
Lecture Notes

Week 2 – Paradigms and Realism

- Paradigms: operating systems which are the foundation of our understanding of all theories of IR
 - Contain certain assumptions about relevant factors/variables/phenomena and the cause and effect rship
 - Lead to certain understanding → leads to policy choice
- Note certain caveats
 - Policy alone isn't indicative of a paradigm (ppl in same paradigm can have diff views and policy recommendations)
 - Decision makers may have contaminated paradigmatic views (not pure)
 - Discussion is of ideal-types, is simplistic

Realism

Core assumptions on humans	Selfish, Morally unbound, Dominance seeking, Unalterable	
Core assumptions on the world	Fixed and anarchic (no supreme authority)	Cannot be altered or tamed
Forces moving the world	Power and (national) interest Distribution of power	Military, economic and other, in this order
Main actor/s	The nation state	Unitary and rational state ("black box" approach) In pursuit of the national interest
Prime motivations of the actor	'Fear, greed and fame' — i.e., Security, power, status	Relative gain
Order of objectives	Self preservation, territorial integrity, political autonomy Improved power position	Security and foreign policy are above all else
Main problems of the world	Revisionist actors, Power vacuum, Imperialism, Idealism	
Main tools/solution	The balance of power	Vigilance, Arming, Alliances, Preventive war
Ambitions	A stable status quo To maintain the BOP Smooth power transition	
General and perpetual peace prospects	None	"Peace" is only truce
Favorable processes	None but the BOP	The world is about greater competitive sophistication not improvement

- Assumptions:
 - Int conflict is imminent (origin is human nature for classical realists; anarchic for structural realists)

- States are the main actors, unitary and rational, IR is rships among states → states are a reflection of individuals
 - Black box → not interested in inside of state, always act w/in nat interest regardless of domestic pol
- Power is most imp variable → all outcomes reflect relative power structures
 - Only relative power matters
- No such thing as absolute security
- Patterns of behaviour
 - Arms races: states move to have equal or better armament than one another
 - Econ comp (bc it's the foundation of nat power)
 - War and truce
 - Int institutions reflect relative power → agenda is actually the agenda of most powerful actor
 - SD: units live in eternal fear that they will lose relative power, so they arm themselves; neighbours fear they will lose relative power → cycle of increasing armaments and increasing insecurity
- World is a ZSG → there's a set amount of power in the world, to gain power someone else has to lose power
- When BoP changes, the world changes
- States should always be guided by the national interest → must be distrusting
- Morality is not a consideration (unless it serves the interest/survival of the state)
- Be concerned w/ foreign relations over any domestic relations
- Paradigm calls for moderation
 - States do anything for their nat interest, but recognise that this is the aim of all other states as well
 - Foolish to impinge on nat interest of other states if they don't need to
- Stagnant, pessimistic, positional, amoral, moderate, anarchic paradigm

Classical realism

- Defensive: units mostly motivated by fear, don't want to take from others but don't want to be taken from
 - Invest heavily in defending themselves, don't allocate too much to take from others
 - Interested in maintaining status quo, relatively conservative
- Offensive: motivated by greed, ready to heavily invest in taking from others
 - Far less stable world
 - Units wait for opportunity until BoP is skewed in their favour
 - Want to change system and status quo → revisionist

Structural realism

- Int conflict arises from anarchy → no meta sovereign, units can decide for themselves how they are going to behave

Week 3 – Liberalism

Core assumptions on humans	Morally neutral, Rational, Absolute gain seekers, Malleable	
Core assumptions on the world	Elastic—can be changed to the point of achieving harmony	Effects of anarchy can be controlled, war can be controlled and even eliminated
Forces moving the world	Individual consciousness, Interests Norms, rules and laws	
Main actor/s	Many (pluralist approach) at different levels: factions, organizations, classes, elites, international institutions, public opinion etc.	Actors pursue their own and possibly the “common” interest (the state is not a unitary actor but rather reflects the sum of interests from “below”)
Prime motivations of the actor	A mix of expedient and moral: affluence, improvement, efficiency, more ethical life, justice	Absolute gain
Order of objectives	Can be acquired Prosperity	
Main problems of the world	War and collective violence, Lack of ethics, freedom and law, Despotic regimes, Realism	
Main tools/solution	International institutions Foreign policy transparency Interdependence Collective security	Democratization Education Regime change Trade and other exchange
Ambitions	Regulation of the world Progress Transform and improve the world	
General peace prospects	Good	
Favorable processes	Integration Conversion Global interdependence	

- Assumptions:
 - Int conflict isn't inevitable, it can be dealt with bc origins are only found in morally defective humans/institutions/states
 - Multiple units: sub-state (classes, bureaucracies) and above-state (UN, WB)
 - Rationality is fundamentally different → about seeking absolute gains
 - NZSG: everybody can win at once
- Liberals are agents of reform → can create new game if you don't like old game
 - Want to weaken state by taking power and giving to int institutions and taking autonomy and giving to wise citizens
 - Building int interdependence (esp econ) → weakens individual states and their ability to destabilize world
 - Must respect rules/decisions of institutions (regardless of your interests)
- 4 sub schools
 - Idealist liberalism: everything vested in ideas, can change the world w/ these
 - Imperialist idealism: to create just world have to weed out those that won't revise themselves e.g. destroying Nazis to create better world
 - Not always about moderation
 - Institutional liberalism: if you create correct institutions (dem), irrespective of nature of humans you will create good policy
 - Commercial/economic liberalism: global market where everyone can recognise absolute gain
 - Neo-liberal institutionalism: hybrid btwn realism and liberalism
- Absolute gains available for everyone if you are moderate and ready to compromise
- Morality is crucial → need to cultivate this in institutions

Differences between realism and liberalism

	Realism	Liberalism
Origins of int order	Nature of units or lack of supreme sovereign	Original and acquired nature of units
Nature of int enviro	Deterministic, competitive, threatening, conflict ridden	Non-deterministic, malleable, can be coop and peaceful
Factors shaping int order	Fundamentals, dist of power	Human design and will, reason, natural interests of units
Relevant unit/actor	States	Pluralistic: states, elites, organisations, institutions
Unit's/actor's nature	Rational, egoistic, relative gain seeker (positional), amoral	Rational, egoistic, absolute gain seeker (atomistic), potentially moral
Unit's motivation	Fear, greed, fame → security, power status	Security, material gain, moral values, identity
Unit's interests/objectives	Survival, integrity, autonomy, power, influence	Material affluence, progress, peace, change (potentially forcible), domestic order (of others)
Action patterns	Supremacy of foreign relations, self-help, use of force, alliances	Coop, collective, potentially moral, benign (towards like units), can be offensive in service of values and better future
Means	Military, econ and diplomatic leverages of power, identity at home (nationalism, xenophobia)	Compromise, negotiation, mediation, commerce, institution restructuring, law, norms, contracts, education
Outcomes	ZSG, BOP, cycles of conflict, arms-races, 'strong' states, wars, distrust	NZSG, interdependence, progressive coop, peace, weaker states, trust