International Relations Notes:

01/15/2009

What are the goals of theories?

To understand the world we live in, influence, control and improve it

Theories don't just explain the past, they're also a guide to the future, and shape policy

But social world is not fixed, change is possible

What are theories?

States that explain a general phenomenon by:

-indentifying important causes

-explain correlations

-focusing on general causes rather than specific causes

Theories must be logical and explain the real world

What makes the social sciences different?

There are many challenges to the social sciences:

-concepts and variables are hard to define and not concrete (i.e. power, state interests)

-equifinality, or there are many paths and several causes to one result

-historical accidents

-observers of the social world often influence it

-actual experimentation is very difficult

What is a good theory?

One that is:

-conscious of its limitations

-is logically sound

-actually explains why a specific historical even occurred

-contingent or possible propositions

01/20/2009

Daniel Byman

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Fareed Zakaria

-Compares British history with America now

-Their influence in the world scene (British decline vs. America decline)

-U.S. needs to accept that there are other players in the world scene

-Britain accepted U.S. as a rising power

Stephen Jay Gould

-Scientific method has a stereotyped image

-says that history is a legitimate science, that paleontology deserves respect

-they observe things and take the data and look for patterns

-contigency - conditionality, history is dependent on conditions

-difference with his science and social science - studies live subjects

Are states in decline?

There has been a recent sharp increase in the number of states being recognized and/or gaining independence

Characteristics of states?

-control over territory

-sovereignty

-the sole legitimate right to use violence (means of coercion)

-usually there is a government

-Internal and External Sovereignty

-internal = legitimacy within a state

-external = recognition of the state

-Juridical and Empirical Sovereignty

Other historical terms of political organization

Nations, empires, corporations, international organizations, churches

How can we know if states are in decline?

First determine what the state does, then find out if those functions are necessary

If they are then find out whether other entities (institutions, organizations) can preform them

If those other entities are performing those duties than the state is in decline

01/22/2009

Who are the players in International Politics?

READINGS:

Deborah Avant

Huge increas in private contractors in war-torn countries

Are these men serving for money (mercenaries) or for their country?

Private contractors are more efficient but may make gov't look bad

Non-state actors, autonomous

Robert Pape

Suicide bombers are actually well educated

Hezbollah is both losing and gaining legitimacy

It has political links and is involved in the government

Has its own military as well

Is Hezbollah the face of Lebanon?

Michael Specter

About the Bill Gates Foundation

Chairty and disease research

Has the power of government without restraints

Jessica Matthews

Power has shifted from government to non-governmental organizations

Zero-sum (your gain is my loss)

Transnationalism

Anne-Marie Slaughter

Non-zero-sum

Transgovernmentalism

9/11 Commission

New terrorism and the rise of Osama Bin Laden

It branches from social, political, economic and religious problems

Bin Laden has created massive international networks that work from everywhere

Phil Williams

Organized crime is becoming part of government

Non-state actors, but where do you draw the line?

Media is also a key player in modern international politics

ANARCHY AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

International politics has concepts that contains parts and wholes

i.e. units, actors, players vs. systems, organizing or ordering principles, structures

Domestic vs. International Politics

-Government: overarching authority vs. no overarching authority

-hierarchical organization vs. anarchical organization (networks are transnational politics)

-rules, laws, authority vs. bargains, deals, power

-enforcement backed up by legitimate violence of state vs. absense of gov't means there is no authority to prevent the use of violence

Consequences of Anarchy

-conflicts of interest; security is scarce; power, politics and war

-some common interest; cooperation is possible; a problem of establishing trust and guaranteeing contracts

-world political culture determines the consequences of anarchy

01/27/2009

CLASSIFYING CAUSES

WHY DID THE COLD WAR COME TO AN END?

THE FIRST LEVEL (INDIVIDUALS) - Gorbachev

THE SECOND LEVEL (STATES OR DOMESTIC POLICY) - Totalitarian Regime

THE THIRD LEVEL (INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM) - Distribution of Power Among States

01/29/2009

WHAT EXPLAINS PEACE DURING THE 1990S?

POWER - People believe unipolar power in the world is more stable.

ECONOMICS - Economic forces drive international politics - economic interdependence - reliance on one another for goods and services.

The more interdependence, the more trade between countries, the less likely to go to war.

IDEAS/CULTURE - Francis Fukayama says that the ideological problems came to an end.

People understood that totalitarian and communist regimes were unsuccessful.

Triumph of Capitalism/Democracy over Communism

INSTITUTIONS - International Institutions (WTO, UN, NATO, etc.) put in place after WWII allow states to achieve common goals.

They prevented anarchical effects.

^These reasons are exclusive and do not always complement each other and may contradict at times.

READINGS:

John Lewis Gaddis - Says that Stalin was the cause of the Cold War.

He was fearful of the capitalist system and his country became an extension of himself.

Stalin was crazy and paranoid, and transferred his insanity to his country by indoctrinating everything that people saw and did.

Driving Forces - First Level of Analysis - Ideas/Culture

Robert Jervis - It's about the tendency the US has to divert to imperialism.

The US expansion is uncontrollable.

US power is so overbearing that it is only natural for them to expand because there is no one else to challenge them.

Fine line between what they are doing and tyranny.

Was the cause of the recent US expansion because of the Bush Administration? Or was it in the nature of unipolarity?

What was the cause for its agression in the recent years? He says it is the nature of unipolarity. It wasn't a matter of who, it was a matter of time and circumstance.

Driving Forces - Third Level of Analysis - Power (unipolarity)

John E. Mueller - Some political ideas go in and out of style. They become internationally uneacceptable.

Moral compass changes over time and evolves and he is saying this is going to happen to war.

i.e. dueling, slavery, etc. go out of style.

War is just but an idea.

Driving Forces - Third Level of Analysis - Ideas/Culture

Andre Gunder Frank - Why are some countries are poor and why some are rich?

It is not because the undeveloped nations are missing resources or lack knowledge within their borders.

Undeveloped countries are underdeveloped because of developed nations who exploited these poorer countries.

The underdeveloped countries have been used for their resources and they get very little benefit from their own resources.

The major culprit is the nature of international capitalism.

Driving Forces - Third Level of Analysis - Economics

Paul Pillar - Describes the disfunctionality between intelligence community and the Bush Administration.

The Bush Administration did not listen to its intelligence saying that going into Iraq would be costly.

Because the US was in such a post-9/11 agression stage they had to go to war and they selectively listened to what intelligence told them.

Driving Forces - Second Level of Analysis - Institutions

02/10/2009, 02/12/2009

Power is the ability to get other actors to do something that they would not normally do

Why do states seek power?

-To preserve territory, independence, culture, and way of life

-To prevent other states from imposing their will

-To impose its will on other states

Power is

-Multidimensional

-Deeply embedded in complex relationships

-Tied to historical context

What is realism?

-states act as unitary and rational actors

-anarchy creates the goal of security

-international politics is about conflict and states seek to accumulate power

What are the origins of realism?

-during WWII; a reaction to the failure of Wilson’s League of Nations

Balance of Power Theory:

-alliances follow logic of gaining more power or countering against powerful actors

-alliances are not strong and fall apart when incentive to power is not great

READINGS:

Huntington – Contradicts the argument that US economic decline means that there is a power decline.

Economic and/or military power is not the only determinants of national power; decline cannot be seen against a purely economic background

Although US predominance in world affairs is not as secure, they still are maintaining their influence

Slaughter – In the modern world the nation with the most technology will come out strong

U.S. capitalizes on connectivity and networking so it will come out strong

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Better education is needed though so that innovation does not decrease

Lansford –

Mearsheimer – A realist viewpoint

Goal is to maximize power

Creates a distant hegemon (or two) in unipolar (or bipolar) system

Talks about human nature realism (domination) and defensive realism (security)

02/17/2009, 02/19/2009

What is neoliberalism?

-a reaction to realism

-explains cooperation among states

-states are primary actors and act rationally (using cost-benefit analysis)

-anarchy creates a need for cooperation, but can also cause conflict

-institutions facilitate cooperation and interdependence

READINGS:

Keohane – A neoliberal viewpoint

International organizations don’t exercise control over other states

Institutions help governments obtain goals that are otherwise impossible

Carpenter – Discusses how at the Geneva 2.0 they discussed the U.S.’s treatment of prisoners of war.

The argument is between U.S. government and human rights policy

Carpenter wants a compromise so both sides should seek to update the laws in 2.0; the old laws are outdated

Hope is to make both sides on same side instead of adversaries

Stedman –

02/24/2009

Commercial Liberalism-

READINGS:

Friedman – Interdependence is a characteristic of the modern world

International free trade fosters good relations

Mansfield and Pollins –

Deudney and Ikenberry –

02/26/2009

Democratic Peace Theory-

READINGS:

Russett – “Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World”

Zakaria – Democracy is not the only thing that makes a country successful, they need a constitution too.

Democracy doesn’t guarantee peace; constitutional liberalism matters more

It protects individual autonomy in the state and unchecked centralization is bad

Right now, democracy is flourishing but constitutional liberalism is not

03/03/2009

Radicalism- WTO, IMF suck. Big capitalists take advantage of smaller countries.

READINGS:

Wade – “Showdown at the World Bank”

03/05/2009

Constructivism-

READINGS:

Price – “Compliance with International Norms and the Mines Taboo”

Risse – “U.S. Power in a Liberal Security Community”

03/17/2009, 03/19/2009

Foreign Policy-

READINGS:

U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence – “Report on the U.S. Intelligence Community’s Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq”

03/24/2009

The Bush Doctrine-

Neoconservatism-

READINGS:

Bush – “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America” \*\*\*\*

Fukuyama – “The Neoconservative Moment”

Walt and Muravchik – “The Neocons vs. The Realists”

03/26/2009, 03/31/2009

Terrorism after 9/11-

U.S. Foreign Policy after 9/11-

READINGS:

Foreign Policy and Center for American Progress – “The Terrorism Index”

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Mueller – “Is There Still a Terrorist Threat?”

There has been an increase in fear that there will be a terrorist attack even though there is more security; heightened paranoia; the threat of a terrorist attack is just the same as it was five years ago; 9/11 was a fluke

Bush Administration has completely exaggerated the threat of a terrorist attack; they were using the fear to get support for their aggressive foreign policy; Iraq War backfired and was a diversion

Riedel – This article discusses the threat of Al Qaeda in the modern world

Al Qaeda is more dangerous today than it ever was before

Al Qaeda has been working to spread its name through propaganda and networking and losing some of their leaders will not set them back (Zarkawi)

He suggests that U.S. move troops to Afghanistan and that the Iraqis should solve their own conflicts

Also take steps to bring connections between Islam world and Western world

Stokes – Anti-Americanism is on the rise from even before 9/11 but Stokes says it does not matter

Foreign leaders do not show their unfavorable sentiments towards Americans because in the long run that will be bad for them

Global attitudes are making it harder for, but not stopping, the U.S. from pushing their agenda

There are subtle changes that over time that will eventually change the influence of U.S. foreign policy completely

Realists would argue that policy is not contingent on popular sentiments and polls or surveys

Ross – Discusses the problems in Iraq

There were no weapons of mass destruction but now it is the U.S.’s job to fix the mess in Iraq that we started

Iran has many internal problems and other countries should use those vulnerabilities to discourage them from proliferating nuclear weapons

Iran going nuclear will prompt other rival nations such as Saudi Arabia to get nuclear weapons (security dilemma)

Lieber and Press – Foreign Policy is evolving after the Cold War

U.S. has surpassed other countries in nuclear warfare and our capabilities continue to grow

Hawks - one view is that modernization will scare other countries

Doves - others believe that U.S. will take advantage of this power and push their own aggressive means

Nuclear weapons are a good deterrent but they can’t actually be used

Owls – they believe nuclear weapons create security dilemma

04/02/2009

Changes in International Power

READINGS:

Huntington – “The Lonely Superpower”

Ikenberry – “The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?”

Weber, Barma and Ratner – “A World without the West”

Gat – “The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers”

04/07/2009

International Politics in Africa-

READINGS:

“Democratic Republic of Congo” and “Somalia” –

...

Waal – “Darfur and the Failure of the Responsibility to Protect”

04/09/2009

Nuclear Weapons-

READINGS:

Sagan and Waltz – “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons”

Mueller – “Radioactive Hype”

Allison – “The Three ‘Nos’ Knows”

Mueller – “Apocalypse Later” The author defends his thesis about the nuclear nonproliferation efforts of the U.S. from its detractors. He points out that in carrying out the measures ordered by the U.S. government to cease the nuclear capabilities of other countries, the government has inflicted more deaths than did the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs combined. He explains that his thesis indicates that most countries fail to pursue nuclear programs because they come to realize that nuclear weapons are dangerous, distasteful and costly. \*\*\*\*

04/14/2009, 04/16/2009

Global Political Economy-

READINGS:

Ferguson – Compares modern economic globalization with globalization occurring prior to World War I. Description of economic conditions prior to World War I; Impact of World War I on international economic relations; Similarities and differences between modern and historical globalization; Claim that the modern economic system is as vulnerable as historical systems; Potential for war and world politics to destabilized the current system.

Blinder – “Offshoring: The Next Industrial Revolution?” This article discusses the effects of offshoring, the migration of jobs from wealthy countries to poor countries. Comparative advantage comes from human effort rather than natural conditions, and can change over time. The information age marks a third industrial revolution, where the easy flow of information has expanded the scope of tradeable services and has altered distinctions between skill-levels in the labor market. As the domain of services expand, competition with other countries for services will expand as well. The increase of service jobs that can be performed electronically will, in turn, effect an increase in jobs that can be moved offshore from the U.S. This trend does not suggest massive unemployment, but instead suggests a massive shift toward the personal service industry in the U.S.

Krugman – “Trouble with Trade,” read NYTimes Article...

Rodrik – “Trading in Illusions,” Comments on the globalization policies of developing countries. Reason for prioritizing global economic integration; Impact on less developed countries; Components of economic growth strategy. Advocates of global economic integration hold out utopian visions of the prosperity that developing countries mill reap if they open their borders to commerce and capital. This hollow promise diverts poor nations' attention and resources from the key domestic innovations needed to spur economic growth.

Final Exam – ...

In international relations there is a cause-effect relationship.

Always striving to answer a question of why something is the way it is (effect)

Finding the reason or the answer to the question (cause)

Security dilemma – when certain countries act in a defensive manner, rival countries will interpret those actions as offensive and react accordingly.