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International Relations

Theory

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M. Beavis

We seek your assistance in helping to create a descriptive list (**see below**) of existing IR paradigms, approaches and theories.

If you know of a particular IR theory, for example, that is not listed and described below, please e-mail the name of the theory and a brief description of it to Mark Beavis at irtheory@hotmail.com. Even if you only know the name, send it: someone else can provide the description.

The list will be maintained as an on-going project and knowledge resource which will be developed and enhanced over time. So, if you think that a particular description is inadequate, please send in a better one.

IR Paradigms, Approaches and Theories:

(Last up-dated on 3 April 2015)

Balance of Power Theory

As a theory, balance of power predicts that rapid changes in international power and status—especially attempts by one state to conquer a region—will provoke counterbalancing actions. For this reason, the balancing process helps to maintain the stability of relations between states. A balance of power system functions most effectively when alliances are fluid, when they are easily formed or broken on the basis of expediency, regardless of values, religion, history, or form of government. Occasionally a single state plays a balancer role, shifting its support to oppose whatever state or alliance is strongest. A weakness of the balance of power concept is the difficulty of measuring power. (Extract from 'Balance of Power,' Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2000 <http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2000 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.)

Balance of Terror Theory

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Balance of Threat Theory

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Behavioralism

An approach to the study of politics or other social phenomena that focuses on the actions and interactions among units by using scientific methods of observation to include quantification of variables whenever possible. A practitioner of behavioralism is often referred to as a behavioralist. Behaviorism refers to the ideas held by those behavioral scientists who consider only observed behavior as relevant to the scientific enterprise and who reject what they consider to be metaphysical notions of "mind" or "consciousness" (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Chaos Theory

In mathematics and physics, chaos theory describes the behavior of certain nonlinear dynamical systems that may exhibit dynamics that are highly sensitive to initial conditions (popularly referred to as the butterfly effect). As a result of this sensitivity, which manifests itself as an exponential growth of perturbations in the initial conditions, the behavior of chaotic systems appears to be random. This happens even though these systems are deterministic, meaning that their future dynamics are fully defined by their initial conditions, with no random elements involved. This behavior is known as deterministic chaos, or simply chaos. Since the International System can be considered a nonlinear dynamic

system, it is reasonable to take this theory into account for the study of the International Order. (Mostly from [Wikipedia.](#))

Classical Realism

Also called human realism and associated with Morgenthau's exposition of realism in which the power pursuit propensity of states is derived from the basic nature of human beings as power maximisers. This perspective holds that ideological, as well as material, factors may constitute 'power' (e.g. power over public opinion) and hence has some social underpinning.

Collective Defence

Though the term existed before 1949, a common understanding of collective defence with regards to NATO can be found in Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty: 'The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them... shall be considered an attack against them all; and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area' (NATO Handbook: 232). In the context of NATO, then, collective defence is based on countering traditional challenges as understood by the realist/neorealist paradigm, specifically to territory, and finds its focus on an identifiable external threat or adversary.

Collective Security

Employed during the construction of the League of Nations, the concept of collective security goes beyond the pure idea of defence to include, according to Inis Claude, 'arrangements for facilitating peaceful settlement of disputes,' assuming that the mechanisms of preventing war and defending states under armed attack will 'supplement and reinforce each other' (1984:245). Writing during the Cold War, Claude identifies the concept as the post-WWI name given by the international community to the 'system for maintenance of international peace... intended as a replacement for the system commonly known as the balance-of-power' (1984:247). Most applicable to widely inclusive international organizations such as the League and the United Nations, ideally, the arrangement would transcend the reliance on deterrence of competing alliances through a network or scheme of 'national commitments and international mechanisms.' As in collective defence, collective security is based on the risk of retribution, but it can also involve economic and diplomatic responses, in addition to military retribution. From this, it is theorized that perfected collective security would discourage potential aggressors from angering a collectivity of states. Like balance-of-power, collective security works on the assumption that any potential aggressor would be deterred by the prospect of joint retaliation, but it goes beyond the military realm to include a wider array of security problems. It assumes that states will relinquish sovereignty and freedom of action or inaction to increasing interdependence and the premise of the indivisibility of peace. The security that can be derived from this is part of the foundation of the neoliberal institutionalist argument.

Communitarianism

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Complex Interdependence Theory

The term 'complex interdependence' was developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye and refers to the various, complex transnational connections (interdependencies) between states and societies. Interdependence theorists noted that such relations, particularly economic ones, were increasing; while the use of military force and power balancing were decreasing (but remained important). Reflecting on these developments, they argued that the decline of military force as a policy tool and the increase in economic and other forms of interdependence should increase the probability of cooperation among states. The complex interdependence framework can be seen as an attempt to synthesise elements of realist and liberal thought. Finally, anticipating problems

of cheating and relative gains raised by realists, interdependence theorists introduced the concept of 'regimes' to mitigate anarchy and facilitate cooperation. Here, we can see an obvious connection to neo-liberal institutionalism. See Keohane, R. and J. Nye. 1977. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Little-Brown, Boston. (2nd edition, 1989).

Complexity Theory

Complexity theory offers a rich array of concepts that can help us ask deeper questions. Taken together, these concepts argue for viewing world politics increasingly as a group of tightly bound actors evolving together, characterized more by context than their innate nature, vulnerable to surprise from new groups whose members decide independently to organize themselves in new ways and for new purposes. These concepts argue further for assuming that substantive consequences can arise, sometimes rapidly, from initially minor conditions and that organizations and countries will have a dangerous tendency to push themselves to limits beyond which catastrophe is almost unavoidable. The resultant picture of the 21st century world of high technology, instant communication, tight international connectivity at all levels of society, and universal education is one of a political world not only constantly evolving but evolving more rapidly, where actors can change course abruptly, policies that worked can suddenly fail, and success will go to the nimble. (William deB. Mills, [Analyzing the Future](#) Web site)

Constitutional Order Theory

Philip Bobbitt's central thesis (in his book *The Shield of Achilles*, 2002) that the interplay between strategic and constitutional innovation changes the constitutional order of the state. In putting his thesis, Bobbitt also contends that: epochal wars have brought a particular constitutional order to primacy; a constitutional order achieves dominance by best exploiting the strategic and constitutional innovations of its era; the peace treaties that end epochal wars ratify a particular constitutional order for the society of states; and each constitutional order asserts a unique basis for legitimacy. In terms of the current international system, Bobbitt argues that it is transitioning from an order of nation-states to market-states. The value of Bobbitt's thesis is that it better explains relations between states, as well as changes within states and in the international system, than the (previously) dominant theory of neo-realism, which assumes that all states are the same and seek only to survive in an anarchical and competitive system through on-going power balancing.

Constitutive Theory

Constitutive theory is directly concerned with the importance of human reflection on the nature and character of world politics and the approach to its study. Reflections on the process of theorizing, including epistemological and ontological issues and questions, are typical. Constitutive theory is distinguished from explanatory or empirical theory (see below) and may be described as the *philosophy* of world politics or international relations.

Constructivism

Constructivist theory rejects the basic assumption of neo-realist theory that the state of anarchy (lack of a higher authority or government) is a structural condition inherent in the system of states. Rather, it argues, in Alexander Wendt's words, that 'Anarchy is what states make of it'. That is, anarchy is a condition of the system of states because states in some sense 'choose' to make it so. Anarchy is the result of a process that constructs the rules or norms that govern the interaction of states. The condition of the system of states today as self-helpers in the midst of anarchy is a result of the process by which states and the system of states was constructed. It is not an inherent fact of state-to-state relations. Thus, constructivist theory holds that it is possible to change the anarchic nature of the system of states. (See Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It', *International Organization*, 46, 2, Spring 1992.)

Corporatism

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Cosmopolitanism

The word 'cosmopolitan', which derives from the Greek word kosmopolitês ('citizen of the world'), has been used to describe a wide variety of important views in moral and socio-political philosophy. The nebulous core shared by all cosmopolitan views is the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, do (or at least can) belong to a single community, and that this community should be cultivated. Different versions of cosmopolitanism envision this community in different ways, some focusing on political institutions, others on moral norms or relationships, and still others focusing on shared markets or forms of cultural expression. The philosophical interest in cosmopolitanism lies in its challenge to commonly recognized attachments to fellow-citizens, the local state, parochially shared cultures, and the like. (From the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: [Cosmopolitanism](#))

Critical Social Theory

Not really a theory, but an approach or methodology which seeks to take a critical stance towards itself by recognising its own presuppositions and role in the world; and secondly, towards the social reality that it investigates by providing grounds for the justification and criticism of the institutions, practices and mentalities that make up that reality. Critical social theory therefore attempts to bridge the divides in social thought between explanation and justification, philosophical and substantive concerns, pure and applied theory, and contemporary and earlier thinking.

Cultural Internationalism

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Decision Making Analysis

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Defensive Realism

Defensive realism is an umbrella term for several theories of international politics and foreign policy that build upon Robert Jervis's writings on the security dilemma and to a lesser extent upon Kenneth Waltz's balance-of-power theory (neorealism). Defensive realism holds that the international system provides incentives for expansion only under certain conditions. Anarchy (the absence of a universal sovereign or worldwide government) creates situations where by the tools that one state uses to increase its security decreases the security of other states. This security dilemma causes states to worry about one another's future intentions and relative power. Pairs of states may pursue purely security seeking strategies, but inadvertently generate spirals of mutual hostility or conflict. States often, although not always, pursue expansionist policies because their leaders mistakenly believe that aggression is the only way to make their state secure. Defensive realism predicts great variation in internationally driven expansion and suggests that states ought to generally pursue moderate strategies as the best route to security. Under most circumstances, the stronger states in the international system should pursue military, diplomatic, and foreign economic policies that communicate restraint. Examples of defensive realism include: offense-defense theory (Jervis, Stephen Van Evera, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Charles Glaser), balance-of-power theory (Barry Posen, Michael Mastanduno), balance-of-threat theory (Stephen Walt), domestic mobilization theories (Jack Snyder, Thomas Christensen, and Aron Friedberg), and security dilemma theory (Thomas Christensen, Robert Ross, and William Rose). (Sources: Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Security-Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Reconsidered,' *International Security*, 25, 3, Winter 2000/2001: 152-86; and John J. Mearsheimer, (2002), *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton, New York).

Democratic Peace

All democratic peace theories seek to explain the disputed empirical fact that two constitutional democracies have never gone to war with each other in recent history (1816 onwards). As such, they rest on a similar hypothesis: that relations between pairings of democratic states are inherently more peaceful than relations between other regime-type pairings (i.e. democratic versus non-democratic or non-democratic versus non-democratic). To prove the reality of the democratic

peace, theorists such as Michael Doyle have sought to show a causal relationship between the independent variable - 'democratic political structures at the unit level' - and the dependant variable - 'the asserted absence of war between democratic states'. Critics, such as Ido Oren, dispute the claims of democratic peace theorists by insisting that there is a liberal bias in the interpretation of 'democracy' which weakens the evidence.

Dependency Theory

Dependency theorists assert that so-called 'third-world' countries were not always 'poor', but became impoverished through colonial domination and forced incorporation into the world economy by expansionist 'first-world' powers. Thus, 'third-world' economies became geared more toward the needs of their 'first-world' colonial masters than the domestic needs of their own societies. Proponents of dependency theory contend that relationships of dependency have continued long after formal colonization ended. Thus, the primary obstacles to autonomous development are seen as external rather than internal, and so 'third-world' countries face a global economy dominated by rich industrial countries. Because 'first-world' countries never had to contend with colonialism or a world full of richer, more powerful competitors, dependency theorists argue that it is unfair to compare contemporary 'third-world' societies with those of the 'first-world' in the early stages of development.

Deterrence Theory

Deterrence is commonly thought about in terms of convincing opponents that a particular action would elicit a response resulting in unacceptable damage that would outweigh any likely benefit. Rather than a simple cost/benefits calculation, however, deterrence is more usefully thought of in terms of a dynamic process with provisions for continuous feedback. The process initially involves determining who shall attempt to deter whom from doing what, and by what means. Several important assumptions underlie most thinking about deterrence. Practitioners tend to assume, for example, that states are unitary actors, and logical according to Western concepts of rationality. Deterrence also assumes that we can adequately understand the calculations of an opponent. One of the most important assumptions during the Cold War was that nuclear weapons were the most effective deterrent to war between the states of the East and the West. This assumption, carried into the post-Cold War era, however, may promote nuclear proliferation. Indeed, some authors suggest that the spread of nuclear weapons would deter more states from going to war against one another. The weapons would, it is argued, provide weaker states with more security against attacks by stronger neighbors. Of course, this view is also predicated on the assumption that every state actor's rationality will work against the use of such weapons, and that nuclear arms races will therefore not end in nuclear warfare. (Edited extract from *Post-Cold War Conflict Deterrence*, Naval Studies Board, National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, 1997.)

Dialectical Functionalism

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Domino Theory

This theory was pronounced in the early 1950s by the US government fearing the spread of communism in Asia, in the early phase of the Cold War. In essence, the domino theory argues that if one South East Asian state becomes Marxist then this will trigger neighbouring states into becoming Marxist and so on. Internal crises in Asian states coupled with their interdependence means that Marxist revolutions or insurgencies will occur and spread. This is akin to toppling a row of dominoes. The Chinese revolution of 1949 followed by the Korean war of 1950-53 seemed to suggest that this domino effect was occurring. Though this theory is somewhat simplistic and based more on observation than scientific reasoning, the logic of the domino theory was perhaps one reason why the US became involved in the Vietnam War to stop this domino effect.

Dynamic Interaction Theory

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Emancipatory International Relations

Emancipatory international relations is characterised by a number of schools of thought most broadly falling under the umbrella of Western or Hegelian Marxism, such as neo-Gramscian theory and approaches to IR based on the Frankfurt School philosophy. These approaches to emancipatory IR can be shown to be reformist rather than revolutionary, in the sense that visions of an alternative world order fail to transcend the state. Thus, some would suggest that approaches to IR that are derived from an anarchist political philosophy, for example, are more appropriate for an emancipatory conception of IR which is revolutionary rather than reformist.

Empirical Theory

An empirical theory in the social or natural sciences relates to facts and provides an explanation or prediction for observed phenomena. Hypotheses associated with empirical theories are subject to test against real-world data or facts. The theorist need not have any purpose in developing such empirical theories other than satisfying his or her intellectual curiosity, although many will seek to make their work "policy relevant" (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

English School

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Ethnic Conflict Theory

Ethnic conflicts are old. It is violence for state recognition, autonomy or to join a neighboring state. Such conflicts received serious attention by scholars in the aftermath of the Cold War and with the demise of the former Yugoslavia and USSR into several independent states. Ethnic conflict studies can be a source for understanding international relations bearing in mind that no single book, concept or theory can expect to capture such a complex phenomena in its entirety. Political scientists use concepts and theories of sociologists such as Evans (1993), Giddens (1993), Smith (1986), Rex (1986), Hurd (1986) and Laitin (1986) to explain endemic ethnic conflicts caused by alienation and deprivation of ethnic minority groups bonded by history, descent, language, religion and culture living in a defined territory. This group perceives itself as 'me-you,' 'we-they,' 'insiders-outsiders,' and 'minority-majority.' Three contending ethnic conflict theories: a) Primordialists stress the importance of instinctive behavior of belonging; b) Instrumentalist or Circumstantialists cite compelling socio-economic-political factors; and c) Constructivists point to the social nature of ethnic groups. For ethnic conflict management models of political 'accommodation' or 'arrangements' see Walker, C. 1994, *Ethnocentrism: The Quest for Understanding* (Chapters 6 & 8), Princeton University Press; McGarry, J. and O'Leary, B. (eds), 1993, *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Resolution: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts* (Chapter 1), Routledge; and Lijphart, A. 1997, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (Chapters 1 & 2), Yale University Press. For further perspectives, see Toft, M. 2003, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*, Princeton University Press; Anderson, B. 1991, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso; and Huntington, P. 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster.

Evolutionary World Politics

A sub-field of the study of International Relations that poses the question: what explains structural change in world politics, in the past millennium in particular? It rests on two core premises: that political change at the global level is the product of evolutionary processes, and that such processes might be best understood through the application of evolutionary concepts such as selection or learning, without yet embracing biological determinism. Focussing on longer-term, institutional, change it contrasts with, and complements, rational choice approaches that illuminate shorter-term, ends-means decision-making. Components of it might be recognized both in the realist, and the liberal schools of international relations. Structural change may be studied at three levels: at the actor level, by looking at long cycles of global politics; at the level of global

political formation, by inquiring into world empire, the nation-state system with global leadership, and global organization, as alternative forms of coping with global problems; and at the of human species evolution, by asking about the emergence of basic world institutions. Global political change co-evolves with cognate processes in the world economy, and is nested in the longer-term developments in democratization, and changes in world opinion. A key exponent of this theory was George Modelski.

Expected Utility Theory

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Feminism

A branch of Critical Social Theory (see above) that seeks to explore how we think, or do not think, or avoid thinking about gender in international relations (IR). Feminists argue that traditional IR thinking has avoided thinking of *men* and *women* in the capacity of embodied and socially constituted subject categories by subsuming them in other categories (e.g. statesmen, soldiers, refugees), too readily accepting that women are located inside the typically separate sphere of domestic life, and retreating to abstractions (i.e. the state) that mask a masculine identity. Gender-minded analysts therefore seek to move from suspicion of officially ungendered IR texts to their subversion and to replacement theories. Some recent gender-attentive research streams include: critique and reappropriation of stories told about the proper scope of the field of IR; revisions of war and peace narratives; reevaluations of women and development in the international system and its parts; feminist interpretations of human rights; and feminist understandings of international political economy and globalisation. (These notes are an adaptation of a piece by Christine Sylvester: 'Feminist Theory and Gender Studies in International Relations'.)

Foundationalism (and Anti-Foundationalism)

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Fourth World Theory

A theoretical framework, based on the distinction between nations and states, examining how colonial empires and modern states invaded and now encapsulate most of the world's enduring peoples. The term *Fourth World* refers to nations forcefully incorporated into states which maintain a distinct political culture but are internationally unrecognized (Griggs, R. 1992. 'The Meaning of 'Nation' and 'State' in the Fourth World', Center for World Indigenous Studies). Fourth World analyses, writings and maps aim to rectify the distorting and obscuring of indigenous nations' identities, geographies and histories and expose the usually hidden 'other side' of invasions and occupations that generate most of the world's wars, refugees, genocide, human rights violations and environmental destruction. The distinction between political terms such as nation, state, nation-state, a people and ethnic group - which are commonly used interchangeably in both popular and academic literature despite the fact that each has a unique connotation - provides a geopolitical perspective from which one can paint a 'ground-up' portrait of the significance and centrality of people in most world issues, problems and solutions. Fourth World Theory was fashioned by a diverse assortment of people, including activists, human rights lawyers, academics and leaders of indigenous nations. Similar to World Systems Analysis (see below) scholars, proponents of Fourth World Theory seek to change the world, not just describe or explain it.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

A theory that argues that collective behavior is an aggressive response to feelings of frustration.

Functionalism

A focus on purposes or tasks, particularly those performed by organisations. Some theorists have explained the growth of organisations, particularly international organisations, as a response to an increase in the number of purposes or tasks demanding attention. *Neofunctionalism* as a theory of regional integration emphasizes the political calculation and pay-off to elites who agree to

collaborate in the performance of certain tasks (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Game Theory

A decision-making approach based on the assumption of actor rationality in a situation of competition. Each actor tries to maximize gains or minimize losses under conditions of uncertainty and incomplete information, which requires each actor to rank order preferences, estimate probabilities, and try to discern what the other actor is going to do. In a two-person *zero-sum* game, what one actor wins the other loses; if *A* wins, 5, *B* loses 5, and the sum is zero. In a two-person *non-zero* or *variable sum* game, gains and losses are not necessarily equal; it is possible that both sides may gain. This is sometimes referred to as a *positive-sum* game. In some games, both parties can lose, and by different amounts or to a different degree. So-called *n-person* games include more than two actors or sides. Game theory has contributed to the development of models of deterrence and arms race spirals, but it is also the basis for work concerning the question of how collaboration among competitive states in an anarchic world can be achieved: The central problem is that the rational decision for an individual actor such as a state may be to "defect" and go it alone as opposed to taking a chance on collaboration with another state actor. Dealing with this problem is a central concern of much of the literature on international regimes, regional integration, and conflict resolution (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Geopolitics

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Globalisation

Globalisation, as a theory, argues that states and societies are increasingly being 'disciplined' to behave as if they were private markets operating in a global territory. 'Disciplinary' forces affecting states and societies are attributed to the global capital market, transnational corporations (TNCs), and structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, which are all driven by neo-liberal economic ideology. Some scholars, such as Stephen Gill, see these agents as representing an emerging system of global economic governance ('disciplinary neo-liberalism') based on a quasiconstitutional framework for the reconstitution of the legal rights, prerogatives, and freedom of movement for capital on a world scale ('new constitutionalism'). See Gill, S. 'New Constitutionalism, Democratisation and Global Political Economy', in *Pacifica Review* 10, 1, 1998.

Globalism

An image of politics different from *realism* and *pluralism*. Globalism focuses on the importance of economy, especially capitalist relations of dominance or exploitation, to understanding world politics. The globalist image is influenced by Marxist analyses of exploitative relations, although not all globalists are Marxists. Dependency theory, whether understood in Marxist or non-Marxist terms, is categorised here as part of the globalist image. Also included is the view that international relations are best understood if one sees them as occurring within a world-capitalist system (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention

Thomas Friedman's theory that no two countries that both had McDonald's had fought a war against each other since each got its McDonald's. More specifically, Friedman articulates it thus: 'when a country reached the level of economic development where it had a middle class big enough to support a McDonald's network, it became a McDonald's country. And people in McDonald's countries didn't like to fight wars anymore, they preferred to wait in line for burgers'. (See Chapter 12 in Thomas L. Friedman, (2000), *The Lexus and The Olive Tree*, Harper Collins Publishers, London.)

Gramscianism

Marxist related theory, developed by Antoni Gramsci (1891-1937) and further

developed by Robert W. Cox. The key question in Gramsci's theoretical work was: 'Why it had been proven to be so difficult to promote revolution in Western Europe?' As Karl Marx predicted that revolution to be in a advanced capitalist society, it occurred in a backward Russia. Gramsci answer revolves around his use of the concept of hegemony. Where Marx focused mainly on coercion (the fear by the proletariat of coercion by the bourgeoisie), Gramsci saw the hegemon as a Centaur (half beast, half man). According to Gramsci, it was the mix of coercion (repression by violence) and consent (norms and morals) that was spread by the Hegemon in advanced capitalist society, while in backward society it was basically only coercion which kept the proletariat 'in line'. Consent, lead to a civil society, where lower classes could relatively identify with and express themselves to other classes. (Source: John Baylis, Steve Smith & Patricia Owens, (2011), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford University Press.)

Grand Strategy

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Hegemonic Stability Theory

The central idea of this theory is that the stability of the international system requires a single dominant state to articulate and enforce the rules of interaction among the most important members of the system. For a state to be a hegemon, it must have three attributes: the capability to enforce the rules of the system, the will to do so, and a commitment to a system which is perceived as mutually beneficial to the major states. A hegemon's capability rests upon the likes of a large, growing economy, dominance in a leading technological or economic sector, and political power backed up by projective military power. An unstable system will result if economic, technological, and other changes erode the international hierarchy and undermine the position of the dominant state. Pretenders to hegemonic control will emerge if the benefits of the system are viewed as unacceptably unfair. (Extract from lecture notes on the theory of hegemonic stability by Vincent Ferraro, Ruth C. Lawson Professor of International Politics at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts.)

Historical Internationalism

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Historical Materialism

Historical materialism is articulated in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The basic assumption of the theory is that the historical process is determined by the type of economic relations prevalent during a specific time period. That is, the economy, or mode of life, determines the political, cultural, religious, legal and other dimensions of society.

Historical Sociology

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Idealism

Idealism is so widely defined that only certain basic tenets can be described. Idealists believe strongly in the affective power of ideas, in that it is possible to base a political system primarily on morality, and that the baser and more selfish impulses of humans can be muted in order to build national and international norms of behavior that foment peace, prosperity, cooperation, and justice. Idealism then is not only heavily reformist, but the tradition has often attracted those who feel that idealistic principles are the "next-step" in the evolution of the human character. One of the first and foremost pieces of the "old world" and "old thinking" to be tossed on the trash heap of history by idealism is that destructive human institution of war. War, in the idealistic view, is now no longer considered by either elites or the populace of the great powers as being a plausible way of achieving goals, as the costs of war, even for the victor, exceed the benefits. As John Mueller says in his book *Quiet Cataclysm*, war is passing into that consciousness stage where slavery and dueling reside - it can fade away without any adverse effect, and with no need for replacement.

Imperialism

Hans J. Morgenthau defines imperialism as a national foreign policy aimed at acquiring more power than the state actually has, through a reversal of existing power relations, in other words, a favorable change in power status. Imperialism as a national foreign policy is in contrast to 'status quo' foreign policy and a foreign policy of 'prestige.' The policy of imperialism assumes the classical realist theory perspective of analysis at the unit level in international relations. Furthermore, imperialism is based on a 'balance-of-power' construct in international relations. The three types of imperialism as outlined by Morgenthau are: Marxist theory of imperialism which rests on the foundation that all political phenomena are the reflection of economic forces; the Liberal theory of imperialism which results because of maladjustments in the global capitalist system (e.g., surplus of goods and capital which seek outlets in foreign markets); and finally, the 'devil' theory of imperialism which posits that manufacturers and bankers plan wars in order to enrich themselves. From Morgenthau, Hans J. 1948. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. McGraw-Hill, Boston. (Chapter 5, The Struggle for Power: Imperialism).

Incrementalism

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Integration Theory

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Intergovernmentalism

In its most basic form, intergovernmentalism explains interstate cooperation and especially regional integration (e.g. EU) as a function of the alignment of state interests and preferences coupled with power. That is, contrary to the expectations of functionalism and neofunctionalism, integration and cooperation are actually caused by rational self-interested states bargaining with one another. Moreover, as would be expected, those states with more 'power' likely will have more of their interests fulfilled. For example, with regard to the EU, it is not surprising, according to proponents of this theory, that many of the agreed-upon institutional arrangements are in line with the preferences of France and Germany, the so-called 'Franco-German core.' Andrew Moravcsik is probably the most well-known proponent of intergovernmentalism right now. (See for example: Andrew Moravcsik, 'Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach,' *Journal of Common Market Studies*, December, 1993.)

Internationalism

Internationalism is a political movement that advocates greater economic and political cooperation among participating actors for the benefit of all. It is by nature opposed to ultranationalism, jingoism and national chauvinism and presupposes the recognition of other nations as equal, in spite of all their differences. Indeed, it is most commonly expressed as an appreciation for the diverse cultures in the world and as a desire for world peace. It also encompasses an obligation to assist the world through leadership and cooperation, advocating robust global governance and the presence of international organizations, such as the United Nations.

International Order Theory

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

International Political Economy

A method of analysis concerning the social, political and economic arrangements affecting the global systems of production, exchange and distribution, and the mix of values reflected therein (Strange, S. 1988. *States and Markets*. Pinter Publishers, London. p18). As an analytical method, political economy is based on the assumption that what occurs in the economy reflects, and affects, social power relations.

International Regime Theory

A perspective that focuses on cooperation among actors in a given area of international relations. An international regime is viewed as a set of implicit and

explicit principles, norms, rules, and procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a particular issue-area. An issue-area comprises interactions in such diverse areas as nuclear nonproliferation, telecommunications, human rights, or environmental problems. A basic idea behind international regimes is that they provide for transparent state behaviour and a degree of stability under conditions of anarchy in the international system. International regime analysis has been offering a meeting ground for debate between the various schools of thought in IR theory. See Krasner, S. 1983. *International Regimes*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Interventionism

The theory of interventionism examines the nature and justifications of interfering with another polity (that is, political organization) or with choices made by individuals. Interventionism is characterized by the use or threat of force or coercion to alter a political or cultural situation nominally outside the intervenor's moral or political jurisdiction. It commonly deals with a government's interventions in other governments' affairs—and is thus an aspect of political philosophy, but it can also be extended to interventions in others' cultures, religions, lifestyles, and economic activities—and thus can fit into applied ethics, covering such issues as paternalism, imperialism, and topics in business, medical, and environmental ethics. ([Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.](#))

Just War Theory

Normative theory referring to conditions under which (1) states rightfully go to war (*jus ad bellum*) with just cause, as in self-defense in response to aggression, when the decision to go to war is made by legitimate authority in the state, as a last resort after exhausting peaceful remedies, *and* with some reasonable hope of achieving legitimate objectives; (2) states exercise right conduct in war (*jus in bello*) when the means employed are proportional to the ends sought, when noncombatants are spared, when weapons or other means that are immoral in themselves are not used (typically those that are indiscriminate or cause needless suffering), *and* when actions are taken with a *right intention* to accomplish legitimate military objectives and to minimize collateral death and destruction. Many of these principles of just war are part of the body of international law and thus are legally binding on states and their agents (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Legal Positivism

A legal theory that identifies international law with positive acts of state consent. Herein, states are the only official 'subjects' or 'persons' of international law because they have the capacity to enter into legal relations and to have legal rights and duties. Indeed, they are the only entities with full, original and universal legal personality; the only proper actors bound by international law. As far as non-state entities (such as individuals, corporations, and international organisations) are concerned, their ability to assert legal personality is only derivative of and conditional upon state personality and state consent. This predominant ideology originated in the nineteenth century when legal positivism took the eighteenth century law of nations, a law common to individuals and states, and transformed it into public and private international law, with the former being deemed to apply to states and the latter to individuals. Thus, only states enjoy full international legal personality, which can be defined as the capacity to bring claims arising from the violation of international law, to conclude valid international agreements, and to enjoy privileges and immunities from national jurisdiction. (Edited text taken from Cutler, C. 2000. 'Globalization, Law and Transnational Corporations: a Deepening of Market Discipline', in Cohn, T., S. McBride and J. Wiseman (eds.). *Power in the Global Era*. Macmillan Press Ltd.)

Liberalism (Liberal Internationalism)

A political theory founded on the natural goodness of humans and the autonomy of the individual. It favours civil and political liberties, government by law with the consent of the governed, and protection from arbitrary authority. In IR liberalism covers a fairly broad perspective ranging from Wilsonian Idealism through to

contemporary neo-liberal theories and the democratic peace thesis. Here states are but one actor in world politics, and even states can cooperate together through institutional mechanisms and bargaining that undermine the propensity to base interests simply in military terms. States are interdependent and other actors such as Transnational Corporations, the IMF and the United Nations play a role.

Marxism

A body of thought inspired by Karl Marx. It emphasises the dialectical unfolding of historical stages, the importance of economic and material forces and class analysis. It predicts that contradictions inherent in each historical epoch eventually lead to the rise of a new dominant class. The era of capitalism, according to Marx, is dominated by the bourgeoisie and will give way to a proletarian, or working class, revolution and an era of socialism in which workers own the means of production and move toward a classless, communist society in which the state, historically a tool of the dominant class, will wither away. A number of contemporary theorists have drawn on Marxian insights and categories of analysis - an influence most evident in work on dependency and the world capitalist system (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Materialism

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Modernisation Theory

A theory presuming that all countries had similar starting points and follow similar paths to 'development' along the lines of contemporary 'first-world' societies.

Mutually Assured Destruction Theory

This theory is based on the same initial input as for security dilemma theory, but differs in terms of the outcome. According to mutually assured destruction theory, when two or more states all acquire a nuclear potential sufficient to destroy any other one, then nuclear conflict is impossible because a first strike will inevitably lead to a response and the subsequent mutual destruction of the actors involved. In other words, a nuclear arsenal is a good deterrent because it does not allow anyone to become a winner in a conflict.

Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism holds that the actions of a state in the international system can be explained by systemic variables, such as the distribution of power capabilities among states, as well as cognitive variables, such as the perception and misperception of systemic pressures, other states' intentions, or threats - and domestic variables like state institutions, elites, and societal actors within society, which can affect the power and freedom of action of the decision-makers in foreign policy. While holding true to the neorealist concept of balance of power, neoclassical realism further adds that states' mistrust and inability to perceive one another accurately, or state leaders' inability to mobilize state power and public support can result in an underexpansion or underbalancing behaviour leading to imbalances within the international system, the rise and fall of great powers, and war. Appropriate balancing occurs when a state correctly perceives another state's intentions and balances accordingly. Overbalancing occurs when a state incorrectly perceives another state as threatening, and uses too many resources than it needs to in order to balance. Underbalancing occurs when a state fails to balance, out of either inefficiency or incorrectly perceiving a state as less of a threat than it actually is. Nonbalancing occurs when a state avoids balancing through buck passing, bandwagoning, or other escapes.

Neococonservatism

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Neoliberal Institutionalism

Encompasses those theories which argue that international institutions play an important role in coordinating international cooperation. Proponents begin with the same assumptions used by realists, except for the following: where realists assume that states focus on relative gains and the potential for conflict,

neoliberal institutionalists assume that states concentrate on absolute gains and the prospects for cooperation. Neoliberal institutionalists believe that the potential for conflict is overstated by realists and suggest that there are countervailing forces, such as repeated interactions, that propel states toward cooperation. They regard cheating as the greatest threat to cooperation and anarchy as the lack of organisation to enforce rules against cheating. Institutions are described by neoliberals as 'persistent and connected sets of rules (formal or informal) that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations' (Keohane, R. 'International Institutions: Two Approaches', in *International Studies Quarterly* 32, 1988). Robert Keohane is the scholar most closely identified with neoliberal institutionalism.

Neoliberalism

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Neomarxism

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Neorealism

A theory developed by Kenneth Waltz in which states seek to survive within an anarchical system. Although states may seek survival through power balancing, balancing is not the aim of that behaviour. Balancing is a product of the aim to survive. And because the international system is regarded as anarchic and based on self-help, the most powerful units set the scene of action for others as well as themselves. These major powers are referred to as poles; hence the international system (or a regional subsystem), at a particular point in time, may be characterised as unipolar, bipolar or multipolar.

Neotraditionalism

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New War Theory

Mary Kaldor's new war theory argues that contemporary types of warfare are distinct from the classic modern forms of warfare based on nation-states. New wars are part of a globalised war economy underpinned by transnational ethnicities, globalised arms markets and internationalised Western-global interventions. The new type of warfare is a predatory social condition which damages the economies of neighbouring regions as well as the zone of conflict itself, spreading refugees, identity-based politics and illegal trade. It is also characterised by new forms of violence (the systematic murder of 'others', forced population expulsion and rendering areas uninhabitable) carried out by new militaries (the decaying remnants of state armies, paramilitary groups, self-defence units, mercenaries and international troops) funded by remittances, diaspora fund-raising, external government assistance and the diversion of international humanitarian aid. Whereas 80 per cent of war victims early last century were military personnel, it is estimated that 80 per cent of victims in contemporary wars are civilians. According to Kaldor, this new form of warfare is a political rather than a military challenge, involving the breakdown of legitimacy and the need for a new cosmopolitan politics to reconstruct affected communities and societies. See Kaldor, Mary. 1999. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Polity, Cambridge.

Normative Theory

Normative theory deals precisely with values and value preferences. Unlike empirical theory, however, propositions in normative theory are not subject to empirical test as a means of establishing their truth or falsehood. Normative theory deals not with what *is*, the domain of empirical theory. Rather, normative theory deals explicitly with what *ought* to be - the way the world should be ordered and the value choices decision makers *should* make (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Nuclear Utilisation Theory

Suggested text for this entry welcome. Please contribute!

Offensive Realism

Offensive realism is a covering term for several theories of international politics and foreign policy that give analytical primacy to the hostile and unforgiving nature of the international system as the cause of conflict. Like defensive realism, some variants of offensive realism build upon and depart from Waltz's neorealism. Offensive realism holds that anarchy (the absence of a worldwide government or universal sovereign) provides strong incentives for expansion. All states strive to maximize their relative power because only the strongest states can guarantee their survival. They pursue expansionist policies when and where the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs. States face the ever-present threat that other states will use force to harm or conquer them. This compels them to improve their relative power positions through arms build-ups, unilateral diplomacy, mercantile (or even autarkic) foreign economic policies, and opportunistic expansion. Ultimately every state in the international system strives to become a regional hegemon - a state that enjoys a preponderance of military, economic, and potential power in its part of the globe. Offensive realists however, disagree over the historical prevalence of hegemonic regional systems and the likely responses of weaker states to would-be regional hegemons (e.g., balancing, buck-passing, or bandwagoning). In particular, there is a sharp disagreement between proponents of the balance-of-power tradition (John Mearsheimer, Eric Labs, Fareed Zakaria, Kier Lieber, and Christopher Layne) and proponents of the security variant of hegemonic stability theory (Robert Gilpin, William Wohlforth, and Stephen Brooks). (Sources: Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Security-Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Reconsidered,' *International Security*, 25, 3, Winter 2000/2001: 152-86; and John J. Mearsheimer, (2002), *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W. Norton, New York).

Parallelism Theory

Based on a fusion of Weberian and Freudian concepts, Parallelism argues that, at the macro level, states fall into two general categories, paternal and fraternal, and that the struggle between the two types characterizes international relations. In the ancient world, paternal systems were predominant because they were militarily superior, but since the rise of the nation-state, fraternal states have become predominant. The engine of historical change is the revolution-hegemonic war cycle, which brings paternal and fraternal systems into conflict with one another. There are at least four examples of this type of hegemonic conflict occurring in documented history: 1) the rise of Macedonia and Alexander the Great's war with Persia; 2) the rise of Mongolia and Gheghis Khan's war of expansion; 3) the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars; and 4) Weimar Germany and World War II. There are other types of hegemonic conflicts (e.g., WW I, Seven Years War), but these four represent parallel events. Victory in revolutionary and hegemonic conflict has determined the direction of the world system, towards paternalism or fraternalism. For more information, refer to the [Center for the Study of Political Parallelism](#).

Peripheral Realism

A foreign policy theory arising from the special perspective of (Latin American) peripheral states and represented by the work of Carlos Escude, for example. This view of international relations regards the international system as having an incipient hierarchical structure based on perceived differences between states: those that give orders, those that obey, and those that rebel. The peripheral approach introduces a different way of understanding the international system: that is, from the unique viewpoint of states that do not impose 'rules of the game' and which suffer high costs when they confront them. Thus, the foreign policies of peripheral states are typically framed and implemented in such a way that the national interest is defined in terms of development, confrontation with great powers is avoided, and autonomy is not understood as freedom of action but rather in terms of the costs of using that freedom.

Phantom State

A state that is not widely recognised internationally or which has a unique set of sovereignty issues that provide only partial legitimacy and partial recognition of

sovereignty among established nation-states. Examples are: Taiwan - successful phantom state using its ambiguity and US support to maintain partial independence; Palestine - less successful, especially at internal governance issues, but better at establishing legitimacy internationally as a cause rather than a state.

Pluralism

A tradition in international relations that argued that politics, and hence policy, was the product of a myriad of competing interests, hence depriving the state of any independent status. Pluralism can be seen to derive principally from a liberal tradition, rooted in Locke's 'Second Treatise of Government', and to pose an anti-realist vision of the centrality of the state in world politics. Pluralists make four key assumptions about international relations. Primarily, non-state actors are important entities in world politics. Secondly, the State is not looked upon as a unified actor, rather, competition, coalition building, and compromise between various interest groups including multinational enterprises will eventually culminate into a 'decision' announced in the name of the state. Thirdly, pluralists challenge the realist assumption of the state as a rational actor, and this derives from the second assumption where the clash of competing interests may not always provide for a rational decision making process. Finally, the fourth assumption revolves around the nature of the international agenda, where it is deemed extensive by the pluralists and includes issues of national security as well as economic, social and environmental issues. Hence, pluralists reject the 'high politics' 'low politics' divide characteristic of realism. They also contend with the predominance of a physical conception of power inherent in realism.

Policy-Relevant Theory

Policy-relevant theories may have explicit purposes that stem from the value preferences of the theorist, such as reducing the likelihood of war or curbing the arms race. Acting on such theories, of course, is the domain of the policy maker, a task separate from that of the empirical theorist. Theorists who become policy makers may well make choices informed by what theories say will be the likely outcomes of implementing one or another alternative. Their choices may be informed by empirical theory or understanding of world events, but the decisions they make are still based on value preferences (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making

Poliheuristic theory suggests that leaders simplify their choice problems according to a two-stage decision process. During the first stage, the set of possible options and outcomes is reduced by application of a 'noncompensatory principle' to eliminate any alternative with an unacceptable return on a critical, typically political, decision dimension (Mintz 1993). Once the choice set has been reduced to alternatives that are acceptable to the decision maker, the process moves to a second stage 'during which the decision maker can either use a more analytic, expected utility-like strategy or switch to a lexicographic decision strategy.' (Mintz 1997; Mintz et al. 1997; Mintz and Geva 1997; Mintz and Astorino-Courtois 2001). In setting out a pivotal preliminary stage to expected utility decision making, the poliheuristic theory bridges the gap between research in cognitive psychology (Taber and Steenbergen 1995) and the considerable insights provided by rational analyses of decision making (e.g., Bueno de Mesquita 1981; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; Morrow 1997). From Mintz, A. 2003. *Integrating Cognitive and Rational Theories of Foreign Policy Decision Making*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Political Geography

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Pool of Power Theory

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Positivism

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Postbehaviouralism

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Postinternationalism

Unlike many other theories, postinternational theory is organized around the premise that our time is marked by profound and continuous transformations and turbulence. It seeks to account for the dynamics of change and anticipate where they might be leading the world. Its prime focus is on the transformation of three basic parameters: one at the micro level of individuals, another at the micro-macro level where individuals and their collectivities interact, and the third is at the macro level of collectivities and their global structures. The central concept at the micro level involves a skill revolution, whereas at the micro-macro level it involves the pervasiveness of authority crises experienced by all kinds of collectivities; and at the macro level it posits a bifurcation of global structures into the state-centric world of sovereignty-bound actors and the multi-centric world of sovereignty-free actors. This formulation is theoretical in the sense that it anticipates the conditions under which continual turbulence and transformation are likely to sustain world affairs. Examples of transformations at each level include the increasingly manifest readiness of individuals to engage in collective action (micro level), the 'battle of Seattle' (micro-macro level), and the pattern - indeed, institutionalization - whereby the NGO and state-centric worlds converge around common interests (macro level). See James Rosenau's (1990) *Turbulence in World Politics* and Heidi Hobbs' (ed.) (2000) *Pondering Postinternationalism*.

Postmodernism

A more extreme branch of Critical Social Theory (see above) that can be identified in terms of its critical stance toward (western) modernity and the unambiguous narratives of reason, truth and progress. Whereas the dominant narrative of modernity upholds reason as the foundation of objective truth and the source of progress, postmodernism emphasises the interplay of a plurality of discursive practices, ways of knowing, social identities and possible worlds.

Postpositivism

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Postrealism

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Poststructuralism

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Power Transition Theory

Created by A.F.K. Organski and originally published in his textbook, *World Politics* (1958), power transition theory today describes international politics as a hierarchy with (1) a "dominant" state, the one with the largest proportion of power resources (population, productivity, and political capacity meaning coherence and stability); (2) "great powers," a collection of potential rivals to the dominant state and who share in the tasks of maintaining the system and controlling the allocation of power resources; (3) "middle powers" of regional significance similar to the dominant state, but unable to challenge the dominant state or the system structure, and (4) "small powers," the rest. The principle predictive power of the theory is in the likelihood of war and the stability of alliances. War is most likely, of longest duration, and greatest magnitude, when a challenger to the dominant power enters into approximate parity with the dominant state and is dissatisfied with the existing system. Similarly, alliances are most stable when the parties to the alliance are satisfied with the system structure. There are further nuances to the theory: for instance, the sources of power transition vary in their volatility, population change being the least volatile and political capacity (defined as the ability of the government to control resources internal to the country) the most volatile. (Best single text and the source of the above description: *Power Transitions: Strategies for the 21st Century*, by Ronald L. Tammen et al., published by Seven Bridges Press, 2000.)

Pragmatic Idealism

Pragmatic Idealism was first developed as a conceptual and axiological

clarification of 'Canadian internationalism' in Costas Melakopides' *Pragmatic Idealism: Canadian Foreign Policy 19945-1995* (McGill-Queens University Press, 1998). It argued that Canada, along with such 'like-minded middle powers' as Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden, had adopted during the Cold War a self-conscious departure from classic Realpolitik, through foreign policies that cultivated moderation, mediation, legal and diplomatic solutions to international conflicts, and authentic commitment to peacekeeping, peace-making, human rights, foreign aid, and ecological rationality. Today, Pragmatic Idealism can be said to characterize any foreign policy - including the international role of the European Union - that embraces the aforementioned principles and values.

Prisoner's Dilemma

Cooperation is usually analysed in game theory by means of a non-zero-sum game called the "Prisoner's Dilemma" (Axelrod, 1984). The two players in the game can choose between two moves, either "cooperate" or "defect". The idea is that each player gains when both cooperate, but if only one of them cooperates, the other one, who defects, will gain more. If both defect, both lose (or gain very little) but not as much as the "cheated" cooperator whose cooperation is not returned. The problem with the prisoner's dilemma is that if both decision-makers were purely rational, they would never cooperate. Indeed, rational decision-making means that you make the decision which is best for you whatever the other actor chooses. Suppose the other one would defect, then it is rational to defect yourself: you won't gain anything, but if you do not defect you will be stuck with a loss. Suppose the other one would cooperate, then you will gain anyway, but you will gain more if you do not cooperate, so here too the rational choice is to defect. The problem is that if both actors are rational, both will decide to defect, and none of them will gain anything. However, if both would "irrationally" decide to cooperate, both would gain.

Prospect Theory

Prospect theory is a psychological theory of decision-making under conditions of risk and derives its name from the tenet that the notion of risk involves some prospect of loss. Thus prospect theory posits loss-aversion, rather than risk-aversion (as claimed by rational choice theorists) and takes into account the psychological primacy of relative positioning. The theory states that there are two phases affecting decision-making: 1) framing, where perception or presentation of the situation in which decisions must be made affect the disposition towards some alternatives over others; and 2) evaluation, where the decision-maker assesses gains and losses relative to a movable reference point depending on the perspective of the decision-maker. It helps focus on how utilities are formed rather than how they are maximised. Prospect theory originally was called 'value theory' by its founders Kahneman and Tversky in the late 1970s. (Edited passages from McDermott, R. (ed.). (2004). *Political Psychology*. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford).

Psycho-Cultural Theory

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Racial Internationalism

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Rationalism

A theoretical qualification to the pessimism of realism and the idealism of liberal internationalism. Rationalists view states as comprising an international *society*, not merely an international system. States come to be a part of an international society by accepting that various principles and institutions govern the way in which they conduct their foreign relations. In doing so, it can be argued, states also display a commitment to the idea that it is inappropriate to promote the national interest without any regard for international law and morality.

Realism

A particular view of the world, or paradigm, defined by the following assumptions: the international realm is anarchic and consists of independent political units

called states; states are the primary actors and inherently possess some offensive military capability or power which makes them potentially dangerous to each other; states can never be sure about the intentions of other states; the basic motive driving states is survival or the maintenance of sovereignty; states are instrumentally rational and think strategically about how to survive.

Reflectionism

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Regime Theory

See International Regime Theory above.

Schema Theory

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Securitization Theory

Securitization theory was developed by Buzan and Waever and explores the constructivist dimension of security. That is, it deals not with security *per se*, but the process of securitization. Accordingly, politicians can position certain facts or problems as existential threats even though they may not be threats in their own right. Therefore, securitization is the process whereby the security label is attached to certain phenomena. A good example is airport security checks: even though their effectiveness may be limited, they are considered essential for safety by the public and therefore subject to little doubt or critique.

Security Dilemma

A security dilemma refers to a situation wherein two or more states are drawn into conflict, possibly even war, over security concerns, even though none of the states actually desire conflict. Essentially, the security dilemma occurs when two or more states each feel insecure in relation to other states. None of the states involved want relations to deteriorate, let alone for war to be declared, but as each state acts militarily or diplomatically to make itself more secure, the other states interpret its actions as threatening. An ironic cycle of unintended provocations emerges, resulting in an escalation of the conflict which may eventually lead to open warfare. (Kanji, O. 2003. 'Security' in Burgess, G. and H. Burgess (eds.). *Beyond Intractability*. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado).

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is about human consciousness and its role in international life. As such, constructivism rests on an irreducibly intersubjective dimension of human action: the capacity and will of people to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and to lend it *significance*. This capacity gives rise to social facts, or facts that depend on human agreement that they exist and typically require human institutions for their existence (money, property rights, sovereignty, marriage and Valentine's Day, for example). Constructivists contend that not only are identities and interests of actors socially constructed, but also that they must share the stage with a whole host of other ideational factors emanating from people as cultural beings. No general theory of the social construction of reality is available to be borrowed from other fields and international relations constructivists have not as yet managed to formulate a fully fledged theory of their own. As a result, constructivism remains more of a philosophically and theoretically informed perspective on and approach to the empirical study of international relations. (Edited passage from Ruggie, J. 'What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge', *International Organization* 52, 4, Autumn 1998).

Sociological Liberalism

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Sociological Neoliberalism

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Soft Power Theory

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State Cartel Theory

State cartel theory is an institutionalist approach with a focus on regional integration. It imports its terminology from the classical cartel theory of economic enterprises. Realising that the benefits of cooperation most often outweigh the costs of conflict, states are willing to cartelize political issues in international institutions. A members' assembly is the primary institution, with further organisations being an expression of the will and needs of members. A good example is the Council of the European Union and its allied European Commission and European Court.

Structural Idealism

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Structuralism

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Supranationalism

Supranationalism entails a formal transfer of decision-making and law-making from the state to an institution or international organization. The notion is to 'pool sovereignty' in order to prevent war by integrating sovereign states economically, politically and socially. Decision-making involves national governments using voting procedures other than unanimity but also that the new supranational institutions have the ability to take or enact decisions without the need for government votes. An example of supranationalism is the European Union in which various powers and functions of member states have been transferred to EU institutions. This means that the EU is 'above the state' in many key areas.

Traditionalism

An approach to international relations that emphasises the studying of such disciplines as diplomatic history, international law, and philosophy in an attempt to develop better insights. Traditionalists tend to be skeptical of behavioralist approaches that are confined to strict scientific standards that include formal hypothesis testing and, usually, the use of statistical analysis (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Transnational Historical Materialism

Transnational historical materialism falls within the Marxist tradition. This contemporary Marxism takes its inspiration from Antonio Gramsci and gives greater significance to the role of culture and ideas, along with focussing on economic aspects of order and change. It is seen as a corrective to the economism of classical Marxism.

Transnationalism

Interactions and coalitions across state boundaries that involve such diverse nongovernmental actors as multinational corporations and banks, church groups, and terrorist networks. In some usages, transnationalism includes both nongovernmental as well as *transgovernmental* links. The term *transnational* is used both to label the actor (for example, a transnational actor) or a pattern of behavior (for example, an international organisation that acts *transnationally* - operates across state borders). Theorists focusing on transnationalism often deemphasise the state as primary and unitary actor (Viotti, P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

Two-World Order

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Virtual Theory

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World Capitalist System

An approach to international relations that emphasises the impact of the world wide spread of capitalism. It focuses on class and economic relations and the division of the world into a dominant centre or core of industrialised countries, a subordinate periphery of less developed countries and a semi-periphery of countries that occupy an intermediate position between core and periphery (Viotti,

P. and M. Kauppi, (eds.). 1987. *International Relations Theory*. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York).

World-Systems Analysis

World-systems analysis is not a theory or mode of theorizing, but a perspective and a critique of other perspectives within social science. Its social origins were located in the geopolitical emergence of the Third World in the late 1960s and the manifest insufficiencies of modernization theory to account for what was happening. The unit of analysis is the world-system rather than a state or society, with particular emphases on the long-term history and totality of the system. The notion of totality (globality, unidisciplinarity and holism) distinguishes world-systems analysis from similar approaches such as global or international political economy which look at the relationships between the two segregated streams of politics and economics. Proponents of world-systems analysis also regard it as an intellectual *movement*, capable of transforming social science into a vehicle for world-wide social change.