International Relations Theory

Nemzetközi Politikaelmélet
A nemzetközi társadalom elmélete.

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Basic International Society Approach

1. **Human centric** and not state centric
2. Derives from ‘philosophy, history and law’
3. Exercise of **judgement**: foreign policy sometimes presents difficult moral choices
4. Evaluate those **choices** in terms of the situations
5. Squarely on the **traditionalist** side: states do not have an existence separate from the human beings
Contribution to the Debates

• **Middle way**: Classical IR approach, but it seeks to avoid the stark choice between (1) state egoism and conflict vs (2) human goodwill and cooperation presented by the debate between realism and liberalism
Basic International Society Approach

1. IR ought to be understood as the ‘society’ of states
2. International Politics is ‘the realm of human experience’. Join the conversation with the aim of understanding it
3. Become familiar with history which is experienced by the people involved
4. Principal actors are statespeople: understand what inclines the practitioners of IR to act the way they do by seeking to gain insight into the ideas and thoughts behind their foreign policies
5. Central focus of analysis: statespeople’s interests, concerns, intentions, ambitions, calculations and miscalculations, desires, beliefs, hopes, fears, doubts...
Kind of a definition of International Society

- International relations consist of the foreign-oriented policies, decisions, and activities of statespeople who act on behalf of territory based political systems that are independent of each other and are subject to no other authorities than themselves i.e. sovereign states. IOs, NGOs are also important, but they are subordinate to states.
What is International Society Theory All About?

- IR is a study of war and peace
- States are human organizations
- ‘Anarchical society’: no world government, but common interests, rules, institutions and organizations which are created and shared by states and which help to shape the relations of states
- Rather ‘international society’ (constitute) than ‘international system’ (compose)
What is International Society Theory All About?

System of states vs. Society of states

USA and Russia before the Cold War

Russia after the Cold War became part of the society (associated with: G-8, OECD, IMF, EBRD, NATO etc.)
# The 3Rs of International Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Rationalism</th>
<th>Revolutionism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States as power agencies pursuing their own interests</td>
<td>States as legal organizations</td>
<td>Emphasis on human beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR is solely instrumental</td>
<td>IR as a rule-governed activity based on mutual recognition of sovereign states</td>
<td>Community of humankind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machiavelli</td>
<td>Grotius</td>
<td>Kant</td>
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</table>

Martin Wight (1991): International Society approach should be an exploration of the conversation or **dialogue** between these three different theoretical perspectives.
Two of the Most Fundamental Values: International Order and International Justice

- **International order**: ‘a pattern or disposition of international activity that sustains’ the basic goals of society of states

- **International justice**: moral rules which ‘confer rights and duties upon states and nations’ (e.g. self-determination, non-intervention, human-rights)
Non-intervention vs human rights

- One of the basic value conflicts of international relations at the present time

- **Pluralist**: stressing the importance of state sovereignty
  - Individuals have right only given by the state

- **Solidarist**: importance of individuals

- Problems of interventions can be studied **normatively** only (philosophically, historically, legally)
  - cannot be studied scientifically because they are essentially human issues and thus value-laden
# The Three Traditions (3Rs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>International anarchy</strong></td>
<td><strong>International dialogue</strong></td>
<td>‘moral unity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling, disciplining factor</td>
<td>Civilizing, moderating factor</td>
<td>Energizing, ‘vitalizing’ factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivalry and conflict</td>
<td>Humans are reasonable,</td>
<td>Revolutionary change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anarchy, power politics and</td>
<td>can recognize the right thing to</td>
<td>Moral unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warfare</td>
<td>do and learn i.e. ‘evolutionary</td>
<td>Cosmopolitan, solidarist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the frank acceptance of the</td>
<td>change’</td>
<td>Missionary character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagreeable side of life’</td>
<td></td>
<td>History has a purpose,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic view of human nature</td>
<td>Peaceful coexistence,</td>
<td>human beings have destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(crooks and fools)</td>
<td>rule of law between states</td>
<td>Humankind, anti-state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No international society</td>
<td>Hope without illusions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Rationalism: one of the three interacting philosophies (along with realism and revolutionism) whose dialogue, according to Martin Wight, is essential to an adequate understanding of IR. Rationalists, such as Hugo Grotius, are more optimistic in their view of human nature than are realists. Rationalism conceives of states as legal organizations that operate in accordance with international law and diplomatic practice; international relations are therefore norm-governed policies and activities based on mutually recognized authority of sovereign states.
**Definition**

**Revolutionism**: one of the three interacting philosophies (along with realism and revolutionism) whose dialogue, according to Martin Wight, is essential to an adequate understanding of IR. Revolutionists, such as Kant and Marx, are solidarists who believe in the ‘moral unity’ of humankind beyond the state. They hold in common a progressive aim of changing (even eliminating) the international state system in the expectation of creating a better world. Revolutionists are more optimistic than rationalists and realists about human nature: they believe in the achievability of human perfection.
The Three Traditions: Practice

- Rationalism
  - Moderate realism
  - Realism
  - Extreme realism
- Soft revolutionism
  - Hard revolutionism
The Three Traditions: Practice

- ‘A little country doesn’t count any more in the modern world. In fact, the only two countries that matter are Russia and the United States. And Russia is superior. The other countries have no real say.’ (Khrushchev, 1956)

- The UN Council is given the exclusive constitutional responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. States can join the United Nations or remain outside, but either way they have no right to refuse the commands of the Security Council which is controlled by five great powers that possess a permanent veto.

- League of Nations principle: binding ‘the organs of the league to observe the rules of law and existing treaties’ much more definitively and explicitly than does the UN.

- Holy war: divide the mankind into good and bad on a criterion provided by your doctrine.

- Seek the violent destruction of the system or society of sovereign states and its replacement by a world government or global order of some kind which is based on an exclusive ideology.

- Kant, Wilson, Nehru, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, christian pacifist: revolution by ideas.

- According to Kissinger the American foreign policy was always guided by the ‘balance of hope and possibility’. There is (1) an onward impulse towards idealism and the creation of a new world order based on human freedom, and (2) a countervailing inward pull of national self-indulgence and isolationism.
Four Emphases in International Society Theory

1. Leading operative ideas
2. Emphasis on the dialogue between the leading ideas
3. Emphasis on the historical dimension of international relations
4. Normative aspect as seen in historical light
Order and Justice

- Deeply sceptical of abstract social science theorizing based on game theory or other scientific models. Explicitly **normative**.
- Hedley Bull (1995): the main point of the anarchical society is promotion and preservation of international order
  1. Preservation of international society
  2. Upholding the independence of member states
  3. Maintaining peace
  4. Helping to secure the foundations of all social life
    - Limitation of violence
    - ‘the keeping of promises’
    - ‘the stability of possession’
Order (and Justice)

- Three kinds of order
  - ‘order in social life’
  - ‘international order’
    - belongs to great powers
    - normative task (but great powers frequently behave in such a way to promote disorder rather than order (two world wars; Cold War in the 1970s, 80s)
  - ‘simple balance of power’ (bipolarity) vs. ‘complex balance of power’ (multipolarity)
  - general balance of power (USA - Soviet Union); local balance of power (Israel and the Arab states)
  - **objective** balance of power; **subjective** balance of power
  - ‘world order’
Order (and Justice)  
The ’Place’ of War

- Since 1945 international society succeeded in **limiting interstate war**, but not intrastate war (predominantly revolutionary wars: national liberation, civil war, ‘war on terror’)
- So called ‘proxy wars’ (Korea, Vietnam)
- Reasons of limiting: two nuclear power, norms of the UN charter, international public opinion

- Hedley Bull: nuclear deterrence and other aspects of the American/Russian rivalry as a conflict involving fundamental human values
- What is at stake in the case of (nuclear) deterrence?
(Order and) Justice

- **Commutative justice**: ‘a process of claim and counterclaim’
  - Just like on the market
  - Justice is fairness of the rules of the game
  - The rules of the game are expressed by international law and diplomatic practices

- **Distributive justice**: the idea that the poor and the weak deserve special treatment, such as development aid
Three Levels of Justice

- ‘International or interstate justice’ (notion of equal state sovereignty)
- ‘Individual or human justice’ (human rights)
- ‘Cosmopolitan or world justice’ (what is right or good for the world as a whole, global environmental standards)
Order and Justice

Order or Justice
Statecraft and Responsibility

- Moral choices in foreign policy that responsible statespeople are confronted with
  1. National responsibility
  2. International responsibility
  3. Humanitarian responsibility
National Responsibility

- Well-being of their citizens
- National security
- Macchiavellian precepts: always put nation and its citizens first; avoid taking unnecessary risk with their security and welfare; collaborate with other countries when it is advantageous or necessary but avoid needless entanglements; do not subject your population to needless war unless it is absolutely necessary

What is the normative basis? (Theory of political obligation)

- State is a self-contained political community that is morally prior to any international associations (either the state is formed by a social contract or by historical evolution or conquest or by any other method. (E.g. some say that the US Constitution is above the international law, human beings have right only by virtue of being citizens)
International Responsibility

- Derived from state’s membership of international society
- Rights and duties as defined by international law
  - Respect other states;
  - Act in good faith;
  - Observe international law;
  - Comply with the laws of war
- What is the normative basis? (Conception of international obligation)
  - States are not isolated, but related to each other
  - States constitute external sovereignty by the recognition of each other
  - These foreign obligations are independent of and additional to the domestic obligations of statespeople
Humanitarian Responsibility

- Statespeople are first and foremost human beings
  - Always remember that people in other countries are human beings just like yourself;
  - Respect human rights;
  - Give sanctuary to those who are fleeing from persecution;
  - Assist those who are in need of material aid which you can supply at no sacrifice;
  - In waging war spare non-combatants

- What is the normative basis? (Theory of human obligation)
  - There is a natural law, a universal law of reason and of conscience; and natural rights = natural law
Which one of the three?

- All three: normative pluralism
Case study I.: Gulf War (1990-1)

• Saddam Hussein’s Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990
• Clear violation of the UN Charter

1. National responsibility: West’s vital interest in an uninterrupted supply of Middle East oil
2. International responsibility: act of an aggression against another state and thus the violation of the UN Charter
3. Human responsibility: human rights violation of citizens of Kuwait, Western citizens living in Kuwait and Iraq, and against Iraqi citizens, minority groups such as the Kurds
Case study II.: Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-5)

- Three basic courses
  1. Absolute non-intervention
  2. Full-scale military intervention
  3. Normatively ambiguous middle way of muddling through, by means of
     - limited UN humanitarian intervention to protect non-combatants
     - deliver humanitarian aid
     - arrange a negotiated settlement
# Critiques of International Society

## Three Traditional Critiques of International Society

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>REALISM</th>
<th>LIBERALISM</th>
<th>IPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak evidence of norms</td>
<td>Ignores domestic society</td>
<td>Ignores economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests dominate</td>
<td>Ignores democracy</td>
<td>Ignores Third World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignores progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Critiques of International Society

## Three Solidarist Critiques of International Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSNATIONAL SOCIETY</th>
<th>GLOBAL SOCIETY</th>
<th>GLOBAL INJUSTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State and non-state actors</td>
<td>Anti-statist</td>
<td>Anti-statist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational activities</td>
<td>Complex global relations</td>
<td>“Global protection racket”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International civil society</td>
<td>World society</td>
<td>Human wrongs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-private coexistence</td>
<td></td>
<td>World injustice</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Paul Kennedy: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers

- The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict From 1500 to 2000 (1987)
- Explores the politics and economics of the Great Powers from 1500 to 1980 and the reason for their decline
- It then continues by forecasting the positions of China, Japan, the European Economic Community (EEC), the Soviet Union and the United States through the end of the 20th century.
Paul Kennedy: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers

- The strength of a **Great Power** can only be properly measured relative to other powers.
- Great Power ascendency (over the long-term or in specific conflicts) correlates strongly to available **resources** and **economic durability**;
- Military "over-stretch" and a concomitant relative decline is the consistent threat facing powers whose ambitions and security requirements are greater than their resource base can provide for.
  
  "Military and naval endeavors may not always have been the *raison d'etre* of the new nations-states, but it certainly was their most expensive and pressing activity", and it remains such until the power's decline.
Paul Kennedy: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers

- **Financial power reigned** between 1660 and 1815, using Britain, France, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, and Russia to contrast between powers that could finance their wars (Britain and France) and powers that needed financial patronage to mobilize and maintain a major military force on the field.

- British wartime expenditures throughout that period
  - Total Wartime Expenditures, 1688–1815: 2,293,483,437 Pounds,
  - Total Income: 1,622,924,377 Pounds,
  - Balance Raised by Loans: 670,559,060 Pounds, and
  - Loans as % of Expenditure: 33.3%
Paul Kennedy: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers

- **Industrialization 1815-**
- Kennedy's next two chapters depend greatly upon Barioch's calculations of industrialization, measuring all nations by an index, where 100 is the British per capita industrialization rate in 1900.
- Relative shares of world manufacturing output are used to estimate the peaks and troughs of power for major states. China, for example, begins with 32.8% of global manufacturing in 1750 and plummets after the Opium Wars and Taiping Rebellion to 19.7% of global manufacturing in 1860, and 12.5% in 1880 (compared to the UK's 1.9% in 1750, growing to 19.9% in 1860, and 22.9% in 1880).
Paul Kennedy: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers

- 20th century
- Measures of strength in the 20th century (pages 199–203) use population size, urbanization rates, Bairoch's per capita levels of industrialization, iron and steel production, energy consumption, and total industrial output of the powers
  - predicts the decline of the Soviet Union
  - the rise of China and Japan,
  - the struggles and potential for the EEC,
  - and the relative decline of the United States
- He predicts that continued deficit spending, especially on military build-up, will be the single most important reason for decline of any Great Power