Lecture 3  
9 April 2019  
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# Intro

## Prepare for the PD Game in section this week – structure vs. intentions

# Readings and News articles:

## Holsti reading: good overview of various theories of IR and how to make sense of them

## Feaver/Popescu and Donnelly/Kristol articles: both articles suggest that “who is president doesn’t make a difference” – consider also Benazir Bhutto as prime minister of Pakistan – in all these cases, the change in our expectations of policy (based on rhetoric or identity of politician) is MUCH bigger than actual change in policy

# Case example to start class

## Discussion of Poll asking “How should the US respond to the crisis in Yemen, which killed over 20,000 people in 2018 alone and over 50,000 since 2011, according to Wikipedia?”

## Goal of exercise: understand somebody else’s position

## Process of exercise

### Divide into Military, Diplomacy, Do Nothing, Unsure

### Pair off with somebody from a DIFFERENT group

### 3 minutes – respectfully lay out your reasons for your view; other should respectfully listen

### 3 minutes – reverse roles

### That’s it: listen & try to understand other viewpoint

# Realism

## Six tenets of realism: **we will use these same categories for all 3 theories in course; will be on exams!**

Important Note: Theory Matrix on Canvas as structure for thinking about 3 theories we cover in course

### Focus: conflict

### Actors: states who act as unitary rational actors

### Goal: survival and power; therefore zero-sum gain concern with relative gains

### Organizing principle: anarchy & self-help

### Means: force is usable, effective and fungible.

### Dynamics of system: acquisition and attempts to balance power

## For years, academics and diplomats have been seeking, "to detect and understand the forces that determine political relations among nations, and to comprehend the ways in which those forces act upon each other and upon international political relations and institutions" (Morgenthau, 1993, 17).

### Realism in a Nutshell: International politics is ***struggle for power***. We can understand the outcomes we observe in IR by examining ***interests and power of the nations involved***.

### A short history of realism: Thucydides, WWI with Carr’s skepticism regarding idealism; WWII with Morgenthau’s Politics Among Nations, Kennan, Lippmann. and others developing theory; Neorealism and structural realism with Waltz.

### Two strains of realism

#### Traditional realism (a la Hans Morgenthau): war results from human nature

#### Structural realism or neo-realism (Ken Waltz): war results from structure or structural characteristics (anarchy) of international system

# An outline of realist theory.

## Focus = conflict. Most salient aspect of IR is constancy of conflict. International politics is a struggle for power dominated by conflict and violence. Puzzle: across time and across cultures, why has war kept recurring? Nations are "continuously preparing for, actively involved in, or recovering from war" (Morgenthau, 1993, 36). Conflict is the outcome we want to explain. Peace possible but only/mainly through balancing of power – i.e., weak states band together to resist oppression of stronger states

## Actors = states as unitary, rational actors dominate the international system.

### States acts as if they calculate costs and benefits of options before acting.

#### Identify and prioritize objectives;

#### Develop policy options/means for achieving them,

#### Use resources to implement preferred options/means, and

#### Learn and reevaluate goals and means.

### Simplifying assumption that fits behavior of many states much of the time. Domestic policy process not important to decisions made. Attempt at explanatory accuracy, not descriptive accuracy (they don’t necessarily go through this process, but they act as if they do).

### Nations and governments are dominant actors influencing the international system, though not only actors influencing system.

## Goals = survival and security.

### National security always highest priority because necessary to any other goals. Each citizen expects protection. Economics, environment, HR lesser concerns. Consider defense budgets.

### States constantly seek to increase power, measured in relative, not absolute terms. Obstacle to cooperation is relative gains concerns.

### National interest defined as consolidating power to preserve security and sovereignty.

### Search for survival becomes search for power for three reasons:

#### Hobbes and Morgenthau say, because conflict is inherent, more power means more likely you can get your needs met.

#### Power is fungible and can provide security and survival.

#### "Because some states may, at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so" (Waltz, 1979, 102). All states are not aggressive, but some are and so all must attend to own survival.

## Means = force as useful and effective.

### "Difference of national and international politics lies not in the use of force but in the different modes of organization for doing something about it" (Waltz, 99).

### Force is fungible. Military power can help achieve all goals. America converted military power into land for farming/settlement. Colonial powers converted military power into access to natural resources. Crusades/Jihad seek to convert military power into religious converts and glory of God.

### Force is usually effective. States with enough power can usually get what they want. Force so effective that most powerful states often do not have to use it.

## Organizing principle = anarchy and self-help: no government to prevent use of force by one state against another.

### Domestically, governments have exclusive claim to legitimate use of force and will prevent others from using it. Internationally, nobody will protect one nation from use of force by another nation.

### Anarchy means each state decides for itself whether to use force to achieve its ends. This leads to insecurity and self-help.

### Capacity matters more than intention: India vs. Pakistan example.

#### "India's Pokharan explosion in 1974 had a traumatic effect upon Pakistan. A passage of letters ensued between the two Premiers immediately after the event, and following Indira Gandhi's public description of the PNE [peaceful nuclear explosion] as 'the result of a normal research and study of our scientists,' adding, '...we are firmly committed to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.' In his letter Bhutto [Premier of Pakistan] set forth Pakistan's apprehensions thus: 'It is a question not only of intentions but of capabilities. It is well-established that the testing of a [peaceful] nuclear device is no different from the detonation of a nuclear weapon. Given this indisputable fact, how is it possible for our fears to be assuaged by mere assurances, which may in any case be ignored in subsequent years. Governments change, as do national attitudes. But the acquisition of a capability, which has direct and immediate military consequences, becomes a permanent factor to be reckoned with.'" (Chari, 1995, 17). In a similar response, K. Subrahmanyam of India, noted that "As regards Pakistan's intention, it is futile to make any assessment, since this is capable of changing, depending upon the decision-maker and the circumstances. General Zia may mean what he says when he asserts that he has no intention of making the weapon. The relevant fact is that he has created the capability for Pakistan to make the weapon" (Sreedhar, 1986, vii).

## Dynamics of system = acquisition, balancing, and shifting of distribution of power.

### Strong states make rules while weak states follow them.

### Power resources constantly changing. Power is relative so merely maintaining current wealth and resources leads to decline relative to those acquiring more.

### Wars deplete power resources, causing changes in distribution of power

### Peace possible only when states are deterred by balancing behavior of states they are seeking to gain power over. Two types of balancing:

#### Internal balancing: self-reliance, build up own weapons and armaments to resist power of stronger states. France building own nuclear weapons

#### External balancing: reliance on other states WHO CLEARLY HAVE SOME SELF-INTEREST IN DEFENDING YOU (otherwise its unreliable). Dutch, Swedes, and Spanish using NATO even though could have built own nuclear weapons

# Conclusion

## Major realist claim: ***Power And Interests Determine Outcomes In International Relations***. Implication: international institutions and international organizations have no effect on behavior and outcomes.

## Major tenets review:

### Focus: conflict. Notice this is puzzle realists are trying to explain.

### Actors: states are primary actors who act as unitary rational actors

### Goal: survival and power; therefore zero-sum gain concern with relative gains

### Organizing principle: anarchy, self-help

### Means: force is usable, effective and fungible.

### Dynamics of system: acquisition and balancing of power

## Saw how security dilemmas can arise between states in the anarchic international system due to lack of trust, misperception and miscommunication, and the inherent ambiguity of every state's attempt to acquire military power to survive. Saw how security dilemma is similar to Prisoner's Dilemma model and that we need not assume that states are inherently aggressive to understand why they often fail to cooperate and end up in arms races, conflicts and wars that neither side really wants.