

Security in different schools of thought politics essay



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Political analysts agree that international security is the most important contemporary global issue. Twenty first century politics has brought urgency to consider the proliferation of weapons, increase in military spending, and terrorism. In principle, security is a condition in which States consider that there is no danger of military attack, political pressure or economic coercion, so that they are able to pursue freely their own development and progress. International security is thus the result and the sum of the security of each and every State member of the international community; accordingly, international security cannot be reached without full international co-operation. However, security is a relative rather than an absolute term. National and international security need to be viewed as matters of degree. Concepts of security are the different bases on which States and the international community as a whole relies for their security. Examples of <https://assignbuster.com/security-in-different-schools-of-thought-politics-essay/>

concepts are the “ balance of power”, “ deterrence”, “ peaceful coexistence” and “ collective security”.

The reason to address security in this paper is the belief that an understanding of the broader scope of security should make it possible for states to deal more effectively, both individually and collectively, with current problems and threats to peace. So accordingly the paper will deal with analysis of security as a concept well established specially since the world war and how different schools of thought defined it. Also the current issues of human security and its impact on foreign policy options will be discussed besides the national interest debate in international relations.

What is security?

There is no agreement on the concept of security. Notwithstanding the wide range of studies of security published over the past sixty years, no single generally accepted definition of security has been produced. The concept of security is as contested as ever. To understand the concept of security we should first define its relation to the state, is it an internal matter related to domestic circumstances or an external matter related to international context. As a matter of fact security as a predominant issue had developed and went through various phases marked by the two world wars, the Westphalia conference also had an impact on it, the huge advance in military and technological tools had dramatic influence as well. Still the concept remained contested between different theories and theorists and between different “ zeit geist” shaping the interests and policies of states.

In the Westphalia world of internally strong states, there is less danger of internal conflict, and the international system is marked by conflicts among states rather than within them. Since 1945, however, many of the most significant threats to state security have been internal, rather than external, a shift which has only accelerated and which may have profound consequences on the conduct of international relations.

So traditionally, security was defined primarily at the nation-state level and almost exclusively through the military prism. This focus on external military threat to national security was particularly dominant during the Cold War. It would be misleading, however, to associate the origins of security studies with the Cold War and the recent nuclear threat. In the first decade after the Second World War academic interest in security studies increased significantly. Although questions of national security were usually treated within the broader framework of international relations and foreign policy, this period has been described as ‘the most creative and exciting period in the entire history of security studies’

Security in different schools of thought

Security has been a cornerstone in realism theories and studies; neorealism has even put more emphasis on security and power as determining factors in states’ decisions and position. Thus a detailed explanation of realism security view follows. While Liberal school was seen as counter theory for realism, for the interest of this paper focus will be shed on these two leading theories.

Realism:

Realism has been the most dominant theoretical tradition in international relations and security studies. Its philosophical foundations were laid by Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau. The realist's world view represents international relations as a struggle for power among strategic, self-interested states. Realists discount any claims to system-wide international order other than that based ultimately on power or force. They argue that international society is best described as a condition of international anarchy, since there is no central authority to protect states from one another. States act as independent, sovereign political units that focus on their own survival (or expansion). For that reason, the objective of national security is survival of the nation-state rather than the guarantee of international security. Realists are not prepared to engage in long-term accommodation or cooperation. In this view, world politics is anarchical characterized by a state of war, not a single continuous war or constant wars but the constant possibility of war among all states. Consequently, the realist perceives a period of peace as a state of non-war. The possibility of war requires that states follow "Realpolitik": be self interested, prepare for war and calculate relative balances of power'. A state is constantly seeking relative gains and its behavior is therefore continuously determined to facilitate self-preservation by the actual 'balance of power' between political powers ... this is what security stands for.

As a product of presumed uncertainty, a central issue in nearly all realist theory is the security dilemma. Due to their continuous efforts to guarantee their own security and survival, states are driven to acquire more and more

power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. This, in turn, constitutes a threat to the security of other states. Traditional Cold War concepts of nuclear strategies and deterrence only emphasize this line of thought. Striving to attain maximum security from attack therefore inevitably produces new insecurities.

Realism is not a single theory. It could be argued that there are two crosscutting dichotomies: classical realism versus neorealism, and offensive realism versus defensive realism. Classical realists, of which one of the most influential was Hans Morgenthau believe that states, like human beings, have an innate desire to dominate others, which leads them to fight wars. In this perspective, state power and security are ends in themselves.

Neorealists see the international system consisting of a number of great powers, each seeking to survive. Because the system is anarchic and has no central authority, each state has to survive on its own. This driving force of survival is the primary factor influencing their behavior and in turn ensures that states develop offensive military force, as a means to increase their relative power. The classical focus on the centrality of power shifts gradually towards a more neorealist view whereby power becomes a means to gain security.

Neorealists bring attention to a persistent lack of trust between states which requires states to act in an openly aggressive manner. Though neorealists recognize that international democratic structures and liberal economics are imperative to peace, security stems from balancing strategies based on

sound military capabilities. For that reason, neorealism can be considered the dominant paradigm in security studies.

Despite the varieties of realist thought, all realists stress the centrality of military threat and the use of force. The referent object of security is the state; states act as strategic, self-interested units which seek to ensure their own security. In all cases, the realist concept of security has been severely criticized as being too 'narrow' to account for the multiple dimensions of security.

Liberalism:

The principal challenge to realism came from liberal theory, the foundations of which were laid, by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. A central principle of liberalism is the importance of the freedom of the individual. Foreign policy should reflect the rights and duties of individuals. Liberals' understanding of security differs in part from that of realists. Reflecting the aims of the individual, liberal states view security not only in military terms, but also in terms of the protection and promotion of individual rights. For example, the liberal approach to combating terrorism focuses far more on the application of legal instruments than on the use of military force. That's to say that liberal concept of security tends to include issues such as migration, environmental concerns.

Like realism, liberalism is not a single theory. Although all liberal theories imply that cooperation is more pervasive than even the defensive version of realism allows, each view offers a different recipe for promoting it.

It is worth noting that Liberalism has such a powerful presence that the entire political spectrum of the Western world, it is no surprise that liberal themes are constantly invoked as a response to contemporary security dilemmas.

Also Liberal theory believes in the innate goodness of mankind to conduct peace-keeping relations in the international system where States rely on mutual cooperation to tackle global issues. Managing security issues according to this theory requires the involvement of international institutions, along with the cooperation of states to achieve this. The Liberal theory of security management consists of two key methods; collective security and arms control.

1. Collective Security

Liberal theorists strongly believe in the power of collective security. This is a protective measure used by a group of allied states. When threatening and unlawful actions are directed at one state, united opposition is shown by the other supporting states. The goal is to stop the aggressor while creating security in the international system. Collective security can be best described by the concept of 'one for all, all for one'. Another important function of this security measure is to ward off potential aggressors from acting.

2. Arms Control

In global politics, arms control is best described by either the controlling, reducing, limiting, or abolishing weapons completely. Another approach to

controlling weapons includes general disarmament. According to Liberal theory, arms proliferation and specialization can be reduced. Having fewer weapons means reduced insecurity so long as states agree to carry out this task mutually.

National security and IR

Human security

In 1994, the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Report presented a new way of thinking about the integration of security issues and globalization. This report defined human security according to seven dimensions: personal, environmental, economic, political, community, health, and food security, the report adopted a people-centric security concept as its focus instead of the traditional state-centered concept

The concept of human security stresses that people should be able to take care of themselves: all people should have the opportunity to meet their most essential needs and to earn their own living. This will set them free and help ensure that they can make a full contribution to development their own development and that of their communities, their countries and the world, Human security is a critical ingredient of participatory development. Human security is therefore not a defensive concept, the way territorial or military security is. Human security is a concept that identifies the security of human lives as the central objective of national and international security policy.

After 1994, the concept of human security became a central theme of a number of governments through their foreign and defense policies. In particular, the Canadian, Japanese and Norwegian governments led the way

in institutionalizing human security concerns into their respective foreign policies. According to a Canadian government report, “ human security means safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people’s rights, their safety, or even their lives.”

Also the report emphasized that increasing human security entails:

Investing in human development, not in arms;

Engaging policy makers to address the emerging peace dividend;

Giving the United Nations a clear mandate to promote and sustain development;

Enlarging the concept of development cooperation so that it includes all flows, not just aid;

Agreeing that 20 percent of national budgets and 20 percent of foreign aid be used for human development; and

Establishing an Economic Security Council

Human security and Foreign policy:

A departure from the realist, state-centered concept of security that has dominated foreign policy thinking of major powers, this conceptual reframing of security has important implications on foreign policy. It brings new issues or vulnerabilities and measures or actions as priorities for global security

that were not on the security agendas, it has huge impact on foreign policy orientations especially when it comes to big powers decisions

The issue of oppression and physical violence due to deliberate action and neglect by the state to its own citizens.

Vulnerability to poverty and destitution as a factor inter-connected with threats of violence.

Development and ending poverty as important means to achieve human security.

Actors other than the state as sources of threat and as holders of obligations to protect;

Global inter-connectedness of security threats (such as terrorist networks, global financial crises and global diseases) and necessary responses.

Questions have been raised about the relationship between human security and state security and actions in foreign affairs. Contrary to some claims, the two kinds of security are not mutually exclusive. The security of the state is not an end in itself rather it is a means of ensuring security for people. In this context, state security and human security are in fact mutually supportive and accordingly the decisions made to maintain security of the state in foreign affairs and in international relations had a direct influence on human security. Building an effective, democratic state that values its own people and protects minorities is central to promoting human security. At the same time, improving the human security of its people strengthens the legitimacy, stability and security of a state. So the interdependent relation is crystal

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clear. Human security provides a template to assess policy and practice effects on the safety of people. From a foreign policy perspective, there are a number of key consequences;

First ensuring human security can involve the use of coercive measures, including sanctions and military force, as in Bosnia and Kosovo.

On the other hand the human costs of strategies for promoting state and international security must be explicitly assessed. security policies such as economic sanctions, should take into account the impact on innocent people.

Third, security policies must be integrated much more closely with strategies for promoting human rights, democracy, and development. Human rights and humanitarian provide the normative framework on which a human security approach is based. On the other hand one of the dividends of adopting a human security approach is that it further elaborates a people-centred foreign policy.

Fourth, due to the complexity of contemporary challenges to the security of people, effective interventions involve a diverse range of actors including states, multilateral organizations, and civil society groups. As the challenges to the safety of people are transnational, effective responses can only be achieved through multilateral cooperation. This is evident in the new international instruments developed to address transnational drug trafficking, terrorism, and environmental issues. These threats link the interest of citizens in countries which enjoy a high level of human security with the interests of people in much poorer nations, who face a wider range

of threats to their safety. This has a direct impact on foreign policy implementation and interests.

The relationship between national and international security

The changing international environment, following the advent of globalization and end of cold war politics has made it imperative for both practitioners and scholars to rethink and redefine the existing framework on which foreign policy operated. Foreign relations are in fact developed in the context of the security environment. However, security issues are no longer seen in the pure realist term of preserving the national security of the states in terms of territory only. States have aligned and realigned to further their national interest by forming new regional and economic blocs, while putting aside historical and cultural hostility, and arriving at consensus over various issues of global concerns.

National and international security are becoming increasingly interrelated, thereby challenging the notion that security is primarily a function of national power or military and economic strength. Searching for solutions to the problem of insecurity, many nations increasingly find themselves face-to-face with circumstances beyond their direct control, such as a structural economic crisis and global economic, population, environmental and resource trends. All nations face universal threats posed by the nuclear arms race. Global interdependence has created a situation in which actions not only by major Powers but also by other nations can have major regional or even international repercussions.

Only by recognizing that security is not divisible, either in its military, economic, social and political dimensions or as between its national and international aspects, can nations evolve the co-operative measures necessary to achieve security in an interdependent age. This requires a comprehensive and co-operative approach to international security (a liberal version of security). The unrestrained pursuit of national security interests at the expense of others is not conducive to international security and may even lead to disaster. With the existence of nuclear weapons such policies constitute a potential threat to the survival of mankind. It is imperative that nations reconcile the contradictions between individual national security interests and the overall interest of international security and peace.

Conclusion