REVISION GUIDE

THEORIES OF GLOBAL POLITICS

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UWC COSTA RICA

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INTRODUCTION

How to use this guide

This guide includes summaries of some of the major theories and models covered during the IB Global Politics course at UWC Costa Rica

These ideas are relevant regardless of whether you are studying Global Politics at HL or SL

It essential that you are familiar with the key points relating to each theory and that you can make links between your theoretical knowledge and real world events. Suggestions for relevant case studies to explore in further depth are given in each section

In order to keep this guide brief and suitable as a quick reference resource, it is expected that you will develop your understanding through carrying out your own further reading and research. Suggestions of useful links and resources are provided for each theory discussed.

You can also find more useful resources on the class website at www.glopoib.wordpress.com

Whenever you see this symbol it provides a definition of a key concept from the course

By clicking on this icon throughout this booklet you will be able view a YouTube clip that explains the concept or theory in more detail

Clicking on this symbol will take you to a useful internet resource for the theory or concept

Indicates a brief summary of key points from a particular section of the guide

WHAT IS A THEORY?

The role of theory and models in Global Politics

We can all watch the news and see what is happening in the world. One state may have gone to war with another state. Perhaps there is a territorial dispute or a change of government has led to a change in a state's foreign policy. Maybe the UN Security Council has imposed sanctions on a rogue state. All of these are not uncommon.

However, what differs is the way in which different people react to and view these developments. What I see as a sensible decision by a particular state might seem to you to be reckless and dangerous.

Why do we see these things differently?

The reason is because our world view is influenced by our thoughts, prejudices and assumptions. We may see the same events taking place but we view them in different ways. This goes some way to beginning to explain what we mean by a theory. It is a lens; a way of viewing the world that is shaped by the assumptions we make.

Another way of defining a theory is to say that it is a set of connected ideas and assumptions that attempts to explain why something happens the way it does and to predict what may happen in a given situation or set of circumstances.

It is important to note that, strictly speaking, not all of the ideas covered in this guide are theories in the way we have just considered. However, models such as Galtung's Conflict Triangle are included here, regardless.

A word of warning

1

When we talk about theories of international relations such as realism and liberalism, it is tempting to make statements such as "The USA is realist' or 'The Netherlands use liberal theory'.

This is not correct.

It is important to understand that theories are developed by political scientists and those who study Global Politics and International Relations - people just like you, in fact - in an attempt to explain why states behave the way they do.

2

Secondly, the majority of theories make no comment on whether the behaviour of states is moral or ethical. Rather, they tend to talk about events in terms of whether they make strategic sense or not

R

REALISM

REALISM

"IN AN IDEAL WORLD, WHERE THERE ARE ONLY GOOD STATES, POWER WOULD BE IRRELEVANT"

JOHN MEARSHEIMER

Realism - and we will discuss the different strands of this theory shortly - is one of the most dominant theories of international relations of recent times. It is so called because supporters of realist theories suggest it is realist in its nature. By this they mean that realism attempts to explain the world as it is in reality - rather than describing the world as we would like it to be. This means that realism can sometimes be seen as ignoring the moral or ethnical implications of a particular event such as a territorial conflict.

The key focus for realist theorists is power. For realists, Global Politics is Power Politics

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Power is a central concept in the study of global politics and a key focus of the course. Power can be seen as ability to effect change and, rather than being viewed as a unitary or independent force, is as an aspect of relations among people functioning within a social organization. Contested relationships between people and groups of people dominate politics, particularly in this era of increased globalization, and so understanding the dynamics of power plays a prominent role in understanding global politics.

There are two main schools of thought in relaism and this can considered as classical realism (sometimes referred to as human nature realism) and structural realism. However, both strands of realist theory share two key assumptions upon which the theory is developed:

1 Humans are, by their nature, selfish and competitive.

2 There is no higher authority than the state. We can describe this by saying states operate in an anarchic system

To a large extent, it makes sense to think of classical realists as more focused on human nature - they believe natural human selfishness and competitiveness is the primary driver of state behaviour - while structural realists focus more on what they see as the anarchic nature of the international system.

Classical Realism

We could argue that the distinguishing feature of classical realism is the fact that its proponents - theorists like Hans Morganthau - claim to base the theory on a rather pessimistic but, they would argue, realistic view of human nature.

Nicolo Machiavelli, writing back in in the early 1500s in Florence, claimed that political life is inevitably characterized by strife which forces leaders to rule through cruelty, cunning and manipulation.

This view is supported by the work of Thomas Hobbes (see Lesson 9 Unit 1) who argued that the strongest of all human desires is the desire for power. The problem, as Hobbes pointed out, is that no single individual or group is in a strong enough position to dominate society and therefore establish a system of orderly rule over society. So, what is the result? Hobbes claimed that a situation would ensue in what he termed 'a state of nature'

According to Hobbes, a state of nature could be compared to an ongoing civil war between members of society. In his words, life in a state nature is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' - you can see why realists are sometimes accused of being pessemistic!

Hobbes suggests that the only solution to this state of nature is the creation of a sovereign power - one that could not be challenged. Essentially, by this he means the creation of the state

Classical Realism and Global Politics

If thinkers such as Machiavelli and Hobbes were talking about how individuals and groups behave within a particular society then it is reasonable to ask what this has to do with Global Politics and international relations. What can it tell us about the way in which states interact with each other?

Let's go back to the second of the key assumptions underpinning realist theory (see previous page) which assumes that states operate in an anarchic international system because there is no higher authority than the state. So, if we think of the international system as like Hobbes' state of nature but applied to states rather than indivduals then it starts to make sense.

If we then accept the claim made by classical realists that, because we are human, we are ego driven and self seeking, it is reasonable to see conflict between and amongst ouselves as inevitable in all aspects of social life.

We can then develop this further - as theorists such as Morganthau do - and claim that the inherent egoism that is part of our human nature creates what we might call state egoism, leading to an international system characterised by rivalry and the desire of each state to pursue its own national interests above all things

Realism at the state and sub-state level

Realist thinkers tend not to be too concerned with what goes on at the sub-state level (any level of analysis below the state) and focus their attention on the ways in which states behave in, what realists claim is, an anarchic international system. So, they are concerned with the behaviour of states in a structure in which there is no higher authority than the state itself. This has led to some theorists to criticise the key assumptions of realism as incorrect, particularly supporters of the Liberalist Theory of International Relations.

1. Classical realism is built upon its assumption that human nature is intrinsically selfish and competitive

2. Builds on historical work by Machiavelli and Hobbes amongst others

3. This strand of realism assumes that states operate in an anarchic international system

4. Realist theory is concerned with the behaviour of states and largely ignores behaviour at the sub-state level

Structural Realism

Structural realism, whilst still very much part of the wider realist school of thought, differs from classical realism in one very important aspect.

Unlike classical realists, who base their theory on the assumption that human beings are selfish and egoistic, structural realists, such as John Mearsheimer, argue strongly that it is the nature of the international system - the global political structure - that causes states to behave as they do and, like classical realists, base their theory on a set of key assumptions.

Find out more about Mearsheimer's work and impact here

Assumptions of Structural Realism

1. **STATES OPERATE IN AN ANARCHIC GLOBAL SYSTEM**

2. **ALL STATES POSSESS AT LEAST SOME FORM OF OFFENSIVE MILITARY CAPABILITY**

3. **STATES CAN NEVER KNOW THE INTENTIONS OF OTHER STATES**

4. **THE PRIMARY GOAL OF ALL STATES IS SURVIVAL**

5. **STATES ARE RATIONAL ACTORS**

The nature of the global system

To understand why structural realists places such importance on the fact that the international structure is anarchic you must understand the difference between anarchy and hierarchy. In this context, both are what we might call ordering principles.

Hierarchy is the ordering principle in almost all domestic politics - by which we mean politics inside a state. The political structure is organised in a top-down manner meaning that if we, as citizens of a state, need help or protection we can, we hope, call upon the authorities to help us. So, if I am assaulted or robbed I can call upon the agents of the state, in the form of the police, to assist me.

But, the international system is anarchic which is the opposite of hierarchical. If a state needs help or protection then there is no higher authority upon which it can call. As John Mearsheimer puts it, 'there is no higher authority than the state, no night watchman upon whom states can call'.

CLASSICAL REALISTS BELIEVE STATES BEHAVIOUR IS THE RESULT OF HUMAN NATURE WHILE STRUCTURAL REALISTS ARGUE THAT STATES BEHAVE THE WAY THEY DO AS A RESULT OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM IN WHICH THEY OPERATE

All states possess at least some form of offensive military capability

If, as realists argue, all states possess offensive military capacity in some form or another, then it follows that all states are capable of inflicting harm upon their neighbours to some degree.

Of course, the degree to which they are capable of doing so will differ massively from state to state. For example, the USA, with it's huge military capacity and nuclear capability, is capable of inflciting much more harm than a non-nuclear state with a relatively small military capability such as Ireland.

What about states without a military? After all, several states around the world do not possess a military including Costa Rica, Iceland and Andorra. It is important to distinguish between a military organisation, such as an army, and military capability. Whilst it is strictly true to say that Costa Rica, for example, does not have a military it clearly possesses military capacity in the form of La Fuerza Publica.

States can never know the intentions of other states

Given that all states have the potential - to some extent - to pose a threat to other states, in an ideal world governments would be able to know the intentions of other states. Do they pose a threat or not?

However, whilst it is possible to know the military capability of another state, it is impossible, by definition, to ever know the intentions of another state. Intentions cannot be empirically verified simply because they reside in the minds of the state's leaders and decision makers.

The result of this is that states must always work on the basis that another state may choose to use force against it and be prepared to defend against that possibility - no matter how remote.

The primary goal of the state is survival

Whilst it is clear that different states around the world have different priorities, from military expansion to economic development, structural realists such as Mearsheimer argue, with justification, that the overriding goal of every state is survival. The simple reason for this is that survival of the state is a pre-requisite for all other goals a state may have.

Ultimately, the logic is that if there is no state then it cannot achieve any of it's goals. It may help to compare it to your own life. Your over-riding priority is to stay alive, no matter what other ambitions you may have, on the basis that if you are dead you will not be able to achieve any of your other goals in life.

States are rational actors

In a world where world leaders are often mocked as being stupid or backward, it is important to remember that, given the previous 4 assumptions, states are rational actors.

By rational we mean that states are capable of developing strategies that maximise their prospects for survival.

Of course, because states can never know the intentions of other states they are operating with less than perfect information in an increasing complicated and interlinked world upon which to base their decision making, they can - and do - miscalculate.

The key point here is to remember, states make decisions because they believe it is the smartest decision to benefit them.

How much power should states seek?

We can see, then, that if we accept the five assumptions upon which structural realism is based, it makes sense for states to be more powerful than their neighbours. Put simply, in realist theory, power equals safety.

Actually, as with many things in Global Politics, it is a little more complicated than that. Structural realists can be divided into two major schools of thought when it comes to the question 'how much power is enough?'.

We have offensive structural realists - such as Mearsheimer - who argue that states should seek to maximise power wherever possible while, on the other hand, defensive structural realists - such as Kenneth Waltz - have argued that once a state amasses a certain amount of power, it can have negative consequences to amass power beyond that point.

Defensive Structural Realism

Defensive structural realists, like their offensive counterparts, accept that it makes sense - in the contemporary international system - for states to be powerful. However, where they differ is in the defensive realist claim that it is foolish for states to pursue hegemony.

So, how much power should states pursue according to defensive realists?

Well, it's difficult to answer that as it would depend on so many other factors such as the balance of power between states and the likely reaction of neighbouring states to an increase in the power of one particular state. However, in the words of Kenneth Waltz, states should seek to gain an 'appropriate amount of power'.

We are left with the challenge, however, of explaining why defensive realists believe states should exercise restraint - to varying degrees depending on circumstance - in their pursuit of power.

HEGEMONY REFERS TO A STATE HAVING DOMINANCE OVER ANOTHER STATE OR STATES. THUS, A STATE THAT HAS POWER AND INFLUENCE OVER OTHER STATES IN A PARTICULAR AREA OR REGION IS KNOW AS A REGIONAL HEGEMON. CHINA IS AN EXAMPLE OF A REGIONAL HEGEMON.

Why defensive realists believe states should show restraint

Defensive structural realists, like their offensive counterparts, accept that it makes sense - in the contemporary international system - for states to be powerful. However, where they differ is in the defensive realist claim that it is foolish for states to pursue hegemony.

1. Other states will 'balance' against state with excessive power

Defensive realists argue that if a state becomes too powerful then other states will attempt to balance that power through strategies such as forming alliances. This will then result in the original state having less relative power than before.

A good example of a leader who understood this is Otto von Bismarck who, after victories in the Austro - Prussian war (1866) and Franco Prussian war (1870-1), realised that if Germany became more powerful then its neighbours would balance against it so he decided to call a halt to German expansion.

BALANCING ENCOMPASSES THE ACTIONS THAT A PARTICULAR STATE OR GROUP OF STATES TAKE IN ORDER TO EQUALISE THE ODDS AGAINST MORE POWERFUL STATES

Find about more about Waltz's Theory of International Politcs here

2. Offence | defence balance favours defending rather than attacking state

The offence | defence balance shows how easy or difficult it is to conquer a territory or defeat a defender in battle. This balance is usually weighted heavily in the defenders favour meaning that any state that attempts to gain large amounts of power is likely to end up fighting a series of losing wars.

For defensive realists, this means that states will realise that offence is a futile strategy and will instead concentrate on maintaining their current position in the balance of power.

3. Costs of conquest

The third point made by defensive realists in support of their claim that their is an optimum level of power to seek is that even when conquest is feasible and possible, the costs of conquering another state very often will outweigh any benefits.

One of the reasons for this is because nationalism - a potent force in many circumstances - will often make it impossible for the conqueror to fully subdue the conquered. We can look at the role played by the Verzet and Maquis in Holland and France, respectively, during WWII to see this, not to mention the difficulties occupying powers have encountered more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

THE IDEOLOGY OF NATIONALISM IS ALL ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION, WHICH VIRTUALLY GUARANTEES THAT OCCUPIED POPULATIONS WILL RISE UP AGAINST THE OCCUPIER

The Structural Realist counter-argument

In response to the claims made by defensive realists, in support of their claim that states should seek only to achieve an 'appropriate amount of power', structural realists have responded with the following criticisms of the defensive realist position:

- Structural realists argue that balancing is often an inefficient process - especially when forming coalitions - and that a clever opposing state will be able to take advantage of its enemies as they attempt to balance against the aggresor.
- Secondly, structural realists take issue with the claim - made by defensive realists - that the defender always has a significant advantage over the attacking state. If the structural realists are correct then it follows that sometime aggression does pay divedends
- Finally, structural realists acknowledge the defensive realist claim that conquest does not always pay. However, as they point out, the flip side of this is that sometimes it does pay to pursue conquest of an adversary as a strategic goal

Nuclear weapons

Both defensive and offensive realists agree, however, that nuclear weapons have little utility for offensive purposes, except where only one side in a conflict has them.

The reason is simple: if both sides have a survivable retaliatory capability, neither gains an advantage from striking first.

Moreover, both camps agree that conventional war between nuclear-armed states is possible but not likely, because of the danger of escalation to the nuclear level.

"Nuclear deterrence is a myth. And a lethal one at that"

Read a copy of the 'Evolution of Nuclear Strategy'

L

LIBERALISM

LIBERALISM

"SEDUCTION IS ALWAYS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN COERCION, AND MANY VALUES LIKE DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE DEEPLY SEDUCTIVE"

JOSEPH NYE

Along with various Realist schools of thought, Liberalism is the other major theory of international relations you need to be familiar with as part of the course.

In fact, you may find it easiest to understand if you view Liberalism as a response to the theories put forward by the likes of Mearsheimer and Waltz.

Liberalism / liberal - in the context of international relations - should not be confused with the way in which they are used in domestic politics – meaning left of centre

While realists see the international systems as being largely characterised by conflict, Liberalism focuses on the way in which we live in a world characterised by interdependence between states. Where realists stress continuity international relations throughout the centuries, liberals see us as living in an era characterised by great change occurring at a rapid pace.

Key principles of Liberalism

- Liberals argue that, by the second half of the twentieth century, states had become so interdependent that the way in which they relate to each other had fundamentally changed
- What happens in one state can have affects on another state
- Relations between two states can greatly affect the relations between other states

Interdependence is the idea that states and their fortunes are connected to each other

Of course, it could reasonably be argued that states have always been interdependent and, to a certain extent, this is true. However, Liberals such as Joseph Nye, suggest that the form of interdependence that developed from WW11 onwards - and was largely in place by the 1970s - the now the defining characteristic of the international system,

Liberals refer to this as complex interdependence and suggest it is made up of three main elements.

- Multiple Channels
- Multiple Issues
- Decline in effectiveness of military power

You can read Nye's classic 'Power and Interdependence' here

1. Multiple channels

One of the most important differences between Realism and Liberalism is that realists see states as, by far, the most important actors in the international system. Liberals do not dispute the importance of states as political actors but argue that non-state actors play a much more important role in global politics than realists assume. Non-state actors including multinational corporations (MNCs), Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and International Organisations or Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) all play their part in creating important and meaningful links across state boundaries.

Liberal theorists also make the point that substate actors play an important role developing and maintaining multiple channels in our complex, interdependent world. For example, non-multinational business import goods from other countries; provincial governments set up trade missions abroad; and we, as individuals, have friendships with others in different countries as well as travelling abroad ourselves. In the Liberal story these are all important multiple channels in our increasingly interconnected global system.

FOCUSING ON ONLY STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS MISSES AN IMPORTANT PART OF GLOBAL POLITICS BECAUSE STATES ARE NOT THE ONLY ACTORS TO HAVE INTERESTS THAT DRIVE THEIR ACTIONS AND NON-STATE ACTORS HAVE OWN GOALS AND INTERESTS THAT MAY DIFFERENT TO THOSE OF THE STATE

2. Multiple issues

Whilst realists tend to focus on power as the currency of international politics, liberal theorists point out that economic, ideological, religious and cultural issues all form part of the contemporary global agenda.

This means that some issues that may be seen by realists as purely domestic in nature do, in fact, have an important international dimension. For example, a state may choose to adopt certain environmental regulations but this would likely have an effect on trading partners if imports had to meet the new standards.

We can see, therefore, that domestic policy can become foreign policy as a direct result of these connections between different states in the international system.

3. Decline in effectiveness of military power

Finally liberal theorists argue that, as a result of increasing interdependence, the use of military power as a means of achieving foreign policy objectives has become less common and less effective. One of the main reasons for this is because many of the issues of most concern to contemporary states do not lend themselves to military action such as climate change for example. Secondly, complex interdependence means that, inevitably, states are constrained in their use of military power as this will damage the multiple interests of multiple state and non-state actors.

FOCUSING ON ONLY STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS MISSES AN IMPORTANT PART OF GLOBAL POLITICS BECAUSE STATES ARE NOT THE ONLY ACTORS TO HAVE INTERESTS THAT DRIVE THEIR ACTIONS AND NON-STATE ACTORS HAVE OWN GOALS AND INTERESTS THAT MAY DIFFERENT TO THOSE OF THE STATE

Realism

- International system characterised by conflict
- All states have some military capacity
- Foreign relations dominated by military alliances and rivalries

Liberalism

- Liberals do not deny the existence of conflict but argue cooperation is the norm.
- States trade peacefully; sign nonaggression pacts; share military responsibilities
- Some states have small/no militaries
- Some centuries old military rivalries have been transformed into military/economic partnerships

Why do states cooperate?

Given the liberal focus on cooperation as the defining feature of the international system, the obvious question is 'why, if the international system is as anarchic and dangerous as realists claim, then why do states cooperate with each other in the way liberals suggest?'

According the Liberalism the answer is simple.

States cooperate because it is in their own interest to do so.

1. States realize that hostile actions are likely to harm their interests as much as those of any potential rival

2. The multiple channels that connect non-state actors constrain states. Even if leaders recognize security threats and want to employ conflictual means, they often face resistance from public or powerful interest groups

3. In democracies, where opposition is legal and citizens can hold their leaders to account, multiple channels are more likely to constrain leaders from conflict

ACCORDING TO LIBERAL THEORY, THE EFFECTS OF COMPLEX INTERDEPENDENCE WILL BE MORE SIGNIFICANT IN A MORE DEMOCRATIC WORLD

4. Due to the development of nuclear weapons, force – at least all out war – is less of an option for major powers. Using the major weapon in the arsenal risks significant damage to all humanity

5. Technological developments associated with globalisation, such as mobile phones, internet, falling cost of air travel have resulted in a more connected world

M

MODERNIZATION THEORY

MODERNIZATION THEORY

"IT TAKES MORE THAN INDUSTRY TO INDUSTRIALISE..."

WALT WHITMAN ROSTOW

It may not - and this is where is gets confusing early on - make sense to talk of modernisation theory as a single unified theory. Rather, Modernisation Theory has been developed and refined by a number of different writers leading to many different variants However, for our purposes, we will focus on the original Modernisation Theory out forward by Walt Rostow in his 5 Stage Model of Economic Development.

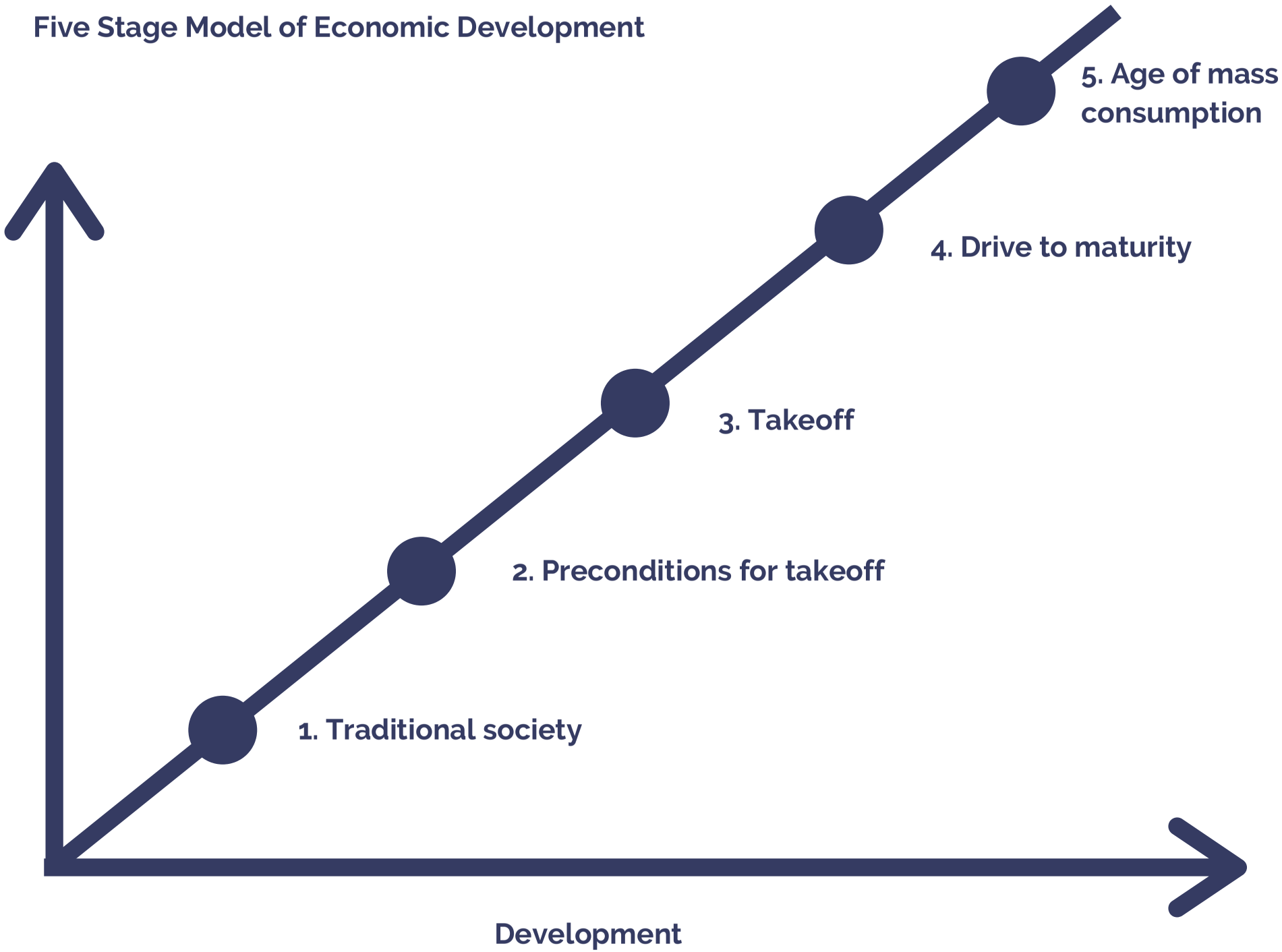
Five Stage Model of Economic Development

The key idea underpinning Rostow's model is that of linear, sequential development. To put that in more straightforward terms, he is suggesting that all societies go through the same 5 stages of development in the same order. That said, Rostow accepts that the speed at which this happens in different socieites may differ.

It is also important to note that Rostow's theory relates to economic development but, as you know, development can also be measured in a number of different ways. It's not a huge issue but it's worth remembering this as you consider Modernisation Theory.

Rostow identifies five different stages undergone by every society as they develop which are:

1. Traditional society
2. Preconditions for take-off
3. Take-off
4. Drive to maturity
5. Age of mass consumption


Five Stage Model of Economic Development
5. Age of mass consumption
4. Drive to maturity
3. Takeoff
2. Preconditions for takeoff
1. Traditional society
Time
Development

1. Traditional society

This first stage of Rostow's model is characterised by a dependence on agriculture as the main form of economic activity and production in a society. Given the low level of development - particularly in terms of access to technology etc. - productivity is relatively low compared the work that needs to be done to produce food etc.

Rostow also argued that this stage was also characterised by a lack of central political authority.

2. Preconditions for take-off

This is the stage at which a society moves from a subsistence based economic model to one in which there is demand from other societies for things such as raw materials - so, in other words, the conditions are in place for trading - and there is a development of more commercial forms of agriculture - as opposed to the subsistence model of Stage 1.

Additionally, Rostow points out that this stage is also characterised by the development of a national identity, albeit often based around shared economic interests.

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Subsistence refers to the idea of being to meet your own immediate needs but no more. So, for example, subsistence farming is farming on a small scale that allows the farmer to feed and meet the needs of his family. This is opposed to commercial farming where the farmer's aim to sell his crops in order to kake a profit.

3. Take-off

Now it starts to get exciting. There is an increase in urbanization - people moving to cities and urban areas - along with all the issues that go along with such a shift. There is an expansion of the secondary sector - basically, manufacturing goods - which is increases in relation to the primary sector - related primarily to resource extraction and raw materials.

It could be argued that the Industrial Revolution in Britain (approx. 1850 onwards) is a good example of the Take-Off stage or, for a more recent example, we might consider the Green Revolution (see link)

4. The drive to maturity

This fourth stage is where industries start to diversify - new industries develop and exisiting industries expand. There is investment in the social infrastructure as governments provide an expansion in the number of schools, universities and hospitals, for example, as well as a rapid expansion in the transport infratructure e.g. road and rail networks.

5. The age of mass consumption

The final stage in Rostow's model is where we see states in which the majority of the population have disposable income beyond that needed to meet basic needs. This means there is widespread consumption of high values goods - think about the possessions in an average middle class home in the west - and society is largely urban in nature rather than rural.

The key feature of Rostow's model is that it is linear in nature. He argues that all states will pass through these five stages in the same order

Why is modernisation theory relevant to global politics?

Modernisation Theory is one way of explaining how states develop. Obviously, there are alternative theories that present different explanations, such as Dependency Theory (see Page ??).

Modernisation Thoery is based around the concept that the drivers of development - the things that happen in order for a state to develop - are internal. To put it another way, in order for a state to develop it must make changes within the state.

However, there are criticisms of the theory:

- It is based on European and North American history and assumes that all countries will develop in the same way
- It is largely an economic model of development and assumes that mass consumption and wealth is a desirable outcome
- It is largely a Western model of development and thus may not be applicable to African states amongst others.

D

DEPENDENCY THEORY

DEPENDENCY THEORY

"TO FULFIL THEIR FUNCTION AS HOSTAGES OF FOREIGN PROSPERITY, LATIN AMERICAN WORKERS MUST BE HELD PRISONER, EITHER INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OF THE JAILS"

EDUARDO GALEANO

It may be easier to understand Dependency Theory as an attempt to respond to the view put forward by proponents of Modernization Theory which, if you remember, is a linear theory which argues that all societies pass through the same stages of development. This would mean, if we accepted it as true, that states we might label as 'developing' or 'less developed' as simply more primitive versions of more developed states as they have not yet passed through as many stages of development.

As well as being patronising, this view fails to take into account the unique ciricumstances in which less developed states operate and the complex and interrelated factors influencing their rate of development.

Key assumptions of Dependency Theory

Whilst there are different varients of Dependency Theory, the one point that unites them all is the belief in a core | periphery model in which resources are seen as flowing from a periphery of of developing (or, to be blunt, poor) nations to an economic core of richer, more developed nations (or what we would generally think of today as 'the West').

One of the key assumptiopns of Dependency Theory was the belief that the relatively superior development of western economies was due to a belief in, and adherence to, a capitalist model of development. Capitalism as practised by the West, at least as understood by Dependency theorists such as a Andre Frnak and Celso Furtado, was simply a way in western states could exploit the less developed states and, at the same time, prevent them from developing.

To put it in more stark terms, the core exploited - and continues to exploit - the periphery. This model has now been developed further with the categorisation of some countries as the 'semi periphery'.

The process of dependency

According to Dependency Theory, developed countries such as the USA, UK, France and other European powers, amongst others, have exploited less developed countries, partoicularly in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia, through processes such as colonisation and unfair trading practices.

As a result, these less developed countries - those on the periphery of the global econom,ic system - have provided resources, including low cost labour and raw materials, to more developed countries , enriching those those in the global economic core while, at the same time, leaving themselves poorer.

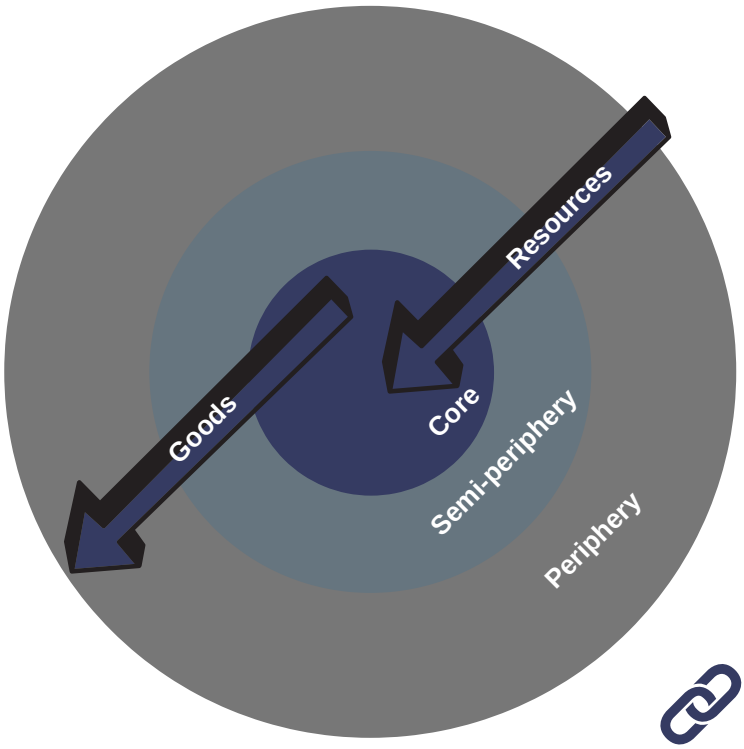
Breaking out of dependency

The solution to the dependecy trap, as advocated by dependency theorists, is for nations on the economic periphery (the poorer nations in the world) to break the strong - and unequal - ties they currently have with more developed nations and to pursue policies promoting internal growth in order to achieve a sufficient level of development.

In order to do so, the state should promote nationalisation of of key industries and promote import substitution policies.

C

IMPORT SUBSTITUTION IS THE PROCESS OF A STATE REPLACING FOREIGN IMPORTS WITH DOMESTICALLY PRODUCED GOOD



Dependency Theory: An Introduction

N

NEOLIBERALISM

NEOLIBERALISM

NEOLIBERAL DEMOCRACY. INSTEAD OF CITIZENS, IT PRODUCES CONSUMERS. INSTEAD OF COMMUNITIES, IT PRODUCES SHOPPING MALLS. THE NET RESULT IS AN ATOMIZED SOCIETY OF DISENGAGED INDIVIDUALS WHO FEEL DEMORALIZED AND SOCIALLY POWERLESS. IN SUM, NEOLIBERALISM IS THE IMMEDIATE AND FOREMOST ENEMY OF GENUINE PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY, NOT JUST IN THE UNITED STATES BUT ACROSS THE PLANET, AND WILL BE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Key assumptions underpinning Neoliberalism

Emerging in the 1970s, Neoliberal Theory put forward the belief minimal state intervention was the best way for a country to develop. Thus, Neoliberal theorists advocate as little state involvement in the market as possible. Instead, the market should be free to set wages and prices on its own, rather than the government doing so. As advocates for minimal state intervention, Neoliberals promote privatisation as one factor in an effective pathway to development.

If we accept, like Neoliberal theorists, that the market is the best way of distributing wealth then it make sense for us to accept that it is counterproductive for a state to errect barriers to imports. The removal of tariffs and trade barriers will, according to Neoliberalism, promote an increase in exports - which earn income for a country and thus promote development

Additionally, Neoliberals believe that development can be promoted by the use of the theory of comparative advantage (Ricardo, 1817). In this theory, Ricardo argues that it makes sense for states to specialize in producing the goods they are able to produce at lower cost than other states as this will give them an advantage in trade.

The Washington Consensus

This term is closely related to the the theory of Neolibraralism. It refers to a set of policies promoted by the US and international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank in the late 80s. The aim of these policies - including tax reform, deregulation, privatisation and promoting foreign direct investment - was to promote economic development in Latin American countries in order to help relieve a severe debt crisis.

Structural Adjustment Programme

The basic ideas underpinning the Washington Consensus were adopted by the World Bank and IMF as a means of promoting development in developing countries. The Structural Adjustment Programme was a set of policies that countries were required to enact in order to access funding from the World Bank. These policies included a reduction in governement spending, a reduction in wages in real terms and the elimination of trade barriers asnd subsidies.

However, the SAP has been heavily criticised with critics claiming that it has been ineffective in eliminating poverty and has, in fact, created more rather than less dependency.

U

UNIVERSALISM

UNIVERSALISM

“WE DECLARE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE FOR ALL OF US, ALL THE TIME: WHOEVER WE ARE AND WHEREVER WE ARE FROM; NO MATTER OUR CLASS, OUR OPINIONS, OUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION.”

BAN-KI MOON

As stated in the Subject Guide for Global Politics ***'In the context of global politics, the ethical theory of universalism puts forward the notion of a universal human nature that transcends traditional boundaries of identity. In a universalist view, universal values are therefore possible.'***

Essentially, Universalism adopts the view that some ideas or beliefs apply universally. To put it another way, if something is true in one society or culture then it is true for all societies and cultures.

Universalism and human rights

One of the major ways in which Universalism is relevant to Global Politics is when discussing human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 was one of the first documents to attempt, at least, to promote a moral universalism in articulating international human rights. So, as we can see from reading Article 2 of the UDHR in which it states ***'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.***
Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty', human rights are, according to the UDHR, universal.

That is, they apply to all people no matter their age, sex, gender, culture or sexual orientation.

Conflicts and criticisms

If we accept, as Universalism assumes, that rights are universal, then it follows that those rights are still held by all even when they directly contradict local beliefs, practices and traditions. This can often cause a conflict between the aspirational nature of the UDHR and the reality of cultural diversity and difference in the world.

For example, despite female genitial mutilation being being condemned as a violation human rights by a number of treaties, it still takes place in many countries around the world.

Cultural relativism provides an alternative theoretical perspective to Universalism.

According to some critics the UDHR - and the Universalist perspective that underpins it - fails to adequately recognize the cultural relativity amongst states, countries and cultures in the contemporary world.

Given this diversity is a fact of life it can be argued that universalism cannot ever be a useful framework for considering the world.

R

RELATIVISM

RELATIVISM

"THE IDEA OF CULTURAL RELATIVISM IS NOTHING BUT AN EXCUSE TO VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS"

SHIRIN EBADI

Relativism as a theoretical perspective or viewpoint can be seen as a response to or critique of Universalism. As stated in the Subject Guide for Global Politics '***the ethical theory of relativism suggests values to be culturally and individually determined. In a relativist view, global agreements on the most fundamental aspects of human life are hence difficult to achieve'.***

Relativism and human rights

As with Universalism, one of the major links between Relativism and the IB Global Politics course is in the area of human rights.

If we define cultural relativism as 'the idea that a person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture, rather than be judged against the criteria of another' then it raises some interesting questions for us as students of Global Politics, particularly in terms of the tension between Universalism and Relativism when it comes to making moral judgments, especially in the field of human rights.

For example, are the universal values promoted in documents such as the UDHR really universal? Or, are they simply Western values masquarading as universal thanks to the priviliged and powerful position occupied by the West in the global system?

To give a specific example, female genital mutilation (FGM) is, when seen in the light of documents such as the UDHR, a violation of human rights that cannot be justified in any case. But who gets to make this value judgment and what right do they have to make such an ethnocentric claim?

CERTAIN SUPPLEMENTARY DECLARATIONS TO THE UDHR SUCH AS THE CAIRO DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAM (1990) AND THE BANGKOK DECLARATION (1993) PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF DEFINING UNIVERSAL STANDARDS, IN THIS CASE RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS.

Essentially, a relativist theoretical perspective forces us to at least consider the possibility that there are not - and can never be - universal agreement as to what consititutes good or bad, right or wrong.

J

JUST WAR THEORY

JUST WAR THEORY

“A "JUST WAR" IS HOSPITABLE TO EVERY SELF-DECEPTION ON THE PART OF THOSE WAGING IT, NONE MORE THAN THE CERTAINTY OF VIRTUE, UNDER WHOSE SHELTER EVERY ABOMINATION CAN BE COMMITTED WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.”

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Just War Theory?

Despite being known as a theory, it is clear that Just War Theory differs from theories such as Liberalism and Realism in that it does not explain why states act in the way they do. Rather, Just War Theory attempts to provide a framework for explaining how states should act in a particular instance - in this case, when deciding whether or not to wage war.

The origins of Just War Theory come from Catholic theology and the work of scholars such as St. Thomas Aquinas who attempted to reconcile a contradiction between three different beliefs:

- Taking a human life is wrong
- States have a duty defend their citizens and defend justice
- Protecting innocent human life and defending important moral values sometimes requires willingness to use force and violence

Just War Theory specifies conditions for judging if it is just to go to war and conditions for how the war should be fought. The theory provides a series of criteria - all of which must be met if a war is to be considered just - split into two categories:

- ***Jus ad bellum*** - the right to go to war
- ***Jus in bello*** - the right conduct in war

Jus ad bellum

1. Just cause:
The reason for going to war needs to be just and cannot therefore be solely for recapturing things taken or punishing people who have done wrong; innocent life must be in imminent danger and intervention must be to protect life

2. Comparative justice:
While there may be rights and wrongs on all sides of a conflict, to overcome the presumption against the use of force, the injustice suffered by one party must significantly outweigh that suffered by the other

3. Competent authority:
Only duly constituted public authorities may wage war. Dictatorships (i.e. Hitler's Regime) or a deceptive military actions (i.e. the 1968 US bombing of Cambodia) are typically considered as violations of this criterion.

4. Right intention:
Force may be used only in a truly just cause and solely for that purpose. Correcting a suffered wrong is considered a right intention, while material gain or maintaining economies is not

5. Probability of success:
Force may be used only in a truly just cause and solely for that purpose. Correcting a suffered wrong is considered a right intention, while material gain or maintaining economies is not.

6. Last resort:
Force may be used only after all peaceful and viable alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted or are clearly not practical

7. Proportionality:
The anticipated benefits of waging a war must be proportionate to its expected evils or harms

Jus in bello

1. Distinction:
The acts of war should be directed towards enemy combatants, and not towards non-combatants caught in circumstances they did not create.

2. Proportionality:
Combatants must make sure that the harm caused to civilians or civilian property is not excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated by an attack on a legitimate military objective

3. Military necessity
An attack or action must be intended to help in the defeat of the enemy

4. Fair treatment of POWs
Enemy combatants who surrendered or who are captured no longer pose a threat. It is therefore wrong to torture them or otherwise mistreat them

5. No means *malum in se*
This means wrong or evil in itself. Combatants may not use weapons or other methods of warfare that are considered evil, such as mass rape, forcing enemy combatants to fight against their own side or using weapons whose effects cannot be controlled (e.g., nuclear/biological weapons).

Difficulties

Just War Theory involves, to a certain extent, making moral or value judgements. For example, if we consider the criterion of right intention under *jus ad bellum* then who gets to decide whether or not the intention is right or not?

How do we deal with the fact that the suicide bomber who blows himself up in a crowded market believes, genuine, that he is doing so to promote a just cause? What about the fact that combatants canot use weapons that are considered evil in and of themselves? Who gets to decide?

These are not easy questions and you do not necessarily need to have the answers to them. You do, however, need to be aware of the difficuluties in answering them and the issues surrounding them.

GALTUNG'S CONFLICT TRIANGLE

GALTUNG'S CONFLICT TRIANGLE

"BY PEACE WE MEAN THE CAPACITY TO TRANSFORM CONFLICTS WITH EMPATHY, WITHOUT VIOLENCE AND CREATIVELY - A NEVER ENDING PROCESS"

JOHAN GALTUNG

Model or theory?

By the definition of a theory given at in the introduction to this guide, Galtung's conflict triangle is a model rather than a theory. However, this does not make in any less useful or any less important for your study of peace and conflict.

Galtung's conflict triangle provides a way to help us understand and unpick the motivations, actions and impacts of the various actors involved in a conflict.

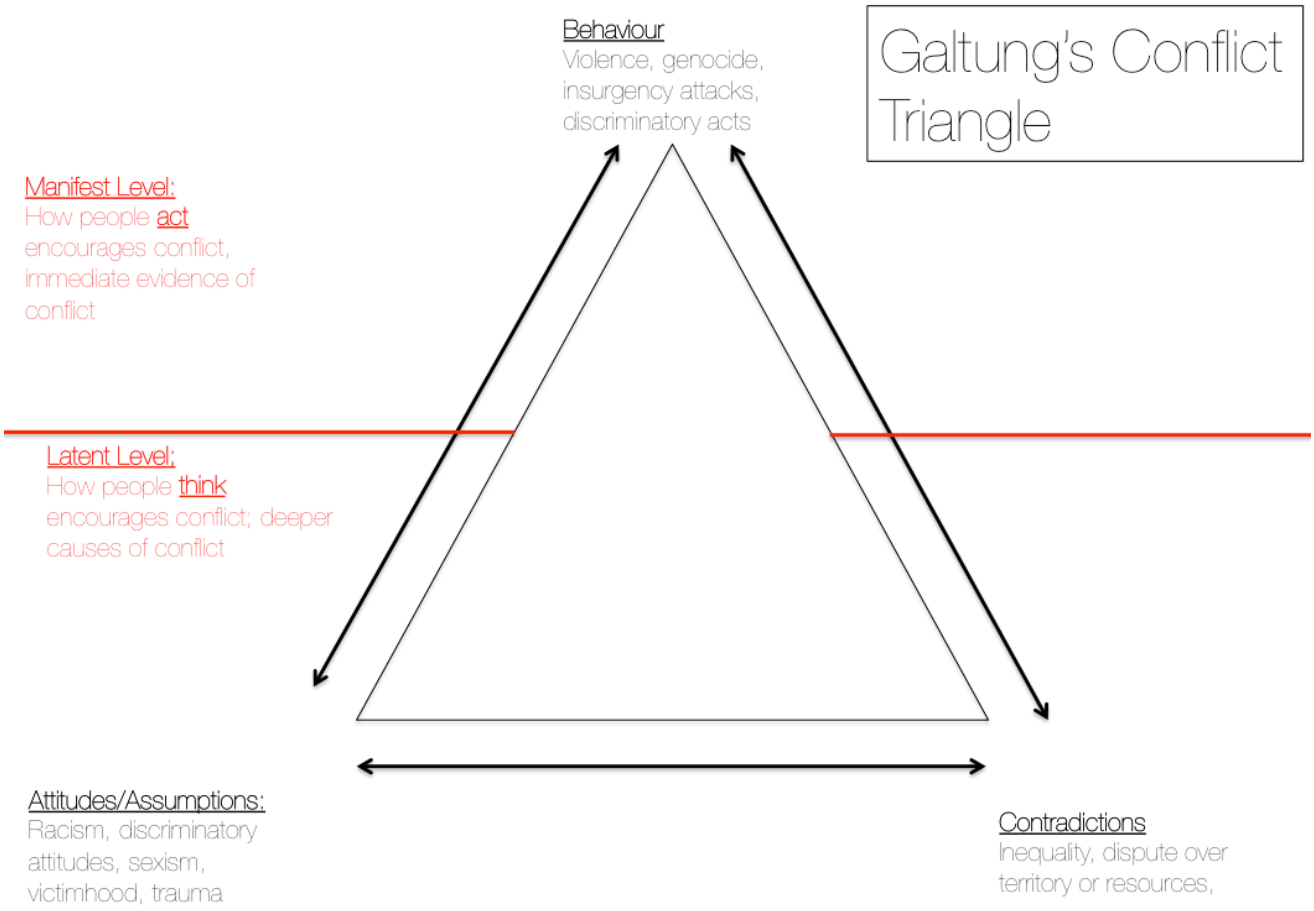
Conflict and violence

Before we go any further it is important that we understand the difference between conflict and violence as used in this model. Galtung defines violence as ***'any physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, structural or spiritual behaviour, attitude, policy or condition that diminishes, dominates or destroys others and ourselves'***.

Using this definition we can see that violence can be regarded as one of several possible responses to conflict but is not necessarily unavoidable.

Behaviours, attitudes and contradictions

Galtung argues that in societies with conflict it is possible to identify both specific causes as well as more general conditions that increase the likelihood of violent conflict. Additionally, Galtung points out that both (or more) parties to conflict are likely to agree on the causes of the conflict. The conflict triangle model allows us to view behaviour and attitude as distinct from one another, enabling us to explain how influence, not only each other, but the conflict itself.



Conditions making violent conflict more likely

- Little or no democratic means of dispute resolution; minorities excluded from political representation
- Wealth, territory or resources shared unequally and controlled by powerful elites
- •Poverty
- •Government is above the law, making arbitrary and illegitimate decisions
- •Judicial system is absent or interfered with, not independent or fair
- •Human rights are abused

Conditions making violent conflict less likely

- Democratic institutions exist, with full political equality and participation
- Equal sharing of resources and wealth
- Equality of opportunity for all
- Government respects the rule of law
- Disputes can be resolved fairly through a fair and independent judicial system
- Respect for human rights (especially of minorities)