Beyond Westphalia-The Difficulties of the Three Principles of Realism

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Abstract. International actors are fundamental units of research in the field of international relations, with state actors being the primary focus. The political relationships between countries serve as the basis for current mainstream research in international relations theory. However, the author believes that with the evolution of the international system and the increasing complexity of the international community, the traditional Westphalian system and its derivative concept of absolute sovereignty have become outdated. This limits the effectiveness of the current paradigm used to describe objective reality and its ability to guide practical applications. As a result, it is necessary to redefine these propositions. In this paper, the author will use literature investigation and historical analysis methods to deconstruct the three mainstream views of the national center, rational countries, and single country perspectives. This will demonstrate that a variety of international actors and power centers have emerged in the field of international relations and are playing increasingly important roles. This highlights the need to move beyond the limitations of a single nation system towards a more nuanced understanding of international relations. Through a multi-center perspective and utilizing multidisciplinary research methods, including techniques from quantum mechanics, the author will work towards developing a more accurate theory based on the reality of the international relations system.

1. Introduction

The three hypotheses of realism, namely the national center theory and the rational state theory, have had a significant impact on various paradigms in international relations theory. Many paradigms have been established on the premise of accepting these three hypotheses. New realism and offensive realism, the two primary branches of realism today, also greatly influence the development of international relations theory. With the continuous deviation of international reality from these hypotheses, the adjustment and transcendence of international relations theory to them have become critical concerns.

Therefore, this paper asserts that the current paradigm of international relations theory requires significant adjustments to align with the actual situation. For decades, the realism paradigm, based on the three hypotheses, has influenced the international relations community. However, many of the fundamental assumptions of realism are no longer applicable to the developing international reality. Consequently, the generalization and predictive ability of various realistic theories established based on these hypotheses have been distorted. It is expected that this paper can deconstruct the Westphalian system of international relations theory around the three big hypotheses, explore the difficulties and shortcomings of contemporary international relations mainstream theory, particularly the realism paradigm, and offer some prospective future theory development opinions to facilitate the emergence of a multicenter quantified international relations theory.

2. A Critique of the three major hypotheses of realism

2.1. Deconstruct of the national center

The Westphalian system established after the Thirty Years' War and the subsequent concept of sovereign state provided a basic theoretical source for the national center theory. The emergence of sovereign states changed the main role of international affairs. With the decline and decline of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the medieval European aristocratic feudal system with the Holy Roman Empire as the core tended to collapse, and the sovereign states with strong national strength and military strength increasingly moved to the center of the European stage. Before the monarchs of these sovereign states, whether the Pope of the Holy See or the elector of the Holy Roman Empire, they did not have enough land and army. Such a process of transferring power from the aristocracy and the church to the sovereign state, the result is the construction of the European international system with the original sovereign state as the core, and with the expansion of European capitalism from Europe to the world, from the corner of Europe to the world.
The international system with sovereign states as the core has created the soil for the birth and development of the national center. Under such a system, as the Austrian Prime Minister Meior pointed out, the basic characteristics of the international community are sovereign states as the center and the communication between sovereign states as the main content. With the increasingly frequent information and material exchange between sovereign countries, with the growing global division of labor, the center of the sovereign state increasingly significant, under this background, the realists put forward the complete national center, one of the most representative, is from the famous international relations scholars Kenneth Waltz, namely in the international environment, countries provide security protection of public goods, guarantee that citizens of international trade and investment, determine the wealth distribution and redistribution of society, solve various conflicts of interest in the society. Furthermore, the principle of sovereignty stipulates that a state enjoys absolute authority internally and is not restricted by any other authority externally. Since only states enjoy sovereignty, any cross-border activity is of great significance must be conducted or permitted by the State. This constitutes the basic view of the realist National Center[1].

The international system of sovereign states, which was initially applicable only in Europe, has spread along with the global expansion of capitalism."No matter how much benefit the countries gain from the war, they all appear to remain true to the principles of sovereignty and equality."The most important thing is to shift from divine rights to monarchy, instead of "fighting for faith ", and complete the shift of national interests.

In other words, the sovereign state that had the ability to maintain its independence under the Westphalia system, and under the later Vienna system, itself had the ability to defend its existence as a sovereign state and to exercise its sovereignty at home. Even at that time, the real sense of sovereignty was not universal in the European continent, and really had enough control over their own sovereignty, only Russia, France, Austria, Britain and other major European powers.

However, following World War II, with the global spread of capitalism and the flourishing of post-war national independence and liberation struggles, many former colonies and weak countries gained national sovereignty under international law. Many of these newly independent countries were still insufficiently equipped to exercise and protect their internal national sovereignty, and often found themselves depending on external assistance. At the same time, the principle of sovereignty transfer has become increasingly important, particularly with regional integration and international system perfection, and strict absolute sovereignty no longer exists today[2].

Meanwhile, as the principle of sovereignty progressively became more influential, a variety of international actors emerged. Among them, international actors such as multinational corporations, NGOs, large political parties, and international organizations possess comprehensive strength and even outstrip a vast majority of sovereign countries. Their international influence is growing, and their internal control has significantly improved. Particularly with the rapid development of information technology, the ability of transnational capital to exist independent of states has improved unprecedentedly, and non-state actors that are not controlled by a single sovereign state have increasingly become a new type of power center in international relations. The national center theory posited that "since only states enjoy sovereignty, any cross-border activity of significance must be conducted or permitted by the state"[3]. However, this idea is no longer fully compatible with the current state of international relations.

Thus, the foundation upon which the national center theory stands now faces significant challenges. State actors such as Tonga and Fiji occupy no more space in the international system than non-state actors such as Huawei, the European Union, and Morgan Bank. It is clear that within the current international architecture, the collapse of a giant multinational corporation would have a far more significant impact on the system than that of smaller sovereign states such as Tonga and Fiji.

2.2. Decont the rational country and the single country

As the three pillars supporting the realism paradigm, rational state theory and single state theory have fundamental significance. However, with the development and evolution of the real world, it is now necessary to deconstruct and reconstruct these theories.

The single state theory is the second hypothesis about the state, which means that in a particular space-time section, the state has only one overall goal, and only one national highest interest[4]. A state is an independent actor, and the goals, behaviors and interests of the state as a whole are different from the goals and interests of any individual or social group within the state. In a country, different social groups or individuals may have different, or even opposite interests, goals or purposes, but they can not represent the interests of the country as a whole. The goals and interests of the country have integrity and unity, and only these overall unified goals can constitute the national interests. Thus, realists further believe that because a single state believes that a state is a unified entity, the most fundamental interest of a state beyond time and space is the survival of the nation-state. In addition, in a particular section of space and time, a state has and only one overall goal, and only one country. While this theory emphasizes the integrity of a country as an international actor, it neglects the effects of information and material exchange occurring both within and outside a country. With globalization, the transnational flow of capital and configuration has blurred the boundary of national interests. Such interests are now subject to internal interest group conflicts within the main countries, including domestic differences between different classes that have surpassed the borders of their respective countries. For instance, Ukraine's fundamental interest, in accordance with the interpretation of the single state theory, is national survival. Therefore, it would have no reason to stand in opposition to Russia or to participate in
a struggle against it. This is obviously not in the fundamental interests of the Ukrainian nation-state. Similarly, if a country functions as a dollar society as a whole and is capable of independently deciding its national interests, such interests should not appear in the game of different interest groups, because the national development strategy should remain constant and free of debate.

The rational state theory is the third hypothesis of the state. It suggests that, regardless of any changes in decision makers or decision groups within a country, they will make rational decisions given the same problems in the same environment[5]. According to the realist inference, no matter how the decision makers or groups of the state change, they will make the same rational decision to be made in the face of the same problem in the same given environment, so the state behavior will be basically the same.

The rational state theory determines the knowability and predictability of the state behavior under the theoretical system of realism, and provides a theoretical basis for the atomization of the state units in the traditional understanding of realism. However, as an imaginative community, a state's interest is not necessarily singular. The "imaginary community" itself is not rational enough. The centers of power that influence national decision-making are the rational entities, not the state. The divergence between these power centers will inevitably lead to choices that are more favorable to specific centers of power than the country as a whole when faced with the same problem under certain time and space conditions. Rationality in pursuit of small interest groups often results in irrationality with respect to the overall interests of the country. In the United States, the military complex's interests lead to the continual involvement of the US military to ensure the procurement of weapons and support infrastructure, greatly supporting US foreign aggression and anti-globalization. However, this conflicts with the interests of Silicon Valley technology groups that pursue globalization and a stable international market. Furthermore, many strategists in the United States believe that the US should choose Russia over China, but for the party's benefit, the Democratic interest group launched a Russia investigation against former President Trump, thwarting the strategy against Russia and in favor of China. When the interests of different domestic interest groups clash, they will eventually make choices that do not align with the country's fundamental interests, leading to "selfish rationality" from the centers of these forces.

3. The difficulties of the new realism

3.1. The new realistic nuclear architecture and its shortcomings

With the further development of the realism paradigm, so far the master and the most representative theory, from Kenneth wold's new realism theory paradigm in the late 1970s, after three rounds of debate, become the realism paradigm and the most representative theory of the international relations theory. However, in this paper, the author tries to critically interpret the theoretical paradigm of new realism.

New realism compared with the traditional realism is more theoretical, also more systematic, new realism of traditional realism made several main amendments, one of the most fundamental, is put forward the concept of system structure, the international relations as a precision system structure, this is the new realism and realism is the most clear points. on this basis, According to the new realism, Units and systems are mutually constructed relationships. Between the system and the unit levels, The system level is decisive; Traditional realism emphasizes that the state aims to pursue power. New realism sees power as a means rather than an end. The ultimate goal of the state pursuing power is to guarantee the survival of the nation state, That is, the pursuit of safety; New realism emphasizes the homogenization of state actors under international anarchy, That is, its atomization, While traditional realism holds that state actors are heterogeneous individuals, They argue that different countries behave in different ways, So the result will be different; thus, New realism, compared with traditional realism, It seems more theoretical and abstract, Neorealism sees the international system as an architecture of homogeneous atoms, The size of the overall national strength affects the size of the atoms, The international system is a complex structure composed of these nuclei of the same properties but of different sizes[6].

The new realism's concise and seemingly convincing nuclear architecture takes into account a country's overall national strength as a measure of its weight within the system. The interaction of the system and overall changes within it are the decisive factors in determining a unit's fate.

However, as previously mentioned, the above architecture must reflect the realities of the modern world. The nuclei that constitute the system must be isolated and exclusive, requiring state actors to have absolute sovereignty to clearly distinguish insiders from outsiders. State actors must also be the sole important actors, with sufficient weight to ignore the influence of other types of international actors within the system. This, however, is no longer reflective of reality. In particular, the growing non-state nature of multinational capital groups, which operate at the speed of electronic signals around the world and involve financial interests above all sovereign state interest groups, goes beyond the limitations of the nuclear international system structure. Although their activities are difficult to capture within the nuclear structure, they cannot be ignored as an important driving force in the development of international affairs.

3.2. Myths in the development of realism after new realism

After Kenneth Waltz proposed the new realism, the realism paradigm has experienced more than forty years of development. So far, the paradigm level has stagnated, with Millesheimer saying, " In recent years, international relations scholars have not spent much effort to create and improve theories, or use them to guide practice. Instead,
they increasingly value pure hypothesis testing, emphasis on fully proven empirical laws. "In this regard, Mills Sea defaults to." It is a false tendency to prioritise pure hypothesis testing, because insufficient attention to theory can lead to wrong empirical models or misleading measures of key concepts."

The emergence of this state investigates its fundamental, the author thinks that is the mainstream paradigm theoretical base and the real world, if not overturn a lot of existing conclusion, is not fundamentally founded based on reality, applicable to the present theory of international relations paradigm, therefore, based on the development of the current paradigm of stagnation is not surprising.

Realism in recent decades, more representative include Milosheimeir's offensive realism.

Based on offensive realism, Mills Sea assumed that the state is actually a revisionist with the intention of aggression. The international system provides a strong incentive for the great powers to take offensive action to strengthen their security and ensure their survival[7]. Therefore, the competition between countries, especially between the great powers, will inevitably lead to war, which is what Millsheimier(1993) calls the tragedy of great power politics[8].

But in retrospect, if we reinterpret the realism of offensive realism in the light of this paper, it is easy to find that the theoretical base itself has many problems. For example, offensive realism holds that the great powers play the main role in world politics, while the international community is anarchy. Although this is the fact, the so-called great powers, strictly divided by the concept of sovereignty are far from enough to become the only decisive force in the overall international political and economic situation. Under the strict division of sovereignty concept, Wagner to Russia, Wall Street to the United States, NATO to Britain, America, France and other countries will be ignored, but these actors often have a great influence on the interest construction and behavior choice of these great powers in reality. Outside of the great powers, international organizations such as huge transnational capital groups, the European Union and the United Nations, together with the great powers, constitute the main picture of world politics. In other words, as regional integration organizations such as the European Union and the existence of domestic interest groups in major countries such as Wagner and Wall Street become more materialized, strictly defined international anarchy has begun to collapse.

4. Conclusion

Therefore, the following four conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, the national center is considered outdated and the state actor is deemed the most crucial actor in international relations. The rise of multiple international actors has relatively reduced the presence of numerous actors in various countries.

Secondly, the single state theory and the rational state theory are no longer viable hypotheses that can be utilized as an axiom. The notion of a holographic country is a direct challenge to the concept of a single country as countries become increasingly complex. As such, national rationality has become a rootless tree and the interplay of internal and external interests has made it difficult for countries to make the only rational choice within a specific space-time section. In fact, it is challenging to discuss the state as a single atomic rational person in the analysis of international relations.

Subsequently, the new realism regulations on the atomization of state actors under anarchy are no longer practical with the increasing complexity of the current international system. While new realism provides a concise and elegant analysis tool, its structure and design have largely become an academic circle within academic toys. Its exquisite and concise design alone cannot accurately reflect the present situation, and the guiding significance of realistic politics has been diminished.

Lastly, the author emphasizes that the fundamental view of the realistic paradigm and the reality of today are at the core of these problems. If these secondary conclusions are based on the three assumptions of realism, but the assumptions themselves are inconsistent with reality, this leads to a viewpoint based on realism and a derived paradigm with increasing deviation from reality. Therefore, it is imperative to re-study the theory of international relations from a more fundamental and foundational position. In today's international community, multiple polycentric forces interact, and developing a more complex and concrete system theory based on a polycentric perspective may be a pragmatic approach. Understanding the ambiguity of the international system requires exploring new research ideas, such as the ideological tools of quantum theory, which may positively impact future international relations theory research.

References