POLS2409 Course Summary Sample

Table of Contents

Lecture 1: Introduction – The World in 1900

Age of Asymmetry, The World Order in 1900
- 19th century global transformation
- The world order in 1900
- Main vectors of conflict
- Primary mechanisms of order preservation
- Vulnerabilities of the old order

The Global Transformation
- Industrialisation and the transformation of the world economy
    - Agrarian to manufacturing shift
    - Began in Great Britain in 18th cent
    - Cities and technological innovations
    - Global economy and a global political order
    - Rise of metropolis
    - Make global economy possible
    - Rise of Germany as industrial power in late 19th century
- 'Rational state-building' and the transformation of governance
    - Prior to 18th cent main power of government is ability to tax
    - Transformation in the capabilities and ambitions of governments
    - Revolution in bureaucratic capacity
    - Governments are more ambitious, more powerful, and more capable of direct rule
    - 1850 Britain shifts from aristocracy to meritocratic rule
    - Governments more ambitious, more powerful, more capable of direct rule in 1800's than in any other time previously
- The ride of 'ideologies of progress' - liberalism, socialism, nationalism, 'scientific racism'
    - 19th century and the birth of ideologies
    - Liberalism: Inherent dignity in the individual and that government should be cast around the notion of 'the people'
    - Socialism: separation from feudalism but market capitalism is not helpful because of the inequalities it causes, industrialisation is important but popular control over means of production the only way to ensure fair rule and peace

- Nationalism: degree of agreement of territorial boundaries and ethnic composition of those who live within it
- 'Scientific' racism: the idea that it makes sense to organise the world by race, and that there are inherently more moral and intelligent races and fight for superiority defines the global actions
- Global modernity and the incomplete transformation of warfare
  - Revolution of firepower
  - Military technological competition and arms races
  - Incomplete transformation: technologies change, tactics are slower to alter
  - Dramatic increase in capacity for destruction

World economy
- Agrarian to manufacturing shift
- Cities and technological innovations -> global economy and a global political order
  - Highly uneven way industrialisation occurs
  - Rise of Germany late 19th cent
  - Rise of US by 1900

Liberal state
- The transformation in the capabilities and ambition of governments
  - Prior no bureaucracy EXCLUDING THE MONGOLS
- Revolution in bureaucratic capacity:
  - **Governments are more ambitious, more powerful, and more capable of direct rule**

Ideologies of Progress
- 19th century and the birth of ideologies
  - Liberalism
    - Inherent dignity to individual
    - Individual rights
    - Government by the people, for the people
  - Socialism
    - Need for fundamental departure from feudalism
    - Industrialisation = wealth and inequality
    - 1840's - industrialisation key but economic and political revolution needed
  - Nationalism
    - Mid-19th - degree of agreement between territories and ethnic of those within
    - Late 19th - nationalism central Europe, universalisation key political challenged for IR system.
  - 'scientific racism'
    - Organise the world by race
    - Some races inherently morally, intellectually superior

Modernity and Warfare
- Revolution in firepower
- Military technological competition and arms races
- Incomplete transformational:
  - Technologies change, tactics are slower to alter

European World Order in 1900
- Economic: uneven and combined development (dependent on interactions with rest of world and colonial exploitation), growth in economic wealth but not evenly distributed
- Political: empires and national, hierarchy and diversity
- Military: European balance, global imbalance (accepted that the peace preserver is the ability of roughly equivalent military powers being able to balance each other e.g. only thing that stops power is power – the institutionalised school of thought towards the end of the 1800's)
  - Peace from equal military power
  - Global imbalance: Europe vs. all
- Ideological: ideologies of progress, ideologies of despair; great optimism, faith in progress and power of industrialisation, also period of deep alienation and despair and gross inequality reinforced by political organisation

Main vectors of conflict between states
- Conflict between states in a world of established, emerging, and submerging powers
1. The 'German Question'
2. The 'Easter Question'
   a. The struggle for power beyond Europe
3. The 'scramble for Africa'
4. The 'scramble for Asia and the South Pacific'

The "German Question"
- 'What to do with Germany that is almost (but not quite) powerful enough to dominate Europe?'
  - Recently unifies as a nation-state
  - Militarily dominant (by 1870): most powerful army
  - Leading industrial power
  - Hegemony: how to deal with Germany (if potentially unified) powerful enough to upset European balance. Two attempts at hegemonic power WWI and WWII.

The "Eastern Question"
A struggle for power beyond Europe
- Declining, previously powerful, empires of the east of Europe
- Ottoman Empire: Great power in 17th century and declining to weakness during 19th century
  - 'Sick man of Europe'
- Austro-Hungarian Empire
  - Corroding force of nationalism
  - World is organised into multiethnic empires during this period
  - Ottoman Empire/Austro-Hungarian Empire become Germany's allies in WWI

The 'Scramble for Africa'
- Congress of Berlin (1885) to 1914: legitimises dismemberment of remaining African polities
- Systematic carve-up of Africa
- Role of anti-slavery movement acting as European justification for asserting political control over African continent

The 'Scramble for Asia and the South Pacific'

- Opium wars: the British in China in 1839 and 1856
- Colonialism in the South Pacific
  - Geopolitical competition
  - Convergence of struggles of European powers in Europe in addition to world powers for colonial conquests

Main Vectors of Conflict Within and Across States
Conflict within and across states in an unequal world:
1. East Asia and the challenge of 'modernisation without Westernisation'
   a. Economic and military power separate from westernisation, want to maintain competitive
2. Colonial subjects and the struggle for recognition
   a. Period of struggles of anti-colonial nationalism e.g. movement toward an independent India, isn't achieved 'til late 20th century
3. The 'social question' and the transnational struggle between labour and capital
   a. Rise of socialism, and social democratic parties.

Primary Mechanisms of Order Preservation
- Mechanisms for managing conflict in the early 20th century:
  - Crisis management and concert diplomacy
  - Alliances and the balance of power
  - Commercial interdependence and constitutional government
  - International law 1: arbitration and disarmament
  - International law 2: colonialism and the 'civilising mission'
- Weak, ultimately ineffective - but they tried so honourable mention

Mechanisms of order preservation
Crisis management and concert diplomacy
- Concert of Europe
  - From 1815
  - Vague consensus regarding dispute resolution
- Congress of Berlin
  - 1885
  - 'Scramble for Africa'

Mechanisms of order preservation
Alliances and balance of power
- Peace can be preserved through:
  - the careful use of interlocking alliances
  - using diplomacy to play-off states against one another
  - threat of catastrophic war averted major war in Europe (for a time…)

Mechanisms of order preservation
Commerce and constitutions
- European attempt to promote peace through the spread of
  - democracy
  - capitalism
  - International rule of law and institutions
- (Note the racist and imperialist qualifications to this)
1. Responsible government must be earnt

2. World construction around notion of ideas of racist hierarchy
    a. Some countries subject to intervention due to 'innate genetic inferiority'

Mechanisms of order preservation
International law: arbitration and disarmament & colonialism and 'civilising'
- Hague Conferences 1889 & 1907
    ○ Idea of international cooperation
- Role of international law in institutionalising prejudice
    ○ The civilised nation (white) = full protection of international law
    ○ Barbarous nations = Islam/China, once were powerful = "a degree of colonial tutoring", can work up.
    ○ Savage nations = assumed genetic inferiority therefore subject to indefinite colonial rule
- Could have been positive, but was shaped by then current ideologies

Vulnerabilities of the Old Order
- The challenges of managing globalisation
    ○ Global economy non-existent till late 1800s
    ○ Interconnected states (one state in depression = spreads?)
    ○ Failure to manage the benefits of an economically integrated global society and stable global society.
- The challenges of legitimising power in a radically unequal world
    ○ Deeply unfair, inegalitarian, hierarchical and unjust order
    ○ Order was subject to critique and challenge
        - By peoples in the colonised world and to a lesser degree the Western world
        - Ethnic supremacy
            ▪ Can you legitimise this world?
- The challenges of accommodating rising and falling powers
    ○ Declining Europe, declining U.S, resurgent China = how do you respond?
    ○ This is the central puzzle of international relations

Week 1 – Age of Asymmetry: Readings

The Global Transformation: History, Modernity, and the Making of International Relations, *Barry Buzan* and *George Lawson*

Shift in 19th Century from 'polycentric world with no dominant centre' to a 'core-periphery' order with a Western centre of gravity

The global transformation also changed the mode of power and stimulated the emergence of global modernity

Prior to the 19th century the world has been an *economic international system*, during the shift of the 19th century the world turned into a *full international system* where all regions of the world were connected economically, culturally, and in military-political terms

Second effect of the global transformation was the creating of new actors (nation-states, transnational corporation, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations)

Argument of the piece: global transformation generated four basic, but linked types of change in IR:

1. Industrialisation resulted in closer contact in international system while simultaneously producing inequalities. 'Intensely connected and deeply divided'.

2. Nation-building went hand in hand with imperialism. Rule-based order which disadvantaged those considered 'barbarians' and advantaged the 'civilised'.

3. New ideologies rose up (liberalism, nationalism, socialism, etc) which provided legitimating strategies for IR practices

4. These things generated core-periphery global order but destabilised power relations by exposing balance of power to the pressure of rapid technological/social change

Main changes that distinguish global modernity from previous periods:

- Agrarian political economies based on land-wealth and harvests succeeded by industrial political economies based on capitalist accumulation; rapid technological transformations

- New ideologies vested sovereignty in people and linked territory to nation

- New bureaucratic structures that increased infrastructural capacities, extending state power

- Industrialisation, rational-state building and ideologies of progress became the criteria by which great powers were defined

- A relatively even distribution of global power was replaced by radically uneven distribution in favour of the West

Benchmark dates around which IR is organised:

- Opening of sea lanes from Europe to the Americas and the Indian Ocean in the late 15th century

- Emergence of modern notions of sovereignty codified in Treaty of Augsburg and reaffirmed in Peace of Westphalia

- The two World Wars and the Cold War as major contestations over world power

- The shake-up to dynamics of polarity initiated by the end of the Cold War

Establishing the Argument: Six Assumptions and Two Claims

The global transformation occurred via three interlinked processes: industrialisation, the rational state, and ideologies of progress

Industrialisation: the commercialisation of agriculture and two-stage industrial revolution which generated an intensely connected global market. This brought new opportunities to accumulate power because of the close relationship between industrialisation and dispossession.

Rational state building: process by which the administrative and bureaucratic competences were accumulated and 'caged' within national territories. Processes of rational state-building and imperialism were co-implicated

Ideologies of progress: systematic schemas of thought, specifically modern liberalism, socialism, nationalism and 'scientific' racism, rooted in ideals of progress associated with Enlightenment values.

These three components of the global transformation were mutually reinforcing.

Emphasis is placed on the role of inter-societal interactions in generating global transformation and authors reject the notion that it was a European development.

Modernity should be seen as a protracted, uneven process rather than a singular moment of sharp discontinuity, no hard distinction between modern/premodern eras

Modernity was a contingent concatenation of social forces, a complex jumble of myriad events and processes, once this had formed it constituted a mode of power that had massive transformative potential.

Global transformation can be characterized by both the intensification of differential development and heightened interactions between societies.

A core-periphery international order was established with a leading edge in the West. This lasted from early 19th century until the early years of the 21st century. It is now being replaced by a more decentred global order in which the states that were on the receiving end of global transformation are employing its mode of power to reassert their position in international society.

Two main claims:

- A set of dynamics established during the nineteenth century intertwined in a powerful configuration that reshaped the basis of international order in such a way as to defined a new era

- This order transformed IR during the 19th cent and underpins core aspects of contemporary IR