

INTRODUCTION TO THE ADVANCED STUDY OF POLITICS
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Week 2: The State of the IR Debate (October 22, 2009)

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I. THE RISE OF NEO-REALISM

A. Differences from Classical Realism

- method (systemic, hypothetico-deductive)
- treatment of power (capabilities, motivations)
- logic of anarchy

B. How the theory works

- anarchy vs. hierarchy (does this distinction hold?)
- balancing behaviour (is it a natural outgrowth of anarchy?)
- unit-level factors (are they 'smuggled in?')

C. Waltz's followers: improvement or radical departure?

II. THE NEO-LIBERAL RESPONSE

A. Interdependence

- pluralism (multiple actors)
- new dynamics (complex interdependence)
- high vs. low politics (still a relevant distinction?)

B. Neo-liberal-institutionalism

- 1) what's new here? (the N-L-I view of co-operation)
- 2) shared assumptions with neo-realism (states, materialism, anarchy)
- 3) Prisoners Dilemma and the role of institutions
 - reduced uncertainty
 - iterative games
 - reduced transaction costs
 - information/monitoring
- 4) what's 'liberal' about N-L-I?

III. THE NEO-NEO DEBATE

A. Points of contention

- nature and consequences of anarchy
- co-operation
- relative vs. absolute gains
- priority of state goals
- intentions vs. capabilities
- regimes and institutions

B. Is this really a debate?

IV. THE CONSTRUCTIVIST CHALLENGE

A. Neo-utilitarianism – assuming rather than explaining?

B. Interests and Identities (anarchy is what states make of it)

C. The Role of Ideas

- systematic examination vs. ‘after-thought’
- inter-subjectivity and collective intention

D. Origins and variations

1) links to the English School

2) different types of constructivism

- modernist (e.g. Wendt, Finnemore)
- linguistic or ‘rules’ constructivism (e.g., Onuf, Kratochwil)
- radical (e.g., Ashley, Walker)

E. The constructivist research agenda

- meeting Keohane’s challenge
- the new emphasis on ethics

V. RATIONALISM VS. CONSTRUCTIVISM?

- approaches rather than theories
- questions to move the conversation along

SUGGESTED READING

Core

Fearon, J. and Wendt, A., 'Rationalism versus Constructivism: A Skeptical View' in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations* (2002), ch. 3, pp. 52-72.

Keohane, R. O., *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory* (1989), pp. 158-179.

Ruggie, J.G., 'What makes the world hang together? Neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge', in *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Relations* (1998), pp. 1-39.

Further

Adler, E., 'Constructivism and International Relations', in Carlsnaes et al, ch. 5, pp. 95-118.

Baldwin, D. A. (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (1993).

Checkel, J. 'The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory', *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1998).

Finnemore, M., *The Purpose of Intervention* (2003).

Keohane, R.O. (ed.), *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World* (2002), chs. 1-3.

Kratochwil, F., 'How do Norms Matter?', in Michael Byers (ed.), *The Role of Law in International Politics* (2000), pp. 35-68.

Mearsheimer, J., 'Anarchy and the Struggle for Power', in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), ch. 2, pp. 29-54.

Price, R. 'Transnational Civil Society and Advocacy in World Politics', *World Politics*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (2003).

Price, R. (ed.), *Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics* (2008)

Waltz, K., *Theory of International Politics* (1979).

Wendt, A., *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999). *See also the 'Forum on Social Theory of International Politics', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2000).