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INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND IR THEORY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THREE MAINSTREAM IR THEORIES

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ABSTRACT

The Westphalian system is recognized as the beginning of international system. After 30-years war, many state-like unit integrated to the world politics. This development directly or indirectly contributed to the formation of the international system. It can be said that world order or international system theory emerged and consisted with Westphalian system Theory of international relations emerged after World War II in US taking a sub-branch of political science as a separate discipline. US policy-makers and institutions started to construct polices for different regions in the world for US. During Cold War the main stream approach to theory of international relations was related to capacity, use of force, national gain and anarchical international system. Commonly international relations or international politics scholars argued and studied to understand conflicts and wars' reasons in the context of realist international relations theory. This realist view of international relations theory has been began to change and came up with new ideas about international politics and system since 1980's. In this regard this paper aims to analyze international politics in sight of theories of international relations. Firstly the fundamental concepts of international politics and system are defined and than three international relations theories' (realism, liberalism and constructivism) views about international politics be evaluated. The article will end with a general overview. It can be said that international politics is evolving in the direction more comprehensive and collective manner. Culture, identity and the process of globalization also have an effective impact in this change. Further, methodologically the article will follow the content analysis.

Keywords: International politics, mainstream theory, international relations, foreign policy

INTRODUCTION

International relations as an academic discipline is based upon early 20th century. International order was mainly arranged in self-gain, enhancing capacity and racing on material and armament during world wars era. The need of ordered international system made emerged after world wars era and the realistic view of international relations, characterized the international environment as anarchical, the war and conflicts as normal and usual because of the conflicts of gains, began to lose inference. Works on International Relations Theory (IR Theory) gained new approaches in parallel to development of political science. The debates of realism that see the international system as anarchical adopted in IR theory (Griffiths, O'Callaghan, C. Roach, 2008:8) Neorealism and world-system theory made impact to theory of international relations. Both of these theories directed to states what kinds of decisions take in international arena as "structural" (Wendt, 1987:335).

Globalization process also effected to international order and system as well in the other fields. In this regard theories of international relations began to be formed identity, social, cultural and economically based. All these effects made impact to international relations theories with an approach has different understanding of international politics. Theory of international relations has begun to centered not only state-based but also such as culture, identity, norm-based with new perspectives especially since after 1980's. Twenty-first century opened a new phase to international politics which economic relations are at the forefront of politics.

CONCEPTIONAL FRAME OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The concept of international relations has a wide deepening meaning. It means not only the relations among states or governments but also it means the relations between states and non-states organizations. It can be given example for non-states or non-governmental organizations (NGO's) religious institutions (such as churches), organizations for humanitarian aid and international corporations etc. The other perspective of the international relations is to meaning of relations between states and interstates organizations such as United Nations (UN), European Union (EU). The international relations is generally thought part or under the discipline of political science in many universities. But international relations differ from pure political science because it requires not only international politics or foreign policy but also international law, international history (in another words political history) and international economics knowledge (Wilkinson, 2010:1).

International Politics, as a separate academic discipline, in the first instance was set up in 1919. The Department of International Politics was established at University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 1919 by Welsh industrials David Davies. According to him the main goal of the department of international politics was to develop recommendations for the prevention of wars. According to common sight in the community it was possible to be found causes of international issues and would also be available solutions of these problems by academic researches (Baylis, Smith and Owens, 2011:3).

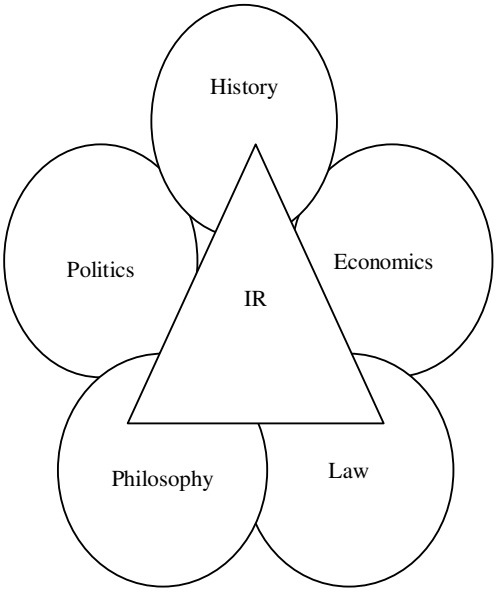


Figure 1. IR'S Creation as a Discipline (Daddow, 2009:55

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The concept of international relations is an academic subject and it's usually used with its short name IR. World has separate communities and independent states and this naturally effect the life of people. The dominant actor of IR is states and in this regard the definition of state must be done. A state is an organization or structure has a specific territory which secured population or public, a judiciary system and independent from any governments in the international system. These states are also defined as sovereign state. There are almost 200 states in the international system currently. However states are sovereign and independent, these states aren't isolated or insulated from each other. States legally act independently as sovereign but affect each other via connecting and relating. Political, social, economical and cultural based agreements and arrangements are examples of this effective intercourse. As a result of this connection a state system constitutes. A state system is also the most important element of IR. IR theory began to expand especially in nineteen century together with sovereign states based in Europe. The state system was spread the other regions of the world after (Jackson and Sorensen, 2007:2).

Historically state system based upon Westphalian system. After Thirty years war Treaty of Westphalia signed and sovereign states began to be formed. The importance of treaty is that it defined the concept of system, accepted the being of sovereign states and made definition about the rights of sovereign states. In this regard sovereignty was mean of each state had absolute authority right over its territory (D'Anieri, 2010:16). Contemporary studies on IR theory seek to make analyze beyond classical state system based inquiry. Especially effects of globalization made almost all concept complexes and complicated expect from sates, use of force and national gains interdependence, economical relations and more diplomatic tools began to become core element of IR. The transformation of IR theory will be explained in following sections.

MAINSTREAM THEORIES AND IR

Actors in policy-making process have generally tendency to ignore academic view about regional and global politics, in other words the theoretical frame. In the same way most academicians criticize the politics and decisions of states' and actor's actions policies and practices. This means that theory and practice are inevitably in close relationship and linked. "Furthermore, policy debates in both domestic and foreign affairs often hinge on competing theoretical claims, and each participant believes his or her preferred policy options will produce the desired result" (Walt, 2005:28). According to the general doctrine good theories lead the actors to the formation of a good foreign policy. Contrary to bad theories lead the policy makers to foreign policy failures (Walt, 2005:28-29). "Theory and policy form a web, even if the web has many gaps and missing strands. Despite these gaps, there are at least four ways that theoretical scholarship can help policy makers: diagnosis, prediction, prescription, and evaluation" (Walt, 2005:29). In this context this section will discuss main stream theories' sights on IR.

Realism

Theories of IR fundamentally originated from the theory of realism. It can also be defined mainstream theory of IR. Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and other realist thinkers agree on the opinion that the core element of politics especially international politics is power. The goal, the means and use of power are main political activities. In this regard according to realism international politics can also be defined as politics of power or power politics. According to realist view again, because international environment is a rival, conflict and war based arena states invariably in struggle to get the better of other states because of the national interest. In this regard realists see world politics in an international anarchy. It means

there is any hierarchical authority over states. In other words due to nature of anarchical international system it's impossible to constitute and survive a world government. The main actor of international system is state, and relations of states are also mean international relations or international politics. The other elements or player of international politics except from states are not taken into consideration in international relations. As sovereign a state's primary foreign policy goal is to guarantee its national interest. States are sovereign but not equal in terms of power. Power hierarchy is a fact of international relations. In this regard international politics is a struggle for power of dominant states (Jackson and Sorensen, 2007:60).

Another point of view of realism is that states naturally act what it wants to do the nature of human is a primarily important issue in international relations. Realists see human nature as important, hard to change and self-centered. To take another's interest into account is meaningless and unnecessary that's why international politics is an arena where states are involved with the struggle to increase their interests. On the one hand states tries to maximize their national interest on the other they make an effort to prevent existing a dominant power in international politics. According to realist view diplomacy has a vital role on balancing different national and interests and powers (Baylis et al., 2011:4).

One of the most important doctrinaires, Hans J. Morgenthau also describes the international relations as power struggle among states. According to Morgenthau, as shown in Table 1, realism has six principles. Main arguments of realist school that states have national interest and there is any authority over states. That's why states' interest clash and wars and conflicts are inevitable.

Table 1. Six Principles of Political Realism

1	Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature. In order to improve society it is first necessary to understand the laws by which society lives. The operation of these laws being impervious to our preferences, men will challenge them only at the risk of failure.
2	The main sign point that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power. This concept provides the link between reason trying to understand international politics and the facts to be understood. It sets politics as an autonomous sphere of action and understanding apart from other spheres, such as economics (understood in terms of interest defined as wealth) ethics, aesthetics, or religion.
3	Realism assumes that its key concept of interest defined as power is an objective category which is universally valid, but it does not endow that concept with a meaning that is fixed once and for all. The idea of interest is indeed of the essence of politics and is unaffected by the circumstances of time and place.
4	Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action. It is also aware of ineluctable tension between the moral command and the requirements of successful political action.
5	Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe. As it distinguishes between truth and opinion, so it distinguishes between truth and idolatry.
6	The difference, then, between political realism and other schools of thought is real, and it is profound.

(Source: Morgenthau, 1993:4-13)

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Liberalism (or Idealism)

Liberalism idea was mainly shaped in World War I when United States included in 1917. US President of period Woodrow Wilson explicated international order in the context of international cooperation and establishing an international organization. According to Wilson it wasn't necessary to harmonize the interests of states. Rather than he emphasized and believed that it was necessary to set up an international organization for arranging relations and developing cooperation among states. The League of Nations was established after World War I as a product of liberal idea (Daddow, 2009:71). Immanuel Kant, on of the most important scholar of liberalism, keynoted the impossibility of independency of states. According to Kant "No state having an independent existence-whether it be great or small-shall be acquired by another through inheritance, exchange, purchase or donation" (Kant, 1903:108).

Liberal theory of international relations commonly agreed on thoughts that states' domestic policies and structures affected their foreign policy in addition to their activities in international relations. The other important contribution of liberalism to IR theory that democratic states are tend to survive in a peace-based international environment.[97] In this regard liberal view of IR theory analyze the international system not only material-based also management and political structures, identities and behaviors of states (Panke ve Risse, 2007:90). Robert Keohane points out that "the more tightly intertwined and interdependent the valued interactions among states, the greater the incentives for long-term cooperation in order to avoid disrupting these ties" (Keohane, 2002:54). According to Keohane an open and systematic international system could rule international politics, and balance power and self-interests of states (Keohane, 2002:54).

Table 2. The Liberal Tradition

On War	*On human nature*	*On governance*
• War is not to the natural conditions of international relations • Peace is normal • National interests safeguarded by more than military means.	• Human beings are perfectible • Faith in the power of human reason • Faith in the power of humans to realize their inner potential • Belief in progress (scientific/ technological/moral/social)	• Democracy is necessary for the perfectibility of human beings to be allowed to develop • States not the main actors on the international stage • States not unitary actors • Interdependence between states a key feature of international relations

(Source: Daddow, 2009:70)

Constructivism

IR theory had debates between realist and idealist views. These traditional IR theories- state, power, actor and interest-centered- affected international relations scholars till mid-1980. Anarchical thought of international relations divided scholars by accepting and rejecting. From 1980's on new approaches and views began to be argued on international politics and IR theory. Alexander Wendt developed a new tradition which aimed to harmonize and build a bridge between two traditional IR theories. According to Wendt "all theories of international relations are based on social theories of the relationship [among] agency, process, and social

[97] Democratic peace theory will be evaluated in the chapter of social constructivism.

structure. Social theories do not determine the content of our international theorizing, but they do structure the questions we ask about world politics and our approaches to answering those questions" (Wendt, 1992:422). Wendt in general makes contact between self-help and power politics by developing a constructivist argument (Wendt, 1992:394).

Constructivist theory mainly aims to search and offer new definitions for main arguments and subjects of international politics and IR Theory. For example; what anarchy means international relations, how power would be defined and what balance of power means, connection between identities of states and interests. In other words constructivism propounds a new viewpoint to world politics and IR theory in the context of social constructed international system. "Constructivism itself should be understood in its *conventional* and *critical* variants, the latter being more closely tied to critical social theory. The conventional constructivist desire to present an alternative to mainstream international relations theory requires a research program" (Hopf, 1998:172). Constructivists are interested in not only the formation of interests which exist but also the interests don't exist. "Constructivism, instead, theorizes about the meaning absent interest. Just as identities and interests are produced through social practices, missing interests are understood by constructivists as produced absences, omissions that are the understandable product of social practice and structure" (Hopf, 1998:176).

According to constructivist approach structure can not be thought apart from process. "In world politics, a structure is a set of relatively unchangeable constraints on the behavior of states" (Hopf, 1998:172). Wendt objected the definition of anarchy of realist view, he points to the importance of process and structure. "Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. *Anarchy* is what states make of it" (Wendt, 1992:395). Unlike realist view constructivists are the opinion that the actors and structures of international system are in a relations that constitute each other, anarchy means that interests of states are identity construction process's part, power may both material and incoherent and changes in international politics are not impossible but hard (Hopf, 1998:181).

In this context constructivists develop two main arguments about international politics and international system. First the basic international politics' structures are social not material, and second identities and interests of actors are mainly shaped by these structures not just their behaviors. Social structures composed of shared knowledge, material recourses and practices. These are the core element in shaping actors' nature and behavior whether they tend to the cooperation or conflict. Social constructivists believe that material recourses gain meaning shared knowledge's structure. For example North Korean's few nuclear weapons threaten US but United Kingdom's relatively large number of nuclear weapons doesn't. Because UK is fiend of US but North Korea isn't, that's why shared understandings are associated with better or worse relationships of states. And social structures exist in practices not in material capacity or else (Wendt, 1995:71-74).

Democratic Peace Theory

The main assumption of democratic peace theory is that democratic states do not fight each other. This could be explained by analyzing democratic states' structure and cultures. Democratic states understand and nations of these states do not want wars Hopf, 1998:191-192). Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett emphasized democratic peace theory by developing two models. According to Maoz and Russett democratic peace theory has tow explanations-normative and structural models. Normative model's first assumption is that "states, to the extent possible, externalize the norms of behavior that are developed within and characterize their domestic political processes and institutions" and second assumption of normative

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model is that "the anarchic nature of international politics implies that a clash between democratic and non-democratic norms is dominated by the latter, rather than by the former" (Maoz and Russett, 1993:624-625). That means war and conflicts are seen as normal between democratic and non-democratic states. Because they do not share same values, culture or knowledge.

The first assumptions of democratic peace structural model are that "international challenges require political leaders to mobilize domestic support to their policies. Such support must be mobilized from those groups that provide the leadership the kind of legitimacy that is required for international action" and the second "shortcuts to political mobilization of relevant political support can be accomplished only in situations that can be appropriately described as emergencies" (Maoz and Russet, 1993:626). During 1990's this belief was accepted and democratization and memberships of NATO and European Union were supported by dominant powers (Sheehan, 2005:32-33). But historically there have been some exceptions and war between democratic states was seen.

THE COMPLEXITY AND EVOLUTION OF IR THEORIES

Thought of international relations was begun to constitute early twentieth century. Modern international system based upon the Treaty of Westphalia. New states obligated to create an international order and system. The relations among states were mainly related to interest or keep sovereignty. The wars and conflicts occurred when interest or goals crashed. Naturally international politics and international relations developed in this manner. International politics or international relations as an academic discipline primarily focused on capacities and interests of states. The realist view saw the states as separate and sovereign thus the nature and result of anarchical international system the wars and conflicts were normal.

Table 3. Three IR theories' perspectives in international relations

	Realism	*Liberalism*	*Constructivism*
Input	Material Capacity	Collective action	Social interaction
Output	Power and interest	International order	Cooperation
Actor	State	State and NGO's	Social structures
International System	Anarchical	Possible to be ruled by an International Organization	Socially constructed

The liberal view objected the anarchical structure of international relations of realist approach. The liberalism's main argument was based on establishing an international organization for ruling international order. This was possible because harmonizing of interests of states could be realized by enhancing democracy. Liberal view also rejected the point that war was normal in international relations. Contrary to liberals saw peace as normal. By the mid-1980's social theories were begun to affect the international politics and IR theory. Constructivists mainly focused on structure and process instead of material. Constructivist view explained social interactions and cooperation were key factors in interpreting international actions and politics. And in contemporary world, once democracies expand wars and conflicts will be reduced. Because democracies are less war like.

CONCLUSION

This paper aims to draw attention of transformation in international politics and IR theory. In this context a brief historical development process of international politics and international relations is given. International relations as an academic field occurred early twentieth century. First studies on international relations mostly related how the states behave and what should be done in order to maximize gains and interests. On account of early researches of international politics and international relations acted as a consultant of actors or policy-makers. Because the first priorities of the actors and policy-makers is to realize national policy goals and gain interests its normal that first academic studies explained material capacity and nature of war and conflict.

Word war series (I and II) had an important effect to international system. That's why structures and explanations of international actions begun to become more complex. And traditional views were begun to lose effect on exposing international events. New theoretical approaches gained a new perspective the international relations. In this regard this article selected three mainstream IR theory; realism, liberalism and constructivism to make a comparative analysis.

Why only three theories were selected? Firstly the aim of selecting these theories in researching international politics and IR theory is not making a hierarchal order of precedence. That doesn't mean the other theories (i.e. postmodernism, critical theory, feminism etc.) are less important. These three theories realism, liberalism and constructivism are selected to analyze the international politics because each of them reflects a breaking point in the international relations. Namely realism is related materialism, liberalism-intuitionalism and economy and constructivism is related social structure.

These connections also indicate the changing dynamics of social, economic, military, cultural transition in world politics. Each era or hot points views made impacts almost all fields. And IR theory was shaped in the context of new approaches in international politics.

In sum it's not wrong to say that international politics and IR theory have inclination that material capacity gives its place to interaction and economy-based international environment. The debates between realism and liberalism caused a new current which give explanation socially-based. It's also not easy to say constructivist and democratic peace theory give excellent explanations about the nature of international politics. Weakest aspects of the constructivist theory could be explained in three assumptions. Empirically the theory is new at least compared to the rests. Analytically the reasons of why democratic states don't fight each other and why they fight with other regimes are insufficient. And theoretically it's not easy to define war and peace.

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