

COMPETING PARADIGMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

*Dissertation Submitted to
Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirement of
the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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INDIA

2001

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Dedicated to

*Late Sri. S. H. Jawatkar,
Grandfather.*



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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled: **COMPETING PARADIGMS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY** submitted by **AJAY JAWATKAR** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the **Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil)** of the **Jawaharlal Nehru University**, is his original work, carried out under my supervision and guidance and that this work has not been presented for the award of any other degree of this University or any other University.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Man needs the help of others while fulfilling a mission/goal. In the course of writing this dissertation and transforming it into the present volume, I have incurred many debts. Each and everyone cannot be mentioned here. But some of them need special mention. Without acknowledging them this work will be incomplete.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Sushil Kumar who not only encouraged me to take this academic endeavour but also gave me full freedom and space to work without any interference, with timely advice and suggestions. His methodological insights crystallised the vague notions of my research. He kept his patience to bear my mistakes and saw to it that my work is completed in time. From the outset it seemed clear that the subject was too unexplored, too controversial, and too discursive to lead to a single formulation and consensual definitions. Needless to say, of course, I do not view the ensuing research as the last word on matters pertaining to competing paradigms in International Relations Theory. I am henceforth grateful to my supervisor for having made it possible for me to initiate and carry out my study.

I am also indebted to my teacher Dr. Amitabh Mattoo for providing me with an opportunity to interact with him and Dr. Varun Sahni Chairperson of the Centre.

A dissertation on "Competing Paradigms in International Relations Theory" had been under consideration, and if the present work usefully supplies this long felt need, I shall consider my labours amply rewarded. I also hope that other scholars will be stimulated to give further attention to theoretical/inter-paradigm debate in the context of Martin Wight's article on: "Why is there no International Theory" and, thereby, contribute to the understanding epistemological baggage. What we do need is one another's expertise and the window on reality that each discipline's subject focus provides.

My purpose in this volume is to give renewed direction to the inter-paradigm debate in International Relations. It seems that the relationship between academics, scientists, or theorists, on the one hand, and diplomats and other practitioners, on the other, has always been an uneasy one, and the latter may be expected to have little patience with arcane debates within the academic demi-monde.

A paradigm is the work of community of scholars whose views, while not necessarily identical, can be distinguished by consensus or

agreement on major questions. These major questions are organized under the categories of ontology, epistemology, and norms or forms of politics. This notion of a paradigm is useful in conveying the unity and internal coherence of series of work produced over time by various scholars. A paradigm is therefore an analytical tool.

Proposed study begins with Chapter on Introduction: Conceptual Framework, second exclusively devoted to Realist paradigm, and third to Liberal and Constructivist paradigms. And the last is Conclusions.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my father: Dr. K.S. Jawatkar, Ex-Chairperson & Associate Professor of the Centre for giving me constant encouragement and moral support when I needed it most in completing this work. My greatest debt, however, is to my two sisters, Dr. Swati and Dr. Jyoti, and my mother Asha who helped me in this academic endeavour. I would like to thank Mr. Dharmender Pawar and Mr. Santhosh who painstakingly typed the manuscript and finished in time.

In the end I am solely responsible for all the lapses and blemishes, typographical or otherwise, that may still be found in the dissertation, inspite of my best efforts to weed them out.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

*“Any paradigm worth its salt will have more than one ongoing research program, so in assessing research programs it is important to select those that focus on a core area of the paradigm and not on areas that are more peripheral or can be easily accommodated by a **competing paradigm**”*

John A Vasquez .¹
Vanderbilt University

With the dismantling of the Berlin wall, together with profound political transformation in Central-Eastern Europe, that signaled the collapse of the Communism and of the Soviet Union

¹ John A. Vasquez. “ The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative Versus Progressive Research on Waltz’s Balancing Proposition”, American Political Science Review vol. 91, No. 4, December 1997, p. 899 The word “paradigm” is commonly used to describe the dominant way of looking at a particular subject, such as International Relations. Derived from the Greek *paradigma*- meaning an example, a model, or a pattern – the general idea underlying the term “paradigm” is that we often base our thoughts about an area of enquiry on our judgments regarding which of its characteristics are most important what puzzles need to be solved, and what criteria should govern their investigation.

itself, the world seems to have “ turned upside down.” Apparently we have arrived at one of those genuine watersheds in history, which may occur more frequently as history accelerates. We are witnessing revolutionary change, a period in which ideologies are reordered, boundaries are redrawn, alliances are reshuffled, new symbols of identity arise, and old loyalties are resurrected.²

As we make sense of this new world of ours we find theories of international relations similarly in a condition of unprecedented disarray. Like the walls that kept peoples apart, those separating schools of thought are also tumbling down, but, as a result, there may be today “less anarchy in world politics than in theories about it.”³

We Need Theories:

Those who conduct foreign policy often dismiss academic theorists (for good reason), but there is an inescapable link

² Yale H. Ferguson and Richard W. Mansbach, “ Between Celebration and Despair: Constructive Suggestions for Future International Theory”, International Studies Quarterly, vol. 35, 1991, pp.363-386.

³ Ibid.

between the abstract world of theory and the real world of policy. We need theories to make sense of the blizzard of information that bombards us daily. Even policymakers who are contemptuous of “theory” must rely on their own ideas about how the world works in order to decide what to do. It is hard to make good policy if one’s basic organizing principles are flawed, just as it is hard to construct good theories without knowing a lot about the real world. Everyone uses theories- whether he or she knows it or not – and disagreements about the basic forces that shape international outcomes.⁴

Throughout the Cold War period, the international system retained “a seemingly recognizable shape, despite swings between deep freezes and warming *détentes*. Analysts developed coherent theories and engaged in sometimes esoteric debates about realism versus idealism, mutual deterrence and balanced armed control, stability and instability, national interests and international security; about the theory and practice of crisis management, regional integration, and the viability of alliances under strain; and

⁴ Stephen m. Walt, *International Relations: One World, Many Theories*”, Foreign Policy, Spring 1998, p.29.

so forth.” Most, but not all, analysts in the field “shared a common conceptual paradigm and professional vocabulary” that enabled them to carry on a meaningful discussion or argument about such things as power, strategy, and foreign-policy decision making under conditions of bipolarity or multipolarity. There were many disagreements, but they fitted into the comprehensive framework based on the international system of a bipolar world.⁵

Paradigm Shifts:

In the aftermath of the Cold War, we are in the midst of a fundamental shift in our thinking about the future of world politics. The importance of paradigmatic change lies in the fact that the paradigm provides the essential basis for theory. The paradigm furnishes a comprehensive framework for the identification of the variables about which the theory is to be developed. As the First stage in theory building, the paradigm (framework for theoretical analysis) describes the phenomena to be investigated. In international relations, these phenomena refer to

⁵ James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey, 4th Edition, Longman New York, 1996, p.1

the numbers and types of actors. The paradigm is essentially a means of selecting what will be the object of theory.⁶

What is Paradigm?

When people think seriously, they think abstractly; they conjure up simplified pictures of reality called concepts, theories, models, paradigms. Without such intellectual constructs, there is, William James said, only “a bloomin’ buzzin’ confusion.” Intellectual and scientific advance, according to Thomas Kuhn, consists of the displacement of one paradigm, which has become increasingly incapable of explaining new or newly discovered facts, by a new paradigm that accounts for those facts in a more satisfactory fashion. In his classic **The Structure of Scientific Revolutions**,⁷ Kuhn wrote: “To be accepted as a paradigm, a theory must seem better than its competitors, but it need not, and in fact never does, explain all the facts with which it can be confronted”. To speak of paradigmatic shift is to emphasize the transformation of a paradigm consisting of states to one that has a

⁶ Ibid. P.2

⁷ Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolution (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970).

multiplicity of differing types of actors. Subsequent chapters of this volume highlight the ongoing discussion and debate about the changing paradigm and its significance for the future of international relations theory.

International theorists are under pressure to produce a new grand conceptual vision in a much shorter time frame – preferably less than a decade – and to do so in a global setting that, unlike the planets in the solar System, is undergoing dramatic and rapid change. Policymakers and diplomats are compelled to deal with emerging problems on an *ad hoc* basis, relying on practical or intuitive political wisdom, or responding, as democratic leaders must, by trying to balance a variety of conflicting demands.

Samuel P. Huntington was not quite satisfied with any of the nascent paradigms. He was particularly critical of what he called “endism”— end of the Cold War, end of history and later, in an article ⁸ he provoked considerable debate on his views that “The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics.” However, he drew fire from several critics.

⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations”, Foreign Affairs, 72 (Summer 1993), 22-49.

The prudent scholar may deem it unwise to fasten too early and too exclusively on any one of the theoretical paradigms now being offered from several quarters. No single approach can explain adequately, with comprehensiveness and subtlety, the full range of phenomena that make up the ever-evolving complex internationale. International relations theory is now in a highly tentative phase, which makes it all the more challenging and interesting. International theory changes constantly, along with the total environment and the human response to it. Today's theoretical explanations may have to be refined and corrected tomorrow as new data are discovered, more accurate classifications and measurements made, and more insightful analysis performed.

Imre Lakatos,⁹ a Hungarian mathematician, has suggested the criteria for determining whether the replacement of an older theory by a newer one represents scientific progress. His formula is somewhat intelligent but clear, and it has been quoted by scientific theorists of international relations. He argued against Popper and in favour of Kuhn that no single theory can even be falsified

⁹ Imre Lakatos, the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs vol.1 (London: 1978), p. 32.

because auxiliary propositions can be added to account for discrepant evidence. The problem, then, is how to evaluate a series of theories that are intellectually related.

No single approach can capture all the complexity of contemporary world politics. Therefore, we are better off with a diverse array of competing ideas rather than a single theoretical orthodoxy. Competition between theories helps reveal their strengths and weaknesses and spurs subsequent refinements, while revealing flaws in conventional wisdom. Although we should take care to emphasize inventiveness over invective, we should welcome and encourage the heterogeneity of contemporary scholarships.

Development of the Study of International Relations:

Efforts at theorizing about the nature of interstate relations are quite old: some in fact go back to ancient times in India — in the Code of Manu, dealing with honorable conduct in warfare and the inviolability of diplomats, and in the works of Kautilya, who had a complex theory of the balance of power among the princely

states; in China – in the writings of Mo-Ti, Mencius, Confucius, and Lord Shang; and Greece. Although Plato's and Aristotle's reflections on the subject are quite sketchy, the ancient Greek historians Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War is a classic treatise any student of international relations can still read profitably. Machiavelli's The Prince, a harbinger of modern realist analysis of power realities in the state system, emphasised a "value free" science of foreign policymaking and state craft. Dante's De Monarchia became one of the first and most powerful appeals in western political literatures for international organisation capable of enforcing the peace. Other early proponents of a confederation or league of nation-states were Pierre Dubois (French lawyer and political pamphleteer of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), Emeric Crucie (French monk of early seventeenth century), the Duc de Sully (Chief Minister of France's Henry IV), William Penn (English Quaker), Abbe de Saint-Pierre (French publicist and theoretical reformer of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries), Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham and Immanuel Kant.¹⁰

¹⁰ Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, op.cit.

The traditional approach to the study of international politics encompasses the study of political thought, diplomatic practice, balance of power, alliances and international law. Historically the "Age of Religion" (1559-1648) gave way to the "Age of Sovereignty" (1648-1789) wherein sovereigns gained complete control over the destinies of their subjects and independence from any external authority, thereby becoming the principal focus of intellectual attention in the study of world affairs.¹¹

Consequently after the peace of Westphalia, the essential reality in international relations was the contaminate existence of a system of sovereign equals and the condition of anarchy which such a system logically implies. Nearly all political thought focussed on the sovereign nation's fate – the origins, functions and limitations of governmental powers, the rights of individuals within the state, the requirements of order, the imperatives of national self determination and independence. The economic order was presumed simplistically to be separate from the political. Many branches of socialist thought professed internationalism, but did

¹¹ Richard Smith Beal, "Theoretical Innovations in Systems Theory in International Relations", paper Presented at the Seminar on International Relations Theory organised by CIPOD, SIS, JNU, New Delhi, 1979. p.1.

not really produce a coherent international theory. They advanced a theory of imperialism borrowed largely from John A Hobson (1858-1940), the British economist, and thus derivative from an economic theory indigenous to the capitalist states.¹² Until 1914, International theorists almost uniformly assumed that the structure of international society was unalterable, and that the division of the world into sovereign states was necessary and natural. The study of international relations consisted almost entirely of diplomatic history and international law, rather than of investigation into the processes of the international system.

Political Theory and International Relations Theory:

Despite all those classical writings, no systematic development, comparable to that in internal political theories of the state, occurred in international theory before World War I. Martin Wight, perhaps the most profound thinker on international relations of his generation of British academics, has noted that if by 'international theory' we mean "a tradition of speculation about

¹² Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, *op.cit.*, p.10.

relations between states, a tradition imagined as the twin of speculation about the state to which the name 'political theory' is appropriated", he said, it does not, at first sight, exist.¹³ Wight suggests that a reason for this situation is that since Grotius (1538-1645), the Dutch jurist and statesman, and Pufendorf (1632-1694), the German jurist and historian, nearly all speculation about the international community fell under the heading of international law. He notes that most writing on interstate relations before the 20th century was contained in the political literature of the peace writers cited above, buried in the works of historians, cloistered in the peripheral reflections of philosophers, or harboured in speeches, despatches, and memoirs of statesmen and diplomats. Wight concludes that in the classical political tradition "international theory, or what there is of it, is scattered, unsystematic, and mostly inaccessible to the layman", as well as being "largely repellent and intractable in form."¹⁴ The only theory which did infuse the thinking of the period — and it was a theory somewhat dearer to practicing diplomats than to

¹³ Martin Wight, "Why is There No International Theory?" IN Diplomatic Investigations, ed., by Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (London: 1966) pp. 17-34, reprinted in J. Der Derian (ed.) International Theory: Critical Investigations (Basingstoke, 1995) pp. 15-35.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

academicians — was that of the balance of power. According to Wight, “international theory” was marked “not only by paucity but also by intellectual and moral poverty.”¹⁵

Wight himself asks where else international theory is found and he answers in four kinds of writing:

- (1) the *irenists* like Erasmus, Sully, Campanella, Cruce, Penn, Abbe de St. Pierre, and Pierre-Andre Gargaz who wrote about the problem of cooperative action among sovereigns.
- (2) the Machiavellians: the succession of writers on *raison d’etat*, of whom Meinecke is the great interpreter.
- (3) The *parerga* of political philosophers, philosophers and historians. As examples of this kind might be named Hume’s Essay on ‘the Balance of Power’, Rousseau’s project of Perpetual peace, Bentham’s Plan for an Universal Peace, Berke’s Thoughts on French Affairs and Letters on a Regicide Peace, Rånke’s essay on the Great Powers, and J.S. Mill’s essay on the law of nations.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.19.

(4) The speeches, despatches, memoirs and essays of statesmen and diplomats.¹⁶

Thus, as late as 1966 Martin Wight had posed the question why is there no international theory, by which he meant an equivalent body of knowledge to that which comprised political theory. Wight argued that there was no body of international theory because the character of international politics was 'incompatible with progressivist theory'. Political theory was philosophically rich because it was concurred with the 'theory of the good life', whereas 'International theory is the theory of survival' in a world where 'international politics is the realm of recurrence and repetition'.¹⁷

Three decades later the poverty of international theory, which Wight identified, has been substantially overcome. This is accredited to an explosion of theoretical activity in the field since the 1970s, international relations can now be regarded as a discipline comprising a range of alternative, overlapping and competing theories of world politics.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.17-19.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.32.

There has been a good deal of academic debate over what constitutes "theory". According to Kenneth Waltz, theories explain laws, which identify probable associations, whereas Martin Wight defines it as a tradition of speculations about relations between states. 'Empirical theories help us to test hypothesis about the world by using observation, while 'normative theory' is a representation of the way the world ought to be. Yet, 'Critical theory' is an ideological critique of the present, which opens up alternative future paths to change, freedom and human autonomy. Last but definitely very important is the 'Constitutive theory' which reflects upon the process of theorising, including questions of epistemology and ontology.

Above all, there is a consensus among scholars that theory should explain some aspect of the international system that is not easily explained by common sense. International relations started with the puzzling question: why do nation-states continue to go to war when it was already clear that the economic gains made in war would never exceed the economic costs of doing so. Thereby the theories resulted.

Besides, the theory need not necessarily aspire to predict. This is where social science differs from natural science. Social science can never confidently predict because the factors involved in human relations are too numerous. A theory of International Relations brings order and meaning into a pandemonium of unconnected material and prepares the ground for a new international order radically different from that, which preceded it. Thus, they enable us to conceptualise both past and contemporary events. They also provide a range of ways of interpreting complex issues. It is a vital task for a theory of politics to anticipate drastic changes in the structure of politics and in the institutions.

Yet, Charles W. Kegley argues that a theory of international relations needs to perform four principal tasks. It should describe, explain, predict and prescribe.¹⁸ Theories of International Relations can be evaluated against one or more of the following criteria:

- a theory's understanding of an issue or process;
- its explanatory power;

¹⁸ C.W. Kegley, Jr. (ed.) Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the New-Liberal Challenge, (New York, 1995), p.8.

- its success in predicting events;
- intellectual coherence of the theory;
- and the theory's capacity for critical self-reflection and intellectual engagement with contending theories

There are two categories of theory representing a fundamental division within the discipline between theories which offer explanatory accounts of International Relations, and those that see theory as constitutive of the reality.¹⁹ According to Hedley Bull, no theoretical enterprise would be complete without both these processes. Many theorists of International Relations share a sense of the importance of theory because it is regarded that the theory versus reality divide is a false dichotomy. It need be mentioned that the division made earlier between explanatory and Constitutive theory are incommensurable and perhaps incompatible.

¹⁹ S. Smith, "the Self-Image of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory", in K. Booth and S. Smith (eds.), International Relations Theory Today (Cambridge, 1995) pp. 26-27.

According to Thomas Kuhn,²⁰ the growth of knowledge in natural sciences takes place via a series of distinct stages, each dominated by a particular frame of assumptions (paradigms) which render knowledge in one particular period of time incommensurate with knowledge in another. These successive periods of knowledge are separated by confrontations between opposing sets of ideas which in turn change the actual shape of the discipline. As human knowledge expands, paradigms become intellectually exhausted and impoverished, and are continually superseded as scholars find within them anomalies which cannot be explained.

There is a great debate over the relevance and applicability of Kuhn's epistemological model to the social science, with suggestions that realism, for example, has been the dominant paradigm within the discipline of International Relations. It then becomes possible for scholars to define theoretical disagreements within the discipline as representing 'interparadigm debates', the

²⁰ Thomas Kuhn, *op.cit.*

implication being that a dominant theory becomes hegemonic within a discipline because of its intellectual merit.²¹

Rather than proclaiming an 'official' definition of International Relations Theory, it might be better to state the purpose to which these theories are being put. One aim of studying a wide variety of International Relations theories is to make international politics more intelligible and better understood. According to Fred Halliday, we need theories because there need to be some preoccupation of facts which are significant and which are not.²²

The development of International Relations like that of all social sciences is in fact a product not just of two but of three concentric circles of influence, change and debate within the subject itself, the impact of developments in the world, but also the influence of new ideas within other areas of social science. Today, the theoretical developments within the discipline of International Relations have reached a new and exciting stage marked by rapid

²¹ M. Banks, "The inter-paradigm debate", in M. Light and A. J.R. Groom (eds.), International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory, (London, 1985).

²² Fred Halliday, Rethinking International Relations (London, 1994), p.25.

intellectual challenges, most notably the influences of cognate fields of research, and need to grasp the extraordinary changes currently taking place in global politics.

The enduring concerns of International Relations have two distinct aspects: One is broadly analytic the role of the state in International Relations, the problem of order in the absence of a supreme authority, the causes of conflict and the basis of cooperation. The other is normative the question of when and to what degree it is legitimate to use force, the place of morality in International Relations, the rights and wrongs of intervention.

Major wars have often brought about significant changes in the theoretical interpretation of world affairs and influenced "What ideas and values will predominate, thereby determining the ethos of succeeding ages."²³ Three such system-transforming wars have dominated the twentieth century. World War I, World War II, and the Cold War. Each struggle caused the dominant paradigm to be jettisoned and encouraged the search for new theoretical orientation.

²³ Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Against this backdrop, it is proposed to examine three competing paradigms of International, Relations theories: Realist, Liberal and Constructivist. Next chapter begins with the Realist.

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CHAPTER – II

REALIST PARADIGM

“It is anarchy that gives international politics its distinctive flavor. In an anarchic system, state’s first goal is to survive. To attain security, states engage in both internal and external balancing for the purpose of deterring aggressors, and of defeating them should deterrence fail. In a realist world, cooperation is possible but is hard to sustain in the face of the competitive pressures that are built into the international political system’s structure. The imperative of survival in a threatening environment forces states to focus on strategies that maximize their power relative to their rivals.

- Christopher Layne¹

Within international relations theory, the debate over the adequacy of the realist paradigm has been fairly extensive since the 1970s. In Europe it is often referred to as the interparadigm

¹ Christopher Layne, “Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace” International Security, Vol.19, No.2 (Fall 1994), pp. 5-49.

debate. In North America, the focus has been more singularly on realist approaches and their critics. Toward the end of the 1970s, it appeared that alternate approaches such as transnational relations and world society perspectives, would supplant the realist paradigm. But this did not happen, partly because of the rise of neorealism, especially as embodied in the work of Waltz.² Now the debate over the adequacy of the realist paradigm has emerged anew.

Realism:

Realism is defined as a set of theories associated with a group of thinkers who emerged just before World War II and who distinguished themselves from idealists on the basis of their belief in the centrality of power for shaping politics, the prevalence of the practices of power politics, and the danger of basing foreign policy on morality or reason rather than interest and power. The **realist paradigm** refers to the shared fundamental assumptions various realist theorists make about the world. Derived primarily from the realist scholarship of

² Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

Morgenthau's **Politics among Nations**,³ these include: (1) Nation-states are the most important actors in international relations; (2) there is a sharp distinction between domestic and international politics; and (3) international relations is a struggle for power and peace. How and why that struggle occurs is the major purpose of the discipline.

While much of the debate over realism has focused on a comparison to neoliberalism,⁴ the debate has also raised new empirical,⁵ conceptual,⁶ and historical⁷ challenges to the paradigm as a whole. Some call for a sharp break with the paradigm,⁸ while others see the need to reformulate on the basis of known empirical regularities.⁹ Many still see it as the major theoretical framework within which the field must continue to

³ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among nations* (5th Rev. ed. New York, 1978).

⁴ Charles W. Kegley, Jr. ed. *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenges*. (New York: St. Martin's 1995).

⁵ Richard Rosecrance and Arthur Stein, eds. *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993).

⁶ Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds. *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1995).

⁷ Paul W. Schroeder, "Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory" *International Security*, vol. 19, no. Summer 1994, pp. 108-48.

⁸ John A. Vasquez, "World Politics Theory" In *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics* ed. Mary Hawkesworth and Mauric Kogan, (London: Routledge).

⁹ Frank W. Wayman and Paul F. Diehl, eds. *Reconstructing Realpolitik*, (Ann Arbor: Univ. Michigan Press, 1994).

work, and even critics like Keohane¹⁰ and Nye¹¹ see the need to synthesize their approaches (neoliberalism) with the realist paradigm.

Appraising a paradigm, however, is difficult because often its assumptions are not testable, since they typically do not explain anything in and of themselves. Essentially, a paradigm promises scholars that if they view the world in a particular way, they will successfully understand the subject they are studying. In Kuhn's¹² language, paradigms do not so much provide answers as the promise. Ultimately, a paradigm must be appraised by its utility and its ability to make good on its promise. Thus, a paradigm can only be appraised indirectly by examining the ability of the theories it generates to satisfy criterion of adequacy.

The task of determining whether research programs are progressive or degenerating is of special importance because a number of analysts e.g. Hollis and Smith¹³ and Wayman and

¹⁰ Robert O. Keohane, "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond" In Political Science: The State of the Discipline, ed. Ada W. Finifter (Washington DC: American Pol. Sc. Association). Reprinted in Robert O. Keohane, International Institutions and State Power. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989)

¹¹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. "Neorealism and Neoliberalism", World Politics 40 (January 1988): 235-51.

¹² Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (Chicago: 1970) pp. 23-24. _

¹³ Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, Explaining and Understanding International Relations (Oxford: 1990) p.66.

Diehl¹⁴ argue that, despite anomalies, the realist paradigm is dominant because it is more enlightening and fertile than its rivals.

While the ability of the realist paradigm to reformulate its theories in the light of conceptual criticisms and accounts for its persistence, argued that proliferation of emendations exposes the degenerating character of the paradigm.

Within mainstream international relations, the work of Lakatos¹⁵ has attracted the most consensus as a source of such criteria among both quantitative and traditional scholars. Imre Lakatos argued against Popper¹⁶ and in favour of Kuhn that no single theory can ever be falsified because auxiliary propositions can be added to account for discrepant evidence. The problem, then, is how to evaluate **a series of theories** that are intellectually related.

A series of theories is exactly what is posing under the general rubrics of realism and neorealism. All these theories share certain fundamental assumptions about how the world

¹⁴ Frank W. Wayman and Paul F. Diehl, eds Restructuring Realpolitik (Ann Arbor: 1994), p. 263.

¹⁵ Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes", In Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Cambridge: 1970).

¹⁶ Karl Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery, (London: 1959).

works.¹⁷ In Kuhn's language, they constitute of family of theories because they share a paradigm. A **paradigm** can be stipulatively defined as the "fundamental assumptions scholars make about

the world they are studying.¹⁸" Since a paradigm can easily generate a family of theories, Popper's falsification strategy was seen by Lakatos as problematic, since one theory can simply be replaced by another in incremental fashion without even rejecting the shared fundamental assumptions. It was because of this problem that Kuhn's sociological explanation of theoretical change within science was viewed as undermining the standard view in philosophy of science, and it was against Kuhn that Lakatos developed his criteria for appraising a series of theories. To deal with the problem of appraising a series of theories that may share a common paradigm or set of assumptions, Lakatos stipulated that a research program coming out of this core must develop in such a way that

¹⁷ Theory is defined here as a set of interrelated propositions purporting to explain behaviour. Given this definition, which is noncontroversial, the realist paradigm can have many different theories.

¹⁸ John A. Vasquez, The Power of Power Politics: A Critique, (NJ: 1983) p.5 Masterman has criticized Kuhn for using the concept of paradigm ambiguously. This stipulating definition is meant to overcome this objection, while still capturing the essence of what Kuhn was trying to do with the concept. See Margaret Masterman, "The Nature of Paradigm", In Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge's, ed. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, (Cambridge: 1970).

theoretical emendations are progressive rather than degenerating.

The main problem with this criterion is that, unless it is applied rigorously, with specific indicators as to what constitutes “progressive” or “degenerating” research programs, it will not provide a basis for settling the debate on the adequacy of the realist paradigm.

Lakatos sees a research program as degenerating if its auxiliary propositions increasingly take on the characteristic of ad hoc explanations that do not produce any novel (theoretical) facts, as well as new empirical content. For Lakatos, “no experimental result can ever kill a theory: any theory can be saved from counter instances either by auxiliary hypothesis or by a suitable reinterpretation of its terms.” Since Lakatos finds this to be the case, he asks: Why not “impose certain standards on the theoretical adjustments by which one is allowed to save a theory?” Adjustments that are acceptable he labels progressive, and those that are not he labels degenerating.¹⁹

The key for Lakatos is to evaluate not a single theory but a series of theories linked together. A theoryshift or problemshift

¹⁹ Imre Lakatos, *op.cit.*, pp. 116-7.

is considered (a) theoretically progressive if it theoretically “predicts some novel, hitherto unexpected fact” and (b) empirically progressive if these new predictions are actually collaborated, giving the new theory an excess empirical content over its rival. In order to be considered progressive, a problemshift must be both theoretically and empirically progressive — anything short of that is defined as degenerating.²⁰ A degenerating problemshift or research program, then, is characterized by the use of semantic devices that hide the actual content-decreasing nature of the research program through reinterpretation. In this way, the new theory or set of theories are really ad hoc explanations intended to save the theory.

Assessment of Paradigm:

Any paradigm worth its salt will have more than one ongoing research program, so in assessing research programs it is important to select those that focus on a core area of the

²⁰ Lakatos notes that by “problemshift” he really means “theoryshift” but does not use that word because it “sounds dreadful”. Ibid., pp. 117, 119.

paradigm and not on areas that are more peripheral or can be easily accommodated by a competing paradigm.

If one uses Kuhn's²¹ analysis to understand the post-World War II development of the field of international relations, there is a general consensus that the realist paradigm has dominated international relations inquiry within the English-speaking world and that Margenthau's Politics among Nations can be seen as the exemplar of this paradigm. Neorealism can be seen as a further articulation of the realist paradigm along at least two lines. The first, by Waltz, brought the insights of structuralism to bear on realism and for this reason is often referred to as structural realism. For Waltz,²² structure (specifically the anarchic nature of the international system) is presented as the single most important factor affecting all other behavior. The second by Gilpin²³ brought to bear some of the insights of political economy with emphasis on the effect of the rise and decline of hegemons of historical change. Both of these efforts have developed research programs. Generally, it is fair to say that Waltz has had more influence on security studies,

²¹ Thomas Kuhn, *op.cit.*

²² Kenneth Waltz, *op.cit.*

²³ Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics, (Cambridge: 1981).

whereas Gilpin has been primarily influential on questions of international political economy.

Waltz's analysis has in fact had a great impact on empirical research. His influence on those who study security questions within international relations in what may be called a neotraditional manner is without equal. Waltz centers on two empirical questions: (a) explaining what he considers a fundamental law of international politics, the balancing of power, and (b) delineating the differing effects of bipolarity and multipolarity on system stability. While the latter has recently given rise to some vehement debates about the future of the post-Cold War era,²⁴ it has not yet generated a sustained research program. In contrast, the first area has. The focus of this appraisal is not so much on Waltz himself as on the neotraditional research program that has taken his proposition on balancing and investigated it empirically. This work is fairly extensive and appears to many to be both cumulative and fruitful. Specifically, the work of Stephen Walt²⁵ and Randall Schweller²⁶ on balancing and bandwagoning, the work of

²⁴ See Mearsheimer's "Back to the future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War" International Security 15 (Summer: 1990), pp. 5-56 and Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold war" International Security, 15 (Winter: 1990-91) pp. 7-57.

²⁵ Stephen M. Walt, The Origins of Alliances (NY: 1987).

²⁶ Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back in" International Security vol. 20 (Summer 1994) pp. 72-107).

Christensen and Snyder²⁷ on “buck-passing” and “chain-ganging”, and historical case studies that have uncovered discrepant evidence to see how these works have been treated in the field are cited by proponents of the realist paradigm.

This apart, unlike the work on polarity, that on balancing focuses on a core area for both classical realism and neorealism. It is clearly a central proposition within the paradigm and concerns with it can be traced back to David Hume and from him to the Ancients in the West, India, and China. Given the prominence of the balance-of-power concept, a research program devoted to investigating Waltz’s analysis of the balancing of power cannot fail to pass an examination of whether it is degenerating or progressive without reflecting on the paradigm as a whole - either positively or negatively.

Balancing of Power:

One of Waltz’s²⁸ main purposes was to explain what in his view is a fundamental law of international politics: the balancing of power. Waltz defines theory as statements that

²⁷ Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity”, International Organisation vol. 44 (Spring 1990), pp. 137-68.

²⁸ Kenneth Waltz, *op.cit.*

explain laws (i.e. regularities of behaviour). For Waltz, "Whenever agents and agencies are coupled by forces and competition rather than authority and law", they exhibit "certain repeated and enduring patterns". These he says have been identified by the tradition of Realpolitik. Of these the most central pattern is balance of power, of which he says: "if there is any distinctively political theory of international politics, balance of power theory is it". He maintains that a self-help system "stimulates states to behave in ways that tend toward the creation of balances of power" and that "these balances tend to form whether some or all states consciously aim to establish (them)".

The main problem, of course, is that many scholars, including many realists, such as Morgenthau, do not see balancing as the given law Waltz takes it to be. In many ways, raising it to the status of a law dismisses all the extensive criticism that has been made of the concept. Likewise, it also sidesteps a great deal of the theoretical and empirical work suggesting that the balance of power, specifically, is not associated with the preservation of peace.

Waltz argued that a balance of power does not always preserve the peace because it often requires wars to be fought to

maintain the balance. According to him there are two possible separate functions of the balance of power — protection of the state in terms of its survival versus the avoidance of war or maintenance of the peace. Waltz does not see the latter as a legitimate prediction of balance of power theory. All he requires is that states attempt to balance, not that balancing prevents war.

From the perspective of Kuhn one can see Waltz as articulating a part of the dominant realist paradigm. Waltz is elaborating one of the problems that Morgenthau left unresolved in Politics among Nations; namely, how and why the balance of power can be expected to work and how major a role this concept should play within the paradigm. Waltz's (1979) work can be seen as a theoryshift that places the balance of power in much more positive light than does Morgenthau. This theoryshift tries to resolve the question of whether the balance is associated with peace by saying that it is not. Waltz, unlike Morgenthau, sees the balance as automatic; it is not the product of a particular leadership's diplomacy but of system structure. The focus on system structure and the identification of "anarchy" are two of the original contributions of Waltz (1979). These can be seen as the introduction of new concepts

that bring novel facts into the paradigm. Such a shift appears progressive, but whether it proves to be so turns on whether the predictions made by the explanation can pass empirical testing.

Stephen Walt, Randall Schweller, Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, and the historian Paul Schroeder all cite Waltz and consciously address this theoretical proposition on balancing. They also cite and build upon the work of one another; that is those who discuss bandwagoning cite Walt. More fundamentally, they generally are interested (with the exception of Schroeder, who is a critic) in working within the realist paradigm and/or defending it. They differ in terms of how they defend realism.

Balancing Versus Bandwagoning:

According to Waltz in anarchic systems, unlike domestic systems, balancing not bandwagoning is the typical behaviour.²⁹ This is one of the few unambiguous empirical predictions in his theory; Waltz states: "Balance of power politics prevails

²⁹ For Waltz, bandwagoning is allying with the strongest power, that is, the one capable of establishing hegemony. He maintains that such an alignment will be dangerous to the survival of states. Stephen Walt defines the term similarly but introduces the notion of threat: "Balancing is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat; bandwagoning refers to alignment with the source of danger" see Stephan Walt op.cit pp. 17, 21-2 also Kenneth Waltz op.cit. p. 126.

wherever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive”.

The first major test is conducted by Stephen Walt³⁰, who looks primarily at the West Asia from 1955 to 1979. He maintains that “balancing is more common than bandwagoning”. Consistent with Waltz, he argues that, in general, states should not be expected to bandwagon except under certain identifiable conditions. Contrary to Waltz, however, he finds that they do not balance power. Instead, he shows that they balance against threat, while recognizing that for many realists, states should balance against power.³¹ He then extends his analysis to East-West relations and shows that if states were really concerned with power, then they would not have allied so extensively with the United States, which had a very overwhelming coalition against the USSR and its allies. Such a coalition was a result not of the power of the USSR but of its perceived threat.

³⁰ Stephen M. Walt, The Origins of Alliances (NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1987).

³¹ Stephen Walt Observes: “The main point should be obvious; balance of threat theory is superior to balance of power theory. Examining the impact of several related but distinct sources of threat can provide a more persuasive account of alliance formation than can focusing on the distribution of aggregate capabilities”. Stephen Walt, op.cit., p. 172.

Walt, however, explicitly maintains that balance of threat “should be viewed as a refinement of traditional balance of power theory”. For Morgenthau and Waltz, the greatest source of threat to a state comes from the possible power advantages another state may have over it. In a world that is assumed to be a struggle for power and self help system, a state capable of making a threat must be guarded against power regardless of immediate threat. If, however, power and threat are independent, as they are perceived to be by the states in Walt’s sample, then something may be awry in the realist world. The only thing that reduces the anomalous nature of the finding is that it has not been shown to hold for the central system of major states, that is, modern Europe. If it could be demonstrated that the European states balanced threat and not power, then that would be a serious if not devastating blow for neorealism and the paradigm.³²

The balance of power does not seem to work or produce the patterns that many theorists have expected it to produce. For Walt, it turns out that states balance but not for reasons of power, a rather curious findings for Waltz, but one entirely

³² Schroeder provides this devastating evidence on Europe. See Paul W. Schroeder *op.cit* ; also Stephen Walt *op.cit.* pp. 89-92.

predictable given the results of previous research that found the balance of power was not significantly related to war and peace.³³

Walt conceptualizes his findings and “refines” the field further. “Balance of threat” is a felicitous phrase. The very phraseology makes states’ behaviour appear much more consistent with the longer paradigm than it actually is. It rhetorically captures all the connotations and emotive force of balance of power while changing it only incrementally. It appears as a refinement – insightful and supportive of the paradigm. In doing so, it strips away the anomalous nature and devastating potential of the findings for Waltz’s explanation.

While any one version of realism (balance of power, balancing power, balance of threats, balance of interests) may be falsified, the paradigm itself will live on and, indeed, be seen as theoretically robust. In fact, the protean character of realism prevents the paradigm from being falsified because as soon as theoretical variant is discarded, another variant props us to replace it as the “true realism” or the “new realism”.

³³ John A. Vasquez, *op.cit.*, pp. 183-94.

The point is not that Walt and others are engaged in “bad” scholarship or have made mistakes; indeed, just the opposite is the case: They are practicing the discipline the way the dominant paradigm leads them to practice it. They are theoretically articulating the paradigm in a normal science fashion, solving puzzles, engaging in historical record, and coming up with new insights — all derived from neorealism’s exemplar and the paradigm from which it is derived.

Even as it is, other research on bandwagoning has opened up further anomalies for the realist paradigm by suggesting that a main reason for bandwagoning (and indeed for making alliances in general) may not be the structure of the international system but domestic political considerations. Larson³⁴ argues antithetically to realism that states in similar position in the international system and with similar relative capabilities behave differently with regard to bandwagoning; therefore, there must be some intervening variable to explain the difference. On the basis of a comparison of cases, she argues that some elites bandwagon to preserve their domestic

³⁴ Deborah W. Larson, “Bandwagon Images in American Foreign Policy: Myth or Reality” In Dominoes and Bandwagons, ed. Robert Jervis and Jack Snyder, (NY: 1991) pp. 86-7.

rule. In fact, Strauss³⁵ also sees domestic considerations and cultural conceptions of world politics as critical intervening variables. Similarly, Levy and Barnett³⁶ present evidence on Egypt and Third World states showing that internal needs and domestic political concerns are often more important in alliance making than are external threats. This research suggests that realist assumptions – the primacy of the international struggle for power and the unitary rational nature of the state will lead elites to formulate foreign policy strictly in accord with the national interest defined in terms of power are flawed. Theories need to take greater cognizance of the role domestic concerns play in shaping foreign policy objectives. To the extent bandwagoning is a “novel” fact, it points us away from the dominant paradigm, not back to its classical formulation.

Buck-Passing and Chain-Ganging:

The bandwagoning research program is not the only way in which the protean character of realism has been revealed.

³⁵ Barry S. Strauss, “Of Balances, Bandwagons, and Ancient Greeks”, In Hegemonic Rivalry: From Thucydides to the Nuclear Age, ed. Richard Ned Lebow and Barry S. Strauss, (Boulder: 1991), p. 245.

³⁶ Jack S. Levy and Michael N. Barnett, “Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-1973” International Organisations 45 (Summer: 1991) pp. 369-95.

Christenses and Synder³⁷ have dealt with the failure of states to balance. They begin by criticizing Waltz for being too parsimonious and making indeterminate predictions about balancing under multipolarity. They then seek to correct this defect within realism, by specifying that states will engage in chain-ganging or buck-passing depending on the perceived balance between offense and defense. Chain-ganging occurs when states, especially strong states, commit "themselves unconditionally to reckless allies whose survival is seen to be indispensable to the maintenance of the balance"; buck-passing is a failure to balance and reliance on "third parties to bear the costs of stopping a rising hegemon."³⁸ The alliance pattern that led to World War I is given as an example of chain-ganging, and Europe in the 1930s is given as an example of buck-passing. The propositions are applied only to multipolarity; in bipolarity, balancing is seen as unproblematic.

The argument that states will either engage in buck-passing or chain-ganging under multipolarity is an admission that in important instances, such as the 1930s, states fail to

³⁷ Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Synder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity" International Organisation 44 (Spring: 1990) pp. 137-68.

³⁸ Ibid.

balance the way Waltz says they must because of the systems' structure. It may be recalled that Waltz has clearly predicted that "balance of power politics will prevail wherever two, and only two requirements are met: anarchy and units wishing to survive." Surely, these requirements were met in the period before World War II, and therefore failure to balance should be taken as falsifying evidence.

Christensen and Synder seem to want to explain away the 1930s, in which they argue there was a great deal of buck-passing. However, while they see pre-1939 as buck-passing and pre-1914 as chain ganging, it seems that Britain was much more hesitant to enter the War in 1914 than in 1939, contrary to what one would expect the logic of Christensen and Synder's historical analysis.

A theory whose main purpose is to explain balancing cannot stand if balancing is not the law it says it is. Such an anomaly also reflects negatively on the paradigm as a whole. Even though Morgenthau³⁹ did not think the balance of power was very workable, power variables are part of the central core of his work, and he does say that the balance or power is "a

³⁹ Hans J. Morgenthau, *op.cit.*, pp. 194 and also 173, 195-6.

natural and inevitable outgrowth of the struggle of power” and “a protective device of an alliance of nations, anxious for their independence, against another nation’s designs for world domination”. Waltz’s theory which has been characterized as a systematization of classical realism⁴⁰ and widely seen as such, cannot fail on one of its few concrete predictions without reflecting badly (in some sense) on the larger paradigm in which it is embedded.

Historical Case Studies:

Unlike the sympathetic work cited above, several historical case studies that focus on the balancing hypothesis give rise to more severe criticism of realist theory. Rosecrance and Stein⁴¹ see the balancing proposition as the key prediction of structural realism. In a series of case studies they challenge the idea that balancing power actually seems or explains very much of the grand strategy of the twentieth century major states: to explain grand strategy for them requires examining domestic politics. In contradiction to structural realism, they

⁴⁰ Robert O. Keohane, “Realism, Neorealism and the Study of World Politics”. In Neorealism and its Critics, ed. Robert O. Keohane, (NY: 1986), p. 15.

⁴¹ Richard Rosecrance and Arthur Stein, eds., The Domestic bases of Grand Strategy (NY: 1993), pp. 7, 17—21.

find that balance-of-power concerns do not take “precedence over domestic factors of restraints”. Britain in 1938, the United States in 1940, and even the Soviet Union facing Reagan in 1985 fail to meet powerful external challenges, in part because of domestic political factors. States sometimes under or overbalance. As Rosecrance⁴² maintains, states rarely get right – they either commit too much or too little, or they become so concerned with the periphery that they overlook what is happening to the core.⁴³ And, of course, they do this because they are not the unitary rational actors the realist paradigm thinks they are. Contrary to Waltz and even Morgenthau, states engage in much more variegated behaviour than the realist paradigm suggests.

Historian Paul Schroeder⁴⁴ shows that the basic generalizations of Waltz – that anarchy leads states to balancing and to act on the basis of their power position- are not principles that tell “real story” of what happened from 1648 to 1945. He demonstrates that states do not balance in a law-like manner but deal with threat in a variety of ways; among

⁴² Richard Rosecrance, “Overextension, Vulnerability, and Conflict”, International Security 19 (Spring: 1995) pp. 145-63.

⁴³ Charles Kupchan, The Vulnerability of Empire (NY: 1994).

⁴⁴ Paul W. Schroeder, “Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory” International Security 19 (Summer: 1994) pp. 108-48.

others, they hide, they join the stronger side, they try to “transcend” the problem, or they balance. In a brief but systematic review of the major conflicts in the modern period, he shows that in the Napoleonic Wars, Crimean War, World War I, and World War II there was no real balancing of an alleged hegemonic threat. When states do resist, as they did with Napoleon, it is because they have been attacked and have no choice: “They resisted because France kept on attacking them”. A similar point also could be made about French, British, Soviet, and American resistance to Hitler and Japan.

For Schroeder⁴⁵ neorealist theory is a misleading guide to inquiry:

“The more one examines Waltz’s historical generalisations about the conduct of international politics throughout history with the aid of historian’s knowledge of the actual cause of history, the more doubtful – in fact, strange – these generalizations become.”

All this suggests that the balancing of power was never the law Waltz thought it was. In effect, he offered an explanation

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 115-6.

of a behavioral regularity that never existed, except within the logic of the theory.

Points Against Schroeder:

Elman and Elman⁴⁶ make three points against Schroeder. First, although his evidence may challenge Waltz's particular theory, it still leaves the larger neorealist approach unscathed. Second, recognises balancing failures so that not every instance of these necessarily disconfirms his theory. Third, even if Schroeder's evidence on balancing poses a problem for Waltz, "only better theories can displace theories. Thus, Waltz's theory should not be discarded until something better comes along to replace it".

The Elmans are technically correct that evidence against balancing does not speak against all the larger realist paradigm in that neorealism also embodies Gilpin. But it is this very correctness that proves the larger point being made and illustrates what so worried Lakatos about degenerating research programs. Elman and Elman rightly capture the theoretical

⁴⁶ Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, "History vs. Neorealism: A Second Look" International Security, 20 (Summer: 1995) pp. 182-93.

robustness of the realist paradigm — showing that Waltz, Gilpin, and others are part of the paradigm — but they fail to realize the damning protean portrayal they give of its research program and how this very theoretical development makes it difficult for the paradigm to satisfy the criterion of falsifiability.

Instead, they conclude about Schroeder's historical evidence that "evidence could be more compatible with a neo-realist reading of international relations". They conclude this because each of these strategies (bandwagoning, etc) does not challenge the realist conception of a rational actor behaving in a situation of competition and opportunity. For them, so long as states choose strategies that are "consistent with their position in the power structure and pursue policies that are likely to provide them with greater benefits than costs", then this is seen as evidence supporting the broad realist approach. Only Wendt's⁴⁷ claim that states could be "other regarding" as opposed to "self-regarding" is seen as discrepant evidence.⁴⁸ Basically, these are "sucker bets" of the "I win, you lose" variety. Let it be noted that these are not bets that Elman and Elman

⁴⁷ Alex. Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of IT: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organisation* 46 (Spring: 1992) pp. 391-425.

⁴⁸ Colin Elman, "Horses for Courses: Why Not Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?" *Security Studies*, 6 (Autumn: 1996) pp. 7-53.

are proposing; they are merely reporting what, in effect, the entire realist research program has been doing — from Walt, to Christensen and Synder, to Schwelger, and so forth. Collectively, the realist mainstream has set up a situation that provides a very narrow empirical base on which to falsify the paradigm.

Schroeder⁴⁹ has a legitimate complaint when he says, in reply: “The Elman argument... appropriates every possible tenable position in IR theory and history for the neo-realist camp”. He concludes: “Their whole case that history fits the neo-realist paradigm falls to the ground because they fail to see that it is their neo-realist assumptions, as they understand and use them, which simply put all state action in the state system into a neo-realist mold and neo-realist boxes, by definition”.

In the end, Elman and Elman concede that Waltz does believe that “on aggregate”, states should balance, so “Schroeder’s evidence that states rarely balance does indeed pose a problem for Waltz’s theory”. They conclude, however, by citing Lakatos — only better theories can displace theories and therefore Waltz’s theory should not be discarded until something better comes along. They then outline a general

⁴⁹ Paul W. Schroeder, “History vs. Neo-realism: A Second Look, The Author Replies” International Security 19 (Summer: 1995) pp. 193-5.

strategy for improving the theory, namely, adding variables, identifying the domain to which it is applicable, and broadening definitions (especially of threat). Thus, they say, by broadening the definition of threat to include internal threats from domestic rivals, decision-makers could still be seen as balancing, and bandwagoning “would not necessarily disconfirm the prediction that balancing is more common”.⁵⁰

What is also evident from this appraisal of the realist paradigm is that Lakatos’s⁵¹ comment that “there is no falsification before the emergence of a better theory” can play an important role in muting the implications of a degenerating research program, especially when alternative paradigm or competing midrange theories are ignored, as has been the case in international relations. These have been too many empirical failures and anomalies, and theoretical emendations have taken on an entirely too ad hoc nonfalsifying character for adherents to say that the paradigm cannot be displaced until there is a clearly better theory available. Such a position makes collective inertia work to the advantage of the dominant paradigm and makes the field less rather than more rigorous.

⁵⁰ Colin Elman and Mirriam Fendius Elman, *op.cit.*, p. 192.

⁵¹ Imre Lakatos, *op.cit.*, p. 119.

APPRAISAL

If one accepts the general thrust of the analysis that the neotraditional research program on balancing has been degenerating, then the question that needs to be discussed further is the implications of this for the wider paradigm. Two obvious conclusions are possible. A narrow and more conservative conclusion would try to preserve as much of the dominant paradigm as possible in face of discrepant evidence. A broader and more radical conclusion would take failure in this one research program as consistent with the assessments of other studies and thus as an indicator of a deeper, broader problem.

The narrow conclusion is that Waltz's attempt to explain what he regards as the major behavioral regularity of international politics was premature because the kind of regularity that he assumes. It is the failure of neotraditional researchers and historians to establish clearly the empirical accuracy of Waltz's balancing proposition that so hurts his theory. If the logical connection between anarchy (as a systematic structure) and balancing is what Waltz claims it to

be, and states do not engage in balancing, then this empirical anomaly must indicate some theoretical deficiency.

The implication of the broader and more radical conclusion is to ask why a concept so long associated with realism should do so poorly and so misguide so many theorists. Could not its failure to pass neotraditional and historical “testing” (or investigation) be an indicator of the distorted view of world politics that the paradigm imposes on scholars? Such questions are reasonable to ask, especially in light of appraisals that have found other aspects of realism wanting.⁵²

Regardless of whether a narrow or broad conclusion is accepted, this analysis has shown that the field needs much more rigor in the interparadigm debate. Only by being more rigorous both in testing the dominant paradigm and in building a new one that can explain the growing body of counter evidence as well as produce new nonobvious findings of its own will progress be made.

⁵² Lebow and Risse-Kappen (1995), Rosecrance and Stein (1993) and Vasquez (1995), *op.cit.*

CHAPTER- III

LIBERAL AND CONSTRUCTIVIST

PARADIGMS

“Whereas realism and liberalism tend to focus on material factors such as power or trade, constructivist approaches emphasize the impact of ideas. Instead of taking the state for granted and assuming that it simply seeks to survive, constructivists regard the interests and identities of states as a highly malleable product of specific historical processes. They pay close attention to the prevailing discourse (s) in society because discourse reflects and shapes beliefs and interests, and establishes accepted norms of behaviour”.

- Stephan Walt

In previous chapter we have seen how Realist paradigm became dominant theoretical tradition throughout the Cold War. An important refinement to realism was the addition of offense-defence theory, laid by Robert Jervis, George Quester, and Stephen

Van Evera. These scholars argued that war was more likely when states could conquer each other easily. When defense was easier than offence, security was more plentiful, incentives to expand decline, and cooperation could blossom. And if defense had advantage, and states could acquire the means to defend themselves without threatening others, thereby dampening the effects of anarchy. For these “defensive” realists, states merely sought to survive and great powers could guarantee their security by forming balancing alliances and choosing defensive military postures (such as retaliatory nuclear forces). Thus, by the end of the Cold War, realism had moved away from Morgenthau’s dark brooding about human nature and taken on a slightly more optimistic tone.

Liberalism:

The principal challenge to realism came from a broad family of Liberal theories. One strand of Liberal thought argued that economic interdependence would discourage states from using force against each other because warfare would threaten each side’s prosperity. A second strand, often associated with President

Woodrow Wilson, saw the spread of democracy as the key to world peace, based on the claim that democratic states were inherently more peaceful than authoritarian states. A third, more recent theory argued that international institutions such as International Energy Agency and the International Monetary Fund could help overcome selfish state behaviour, mainly by encouraging states to forgo immediate gains for the greater benefits of enduring cooperation.

Liberal Idealism:

Liberal idealism emphasizes ethical principle over the pursuit of power. Its modern proponents included thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, John Locke, David Hume, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith. They assumed that people were not by nature "sinful or wicked" but that harmful behaviour was the result of structural arrangements motivating individuals to act in their own self-interest.

Because idealists draw their philosophy from what has been called the Liberal school of thought, they are sometimes referred to

as “liberal idealist”.¹ After World War I, they became known simply as “idealists”, even if they were a diverse group within the larger liberal tradition.

World War I initiated a paradigmatic revolution in the study of International Relations, in which several perspective competed for attention. While the approach of current history continued to claim same disciples in the waning days of World War I, after Russia’s Bolshevik Revolution, Marxist-Leninist thought became increasingly influential, with its critique of capitalism’s creation of inequality, class conflict, and imperialist war. In the 1930s, rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany, national socialism (or fascism) also challenged conventional European thinking about world politics. Nazism, the German variant of national socialism, was particularly provocative. Not only did Nazism glorify the role of the state (as opposed to that of the individual) in political life, it also championed war as an instrument of national policy. Emerging as dominant, however, was a perspective known as idealism, which

¹ Post-World War I idealism, as advocated by such scholars and policymakers as Alfred Zimern, Norman Angell, James T. Showell, and Woodrow Wilson, derived from ancient liberal philosophy (recall the Serman on the Mount) and has been interpreted variously in different periods. At the core of liberalism is an emphasis on the impact of ideas on behaviour, the equality and liberty of the individual, and the need to protect people from excessive state regulation.

assumed that people were not by nature sinful or wicked but that harmful behaviour was the result of structural arrangements motivating individuals to act in their own self-interest.

Collectively, the post-World War I idealists embraced a worldview based on the following beliefs:

1. Human nature is essentially “good” or altruistic, and people are therefore capable of mutual aid and collaboration.²
2. The fundamental human concern for others’ welfare makes progress possible (i.e. the Enlightenment’s faith in the possibility of improving civilization was reaffirmed).
3. Bad human behaviour, such as violence, is the product not of flawed people but of evil institutions which encourage people to act selfishly and to harm others.
4. War is not inevitable and its frequency can be reduced by eradicating the institutional arrangements that encourage it.

² The role of human nature in theories of politics is controversial. See Lewontin, Rose and Kamin (1984), Nelson (1974) and Wilson (1993) for reviews and critical discussions.

5. War is an international problem requiring collective or multilateral, rather than national, efforts to control it.
6. International society must reorganize itself in order to eliminate the institutions that make war likely, and nations must reform their political systems so that self-determination and democratic governance within states can help pacify relations among states.

While not all idealists subscribed to each of these tenets with equal conviction, they shared a moralistic, optimistic, and universalistic image of international affairs.

Idealist Reform Program:

Although idealist differed significantly in their prescriptions for reforming the international political system,³ they generally fell into one of three groups. The first group advocated creating international institutions to replace the anarchical and war-prone balance-of-power system, characterized by coalitions of

³ Charles W. Kegley, Jr and Eugene R. Wittkopf, World Politics: Trends and Transformation, (New York: 1995), pp. 21-22. _

independent states formed to wage war or to defend a weaker coalition partner from attack. In place of this competitive unregulated system, idealists sought to create a new one based on collective security. This approach dealt with the problem of war by declaring any state's aggression was an aggression against all, who would act in concert to thwart the dominance-seeking aggressor. The League of Nations was the embodiment of collective security, reflecting simultaneously the idealists' emphasis on international institutions as a mechanism for coping with war and social injustice and the possibility to international cooperation for global problem solving.

A Second group of idealists emphasized the use of legal processes such as mediation and arbitration to settle disputes and inhibit recourse to armed conflict. This facet of the idealists' policy prescriptions was illustrated by the creation in 1921 of the Permanent Court of International Justice to litigate inter-state conflicts and by the ratification of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which "outlawed" war as an instrument of national policy.

A third group followed the biblical injunction that nations should beat their swords into plowshares. This orientation was

exemplified by efforts during the 1920s, such as those negotiated at the Washington and London naval conferences, to secure arms control and disarmament agreements.

Several corollary ideas gave definition to the idealists' emphasis on encouraging global cooperation through international institutions, law, and disarmament. These included:

- The need to substitute attitudes that stressed the unity of humankind for those that stressed parochial national loyalties to independent sovereign states.
- The use of the power of ideas through education to arouse world public opinion against warfare.
- The promotion of free international trade in place of economic nationalism.
- The replacement of secret diplomacy by a system of "open covenants, openly arrived at".
- The termination of interlocking bilateral alliances and the power balances they sought to achieve.

In seeking a more peaceful world, some idealists saw the principle of self-determination — giving nationalities the right through voting to become independent states — as a means to redraw the globe's political geography to make national borders conform to ethnical groupings. Related to this was US president Woodrow Wilson's call for democratic domestic institutions. "Making the world safe for democracy", idealists believed, would also make it secure and free from war. Wilson's celebrated Fourteen Points speech, delivered before Congress in 1918, proposed the creation of the League of Nations and, with it, the pursuit of other idealists' aims. This speech, perhaps better than any other statement, expressed the sentiments of the idealist world view and program.

Although liberal/idealist paradigm dominated policy rhetoric and academic discussions during the interior period, little of the idealist reform program was ever attempted, and even less of it was achieved. When the winds of international change again shifted and the Axis powers pursued world conquest, idealism as a world view receded.

New Life For Liberalism:

The collapse of communism sparked a round of self-congratulation in the West, best exemplified by Francis Fukuyama's infamous claim that humankind had now reached the "end of history".⁴

History has paid little attention to this claim, but the triumph of the West did give notable boost to all three strands of liberal thought referred to above.

By far the most interesting and important development has been the lively debate on the "democratic peace". Although the most recent phase of this debate had begun even before the Soviet Union collapsed, it became more influential as the number of democracies began to increase and as evidence of this relationship began to accumulate.

Democratic peace theory⁵ is a refinement of the earlier claim that democracies were inherently more peaceful than autocratic

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?", National Interest vol. 16 (Summer, 1989).

⁵ Many of leading contributors to the debate on the democratic peace can be found in Brown and Lynn-Jones, eds., Debating the Democratic Peace (Cambridge: 1996) and Miriam Elman ed., Paths to Peace: Is Democracy the Answer? (Cambridge: 1997).

states. It rests on the belief that although democracies seem to fight wars as often as other states, they rarely, if ever, fight one another. Scholars such Michael Doyle, James Lee Ray, and Bruce Russett have offered a number of explanations for this tendency, the most popular being that democracies embrace norms of compromise that bar the use of force against groups espousing similar principles.

However, this view is contested by number of scholars with some qualifications⁶. First, Synder and Edward Mansfield pointed out that states may be more prone to war when they are in the midst of a democratic transition, which implies that efforts to export democracy might actually make things worse. Second, critics such as Joanne Gowa and David Spiro have argued that the apparent absence of war between democracies is due to the way that democracy has been defined and to the relative dearth of democratic states (especially before 1945). In addition, Christopher Layne has pointed out that when democracies have come close to

⁶ The contributions of institutionalist theory and the debate on relative gains are summarized in David Baldwin, ed., Neo-realism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate (New York: 1993). An important critique of the institutionalist literature is Mearsheimer's "The False Promise of International Institutions", International Security, Winter 1994-95, but its responses in the Summer 1995 issue.

war in the past their decision to remain at peace ultimately had little to do with their shared democratic character.

As Christopher Layne⁷ observed: “Modern day proponents of a liberal theory of international politics have constructed an appealing vision of perpetual peace within a zone of democracy and prosperity. But this ‘zone of peace’ is a peace of illusions. There is no evidence that democracy at the unit level negates the structural effects of anarchy at the level of the international political systems. Similarly, there is no evidence that supports the sister theory: that economic interdependence leads to peace. Both ideas have been around for a long time. The fact that they are so widely accepted as a basis for international relations theory shows that for some scholars, ‘theories’ are confirmed by the number of real-world test that they fail. Proponents of liberal international relations theory may contend, as Russett⁸ does, that liberal approaches to international politics have not failed, but rather that they have not been tried.”

⁷ Christopher Layne, “Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace” International Security, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall 1994), p. 48.

⁸ Bruce Russett, Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World (Princeton: 1993) Chap. 7, p. 9. Russett says that Kantian and Wilsonian Principles have not been given a real chance to operate in International Politics.

Liberal institutionalists likewise have continued to adopt their own theories. The core claims of institutionalist-theory have become more modest over time. Institutions are now said to facilitate cooperation when it is in each state's interest to do so, but it is widely believed that they cannot force states to behave in ways that are contrary to the states' own interests. Institutionalists such as John Duffield and Robert McCalla⁹ have extended the theory into new substantive areas, most notably the study of NATO. For these scholars, NATO's highly institutionalized character helps explain why it has been able to survive and adopt, despite the disappearance of its main adversary.

The economic strand of liberal theory is still influential as well. In particular, a number of scholars have recently suggested that the "globalization" of world markets, the rise of transnational networks and non-governmental organisations and the rapid spread of global communications technology are undermining the power of states and shifting attention away from military security toward economics and social welfare. The details are novel but the

⁹ John Duffield, "NATO's Functions after the Cold War" Political Science Quarterly, Winter: 1994-95; Robert McCalla "NATO's Persistence after the Cold War" International Organisation, Summer: 1996. _

basic logic is familiar: As societies around the globe become enmeshed in a web of economic social connections, the costs of disrupting these ties will effectively preclude unilateral state actions, especially the use of force.¹⁰

This perspective implies that war will remain a remote possibility among the advanced industrial democracies. It also suggest that brining China and Russia into its fold is likely to be the best way to promote both prosperity and peace, particularly if this process creates a strong middle class in these states and reinforces pressures to democratize. The idea is: get these societies hooked on prosperity and competition to the economic realm.

This view has been challenged by scholars¹¹ who argue that the actual scope of "globalization" is modest and that these various transactions still take place in environments that are shaped and regulated by states. Nonetheless, the belief that economic forces are superseding traditional great power politics seems to have

¹⁰ The Liberal approach to international affairs is summarized in Andrew Moravcsik's "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics" International Organisation, Autumn: 1997.

¹¹ Susan Strange, The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy (Cambridge: 1996), and Jessica Mathews, "Power Shift" Foreign Affairs, January/February 1997. _

widespread acceptance among scholars and policy makers, and the role of the state is likely to be an important topic for future academic debate.¹²

Constructivist Paradigm

Whereas realism and liberalism tend to focus on material factors such as power or trade, constructivist approaches emphasize the impact of ideas. Instead of taking the state for granted and assuming that it simply seeks to survive, constructivists regard the interests and identities of states as a highly malleable product of specific historical processes. They pay close attention to the prevailing discourse (s) in society because discourse reflects and shapes belief and interest, and establishes accepted norms of behaviour. Consequently, constructivism is especially attentive to the sources of change, and this approach has largely replaced Marxism as the preeminent radical perspective on international affairs.

¹² Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, Globalization in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance (Cambridge: Polity, 1996); Ethan Kapstein, Governing the Global Economy: International Finance and the State (Cambridge: 1994), and Peter Evans, "The Eclipse of the State? Reflections on Stateness in an Era of Globalization" World Politics, October 1997.

The principal focus of constructivist paradigm is the assumption that our understanding of the world, as well as the intellectual tools used for viewing that world, are not objectively derived, but instead are the result of socially constructed concepts. In a way, the proponents of this paradigm suggest that “the world is in the eye of the beholder” and then proceed to ask where those interpretations of the world come from and how they influence the behaviour of individual and state actors.

The end of the Cold War played an important role in legitimizing constructivist theories because realism and liberalism failed to anticipate this event and had some difficulty explaining it. Constructivists had an explanation: a case in point specifically is that of former president Mikhail Gorbachev who revolutionized Soviet foreign policy because he embraced new ideas such as “common security”.

Moreover, given that we live in an era where old norms are being challenged, once clear boundaries are dissolving, and issues of identity are becoming more salient, it is hardly surprising that scholars have been drawn to approaches that place these issues front and center. From a constructivist perspective, in fact, the

central issue in the post-Cold War world is how different groups conceive their identities and interests. Although power is not irrelevant, constructivism emphasizes how ideas and identities are created, how they evolve, and how they shape the way states understand and respond to their situation. Therefore, it matters whether Europeans define themselves primarily in national or continental terms; whether Germany and Japan redefine their pasts in ways that encourage their adopting more active international roles; and whether India embraces or rejects its identities as global player.

Constitutive Theory:

Constitutive theory is an approach which has become known as constructivism. One version of constructivism, as advocated by Emanuel Adler,¹³ portrays it as presenting a middle way between the extremes of positivist social scientific approaches to IR (which include realist, neorealist, and Liberal institutionalist accounts), on the one hand, with interpretivist approaches (which include post-structuralists, post-modernists and some feminist approaches to

¹³ Emanuel Adler, "Seizing" the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", European Journal of International Relations, 3.3, September 1997, pp. 319-64.

the IR) on the other. Adler defines constructivism as “the view that the manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world”. This is a ‘middle way’ in that it is based on a realist ontology which asserts the existence of the material world, but at the same time, it acknowledges that “International Relations consist primarily of social facts which are facts only by human agreement”.¹⁴

A crucial insight for constitutive theories is that our current ways of constituting the world and ourselves within it create and privilege certain kinds of actors (identities) and denigrate others. Thus feminist IR theorists have pointed out how the system of sovereign states is a constituting form which has the effect of hiding women from view – of suggesting that women, as women, are insignificant for a proper understanding of world politics.¹⁵ Similar points could be made about the other approaches to IR theory which have been grouped together. A central task of constitutive theory is the bringing to light of what the current

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 322-3.

¹⁵ See Cynthia Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics (London: Pandora Books, 1989).

constitution of world politics — dominated by the system of sovereign states and by the global market — keeps hidden.

Thus, in constitutive theory, it seems, as if, at last, ethics might be reinstated as of central concern to IR. For the task of IR theory according to constitutive theorists is to reveal our global international social order to be a human construct within which are embedded certain values chosen by us and to show how this construct benefits some and oppresses others. This seems to be pre-eminently an exercise in ethical evaluation. It would seem to be self-evident that scholars — be they critical theorists, post-modern theorists, feminist IR scholars, constructivists, or structuration theorists — involved in such evaluative exercises must engage in serious ethical argument — argument about what is to count as oppression as opposed to liberation, or about what is to count as an emancipatory practice as opposed to an enslaving one, about what would be fair in international relations, what just, and so on. However, in practice, constitutive theorists have done very little of this kind of theorising.

Reason being, constitutive theorists are still blocked from doing so by an ongoing commitment to the fact/value distinction

and by a thoroughgoing descriptivism. Constructivists like Nicholas Onuf describe the complicated framework within which we do things with words. For example, making promises – the basis of all contract – requires an elaborate set of background conditions understood as binding by those making and those receiving the promises.

Constitutive theorists themselves go to great lengths to show that they are super-aware of how their own ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies and ethical systems might influence their account of the subject matter under investigation.

Constructivist theories are quite diverse and do not offer a unified set of predictions on any of the issues. At a purely conceptual level, Alexander Wendt¹⁶ has argued that the realist conception of anarchy does not adequately explain why conflict occurs between states. The real issue is how anarchy is understood – in Wendt’s words, “Anarchy is what states make of it”. Another strand of constructivist theory has focussed on the future of the territorial state, suggesting that transnational

¹⁶ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics” International Organisation, Spring 1992.

communication and shared civic values are undermining traditional national loyalties and creating radically new forms of political association. Other constructivists focus on the role of norms, arguing that international law and other normative principles have eroded earlier notions of sovereignty and altered the legitimate purposes for which state power may be employed. The common theme in each of these strands is the capacity of discourse to shape how political actors define themselves and their interests, and thus modify their behaviour.

Domestic Politics Reconsidered:

In theorizing, scholars continue to explore the impact of domestic politics on the behaviour of states. Domestic politics are obviously central to the debate on the democratic peace and scholars such as Synder, Jeffrey Frieden and Helen Milner have examined how domestic interest groups can distort the formation of state preferences and lead to suboptimal international behaviour. George Downs, David Rocke, and others have also explored how domestic institutions can help states deal with the perennial problem of uncertainty, while students of psychology

have applied prospect theory and other new tools to explain why decision-makers fail to act in a rational fashion.

The fag end of the 20th century has also witnessed an explosion of interest in the concept of culture, a development that overlaps with constructivist emphasis on the importance of ideas and norms. Thus, Thomas Berger and Peter Katzenstein¹⁷ have used cultural variables to explain why Germany and Japan have thus far eschewed more self-reliant military policies; Elizabeth Kier has offered a cultural interpretation of British and French military doctrines in the interwar period; and Iain Johnston has traced continuities in Chinese foreign policy to a deeply rooted form of “cultural realism”. Samuel Huntington’s warnings about an imminent “clash of civilizations” are symptomatic of this trend as well, in so far as his argument rests on the claim that broad cultural affinities are now supplanting national loyalties. Though these and other works define culture in widely varying ways and have yet to provide a full explanation of how it works or how enduring its effects might be, cultural perspectives have been very

¹⁷ Peter Katzenstein, ed., The Culture of Nation Security (New York: 1996) and Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil, eds., The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory (Boulder: 1996). —

much in vogue during the last decade. This trend is partly a reflection of the broader interest in cultural issues in the academic world and within the public debate as well and partly a response to the upsurge in ethnic, nationalist, and cultural conflicts since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Appraisal:

While these debates reflect the diversity of contemporary scholarship on international affairs, there are also obvious signs of convergence. Most realists recognize that nationalism, militarism, ethnicity, and other domestic factors are important; liberals acknowledge that power is central to international behaviour; and some constructivists admit that ideas will have greater impact when backed by powerful states and reinforced by enduring material forces. The boundaries of each paradigm are somewhat permeable, and there is ample opportunity for intellectual arbitrage.

CHAPTER- IV

CONCLUSIONS

We have seen when people think seriously, they think abstractly; they conjure up simplified picture of reality called concepts, theories, models, paradigms. Without such intellectual constructs there is only "a bloomin 'buzzin' confusion".

Social scientists construct different theories to make international events understandable. Over a period, these paradigms, or models are revised to explain new developments and solutions. Thus, the paths to knowledge that guide our thinking both of scholars and of policymakers in different historical circumstances tell us much about world politics itself.

Major wars have often brought about significant changes in theoretical interpretation of world affairs and influenced what ideas and values will predominate, thereby determining the ethos of succeeding ages. Each struggle causes the dominant paradigm to be jettisoned and encourages the search for new theoretical orientations.

The study of international relations is best understood as a protracted competition between the realist, liberal, and radical traditions. Realism emphasizes the enduring propensity for conflict between states; liberalism identifies several ways to mitigate these conflictive tendencies; and radical tradition describes how the entire system of state relations are somewhat fuzzy and a number of important works do not fit neatly into any of them, but debates within and among them have largely defined the discipline.

Realism:

Realism was the dominant theoretical tradition throughout the Cold War. It depicts international affairs as a struggle for power among self-interested states and is generally pessimistic about the prospect for eliminating conflict and war. Realism dominated in the Cold War years because it provided simple but powerful explanations for war, alliances, imperialism, obstacles to cooperation, and other international phenomena and because its emphasis on competition was consistent with central features of the American-Soviet rivalry.

Realism is not a single theory, of course, and realist thought evolved considerably throughout the Cold War. "Classical" realists such as Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr believed that states, like human beings, had an innate desire to dominate others, which led them to fight wars. Morgenthau also stressed the virtues of the classical, multipolar, balance-of-power system and saw the bipolar rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union as especially dangerous.

By contrast, the "neorealist" theory advanced by Kenneth Waltz ignored human nature and focused on the effects of the international system. For Waltz, the international system consisted of a number of great powers, each seeking to survive. Because the system is anarchic, each state has to survive on its own. Waltz argued that this condition would lead weaker states to balance against, rather than bandwagon with, more powerful rivals. And contrary to Morgenthau, he claimed that bipolarity was more stable than multipolarity.

An important refinement to realism was the addition of offence-defence theory, as laid by Robert Jervis, George Quester, and Stephan Van Evera. These scholars argued that war was more

likely when states could conquer each other easily. When defense was easier than offense, security was more plentiful, incentives to expand declined, and cooperation could blossom. And if defense had the advantage, and states could distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons, then states could acquire the means to defend themselves without threatening others, thereby dampening the effects of anarchy.

For these “defensive” realists, states merely sought to survive and great powers could guarantee their security by forming balancing alliances and choosing defensive military postures such as retaliatory nuclear forces. Thus, by the end of the Cold War, realism had moved away from Morgenthau’s dark brooding about human nature and taken on a slightly more optimistic tone.

Liberalism:

The principal challenge to realism came from a broad family of liberal theories. One strand of liberal thought argued that economic interdependence would discourage states from using force against each other because warfare would threaten each

side's prosperity. A second strand, often associated with President Woodrow Wilson, saw the spread of democracy as the key to world peace, based on the claim that democratic states were inherently more peaceful than authoritarian states. A third, more recent theory argued that international institutions such as the International Energy Agency and the International Monetary Fund could overcome selfish state behaviour, mainly by encouraging states to forgo immediate gains for the greater benefits of enduring cooperation.

Although some liberals flirted with the idea that new transnational actors, especially the multinational corporation, were gradually encroaching on the power of states, liberalism generally saw states as the central players in international affairs. All liberal theories implied that cooperation was more pervasive than even the defensive version of realism allowed, but each view offered a different recipe for promoting it.

Radical Approaches:

Until the 1980s, Marxism was the main alternative to the mainstream realist and liberal traditions. Where realism and liberalism took the state system for granted, Marxism — both Orthodox Marxist theory and Neo-Marxist “dependency” theory — offered both a different explanation for international conflict and a blueprint for fundamentally transforming the existing international order.

Both of these theories were largely discredited before the Cold War even ended. As Marxism succumbed to its various failings, its mantle was assumed by a group of theorists who borrowed heavily from the wave of post-modern writings in literary criticism and social theory. This “deconstructionist” approach was openly skeptical of the effort to devise general or universal theories such as realism or liberalism. Because these scholars focused initially on criticising the mainstream paradigms but did not offer positive alternatives to them, they remained a self-consciously dissident minority for most of the 1980s.

Not all Cold War scholarship on international affairs fit neatly into the realist, liberal or marxist paradigms.

New Wrinkles in Old Paradigms:

Instead of resolving the struggle between competing theoretical traditions, the end of the Cold War has merely launched a new series of debates.

Realism Redux:

Although the end of the Cold War led a few writers to declare that realism was destined for the academic scrapheap, rumours of its demise have been largely exaggerated. A recent contribution of realist theory is its attention to the problem of relative and absolute gains. Responding to the institutionalists' claim that international institutions would enable states to forgo short-term gains, realists such as Joseph Grieco and Stephen Krasner point out that anarchy forces states to worry about both absolute gains from cooperation and the way that gains are distributed among participants. The logic is straightforward: If one state reaps larger

gains than its partners, it will gradually become stronger, and its partners will eventually become more vulnerable.

Realists have also been quick to explore a variety of new issues. Barry Posen offers a realist explanation for ethnic conflict, noting that the breakup of multiethnic states could place rival ethnic groups in an anarchic setting, thereby triggering intense fears and tempting each group to use force to improve its relative position. Realists have also cautioned that NATO, without a clear enemy, would likely face increasing strains and that expanding its presence eastward would jeopardize relations with Russia.

The most interesting conceptual development within the realist paradigm has been the emerging split between the “defensive” and “offensive” strands of thought. Defensive realists such as Waltz, Van Evera, Jack Snyder assumed that states had little intrinsic interest in military conquest and argued that the costs of expansion generally outweighed the benefits. Accordingly, they maintained that great power wars occurred largely because domestic groups fostered exaggerated perceptions of threat and an excessive faith in the efficacy of military force.

This view is now being challenged along several fronts. First, as Randall Schweller notes, the neorealist assumption that states merely seek to survive “stacked the deck” in favour of the status quo because it precluded the threat of predatory revisionist states — nations such as Adolf Hitler’s Germany or Napoleon Bonaparte’s France that “value what they covet far more than what they possess” and are willing to risk annihilation to achieve their aims. Second, Peter Liberman, in his book **Does Conquest Pay?**, uses a number of historical cases — such as the Nazi occupation of Western Europe and Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe- to show that the benefits of conquest often exceed the costs, thereby casting doubt on the claim that military expansion is no longer cost-effective. Third, offensive realists such as Eric Labs, John Mearsheimer, and Fareed Zakaria argue that anarchy encourages all states to try to maximize their relative strength simply because no state can ever be sure when a truly revisionist power might emerge.

These differences help explain why realists disagree over issues such as the future of Europe. For defensive realists such as Van Evera, War is rarely profitable and usually results from

militarism, hypernationalism, or some other distorting domestic factor. Because Van Evera believes such forces are largely absent in post-Cold War Europe, he concludes that the region is “primed for peace”. By contrast, Mearshiemer and other offensive realists believe that anarchy forces great powers to compete irrespective of their internal characteristics and that security competition will return to Europe as soon as the US withdraws from Europe.

New Life For Liberalism:

We have seen that the defeat of communism sparked a joy in the West, best exemplified by Francis Fukuyama’s infamous claim that humankind had now reached the “end of history”. History has paid little attention to this claim, but the triumph of the West did give a notable boost to all three strands of liberal thought.

Most interesting and important development has been the lively debate on the “Democratic Peace theory”. It is a refinement of the earlier claim that democracies were inherently more peaceful than autocratic states. It rest on the belief that although

democracies seem to fight wars as often as other states, they rarely, if ever, fight one another. Scholars such as Michael Doyle, James Lee Ray, and Bruce Russett have offered a number of explanations for this tendency, the most popular being that democracies embrace norms of compromise that bar the use of force against groups espousing similar principles.

However, this view has been contested by some scholars. First, Synder and Edward Mansfield pointed out that states may be more prone to war when they are in the midst of transition, which implies that efforts to export democracy might actually make things worse. Second, critics such as Joanne Gowa and David Spiro have argued that the apparent absence of war between democracies is due to the way that democracy has been defined and to the relative dearth of democratic states. In addition, Christopher Layne has pointed out that when democracies have come close to war in the past their decision to remain at peace ultimately had little to do with their shared democratic character. Third, clearcut evidence that democracies do not fight each other is confined to the post-1945 era, and as Gowa has emphasized, the absence of conflict in this period may be due more to their common

interest in containing the Soviet Union than a shared democratic principles.

Liberal institutionalists likewise have continued to adopt their own theories. Among these, the core claims of institutionalist theory is with regard to cooperation when it is in each state's interest to do so, but it is widely agreed that they cannot force states to behave in ways that are contrary to the states' own selfish interests. On the other hand, institutionalists such as John Duffield and Robert Mc Calla have extended the theory into substantive areas, most notably the study of NATO. For these scholars, NATO's highly institutionalized character helps explain why it has been able to survive and adapt, despite the disappearance of its main adversary.

The economic strand of liberal theory is more appealing. In particular, a number of scholars have recently suggested that the "globalization" of world markets, the rise of transnational networks and nongovernmental organisations and the rapid spread of global communications technology are undermining the power of states and shifting attention away from military security toward economics and social welfare. The details are novel but the logic is

familiar: As societies around the globe become enmeshed in a web of economic and social connections, the costs of disrupting these ties will effectively preclude unilateral state actions, especially the use of force.

This perspective implies that war will remain a remote possibility among the advanced industrial democracies.

This view has been challenged by scholars who argue that the actual scope of "globalization" is modest and that these various transactions still take place in environments that are shaped and regulated by states. Notwithstanding this, the belief that economic forces are superseding traditional great power politics enjoys widespread acceptance among scholars, academicians and policymakers, and the role of the state is likely to be an important topic for future economic inquiry.

Constructivist Theories:

Whereas realism and liberalism tend to focus on material factors such as power or trade, constructivist approaches emphasize the impact of ideas. Instead of taking the state for

granted and assuming that it simply seeks to survive, constructivists regard the interests and identities of states as a highly malleable product of specific historical processes. They pay close attention to the prevailing discourse (s) in society because discourse reflects and shapes beliefs and interests, and establishes accepted norms of behaviour. Consequently, constructivism is especially attentive to the sources of change, and this approach has largely replaced Marxism as the pre-eminent radical perspective on international affairs.

The end of the Cold War played an important role in legitimating constructivist theories because realism and liberalism both failed to anticipate this event and had some trouble explaining it. Constructivists had an explanation: Specifically, former president Mikhail Gorbachev revolutionized Soviet foreign policy because he embraced new ideas such as “common security”.

Although power is not irrelevant, constructivism emphasizes how ideas and identities are created, how they evolve, and how they shape the way states understand and respond to their situation.

Constructivist theories are quite diverse and do not offer a unified set of predictions on any of these issues. At a purely conceptual level, Alexander Wendt has argued that the realist conception of anarchy does not adequately explain why conflict occurs between states. Another strand of constructivist theory has focused on the future of the territorial state, suggesting that transnational communication and shared civic values are undermining traditional national loyalties and creating radically new forms of political association. Others constructivists focus on the role of norms, arguing that international law and other normative principles have eroded earlier notions of sovereignty and altered the legitimate purposes for which state power may be employed. The common theme is each of these strands in the capacity of discourse to shape how political actors define themselves and their interests, and thus modify their behaviour.

The past decade has also witnessed an explosion of interest in the concept of culture, a development that overlaps with the constructivist emphasis on the importance of ideas and norms. Samuel Huntington's warning about an imminent "clash of civilizations" are symptomatic of the trend as well, in so far as his

argument rests on the claim that broad cultural affinities are now supplanting national loyalties.

Conceptual Framework of Future Paradigms:

While these debates reflect the diversity of contemporary scholarship on international affairs, there are obvious signs of convergence. Most realists recognise that nationalism, militarism, ethnicity, and other domestic factors are important; liberals acknowledge that power is central to international behaviour; and some constructivists admit that ideas will have greater impact when backed by powerful states and reinforced by enduring material forces. The boundaries of each paradigm are somewhat permeable, and there is ample opportunity for intellectual arbitrage.

Many academics and a few policymakers are loathe to admit that realism remains the most compelling general framework for understanding international relations. States continue to pay close attention to the balance of power and to worry about the possibility of major conflict.

Thus, we have seen that each of these competing paradigm captures important aspect of world politics. Our understanding would be impoverished were our thinking confined to only one of them. The “complete diplomat” of the future should remain cognizant of realism’s emphasis on the inescapable role of power, keep liberalism’s awareness of domestic forces in mind, and occasionally reflect on constructivism’s vision of change.

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