International Relations Theory

Nemzetközi Politika Elmélet
A tudományterület fejlődése és vitái

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The Development of IR Thinking

Historical context:
Development and change of sovereign statehood

Theoretical discussion between IR scholars:
Major debates

Other disciplines
(philosophy, history, economics, law, etc.)
New insights and new methods influence IR
## Four Debates of International Relations Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liberalism</th>
<th>vs</th>
<th>Realism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic, historical approach</td>
<td>Methodological debate:</td>
<td>Behaviouralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neoliberalism/Neorealism</td>
<td>vs</td>
<td>neo-Marxism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Established traditions (Neorealism/Neoliberalism/International Society/IPE)</td>
<td>vs</td>
<td>New voices (Post-positivism)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1st debate
**Utopian liberalism and the realist response**
2nd debate
3rd debate
4th debate
Which theory to choose
(Utopian) Liberalism
Woodrow Wilson.

- Origins of IR after the First World War
- Aim: never let this happen again
Principles of the “Concert”
Concert of Europe (1815-1914)

Penetrativeness
- Homogenous
- Flexible
- Self-restraint
- Consensus in the goals and means of diplomacy and foreign policy

Britain
France
Prussia
Russia
Austria-Hungary

Liberal
Classical conservative
Concert of Europe after Bismarck (1890-)

1. Rising power of agrarian, military and industrial lobbies (mainly in Prussia)
2. Prussia challenges Britain’s hegemony on the sea
3. Suicidal undertakings by allies (Failed BoP)
4. Arms race; Failed evaluation of self and the enemy; Secret diplomacy; Pressure of the lobbies
(Utopian) Liberalism
Woodrow Wilson.

- Wilsonianism: **fourteen-point programme** - to establish a world ‘safe for democracy’
  - End of secret diplomacy
  - Freedom of navigation on the seas and barriers of free trade should be removed
  - Armaments should be reduced
  - Self-determination of peoples
  - League of Nations

- Basic idea: the power of public scrutiny, liberal democracy, international institution and cooperation can hinder wars
  - From “jungle” to “zoo”
(Utopian) Liberalism
Norman Angell.

- The Great Illusion (1909)
  - war is not beneficial
  - territorial conquest is extremely expensive and politically divisive because it severely disrupts international commerce
Achievement of Liberalism

- League of Nations was established
- Great powers took steps to assure each other of their peaceful intentions
- Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928
Failures of Liberalism

- US Senate refused to join the League of Nations. Germany, Russia involved only later, but then quit. Japan quits. France and Britain never accepted the rules of the League of Nations.
- Peace was not based on wilsonian (liberal) principles, but rather on great power politics and revenge aims of the French.
- Self-determination?
- The Wall Street crash of October 1929 made an end of ‘rational cooperation’ and opened the era of ‘rational rivalry’
Realism and the Twenty Years’ Crisis

- E.H. Carr: *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* (1964 (1939))
  - There are profound conflicts of interest both between countries and between people (haves and have-nots)

  - Human nature at the base of international relations
    - (Einstein and Freud, Christian religion)
    - Humans are self-interested and power seeking
  - Nature of international relations
    - No world government - international anarchy
    - Struggle for power (Carr - haves and have-nots)
  - Peace is achievable when balance of power exists
  - History is a cyclic process
Realism and the Twenty Years’ Crisis

- Nature of international relations
  - Struggle for power
  - No world government - international anarchy
  - Peace is achievable when stable balance of power exists
- Cyclical view of history (same mistakes again and again as long as sovereign states are dominant in international relations)
First Major Debate in IR

Utopian liberalism
1920s
Focus:
international law
international organization
interdependence
cooperation
peace
progressive view of history

Realist response
1930s-1940s-1950s
Focus:
power politics (balance of power)
security
aggression
conflict
war
cyclical view of history
1st debate
2nd debate
Traditionalism vs Behaviouralism
3rd debate
4th debate
Second Major Debate in IR

**Traditional approaches**

Focus:
- understanding:
  - norms and values
  - judgement
  - historical knowledge
  - holistic approach
  - consideration of the complexity of the human world

Theorists inside the subject

NORMATIVE

**Behaviouralist response**

Focus:
- explaining:
  - intuition
  - hypothesis
  - collect empirical data
  - scientific knowledge
  - influence of natural sciences

Theorists outside subject

POSITIVE
Second Major Debate in IR

Pauls Senese & Stephen Quackenbush (2003)

Which last longer?
imposed settlements vs. negotiated settlements

2536 cases

19 years vs. 9 years
1st debate
2nd debate
3rd debate

**Neoliberalism/neorealism vs neo-Marxism**

4th debate
## Neoliberalism: Institutions and Interdependence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neoliberalism: progress and cooperation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sociological liberalism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interdependence liberalism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional liberalism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Republican liberalism</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provides an overall consistent argument for more peaceful and cooperative international relations describing the progression in the West, but says nothing about the East-West confrontation.
Neorealism: Bipolarity and Confrontation

- Kenneth Waltz: *Theory of International Politics* (1979)
  - Focus on the structure
    - Anarchy
    - International system is composed of like units
    - The only thing that matters is relative power
  - Simple theory explaining ‘few big important things’

1. Great powers will always tend to **balance** each other
2. Smaller and weaker states will have a tendency to align themselves with great powers in order to preserve the maximum **autonomy**
3. States are **power-seeking** and **security-conscious** because the structure of the international system compels them to be that way
Neorealism: Bipolarity and Confrontation

- Neorealists do not deny the possibility of cooperation
  but only for the sake of maximizing their relative power and autonomy
- Supportive historical events (1980s):
  - Rivalry between the USA and Soviet Union (Reagan-era)
  - Decline in US relative power: ‘trade wars’ between the Western Democracies
Neoiberalism vs Neorealism

And the winner is: ...
# International Society (The English School)

**METHODOLOGICAL FOCUS**

- Understanding
- Judgement
- Values
- Norms and historical knowledge

Theorists inside the subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN ELEMENTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Power, national interest (realist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rules, procedures, international law (liberal element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Universal human rights, one world for all (cosmopolitan element)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
E.g.: UN, “power and law”

- power: Security Council (USA, Russia, China, France, Britain) - veto power
- law: General Assembly - one state one vote principle

- cosmopolitan, solidarist element: promotion of human rights
  Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
  - defines the basic civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights
International Political Economy (IPE)

- Emphasis on the economic system
- 1970s: Third World countries started to press for changes in the international system to improve their economic position. (neo-Marxism emerged to attempt to theorize about economic underdevelopment in the Third World)
- Theory about international wealth and international poverty
- Who gets what in the international economic and political system
Third Major Debate in IR

Realism/neorealism
Liberalism/neoliberalism

Neo-Marxism
Focus:
Capitalist world system
Dependency
Underdevelopment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Three Views of IPE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neo-Marxism/Structuralism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Capitalist class uses its power to exploit and oppress the working class (Marx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Neo-marxists extend that analysis to the Third World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Third World countries are subject to unequal exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Only a few can ‘move upwards’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Capitalism is a hierarchy based on exploitation of the poor by the rich, and it will remain until it is replaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liberal view of IPE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Human prosperity can be achieved by the free global expansion of capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Based on Adam Smith and his followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Free markets, private property, individual freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Realist view of IPE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Economic activity should be put in the service of building strong state and supporting the national interest (Friedrich List - historical school of economic development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Mercantilist (economic nationalist) type approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Wealth is an instrument of creation of national security and national welfare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Three Issues of IPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic globalization</th>
<th>Does it undermine ‘national’ economies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who wins and who loses in the process of economic globalization</td>
<td>Developed world, Third World, Rich, Poor, Middle-Class etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How we should view the relative importance of economics and politics</td>
<td>Do economic actors dominate politics or politicians still have the chance to validate different values based on different ideas?</td>
</tr>
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1st debate
2nd debate
3rd debate
4th debate
Mainstream vs. new voices
Fourth Major Debate in IR

Established traditions

Realism/neorealism
Liberalism/neoliberalism
International Society
International Political Economy

New voices

Post-positivist methodologies
(How to approach IR?)
e.g.: social constructivist
argue that the international system is constituted by ideas not material power

Post-positivist issues
(Which issues should be considered the most important ones?)
e.g.: international terrorism, environment, gender, sovereignty, changes in statehood
Annex...
Which Theory....?

- Either the question is not meaningful: how to compare different games, played by different people.

- Or can we make ‘player of year’ based on the following criteria?
  - Coherence
  - Clarity of exposition
  - Unbiased
  - Scope
  - Depth
The Concert of Europe

1st debate
2nd debate
3rd debate
4th debate
Which theory to choose
## Balance of Power in Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hegemonic attempts</th>
<th>Balance of power counteractions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habsburg Empire (1618-48)</td>
<td>France and Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Louis XIV (1661-1714)</td>
<td>England and Holland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napoleon (1795-1815)</td>
<td>Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1815-1914</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Concert of Europe based on the Vienna Congress</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (1939-45)</td>
<td>USA, Soviet Union and Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States (1990-)</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Concert of Europe, Europe between 1814-1914

1814: The Congress of Vienna ("concert" = mutual agreement) - Austria, Russia, Britain

- Aims
  1. Contain France after decades of war
  2. Achieve BoP between Europe’s great powers
  3. Uphold the territorial agreements
  4. Prevent the rise of another Napoleon-esque figure
Principles of the “Concert”

1. Alteration of the uncontrolled BoP politics through a steady institution (“Congress System”): Holy Alliance + Britain + France (1818)
2. Not to humiliate the loosing power, but to endow with responsibility
3. Pentarchy
4. Matter of balance
Principles of the “Concert”

3. Pentarchy.

- Britain
- Prussia
- France
- Russia
- Austria-Hungary

Penetrativeness
- Homogenous
- Flexible

Liberal
Classical conservative
Principles of the “Concert”


1. Compensation (Prussia loses Warsaw, gets Rhineland)
2. Unanimity among the Great Powers
3. Great power sovereignty (not ethnic)
5. Balancing in practice. (e.g. 1854 - Crimean War)
Concert of Europe lead by Bismarck (1871-)

Aims: keeping peace in Europe and contend with French revanchism
Concert of Europe lead by Bismarck (1871-)

Unipolar system, Prussia became too strong, but Bismarck ("fair broker") tried to balance on his own...
Concert of Europe after Bismarck (1890-)

1. Rising power of agrarian, military and industrial lobbies (mainly in Prussia)
2. Prussia challenges Britain’s hegemony on the sea
3. Suicidal undertakings by allies (Failed BoP)
4. Arms race; Failed evaluation of self and the enemy; Secret diplomacy; Pressure of the lobbies
Lessons to Learn
Afterlife of the Concert of Europe.

1. Nixon-Kissinger in the ‘70s: secret visit at Mao.
   • Aim: 5 Great Power system in the World (Japan, USA, Soviet Union, China, Europe)
   • How could we make the interstate relations independent from the differences in ideology?

2. What else...?