

# Realism: strategic approach to energy security

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ESS419 International Relations Theory and Energy Security

15th October 2015

# Outline

- Realism in International Relations.
- Realism: agency and structure.
- Realism and energy: issues.

# Realism in IR

- International system (IS) is **anarchically organized**.
- The IS is structured by **distribution of material capabilities**.
- The IS consists of national states, **self-help units**, that seek **survival**.
- **Conflict** is an **inherent feature** of IS.
- There is a clear distinction between international and domestic level.

# Neoclassical geopolitics (NG)

- NG shares number of Realist assumptions.
  - State-centrism.
  - Emphasizes power distribution and military forces.
  - Conflict as an inherent feature of international system.
- NG emphasizes and focus on geographical factors.
- Geographical space shapes opportunities and constraints of actors' behavior.
- Energy arena: security of transport routes, chokepoints, control of production areas, and pipeline policies.

# Agency

- Agency: concept of a social actor.
  - Actor: an entity that is able to make decisions.
- Realism rejects optimistic liberal view of agency.
- Two variants:
  - Classical Realism: agency connected to ambivalent human nature.
  - Neoclassical Realism: agency based on rational actor mode where actors maximize their security.

# Agency: national capabilities

- Most important feature: power capability.
- Seen in material terms.
- Composite Index of National Capabilities.
- 6 indicators:
  - Total population.
  - Urban population.
  - Steel and iron production.
  - TPES
  - Military expenditures.
  - Number of military forces.

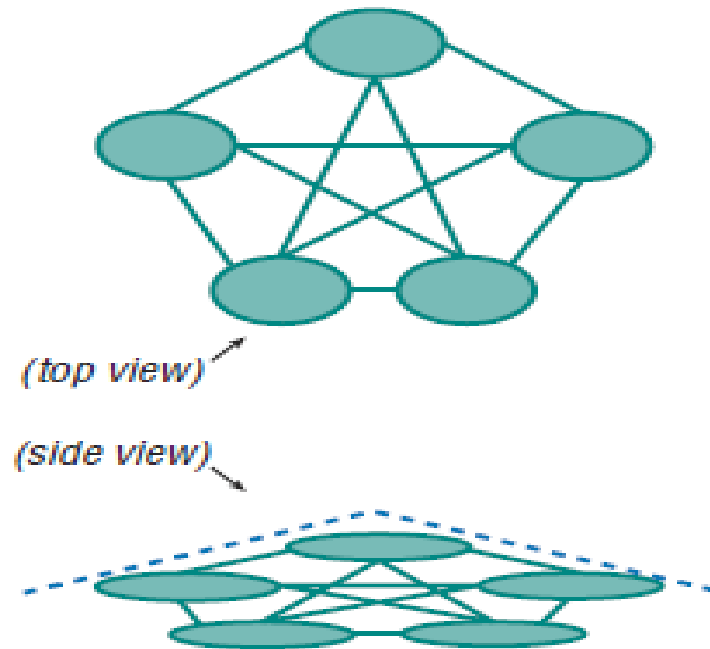
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2	 United States	.142149
3	 India	.073444
4	 Japan	.042675
5	 Russia	.039274
6	 Brazil	.024597
7	 Germany	.024082
8	 South Korea	.023878
9	 United Kingdom	.021158
10	 France	.018924
11	 Italy	.017420
12	 Turkey	.014317
13	 Pakistan	.013772
14	 Indonesia	.013708
15	 Iran	.013450
16	 North Korea	.012925
17	 Mexico	.012269
18	 Ukraine	.011835
19	 Spain	.011389
20	 Saudi Arabia	.010883

# Structure: polarity

- **Structure:** a context that enables and constraints actions of actors.
- Realism: **distribution of power capabilities.**
- Based on the distribution different configurations of IR are recognized:
  - Unipolar
  - Bipolar
  - Tripolar
  - Multipolar
  - Diffused

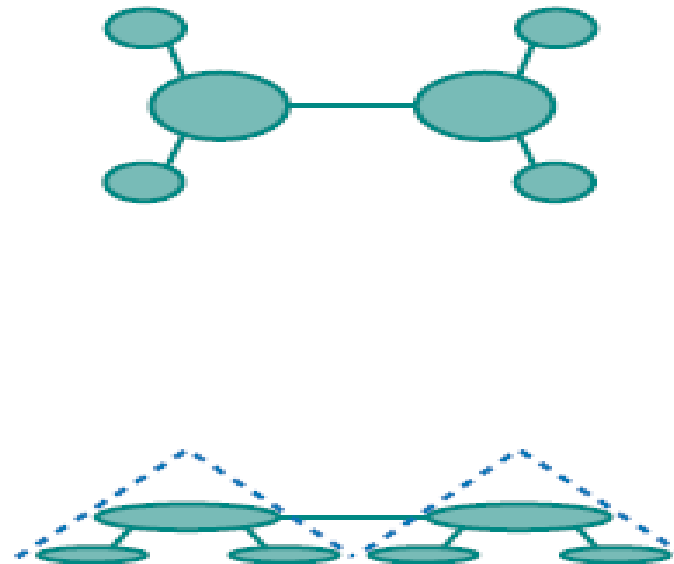
**FIGURE 2.4** Power Distribution in the International System

**Multipolar System**



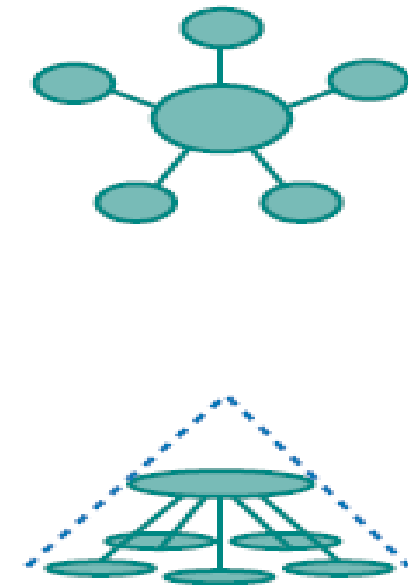
Flat hierarchy  
More reciprocity  
Less stable?

**Bipolar**



Split hierarchies  
Dominance within blocs,  
Reciprocity between blocs  
Stable

**Unipolar (Hegemony)**



Steep hierarchy  
More dominance  
More stable?



# Structure: balance of power

- **Balance of power** mechanism mediates structural effects.
- Two conditions of balancing (Waltz 1979: 121):
  - International system must be anarchical.
  - System must consist of units that seek survival.
- It is distinguished between **internal and external balancing**:
  - Internal balancing: e.g. military build-up.
  - External balancing: e.g. alliance formation.

# Structure: security dilemma

- The **inherent uncertainty** of an anarchical system and **self-help** nature of states lead to security dilemma.
- Since **security is seen as a zero-sum game** → security gain of one state brings security loss of another.
- Result: escalating spiral of armament (**an arms race**).
- Introduced by **John Herz** (1950).
- Solutions:
  - Balancing
  - Bandwagoning
  - Hegemony
  - (Collective security)

# Structure: security dilemma

*“Wherever ... anarchic society has existed ... there has arisen what may be called the ‘security dilemma’ of men, or groups, or their leaders. Groups or individuals living in such a constellation must be, and usually are, concerned about their security from being attacked, subjected, dominated, or annihilated by other groups and individuals. Striving to attain security from such attack, they are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the power of others. This, in turn, renders the others ore insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on.” (Herz 1950: 157)*

# Structure: (energy) security dilemma

- Two approaches to energy security dilemma.
- (1) States have to choose between market effectivity and control over the energy markets.
- (2) “Diversification race”: diversification of importer/exporter increases vulnerability of importer/exporter.

# Conflict over resources

- National resources are dominant sources of power (Klare 2008).
- Energy resources are integral part of the national states' power capabilities.
- Strategic nature of energy resources is given by:
  - **Limited amount** and availability of these **resources**.
  - **Relative scarcity** of its **substitutes**.
- In combination with anarchical nature of IR → pushes states towards competition over resources.

# Self-sufficiency

- State is able to satisfy its whole consumption from domestic resources.
- **Self-sufficiency vs. autarky** (or independence).
- Latter assumes independence of external influences.
- Self-sufficiency often not a realistic option.

# Economic nationalism

- Approach that evaluates economic policies based on their contribution to state power.
- **Economic mercantilism:** accumulation of scarce resources.
- **Strategic trade:** state support of strategically important companies.

# Energy security: strategic approach

*“War, war never changes.”*

- **State-centrism:** state as a key actor.
  - The main goal is **survival**.
  - State interactions governed by **balance of power mechanism**.
  - **Energy commodities** are considered as a **source of power**.
  - Energy comm. might be **causes and means of conflict**.
  - Limited amount of energy comm.: **zero sum game**.
  - Emphasis on **relative gains**.
- Militarization of energy issues (**logic of war**, Ciuta 2010)