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Rationalism in international relations pdf files download windows 10

Methodology/Epistemology One aim of the discipline of International Relations is "to make international politics more intelligible – to make better sense of the actors, structures, institutions, processes and particular episodes mainly, but not only, in the contemporary world" (Burchill and Linklater 2005, p. Scientists try to explain phenomena in a neutral way, i.e. by means of observable and measurable facts. But only because this period is over doesn't mean that neorealist approaches don't make any valuable contributions to the study of IR any more. These rational models of behaviour frequently support the research program using game theory, which is seen as an appropriate and suitable way to examine strategic interactions (see Powell 2002, p. This approach was widely used during Cold War to explain possible behaviour of the two opposing superpowers. In Cox' spirit I am going to illuminate various strengths and weaknesses of the rationalist approaches as regards the study of IR – and more precisely, with a particular focus on neorealism and neoliberalism. Therefore, I concentrate on neorealism, which is an overtly rationalist approach. By means of quantitative methods, and hence through the specification of different variables, scholars draw up falsifiable hypotheses which can be tested and proved out empirically. According to Waltz states are the main actors, and as the basic units they want primarily to secure their survival (1979, p. Since the "marriage of realist tenets and rationalist models" came up very intensely with Waltz's structural theory (Kahler 1998, p. But to begin with, I will define what is meant by rationalism in IR: Rational is commonly said to be an individual that is acting logically (or rationally), i.e. without any emotions. Or briefly summarized by Nicholson: "rationality is the efficient pursuit of consistent goals" (1996, p. Through the collection of sufficient data certain regularities can be unfold. Under the umbrella of methodology/epistemology these approaches contribute a scientific framework emulating the natural sciences. His theory explains general principles and recurring patterns of behaviour, affecting international relations between states in an anarchic system. 163). 157). 757). 167). "Theory is always for someone and for some purpose" Robert Cox stated in one of his seminal works (1981, p. 15, p. To sum up: Such generalizing rationalist theories help to explain in a systematized way why events have occurred, thus allowing for clearer future predictions of behaviour. This aspiration is endangered by other states with different capabilities, which in turn leads to the principle of self-help (Waltz 1979, p. On the other hand he himself makes use of rational elements in order to illustrate his theory of international politics in *Politics Among Nations* (see the six fundamental principles of realism, Morgenthau 1993, p. From the 1930s onwards, scholars "assumed that human reason could illuminate international relations in the same way that it had comprehended the economy and political behaviour" (Kahler 1998, p. Authors attempt to analyze emotional driving forces in international relations and estimate their impact. Scholars like Waltz require from a good theory that it must have "explanatory and predictive power" (1979, p. 128). 163), and in the form of maximizing benefits and minimizing losses. Many scholars have "used rational choice theory very effectively" (Nicholson 1996, p. Usually, they aim at achieving certain goals, as a rule with own interests and power in the center (see Keohane 1986, p. 16). Which concrete theory finally is chosen depends often on the prevailing topic intended to present. Several different types of rationalism exist, but in general the term "rationalism" in IR comes along with rational choice theory, English School theory and elements of constructivism will provide a theoretical and methodological lens for the study. Causal explanations of why certain events have occurred are in these scholars' view the key to predicting future actions in international affairs, and thus to create a universal truth. This fact alone speaks for the crucial success these approaches have brought to the study of IR till this day. To comply with this goal, both neo-schools of rational thought – neorealism as well as neoliberalism – devote themselves profoundly to the positivist tradition. Ontology - Neorealism With regard to the question, which contents the discipline studies, I decided to focus rather on neorealist theory than on classical realism. Although e.g. Keohane argues that by and large all realist theories are related to rationalism (1988, p. 924). 190). The rationalist approaches in IR, rooted in rational choice theory, are often characterized by a strict methodology borrowing heavily from microeconomics (see among others Keohane 1986, p. Nowadays, rationalism is still a quite important approach for analysis in IR, contributing many precious aspects to the discipline. These rational models show certain advantages, as e.g. clear and precise arguments, and ensure logical consistency through the use of empirical data. Through formal and parsimonious models the real world is represented in a simplified manner, and thus analyzed. With the help of these "explanatory theories" the discipline becomes systematized, because they "can help the observer to think critically, logically and coherently by sorting these phenomena into manageable categories so that the appropriate units and level of analyses can be chosen and, where possible, significant connections and patterns of behaviour identified" (Burchill and Linklater 2005, p. 93ff.). Non-measurable factors such as religion, values, ideas etc. The relationship among these variable becomes clear, which in turn reveals particular regularities. 381), other scholars like Kahler claim that classical realist theory opposes to rationalist principles, deeming the rationalist tendency in classical realism as rather "tenuous" (1998, p. are neglected and left aside. 36, p.40), because "realist theory addresses the key questions in international relations: What are the causes of conflict and war among nations, and what are the conditions for cooperation and peace among them" (Grieco 1997, p. Actions are carried out sensibly, underpinned by clear thinking, using a reasonable mind. On the contrary, "structural Realism helps us to understand world politics as in part a systemic phenomenon" (Keohane 1986, p. 920f. p. The most known contradictory author is possibly Hans Morgenthau. Positivist, i.e. scientific rationalist approaches have dominated IR for a large part of history – and are still exceedingly dominant in the United States with neorealism and neoliberalism being widely applied. 41). By means of tools like Prisoner's Dilemma, motives of rationally behaving (political) actors are examined: Individual decisions depend on the supposed action intended by the opponent, whereat all actors try to rationally pursue the optimum for themselves, assessing possible consequences in the face of certain constraints. Objective knowledge gained from it helps in turn to identify general and verifiable laws, and thus to formulate recurring patterns of behaviour (see Jackson and Sorensen 2007, p. In his famous work *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* he criticizes the application of scientific methods referred to liberal rationalism, advocating that "politics is an art and not a science, and what is required for its mastery is not the rationality of the engineer but the wisdom and the moral strength of the statesman" (Morgenthau 1946, p. Rationalist approaches to IR have their roots therein, and so it can be understood as actions of decision-making entities (individuals, states, etc.) making choices rationally, given a set of preferences and constraints which they are facing (see also Snidal 2002, p.74). According to Powell these research methods "help us discipline our thinking about our ideas and intuitions and about the conclusions that seem to follow from them" (2002, p. Neorealism is influenced by positivist and behaviouralist methodologies, developing parsimonious explanations and predictions of state behaviour. 924), I will bear in the following on the contributions of his work in the main. According to logos, these actions should be rational and pragmatic. Broadly spoken, IR-theories can be categorized into two big opposing groups: rationalism and reflectivism – whereat the former rubric differs among others in realist as well as liberal approaches. 920). By means of a literature analysis I will first concentrate on the valuable points that both approaches add, initially looking at methodology/epistemology, then ontology, and last but not least followed by a compendious critique of rationalism's cons. The reason is to be found in the fact that the position of the latter approach towards rationality is somewhat controversial. 75f., p.80ff.). Second purpose of the paper is to explore the instances of the use of emotions in offensive actions in international relations with the crisis-torn European Union as a case study. And scholars like Hollis, Martin and Smith or Grieco identify realism as today's dominant approach (1990, p. He draws a very parsimonious picture with only a few elements, often illustrating it by means of microeconomic principles (see e.g. Waltz 1979, p. 151). being convinced of the advantages the subject's decision-centred neo-approaches contribute. The practice of reason, logic and human rationality further the comprehension of politics and have a predictive validity of how actors will behave in the future. In *Theory of International Politics* Kenneth Waltz departs from classical realism by framing an abstract theory which focuses on the political structure of the international system and its effects on the behaviour of interacting states as the major units. 4ff.). In the discipline of International Relations exist a great many of different theories which are drawn upon to analyze a certain circumstance. 97f.). It is considered as one of the most explicit rationalist approaches. The persisting anarchic structure compels states to preserve their autonomy. 69). 10). 15). However, emotions – metaphorically symbolized by pathos – contribute to states' international activities. [...] ABSTRACTSocial, cultural, ideological and political background of different states define their behavior and international relations. 760).

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