

Structural Realism - International relations 19/10/2016

In political matter, only great powers matter, even though legally in an anarchic view all states are "equal".

We can predict how states behave. States are rational powers whose main goal is survival. Even Kosovo can be a potential threat to countries around it. The security dilemma is very apparent in every state because you don't know their intentions.

Zero-Sum game: My game is your loss. If I have MORE power you have LESS power. Structural realism only focuses on great powers not culture, individuals etc.

TWO SCHOOLS OF REALISM: OFFENSIVE REALISM (MODERN) AND DEFENSIVE REALISM (OLD)

Defensive realists say: you need as much power as you need to have security. If you want more power allies will come against you. (No maximum power; yes maximum security).

Offence-defender balance in favor of defense, because they know the territory and make strategies (territory, population, weapon etc.)

Conquest pays-off. Alcibiades suggests benefits in economy, disarm and rule (Germany was split up), disarm, and take away their resources.

Offensive realists say: you need as much power as possible (you're safe when you're the hegemon because you never know how much power is enough). Hard to become world hegemon/ Try to become regional hegemon. Don't allow in other places for others to become the hegemon, by helping the weaker ones. (America i.e doesn't want China to become regional hegemon in Asia therefore it'll help Japan etc.)

No allies because not effective (buck-passing, band wagoning, free-riding etc.)

Offense-defense balance in favor of who strikes first. Hobbes says if two men like the same thing, the guy who strikes first (competition) has better chances.

Conquest does not pay-off. Nicias says it would be very hard to conquer Sicily because resistance, population, cost too high etc.

What causes wars?

The answer is in the system where it tells you if a war is likely or not.

- Polarity of the system (Distribution of power between states)