

# **PMCb1002 - Academic Writing**

Autumn 2023, Class 5 of 6

Structure of an academic paper – part 2

# ★ Theories ★

- Your papers always need to follow a theoretical framework
  - This connects your research to existing knowledge
  - It gives you a basis for your hypotheses and choice of research methods
- It guides your analyses by suggesting concepts and relationships to explore

# Examples of IR Theories: Constructivism

- Constructivism's arrival in IR is often associated with the end of the Cold War, an event that traditional theories such as realism and liberalism failed to account for.
- By having a dominant focus on the state, traditional theories have not opened much space to observe the agency of individuals.

# Examples of IR Theories: Constructivism

- Constructivism argues that the social world is of our making.
- Actors (usually powerful ones, like leaders and influential citizens) continually shape – and sometimes reshape – the very nature of international relations through their actions and interactions.

# Examples of IR Theories: Constructivism

- Constructivism sees the world and what we can know about the world as socially constructed.
  - Alexander Wendt (1995) offers an excellent example that illustrates the social construction of reality when he explains that 500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than five North Korean nuclear weapons.

# Examples of IR Theories: Constructivism

- Constructivists argue that states can have multiple identities that are socially constructed through interaction with other actors.
- Identities are representations of an actor's understanding of who they are, which in turn signals their interests. They are important to constructivists as they argue that identities constitute interests and actions

# Examples of IR Theories: Realism

- A school of thought that emphasises the competitive and conflictual side of IR.
- The **first** assumption of realism is that the nation-state (usually abbreviated to 'state') is the principle actor in international relations. Other bodies exist, such as individuals and organisations, but their power is limited.

# Examples of IR Theories: Realism

- The **second** assumption is that the state is a unitary actor. National interests, especially in times of war, lead the state to speak and act with one voice.
- The **third** assumption is that decision-makers are rational actors in the sense that rational decision-making leads to the pursuit of the national interest.

# Examples of IR Theories: Realism

- Realism suggests that all leaders, no matter what their political persuasion, recognise this as they attempt to manage their state's affairs in order to survive in a competitive environment.
- The **fourth** assumption is that states live in a context of anarchy – that is, in the absence of anyone being in charge internationally. The often-used analogy of there being 'no one to call' in an international emergency helps to underline this point.

# Examples of IR Theories: Realism

- As realism draws on examples from the past, there is great emphasis on the idea that humans are essentially held hostage to repetitive patterns of behaviour determined by their nature: our selfishness, our appetite for power and our inability to trust others leads to predictable outcomes.
- Kenneth Waltz, Morgenthau,

# Examples of IR Theories: Liberalism

- Liberalism contains a variety of concepts and arguments about how institutions, behaviours and economic connections contain and mitigate the violent power of states.
- When compared to realism, it adds more factors into our field of view – especially a consideration of citizens and international organisations.

# Examples of IR Theories: Liberalism

- Liberalism has been the traditional foil of realism in IR theory as it offers a more optimistic world view, grounded in a different reading of history to that found in realist scholarship.
- Liberalism is based on the moral argument that ensuring the right of an individual person to life, liberty and property is the highest goal of government.

# Examples of IR Theories: Liberalism

- Liberalism emphasises the wellbeing of the individual as the fundamental building block of a just political system.
- A political system characterised by unchecked power, such as a monarchy or a dictatorship, cannot protect the life and liberty of its citizens.

# Examples of IR Theories: Liberalism

- The realm of IR is also important to liberals because a state's activities abroad can have a strong influence on liberty at home. Liberals are particularly troubled by militaristic foreign policies.
- The primary concern is that war requires states to build up military power. This power can be used for fighting foreign states, but it can also be used to oppress its own citizens. For this reason, political systems rooted in liberalism often limit military power by such means as ensuring civilian control over the military.

# Examples of Security Theories: Buzan et al.

- The theory of securitization (or Copenhagen School) emphasizes that security is not solely a military concern but encompasses a wide range of issues that can threaten a state's well-being and stability.
- It also recognizes the importance of societal and environmental aspects of security, moving beyond the traditional focus on military and political dimensions.
- This framework provides a more holistic understanding of the complex security challenges facing states and societies in the contemporary world.

# Examples of Security Theories: Buzan et al.

- The 5 sectors are:
  - Military: the capability of a nation-state to defend itself, and/or deter military aggression
  - Political: prevention of government repression, systematic violation of human rights and threats from militarization
  - Economic: the condition of having stable income or other resources to support a standard of living now and in the foreseeable future
  - Societal: the survival of a community as a cohesive unit
  - Environmental: threats posed by environmental events and trends to individuals, communities or nations. It may focus on the impact of human conflict and international relations on the environment, or on how environmental problems cross state borders.

# Examples of Security Theories: Buzan et al.

- The 5 sectors are:

1. Military: the capability of a nation-state to defend itself, and/or deter military aggression

2. Political: the prevention of government repression, systematic violation of human rights and threats from militarization

3. Economic: the condition of having stable income or other resources to support a standard of living now and in the foreseeable future. Cash flow, job stability, etc

## Examples of IR Theories: Buzan et al.

4. Societal: the survival of a community as a cohesive unit
5. Environmental: threats posed by environmental events and trends to individuals, communities or nations. It may focus on the impact of human conflict and international relations on the environment, or on how environmental problems cross state borders.

# Examples of Theories: Feminism

- An early contribution of feminist theorists is revealing that women were and are routinely exposed to gendered violence.
- Nowhere do women share the same economic, political or social rights as men and everywhere there are prevalent forms of gendered violence, whether this be domestic violence in the home or sexual violence in conflict. We see a continuum of gendered violence that does not reflect neat and distinct categories of peace, stability and so on.

# Examples of Theories: Feminism

- Many societies are thought of as predominantly peaceful or stable despite high levels of violence against a particular portion of the population
- Feminism has also highlighted women's absence from decision-making and institutional structures
- Men are predominantly in charge of state institutions, dominating power and decision-making structures. There is a gendered exclusion as women contribute in essential ways to global politics even though they are more likely to populate those areas not considered high politics and their day-to-day lives may be considered "peripheral"

# Examples of Theories: Feminism

- Feminism also helps expose and deconstruct socially constructed gender norms
- Intersectionality refers to where other identities, such as class, race, and ethnicity, intersect, and how different groups of people are marginalised, suggesting that we must consider each in tandem rather than in isolation.

# Examples of Theories

- There are so many theories!
  - Marxism
- 3N theory of radicalization
- Theory of restorative justice
  - Theory of recognition
  - Decolonial theory
  - Social identity theory
  - Rational choice theory

# Findings

- It can be its own section or it can be in the analysis or in the conclusion
- Findings may be reported in written text, tables, graphs, and other illustrations
- It is important to include a contextual analysis of the data by tying it back to the research question(s)

# Discussion

- Not always necessary on its own. Can be part of the conclusion
- This sections connects your results to previous research studies, make explicit connections back to your research question(s) and include an explanation about how the results might be generalized.
- It can also include an analysis of any unexpected findings, with a description of the unexpected finding, a brief interpretation as to why you believe it appeared and, if necessary, its possible significance in relation to the overall study

# Conclusion

- Clearly state the answer to your main research question with a short summary of the research process
- Counter-arguments (if available): what are the main objections to your research, and can you defend your thesis from them?
- Make recommendations for future work on your thesis or dissertation topic
  - Show what new knowledge you have contributed to your field

# Abstract

- 200 – 250 words stand-alone piece of text that provides a snapshot of the key points, methodology, findings, and conclusions of the full document
- It serves as a tool to showcase your work and enable readers to quickly assess whether a particular study is relevant to their own interests or research needs

# Keywords

- 3 to 5 main words that relate to your essay
- Keywords can be key concepts and don't have to be 1 word, for example: Second World War, American exceptionalism, transitional justice
- They search engines find relevant papers for people's searches
- Also help you understand your paper's main topics

# Acknowledgements

- Not necessary in essays for university courses
- Fun to include in a thesis to thank those that have helped you throughout - family, friends, classmates
  - Published articles also include:
    - Funding details
- Disclosure statement: competing/conflicting interests

# Titles

- You can ask ChatGPT to generate 5-10 titles for you based on your abstract or a short description of your article
- Academic article titles are often formatted like this:
  - Podcast Patriots: How far right women podcasters shaped the narrative around the Jan. 6 insurrection
  - From Truth to Transformation: Indigenous Restorative Justice in Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

# Titles

- "Is the Party over? The Decline of Party Activism and Membership across the Democratic World." *Party Politics* 17(1): 21–44.
- "Blogs Are Echo Chambers: Blogs Are Echo Chambers." In 2009 42nd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 1–10.