance, an arms race, the value of this knowledge grows.

Contrary to a widely spread belief that the art of foreign policy is the art of deceit, the realities of international life generate demand for truthful information. If state A devises its own defensive program, reliable knowledge about the capabilities and intentions of state B will help find an appropriate,

and not excessive, response. It is also important that state B is similarly interested in appropriate actions of state A; therefore, it is in its strategic interests to provide such information. This is the rationale behind one of the key institutions of international security in the modern world, the non-proliferation regime. However, to understand the value of truthful information, states sometimes have had to go through several rounds of, so to speak, buying fake wine with fake money.

Institutions also allow enhancing the effectiveness of interaction and reducing communication and management costs. If to consider interstate agreements as something similar to contracts but in the environment where courts and coercive mechanisms are entirely absent, the uncertainty as to whether these agreements will be fulfilled becomes an additional cost. International institutions can lower the costs of communication among states by framing trade-offs and providing opportunities for implementing the agreements reached. It can be said that institutions turn into some sort of a 'police force', whose maintenance is more beneficial for states than interaction in conditions of total anarchy and uncertainty. This 'police' do not have the authority of the real police within states, but it can indicate in advance that the agreements reached are no longer in line with the interests of all and may thus be breached. Besides, institutions often give states access to special procedures of resolving controversies or pursuing agreements if cooperation in broad terms is more useful than its termination.

International institutions

- Widen horizons of cooperation.
- Inform states about other's interests and intentions.
- Reduce communication and management costs.
- Increase mutual trust.
- Require maintenance costs.

Institutionalism of rational choice suggests a view on international politics according to which states are unitary rational agents, whose egoistic considerations prompt them to gradually overcome the anarchy of the environment, at least in the areas where there is recurring mutually beneficial cooperation. The making, enshrining and institutionalizing of norms and rules of behavior will make states' actions more predictable and less oriented towards worst-case expectations than realists would expect. Arguably the most striking example of such a pattern is a separate, albeit important, case of institutions, which is international law. The very existence of international law in an anarchical environment suggests that states find it better to agree about something in interacting with each other. At the same time, the record of violations of international legal norms and principles witnesses that an institution remains effective until it contradicts the national interests of states. The cost of breaking the rules may be high, but occasionally there are those ready to pay it.

Theory of regimes

According to the classical definition of Stephen Krasner, a regime is formal and informal principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given area of international relations (Krasner, 1983). As is usually the case in international relations theory, this definition is accompanied with a multitude of critical comments; but it is succinct, simple and accurate in covering the essence of international regimes.

Attention should be paid to several important aspects. First, a regime is a particular case of an international institution. It is established through a set of norms and procedures with a view to making relations among actors more predictable and less anarchic. The peculiarity of an international regime as an institution is that its norms, rules and procedures are detailed, most commonly written and cover a specific area of international relations. For instance, the non-proliferation regime is an extensive set of rules of conduct for nuclear and non-nuclear states enshrined in a range of international agreements. The existence of such a regime results in the transparency, predictability and stability of states' interaction in this area, at least as compared to the scenario where the regime is absent.

Not every institution is a regime. For instance, sovereignty is an international institution, but it is too abstract and comprehensive to be considered a regime.

A regime is close, but not equal, to an international organization. As distinct from regimes, organizations can be established on geographical, not functional, grounds, as illustrated by the African Union or the OSCE. The purview of such organizations covers a wide range of issues not always governed by a set of hard-and-fast norms or rules. Rather, organizations are often more akin to negotiation platforms or forums than international regimes. A regime can thus be understood as a specific type of international institutions that can take the form of an international organization, but only when embodies the norms and rules of interaction in a given area.

As a separate matter, there is an interesting theoretical issue of what is meant by rules, especially if they are informal. International relations are still too anarchical by any measure to define rules as legal norms. If rules are not like legal norms, they can be taken as certain principles, which guide decision-making of states. But in that case every motivation is a certain rule for a certain state. A revisionist state, which challenges the world order by violating seemingly universal, but not always written, rules of conduct, is also guided by some principles or, to better put it, preferences. However, instead of being related to agreements among states, these rules are more linked with egoistic interests, the logic of power-based interaction among states, the understanding of tendencies and regularities of world politics or the assessment of the structure of the international system. Breaking the rules in an anarchical society may seem quite problematic.

For such cases, there is a narrower interpretation of an international regime as a system of multilateral agreements among states for governing relations in a given field. In this case, agreements are understood as clearly stated and enshrined norms of behavior, which accords the notion of a regime the meaning approximated to the domain of international law, with all its strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, such an approach allows drawing a clearer line between regimes as embodiment of international cooperation and cooperation itself, which does not necessarily require establishing regimes.

There are several theoretical explanations of how international regimes emerge. They generally coincide with the logic of shaping international institutions. The rules of interstate interaction in specific fields of a supposedly anarchic international politics are more frequently viewed as either imposing the will of the most powerful and influential – where it represents their common interest – or a mechanism of maximizing the collective good. In some cases, these two are not mutually exclusive. The aforementioned non-proliferation regime can be seen as a code of conduct imposed by great powers, which is nevertheless beneficial for all. The explanation of how international regimes function nearly always refers to axioms about the rationality and unitarity of state agents. It takes into account not only the balance of power but also the balance of interests and mutual perceptions of international actors.

Interestingly enough, the emergence and functioning of international regimes can also be explained beyond the framework of institutionalism. Realism, for instance, in its various modifications views regimes as a *sui generis* forced cooperation of egoistic states in cases where they understand that collective efforts and defined rules allow achieving the biggest gain possible. States remain bound by common norms until they believe that it enables them to get more benefits. Accordingly, they withdraw from the regime once the benefits decrease. Consequently, this confronts them with the dilemma of absolute and relative advantages, which has been examined in one of the previous chapters: if a regime brings about a reward, but others are getting more, is it a good idea to participate in it?

Neoliberalism also has its own explanation of how international regimes work, which mainly comes down to the regimes enabling international actors to overcome distrust among them, thus collectively achieving better results (Table 6.1).

International regimes theory offers quite an extensive and diverse typology of regimes. It is based on various criteria, with two being the most important: power and the organizational framework of a regime. The power of the regime is the extent to which its participants abide by common norms. Given the anarchic nature of the international environment and controversy of states' national interests, powerful regimes are relatively rare. Abidance by the rules of the game occurs when the rules foster the collective good or if they are imposed by the hegemonic state or a coalition of states, as is the

Table 6.1 International regimes theory

<i>Realism</i>	<i>Neoliberalism</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect correlation of forces • Serve security interests of states • Hegemony fosters the success of regimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect common interests • Foster cooperation • Mutually beneficial agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can change identities and interests • Perception plays a key role

case with the non-proliferation regime. Apart from the regime's imposition by hegemon or coalitions, the theory also identifies two other ways of their establishment, namely independent emergence and negotiations. The first is predominantly understood as enshrining an existing practice, the emergence of the regime from the previous pattern of relations – in a natural way, as it were. In turn, the path of negotiations is considered the most widely spread way of establishing regimes; it goes through more or less lengthy negotiations, during which each state seeks to approximate the regime to its vision, but at the same time all are interested in making the regime work. This is a gripping and exciting game that brings to the surface all the usual dilemmas of choosing between egoistic and common interests in international politics.

The organizational framework of a regime encompasses the mode of the regime's functioning in general. This is defined by decision-making procedures, availability or absence of governing bodies and their functions as well as the nature of requirements stemming for states from the very fact of the regime's existence. The requirements may, for instance, be related to refraining from certain actions, which is often the case in regimes concerned with environment or climate protection. Trade and economic regimes require states to take proactive measures or bring national policies into conformity with the common requirements.

International regimes theory is going through an interesting process of evolution. From simple ideas that regimes are established by rational unitary states for the purpose of advancing their national interests, it has moved to a complex interpretation of regimes as the result of the intertwining of volatile interests of a wide circle of actors and pressure groups within individual states. Regimes are not only an instrument of pragmatic advocacy of a permanent set of states' aspirations but also a way of transforming these interests and changing conditions in which they are defined and carried out. Put otherwise, the key interests of a state in a totally anarchic environment if it perceives others as enemies will be different from the interests of the state in the environment formed with the active involvement of robust international institutions.

The effectiveness of international regimes is often determined by their ability to set up a common agenda, make the environment more contractual

and strengthen the capacity of nation states. This is the so-called *three 'C' mechanism* – concern, contracts and capacity. Within this framework, regimes act as a tool of modifying the utility of states parties by encouraging strategies of cooperation and defining rules of the game in general, which make cooperative strategies more beneficial.

From the institutionalist viewpoint, *world order*, which is a mode of the arranging of the international system through introducing rules and procedures, at times informal, may be considered a combination of functioning international regimes.

Functionalism and neofunctionalism

Processes of integration make significant adjustments to how the institution of state sovereignty functions in a world of today. They also give rise to a new group of institutions, this time at the supranational level. The latter accumulates a part of the sovereign powers of states – and that power at supranational level is the key difference between integration on the one hand and organizations, coalitions or other forms of international cooperation on the other. The specificity of supranational bodies and integration in general has led to the rise of a group of theories explaining them, amongst which functionalism and neofunctionalism are the most influential.

As commonplace as it is today, in the mid-20th century the process of European integration was a total theoretical mystery. The emergence of the European Coal and Steel Community followed by the European Communities confronted scholars of international relations with complicated tasks. The question was why states voluntarily ceded a part of their powers, albeit as-yet small and insignificant, to supranational structures, which, unlike international organizations, they could not control. This process did not fit into the theoretical framework of realism, the prevailing paradigm at the time, with its calculations of power capabilities and states' preoccupation with national interests.

The British historian of Romanian origin David Mitrany offered his own explanation of European integration within the framework of the theory called *functionalism*. Its core question was quite usual: how to achieve peace among nations? Mitrany's response was as follows: through functional integration.

Integration differs from cooperation among states by the fact that a part of authority is transferred to supranational bodies. In the pre-20th century world history, the transfer of powers to someone else usually was a result of a military takeover. Sovereignty, independence and therefore decision-making autonomy were considered the key priorities of national policy. Very few people thought about renouncing them voluntarily.

Functionalism offered a somewhat different view of international politics, focused not on the power calculations of states but on economic and social issues, in which institutions play a pivotal role. The basic assumption

of functionalists was that states seek not only hard security, which could be attained through a favorable balance of power, but also peace and prosperity. The latter are impossible without economic agenda, but also can help in achieving hard security.

By the logic of the theory, states seeking peace and prosperity are able to gradually establish a *working peace system*, the term coined by Mitrany in his eponymous book in 1943. As Mitrany himself put it, this system will yield 'not a peace that would keep the nations quietly apart but a peace that would bring them actively together' (Mitrany, 1966). It will be based on technical and economic cooperation built upon pragmatic interests of the states involved. When asked why the European Coal and Steel Community was established, most students know the answer: to prevent another war between Germany and France. The logic will be simple: to put coal and steel production, strategically vital for waging wars at the time, under the joint control of the two antagonistic states. The initial stage of transformation of this experiment into the European integration project generally fitted the theoretical edifice of functionalists.

According to functionalist theory, states seeking peace and prosperity gradually build sectoral cooperation by integration, for it brings them closer to both prosperity and peace. The positive effects from strengthening such cooperation will incrementally cover adjacent sectors, resulting in the *spill-over effect*. In this fashion, integration processes spread themselves, underpinned by supranational structures performing certain functions, as indicated in the name of the theory. Institutions emerge in response to a process of integration.

From the functionalists' standpoint, state sovereignty is a convention and a remnant of previous eras, as is the nationalist ideology. In their view, the world of the future would be an interaction of large integration projects established on the basis of common needs to secure as high efficiency as possible. Economic interests and, at critical junctures, acts of political will define states' foreign policies, which have to be primarily manifested by the establishment of international organizations, transferring of some sovereignty to them and facilitation of their efficiency. These ideas perfectly resonated with the European integration processes in the 1950s. In contrast to federalist theories that explained integration as a top-down movement, i.e., from political decisions of elites to intensified economic cooperation, functionalism offered a bottom-up view, from enhanced economic ties to political projects of integration.

At some point, however, it became evident that functionalism overestimated the power of technical and economic driving forces of integration. As its logic had it, the spillover of integration to adjacent sectors would happen automatically given that it is economically beneficial. Similarly, it would appear that later integration had to extend into the political sphere. This, however, did not occur; processes within European Communities, an idiosyncratic laboratory for integration theories, became inconsistent. It seemed

as though the importance of sovereignty was still floating around and states learned to align the integration processes with national interests, instead of fully committing themselves to the functionalist logic of integration. The political will of states continued to play a major part. A new take on integration processes was put forward in the theory dubbed *neofunctionalism*.

Devised in the 1950s and primarily associated with the American political scientist Ernst Haas, this theory, just as functionalism, adheres to explaining integration processes from the perspective of the so-called *institutional incrementalism*. It is the gradual step-by-step extension of organizations which go hand-in-hand with the growth in common needs and carry out certain functions, conditioned by those needs. These functions shape the framework, structure and mandate of such organizations, including supranational bodies established by states. From a neofunctionalist perspective, however, the integration process is not as automatic as functionalists think. It engages not only unitary nation-states but also a multitude of various agents within their borders. These agents have agendas and priorities of their own and can make a major impact attempting to promote their interests. In the end, decisions of nation-states, if seen as a result of complex internal political bargaining, are also not automatically expanding integration and institutions related to it. Instead, the pivotal aspect of the integration process is the shift in loyalties of social groups, citizens and elites from national to supranational institutions.

The spill-over effect also remains essential in the theoretical framework of neofunctionalists. Integration in a single sector stimulates integration in adjacent sectors, as well as can promote it. In case of European integration, this process spilled over from coal mining and steel production to energy and then to a common market. Inter alia, this means that the natural tendency of integration is deepening. However, the history of European integration is replete with examples of contradictions between the positions of national governments and a supposed logic of integration. Another essential premise of neofunctionalism is that the supranational bodies established in the course of integration become interested in deepening of integration and spreading it to adjacent sectors (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Theories of integration

<i>Functionalism</i>	<i>Neofunctionalism</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State sovereignty is a remnant of the past • Automatic process • Spill-over effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State sovereignty remains important • Non-automatic process • Spill-over effect • Institutional incrementalism • Role of supranational institutions in further integration

Summing up, it can be noted that neofunctionalism explains integration and accompanying institutions by referring to two key factors. First, economic needs of various actors lead to pressure on national governments that resort to establishing supranational institutions with a view to managing economic interdependence. Second, the beginning of such integration generates the spill-over effect under which the integration deepens.

Institutions of integration are quite specific. Spillover of economic interdependence onto political level is unusual outside the European Union. But even without such a spillover, deepening interdependence generates considerable demand for international institutions.

Full-scale integration is a rare phenomenon. Even more rare still may be the institutions engendered by hegemony.

Hegemonic stability theory

Hegemony is defined in international relations as the ability of an actor or a coalition to exert a decisive influence on the international system due to its advantage in power resources. As opposed to an empire, which possesses a physical control over territories, a hegemon exercises its influence via international institutions and by establishing and endorsing general rules favoring its interests. The hegemonic stability theory addresses the phenomenon of hegemony through the lens of the collective good, viewing hegemony as a way to enhancing stability of the international system. Fate of a hegemon to a large extent is dependent on its ability to design and implement proper international institutions.

The idea of ensuring stability by means of exploiting hegemony in the international system has much to do with economy. Theory examining it in details has been initially linked to the works of Charles Kindleberger (1973) and Robert Gilpin (1975). In particular, early focus on hegemony was about its liberalizing economic effects: a hegemon state was supposed to promote global trade and thus more stability; while absence of a hegemon was associated with turbulence of different kind. Hence, hegemonic stability theory, which later on expanded beyond economic realm, examines how a hegemon is capable of stabilizing international system and making it more secure.

Modern hegemonic stability theory rests on two assumptions. First, it is believed that the presence of a hegemonic state stabilizes international system by spreading and strengthening various international regimes and institutions. This happened, for instance, in the mid-19th century under the hegemony of the United Kingdom and in the mid-20th century under the hegemony of the United States. Those accustomed to the 'bipolarity' of the international system in the mid-20th century will have to become more familiar with an alternative point of view according to which the United States emerged as a hegemon from World War II, and its competition with the USSR resulted from a failed challenge of the latter to American hegemony under specific conditions of nuclear confrontation. In both cases,

the hegemons bolstered special trading regimes favoring their interests and boosting their advantages. Second, it is assumed that the policies of a hegemonic state prove useful for others through providing them with access to common good. That common good, most notably security, arises because a hegemon uses its own resources to promote it, while others may obviate the need for incurring related costs. Reference may be made here to an economic analogy of hegemony, i.e., monopoly. A monopolist gets additional sources of income, which can be used for either strengthening its position or transforming the whole structure of relations and maintaining them in a stance that would best meet monopolist's needs. Under market conditions, a monopolist, while maximizing its profit, can also stabilize costs or protect the market in general from signs of instability or crises. This meets the interests of all participants by reducing their risks. Truth be told, in economics, the idea of the system-wide benefit of monopoly is much less supported than that of hegemony in international politics. Presence of a hegemon in the international system may be generally beneficial provided that a hegemon protects its own security by maintaining in the international system norms and rules that are also helpful for others. A hegemon, obviously, gets the largest share of benefits.

The hegemonic stability theory assumes that a hegemon would be spreading its values/ideology. Over time, however, it became apparent that this is not necessarily the case. By way of example, the US influence during the interwar depression did not prevent the intensive use of protectionist practices and, in fact, lowering volumes of international trade. Debates also continue as to how the Cold War should be regarded, particularly its nascent stages, when the United States lead over the USSR was unprecedented. Though having a total advantage in power capabilities, the United States accepted some important geopolitical concessions to the Soviet Union. It is thus no wonder that the modern world poses even more problems for the hegemonic stability theory. One of such major problems is determining the time frame of hegemony and the possible scenarios of its decline.

Hardly anyone believes that hegemony can be eternal (certainly not in the absolute meaning but rather understood as 'happening over an indefinitely long time span'). The fact that a hegemon spends more resources for maintaining his status than he gets in return is of fundamental importance. All historical examples of hegemony starting from the Assyrian and Roman Empires suggest that exhaustion and demise are inevitable course of the evolution of the hegemonic status.

Contrary to a widely spread view, proponents of the hegemonic stability theory rarely regard hegemony as an exceptional and undisputed benefit for the most powerful international actor. The state which has assumed hegemonic status in view of structural transformations is destined to bear additional costs. That eventually will have to undermine its dominance. Moreover, it cannot reject the status without putting its own security at risk. As a rule, threats arising in the course of discharging the hegemonic

functions are of a strategic character. The system in which principles and mechanisms of hegemonic stability work serves the interests of the minor elements, because they can obtain various kinds of profits by exploiting the hegemon's aspiration to maintain stability as well as its resources. This leads to the utilization of the hegemon's capacities by others, which in the long run works to the advantage of its potential rivals. The hegemon is also forced to invest its own money and technologies into generation of common good. That gradually leads to the loss of the key elements of hegemony and accelerates development of competitors.

The institution of hegemony may also be social by creating advantages for some social groups and limiting the opportunities of others. From this standpoint, not only a state can be a hegemon. Hegemony can as well be a collective one, represented by a group of states/societies able to impose their will on other states/societies. Such a broad interpretation of hegemony allows going as far as talking about the ironic *hegemony of the weak*, a situation when the most powerful states cannot impose their own rules of the game, instead being forced to comply with the concerted demands of the weaker ones. Examples of collective hegemony may include some peace congresses after major wars, used by great powers as an opportunity to enshrine terms of post-war settlement favoring their interests.

Particular attention should be paid to the problem of legitimizing hegemony. For classical realism and theories devised in its vein, there is no such problem at all: the anarchy of the international environment and the primacy of national interests do not create any need whatsoever to trespass the confines of purely material aspects of imposing one's will. For other paradigms, the legitimacy issue is more controversial. It is regarded as an additional tool for protecting the interests of the weak elements of the international system, where the main aspect is their right to take part in utilizing the collective good created by a hegemon. The effective maintenance of a hegemony requires that the hegemon adhere to the minimum standards with regard to considering legitimate rules or institutions. This approach reflects the institutional dimension of hegemony in international relations.

A broader model of hegemony was devised by the Italian scholar and politician Antonio Gramsci. According to it, hegemony is viewed as a mode of arranging social relations, particularly between the state and civil society (Gramsci, 2011). Unlike classical realistic interpretations of hegemony as predominantly coercive, Gramsci rather defines it as a form of relations of consent. In the light of such an approach, hegemony is exercised not so much through direct sanctions or punishments as through managing political processes in the society, or *historical blocs*. This term is used to denote a system of material tools, institutions and an ideology, which is virtually a coalition of various class elements. A successful historical bloc carries out its hegemony in the common interest on the basis of a *dominant ideology*. The formation of such an ideology requires something more than the seizure of state power. Gramsci's model reaches beyond mere international

relations but can also be used for their analysis. Specifically, it can prove useful in demonstrating that the nature of contemporary hegemony extends far beyond physical coercion and unites in itself various elements of puissance and interests of its different agents. Furthermore, the notion of the historical bloc can be expanded to the *concept of the international historical bloc* by applying it to the explanation of modern processes in the development of global capitalism and its attainment of structural advantages of an economic and political character.

One also cannot fail to mention the destabilizing effects of hegemony. Classical realism regards the presence of a potential hegemon as one of the major threats to security of all states. In such a case, states resort to setting up coalitions aimed at counterbalancing the hegemon's capabilities. This, in turn, may lead to the increased likelihood of wars and destabilization of the entire system.

Besides, the crisis of hegemony provokes the demise of the hegemon-fostered international regimes, thus undermining the established mechanisms of international cooperation. Instead, there often occurs a growing distrust and restoration of the security dilemma.

Hegemony in the international system is a specific expression of the concentration of power capabilities. Its manifestation on a global scale is a rare thing in recent history and is compounded by numerous circumstances such as the constant diversification of groups of power resources, a growing number of international actors, the interference of ideological and religious factors and alike.

The hegemonic stability theory states that in pursuing its own interests the hegemonic state will be able to articulate and implement international rules adherence to which would enhance the stability of the international system in general. The evolution of the hegemonic stability system may lead to its crisis and demise that typically occurs because of frustration over distribution of benefits or the hegemon's incapacity or reluctance to exercise hegemony.

Seeing the world through the lens of realism, Hobbes believed that a strong hegemon was the key to international security. The institutionalist approach takes the hegemon not so much as a source of coercion for others but as the state able to articulate and maintain the rules of the game in international politics.

Recommended reading

- 1 Haas, E. (1958). *The Uniting of Europe*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
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- 3 Mitrany, D. (1975). *The Functional Theory of Politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- 4 Keohane, R. (1980). *The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in the International Economic Regimes, 1967–1977*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- 5 Krasner, S. [ed.]. (1983). *International Regimes*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- 6 Worth, O. (2015). *Rethinking Hegemony*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Questions

- Define ‘international institution’.
- How can emergence of international regimes be explained?
- What is the major difference between functionalism and neofunctionalism?
- Does hegemon foster stability?

Keywords

- Institution
- International regime
- International organization
- Integration
- Spill-over effect
- Institutional incrementalism
- Hegemony
- Common good syndrome

7 Constructivism

Providing definitions for *anarchy*, the basic, as will be remembered, concept of neorealism, perhaps was a hobby for Alexander Wendt, an American political scientist of German origin and, perchance, the most reputable theorist of constructivism. His most celebrated dictum – ‘anarchy is what states make of it’ – can be best explained as follows: anarchy is what states consider it to be (Wendt, 1992). This phrase relates not only to anarchy but literally everything that states and other actors have to deal with on the global scale. Loosely speaking, this is the worldview constructivists use in exploring world politics.

The term ‘constructivism’ itself was introduced into scholarly parlance by another American academician, Nicholas Onuf, at the turn of the 1980s (Onuf, 1989). The new paradigm became a sort of an intellectual accompaniment to the profound changes which took place due to the end of the Cold War and the demise of the USSR. Quite unexpectedly, it turned out that the power of perception, ideas and identities has no less an impact on interstate relations than the correlation of material capabilities, particularly economic and military. Under the new world order, being attractive is just as critical as, if not more important than, being powerful. It is no wonder that the term ‘soft power’ emerged and gained currency at approximately the same time. States are increasingly seeking to form a beneficial *perception* of them. These perceptions may serve as the basis for establishing alliances, posing a threat or creating opportunities for others. Being a close, albeit military weak, friend of great powers is better than being their enemy. Besides, drastic changes in Eastern Europe stemming from NATO expansion, EU enlargement and renunciation of some states, most notably Ukraine, from nuclear weapons can be regarded through the lens of constructivism. According to another quote by Wendt, ‘an anarchy of friends differs from one of enemies’.

Emergence of constructivism was accompanied by the growing skepticism towards prognostic capacities of traditional mainstream paradigms. Something appeared to be wrong with them, given that all of them were caught by surprise with the end of the Cold War, collapse of the USSR and geopolitical consequences of all that. Realists, neoliberals and institutionalists all failed

to discern sudden and dramatic changes in the nature of world politics in the seemingly slow processes of the shifting balance of power, growing interdependence and the expanding network of international institutions. Apparently, the reason was in some other factors.

As did some other paradigms before it, constructivism emerged on the wave of criticism of other well-established approaches. In this case, it was about the overemphasis of material factors and underestimation if not neglecting social aspects of international interactions. Excessive attention to great powers, poles, balance of power and issues alike prevented traditional theories from noticing the importance, which was suddenly assumed by friendship, historical animosity, strategic culture and other forms of how states and societies perceive one another. Constructivism faced up to the challenge of redressing such a state of affairs.

Ontology of constructivism

Constructivism is premised on the philosophy drawing a line between the material world and our perception of it. Major components of such a world-view can be boiled down to the following three: (1) social sciences cannot be free from value judgments and subjective assessments; (2) they do not have a reliable experimental or, in a more radical version, even factual basis separable from theoretical knowledge; and (3) the world explored by social sciences is fluid, thus making it impossible to create a credible system of scientific knowledge. Therefore, scientific cognition of social life and international relations in particular with all of its coercive and other manifestations becomes impossible in positivist terms, i.e., through the sequential suggestion and verification of theories and the ensuing generation of a picture of the world that would gradually approach the reality. Instead, cognizing the world is inseparable from its constitution and construction. Ways of cognition are countless; and each of them impacts the real state of things under examination.

As far as constructivist ontology is concerned, social relations, as opposed to the material world, do not exist independently of the minds of people who take part in them. Accordingly, constructivists draw a clear and unequivocal boundary between social science and natural science as well as between positivist and post-positivist research methods. For them, there are no 'natural' laws regulating social relations. The social world is portrayed as an ever-changing environment formed by ideas, beliefs, discourses, language and symbols. A certain role here is played by material factors, too, but these become meaningful only in the context of perceptions existing in society.

From such a standpoint, the reality is a social construct, a result of collective social efforts, which, in shaping its culture, opts for one of numerous alternative views of the world and becomes captive of this approach, its concepts, definitions and predictions. The categories we use for thinking about international relations, for instance in terms of wars, peace and cooperation

are just one of many ways of how they can be thought of. Science creates a reality of its own, forcing society to agree with it. Special attention is attached to the language, concepts and paradigms, which not only explain and describe the world around us but create it, too. Such a process of creation takes place thanks to promoting certain approaches and discouraging others. Constructivism itself is no exception in this regard.

The peculiarities of constructivist ontology are reflected in a widespread denial of objectivity in the world (in various forms), the recognition of the role of consciousness and forms of its manifestation in history, a protest against the imposition of myths and stereotypes and an aspiration to *deconstruct* them. In general, such views encourage one to deny the idea of progress and dispel the 'myth of the Renaissance'. Renaissance was the historical period that inaugurated a human belief in progress, a gradual and continuous approximation of science to truth – an idea labeled by an array of postmodern theories as a manipulative technology. Central ideas of constructivist and postmodern theories suggest rejecting objectivity and permanence of the social world and recognition of the proactive role of the human being and its consciousness. Accordingly, their attention is constantly focused on the factors driving human behavior and our perception of reality, as opposed to structural theories with their deterministic approaches. A notion of *Verstehen* has been introduced to address these factors. Popularized by Max Weber, it can be roughly explained as interpreted understanding. Constructivists refute the very possibility of obtaining of, or feasibility of aspiring to, any sort of objective truth in exploring social processes. Any of their own judgments are always relative and conditioned by ways of interpreting facts prevailing in society.

Reflecting on the issues of truth, objectivity and ways of cognition, one cannot but mention Immanuel Kant, who was very much involved – again – in the issue. We have already felt the influence of the German philosopher on the making of neoliberalism and institutionalism; constructivism also owes a lot to his legacy. Kant put forward an idea that our knowledge about the surrounding world is always subjective by citing a wonderful story about a house. In this story, a person, being unable to see the entire house, walks around it and comes up with her own vision of the house, based on the parts she has seen. She expects that other people repeating this experience will get the same result and considers any other outcome to be wrong. At the same time, if this person has felt nostalgic about the house since her childhood, she will hardly expect the same thing from others. The house therefore has both objective and subjective aspects. This must be one of the simplest images used by Kant for illustrating his ideas.

From the standpoint of such approaches, science performs not only cognitive but also transformative functions, while cognition becomes an *active* process. This approach combines such diverse areas as hermeneutics, pragmatic philosophy, radical postmodernism, critical social theories and feminism. From a perspective like this, international politics is defined not

so much by material factors, but by subjective features of its participants, including the peculiarities of their perception, value systems and information exchange. Put otherwise, it advocates the idea of a *socially constructed world*.

Social structures have three elements: shared knowledge, material resources, and practices. First, social structures are defined, in part, by shared understandings, expectations, or knowledge. These constitute the actors in a situation and the nature of their relationships, whether cooperative or conflictual. A security dilemma, for example, is a social structure composed of intersubjective understandings in which states are so distrustful that they make worst-case assumptions about each others' intentions, and as a result define their interests in self-help terms. A security community is a different social structure, one composed of shared knowledge in which states trust one another to resolve disputes without war.

Alexander Wendt

In international relations theory, constructivism is known for its aspiration to destroy, or deconstruct, well-established stereotypes, such as 'anarchy', 'security dilemma', or 'power' and demonstrate the extent to which these habitual words depend on discourse. Their very existence sometimes fosters an increase in animosity and a decrease in objectivity in terms of mutual perception by the parties. Some believe the theory's resolve in fighting against imposed social stereotypes to be its soft spot. After all, constructivism itself can also be presented as another myth.

Constructivism contrasts materialistic views with the idea that cultural phenomena lie at the core of social behavior. This particularly pertains to identity and perception which shape interests and goals of states and societies. The essence of international politics as a whole depends on ideas and views guiding states, which means that power resides with normative structures more than it does with material ones.

Constructivism emphasizes that the structure of the international system is determined by social, not material, factors. Those social factors shape states' identities and interests. Instead of the world of constant and permanent 'national interests' of realism, constructivists deal with a social environment which makes states' preferences dynamic. The world becomes socially constructed.

Socially constructed world

Assumption that the world is socially constructed is of principal importance for the paradigm of constructivism. Not only its name but also interpretation of key notions and explanation of international politics originate from this belief.

Instead of the familiar concept of 'international system', constructivism puts forward the one of *international society*. In this case, the major

difference between the society and the system is the way in which states, its primary actors, form their interests. In the international system – and therefore in realist and neoliberal frames of reference – states are non- or pre-social in the sense that they enter into relations with others with ready-made needs and interests, thus seeing such relations as a way of maximizing their payoffs. In contrast, in the international society – the constructivist frame of reference – states constantly change their interests aligning them with their perception of the environment.

Whereas realists are certain that the international system results from and embodies the balance of power among states and is thus defined by material factors – economic potential, military capabilities, etc. – constructivists believe that the decisive role is played by perception, norms and identities, i.e., non-material factors. From their standpoint, it is not the distribution of power that matters so much as what states think of it. Realists are of the opinion that the principles guiding states' foreign policies act automatically: for instance, the presence of a powerful neighbor encourages one to contain him by forging coalitions. For constructivists, the presence of a powerful neighbor is of no consequence in itself. What matters is the perception of this neighbor, assessment of his intentions and understanding of his identity. Ukraine borders a stronger neighbor in the east – the Russian Federation, and a stronger neighbor in the West – the European Union. In realist terms, both have to be regarded as a potential threat, since the correlation of power is tilted against Ukraine. Constructivism offers a different take on the situation.

While realists and neoliberals argue that states' interests are formed prior to their entering into relations between themselves (due to the correlation of power in the international system in the former case and internal needs in the latter case), constructivists emphasize that interests depend on what these relations are. States certainly may aspire to quite abstract things, such as security, even before becoming involved in the international context; but it is only in this context that they acquire identities and their own individual understanding of security. Constructivism is premised on the idea that states endow each other with certain traits and features, which allows distinguishing between potential friends and foes. Instead of perceiving all others impersonally as potential foes, as suggested by realism, or as partners, provided that there is scope for cooperation and an opportunity for mutual gains, as advised by neoliberalism, constructivism proceeds from the states' ability to perceive all the niceties of each other's behavior and build subjective expectations on this basis. Not every neighbor will be a foe nor will those having trading relations or sharing certain goals necessarily become friends. The perception of states with long-standing expansionist traditions, for example, will differ from those who have been neutral for centuries. All of a sudden, the vision of world politics acquires a variety of shades, giving space for images of friends and foes, heroes and traitors, historical memory, culture, traditions, etc. All of these forms become social norms.

The concept of *norms* plays an essential role in the theoretical edifice of constructivists. Neoliberals and institutionalists explain the emergence of international norms by rationalist considerations of states, as norms reduce the costs related to negative expectations. From this standpoint, norms remain effective until they are beneficial for states. Constructivists offer a wider understanding of international behavior as a tool through which states not only reduce costs but also build their identities. Abidance by certain sets of norms sends signals to others, thus changing their expectations and influencing their behavior. The norms, which states think of as legitimate, are in line with their identities and become a feature of behavior or a part of strategic culture.

A widespread example among constructivists concerns nuclear weapons: the arsenal of Great Britain is tens of times bigger than that of the North Korea, but only the latter's nuclear warheads are believed to be a threat for the United States. This can be explained by expectations and identities: Britain is considered to be a friend and an ally, whereas North Korea is viewed as a potential rival. As it turns out, the United States, just like any other state, is guided in its policies not by pure power calculations but by the current perception of an existing balance of power. Perception is contingent on a wide range of factors, one of which is commitment to, or violation of, certain norms. If to apply this viewpoint to well-known international phenomena, one may discover new aspects and nuances, as compared to the visions offered by realists and neoliberals. Neutrality, or instance, is not merely a result of cost/benefit calculation, (where the probability of being entangled into a war is weighed against the probability of meeting one's security demands at the expense of others) but a way of creating or changing one's own identity, thus transforming the others' perception and expectations. The behavior of states becomes social, and norms become the machinery of this transformation.

An explanation of how norms operate was given in Martha Finnemore's *National Interests in International Society*. She focuses on identities and interests shaped under the influence of international social norms (Finnemore, 1996). Identity defines states' interests, which have an impact on their behavior. In turn, identity is shaped by norms, which are transferred to states through the mediation of international organizations. The latter thus give states a sort of hints on what their interests should be.

The social construction of the world implies that in international politics non-material resources play an exceptionally important role. What we say, write or think about international developments, historical analogies we draw, even titles of our books, articles or analytical reports – all of these stem from the environment and context, which give meaning to the well-known vocabulary of international politics. What we think about and say becomes a reality shaped with the active role of culture and identity.

Identity and cultural norms

Generally speaking, identity is a way of associating oneself with others. In a person's social life, identity plays a key role by defining his/her affiliation with groups – for instance, ideological, national or religious. Identity is a complex phenomenon: a person simultaneously belongs to, or identifies herself with, various groups. Identity is also mutable, as few of its many components remain unchanged over time. Identity, as felt by a person at each particular moment, has an impact on his/her relations with other people and social life as a whole. The question is whether such a mechanism works in relations among states.

According to constructivists, it certainly does. States, just like people, are able to shape others' opinions about themselves by being identified with certain principles, values or preferences. Unlike people, states do not have gender, class or age markers of identity (the latter point will definitely be contested by proponents of 'thousand-year history' theories), but they can be aggressive or peace-loving, expansionist, neutral, highly reputed as mediators, etc. States can also be democratic, totalitarian or fundamentalist, which heavily affects their perception by other states and societies. At least, such is the opinion of constructivists.

The core question for a state's identity reads as follows: who are we and what does it mean for our foreign policy? The answer to this question is defined not only by geographic or structural but also cultural and social factors. Within this approach, EU, the United States, India, Russia or China each receive a certain set of attributes, most frequently associated with the history of states and societies. This is exactly where stereotypes about Russia's imperialist ambitions, U.S. messianism in foreign policy or China's commitment to thousand-year traditions of continued statehood stem from. From this perspective, states are prone to make foreign policy decisions not merely and solely based on rational calculations but under the influence of their perceptions of others and themselves, frequently motivated by heroic interpretations of their own history.

In this respect, the correlation between the key notions of identity and culture remains controversial, primarily due to niceties in the understanding of culture. On the one hand, culture as a set of social beliefs and values is a broader term. On the other hand, in terms of international politics, culture is understood far more narrowly than the prevailing views on expectations and priorities of other states. From yet another point of view, the notion of culture is seen by many as a methodological trap with respect to exploring international politics. It allows explaining everything that one fails to explain otherwise. This makes culture the ultimate argument, some sort of a tautology, used when all other theories are impotent. Ukrainians have made a certain choice in foreign policy based on the peculiarities of Ukrainian culture – this statement is a good case in point. *Mentality* is a notion of the same kind, though more dubious from the perspective of positivist science.

Given the uniqueness of every person, linking characteristics, norms or ways of perception to any group of people is problematic – all the more so when this group is defined by nationality or ethnicity. In most cases mentality turns into a set of stereotypes that can be reconciled with reality in no other way than through tautology.

Regardless of such methodological subtleties, constructivism manages to suggest ways for making culture operational in the context of international politics. One such way is understanding culture as a mode of arranging priorities and values. In other words, culture tells us what to wish for, avoid, seek and value – i.e., creates certain behavioral patterns or syndromes. On this basis, there are several types of behavior for societies, such as, for instance, democratic, individualistic, egalitarian or, say, fatalistic. One may also add here, albeit with some caveats, a broad civilizational approach, made popular back in the day by Samuel Huntington. His theory of the clash of civilizations is premised on cultural differences, which are precisely the mode of organizing priorities for the Muslim, Western, Orthodox and other civilizations (Huntington, 2016).

An alternative way lies through understanding culture as a way of organizing meanings, which it accords to rituals, procedures, symbols and language. In this respect, meaning is given, e.g., to terms in which we think of international politics. Elements of worldview, specific words and ways of interpreting historical experience – all of these have an impact on reality. The reality regarded as objective by traditional paradigms but mutable and constructed by adherents of constructivism.

Identity is formed not only by individual but also collective actions of states as well as by parameters of the international system. In developing his idea concerning the subjective nature of anarchy, Wendt puts forward a statement that a way of organizing world order gives rise to various types of international social structures, including three types of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian (Wendt, 2003). Hobbesian anarchy is characterized by the states' perception of each other as enemies, which, as we remember, perfectly fits into what the English philosopher described as the world of 'all against all'. States are hostile and fight for dominance and relative gains. Military power is decisive.

Lockean anarchy is about competition. It is about deterrence, conflict management and balance of power. States view each other as rivals or adversaries and resort to violence but avoid using it excessively.

Kant's anarchy is the anarchy of friends. Legal values and a constructed 'we' is the basis. Here one can observe the dynamics of views on the nature of international politics and a feedback loop between what states think of and what they are for one another. Bedside books of monarchs and presidents thus play a major role in how the international system eventually looks like.

The concept of identity is so important for constructivism because it reveals the significance and nature of the influence of norms on states' behavior. Norms are not merely instruments for receiving additional advantages

but also part of how states see themselves. Abidance by or violation of certain norms requires modifying a state's identity in so far as identity itself is the set of such legitimate, as seen by the state, norms. Constructivists are sure that identity and interests of a state can change because they are constructed, like, for instance, the anarchy of the international environment. If to extend this logic further on, it can be said that the ideas of power, war, conflict or rivalry among states are also constructed. These ideas emerge under the pressure of social interactions but can also influence the character and direction of future relations independently. The world we live in is largely a reflection of what we think of it.

A part of differences in identities concern solely states' behavior on the international arena. This part is known as *strategic culture*.

Strategic culture

Why do different states take different foreign policy decisions under same conditions?

From the rational choice theory's perspective, it's because they make mistakes. International politics resembles a game for a rational player. The game is shaped by rules, written or not. It has some basic parameters or, at least, what is believed to be basic parameters, i.e., what states take into account when making decisions, like anarchy or balance of power. A combination of rules and parameters is the basis for strategies states imply in dealing with each other. The logic of the game remains unchanged even if some players are replaced. The skill of playing *Monopoly* depends on the ability to calculate probabilities and measure mathematical expectation and not on the personal traits of the people at the table. At least that's what rational choice theory could tell.

International politics may be seen as a much more complicated and extended version of *Monopoly*. To play successfully, one should take as many rational decisions as possible. Rationalism is defined in relation to the criteria of victory, which are written in the rules or implied universally, if there are no written rules.

But reality is often different.

From a neorealist perspective, for instance, the rules are set out somewhere at the level of the international system and the very nature of international politics, and require that states maximize their chances of survival at any cost. For constructivism, on the contrary, the rules are more likely to be determined by the history of states and the way they perceive themselves and others. Put otherwise, although each player strives for victory in *Monopoly*, everyone has an individual understanding of what that victory is. Beliefs about victory, ways of achieving it and criteria of success can be jointly referred to as a state's *strategic culture*.

Its elements are rooted in the experience of nation-building, history, world outlook of the state elite, its culture and perceptions. For those who

believe in strategic culture, they may become even more important for setting the goals and defining interests of a state than material factors, such as polarity of the international system. It is due to these reasons that anarchy does not always activate the self-help principle and that powerful neighbors are not always feared or contained by coalitions. Canada does not channel its efforts to countering the ‘threat from the South’ as it would have to if Canadian politicians shared the purely realistic view of the world or if the history of bilateral relations had been more filled with hostilities and violent conflicts. Instead, Canada and the United States are allies, and each of them is certain about the other’s intentions. Experience influences strategic preferences and deviates them from abstract norms dictated by structural factors. These deviations are unique. That’s why different states under similar conditions may take different foreign policy decisions.

In applying the concept of strategic culture it is necessary to be aware of some methodological nuances. First, one can easily fall into a trap awaiting those who refer to cultural factors when explaining international phenomena: the temptation of declaring that literally everything is a component of strategic culture. Geography, traditions, history, ideology, political practices, mentality – why not? One way or another, all of these and myriads of other factors certainly shape what we have already defined as strategic culture. But broadening the notion this far is a road to nowhere.

Second, an interesting question concerns the time frame for the formation of strategic cultures. Is, for instance, the German strategic culture the one which shaped in the late 19th or the first half of the 20th century with the emphasis on strong military, belligerence and the cult of war? Or is it better reflected in what is typical for a German foreign policy of today – i.e., cooperation, peacefulness and multilateralism? At first – and not only first – glance, Germany a century ago and Germany of today demonstrate completely different behavior patterns and strategic orientations. One could go a step further and wonder whether today’s Germany and a Germany of a century ago are the same country and whether it is valid to draw any parallels between states from different historical epochs solely based on the fact that they are situated in approximately the same territories? If to endow German strategic culture with certain features, how consistent will these features be?

A narrower and more instrumental approach defines strategic culture as a certain set of symbols limiting or guiding strategic choices. Roughly speaking, this set consists of explicit or implicit answers to the following questions:

- How hostile is the external environment? The answer to this question influences the nature of foreign policy, for instance, by encouraging one to opt for preventing strategies and aggressive action or, otherwise, spurring one to choose appeasement or neutrality. A state historically surrounded by enemies or those it sees as enemies will hardly conduct a foreign policy resembling that of Canada.

- What is the image of an enemy? Is it historical, eternal or the one threatening the state's very existence? The relations with eternal foes are usually antagonistic, full of negative expectations and constitute a zero-sum game. Realists advise assuming that everyone is a potential enemy, attributing worst-case intentions to each enemy and proceeding from them; in reality, however, perception is more nuanced and marked by undertones.
- What is the role of warfare and effectiveness of violence and how appropriate is military force as a tool of resolving international conflicts?

Taken together, answers to these and other questions alike will drive states' decisions away from optimal, if the notion of 'optimal' exists at all within constructivism. It is up to states to interpret the rules of the game themselves, including the criteria for winning or losing.

Strategic culture may be embodied in, or even carried by, philosophers and thinkers, great strategists of the past, military traditions or even ceremonies. It comprises ways in which decision-makers see a state's goals in world politics. Metaphorically speaking, strategic culture defines which game a state plays with others and whether its relations with partners are more akin to chess, poker or bridge. Inter alia, players in each of these games have a certain style and propensity to specific techniques, which very much resembles the strategic culture of states.

In some cases, noticing elements and studying strategic culture is easier. For instance, states with a long-standing uninterrupted history will have its elements in a more explicit form. It is on this basis that we can speak about the traditions of American manifest destiny, Russian expansionism or Chinese views of the Central State – *Zhōngguó* and Tianxia. Elements of strategic culture can certainly be adopted, as exemplified by medieval emperors or Russian monarchs who emulated what they believed to be the worldview of the Roman Empire, all the way down to titles 'kaiser' and 'tsar'. Moscow referred to itself as the 'Third Rome', replicating cultural features not so much of the Roman Empire but rather of the Byzantine Empire. The general tendency, however, remains: a continuous statehood fosters the formation and strengthening of elements of strategic culture.

Being a *great power* also contributes into this. National greatness is a term more typical for realism, with its division of states into great, middle and small, and a notable feature of neorealism. However, it seems that foreign policies of great powers become more distinctive, probably due to their more often involvement in wars, a broader geography and diverse interests. Apparently, foreign policy for them plays a far bigger role than for states that are not great.

Mythology and symbols of strategic culture accumulate public attention, shaping images of states in the world. Those images, in turn, influence states' further behavior. Such an influence can be felt also through the lexicon: in aphorisms, featured terms, such as 'finlandization', or in emotionally

colored assessments of historical events, like the 1938 Munich agreement, referred to in the Russian language as the Munich plot.

In studies on strategic culture – its sources, manifestations and ways of influence – the typical features and problems inherent to constructivism in general, are reflected, including ambiguity and mutability of definitions, a strong two-way relationship between ideas and reality, relativity and subjectivity of rationality. And most importantly, how convincing could academic suggestions of constructivism be, if the approach itself is premised on the idea of impossibility of any positivist cognition of the world?

Soft power

Soft strength, smart power, the power of ideas, gentle power, a carrot – here is a non-exhaustive list of synonyms for the notion of *soft power*, suggested by Joseph S. Nye from the Harvard University at the end of the Cold War (Nye, 1990a). The term ‘soft power’ itself carries constructivist flavor: an appeal to attractiveness, affection, the transformation of wishes, interests and motivations of other actors envisage the changeability and subjectivity of reality and an ability to change it by imposing one’s own ways of understanding and assessment.

As is the case for many other attempts to enhance the understanding of power, the decisive impetus was given by a methodological problem. It is impossible to feel the power of a certain international actor by measuring its resources or watching changes in the behavior of others, especially because we are often unaware of their goals and real interests. How can one detect an application of power in case if the one against whom the power is used was willing to achieve the result required from him? The situation is well known even to children: in Joel Harris’s story about Br’er Rabbit and Br’er Fox, the former begs the latter not to throw him into a briar patch, which is exactly where he wants to get. In this case, it is extremely difficult to gauge the balance of power by observing the result of the interaction of those two. The change in behavior change or control over resources does not prevent Br’er Rabbit from skillfully using the context of the situation and forcing Br’er Fox to want precisely what he wants.

In international politics such things happen as well. Theories based on the understanding of power solely as coercion and control over resources can’t explain the results of such interactions. To rectify this shortfall, Nye suggests supplementing the two traditional faces of power (such as using threats and promises of rewards) with the third one – *engaging* others to one’s own wishes. The ability to engage is the basis of a state’s soft power, which is often related rather to the notions of attractiveness, affection, standing and charisma. In the world of international politics, these are very abstract, ephemeral phenomena. They are quite difficult to turn operational, which is often pointed out by critics of the entire concept of soft power.

Nevertheless, its proponents are convinced that the features of the modern world politics enable not only the usage of such things as standing or

affection in political relations but also the study of the patterns and ways soft power is applied. This is due to the fact that the contemporary political world increasingly resembles a socialized system allowing not only a vertical hierarchy of actors but also an extensive network of relations at different levels, where the influence of moral resources and social opinion can sometimes get critical importance.

Soft power is the ability to turn one's own interests into the interests of others owing to their moral/cultural attractiveness, thus facilitating the achievement of political goals. In this case, power resources will comprise culture, political values and the moral foundation of a state's foreign policy. Among the resources on which soft power relies, there are values professed by a state, its domestic policy standards and prevailing forms of foreign policy.

Ways of measuring soft power capabilities of states are a traditional problem for constructivists; and indexes reflecting relative soft power capabilities of states are more diversified than those covering military capabilities or even sustainability of democracy. The criteria that can be used to measure soft power of states include, for instance, the number of exported films, music discs and books as well as the size of the audience watching, listening to or reading them; the number of tourists; quality of education measured by quantity of universities on top of various rankings; the number of Nobel Prize winners, etc. Though certainly vague and not directly connected with the effectiveness of foreign policy, these criteria cover such an abstract value as a country's international standing or reputation. The usage of soft power, whether deliberate or not, creates and image of a country in the world, as well as some common ideas about its possible intentions and wishes. The world not only assesses the state's material capabilities, as realists would suggest, but also perceives the sincerity of intentions with regard to applying them.

One of the most gripping and theoretically complicated issues related to soft power concerns its very basis, the definition of its nature and outlining sources of attractiveness. The problem is that, on the one hand, the attractiveness of ideas and values is considered as something objective by many: democracy and peace are supposed to be liked by everyone and are thus 'natural' source of attractiveness of an ideology pursuing them. On the other hand, the attractiveness of anything results from communication and exchange of perceptions among actors, and is thus a social construct. This implies that there are no objective values and that the attractiveness of any ideas can be manipulated by increasing or decreasing it through means of communication.

There is also another paradox regarding soft power. If attraction is gained through persuading others in the process of communication, it is *de facto* an imposition of one's will. In this case, the softness of power vanishes, dissolves in coercive techniques. Put otherwise, soft power is sometimes difficult to distinguish from hard power.

The notion of attractiveness is behind the reasoning about values and their influence. It is the attractiveness of values that turns them into a source of soft power. In a way, attractiveness for soft forms of influence is analogous to coercion for hard power resources. Values become attractive in the course of communication and are therefore not a natural but a social phenomenon. If the attractiveness of values is inherently objective and natural, the most likely historical path for humanity would be establishing cultural unity based on objectively attractive values. But if attractiveness is socially constructed and changeable, international politics becomes a battleground for a permanent cultural confrontation, where attractiveness is an interim result of a competition in creating a social, cultural and linguistic reality. The attractiveness of values is better regarded as socially constructed. It helps to avoid numerous paradoxes and controversies emerging in case of taking attractiveness as something natural while considering its major features and manifestations permanent. When attractiveness is seen as a result of social interaction, values, be they related to liberal democracy, religious fundamentalism, communism or anything else, become attractive by way of a constant competition among alternative understanding of reality. Hence an important conclusion: the source of soft power is not in professing a specific set of values but in the ability to impose one's own values on others.

Partially because of this it's sometimes difficult to find a direct link between hard and soft power of states. A superpower in a traditional sense may possess minor soft power capabilities, as was the case with the Soviet Union during the era of stagnation in the 1960s–1980s. And conversely, small states often earn a great reputation thanks to numerous initiatives on resolving major global problems, participation in peacekeeping missions or mediation (as shown by the Holy See, Norway, Sweden, New Zealand or Canada). In the modern socialized world, the growth of soft power capabilities is facilitated by taking part in activities of international organizations, especially those unrelated to violence.

The forms of influence exerted by culture and attractiveness on politics may be contested. The soft power theory proceeds from the fact, that through attractive culture a state can have an impact on social opinion in other countries, thus also shaping their national priorities. However, the ability to exert such an influence is heavily dependent on various circumstances, and its content is often totally lost. For instance, a traditional set of Western mass culture draws the worldview of Americans and Europeans closer together, at the same time widening the gap between, say, Europeans and Muslims. The political effect of convergence in the first case remains dubious, while the losses in the second case are obvious. It is impossible to be liked by everybody, after all. Therefore, the culture of each country will simultaneously generate affection, indifference and rejection by different people, with division lines running not along the borders of states but rather those of various social groups. Besides, cultural attractiveness is, so to speak, historically rooted in traditions, achievements and values, laid in

the past and is thus not always amenable to swift transformation for political usage. German philosophy or Italian fine art will appeal to people's aesthetic emotions regardless of the current foreign policy of Germany or Italy. Conversely, states devoid of deep historical cultural traditions will not be able to create them in a few years' time.

In cultural terms, soft power is usually seen as based not on classical philosophy or fine art but on *mass culture*. It is oriented towards vast segments of consumers and comprises cinema, music, literature, photography, television and online platforms. As a rule, the winner in a competition of mass cultures would not be the one making higher quality transmitters of culture but to the one who can rapidly produce any transmitters and widely spread them. The competition then moves from the cultural sphere to the sphere of production. However, the winners in such a cultural 'arms race' get an opportunity to influence public preferences, interests and reactions far beyond their own state borders.

The notion of soft power is often accompanied with the concept of *smart power*. Smart power is a way of putting soft and hard power resources together within one strategy. The smartness of such power is reflected in the ability to flexibly combine different groups of resources for achieving specific goals. To this end, it is also necessary to balance hard and soft power resources and apply them selectively.

The usage of soft power, much as any other of its kinds, depends on context. In spreading its values and ideas, a state has to create as conducive an environment for this purpose as possible. For instance, soft power is most effectively applied in open societies with decentralized governance and a democratic regime marked by freedom of speech. In closed societies with a strong position of an authoritarian leader opportunities to influence others' preferences are limited. Furthermore, it is easier to disseminate values in societies with similar or close cultural orientations. Fundamental differences give rise to reactions of rejection; the same reactions are an answer to a too aggressive advancement of any lifestyle or cultural stereotype. Instead, it is better to give others freedom of choice. In the long run, it is better to find proper proportions of using soft and hard power. There is no universal rulebook in this respect, but, in general, hard power allows more efficiently attaining concrete goals or eliminating direct threats to national security, while soft power is aimed at shaping long-term conditions for carrying out foreign policy as well as creating a friendly and conducive international environment.

This paves the way for understanding power as the ability to establish the rules of the game, limit alternative opportunities of others and define the normality or abnormality. Based on these theoretical positions, the manifestations of power are far less noticeable, indirect and dissolved in the multitude of political processes. Power becomes related to the issues of legitimacy, justice and agenda, thus losing a direct association with violence, coercion and authoritarian influence. From this perspective, it is clear that

the list of powerful international actors is not limited to states, enjoying a monopoly on violence, but also includes, for example, international organizations that can influence public opinion, the development of norms of behavior and the prioritization of certain issues on the agenda of world politics.

The desire of states to be liked and spread their values is, perchance, the most vivid example of the fact that constructivist views on international politics are already here, seriously and permanently.

Recommended reading

- 1 Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics. // *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 391–425.
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- 3 Onuf, N. (1989). *World of Our Making*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- 4 Huntington, S. (2016). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India.
- 5 Finnemore, M. (1996). *National Interests in International Society*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- 6 Nye, J. (1990). *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books.

Questions

- Is there friendship in international politics?
- How do states distinguish friends from foes?
- What is strategic culture?
- What is anarchy in international politics from a constructivist perspective?
- How is international system different from international society?

Keywords

- Positivism
- Identity
- Culture
- Social norms
- International society
- Strategic culture
- Stereotype
- Soft power
- Mass culture

8 Marxism and neo-Marxism

German economist, philosopher and sociologist Karl Marx is one of the most influential intellectuals in history. His fundamental research has had a profound impact on the ways of understanding how modern society works. Moreover, Marx's ideas have transformed the ways this society lives – just in accordance with his famous saying, inscribed on his grave, that philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways, while the point is to change it.

Marx's theoretical inquiries went far beyond the realm of international politics. Strictly speaking, international politics has never been in the focus of his attention. Marx has been first and foremost interested in interaction between economy and politics, matters of exploitation, expansion of capital, national and class identity. But all these issues are in one way or another connected with international politics. Thus, classical Marxism has become a foundation for a number of international relations' theories within a Marxist/neo-Marxist paradigm.

On vast territories of former socialist countries, post-Soviet space, and in the world in general Marx's philosophical views, including those on international politics, are associated with their practical incarnation by socialist and communist states, with all its controversial experience. Many believe that Marx's views have been passed the judgment by history when the USSR collapsed.

But it is always worth separating scientific and philosophical approaches from politics, which is aimed at transforming the world in accordance with them. As a paradigm, Marxism offers a comprehensive view on the nature of international relations – a view, which has to be assessed from an academic, not a political perspective.

Karl Marx: materialism and capitalism

Marx was an economist, not an IR theorist. His most important book, *Das Kapital*, is about functioning of a capitalist economy. Value added theory, tendency of the rate of profit to fall, overproduction crisis – these terms made up Marx's vocabulary (Marx, 2011). He very seldom referred to imperialism,

and when doing so was rather referring to settlers in distant lands, than to system of economic exploitation.

However, Marx's views on how capitalism operates and what kind of political consequences it brings about are important for understanding international politics as well. By demonstrating how material factors and modes of production impact social life, the German thinker offered a view of the world which was free from conventions like, for instance, state borders, obeying instead the logic and laws of capital. Marx was both determinist and materialist, a combination attractive for many even today. He explained social interactions referring to material conditions and stated that it is not the consciousness that determines being, but social existence that determines consciousness.

Marx's historical materialism is built upon the idea that history is not created by will of individuals, but is determined by social laws, which reflect existing contradictions among classes. A class – essential keyword for Marxism – is a large social group characterized by a place in a system of social production. It is primarily defined by relation to means of production and class consciousness. Contradictions between classes, for instance proletariat and bourgeoisie, are material and are shaped by the level of development of productive forces and relations of production. From such a perspective, history is seen as a constant struggle between classes. In this struggle productive forces develop faster than relations of production, which leads to occasional *revolutions*. Marx himself knew about bourgeois revolutions, but after his death there also were socialist ones. Revolutions radically transform relations of production.

Within such an approach history is seen not only as a constant struggle between classes but also as a progressive change of *social-economic formations*: primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and, finally, communism. Relations between classes are supposed to be antagonistic in all formations, with the exception of the first and the last – primitive communism and communism. Antagonisms generate constant class struggle between exploiters and exploited.

Getting closer to international politics, Marx considered states not as absolute embodiment of social life, but as conventions, almost randomly shaped – quite an unusual approach in an age of reining principle of state sovereignty and sacredness of state territories. He assumed further on, that state borders and national identities are also conventional – another heretic assumption at the age of rising nationalism. Marx viewed a state first and foremost as dominant classes' instrument for exploitation. He believed that when means of production are nationalized one day, there will be no classes any more – and a state will become obsolete. But as long as it still exists, a state is an institutional and ideological superstructure for a mean of production of material assets, an economic foundation of a society, which is called *basis*. However, a real driving force and elementary units of political processes are classes with their own, *class* interests, as opposed to national or state ones.

A state's primary external task is to promote economic expansion and constantly look for new markets and sources of commodities supplies. International relations from such a perspective look like embodiment of certain types of economic activities. Hence, international politics is in a way a continuation of economic competition.

A state itself is destined to vanish one day, not necessarily as a result of world revolution, but under the pressure of industrial development, which is capable of annihilating both interstate borders and individual features of different nations. It is easy to notice similarities between these formulations of classical Marxism and modern theories of globalization, especially those focused on its economic dimension. However, unlike Marx, theories of globalization do not expect states to vanish. Globalization, at least during the recent century, is accompanied by increase, not a decrease, of a number of states in the world.

Classical Marxist interpretation of international politics is shaped by the following statements. First, governments are believed to act in accordance with interests of dominating classes and to be instruments of classes. Second, capitalism expands, and that expansion is driven by a homogenous world market. Third, trade is both trans-border and universal, thus borders between states are unimportant.

In what concerns first two points, Marxists' views are close to those of classical political economy, laid out by Adam Smith and David Ricardo. However, there is an important difference. Smith and Ricardo believed in 'invisible hand', which would harmonize interests and promote development, while Marxists see capitalist economy filled with crises and conflicts. The conflicts are mainly among classes in social and political areas. The crises are of economic nature and result from the very logic of capitalist production. Capitalists' desire to maximize profit leads not to common good, as invisible hand approach might suggest, but to scaling down of the market: by spending money for production expansion and keeping wages as low as possible capitalists limit workers' expenditures to some minimal needs. Occasionally there would be not enough demand for manufactured products, hence overproduction crises. Marx anticipated periodical crises in a capitalist society. But only theory of imperialism, elaborated later, pictured them as a way to inevitable global war for redistribution of colonies. From its perspective, the main feature of capitalist development is a constant lack of markets, resulting in colonialism, i.e., policy aimed at securing control over colonies with the view to sell surplus production. Marx drew a distinction between early and developed capitalism: while in early capitalism states were fighting wars for colonies or over trade disputes, under developed capitalism wars are becoming unprofitable due to their strong negative impact on the markets. Marx's conclusion was simple: in late capitalism wars most likely will break out because of political, not economic reasons.

Not only wars, conflicts and crises happen in a world of capitalism – but also competition. A concept of competition plays a key role in classical

Marxism, since it helps explain the overall nature of capitalism. Through an ongoing competition among companies the biggest and the most efficient of them gain additional advantages, while those which lose competition turn bankrupts. Marx believed that bigger companies have an edge in competition, and thus will become further bigger over time – the process known as *concentration of capital*. Money is used for reinvestment, market expansion, search for new markets and supplies of commodities and, in the end, for survival. That's what makes capitalism radically different from other ways of arranging economy. Development of capitalism pumps demand for cheap labor and raw materials, which leads to its (capitalism's) constant expansion. This logic of expansion of capitalism is much more powerful than conventional borders between states, and once capitalism appears anywhere it would inevitably generate surplus capital, which will do the rest and expand. Because of the emphasis on capital, Marxist interpretation of international politics deals more with issues of trade, means of production and technologies, than with wars or diplomacy among states. Classical Marxists believe that both capitalism and a state are products of specific historical conditions and will disappear as soon as these conditions change – a notion, both constructivists and advents of the English School could subscribe to.

Marx considered classes the basis of all social processes, and saw class interests as a driving force of history. He believed in dialectics and material factors, denying much of what was popular and influential at that time. For instance, within a framework of his class theory, Marx put forward the idea that national identity is artificially imposed on people with the view to mask or put aside their real identity, which is class. Hence his and Friedrich Engels' slogan 'Proletarians of all countries, unite!' once written on the state emblem of the Soviet Union. It called for workers to remember their true identity regardless artificial borders between countries.

Concentrating on a state level of analysis, Marxists treated national interests as embodiment of class ones. Some of Marxists, for instance Vladimir Lenin, considered this factor decisive for a future war between socialist and capitalist countries. International security is thus perceived by Marxists more as an access to economic opportunities than from a military point of view.

Marx believed that philosophers should not only understand but also change the world. His own ideas turned to be influential enough to provide such changes and make history. They also impacted the way international politics could be comprehended and assessed. Marxism offered an approach within which dominance of capitalism turns classes and economic agents into primary actors, for which a state is just an instrument – a radical departure from a traditional state-centered perception of international relations.

Theory of imperialism

Ideas of Marx, mostly touching upon economic essence of capitalism, were eventually added with variations about international politics by a number

of authors, from German socialists to Russian revolutionaries. They built upon Marx's understanding of social consequences capitalism generated, and applied the logic of its expansion. Marx's findings were developed in such a way as to demonstrate implications of capitalist development for foreign policies of states. In numerous attempts to do so the word 'imperialism' has become a key one, in particular in two most influential books, 'Imperialism' by the British economist John Hobson and 'Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism' by the Russian political writer and revolutionary Vladimir Lenin.

Within IR theory imperialism is usually understood as a policy or ideology of extending power of metropolitan states to other, often distant, territories and countries. As a grand strategy, imperialism was widely applied in the 19th century, although some features of similar but simpler policies could be noticed already during colonization since the times of Great Discoveries. Traditionally, colonial policies of early empires, imperialism of capitalist states in 19–20th centuries and neocolonialism after 1960s are analytically separated. All these phenomena are in one way or another characterized by exploitation of some countries by the others, but imperialism provides the deepest and broadest manifestation of such policy.

Era of modernity brought about changes in the whole range of usual state institutions, including those for exploiting dependent territories. While Marx demonstrated the impact of these transformations upon economic and political life of societies, other thinkers paid attention to their international consequences. Early theoretical approaches to imperialism acquired additional influence as they provided logical and convincing exposure of the underlying causes of World War I, an event which clearly required some explanation.

Hobson published the first edition of his best-known work, 'Imperialism' in 1902. In two parts, one about economics, and another one about politics, he systematically and widely criticized imperialism, at the same time explaining how it unfolded (Hobson, 2005). In a certain way, some of his theses were logical follow-up to ideas of Marx, but, for sure, his and Lenin's works provide a different look at the issue of imperialism, the one which has not been among Marx's major points of interest.

Hobson's general idea is that imperialism is a bad policy. It demands excessive expenditures and generates low profits. It is also highly risky. It is bad for reputation and what we now call soft power. Why then was it so widespread among great powers in the end of the 19th century?

Hobson was looking for an answer in the economic nature of capitalism. Development of capitalism leads to concentration of capital and monopolization, just in accordance with Marx's predictions. Monopolies accumulate investments and diminish demand because of an opportunity to gain excess profit. They keep wages low while setting prices high. Capitalist overproduction, as also foreseen by Marx, is the result. Can anything be done about that?

Hobson pointed at two possible ways. The first is through redistribution of wealth in a capitalist country through changes in social policy and taxation, which would lead to an increase in internal demand and solving the problem of overproduction. The second way is through export of capital and search for external markets. Imperialist countries choose the latter, but why?

Lobbying and nationalism are two most popular answers to the question in a theory of imperialism. Foreign policy of states is strongly influenced by exporters, arms producers and banks, which are interested not in redistribution of wealth, but in taking control over new markets. In an early USSR, it was very popular to cartoon images of the bosses of the military-industrial complex and banks to demonstrate in whose hands real power resides. Politicians were mainly depicted as puppets of capitalists – and to some extent those images from the 1920s may be helpful in grasping the essence of the first Hobson's argument. Like later Lenin, Hobson believed that those groups, driven by desire for excess profits, would be able to unleash wars – and no democratic institutions/procedures would be able to prevent them from doing so. Democratic institutions seemed to be just a folding screen, while decisions seemed to be taken by a few.

Another possible explanation for a choice in favor of expansion is nationalism. Brought about by modernity, nationalism as a political ideology had a considerable impact on European and world politics in the 19th century. It contributed a lot to unification of Italy and Germany, transformation of political systems of European countries and crises of multinational monarchies. However, not only nationalism impacted states, but states and political forces also learned to use it in accordance with their interests. They constructed and changed national identities, introduced history courses in universities, exercised mobilization on previously unseen scales, waged wars against neighbors, exploited national ideas and generated own versions of history. Occasionally these efforts have been accompanied by theories, arguing for and providing grounds for domination of some nations over the others. These features of nationalism as an ideology, as well as its ability to mobilize vast groups of people, came in handy for those who advocated aggressive foreign policy and imperialist expansion in response to overproduction crises.

Hobson also took into account strategic effects of imperialism. If any developed capitalist state opts for expansion in search for markets and supplies of commodities, it will create a threat – perceived or real – to others. As a result, those of them who otherwise would be more willing to choose redistribution of wealth will be less likely to do that out of fear of potential losses. More aggressive strategies promote each other and generate a circle of mistrust. This logic is especially widespread in relations among great powers with their peculiar understanding of geography of their national interests. Unlike Lenin, Hobson did not think that imperialism is inevitable final destination of capitalist development. The fact that some of capitalist states, for instance Sweden, did not pursue anything close to imperialist

policies proves that economic factors are not the only ones. Imperialism is a political choice and a result of a specific perception of security challenges.

Lenin's edition of theory of imperialism draws on ideas of Hobson and, to an even bigger extent, of Rudolph Hilferding, a theoretician of Austro-Marxism and an author of 'Financial Capital', published in 1910. In the center of his theory, Lenin placed a thesis about inevitability of war among capitalist states (Lenin, 2010). Using Marx's idea about concentration of capital and Hilferding's concept of financial capital, Lenin put forward the notion of monopoly capitalism as the one different from the capitalism of free competition. Monopolies – a point of Lenin's special attention – export not so much goods and services, but financial capital. Export of capital makes exporting countries willing to control the countries of destination. Hence the link between investments and intervention into other countries' internal politics, so well exploited by another set of Soviet popular art pieces, including fairy tales.

Lenin put forward an idea that imperialism or monopoly capitalism is the final stage of capitalist development, in which gradual concentration of production turns free competition into monopoly. Lenin's another idea is that imperialism is characterized by merging of banking and industrial capital, resulting in emerging of financial capital and its concentration, resulting in its total dominance over economy. In other words, imperialism is a power of financial capital, which through fusion of capital and a state turns the latter into an instrument of a dominant class.

Lenin's features of imperialism

- Concentration of production and capital; emergence of monopolies with a decisive role in economy
- Fusion of banking and industrial capital into financial capital
- Export of capital becomes most important
- Emergence of international monopolistic unions of capitalists
- Territorial division of the planet among the leading capitalist states

Interaction among great powers in the latest stage of capitalist development inevitably leads to competition and struggle for re-division of territories. Hilferding's theory of imperialism assumes that financial capital's utmost goal is to capture as much economic territory as possible and close access to it for foreign rivals through tariffs. If all capitalist states do something of this sort, the world is rapidly turning into a small pie to divide, while international relations are becoming a zero-sum game.

Like many his contemporaries, Lenin was strongly impacted by socio-biological approaches, so popular those days, and in particular their views on struggle for survival. Rivalry among imperialist powers was looking as a struggle of that type. From Lenin's point of view, imperialism generated not so much controversies between developed and underdeveloped countries, but rather inevitable wars among capitalist states, which one day would result in all-out imperialistic war. Lenin assumed that capitalist

states are different – in levels of economic development, military capabilities and starting positions. Those differences are captured in the *law of unequal capitalist development*, arguably Lenin's major contribution into theory of Imperialism.

It is widely believed that Lenin's view of imperialism was not a separate theory, mostly because of weak own arguments and numerous comments of ideas of other authors, most importantly Hobson and Hilferding. Lenin's writings, albeit rather sophisticated in what concerns terminology and grammar, were quite superficial. He was mostly interested in politics, than in theory. When World War I broke out in Europe, his focus was not so much on explaining its roots, but on using the opportunities it created. In the end he made it. However, decisions by Lenin as a politician, especially after the October revolution in Russia, too often went against the views of Lenin as a theorist of imperialism.

Marxist theories of imperialism are easy to criticize. Underconsumption does not necessarily lead to expansion, but can be treated by changes in social policies and redistribution of wealth, as has been pointed out by Hobson. War is not in capitalism's interests. It brings about destruction, loss of resources and high costs. Theoretically, capitalists should prefer peaceful agreements to wars, including in what concerns dividing the world. After all, World War I was more the result of the pressure of a security dilemma, than of the hopes to get economic benefits. Some capitalist countries didn't show any signs of expansion in their foreign policies, while for most imperialist states their own colonies meant much less as markets than other imperialist states.

No matter how vulnerable theory of imperialism may seem, it remains very important to a Marxist paradigm. Development, modification of, and polemics over its key provisions provoked more strict modern understanding of exploitation, colonies and dependency in international politics.

Dependency theory

Wide range of ideas by Marx and his followers opened up an intellectual space for further, more detailed and nuanced theories in the second half of the 20th century, which often are commonly labeled neo-Marxism. They are quite different, but share elements of economic determinism on the one hand, and determination to make the world a better place on the other. A bunch of critical theories are to be addressed separately; while dependency theory and world-systems analysis will be shortly presented in this chapter. Both of them have offered quite a, well, Marxist view on how the world still remains economically unbalanced and unjust, even after broad decolonization, which resulted in formal independence of dozens new states.

Why do some countries remain poor while others get increasingly rich? Can poor turn into rich by just replicating some successful economic policies? What is there in the international system which makes conditions for economic development unequal for different countries?

Dependence theory offers answers to questions like these. The answers have something in common with Marxism, because they are rooted in concepts of exploitation and capitalism. They also are different in many ways from the ideas of Marx himself, most importantly in what concerns assessment of progressive impact of capitalism. From Marx's point of view, imperialist countries deprived colonies of independence and exploited them, but at the same time enhanced their development by introducing new institutions. The German philosopher believed that expansion of capitalism is generally progressive, since within his theory of social formations capitalist stage of development was a necessary prerequisite for proceeding into socialist stage. Dependence theory, on the contrary, perceives exploitation of *Third World* countries by developed capitalist states as a cause for an ever increasing gap between them, which is generating a host of various problems, including those in international security. Flourishing of the rich continues only at the expense of the perspectives of the poor, a fundamental feature of the international system, built on exploitation.

In looking at international politics from a political economic perspective, dependency theory shifts the focus from a state to a structural level. It assumes that the issue is not in some specific features of national economies, but in a way global economic forces operate. The structure of capital flows and its ability to intervene into national economies and make them parts of a global economic system is usually the key explanation for underdevelopment. The focus of dependency theory is on the international system and processes which take place in it, first of all economic. International system is comprised of national economies; however, the key role is played not by specific states, but by two large groups of states – those of *core* and *periphery*. World-systems theory, examined below, also adds a group of *semi-peripheral* states.

Developed capitalist states belong to the core. At times of Cold War, when dependence theory emerged, they were often referred to as the *First World*. The *Second World* consisted of socialist countries, which believed they were an economic system of their own. The *Third World* comprised countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America – developing nations, non-aligned with any of the blocks, at least by 1952, when the term 'Third World' was put forward by a French historian Alfred Sauvy – and the countries often referred to now as the Global South.

Global economic system functions in such a way as to constantly generate advantages for developed states at the expense of developing ones. The very notion 'developing' underlines continuity of the process, which, quite possibly, will never get to the end. In some sense this race resembles Zeno's paradox about Achilles and tortoise. Although while in the paradox Achilles is cutting the distance to the tortoise, which started to run earlier, but can't catch it; in dependence theory states, which started from worse positions, will only fall further behind the leaders. Development of the latter is possible at the expense of the former.

Rise of dependency theory is most often linked to the works of Argentinean economist Raul Prebisch and British economist Hans Singer. In late 1940s and early 1950s, they laid out key issues and guidelines of a new approach and put forward the *Prebisch-Singer hypothesis*. It states that over time price of primary goods declines in proportion to manufactured goods. That's why countries exporting commodities and agricultural products can buy increasingly fewer industrial products from developed countries in return. Global trade provides completely different opportunities for the countries of the core and periphery. Simply put, it works as a channel for transition of resources toward the core.

A deeper theoretical inquiry into relations between core and periphery has been carried out by a German economist Andre Frank. He suggested distinguishing between poor development and underdevelopment (Frank, 1966). The former means that a state is not using properly economic resources it possesses. One of the common reasons is because the state is excluded from capitalist production. Gradual integration into global capitalist system makes resources work, which in turn may lead to economic development. However, it is often accompanied by underdevelopment, when the income recovering economy generates is concentrated in the core countries because of the structure of the global capitalist system. Development of periphery countries is being slowed down as a result, and they find themselves in the state of dependency in the end. That state of dependency is preserved, inter alia, by local elites, which are benefiting from existing imbalances. The word 'development' is so often used in theoretical constructions of the dependency approach, that one may presume a simple link: dependency prevents development. Things, of course, are somewhat more complicated.

Taking Latin American countries as an example, Frank examines how ways of exploitation of colonies by metropolitan countries got more sophisticated since the 15th century. Trade capital of the first stages of dependency set conditions for appropriation of incomes from trade and distribution of goods by metropolitan countries. Gradually it has been replaced by modern monopolistic capital controlling large industrial production with the participation of multinational corporations. Functioning of the capital sets a stage for unequal exchange through structural advantages a monopolist possesses. On internal market a monopolist can confer surplus of the others, like for instance land-owners do by increasing the price for land use. In relations between metropolitan states and colonies (or, as Frank often calls them, 'satellites') the former get the same advantages as their relations with the latter are unequal. Each metropolitan state interacts with several colonies, while each colony has only one metropolitan state to interact with. Such structure provides metropolitan states with all benefits of a monopoly and ensures dominating positions in relations with colonies.

Domination of metropolitan states and 'development of underdevelopment' of colonies take place due to a flow of income towards the core. From a classical Marxist perspective, capital investments are headed to places with

comparative advantages, most likely cheap labor, which can increase profit. If that's the case, then capital will gradually penetrate into poorly developed parts of the world, making them part of a global system of capitalist production. Dependence theory, however, sees things differently. It assumes that metropolitan countries deprive satellites of capital surplus through setting unjust prices. Strict division of labor on global scale turns poor countries into suppliers of cheap labor and commodities. In exchange, they receive made products, outdated technologies and surplus of capital, the usage of which, however, is defined by the interests of developed countries.

Theory of comparative advantage

Theory of comparative advantage, put forward by the British economist David Ricardo, assumes that economic development is best assured when resources of each country are concentrated on those productions, where it possesses comparative advantages. If climate in country A favors planting of oranges, while oil reserves in country B are helpful for producing petrol, then the best way for both would be if A grows oranges, B produces petrol and they trade. Division of labor, specialization of production and trade instead of diversified economies all over the world – that's how global economy would look from a perspective of theory of comparative advantages.

The theory provides rationale for free trade ideology. Its provisions are often referred to by dependency theory.

A major difference between poor development and underdevelopment, described above, creates unfavorable structural conditions for poor countries. These countries fall behind developed ones not because they have been late in getting acquainted with scientific discoveries or industrial technologies, but because they have been integrated into global capitalist system as suppliers of cheap labor and commodities. State of their dependency appeared long time ago – from the times of colonization at latest – and is sustained not only because of developed countries' impact but also because of their own national elites, which have the same interests as metropolitan states.

Dependence theory is not enthusiastic about the chances for poor countries to replicated economic success of rich ones. That success is a result of unique historic conditions, in particular the possibilities to exploit others. Poor countries are unlikely to follow the same path. They are advised by some theorists to rely only on themselves; while others even suggest they stay away from the global distribution of labor, which leaves small chances to get away from planting oranges and generally creates considerable advantages for developed countries at the expense of underdeveloped ones.

Dependency theory offers an alternative systemic explanation of international politics. Its emphasis is not on interaction of states with their power potentials, but on unbalanced trade between core and periphery. Structure of these relations is stable and deeply rooted historically. It has a decisive impact on foreign policy and security options available for the states of periphery.

World-system analysis

World-system analysis is a theory which brings ideas of global capitalism, ensuring unequal development, further; and pays attention to new facts as well. For instance, one of such facts is a rapid economic growth of Eastern Asian countries in the 1970s, something beyond static framework of classical dependency theory, which takes underdevelopment as a destiny. Dynamic events in 1960–1970s generally witnessed variability of economic dominance and volatility of global economy. Systemic ideas about determination of international politics by economic factors required clarification and, if possible, improvement. World-systems theory is historical, in a sense that it assumes transitional nature of social structures. Methodologically it is close to the Annales School and the views of the French historian Fernand Braudel, who introduced several levels of historical time, among which there was *longue duree*, long cycles, describing evolution of large social structures (Braudel, 1995).

World-systems theory offers another neo-Marxist approach to international politics, the one which sees the world as the global system of capitalism. Its continuous expansion brought everyone under its control and in link with global markets. In this system resources and wealth are continuously transferred from less developed states of periphery to an industrial core. Elites of peripheral states act against interests of their own populations, mostly poor proletariat, which fuels internal conflicts on these countries in addition to a systemic conflict between core and periphery.

A notion of *structure* plays a key role in world-systems analysis, although understanding of a structure is different from the one in, say, neorealism. Instead of counting poles and great powers, world-systems theory pays attention to core societies and periphery/semiperiphery. State borders are of secondary importance; it is structure of wealth flows that matters.

Establishment of the world-systems analysis is most commonly associated with economic and sociological inquiries by Andre Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein and Giovanni Arrighi. As we already know, Frank's theorizing was about gradual integration of the global capitalist system generating underdevelopment and accumulating global monopolistic capital.

Arrighi, an author of *The Long Twentieth Century* and *Adam Smith in Beijing*, turns primary attention to cycles of accumulation, which make periods of financial expansion follow periods of material expansion. This sequence triggers increase in commodities and of money capital (Arrighi, 1994). Several such cycles can be identified in the past: Genoese-Iberian, Dutch, British and American. They provided centers of accumulation with power and, possibly, hegemony. While capitalism followed the accumulation of capital; power was about control over territory. Interconnection of these processes is captured in 'money-territory-money' formula. Territory is a means for accumulating more wealth, and it is expanded as soon as the 'container' gets small – i.e., how capitalist states expand. But the global

capitalist system also expands; and that expansion follows the logic of enlargement. That's how city-states in Italy have been replaced by proto-national state in United Provinces, to be followed by multinational United Kingdom and vast empire, and, finally, by the United States with transnational corporations and institutions of world governance (Arrighi, 2007).

World-system analysis is most closely associated with the name of American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein. In his book *The Modern World-System*, the first volume of which was released in 1974, Wallerstein put forward the idea that the world is not so much a set of states with their national interests, but a global capitalist economy, arranged in such a way as to make economic resources flow towards the most developed countries of the core (or center) (Wallerstein, 1974). The fourth volume of *The Modern World-System* was published in 2011, 37 years after the first one. Wallerstein had much time to test his major hypotheses.

One of them states, that in a mid-15th century, in response to the crisis of feudalism, a world-empire type of international system, had been replaced by a world economy, based on the distribution of labor and shaping relations between and within different parts. Empire has been marked by a single political center, while world economy was able to move beyond and through the borders of any imperial unites – due to capitalism's ability to expand. While empires were using centralized administrations which were preserving inequality between the center and periphery through coercion and trade monopolies; the world economy has been rooted in a global distribution of labor. Army and bureaucracy were needed to maintain empires; while for the world economy functioning of capital is the key. Inter alia, such an approach explains why after 1,450 all attempts to build world empire have failed. None of the contenders, among which in Wallerstein's view were the Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States, was able to match outstanding geopolitical performance by Ancient Rome.

A world-system is a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. Its life is made up of the conflicting forces which hold it together by tension and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remold it to its advantage. It has the characteristics of an organism, in that it has a lifespan over which its characteristics change in some respects and remain stable in other.

Immanuel Wallerstein

The world economy is built on a global division of labor, which generates three large groups of states: core (center), periphery and semiperiphery.

States of the core enjoy dominant positions in economy, possess capital and technologies. They are engaged into capital-intensive production. By using advantages they can arrange and hold world-system in such a stance which would ensure a flow of capital surplus and resources towards them. The Netherlands, England and France encompassed the first core region

after the crisis of feudalism. Power, consolidated by strong central governments; big armies, often mercenary; bureaucracies; and geographical advantages gave them chances to establish control over international trade routes and collect profit from trade. That, in turn, had eventually secured their leadership in industrial revolution, urbanization and transit into era of modernity.

Fate of states of periphery was different. Without strong centralized power or under foreign control, they turned into suppliers of raw materials, natural resources and agricultural products. Big land-owners, capable of ensuring cheap labor, dominated their economies. Being integrated into world economy on unequal terms of supplying cheap commodities and consuming expensive industrial goods is the real fate of periphery countries. Such structural imbalance has long reaching international political consequences by shaping coalitions, conditioning wars and protracted conflicts. Eastern Europe and Latin America are often referred to as examples of peripheral states.

Semiperiphery is a buffer zone, transitional between two abovementioned groups and occasionally an area of conflict. Semi-peripheral regions may those which dropped from the core, like Spain and Portugal, or those with a limited access to benefits generated by international trade. In that regard world-system analysis is different from dependency theory. The latter provided no chance for periphery countries to move into the core. While the former assumes that both states of the center can have their positions worsen over time (like Spain and Portugal), states of the periphery may gradually drift towards the center.

What could all that mean for international relations? Mostly that means a continued struggle for hegemony among the states of the center as well as conflicts accompanying transition of states from one group to another. Hegemony in the world-system is linked to dominating positions in a global economy. Dominance in a global economy, in turn, is coming from a capability to absorb the largest income within existing system of trade. Thirty Years' War, as well as World War I and World War II are seen by world-system theorists as attempts to fight for hegemony – however not by France and Germany as one could have immediately imagined, but by the Netherlands, Britain and the United States.

It also means that world-system is what matters, not national states. They are just occasional instruments utilized by the core to pursue interests of dominance. Technology is the key power resource which provides the core with decisive advantage. At the same time technologies tend to spread, thus giving a chance for non-core societies.

Like other approaches within Marxist/neo-Marxist paradigm, world-system analysis points to a decisive role of economic factors in international politics. State borders are conventional, while movement of capital, efficiency of production and competitive advantages determine almost everything.

Recommended reading

- 1 Marx, K. (2011). *Capital*. London: Penguin Classics.
- 2 Hobson J. (2005). *Imperialism: A Study*. New York: Cosimo.
- 3 Arrighi, G. (1983). *The Geometry of Imperialism*. London: Verso Editions.
- 4 Lenin, V. (2010). *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. London: Penguin Classics.
- 5 Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press.

Questions

- Is foreign policy of capitalist countries aggressive? Why?
- What are the key differences between Hobson's and Lenin's view of imperialism?
- Why do states engage in imperialism?
- Why is it so difficult for poor countries to get rich? Is it?
- What's the major difference between dependency theory and world-system analysis?

Keywords

- Class
- Social-economic formation
- Revolution
- Imperialism
- Third World
- Core and periphery
- Underdevelopment
- Exploitation

9 Critical theories

Critical theories, as one might suggest, are about ‘critique’, a word which appears in the titles of two prominent works, Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* and Karl Marx’s *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. It is a wide philosophical approach based on the idea that theories should not only describe and explain the world but also transform it, and that dominant theories are built into specific social and political structures and institutions, and serve their needs – and thus need to be critically examined and exposed.

Influenced by thinkers like Kant and Marx, critical theories differ epistemologically from traditional theories. They don’t take the world for granted. Unlike mainstream traditional IR theories, e.g., realism, which tend to follow the scientific path of natural sciences and separate international politics from theories about it, critical theories underscore importance of reflections and mutual impact. From their perspective there is no way to study international relations – or, in fact, any social relations – by putting them under the microscope. Unlike cells or viruses, social groups and states take into account and utilize theoretical knowledge. It’s impossible to draw a line between what is being studied and those who study.

What is critical about critical theory, or critical theories, if one takes the approach as a conglomeration of quite different theories with similar epistemological foundations? These theories critically examine a certain social order. They seek to understand what is wrong with the world – and change it. They encompass explanation and criticism by pointing out what causes a specific manifestation of injustice. Marxist and neo-Marxist theories covered above, as well as feministic theories covered below, fit that category.

Unlike traditional or problem-solving theories, critical ones are about reflections and contexts. They assume importance of a link between knowledge and social practice. They also pay attention to how knowledge can become instrumental and may be utilized for holding power or exercising structural violence. Consequently, critical theories are aimed at uncovering such patterns. Concepts like ‘emancipation’ and ‘justice’ mean a lot for them.

In studying IR critical theories present another paradigm, broad enough to be identified with a fixed set of axioms, but reflecting on structural violence, justice and injustice, problems of manipulation, while addressing diversity, globalization and democracy.

Jurgen Habermas: communicative action and post-national constellation

Critical theories are closely associated with the Frankfurt School of social theory. While today their area of research has significantly expanded, in-ter alia into the realm of international politics and methodology enhanced, some key epistemological views are mainly rooted there, in Frankfurt. Agenda of the Frankfurt School agenda is about structures and power, thus dealing a lot with structural power and structural violence. It assumes that social structures generate inequalities, pose limits to freedom and cause in-justice, and that the task of a theory is not only in showing or explaining – but also in transforming the existing state of things, hopefully for the better.

The Frankfurt School united many outstanding philosophers in a search for alternative ways of dealing with numerous social issues raised by turbulent developments of an early 20th century. They relied on idealist philosophy of Kant and Hegel, but also were sharing transformative approach of Marx or even questionable – from the point of positivist science – ideas of Freud. A resulting mix opened up a broad arrange of problems and approaches, gradually placing critical investigation in the center of methodology. Over time Jurgen Habermas has become the most influential philosopher within critical theory, which today does not look as a finalized paradigm, but rather a broad space for a variety of debates.

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society has been written by Habermas in 1962 and carries some important terms, concepts and ideas of modern critical theory (Habermas, 1991).

One of them is mentioned in the title. *Public sphere* is a space between people and a state, which has been promoted since the Renaissance and especially under capitalism (hence, *bourgeois* in the subtitle), when free public communication has been enhanced by numerous institutions. However, according to Habermas's historical analysis, in the 20th century increased interference of state into public sphere significantly narrowed it. People got manipulated through mass media and are excluded from a critical discussion of policies. In particular, that explains social and political processes in Germany between World wars, including the rise of Nazism. Free communication got disrupted.

Habermas places communication into the center of his theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984, 1985). Non-violent, true communication is of utmost importance; however, there are factors deviating communication. Critique of these factors is much what Habermas's discourse analysis

is about. Communication also is central to his theory of evolution, which shares some of Marx's ideas and suggests increase in productive forces through rational communication, i.e., communication which is free from social constraints. Like Marx, Habermas outlined the key role of consciousness in the way different sorts of ideologies installed dependencies; however, unlike Marx, he is not sure about where possible changes in consciousness would lead in the end – and for that reason Habermas shifted the focus from consciousness to language and thus to intersubjectivity. Like Marx, Habermas underscored the importance of freedom and solidarity; however, unlike Marx, he thought that production paradigm is not enough for that. Labor was not the only key to social and political organization; for Habermas it should be added with social communication.

The establishment of the legal code, which is undertaken with the help of the universal right to equal individual liberties, must be completed through communicative and participatory rights that guarantee equal opportunities for the public use of communicative liberties.

Jurgen Habermas

Emancipation from ideologies is possible through critical analysis of discourse, with special attention to issues of power, control, obedience, inequality and alike. Critical school in sociology studies communication in various contexts; examines connections between language and power, in particular how a language is used to hold power – all that being in the focus of Habermas's analysis as well.

Habermas takes free social dialogue as the basis of consent in a modern pluralistic society. In order for social communication to be free, any ways and forms of suppression should be discovered and abolished – through rational critique. Knowledge, thus, is aimed not only at understanding but also at liberation.

Knowledge, from the point of view of Habermas, can be generated by different ways. Instrumental knowledge, which is mostly about causal relations, is mainly derived from empirical investigation and is aimed at controlling environment. It is technical, within the realm of chemistry or physics and is based on positivist methodology. Practical knowledge is about understanding and interpretation. It is focused on social interaction and communication; and is contained in social science and history. Practical knowledge is generated through interpretation and methods of hermeneutics.

Finally, there is emancipatory knowledge, which is aimed at, well, emancipation. It is reflective knowledge based on critical theory methods and concentrated in fields like feminist theory or critique of ideology.

In Habermas's extraordinary broad agenda issues of international politics have been of peripheral importance. The most prominent contemporary German philosopher was focused on communication, hermeneutics, language, social theory and many more areas, some of which, like democracy,

occasionally brought him closer to IR, but hardly competing with mainstream theories was his intention. In a way such a pattern of philosophical interests resembles that of two other great German thinkers, Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx. They formulated general ways of thinking about society, while those ways were utilized for elaborating more specific theories, in particular about international relations. In addition to it, Kant, Marx and Habermas at some point paid attention to various aspects of international politics as well.

For Habermas the moment arrived after the Cold War was over. For many optimists and some philosophers the new world promised more freedom, less borders, increasing globalization, technological and communicational breakthrough and a triumph of liberal democracy. In short, it should have been a turning point to completely new ways of arranging international politics and theorizing it.

Habermas extended his general logic into the realm in international politics. This realm is also about power, structural violence, frameworks and communication. It has for quite a long time been arranged along the lines of nation-states competing for power and security under conditions of anarchy; but Habermas noticed fundamental changes in that order of things. These changes were mostly happening in two dimensions. On the one hand, the role of nation-states has been gradually transformed by the growing pressure of interdependence and globalization, as well as strengthening of global institutions. These processes have been replacing the usual framework of nation-states with a 'post-national constellation'.

On the other hand, ideas and norms are also changing, which is reflected in how law is being applied. While under Westphalian international order states held absolute sovereignty and international law was addressed only to them; a post-Westphalian world is marked by growing role of individual rights of citizens. Nation-states seem to be more limited by universal legal norms and much less 'sovereign' in their internal and foreign policies. Comparing to pre- and Westphalian editions, people in a post-Westphalian world got their rights recognized and protected by the law; while states were, at least to some extent, contained by the norms of international law and international institutions.

Habermas observed changes after Cold War, which seemed fundamental, and theorized them. Of special interest for him, in particular, were issues of 'post-national' ways of reorganizing world society and 'transnationalization of democracy', as well as instruments of handling dangers of globalization by expanding democratic institutions globally. These dangers were emanating from imbalances between market economy, operating globally; and political systems, territorially bound. Transformations of world economy, which started in the 1990s, brought about intensification of trade and communication. Barriers were lifted, and states just didn't catch up. Their functions have become limited in the age of globalization, which could have undermined traditional social systems. Something should have been done about that – and that was a space for critical theory to step in.

From Habermas's perspective, the point was in making political structures corresponding to economic changes. Transnational economies required political rearrangement on a level higher than that of the nation state. Hence, reference to post-national in Habermas's terminology.

That has been challenging. Habermas devoted much attention to generalizing the ambivalent experience of the EU. On the one hand, European integration provided an example, probably the only one, of a successful large-scale transfer to a post-national level, a catch up by political institutional framework of economic developments. On the other hand, EU has been suffering from a 'democracy deficit' problem: apparently it was problematic to expand the way democratic institutions function at a national level to a post-national one. Habermas suggested the model of a decentered world society as a multilevel system; however, there is still a long way to go to see how democracy and cosmopolitanism can go together.

Habermas's another key point was about evolution of the world society and moral side of things, something for which critical theory reserved the term *progress*. Radical changes in political and economic systems, such as deepening integration, strengthening of global institutions, transformation of the role of state and society, reflected a move forward to more developed arrangements of politics. A post-Westphalian order was not just about change in a set of key actors of international politics (and as such, resembling a pre-Westphalian world with its variety of agency), but a progress in what concerned legal and normative foundations of world society.

Coxian critical theory

Robert Cox, an author of *Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations theory*, has made one of the biggest contributions into critical school, albeit from an angle different from the one of Habermas (Cox, 1981). As a political economy scholar and a former UN official, Cox paid much attention to explaining differences between problem-solving and critical theories; as well as political implications of all theories. The latter emphasis has been reflected in his most famous quote.

Theory is always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective. Perspective derives from a position in time and space, specifically social and political time and space.

Robert Cox

Since theoretical knowledge is politically important, theories are no longer taken as abstract or non-biased. It is important to have a closer look at how theories appear and in what ways they are different from one another.

Cox divided theories into two groups: problem-solving and critical. The former are taking the world as it is, with existing frameworks, institutions and procedures. They rely on positivist methodology. For existing

circumstances they provide not only generalizations but also guidelines for tactical actions aimed at keeping things as they are. They assume common rationality and may be applied to any period in the past, i.e., they are ahistorical. Problem-solving theories aim at legitimizing dominating social structures and preserving status quo. They operate within the framework of dominating ideology – and because of that are value-bond by the very that fact. Knowledge, and theories as a part of it, is generated under the impact of power.

Realism – not the one of Edward Carr, but rather the one of Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz – would be a good example of a problem-solving theory. Actually, Cox draws a line between early realism, with its historical mode and attention to specific contexts and institutions; and ‘American’ realism with its focus on great powers and structures. The latter version of realism is instrumental, since provides tactical guidelines for states, for instance, to assume worst-case scenarios or value relative gains more than absolute ones. It perceives states as rational actors of international politics. It sees no difference between structurally similar events, like a Peloponnesian War and World War I. It is not interested in historical contexts, social norms, and is value free methodologically – although not free from prevailing political order. In short, it has become a problem-solving theory.

Critical theories rely on a different approach. They do not take existing order of things for granted, but aim at examining how it came about. They are reflective about the process of theorizing and they always question existing institutions and power relations. They are aimed at critical evaluation of cognitive processes and revealing ideological, cultural and social influence behind them.

Unlike problem-solving theories, which provide tactical guidelines for preserving status quo, critical theories formulate strategic ways of changing it. History is in focus of critical theories, since particular social and political conditions define perspectives of theories; while historicism is highly important as a method.

Probably a crucial notion in this regard is critical theory’s take on changes. It assumes that the nature of human beings changes over time, as well as institutions embedding political and social arrangements. It is contrary to what many students and implicit realists think: they believe that people are the same, and thus institutions are also the same. Peloponnesian War and World War I have same roots and explanations; balance of power, security dilemma and anarchy equally contributing into each of these events. Critical theory does not share this approach. It rather shares that of Marx’s historical materialism in a sense that there is a connection between material conditions and institutions and ideas. Institutions emerge in response to material world, and change together with it. They are reflections of power and hegemony, and the task for critical theory is to expose those links and well as to show how existing theories contribute into safeguarding existing status quo and structural violence.

From a standpoint of Coxian theory, ideas, material capabilities and institutions are interconnected. Ideas, on the one hand are 'intersubjective meanings', i.e., shared perceptions of some practice, and, on the other, are collective images different groups may have. The latter may vary; while the former are historically based and may change over time. Material capabilities are measured by wealth, technologies, industry and organizational capacity. Institutions, which maintain relations of power, can be hegemonic or non-hegemonic. The former install universal collective image and ensure legitimacy through consensus, while the latter rely on coercion.

Together ideas, material capabilities and institutions create a framework, which shapes actions of actors – and also knowledge, e.g., theories. These theories are not value-free or unbiased; they are part of the structural frameworks and should be aware of that. The frameworks are historically determined. Within frameworks, and in particular through the work of hegemonic institutions, the use of force is minimized. There is no need for it, as power becomes legitimate, and violence turns from direct to structural.

Cox applied this method of historical structures to three levels: (1) organization of production; (2) forms of state and (3) world orders. At each of these levels, material capabilities, ideas and institutions generate frameworks to define actions of various elements. A world order, in particular, is defined as a certain framework, which defines the problematic of war and peace, available strategic, forms of violence and issues alike for the ensemble of states (Cox, 1981). All three levels are interconnected: structures of world order may impact forms of state, while a change of production mode can do the same, and vice versa, but the link is not necessarily linear.

One of the key elements of Coxian theory is a notion of hegemony. The way of its understanding differs from the one within institutional or neoliberal approaches, which is quite telling.

For positivist approaches hegemony is about distribution of material resources among states (and, possibly, among coalitions or clusters). A hegemon is an actor possessing the biggest share of resources, large enough to install will over others. Within a Coxian approach, hegemony is not about control over resources, but about a 'fit'. It is when resources, institutions and ideas act together to exercise power. This is where Cox comes close to Antonio Gramsci's concept of a *historic bloc*, which is also about interconnection of social relations, ideas, politics and ethics stemming from forms of production (Gramsci, 1971). On the international level hegemony is a way to bring together material and non-material factors for sustaining a certain mode of relations. It is worth noting, that from a Coxian perspective, hegemony is less violent than non-hegemony. Under hegemony, generated by a fit of resources, ideas and institutions there is no need in direct application of violence. Hegemony installs consensus and structure, thus promoting structural instead of direct violence. Non-hegemony, on the contrary, promotes struggle and competition, and is marked by a lack of institutions

limiting violence. This is another aspect which distinguishes Coxian hegemony from that of realism.

What can Coxian theory tell us about the future of international politics or world order? Cox himself identified several possible scenarios. One of them is a new hegemony, shaped by continued internationalization of production and dominance of international capital. Another one is a non-hegemonic world with conflicts among great powers. And a third one is a counterhegemonic, with Third World countries challenging the dominance of core states (Cox, 1981).

To be less specific, the question is whether a current world order will be replaced by another historical structure. Political and geopolitical developments with more plurality and dispersion of power indicate that's possible. But how exactly the transformation will take place (or already taking)? Will it be on a basis of free communication, as Habermas pointed out? Will it bring about a new hegemony as a 'fit', leading to legitimacy based on consensus and thus more peaceful, as the European concert in the 19th century? Or will it be non-hegemonic world of continued geopolitical struggles? As one can see, well-known traditional notions acquire a new meaning under Coxian theory.

Andrew Linklater: normative theory

Andrew Linklater, a professor of Aberystwyth University, has put forward arguably the most influential critical theory with a focus on international relations so far. It is a normative theory, explaining evolution of norms in international society. It is a theory with a significant moral component and, as all critical theories, has a strong incentive towards emancipation.

Early stages of Linklater's research set the scene for further investigations by critique of realism and Marxism; accepting of the divisions of theories into traditional and critical, once made by Max Horkheimer (1972), and presenting history of IR theories development as a progressive move through realist, rationalist and revolutionist stages. Each of these stages has been characterized by its own agenda and methodology. From this perspective, realism studies power with positivist methods; rationalism concentrates on norms and orders and applies hermeneutics, while revolutionism is about emancipation and critical theories. That scheme in a way resembles Habermas's typology of knowledge into instrumental, technical and emancipatory, but the focus now is clearly on international politics.

From Linklater's perspective, a critical theory in a revolutionist phase should move far beyond description of usual international practices of structural peculiarities. It should be able to suggest a world order, based on freedom; find out what currently prevents it from being installed; and look for ways to overcome those barriers. In that vein, Linklater suggested a completely new and somewhat unusual agenda for international IR academic scholarship, arranged around issues of harm, suffering,

mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, as well as routs of transformation of political community.

The concept of harm takes one of the most important places in Linklater's theorizing. In his view, 'there is nothing more fundamental in social life than organising the capacity to harm' (Linklater, 2010). Harm becomes central to issues of domination, power and social structures in general. But what is even more important, vulnerability to harm and a desire to limit it can become a basis for a new political community, as long as a desire to avoid suffering can be regarded universal. Harm conventions are instruments of rational arrangement of social life, both within countries and among them. And – another step forward – harm conventions may make a real difference between various international systems. This is a radical departure from traditional approaches: international orders are distinguished not by balances of power among poles, but by an ability to address a cosmopolitan need; while this cosmopolitan need becomes an alternative foundation for all social arrangements in the sphere of international politics.

The idea that complex dependencies generate increased sensitivities brings back memories of the complex interdependence theory, but it is also important for critical theories. Within its lexicon, it is growing interconnectedness which impacts sensitivities to different sorts of harm. Thus, it can provide new ways of assessing how globalization impacts international society and generates new grounds for world orders.

Instead of claiming anarchy a constant feature of international politics, Linklater's theory takes a more historical approach, in particular assessing how norms shaping security came about. Initial relations among tribes were truly anarchical, but they have progressed into relations among nation-states along the lines of the Westphalian order. Anarchy of relations among nation-states is not really the anarchy of relations among tribes. Further progress has been marked by a post-national order, resembling both Habermas's post-national constellation and Kant's league of nations. Reference to Habermas can be strengthened further by Linklater's emphasis on language and communication as key mechanisms of post-national order. In applying historical analysis Linklater demonstrated how moral progress advanced through three stages. Thus, norms and security environment can change and improve over time.

The current stage of this process, referred to as post-national order, is featured by a post-national citizenship, a concept developed by many scholars within different paradigms. Globalization and European integration provided enough evidence to suggest that the classical institution of citizenship is undergoing profound transformations. Within Linklater's critical theory these transformations are about strengthening subnational and transnational citizenship, which are turning a state into a mediator of loyalties at different levels (Linklater, 1996).

A notion of political community is also central to Linklater's theory. This community so far has been shaped by nation-states, capitalism, geopolitics

and moral-practical learning, and provides a state with a monopoly to violence, a right of taxation, arbitrary authority, a right to demand political allegiance and a representation in international law. This is a well-known picture of a Westphalian order.

According to Linklater's theory, this community, arranged along the lines of Westphalian nation-states, should be expanded in order to overcome deficits and injustice generated by existing political structures. *Inter alia*, nation-states impose mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion to separate aliens, both inside and outside the state, and unite all the rest. Results may include oppression of minorities or assimilation inside, and aggressive foreign policies outside. Take a look at how Marxist theories explained effects of nationalism on foreign policy – and imperialism in particular.

Political community undergoes 'triple transformation' (Linklater, 1998), three stages which include a recognition that political, moral and legal principles must become universal; that inequality should be diminished; and gender, cultural and ethnic differences should be respected. If successfully completed, such transformation would allow moving to cosmopolitanism by braking interplay of territory, sovereignty, citizenship and ideology of nationalism, which is framing Westphalian order.

Sovereign states, the basic elements of existing community, should thus be critiqued with the view to significantly expand the boundaries of political community and transform the way it operates. The post-Westphalian international community, which would emerge as a result, would be built on universal communication and dialogue instead of force. In the post-Westphalian community national loyalties will be partly replaced by cosmopolitan and local (or subnational and transnational) – the process that would bring about radical changes in international institutions and, coupled with effects of democratization, become a step towards emancipation. Institutional changes are expected to be accompanied by ethical. Here is when Linklater's emphasis on harm comes into focus. In his view, a moral foundation for broadening political community could be provided by general dislike of suffering and a desire to minimize it.

Critical theories in general and Linklater in particular, are often referring to 'post-Westphalian'. They have attributed large significance to complex transformation of world politics at different levels; and they also believe that grasping those transformations and communicating them properly could make the world, in particular the world of power relations, better.

Critical international relations theory

Abovementioned philosophical, epistemological and methodological ideas, when applied to the realm of international politics, generated enough potential for another 'great debate' within the discipline. Authority of realist, neorealist and neoliberal approaches has been challenged from a completely different direction. Instead of questioning issues of agency in international

politics, primary interests of states or relative importance of different dimensions of security, post-positivist theories, to which critical international relations theory (CIRT) is a part, suggested a different approach to analysis and theorizing. It is focused on the way theories are linked to existing institutions and utilized to preserve the status quo or hegemony, and suggests the method of critique to demonstrate those links. Its task is to question and uncover structural conditions, taken for granted by problem-solving theories. CIRT underscores importance of changes in international relations and aims at making theory contribute into emancipation instead of conserving dependencies.

Quite likely, neorealism has become an unexpected starting point for CIRT ascent. Once Marx directed his critique against classics of political economy, pointing out that their research agenda helped sustaining existing inequalities and injustice; while CIRT gained influence and recognition by extensive critique of neorealism. It has been seen as a typical problem-solving theory, the one which was ignoring changes and betting too much on a notion of eternal anarchy. Neorealism was seen as the result of specific demands of American grand strategy and foreign policy and, as such, as an ideology of the Cold War.

Instead of educing eternal, ahistorical elements of international politics, CIRT places historicism in the center. Unlike positivist theories it does not aim at uncovering some universal truths and regularities about international politics, which are relevant in any epoch. On the contrary, the world is perceived as constantly changing, in what concerns social forces, forms of state and world orders. These changes bring about new institutions and knowledge, including theoretical knowledge. Thus, theories are time bound and context related.

CIRT has its specific vision of a nation state, which has been the key agent for mainstream 'problem-solving' theories. What these theories perceive as natural and given is seen by CIRT as a result of concrete historical developments. World order of anarchy, national interests and power, defined by state borders, is only one of possible ways of arranging global politics, and arguably not the best one. Division lines drawn between and inside nation-states provoke inequalities, wars and other implications of violence. In short, the world of nation states installs specific frameworks, institutions and ways of thinking about international relations. Isn't it a good time to look for alternatives?

Given global changes in technologies, communication, production, trade and political agency, a political community based on nation states should be significantly expanded and become global as well. A new set of norms and institutions, established as a result of free and inclusive communication, should replace a narrow Westphalian order, which is too focused on interests of states, and too suppressive of numerous 'excluded'. Issues of high politics, such as hard security, should be added by a variety of other topics, from human rights protection to climate change – a process that

has already been underway. Non-state agents should be fully included into global communication. Those are main directions and areas of political transformation, CIRT is specifically interested of. Democracy, integration and globalization provide sound basis and valuable experience for expanding political community.

A task of CIRT is to look into how a particular order appeared, with its implications of inequality, hegemony and structural violence. These implications impact the way political relations are functioning. Another task is to find ways to make things better, in particular by eliminating injustice, emancipating and finding ways of just and democratic arrangement of politics.

Methodology is another CIRT's trademark. Positivism of realism and other traditional theories is rejected in favor of hermeneutics and permanent critique. Understanding that theory is not separated from power and historical structures makes the whole task completely different. Traditional theories have been looking for universal guiding principles, be it in security, power, national interests or anything else. They aim at following the success of natural sciences. CIRT, on the contrary, believes it's impossible to separate theoretical knowledge from political practice. It is focused on historical conditions, rejecting ahistoricism of traditional theories.

So, what is CIRT about?

Epistemologically, it suggests that what we know about international relations is linked to what is happening there, especially in terms of existing structures, institutions and social arrangements. Mainstream theories are not providing unbiased rational abstract explanations, but rather assist in sustaining existing political status quo, based on interests of great powers. Their ways of reasoning, agenda and lexicon are reflecting existing structures of dominance and hegemony. When we speak of security, national interests, power, war, interdependence or arms races, we remain locked within exiting historical and political context.

CIRT, on the contrary, aims at uncovering the links between knowledge and political arrangements. Permanent critique is the way; while changing the existing status quo is the utmost goal. Theories should help establish a better, just, more democratic world order.

Methodologically CIRT proceeds from understanding the limits of positivism. Rational choice approaches, experimental methods, and strict line between an object and a subject of study are not as much effective in dealing with social realm as they are in exploring nature. What we know about international relations is interconnected with what they really are. Thus, positivist theories can offer some guidance for foreign policies of states, but they can't fully comprehend the nature of international politics.

CIRT also can't do it, but its aims are limited. It doesn't aim at uncovering universal truths about, for instance, why states are getting engaged into wars. A positivist theory may study the impact of polarity of the international system, the type of political regime, or effect of mutual military expenditures on belligerence, but for CIRT generalizations like these will hardly matter. Instead, it places historicism at the heart of methodology.

This principle implies that contexts matter; social reality is changing; and it's impossible to apply generalizations about some social orders to other social orders. Thus, what matters more than positivism is hermeneutics, as well as study of language, communication and discourses.

Normatively CIRT is about emancipation. Political norms, including international, should be brought in line with globalization, democratization and changing role of a nation-state. Theory should study the sources of inequality and hegemony and transform political community in a way that would bring about emancipation. Such new order should go beyond boundaries of states and become global.

Thus, CIRT's view on Westphalian order is different from that of positivist theories. It takes it not as a given, but as a result of previous developments, a selection from many possible alternatives. In the same way, a post-Westphalian order, which for some theories may appear as just a number of structural changes in international politics or transition of power, is a project in the making for CIRT.

Recommended reading

- 1 Habermas, J. (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- 2 Cox, R. (1981). Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory.//*Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 126–155.
- 3 Linklater, A. (2007). *Critical Theory and World Politics*. New York: Routledge.

Questions

- Why 'critical' theories?
- How are problem-solving theories different from critical ones?
- What is similar in views of Marx and Habermas?
- How did Linklater see the transfer to a post-Westphalian world order?
- What is wrong with neorealism from a critical school perspective?
- What does principle of historicism imply for critical theories?

Keywords

- Frankfurt School
- Public sphere
- Communicative action
- Post-national constellation
- Structural violence
- Problem-solving theory
- Political community
- Triple transformation

10 Feminism

It may be the case that everything we know about international politics is biased. Moreover, it may be the case that the very words, which are so often used in various contexts on the pages of this book, are having some additional significance – and that significance is gender related. Power, security, anarchy, hegemony, institutions and many more familiar concepts are reflecting masculine experience and masculine knowledge. They have been coined, provided with meaning and popularized when social construction of gender provided males with power and opportunities to impose masculine perceptions universally.

Gender provides just on one more criterion for divisions in the society and, of course, another basis for structural violence. By installing stereotypes and juxtaposing male and female, it becomes possible to privilege some groups, namely male, at the expense of others, namely female.

At the same time, gender stereotypes shape the way we perceive the world, including the world of international politics. It is seen through images and analogies especially important for a masculine outlook, thus promoting certain types and patterns of behavior while discouraging other.

These effects could not pass unnoticed in the age of post-positivism in IR studies. Feminist theories, flourishing since 1980s, turned an eye on different manifestations of gender in international politics. As it turned out, gender is not only limiting women's access to decision-making (at least so far, in most of the countries) but also has some deeper implications. Gender identities are also socially constructed, like many other things already mentioned in previous chapters. The point is that they are not only constructed, but politically applied. They are used to exercise structural violence and retain power.

Gender identity and power

By referring to gender one activates several meanings with one touch. Gender is about physiological differences, material factors, structural limitations and social experience. It brings all these elements together and creates different social roles and expectations for males and females, thus enabling oppression, structural violence, privileges and power.

Issues of gender are quite complicated since they involve biological and social elements. The latter seemed to be more dynamic and flexible; however, seeming biological simplicity has been challenged recently from various directions. Hermaphrodites, for instance, are not taken as anomalies anymore and may be regarded as a group biologically different from both females and males. Moreover, a person may change her/his sex – something which was hardly an option before, when a dichotomy of male-female has been imposed on a society.

It's quite possible that the very existence of such a dichotomy makes feminist theory a part of a broader critical approach. Dichotomies often imply stereotypes and thus give way to structural violence. In many cases, the division lines are questionable and may be subjected to critique. We have already touched upon this issue when dealing with ethnic, religious or ideological identities. The latter are easy to change, while the former are considered by some theories as given. Biological sex may also be considered as given and impossible to change, but that view can now be challenged. What does all that mean for international politics and, in particular, for power in international politics?

Mostly, it means that the realm of gender identity is rather complicated and involves biological distinctions and social stereotypes connected to them. That combination opens up wide space for manipulation and structural oppression. Traditional binary mode of thinking about genders implies privileges and restrictions – something which should be revealed and removed.

Imposition of sexual binary takes different forms. One of them is about words, namely pronouns. Those who are not dealing with IR, still encounter consequences of this dichotomy quite often, even without paying much attention to them. The dichotomy is manifested, among other things, in pronouns 'he' and 'she'. Using one of them in reference, for instance, to an abstract reader has suddenly become challenging and full of sense. Same is true concerning words like 'policewoman', 'chairwomen' or 'authoress' – which are reflecting changes in understanding the importance of gender context.

Is a country 'she' or 'he'? That matters, since a pronoun implies a set of features and attitudes. 'Motherland' may be treated different from 'fatherland', since abstractions like states are bestowed with human features. Sets of these features may vary, even depending on the use or a non-use of a capital letter in each of these words. States associated with masculinity would provoke different expectations and perceptions than those associated with femininity.

Division of the world into the realms of male and female provides the basis for exercising power. In the simplest form that will be a power of coercion, which will be taken by the society as normal. Stereotypes and models of masculine and feminine behavior are ready to provide simple answers to boys and girls about what kind of reactions and roles a society is expecting from them. Most of girls and boys will find it difficult to resist those

expectations and will pick their habits, clothes, friends and hobbies accordingly. Even those who will be able to get free from stereotypes may still be expecting stereotyped behavior from others and will be reacting proceeding from these expectations. One may reject the right to violence based on sex, but it will be more difficult to resist it if there is a high chance for such violence because of stereotypic behavior of others. Gender-colored modes of thinking are quite tough to deal with.

Another way of how gender generates power is by blocking access to decision-making in certain areas. That mechanism is very close to the one of discrimination. Women may be denied access to certain positions, for instance in the government, or to certain fields, like national security or foreign policy. That denial is implicit and informal, but in many societies, it is a powerful mechanism for preventing women from shaping policies. Stereotypes about women's inability to perform certain functions may be widespread and often referred to. Notable formulas, like 'kinder, kuche, kirche' (German for 'kinder, kitchen, church') may provide examples of wide-spread beliefs of that kind. If in a society with such stereotypes a woman by any chance becomes a scientist, a politician or a military commander, she may face comparisons with males, which are often presented as compliments.

Realm of military conflicts, so dear to realists, provides multiple cases and ways of gender impact. Males are taken as 'natural' combatants, while women are largely perceived as victims – a stereotype, which persist no matter how often women become soldiers or how often men become subjected to violence in wars. There are much less female soldiers than male ones; but, as in case with presidents, this is probably because a society does not expect something like that from women; not because they don't fit. After all, women perfectly fit for being monarchs – if there are no legal barriers for that, created by some gender-stereotyped kings. Peter the Great of Russia signed a new Order of Succession in 1722, and there have been four female Empresses of Russia in the 18th century, who jointly ruled for 66 years; and two of them – Elizabeth and Catherine the Great – are usually credited as the most successful rulers. This example is certainly short of breaking social gender constructs of the Westphalian world, which have turned war and politics into a realm of masculinity.

A concept of patriarchy reflects on another mechanism for preserving subordinate status of women in a society. Patriarchy is more than a stereotype; it is rather an ideology installing dominance of males in a hierarchy of a society. That dominance takes different forms and is found in a variety of areas. In the history of the Western world there are exceptionally few women among philosophers and scientists, artists and composers, religious leaders and prophets. That's how the institution of patriarchy works. And the power of this institution is reinforced by stereotypes and inverted causal explanations: some may argue that there are few women among philosophers because women are not good at philosophy – which is certainly not the case. There are also competing explanations about emergence of

patriarchy, in particular about whether it is a biologically or socially based institution (Code, 2002). Early historical forms of patriarchy may be attributed to physiological differences between males and females, in particular to physical strength. Marxists explained patriarchy through institution of private property (Engels, 2010). Other explanations are also possible. The resulting effect of patriarchy was exclusion of women from decision-making and, more broadly, from active role in a political life; their subordinate position; and limited rights.

Gender also operates in more sophisticated ways. In addition to exclusion and discrimination, it also shapes normality, knowledge and theories. Standpoint feminism points out that what we know about international relations is not some objective unbiased knowledge. Instead, it is a set of theories which are mostly normative and designed out of masculine experience and vision. Thus they help sustain existing status quo, to which masculine dominance is an important part. Such a look at how gender functions in science resembles the one of critical scholars on problem-solving theories.

From a feminist perspective, we tend to think about the world in terms of dichotomies, with special meanings and values attached to subjects and objects, order and anarchy, freedom and necessity, culture and nature and so forth. The point (or the problem) is that the existing mode of thinking associates masculinity with more attractive elements in these pairs, thus turning gender into the source of power.

What if all presidents were women?

One of the most straightforward ways to understand feminist approach to international politics is through paying attention to how males and females are represented in the governments, diplomacy, higher position of international organizations and, generally speaking, how much they are involved into decision-making in foreign and security policy.

International politics has for a long time been the realm of males. Emperors and kings, first ministers and chancellors, with few exceptions, were males. Same was true about academic study of international relations. Thinkers and scholars, mentioned in this book as pioneers of most influential figures in various paradigms, are mostly males. Presidents and foreign ministers, leading scholars and experts in IR today are still mostly males, although some fundamental changes in female representation are evident. In the Soviet Union and early post-Soviet countries, a vast majority of students in quite few IR faculties were also males. Cases of women serving heads of states and governments were seen as exceptional and attracted additional attention. International politics seemed to be a predominantly male business.

...in spite of the presence of some women in foreign and defense policy leadership positions, the term “woman” is still antithetical to our

stereotypical image of a “national security specialist.” War and national security are areas where it has been presumed that women have little important to say.

J. Ann Tickner

These words written by J. Ann Tickner in 2006 (Tickner, 2006) may not reflect the real state of things in some societies, in which women are broadly engaged into expertise on foreign policy and security or hold offices of defense or foreign ministers. However, there is still a majority of countries in which the sentence above holds true.

Male dominance implies not only a lack of chances for a woman to participate in political decision-making. It results in a certain gender-colored mode of thinking about political, international and security issues. Questions of statehood, sovereignty, national interests or security were thought of within a male perspective, which, in turn, promoted resolve, authority, violence and many other attributes associated with masculinity. Images of heroes, defenders and warriors has been associated with males, setting stereotypes about masculine field of security, war and power, so often considered the core of international politics. Explanations for that state of things may vary on a broad spectrum from social to biological, but the result was that women were underrepresented in international politics, with their interests and visions largely ignored.

However, things have started to change. Expansion and popularization of feminist ideas after the Cold War was so rapid, that promoting women to higher offices has become a widespread practice, especially in democratic countries, where women often constitute majority of voters. Broad movements for emancipation of women and against gender discrimination gained widely popular. Gradually that set a scene for fundamental changes in women’s representation in all areas, including political.

In the 1980s, when feminist theories offered their initial views on international politics agenda, there were about five women in the world annually on top of executive power of a state, with slight changes in that number for some particular years. In the 2010s, the mode was 14. In 2021, 22 out of 193 countries had a female head of state or government; while in 13 countries there were at least 50% of women in the government (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). There is a clear tendency for an increase of women’s share in politics at all levels.

Parliaments, foreign services and even military are gradually losing their male-dominated image. More and more women are being elected or appointed in offices traditionally held by men. The upward trend is surely visible, and one might expect more women in power, diplomacy and international organizations in the future. Presumably, that would eventually lead to more equality, stability, social welfare, and less violence, including structural. Does that mean that the problem of gender in international politics is almost solved?

Not really. Just the simplest understanding of feminist ideas implies that equality in numbers would mean equality in power. A deeper problem is that ideas and visions of masculinity dominate political agenda and societal structures. These ideas may have been rooted in biological differences between sexes, but since then they have got social dimension through the notion of gender, gender stereotypes and expectations. If political leaders are expected to be tough, resolute and rational – features, attributed by stereotypes to males – then they will continue to pursue masculine agenda even being women.

Descriptive gender stereotypes shape beliefs about how males and females behave. For instance, men are believed to better handle military crises and terrorist threats and generally are considered to be better prepared for leadership in areas of security and foreign policy (Dolan, 2014). That stereotype not only would make people think that women are not as good for the job as men, if it's about the job of designing and implementing foreign and security policy. The stereotype would also generate incentives for women to behave as if they were men. Or even more than that: women, knowing about the stereotype, may actually try to outperform a behavior usually expected from men, i.e., to be even more resolute, tough and hard-lining.

A female perspective on some important notions and concepts of international politics presumably differs from a male one. A male perception of power is mostly about coercion; while a female perspective is about power-over type of relations, often unbalanced or unjust. However, a woman in a high office does not necessarily take a female perspective. If gender differences are discursive, then women would become trapped by stereotypes about masculinity and a male way of handling political issues. Even if all presidents are suddenly women, not much would change in the way international politics is arranged, if it is still operating along the lines of masculinity. Women in presidential offices would just take decisions as if they were men.

That means that the issue is not so simple. Providing women with higher chances to become elected or appointed at high offices through quotas or other legislature is only a part of the puzzle. Guided by existing stereotypes, women in offices may actually promote masculinity further or even overcome men in demonstrating resolve and coercion – just because they would think their opponents are expecting submissiveness and softness. The other part of the puzzle is about changing not so much who is in the office, but who they perceive political agenda and whether they are influenced by stereotypes which are still widespread in the society. And, of course, dismantling those stereotypes is another task on the feminist agenda.

Feminism on war and peace

War is important for feminist theories. It is a certain conjuncture of different levels at which feminism operates; and of different issues which are especially important to feminism. On the one hand, feminism provides an

alternative explanation of war to that of realism and other mainstream theories. On the other hand, war itself provides a variety of cases and patterns of discrimination, gender inequality and suffering.

Back in the 19th century ideas of peace have become central on the agenda of various women's organizations. Times of modernity and ideology opened up new ways for social activities; while times of industrialization, mass armies and nationalism raised concerns about the scale of future wars. Women's organizations at the time hardly demonstrated a truly feminist approach: they took difference between men and women for granted, well in accordance to dominating stereotypes. At the same time, they aimed at limiting violence and believed that women can do it better than men, since it is natural for them as mothers. Hardly a feminism by modern standards, that was nevertheless a move to challenge a masculine agenda which could be seen as partly responsible for destructive wars.

World War I provided a strong impetus for all kinds of pacifism, in particular to that promoted by women. Woman's Peace Party (WPP), established in 1915, manifested what may be called a feminized version of idealism, so influential at the time. Referring to security and economic roots of wars, WPP offered a mix of ideas with the view to limit violence. Removal of economic causes of war, introducing international police and downplaying radical patriotism were among them. Activities of WPP and other organizations during the war indicated that they perceived themselves as possible negotiators and mediators, and considered gender attributes as an advantage in that effort. To put it shortly, women were not attempting to changes existing gender lenses, but rather to use them to promote peace agenda globally.

Large-scale wars of the 20th century have promoted the image of women struggling for peace (or at least against war), extending the realm of political activity for women. However, at the same time dramatic and devastating world wars have consolidated a masculine political agenda by significantly enhancing the role in institutions, first of all army, associated with masculinity. Males have been considered as possessing the right to define fundamentals of foreign and domestic policy – just because of a traumatic experience of World War I and World War II. That experience has been over-generalized in many ways and impacted the future of how people perceived and acted in international politics. One of those ways has been about stereotyping males as protectors and females as victims – with all the broad consequences it could have for issues of war and peace.

There is an old story about war. It starts with war being conceived of as a quintessentially masculine realm: in it, it is men who take the decisions to go to war, men who do the planning, men who do the fighting and dying, men who protect their nation and their helpless women and children, and men who negotiate the peace, divide the spoils, and share power when war is over.

Carol Cohn

Issues of war and peace have been addressed by feminists in a way that would enable to go beyond strict frameworks of state agency. These issues have been rather seen as social interplay at different levels. Hence, most stereotypes, associated with belligerence, security and war should be dismissed. War is not about males, fighting to protect helpless females; as well as security is not about military dominance in a masculine fashion. Instead security is broad and multilayered, including at the level of being protected from a state violence.

An issue of war remains in focus of modern feminist theories; and their perspective is different from that of realism and neorealism. While the latter see a war as a result of structural factors or conflict of national interests, i.e., from a top-down perspective; feminist theories address consequences and impacts of militarized conflicts on various social groups and individuals, including women. War is a social phenomenon to be studied from a bottom-up perspective; with special attention to abuses, suffering and inequalities experienced by males and females in the course of military standoffs. Ironically enough, early focus of feminists on women's sufferings during wars contributed to sustaining images of women protecting children, being 'naturally' inclined to peace, and other maternalist attributes. These ideas reconfirmed gender stereotypes and may have prevented a more active stance of women on issues of hard security.

From the point of view of modern feminism, usual stereotypes surrounding wars, like a need for protection for weaker women or a 'natural' masculine violence, should be addressed and dismissed. Along with that, feminists argue, that their theory is better suited for explanation of modern wars, especially ethnic militarized conflicts, since feminism focuses on social relations and identity, which are playing a bigger role in modern wars than structural factors, underlined by realists (Tickner, 2006).

It may also be the case that feminist theory is well suited for explaining not only war but also peace. Positive peace has been taken as not only the absence of direct violence and coercion but also the lack of structural violence. Peace studies today pay much attention to issues of justice, economic and social causes of conflicts and wars. That brings their agenda quite close to that of feminism, which is also looking for ways to diminish inequalities and establish peace through non-discrimination.

Multiple focuses of feminism in IR

Just like (other) critical theories, feminism has multiple directions and faces. Within this approach there are numerous quite different schools, paying attention to quite different issues: methodology, inequality and discrimination, structural violence, rights of women, security and many more. They are hardly a unified theory; however, all of them are bringing in a point of oppressed and marginalized, as well as criticizing mainstream theories for taking for granted the state of things which should not be taken for granted.

Gender is taken as the central category, but in similar fashion reigning social structures can be critiqued for oppressing other groups, along with females, on the basis of socially constructed privileges.

Agenda of feminist theories in IR is extremely broad. It extends from issues of political economy, global inequality and security to grass-root level of family violence, human trafficking or prostitution.

Theoretical claims of feminism grew out from various social movements which were fighting discrimination of women. Dramatic events in the end of 1980s gave a chance to challenge both a domination of masculine approaches in IR and the focus of the discipline on wars. A crisis of mainstream theories at the end of the Cold War gave rise to numerous alternatives, shifting emphasis away from constellations of power and hard security towards ideas, norms, perceptions and social interactions. In that regard feminism has much in common with constructivism and critical theories.

Feminist theories have multiple issues in focus, and there are plenty of them addressing different aspect of international relations. Standpoint feminism claims that a better perspective can be obtained if views and interests of those oppressed are taken into account. Not only women are those who can be oppressed. Plural standpoint feminism also refers to other social groups. But the general idea is the same: experience of being oppressed should be taken into account and could be a basis of transformation existing social practices and institutions. In international politics, where there is so many various oppressed, that could significantly widen the focus of theoretical knowledge. Liberal feminism, probably the pioneering branch, aims at establishing equal rights for men and women and put an end to discrimination. Radical feminism offers an agenda that would not just put women on equal terms with men within a framework shaped by masculine attitudes; but counter that masculine framework with feminine values and roles. Marxist interpretation of feminism involves class struggle and issues of labor, as well as separation of public and private spheres. From this perspective, women has become subordinated to men, since capitalist development prioritized public sphere of production over private sphere of household; while social roles of males and females have been predefined in a way, which installed male dominance in a public sphere.

There is hardly an exhaustive list of all variations of feminism. There are more of them and counting. Apparently, the concept of gender and inequalities generated by existing social structures and stereotypes, provide a number of ways to discrimination and exercising power. And gender is not only about representation of women in power. It goes deeper. Social dimension of gender empowers males. It also provides them with bigger rewards and with more access to various resources, including power. Installing quotas for women in parliaments may help make this problem less visible, but will hardly remove structural limitations and privileges created by gender. Feminism, in most of its forms, seeks to uncover ways in which women are becoming subordinated. Like many other critical theories, feminism aims at emancipation.

Feminist theories surely address issues of methodology. Feminist research emphasized diversity of experience and points to the importance of reflexivity. As long as feminism is a critical theory, it implies the method of critique, in particular towards concepts of masculinity and gender. Discourse analysis and historical approaches are offered as the ones capable of desecuritizing the discipline and providing a much wider vision than the one, offered by traditional mainstream theories (Ackerly, True, 2010). Emphasis is also made on dialogue, which could help explore differences in both between feminist and non-feminist approaches; and among various feminist schools as well. Picking up a notion of traditional theory once again, one could point that it separates objects from subject, knowledge from everyday politics. Feminist theories, on the contrary, are paying special attention to the impact of (gendered) thinking on what international actors do. They depart from epistemology of traditional theories and suggest that approach from natural science would not work. Limited experience of male political practices can't be the basis for understanding the whole diversity of international relations.

Traditional theories are putting a state into the focus. States are considered to be unitary rational agents, with predefined interests, motivations and priorities. For feminist theories, analysis starts at lower levels of social interactions among groups and people, in particular involving females. Feminism is a social theory in a sense that it is about social relations, which are present at various levels of political interactions.

In fact, from a feminist perspective, states not only protect and provide security, but can also be a source of threats to citizens by excessive use of violence. Hence, feminists pay much attention to security at the levels of social groups, e.g., women, which may face threats and humiliation through direct violence and structural oppression.

Feminism has its take on issues of global economy as well. Global capitalism is seen as another manifestation of patriarchy, which generates material divisions and places women in a subordinated and disadvantageous position. Globalization strengthens that effect by enhancing structural oppression. Global institutions undermine protectionist economic policies and promote free trade, which leads to less protection of labor from a state and opens up more opportunities for exploitation of women.

Women seem to have a limited access to economic benefits and advantages; and they own a very small share of world's wealth, comparing to their share in global population. At the same time, women comprise a majority of poor people; while being a majority of labor force on a global scale. All in all, it seems like women work more while getting paid less – and that's a problem from a feminist point of view.

Bringing ontological and methodological focuses of feminism closer to IR domain, it should be noted that feminist theories perceive international politics as a very unbalanced realm from the gender perspective. It is especially applicable to the Westphalian world, arranged around states, wars and hard

security. Westphalian order was tailored in such a way that it perfectly met stereotypes about masculinity which have been reigning in the Western societies. Sovereignty itself, the foundation of Westphalian world, was associated with males, who were supposed and expected to demonstrate power, resolve and desire to dominate – much in the way states were expected to carry out their foreign policies.

While Westphalian world expanded from Europe elsewhere, gender stereotypes also followed. Eventually, masculinity was marked with independence, rationality and power on the global scale, while femininity implied subjectivity, obedience or just a lack of masculine features. Males were supposed to rule, while females were expected to comply.

Feminist theories of IR are certainly criticized from various directions. They are so unlike traditional mainstream theories in terms of methodology, that are often referred to as rather a branch of philosophy, than a science. They have a too broad scope of research. They often lack clear and unified understanding of even key concepts, like gender. They seek to critique and deconstruct existing social structures and gender stereotypes, but is it possible to shape a perspective IR agenda on such a basis?

With lots of questions still open and new ones certainly approaching, feminist theories have nevertheless become an important element in a kaleidoscopic vision of international relations provided by critical theories.

Recommended reading

- 1 Ackerly, B., True, J. (2010). *Doing Feminist Research in Political & Social Science*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
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Questions

- What do feminist theories have in common with critical theories?
- Will more women in politics and diplomacy make the world a safer place? Why?

- What role is played by stereotypes in shaping our understanding of gender roles in international politics?
- Are we living under masculine world order?

Key words

- Gender
- Stereotype
- Masculinity
- Patriarchy
- Standpoint feminism
- Radical feminism
- Liberal feminism

11 Non-Western approaches

The logic of the critical theory can be extended further, up to the point where it will be possible to say that IR theories are not only a part of a historical structure, but are constructed for some political, not just academic, ends. More specifically, that they are a part of hegemonistic discourse and are aimed at sustaining existing status quo, shaped by norms of Westphalian world order and Western supremacy.

If that's the case, the dominance of the Western, in particular, American paradigms, approaches, theories and concepts may be seen as a way to impose specific ways of understanding international politics. These ways may be supposed to reflect Western, in particular, American habits of dealing with international issues; and serve better for attaining specific goals of ensuring political dominance or keeping things in international politics as they are – providing the West with structural power and advantages. Many things that we know about international relations, described by such concepts as power, anarchy, hegemony, security, national interests or security dilemma shape the knowledge along the lines of state-centered, power-oriented competition, in which Western countries have so far been more successful.

From the perspective of many, there should be alternatives. In a world of political diversity it would be helpful to enjoy academic one as well. Bringing in various national takes and visions of international politics may help better understand other, non-Western ways of making foreign policy. After all, if there is English school, why not Chinese or Russian?

For decades, the Western way of understanding, teaching of and writing about international politics enjoyed unrivaled domination. But the world is changing, in at least two ways. First, it is becoming more diverse and complicated. Second, the balance of power, something the Western tradition has been paying so much attention to, is shifting – quite possibly not in favor of another Western challenger for hegemony. Wouldn't it be helpful to incorporate non-Western intellectual traditions, philosophies and approaches into the study of international politics? What people think about international politics and what is really becomes is highly interconnected. What if traditional ways we got used to think about national interests, power, security, interdependence and institutions are not fully applicable under non-Western realities, cultures or outlooks?

Why is Western IR not enough?

If knowledge and particular theories had citizenship, like athletes at the Olympic Games, one could have noticed that representation in the IR sector of the stadium is far from equality. Most paradigms and concepts we use to grasp international politics, as well as methods we use to process data, are offered by the Western approaches. Books and articles we read or advise students for reading, jargon we use or samples of how science in IR should look like – all that has been mostly suggested by the Western scholars. Best practicing of learning and teaching IR is found in American, British and European universities, and often the quality of others is measured by how closely they can emulate that experience.

In providing generalizations for explaining international politics, Western scholars refer to Western agenda, Western philosophy and Western history. IR students are mostly well aware of the wars waged by the Romans or Ancient Greeks, while being not so much informed about, for instance, Warring States period in Ancient China. They also know much about balance of power or sovereignty – institutes, which has been shaping foreign policies of the European powers, but not so much about important elements of strategic culture of non-Western states and civilizations.

Many would say there is nothing wrong with that. The key point is methodology, and if it is applied correctly, it wouldn't matter whether it is applied by an American or an Indian scholar. Furthermore, science has got no nationality. It should be unbiased and standardized. Scientific inquiries, after all, do take into account data from all over the world, without limiting it to sets of events that take place in the West. Regularities are either present or absent; and conclusions about that should not depend on a researcher's citizenship or cultural backgrounds.

These are strong points in support of those who maintain that IR should just follow the path of a positivist science, without looking for national peculiarities or specific approaches. But what if we assume that IR is different from, say, physics in a way that what we think or pay attention to as researchers does change the way international politics operates. Putting sovereign states and issues of power or security in the center of analysis, we marginalize other issues, around which interactions of actors could have been arranged in a completely different manner. In that case, there will be stronger demand for non-Western approaches and emphases. It's worth noting, that 'non-Western' does not necessarily imply geographical reference. 'Western' refers to research agendas, dominating theories and concepts, as well as focus on Westphalian order – no matter where exactly a scholar is located. Likewise, non-Western approaches will not necessarily be developed and implied in China, India or Russia. They may well be promoted in Western countries. Actually, due to better communication, financing and institutional support Western universities and scholars have higher chances of pioneering non-Western approaches and bringing them high into agenda. After all, a wave of interest towards non-Western theories of IR was raised

by Barry Buzan and Amitav Acharya, professors from LSE and American University respectively (Acharya, Buzan, 2010).

'Non-Western' approaches should not be taken for their geographical nominal value; neither should they be perceived as anti-Western. Juxtaposition of Western and non-Western theories would lead to just another competition for hegemony, i.e., exactly to what proponents of non-Western theories want to escape. So far projects of various national schools in IR theory mostly do not aim at replacing well-established Western paradigms. The point is in adding them with new concepts, insights and intellectual traditions. In that sense, of course, 'non-Western' implies not 'anti-Western', but rather 'post-Western'.

Western approaches can be criticized for applying what Stanley Hoffmann once called 'an Athenian perspective of the world'. In other words, they see world politics through the lens of great power rivalry and its consequences, paying little attention to extensive political and international experience of weak states and non-states. Symptoms of that may be seen, for instance, in geographical maps or the ways history is taught at schools and universities. Maps often picture one or another Western country in the center, while history is divided into periods according to major events with the participation of Western powers. Athenian, Westphalian, European or any other Western perspective puts states in focus, provides them with monopoly for violence, lay down national interests as driving forces of international politics and pays too much attention to great powers. Such an approach may be fine for dealing with pre- and Westphalian worlds, but today there is a need for more.

So, to put it short, Western IR is not enough because theories are political, while the world is not West-centric any more. Specifications of this short answer, however, are quite complicated.

The world has not always been West-centric. Actually, it has only been such in a relatively short period between the Age of Discovery and the beginning of the 21st century, most of which falls to the Westphalian world order with its specific emphasis on state sovereignty, hard security, nation-states, anarchy and diplomacy. It may be a coincidence that IR as an academic discipline emerged exactly during this period, thus reflecting its most important elements, framing perceptions and decision-making in certain ways, and serving political ends of retaining Western dominance; but it's not a coincidence that IR has been built on Western epistemological principles and methodology, as well as studied cases mostly from European history.

Before the world became West-centric, international politics as well as problems of war and peace have also been addressed. But that was rather philosophical than scientific inquiry. It has been characterized by diversity, with thinkers of the Ancient Greece and China, Rome and India competing with each other and with religious doctrines in putting forward explanations

of war, violence, statehood and pointing to ways of securing peace. These inquiries have been marked by plurality of truths and ideas; thus contemporary proponents of non-Western theories also pay special attention to pluralism as an epistemological basis of research, denying monopoly for a single truth.

When knowledge about international politics moved into the realm of science, the West has already dominated globally, both in politics and scientific research. Thus, the academic field about international relations we know has been shaped by Western approaches, methods and principles. The question is open whether it was established in such a way as to promote Western political dominance or just contributed into it unintentionally, by focusing on and shaping research in such a way that plays in favor of the Western powers; but it seems that we do perceive international politics through the lens designed at a very specific political moment in a very specific way.

To study United States foreign policy was to study the international system. To study the international system could not fail to bring one back to the role of the United States.

Stanley Hoffmann

If that's the case, why not expand our perspectives? Western academic practices have filtered out many philosophical concepts and approaches, leaving in the core those which best fit for describing political realities of the Westphalian international order. Since many elements of this order have been eroding and transformed, it may be useful to diversify scholarly practice in IR as well. It may also be possible that alternative ways of knowledge, approaches as well as epistemological and methodological foundations may be helpful in that. Non- or post-Western research agenda is different from that of theories built on rational choice, like realism or neoliberalism. Post-positivism rules the game; the differences between natural and social science are seen as crucial, in particular in what concerns objective knowledge. Interpretations matter, while international politics is not so much explained through discovering universal laws and regularities, but rather is provided with meaning. These epistemological foundations make pluralism of various national schools important and relevant.

One of the possible answers to the question 'why is there no non-Western international theory?' is because Western approaches hold agenda-setting capabilities, defining paradigms and examples of how science in IR should look like. One may assume that raising awareness about limitations of Western theories in the modern world accompanied by expanded opportunities of non-Western countries to promote their own ways of thinking about international politics would weaken the monopoly and give a floor to alternative theoretical views.

Chinese school of international relations

A search for a national approach to studying IR in China is a part of a much broader dilemma. For decades or even centuries it has been believed that a triumph of Western nations was possible because of a rapid modernization and technological progress on the basis of Western philosophy and science. To survive in tough geopolitical realities of the 20th century, China had to learn the Western way – including dogmas of Marxism and communist ideology, which are also Western by origin. But the desire to survive has been accompanied by a no weaker desire to preserve national identity and uniqueness of Chinese civilization. Modernization which would not devour core elements of national identity was China's big mission.

Same task holds about IR: to learn dominating Western approaches and make good use of them; but at the same time to devise tools which would help focus on a Chinese way.

Changes in a way IR is studied and taught in China have been no less radical and impressive than the rise of China in international politics in recent decades. It seems like the progress in various fields and areas tends to spill over and stimulate transformations in neighboring sectors. In particular, China's geopolitical successes may promote academic advances in IR, which, in turn could further improve China's international performance.

IR as an academic discipline in China reflects so many at the same time: Chinese expanding capabilities and changing status in international politics, ups and downs in adoption of Western approaches, rising interest in international politics, progress in methodology and – finally – a search for its own national school, better adopted to explain and guide Chinese foreign policy.

Before 1980s there was hardly a discipline of IR in China. When IR emerged as a special field of study, it was dominated by Marxist approaches, against the backdrop of which Western theories have been criticized. In the mid-1990s, theory of international relations emerged as a selective course in a number of BA programs.

Then, all of a sudden, the trend has changed. Chinese audience of IR scholars got acquainted with mainstream paradigms and most influential theories of the day, Western, of course. Theoretical knowledge in IR never lacked volume; thus an interest in American theories, approaches and methods was strong in China. Books were translated, approaches were learnt, students and professors went to American universities for studying and teaching. Today Chinese IR scholars are writing world bestsellers, taking part in numerous forums on IR theories and considering obstacles and perspectives for developing a Chinese school of international relations.

Within these several decades, China has grown to a potential challenger to American leadership, while the world has become much more diverse – and these changes, in view of many Chinese scholars, should be reflected in advancing new approaches to understanding international politics.

Debates about Chinese school of international relations resemble those about any other national school in IR. Proponents point out at changing political landscape and a need for a theory which would take into account not only general abstract and universal variables but also factors of strategic culture and tradition which certainly shape decision-making but are excluded from analysis. Skeptics respond that there is no national physics or biology, thus there should not be national school of IR; international politics is subject to regularities and laws which should be discovered by universal methods and approaches.

A significant part of arguments in favor of development of Chinese school of international relations revolves around the rise of Chinese power. It is assumed that a further ascent of China would require theories and approaches that would better describe and promote Chinese vision of leadership and Chinese interests by, inter alia, taking into account basic elements of Chinese tradition and strategic culture.

A list of these elements may have different editions. However, among most often mentioned and most significant features of Chinese understanding of international politics there are: strategic culture, going back to ideas of Sun Tzu and Confucius; a renewed ideology of Maoism; and the concept of *Tianxia*.

Sun Tzu has contributed significantly to our understanding of war and politics. His ideas are no less important to our knowledge of strategy and security than those of Thucydides, who, most likely, lived a century after Sun Tzu. *Peloponnesian War* by the great Greek historian is currently studied within university courses and is believed to be the basis of what we know about international relations, while his name is often a synonym to realistic tradition. *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu is credited less. These two pieces are in a way illustrative of a dominant influence of rationalist Western thought and a very Chinese way of laying down wisdoms of strategic interaction.

In a relatively short treatise, consisting of 13 chapters, Sun Tzu drafted fundamentals of strategy, not only military, but of what is now called 'grand strategy'. His central idea is laid out in the beginning: war is about deception, calculations and interplay of chances. But it is always better to make war as short as possible or to avoid it. By implying abstractions and unexpected analogies, Sun Tzu pictured war as a complex, multifaceted challenge for a state, a matter of life and death, which is too complicated to be fully controlled. Avoiding unnecessary wars has thus been an important element of Chinese strategic culture long before Hugo Grotius voiced a similar maxim, although from a more rationalist perspective.

Ideas of Sun Tzu have later echoed with Western thinkers. Some of them were developed further, for instance his advice to proceed from worst-case scenarios or the essence of containment, which classical realism could fully subscribe to. Sun Tzu has also anticipated approach of Richelieu by saying that a state that has perished cannot be restored, nor can the dead be brought back to life – that resembles the way the cardinal justified his long-lasting

support for Protestant states against Catholic Habsburgs during the Thirty Years' War. Sun Tzu applied a very rational-theory approach to war, pointing at importance of random events and impossibility to guarantee victory.

Some of Sun Tzu approaches have been opposed by later Western thinkers, most notably Carl von Clausewitz. From Sun Tzu's perspective, the best outcome is to subdue the enemy without fighting, while next to it is to defeat him. He proceeded by noting that the best war is to balk the enemy's plans, then alliances, then the army – and that is the essence of his general philosophy. Clausewitz, on the contrary, considered military victory to be a necessary prerequisite for political success.

The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

Sun Tzu

Ideas of Sun Tzu provide a holistic vision of war, peace, security and international politics. They summed up the dramatic experience of Chinese history and laid out maxims of strategic culture of China. The very name of Sun Tzu is so closely associated with strategy and art of war in China, that it is hardly possible to assess the country's grand strategy without reference to *The Art of War*.

Confucianism is another ancient source of Chinese strategic culture and is seen by many as a necessary element of Chinese school of international relations. It puts forward concepts of order, harmony, morality and institutions, uniting them into a single vision of international politics built on benevolence and self-restraint. Confucianism sees anarchy not as a natural state of things, but as a deviation, resulting from the break of a truly order, built on moral laws, traditions and loyalty. Restoring such an order may be seen as one of the grand missions of today's China, which is why Confucianism may be so appropriate for its foreign policy – and for studying it. A world order built on the principle of self-restraint is likely to be different from the ones arranged around balance of power, security dilemma or anarchy.

An important place in the Chinese school of international relations is reserved for elements of official state ideology. Communism is a general term; in Chinese case it underwent significant transformations, driven much by the same considerations of finding a national way of pursuing vision once stated in a Western doctrine, Marxism. Its postulates have been modified within Maoism, an ideology based on class theory, but adapted for a pre-industrial society. Its international dimension is characterized by the concept of the Three Worlds, different from the one within dependency theory and underscoring China's non-imperialistic foreign policy as compared to American and Soviet imperialisms. Maoism shared dialectical materialism approach of classical Marxism to demonstrate contradictions and sources of conflict in international politics. Later on, socialism with Chinese characteristics surfaced as an adapted communist ideology, better suited for changing realities of the day. Another turn in China's foreign policy strategy

and the country's rising power enabled additional modifications known as *Xi Jinping Thought*. Most likely, such ideological turns will continue with the shifts in the country's foreign policy; but a role of communist ideology shouldn't be underestimated.

The concept of *Tianxia* is in many ways central to Chinese long-lasting state tradition, political philosophy and vision of international order. It reflects basic ideas about China's role in history and is symbolic for Chinese political culture. Elaborated about three millennia ago, it provided a model of peace among people and joint access of nations to common good – a specific political way to universal harmony. Peace, joint access and harmony continue to play an exceptionally important role in Chinese foreign policy rhetoric even today.

The concept of culture itself in the Chinese language is denoted by two characters 文化. The first of them stands for culture, writings, literature, language – however the meaning was changing over time. Initially it referred to colored body with a sacred sense of being engaged with gods, or power of nature. By the time of Confucius, it acquired additional meaning of literature, culture, in a sense of heritage, transferred by meanings of writing. The second character means transformation. Together, the two hieroglyphs mean changes through culture, something Chinese saw as a special mission, a key element of *Tianxia*.

When the Zhou dynasty in China was replaced by the Qin dynasty, which established an empire, the meaning of *Tianxia* was expanded and modified to become a system of the world, rather than states; however initial emphasis on harmony and peace remained. Zhou secured peace and order by referring to *Tianxia* as a system capable of ensuring harmony for all and relying not on coercion and hegemony, but on institutions and common good.

That can be pictured in geometrical terms as well. The skies were perceived as a circle, while the Earth was seen as a quadrant. The projection of sky on Earth leaves open angles, corresponding to uncivilized barbarians, who were surrounding the 'all-under-heaven' China, a Celestial Empire. Its mission was to bring civilization to the angles, and a special role in the process has been attributed by ancient Chinese to the emperor. There is a well-known response by the Chinese Emperor Qianlong to King George III of Great Britain, saying that the Celestial Empire has no need to import manufactures of outside barbarians. That was in 1792, and that is how long the tradition of *Tianxia* has been a part of China's view of the world and its role in it.

Apart from civilizing barbarians, *Tianxia* offered a world-home system, reflecting unity in diversity. That's one of the reasons why such a worldview can be highly demanded today in a globalized world, where egoistic policies of national interests may be replaced by constructing family type relations among polities, based on harmony. From the Chinese school perspective, *Tianxia* may help overcome most of juxtapositions so characteristic for Western philosophical and theoretical approaches by seeing the world as a whole, arranged around moral principles and political institutions.

It still remains to be seen whether a project of drafting a Chinese school of international relations will be successful to the point of full-scale competition with mainstream Western theories. But elements of Chinese philosophical tradition and strategic culture are surely capable of expanding our knowledge about international politics.

Islamic paradigm

Religion would be the keyword, denoting Islamic paradigm in IR theory. In most Islamic countries, religion is shaping and dominating political theories in general and theories about international politics in particular. It provides a specific outlook of the world – a specific in a sense that Islamic paradigm doesn't look like a finalized set of axioms and theorems, like classical realism, for example. It is rather a set of concepts, beliefs and perceptions often guided by universal principles – as universal as religious principles may be.

Islamic paradigm offers a non-Westphalian view on international politics – which is non-surprising, given that Islam is a millennium older than a Westphalian world order. This outlook's main components have been crystallized in the Middle Ages, when nation-states have yet been out of sight. Those were the days of flexible borders and changing loyalties, and, most importantly, a strong impact of religion on international politics.

When Westphalian principles expanded and gained dominance in international relations, Islamic states had to accept them. These principles were – and still are – territorially based. They see possession of territory a key prerequisite for national sovereignty, and put control over territories into the heart of international politics. In some sense ideology of nationalism replaces religion, while symbols of a nation may acquire religious meaning, with a mythology of their own.

But a vision of *Ummah*, *Caliphate* and of unity of Muslims survived, even if in the shadow of institutionalized Western foreign policy practices. Today, when the world is moving into a post-Westphalian direction and is more culturally and civilizationally diverse, the time may be coming for another closer look at how relations, in particular among Islamic countries, may be arranged along alternative lines.

Within Islamic paradigm the world doesn't look as an anarchical coexistence of egoistic national states.

Instead there is a world of three large areas arranged in accordance to relations with Islam: *dar al-Islam*, *dar al-Harb* and *dar al-sulh*. *Dar al-Islam*, a home of Islam, contains countries ruled by Islamic governments in accordance with Islamic norms and traditions. This is supposed to be a land of peace, as opposed to *dar al-Harb* or a land of war, countries outside the Muslim world, which should be subjected to a struggle for expansion of Islam, a struggle, sometimes referred to as *Jihad*.

When a territory of peace borders a territory of war, a security dilemma, so well known to IR scholars, arises. Since it is next to impossible to define

how much security is enough, the only way for ensuring it is often through controlling the environment. Coexistence of dar al-Islam and dar al-Harb may turn expansion to a necessity – up until the moment when the whole world becomes the former. That has much to do not with religion, but with strategic uncertainty. Same reasoning stood behind, for instance, Russia's 'sense of insecurity' as George Kennan once called it (Kennan, 1946). Rapid expansion of Caliphate in the 7–8th centuries can also be explained by that reference. Such is the mechanics behind the process when even the most peaceful and high-minded commitments may trigger violence and aggression – due not to religion or values, but to strategic considerations.

A third realm, *Dar al-sulh* or a land of treaty is where non-Muslims and Muslims have reached a truce. Non-Muslims in this space include *ahl al-kitāb* and *ahl-Dimmah*. The former are people who received revelation, but misunderstood it. The term refers mostly to Christians and Jews, the People of the Book. Relations between them and Muslims are regulated by an extensive set of norms and rules which may truly resemble a peace treaty in terms of laying out numerous details. *Ahl ad-Dimmah* are those non-Muslims who accepted the rule of Muslims and got protection.

Within such a framework, the world doesn't look anarchical. On the contrary, it is rather well-ordered and regulated by defined norms. These divisions are subjected to different interpretations and may even seem irrelevant, at least in their classical form. However, although it may be difficult to see their application to everyday international politics, they shape perceptions, impact public opinion and provide ideological foundations for thinking about foreign policy and the world. Islamic paradigm is focusing on relations between Muslim and non-Muslim worlds, be it in a way described above or any other. It perceives these relations as historically conditioned, dynamic, and suggests normative prescriptions about what should be done. International system in Islamic interpretation is far from anarchy, self-help principle and abstract national interests. On the contrary, it is ordered and provides much more determination for states than even structural constraints described by neorealists.

Within such a vision of the world, the concept of *Ummah*, a community of Muslims, is becoming a cornerstone. Ideally, Ummah should unite all Muslims and be ruled by a spiritual leader – a world order unattainable under current conditions, but the one still shaping the normative side of Islamic perception of international politics. It can also be understood in a narrower sense, close to Western understanding of a nation, however still broader than that. Unlike a classical Westphalian nation-state, which implies control over territory and fixed national borders, Ummah is primarily about ruling people, and thus may be seen as an alternative to a nation-state. The notion of Ummah as a community is linked to pan-Islamism, a specific ideology placing Muslim community into the center of a large group identity. Islamic nationalism, offering a religious marker of identity, is different from pan-Arabism and other nationalist ideologies, reflecting the integrity of Ummah.

Sharia, Islamic law, is based on religious norms and prescriptions and it defines all aspects of life of a Muslim. In Islam there is no distinction between law, religion and moral norms; thus *Sharia* becomes an important element of Islamic view on world order.

Vast majority of world's Muslims are Sunni. However, the take of Shia is also very characteristic, partly because of historic and political features of Iran, the biggest Shia country. In a number of ways Iran plays a special role in Islamic world. Long tradition of greatness, legacy of the Achaemenid Empire – arguably the greatest Empire in history, deep-seated perception by Iranians of their country as playing a unique place in history and international politics, have contributed into installation of special political institutions and practices after the Sassanid Empire has been defeated by Arabs in the 7th century. A decisive battle, the Battle of Nahavand in 642, often referred to as 'The Victory of Victories', has been a severe blow to the Persians and their Iranian-centric worldview. When Islam started to expand in Iran, it interacted with already existing strong local political traditions. Since Achaemenids, Persians perceived king's power as hereditary and divine – which was quite different from Sunni's understanding of Caliphate's institutional setting. Dogmatic and political conflicts erupted and Shia opposed themselves to a vast majority of Sunni, which resulted in a series of uprisings and wars, adding an element of ever-lasting struggle to the international outlook of Iranians. A complicated history of continued fighting with neighbors and, later on, British and Russian colonizers, strengthened that effect: today Shia's take on international politics is more antagonistic.

A concept of *Caliphate*, a single Muslim state, is another cornerstone of the Islamic paradigm. It is inspired by reference to unity, religious and political; and to history, where a period from the 8th till the 14th century is marked as the *Islamic Golden Age*. That was an era of prosperity and greatness, cultural achievements and scientific primacy – and, like every golden age, that has been lost one day, leaving memories of the past and images for the future.

Islamic states used to play a special role in international politics. Shortly after Islam was founded, the Umayyad Caliphate and the Abbasid Caliphate, controlling large spaces from Western Europe to Central Asia in the Middle Ages, were among leading contenders for power at the time. Ottoman Empire, which claimed caliphate in the 16th century, was a systemic threat to most influential European dynasties, from the Habsburgs to the Romanovs, up until World War I – and certainly one of the world's great powers. Arabic states in the Middle East, as well as Iran and Turkey have been comprising a highly sensitive and turbulent regional security system in the 20th century; with its (geo)political significance rising further in the 21st century as the role of religions and civilizations increased. Today most Muslims live in South Asia and the Middle East, while large communities may also be found in non-Islamic countries, most notably India, China, Russia, and in Europe. Islam is a fastest-growing world religion, and it is global.

Given that, understanding how Islamic paradigm perceives politics is truly important.

But if there is the Islamic paradigm in IR, why shouldn't one mention the Christian paradigm as well?

Religions provide different ways of understanding the world and, more importantly for IR, they have different impacts on decision-making and are translated into political narratives in different ways. In that regard speaking of the Islamic paradigm of international politics seems more justifiable than of the Christian one, at least in what concerns the world of today. However, before power of kings prevailed over that of Popes, and before secularization in the West; and before institutions and structures of a nation-state subordinated all the rest, it could have been possible to identify a Christian approach to international politics as well. Christendom was a unifying concept, Popes were powerful international actors, chivalric orders prevailed in battles over states and Crusades were in some way manifestations of the power of Church.

When the Roman Empire collapsed in the 5th century, three large geopolitical realms gradually emerged on its former vast territories in the following 200 years: Western European kingdoms, Eastern Roman Empire and Caliphate. One of the decisive differences among them was in how religion was interconnected with politics. Christian churches have been involved into a long competition with secular authority with mixed results in the beginning and a loss to kings in the end. In Byzantium Empire, emperors have got an upper hand from the start, and Orthodox Church has become subordinated to their political interests. In Western Europe, it took much longer before kings of the biggest states consolidated enough power to feel themselves independent from the Pope. That has been preceded by centuries of institutionalized conflict. Due to those developments Christianity has never reached the level of universality of Islam; while Caliphate has been a state completely based on Islam.

Westphalian order itself has been established to draw the line under religious conflicts in Europe and ensure state sovereignty as a key principle of arranging internal and international politics. Decisions and policies of Cardinal Richelieu are illustrative and even symbolic in that regard, since the top church hierarchy preferred state interests to religious dogmas – and made that choice a universal principle.

For Islamic states things went on differently, and they continued to see international politics through the lenses of religion. Dominating role of Islam in politics was added with recollections of the Islamic Golden Age to secure decisive influence of religious principles. Nevertheless, the Ottoman Empire, a great power in the 17th century, had to adapt to new principles of a world order, elaborated by Western states. It wasn't alone in that: many other states also had to, since the world has become euro-centric. In some cases, like the one of Russia examined below, the process of adaptation resulted in a cultural, political and philosophical duality, under which formal

political institutions were established under the Western example, but some space has always been reserved for ‘peculiarities’, conditioned by historical or civilizational differences. References to ‘sovereign democracy’ in Russia today are continuation of that trend.

Like the Ottoman Empire before, today’s Islamic states are also involved into the usual practices of international politics, arranged around nation-states and their interests. They accept the principle of sovereignty, use diplomacy and are members to international organizations. They even fight wars with each other. But at the same time there are ‘peculiarities’ in perception, a common drive for unity and a strong impact of the glorious past. These nuances may be hidden or shadowed behind what looks like a regular Western style foreign policy, but they should be better kept in mind.

One of such nuances, which seems simple, but is complicated, is the concept of *Jihad*, probably, the most immediate association with Islamic IR for many. Since Islamic paradigm is built on religion and focuses on relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, it is always tempting to oversimplify the picture by pointing to Jihad as the main explanation of conflicts along these lines. But most of the time it is misleading. Jihad is a very complicated and controversial concept, within Islamic discourse as well. A notion of ‘war’ and history matters: when Quran was heaven-sent to Muhammad in the 7th century, wars were quite straight and open, implying much more direct meaning than in today’s world of hybrid and asymmetric warfare. ‘Non-Muslims’ were also quite distinguishable and specific, namely in neighboring big powers, Byzantine Empire and Sassanid Empire. Thus, Jihad as a war against non-Muslims has had different connotations in geopolitical realities of the 7th century from what it means today. Contemporary concept of Jihad is more general and open to competing interpretations.

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.

The Quran, 2:190

Although it is possible to fit implications of foreign policies of Islamic states into frameworks of traditional IR theories, there’s a considerable risk of missing out some important elements of how these foreign policies are shaped. More generally, Islam offers a very specific view on all aspects of life, including politics, both internal and international. Without knowing about characteristic features of this outlook, it is impossible to see much beyond implications on the surface, most importantly real driving force behind Islamic states’ relations among themselves and with the rest of the world. That’s what Islamic paradigm of IR proceeds from – and that’s what it offers as a main focus of inquiry. As one may see, state borders are not seen by Islamic paradigm as primary elements of international politics, like they are in a current edition of world order. Communities are what matters, in particular religious ones. International relations from such a viewpoint

are not so much continuous conflicts and wars over borders of states – as they may appear after examining history of international politics and significance attached to territorial integrity by most of the states today – but about hearts and minds of people.

The Global South perspective

The view on international relations from the Global South is broad. It encompasses numerous issues in a variety of ways, focusing on injustice and inequality of current structures of dominance, which may be continuing the practice of colonialism even after formal decolonization. Complicated relations between former colonies and former colonial powers may still be heavily influenced by the legacy of the past, embodied in social discourses, division lines, structural violence and dependency. The world may be different from what mainstream theories depict, and that first of all concerns political agendas of the developing countries – numerous countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are often referred to as the *Third World* or the *Global South*.

To feel these differences one could get acquainted with rich and diverse literature, mass culture, philosophy and social practices of the countries from the Global South, especially since 1950s, when decolonization started to release the potential of former colonies. But in order to conceptualize the ways Global South perspective on international politics is different from mainstream IR theories it is important to have a closer look at the North-South division line, postcolonialism studies and dependency theory.

International politics is much about divisions and lines. Thus, in addition to state borders dividing states, there is also a macro level of division, at which West is against the rest (or the East), civilizations compete with each other and, most importantly from the Global South view, the North endlessly utilizes its advantages over the South.

This specific division line is political, economic and geographical. Southern countries are more often homes to authoritarian regimes, and democracies there tend to be much less sustainable. They are places of revolutions and civil wars. Military conflicts are much more often found in relations between South and North or within South than within North. In the South anarchy, security dilemmas and short-term interests are much stronger; while in the North interdependence, integration and international regimes prevail. Lack of leverage often turns countries of the South into bases for terrorists. All in all, political, security and international agenda look completely different for countries, divided by that line.

Geography, probably, has the least to do here, but it's symbolic in many ways. It is assumed that countries to the South of a latitude of 30°N, with the exception of Australia and New Zealand, are significantly poorer than those to the North. This specific line is often named after Willy Brandt, a former German Chancellor, who was heading the commission,

examining the differences in global economic development. Alternatives latitudes are also possible, while the general division is clear: highly developed countries in the North against poor countries in the South, many of which are former colonies. That suggests that poverty has something to do with the colonial system, and that former colonial practices are far from over and continue to shape perceptions of normal in a very specific way. Economic and political-economic effects are examined, *inter alia*, by the dependency theory; while a broader IR agenda is in the focus of postcolonialism studies.

An issue of dependency has been systemically addressed by Western neo-Marxists in a quite Western manner. Core elements of dependency theory, in particular Frank, have been examined above. At the same time ideas of dependency are core to the Global South paradigm – however; to qualify as non-Western they require being non-Western. This is the right moment to recollect a non-Western approach which is seen by many as the most successful – a set of Latin American theories of dependence, launched in the 1960s under very special conditions of capitalist global economy development of the time.

Why Latin America? Like states in Asia and Africa, Latin American countries experienced serious problems with economic performance and development in the second half of the 20th century. Striking contrast between few rich and lots of poor, lack of economic progress and political systems with authoritarian profile, dominated by oligarchs were the common features. But at the same time, it was Latin America where the countries enjoyed the longest record of independence, and scholars there could hardly blame recent colonial practices for everything bad. Existing problems were a specific intellectual challenge for Latin American scholars; while offered solutions have shaped the political agenda for the governments in the region. Even words like *dependistas*, i.e., adepts of dependency theory; and *cepalista*, derived from Spanish acronym for abbreviation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, have become markers of special status of Latin American scholarship of dependence.

That, however, didn't mean Latin American scholars wouldn't make an attempt to place responsibility for poor economic performance on someone else. A Latin American dependency theory is still about how functioning of global capitalism and structural factors makes some states rich at the expense of many others.

Brazilian economist Theotonio Dos Santos has put forward his own version of dependency theory, which has broadened the horizons of dependency to claim that dependency is the most important feature of social and economic development of poor countries. Growing global economic interdependence in the 1960s and 1970s brought about new forms of dominance, including by the transnational corporations; and centers of dominance were seen to be transforming global development into accumulation of wealth. Another Brazilian economist, Ruy Mauro Marini, suggested the concept of

super-exploitation, built upon the views of Dos Santos and what is generally known as Marxist theory of dependence. It suggested breaking dependency as the only possible way of overcoming underdevelopment.

Fernando Cardoso, a Brazilian sociologist and, of course, the former President of Brazil, paid most attention to structural factors. Together with Enzo Faletto, a Chilean sociologist, he laid out the concept of *associated-dependent development*, which reflected the possibilities for some development for poor countries, in which domestic ownership of industry was high enough (Cardoso, Faletto, 1979). Cardoso assumed that intervention of the core countries into periphery generates instability, both within the countries of the periphery and in their relations with the center.

Mexican economist Alonso Monteverde has come up with the concept of *subdevelopment capitalism*, emphasizing that Latin American countries have had completely different trajectories of capitalist development than European states.

A rich experience of Latin American countries, in particular in fighting with poverty and attempting to catch up with the West, has contributed into formulating an original and influential view on how international political economy functions. This approach from Latin America has been highly competitive against Western theories about and around dependence and this is one of the most well-known examples of breaking monopoly of Western IR theories.

Dependence theory explains why former colonies tend to stay poor. A wider look at the problems they face is offered by postcolonialism – a broad approach, focusing on discourses, perceiving ‘others’, issues of superiority and inferiority; and doing it by a variety of ways.

From a postcolonial perspective, the end of formal colonization did not bring about justice and equality. Global system remains unbalanced, structural violence persists, while *colonialism without colonies* continues to negatively affect countries of the Global South.

The logic of class struggle plays an important role in postcolonialism, and that struggle is seen at the global level. From the point of view that many in the North would agree with, the gap between rich Northern and poor Southern countries is due to the differences in the levels of development of the societies, literally because the latter are undeveloped. That often may imply sociological connotations, referring to lower levels of culture, higher levels of aggression or less developed institutions. The problem with such an approach, from the Global South perspective, is that it concentrates on biases instead of looking for underlying economic and structural factors. States in the South are poor not because they are ‘underdeveloped’, but because of inequality of chances created by flow and accumulation of capital globally.

Social discourses are built accordingly. They continue to set a line between North and South, West and non-West, just the way it went before decolonization. Within these discourses societies in former colonies continue

to be in a completely different coordinate system. These discourses help sustain a system of subordination, inequality and domination of the North over the Global South.

The concept of 'others' and the way others are perceived politically are important in that regard. It describes how people are different; but that difference also implies inequality. It is not the way national identities may differ from each other. It is the way one group legitimizes its dominance over the other(s). The concept of 'others' has been developed in details in Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (Said, 1978), where it was assumed that the world has been once artificially divided by the Europeans into the occident and the orient, where the former implied civilized and the latter – uncivilized. This installed 'we' and 'they' approach and provided legitimization for violence and colonization; as well as grounds for defining identity in a broader sense. In a way, that resembles Chinese *Tianxia* worldview with a need and a ground for civilizing the rest of the world, which initially is inferior. This division has been deeply imprinted into social practices, education for instance, and helped install corresponding political structures and institutions. Postcolonialism seeks, inter alia, to uncover such practices.

A look at the map of Africa is always striking for a schoolchild, due to straight lines of interstate borders. They are artificially drawn. The boundaries and the concept of a state itself have been imposed on the former colonies by colonial powers – as well as understanding of state sovereignty and other attributes of a Westphalian world. In a way these borders are symbols of postcolonial legacy, including also security dilemmas, struggle for power, relative gains and other elements of interstate mechanics, engaged by colonial powers. To a certain extent, the IR itself, as a discipline, may be seen as a part of colonial legacy, given its birth in the height of colonial and Westphalian era. It may be even more true about traditional mainstream theories with their concentration on power, neglect of history and unified epistemology.

Colonialism has been actively utilizing racial, cultural, linguistic and other visible differences to impose a vision according to which some people are better fit for ruling, while some others should subordinate. That narrative played an important role in establishing and sustaining dominance of white colonizers over non-white colonized people. Symbols and remnants of what has been a common practice continue to play a role in numerous societies of the Global South.

A view from the Global South points at long-term effects of colonial system, which partly survived even after it has been dismantled. These effects are reflected in social discourses and global imbalances in economic development. Political agenda of the Global South is filled with conflicts, violence, discrimination and poverty, and, more generally, is different from the agenda of the Northern countries. Any attempt to theorize about international politics should take that into account.

Russian theory of international relations: project in the making

While it is still an open question whether there is any special Russian way of understanding international politics; it is absolutely clear that there once was a Soviet way. What can now be found in IR curricula of Russian universities is to a large extent a result of attempts taken by Russian scholars after the fall of the USSR to bring the way international politics is studied and taught in line with more general, i.e., Western, practice. Otherwise those curricula would have still been filled with courses on philosophy, political economy and history.

An enthusiastic runaway from Marxist interpretations of international politics has, on the one hand, made realism a dominant paradigm among Russian scholars for a while. It has become fashionable to think and talk about international relations in terms of struggle for power, mistrust, security dilemmas and great powers. Probably, that also partially shaped perceptions of the Russian leadership as well and thus contributed into evolution of Russia's foreign policy.

On the other hand, neo-Marxist approaches have been taken mostly skeptically, especially in the 1990s. That could be felt in the university environment in particular, where students demonstrated strong interest towards realism, neorealism and neoliberalism, while avoiding referring to dependency theory, world-systems analysis or classical Marxism. These approaches have in some sense paid the price for political failure of the first communist state, the USSR.

Quite ironically, after introducing enough Western texts into university courses and adopting basic Western IR paradigms, approaches and categories, some Russian (and not only) scholars have been posing a question about whether there should be a Russian approach to international problems – an approach that would fit better for both understanding what Russia does internationally and for pursuing Russian political interests, than traditional Western paradigms.

The way international politics was studied in the Soviet Union was different from the Western way. Ideologically, there was an unquestioned dominance of Marxist and Leninist approaches. Whatever one's academic piece was about, it should have had references to works by Marx and Lenin. Conclusions in most cases have been known way beforehand. Generally speaking, the task of science was not in putting forward theories and testing hypotheses, but in framing facts up the way they could supplement existing ideological guidelines.

Methodologically studying IR was mostly about applying history, while history itself was a much dogmatized list of interpretations, carefully omitting uncomfortable facts and competing explanations. In Soviet universities, teaching IR was either a modified version of teaching history, with more emphasis on political history of other nations (compared to regular history), or a part of teaching sociology and philosophy, with all their Soviet

peculiarities. Professors at IR faculties were mostly ‘doctors of historical sciences’; while an imaginary profile of an IR specialist resembled that of a historian or a philosopher (i.e., Marxist-Leninist) with a good knowledge of one or two foreign languages.

In some way that was an example of emancipation from Western political thought, something critical theories may have welcome. But that emancipation came at a high price. A monopoly of Marxist and Leninist approaches made it difficult for the Soviet and post-Soviet scholars to compete globally. They had to spend considerable amount of time and effort to just get in touch with paradigms, theories and methods in IR, familiar to any Western student of the discipline.

Adopting Western standards of knowledge and theorizing about IR may still be the dominant trend in Russia, but it has already been accompanied by attempts to find or add some specific Russian flavor to the discipline. Among Russian IR scholars it is widely believed that there is another way somewhere, a way not so much framed by the Western schools of thought and the one that takes into account or even builds upon Russia’s special role in world’s history and politics. From such a perspective, traditional mainstream paradigms are good for keeping the status quo; while what Russia has been actually doing since the beginning of the 21st century, was aimed at undermining it. Different sorts of discussions about balance of interests, great power politics, multipolarity and imbalances of the post-Cold War world order dominate Russian IR agenda.

From the point of view of those looking for a national theory of international relations, for understanding what Russia’s foreign policy is about it would be helpful to pay special attention to some of its characteristic features.

These features are quite numerous. It may even seem that Russia is very different from the rest of big powers, especially after reading enough classical Russian literature of the 19th century. But in more practical terms, most of issues making Russia’s foreign policy special and thus requiring some personalized, nationally colored approaches are concentrated around perception of territory and security, Orthodoxy, historical identity, some national idea and the concept of *the Russian World*. Attempts to center the analysis on these issues and get a more nuanced picture of Russia’s foreign policy are currently shaping what is often called *Russian theory of international relations*.

Russia is the biggest country on Earth, accounting for about 11% of world’s landmass. Even after losing considerable territories at the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia kept the leading spot. Its continuous expansion since the 16th century has generated numerous political implications, for instance by triggering security dilemmas in relations with neighbors, implying specific imperialist policies or creating a strong link between control over territory and national identity. Russia’s focus on territories in foreign and security policy is, perhaps, more noticeable than the one of any other great power.

Other elements of geopolitics also matter for the Russian view of international relations: borders, transportation routes and buffer states in particular. Russia has got almost no ‘natural borders’; instead, there is vulnerability for wide open spaces, particularly, in steppes, which were homes of so many painful attacks on Russian territory from outside throughout history. Lack of protection has been driving Russia to expansionist policies, encouraging mistrust and suspicion. Long and often purely protected borders instigate emphasis on military force, strong impact of strategic considerations on foreign policy and excessive alarm about external threats. Those, in turn, often made Russia spend a bigger share of its resources for international competition or rivalry. Special attention has also been paid to transportation routes long before Russia became an energy superpower with corresponding geopolitics of pipelines attached. Trading routes in Medieval, access to seas, in particular the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, as well as other geopolitically important territories, obsession with the Turkish Straits in the 19th century, as well as oil and natural gas pipelines today are also of primary importance for a country, which perceives itself as a typical continental nation in Halford Mackinder’s classification.

Large territories and constant perceived lack of security make Russia pay special attention to neighboring countries, from time to time claiming ‘near abroad’ to be the area of the country’s special interests. Attempts to limit freedom of neighboring states and/or create and control permanent threats to their security, from ‘Finlandization’ to ‘frozen conflicts’ in Moldova, Georgia or Ukraine, have become another trademark of Russia’s security and foreign policy.

According to one of the most well-known proponents of the Russian theory of international relations, Andrei Tsygankov, there should be a link between theorizing international politics and Russian political thought, which has been traditionally focused on discussing Russia’s grand role in the world. Several steady traditions of thought, like Westernism (*zapadnichestvo*), Statism (*derzhavnichestvo*) and Civilizationalism (‘Third Rome’ concept), can be outlined. Debates among them on issues of freedom, state, history have become everyday intellectual practice, around which Russian political philosophy has been arranged for a very long time. This is supposed to become an alternative or supplement to studying IR within traditional Western paradigms, an alternative which would enable explanation and preservation of historical Russian identity and system of values. Generally, references to values are often found in the books and articles of proponents of a special Russian outlook – which may seem surprising as Russian philosophy and culture, including the already mentioned political thought have mostly been developed within the frameworks of the Western philosophy.

Some of the elements of identity and values may be found in the doctrine of the *Russian World*, which has become increasingly instrumental for Russian foreign policy recently, but also carries some deep self-reflections.

Generally speaking, Russian World is a mixture of ideas, narratives and slogans from the Russian history of the recent two centuries, accompanied by the *theory of official nationality*, which rested on orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality and was put forward by Count Sergey Uvarov.

The concept of the Russian World is broad. It entails several dimensions and can be applied in a variety of ways and within different contexts. From a civilizational perspective, it is a set of values and practices, a specific way of life defined by a mixture of traditions, writing culture, philosophy, arts and Orthodoxy. From a linguistic point of view, the Russian World is all about the Russian language and entails all Russian-speaking groups, regardless their origin and place of living. Somewhere in between there is an integrative approach, which defines the Russian World as the idea of unity of Eastern Slavic countries – Russia, Ukraine and Belarus – on the basis of language, culture, religion, history and ‘common ancestry’.

The concept of the Russian World has been put forward as one of the key ideological foundations of Russia’s influence abroad, especially in the neighborhood. Initially it did not imply specific focus on ethnic Russians, instead targeting Russian-speaking ‘compatriots’. Today the concept of the Russian World is inseparable from foreign and security policy of Russia. Russian diasporas are large and reside in numerous countries. Dramatic events of history in Eastern Europe generated several waves of migration from the Russian Empire, Soviet Union and post-communist Russia. Large and numerous Russian-speaking communities appeared all around the world. Probably that is what the Russian president Vladimir Putin had in mind when on November, 26, 2016 at the award ceremony of the Russian Geographic Community he stated that Russia has no boundaries – which brings us back to geographical and security connotations of the Russia foreign policy.

The Russian World implies not only language. It is a complex narrative and a specific outlook, which has become not only an instrument of propaganda, but a tool for constructing identities. It addresses non-ethnic elements of identity, emotional, historical and ideological connotations. It relies heavily on Orthodox version of Christianity, picturing Moscow as a spiritual center and a Third Rome.

The Russian World concept plays exceptionally important role in the near abroad, a region where Moscow’s most vital security and geopolitical interests are concentrated (Table 11.1).

Table 11.1 The Russian World

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Markers</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civilizational • Linguistic • Integrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Traditions • Language • Orthodoxy

Debates of its own are also possible inside the Russian theory of international relations. Statism is concentrated primarily on a strong state and security, an obsession resulting from learning tragic lessons of Russian history and perception built on worst-case scenarios. Westernism is about freedom, human rights and closer association with the West. 'Third Rome' approach pays primary attention to civilizational aspects, culture and identity. Sounds like familiar debate among realists, neoliberals and constructivists, doesn't it? But a more nuanced and reflecting on some specific Russian features – at least that's what proponents of the Russian theory of international relations believe.

In philosophical sense Russian idea has traditionally been about exclusiveness, unique values, identity, special geopolitics and a mission in the world. Whether that could be effectively translated and incorporated into a national school in studying IR still remains to be seen.

What's next? An epilogue

In the beginning of the 20th century, knowledge about international relations was a curious mix of history, law studies and abstract philosophical ideas, sometimes quite exotic. That knowledge contained much wisdom as a record of history of previous generations, a lot of idealistic faith in beautiful peaceful future, but it lacked conceptualization and effective methodology as well as reliable rooting in realities of international life. Requirements were modest: any reasoning about war, peace, state interests of foreign policy qualified as knowledge. First theories did not so much explained what was happening in international politics, but rather described how things should be arranged.

In some sense, similar patterns may be observed today. Abstract speculations about international events may also qualify as knowledge, while normative prescriptions are often valued higher than causal interconnections. A special charm to IR theories is provided by contradictions and fluidity of paradigms, views and beliefs. This academic area is an arena for intellectual showdown, which is sometimes better in attracting attention than providing reliable explanations. This is a place for bold ideas, unexpected analogies and new words, created out of mixing old ones – with some luck they would become catchers of attention and a part of international political lexicon.

Some things, however, have changed. A scholar of international relations today knows not only history. Actually she may not know history at all. Instead, she may pay attention to systemic features of international politics or its anarchical nature; can present complicated international processes as comparatively simple models of strategic interaction; knows how people take decisions; and understands why they so often do it irrationally.

IR scholarship has become more complicated and multifaceted. It is no longer enough to know a couple of main paradigms and a dozen of key concepts. Instead, there are dozens of theories, notions and names. Theoretical horizons are constantly expanding. Acquaintance with previous knowledge takes more and more time and effort. A classical IR theory text from the mid-20th century may look for many today rather as an intellectual exercise in constructing nice sentences about politics than a scientific inquiry.

An interesting future lies ahead of IR theory. Fierce battles among adepts of different paradigms will be fought. New hypotheses in interdisciplinary zones will be laid down. Speculative theories will be edged out by processing big data; however, 'why?' questions will remain a key to theoretical knowledge.

It will be impossible to know anything for sure about the nature of international politics, be it constant or dynamic. Along approximately these lines, a human brain will continue looking for regularities in an anarchical world, divided by state borders.



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