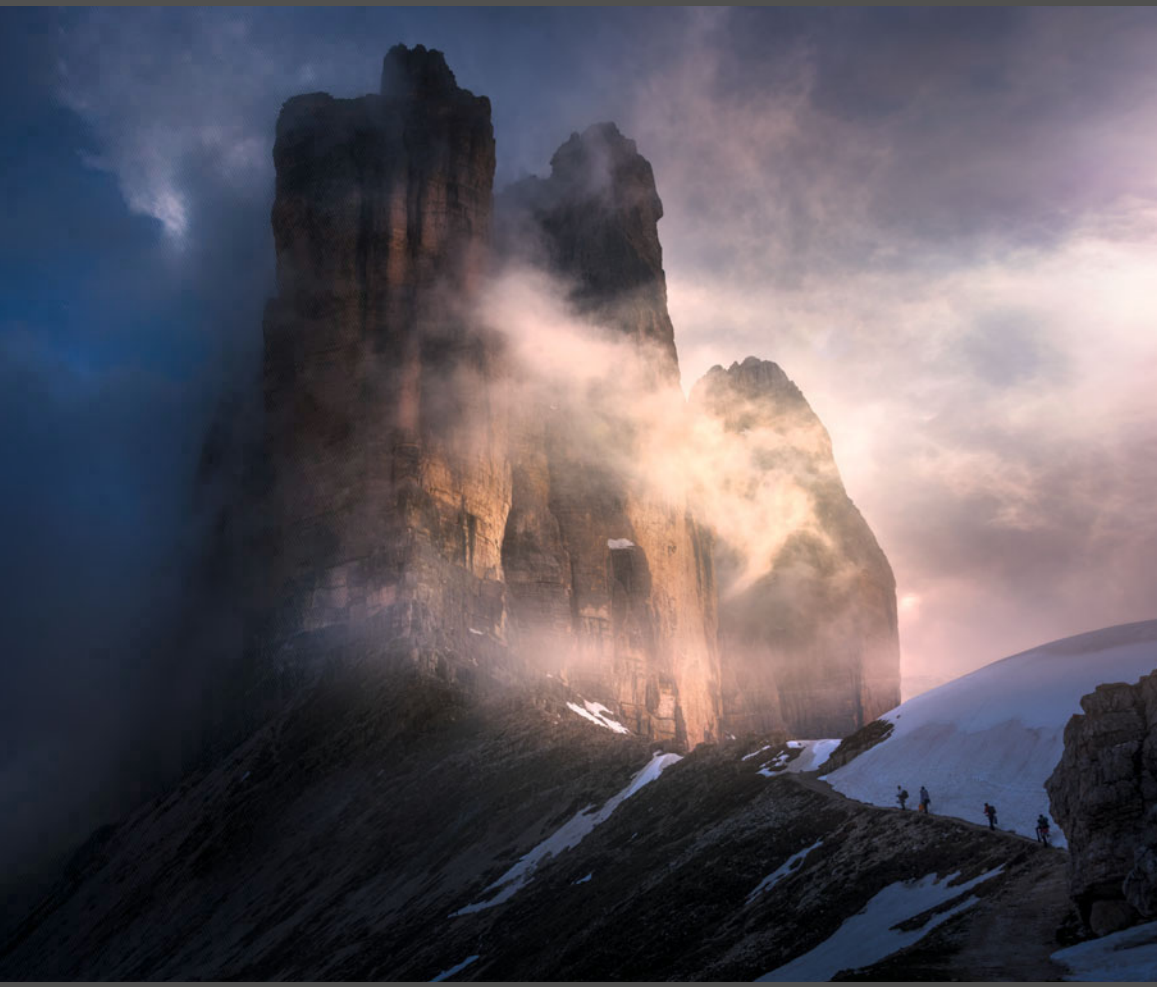
Fear and Uncertainty in Europe

The Return to Realism?

Edited by Roberto Belloni, Vincent Della Sala, Paul Viotti



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The Return to Realism?

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Roberto Belloni and Vincent Della Sala

The election of Donald Trump to the American presidency, a growing sense of American disengagement in Europe, Russian's seeming readiness to challenge basic liberal institutions both internally and in Europe, the on-going Ukraine conflict, Brexit, the rise of extremism in European states, the migrant crisis, terrorist attacks in and outside Europe, and collapsing states in the Middle East and North Africa are just a few recent developments that have raised challenges to the post-war order in Europe. Europe, on the frontlines of both the Cold War and the multilateral system that governed the first decades of the post-war period, now faces the possibility that its transatlantic partner is no longer committed to the same international order at precisely the moment that the European Union and Europe faces serious internal and external challenges.

Order in post-war Europe was marked by two very different elements. On the one hand, being on the frontlines of the Cold War meant it was

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at the very heart of power politics, with their attendant fear and uncertainty over material capacity and intentions in relations between states. On the other hand, the American security commitment contributed decisively to create the political space for the development of a political and economic order based on different principles, those that stressed a thick institutional and normative international order and a social market economy. In this context, European integration created an institutional architecture and normative foundation that would reduce, if not eliminate, fear and uncertainty and make calculations of material capability marginal in relations among a wide range of actors (Belloni 2016).

The end of the Cold War was thought to diminish the role of power politics in Europe and clear the way for the further development of peaceful relations. Theoretically, two influential components of structural realism—which was predominant in the United States in the 1980s and involved confidence in bipolar stability and power transition theory with its prediction of a clash among the superpowers—were challenged by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the peaceful end of the Cold War. While, as Paul Van Hooft and Annette Freyberg-Inan (Chapter 4, this volume) argue, realism can persuasively account for the end of the Cold War, the transformation of the global order, and the lack of major power conflict, the international system seemed to be moving in a direction that appeared to undercut realism's core tenets. This was no more the case than in Europe, as steps towards creating an 'ever closer union' with the European Union gave space to many new interpretative schemes that sought to understand an international order that seemed to be no longer driven by the dynamics of power politics and rational geopolitical calculations. Realists warned about the possibility that the end of bipolarity could result in increasing levels of instability (Mearsheimer 1990), but enthusiasm for European integration prevailed and reflected the hope that the second pillar of the post-war order—a thick normative and institutional architecture—would dominate and even extend beyond the expanding EU borders. It suggested that using "realism" as a cognitive map to understand the emerging European order, the behaviour of actors and the drivers of foreign policy was less useful than one that draws from liberal, or even interpretive and reflective, constructions of international relations.

As the euphoria over the end to Europe's division faded, the current political challenges stemming from the instability of the international system have raised questions about whether it may have been premature to

herald the end of realism in Europe. As Paul Viotti explains in Chapter 3, "a shift away from multilateralism to bilateralism or unilateralism driven by the political right in various countries undermined the embedded liberalism in the elaborate architecture of multilateral institutions" that have been the bedrock of the international system since the end of World War II. With increasing levels of perceived insecurity and the lack of trust in the "civilizing" (Koskenniemi 2010) potential of international law and multilateralism, realism appeared once again as a promising tool to explain the return of forms of instability and uncertainty at the international level.

Not unlike previous historical moments when alternative paradigms—most notably institutional liberalism—seemed to take the upper hand, amended versions of realism claim to provide important insights to Europe's present-day predicament (Orsi et al. 2018). Realists' own self-reflexivity, as well as engagement with critics, have frequently contributed to the regeneration of this tradition of thought, rather than its marginalization (Guzzini 1998). Journalistic and popular accounts contribute to a persisting interest in realism, however defined. Realism maintains a certain attractiveness because of its apparently simple lexicon, including references to 'security', the 'heartland', and the dichotomy and dualism between 'self' and 'other'—understood in the current European context as Russia, the immigrant, financial capital, and everything else supposedly menacing the 'self'. In sum, even when both the theory and practice of realism appeared to be on the defensive, it may have gone underground rather than have disappeared.

Realism's Many Faces

Any discussion of which conceptual map we might use to understand contemporary international relations, including Europe, requires sifting through the many ways in which the term "realism" can be and is used. There is no widely shared core of assumptions and claims that cover the entire spectrum of what is called realism: many claims made in the name of realism are not unique to it. Moreover, there is no immediate or clear answer to the question, "What is realism?".

As a rough approximation, two main traditions can be identified (Donnelly 2000; Wohlforth 2008). Classical or biological realists emphasize the importance of human nature, understood in essentially pessimistic and negative terms, in causing social conflict among groups.

By contrast, structural realists, often defined as neo-realists, stress the role played by international anarchy in creating the conditions for a perpetual struggle for power. Neo-realism is further divided into defensive and offensive realism on the basis of how much power states presumably require. Offensive realists, most notably John Mearsheimer (2001), argue that power predominance is the best safeguard for states' survival and thus states should maximize their relative power and become hegemonic. By contrast, defensive realists, such as Waltz (2008), contend that the maximization of power is ultimately counter-productive since it will eventually trigger the formation of an opposing coalition that will challenge their predominance. Whatever the merit of each position, power, along with its material manifestation to counter fear and uncertainty, is central to any type of realist analysis.

Both classical and structural realists have neglected the impact of domestic political factors in either constraining or enabling the ability of the executive to respond to systemic pressures and strategic challenges. In response to this limitation, a third major realist approach has been taking shape. Neoclassical realism affirms the primary importance of the international structure, but also includes in its analysis 'unit-level' variables such as domestic strategic leadership and power relationships (Rose 1998; Lobell et al. 2009; Toje and Kunz 2012). In this way, neoclassical realism 'brings the state back in' to the debates concerning systemic pressures on states and in the formulation of states' preferences and strategy. Several of the contributors to this volume draw from neoclassical realism to examine the foreign policy behaviour of states. In Chapter 4, Paul Van Hooft and Annette Freyberg-Inan explain recent security policy stances of states, such as France, as shaped primarily by domestic preoccupations and concerns, while being significantly moulded by their understanding of power relations in the international system, in particular in light of American relative decline over the last two decades or so. In Chapter 5, Alexander Reichwein adopts neoclassical realist lenses in order to elucidate dynamics of continuity and change in Germany's post-Cold War foreign policy. Along similar lines, Benedikt Erforth in Chapter 6 and Fabrizio Coticchia in Chapter 7 argue that neoclassical realism is well-suited to explain foreign policy decisions, in particular France's Operation Serval in Mali and Italy's Operation Prima Parthica in Iraq. Analogous dynamics are at play in non EU-members as well. In Chapter 9 Ozgur Ozdamar and Balkan Devlen elucidate Turkey's assertive policy towards the Middle East in the aftermath of the 2011 Arab

revolutions as a result of both the perception of domestic elites with regard to Turkey's role in the region, and the lack of domestic constraints. This case is revealing of how domestic considerations shape foreign policy decisions but do not guarantee the adoption of the most rational or effective policy. In the case of Turkey, the assertive foreign policy caused a worsening of relationships with neighbours and eventually had to be reconsidered.

The different understandings of the realist tradition in international relations raise the question of whether it is possible to identify a set of essential realist principles. While disagreements on what to include are bound to persist, we understand these principles to consist of the following main concepts and ideas (drawing from Brooks 1997; Donnelly 2000; Guzzini 1998; Legro and Moravcsik 1999; Lobell et al. 2009). First, the international arena is anarchic. While in most IR scholarship "anarchy" is taken for granted, there are at least 20 different conceptions of the term (Donnelly 2015). This multiplicity is biased towards realist meanings involving primarily disorder, lawlessness, and the possibility that violence may break out at any time. Crucially, this anarchic structure does not compel a single particular type of behaviour, although it may favour the development of competition for scarce resources among states. As Donnelly argues in this volume, rather than a causal factor, anarchy is best understood as a permissive condition.

Second, the state is the primary unit of analysis. States with the greatest resources—great powers—are the most important because of their ability to shape international affairs. Primary among the states' priorities is security, which could be achieved through a variety of goals ranging form self-preservation to universal domination but always with keen attention to material conditions. Following the publication in 1979 of Waltz's seminal neo-realist work, *Theory of International Politics*, most IR literature, and above all structural realism, has focused on the systemic constraints on states' behaviour (for an assessment see Viotti, Forthcoming). Neoclassical realism does not neglect these constraints, but focuses on the internal characteristics of states to explain how |constraints (and opportunities) are understood, interpreted and acted upon. Structural realists may find this approach reductionist, but it does have the merit of problematizing the role of the state—thus far considered in realist analysis as a "black box." Neoclassical realism draws attention to the 'two-level game' (Putnam 1988) leaders play in devising and implementing their policies: while on the one hand they must assess

and respond to the external environment, on the other hand they strive to gain or maintain the support of key domestic stakeholders, and to mobilize resources from domestic society. Thus, neoclassical realism combines structural realism's top-down approach with classical realism's bottom-up approach (Rose 1998: 154). As a number of the chapters in this volume demonstrate, understanding this dynamic may provide a useful interpretative key when examining recent foreign policy continuity and change in Europe.

Third, the view of human nature is profoundly pessimistic. Human nature is considered to be immutable, making moral progress impossible. Fear—understood as a reaction to a perceived threat or danger—is intrinsic to the human condition and urges us to defend ourselves from that threat or danger. Self-protection can be practiced through restraint or through aggressive behaviour. Whatever the preferred option, realists remain sceptical of the possibility of ameliorating international anarchy and thus reducing fear (Pashakhanlou 2017). The feasibility of establishing a pacific international order through international law and regimes is remote at best. Rather than relying on international institutions, states count on power to pursue their goals. Power is understood primarily, but not exclusively, in terms of material capabilities while politics is largely reduced to a struggle among states to acquire power in a world of uncertainty.

Reflecting on these different meanings attributed to the word 'realism', Jack Donnelly shows in Chapter 2 that the term has been used to capture a variety of uses. We can place them roughly on a spectrum that has theory on one end and tradition at the other, with models closer to the former, schools and approaches closer to the latter. Put succinctly, according to Donnelly, realism understands the international realm as one where self-interested states are driven by fear and uncertainty in a system based on states seeking power, at a minimum, to guarantee their survival. Each of these elements, either individually or collectively, does not necessarily constitute realism. What does is whether and how these elements shape the behaviour of actors and their understanding of international relations. Realists, whether as analysts or as foreign policy actors, "emplot" these elements in a particular way to shape their understanding of the social world and how to behave in it. For example, realists understand uncertainty as fear induced by anarchy and the possibility of predation (Rathbun 2007). This understanding gives meaning to the use of power and the thin normative and institutional order

that serves strategic interests. The contributions in this volume want to explore whether this provides a useful conceptual map to understand how states and other actors face the growing uncertainty about the future of international order constructed over the last 75 years in Europe.

This Book

The aim of the chapters in this book is three-fold. First, they seek to assess whether foreign policy actors in Europe understand the international system and behave as realists and/or how realists would expect them to behave. They ask what drives their behaviour, how they construct material capabilities and to what extent they see material power as the means to ensure survival in a post-Cold War context apparently marked by growing instability. The contributors use or contest realism in its different forms as laid out in the chapter by Jack Donnelly. These authors also identify continuity or change in the foreign policy of key European actors. They ask whether the use of realism helps us to understand what might be critical junctures and why.

A number of important themes cut across most, if not all, of the chapters that deal with Europe in this volume. They address the question of how actors understand and use power. The conventional argument that European states are less driven by fear—the use of material power to achieve survival and security—is examined in a series of different cases. Countries such as Germany and France no longer engage in what Zaki Laïdi (2008: 12–17) described as 'power avoidance', that is, the preference for a limited engagement in international relations. In Chapter 5, Alexander Reichwein accounts for the rise of Germany as a 'responsible' and 'shaping power' in the international system and Benedikt Erforth in Chapter 6 discusses France's self-understanding as an 'influential power' with growing responsibilities and obligations. In Chapter 10, Pauline Schnapper discusses the consequences of 'Brexit' in the United Kingdom, including the return of what appears to be a traditionalist, power-based foreign policy detached from entanglements with European countries and based on British exceptionalism. The chapter has been placed in the section dedicated to non-EU European states to underscore that perhaps Britain's different understanding of fear and uncertainty had always distinguished it from its soon to be former EU partners.

Second, the chapters examine whether a thick normative order has developed and whether this has changed the ways in which actors understand fear and uncertainty along with how to manage this condition. This normative imperative is central to the discussion of European intervention in Africa, examined by Catherine Gegout in Chapter 13, and in the foreign policy of states such as France and Italy. In addition, it informs the analysis of recent Russian foreign policy. As Natalia Morozova argues in Chapter 8, Russia's subordinate position within the Western dominated normative order generates uncertainty not, as in the realist framework, about other states' intentions but rather about its own sense of identity and sources of agency. With an approach based on discourse analysis, Morozova examines Russia's attempt to ease its ontological insecurity through the adoption of a discursive framework based on 'Eurasianism' and 'geopolitics.' Even a security organization such as NATO experienced important normative developments. As Sten Rynning explains in Chapter 11, NATO's recent Protection of Civilians doctrine constitutes an important normative adaptation to the challenges presented by the organization's post-Cold War engagement in crisis management tasks.

Third, contributors examine what it means to act strategically in a world apparently dominated by fear and uncertainty. The foreign policy of states examined in this volume, as well as that of multilateral organizations such as the NATO and the EU, testified to the difficulty of formulating and implementing a coherent approach to the challenges that Europe has been facing since the end of the Cold War. In particular, in Chapter 12 Roberto Belloni and Vincent Della Sala discuss the EU's actions in the Balkans and its relations with Russia. Both areas present the EU not only with foreign policy challenges but also existential issues that point to its lack of ontological security. Both engagement with the Balkans and with Russia highlight the tension in the growing need to make strategic choices while remaining consistent with its narrative of a benign, normative power that looks to a thick institutional architecture to provide order.

Most of the chapters included in this volume originated from a conference held at the University of Trento on 11–12 November 2016, titled 'Realism and the Return of Geopolitics in Europe'. We are grateful to both the University's Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence and the Department of Sociology and Social Research for their generous financial and logistical support. We are also indebted to the conference participations as well as those colleagues who accepted to contribute a chapter at a later stage.

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PART I

Context

CHAPTER 2

What Do We Mean by Realism? And How—And What—Does Realism Explain?

Jack Donnelly

Certainly, one would think, we know what we mean when we call an action, outcome, argument, or explanation "realist." In IR we do it "all the time," so we *must* know. Right?

Often, I want to suggest, only sort of. This essay tries to sort out and clarify some of the principal senses of "realism" and how (and what) realism explains.

"Defining" "Realism"

Consider the following "definitions" (presented in more or less heavily elided quotations or close paraphrases).

1. The fundamental unit of social and political affairs is the "conflict group."
2. States are motivated primarily by their national interest.
3. Power relations are a fundamental feature of international affairs (Gilpin 1996: 7–8).

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1. The state-centric assumption: states are the most important actors in world politics.
2. The rationality assumption: world politics can be analyzed as if states were unitary rational actors seeking to maximize their expected utility.
3. The power assumption: states seek power and they calculate their interests in terms of power (Keohane 1986: 164–165).

1. Groupism. Politics takes place within and between groups.
2. Egoism. When individuals and groups act politically, they are driven principally by narrow self-interest.
3. Anarchy. The absence of government dramatically shapes the nature of international politics.
4. Power politics. The intersection of groupism and egoism in an environment of anarchy makes international relations, regrettably, largely a politics of power and security (Wohlforth 2008: 133; Donnelly 2008: 150).

1. Humans face one another primarily as members of groups.
2. International affairs takes place in a state of anarchy.
3. Power is the fundamental feature of international politics.
4. The nature of international interactions is essentially conflictual.
5. Humankind cannot transcend conflict through the progressive power of reason.
6. Politics is not a function of ethics.
7. Necessity and reason of state trump morality and ethics (Schweller 1997: 927).

1. The international system is anarchic.
2. States inherently possess some offensive military capability, which gives them the wherewithal to hurt and possibly destroy each other.
3. No state can ever be certain another state will not use its offensive military capability.
4. The most basic motive driving states is survival.
5. States are instrumentally rational (Mearsheimer 1994/1995: 9–10).

These are all "good definitions" that "point in the same direction." They range, though, from very broad (e.g., Gilpin and Keohane) to rather narrow (Schweller). And they only partially overlap.

Even more importantly, the widely shared elements, such as anarchy, power, selfishness, and rationality, are also central to many (most?) other leading perspectives. (Most strikingly, most IR scholars would readily agree with Gilpin's "defining" claims that social and political life is organized in groups that regularly engage in conflict, that states are motivated principally by their national interests, and that power is fundamental to international relations.)[1] In fact, although these definitions identify many *characteristically* "realist" features, few, even in combination, are *distinctively* "realist," in the sense that they demarcate "realist" from "non-realist."

Furthermore, the use of terms like "primarily," "fundamental," "most basic," and "essentially" make it unclear just what is being claimed. And how one gets from these "realist premises" to "realist conclusions" is, at best, obscure.

This variety and imprecision, I will argue, is inescapable. (If it is a "problem," it is irresolvable.) Realism has no defining core; no set of criteria by which we can sort arguments, explanations, actions, or outcomes as realist or non-realist. That does not, however, make "realism" an empty or confused term. Rather, I will argue, realism is a complex and diverse family of "things" that recurrently appear in our analytical practice in varied but patterned ways.

Realism as "Theory"

What kind of a "thing" is realism? One obvious answer is "a theory," in the broad sense of abstracted generalizations that purport to be of analytical or explanatory value. Here I identify five types of "realist theory," which I call theories, traditions, models, schools, and approaches.

Kenneth Waltz (1990b, 1991) drew a useful distinction between (realist) thought and (neorealist) theory. "Theory," Waltz argues (1979: 8–10, 12, 69), explains law-like regularities by showing them to be effects of underlying relations of cause or interdependency. I will adopt this fairly standard sense. *Theories* provide particular substantive explanations of patterned events. Waltz presents structural realism as a theory in this sense.

[1] Most would also agree with Mearsheimer's claims, at least if we interpret his claim that survival is the most basic motive driving states to to mean that states, if forced to choose, usually would rank survival above all other objectives.

"Thought" is a less clear category. I will use it here to refer to *traditions* of analysis, understood as persistent discursive communities and their associated bodies of work. Traditions of thought have no defining criteria. They do, however, have characteristic analytical perspectives and practices that typically are expressed in more or less widely shared parameters of conversation, common themes, characteristic elements and arguments, and exemplary authors and texts. The realist tradition is generally recognized as central to IR (although it long predates academic IR).

Models, as I will use the term, are combinations of interconnected analytical elements that say something significant about cause, process, mechanism, or outcome. Models, although more like theories than traditions, are too incomplete or underspecified to explain without (more or less substantial) supplementation.[2] Structural realism, I will argue below, is always used as a model.

"Schools" and "approaches", like traditions, are communities of practice that encompass multiple theories or models. They are, however, narrower and more coherent than traditions (of which they typically are parts). *Schools*, as I use the term, are fundamentally substantive. Their identity is tied to canonical texts or authorities or characteristic arguments or insights. Marxism is a school of social theory. Structural realism can also be read as a school. *Approaches* are much more centrally "methodological", defined more by shared analytical orientations and practices than by shared substance. Neo-classical realism, I will argue below, is an approach.

Finally, I suggest that it is useful to think of traditions, schools, and approaches as "perspectives", which inspire and guide, rather than provide, explanations. Theories and models, in this typology, explain (as do ad hoc and eclectic arguments).

These categories should not be taken too seriously. The dividing lines are not clear. Other fruitful categorizations are possible. (For example, I have not included research programs.) Nonetheless, this typology seems to me both insightful and useful for clarifying the diversity of "things" that fall within the realm of realist "theory" in IR.

[2] This distinction between theory and model is common in natural science disciplines that have been intensively formalized through mathematics. It also seems to me broadly consistent with standard usage in self-consciously social-scientific IR. See, for example, King et al. (1994: 49–53, 106–107).

What Is a Realist Explanation?

The rest of this chapter focuses on how and what "realism" explains. (For maximum clarity, I repeat that my focus is on realist *explanations*. The policies, actions, and outcomes that are being explained—which are the central concern of most of the other chapters in this volume—appear here only incidentally.) This section examines the character of realist (in any of the above senses) explanations. What makes an explanation "realist"?

Realist Explanations Versus Explanations that Employ Realist Elements

An explanation that employs "characteristically realist" premises in ways guided by and reflective of a realist tradition is, I will argue, "realist" in a strong and unambiguous sense. It is not enough that it gives a central place to one or more "characteristically realist" factors or forces—especially when those factors or forces are not *distinctively* realist.

For example, both neoliberal institutionalism[3] and structural realism[4] begin with anarchy and the problems for cooperation that it poses. Structural realism, however, focuses on self-help responses that pose power against power. Neoliberal institutionalism, by contrast, focuses on responses that develop and deploy international institutions. Structural realist theories and models (and the school or approach of structural realism) and neoliberal institutionalist theories and models (and the school or approach of neoliberal institutionalism) explore different kinds of responses to different things, producing divergent explanations.

Or consider neoclassical realism,[5] which, like neoliberal institutionalism, focuses on situations where structural explanations fall short or fail. Most of the work in neoclassical realist explanations is done by factors such as domestic political structure, perceptions, intentions, and processes of strategic interaction that not only have no special connection

[3] Keohane and Martin (2003), Stein (2008), and Keohane (2012) provide good brief overviews. I treat neoliberal institutionalism both as a school that is part of a broad tradition of liberal international thought and a part of a broad institutionalist approach that has generated a variety of theories and models.

[4] See section below on structural realism.

[5] See section below on neoclassical realism.

to realism but are widely employed by a great variety of other theories (broadly understood)—including neoliberal institutionalism. Nonetheless, we regularly (and I think rightly) describe neoclassical realism as a school or approach within realism and neoliberal institutionalism as a school or approach outside of (or even opposed to) realism.

If we look simply at the elements employed in the analysis and see neoliberal institutionalism as not realist, then we would seem to be compelled to say that neoclassical realism is not actually a form of realism. Conversely, though, looking only at the elements employed and seeing neoclassical realism as realist, we would seem compelled to say that neoliberal institutionalism is a form of realism. And there is no neutral position to adjudicate between these readings.

I have not mentioned "realist conclusions" because I am arguing that there are no such things *separate from the (realist) path(s) that produce them*. A realist conclusion is a conclusion reached by a realist path, guided by a realist perspective, largely irrespective of its content.

Because realism is not one thing with a precise and highly elaborated form, no particular conclusions follow necessarily from "realism." Therefore, there are no essential or defining realist conclusions. Conversely, any particular policy, action, outcome, or explanation usually can be reached by a variety of paths. Therefore, how one gets there (or explains getting there) is essential to whether it "is realist" (or not). In particular, simply reaching a characteristically realist conclusion (or behaving in a characteristically realist fashion) does not make an explanation (or action) realist.[6]

An explanation's perspective—features such as heuristics, emphases, discursive settings, analytic dispositions, and characteristic frames, elements, and arguments—is fundamental (and, I am suggesting, usually decisive) in determining its character. It matters, centrally, that neoclassical realists operate (and see themselves as operating) within the realist tradition, from which they draw their analytical frames, positive and negative heuristics, "unthinking" analytical and substantive predisposition, etc. And it matters, centrally, that others whose work might seem "very similar" employ different frames, for different purposes, to reach

[6]To argue otherwise is likely to lead us dangerously close to confusing "realist explanations" with "explanations often (or even typically) offered by realists." Were this error not so obvious, once noted, it might merit further discussion.

different conclusions (or the same conclusion by a different route)—and that they have different understandings of the meaning and significance of their accounts.

Realist Explanations Versus Explanations (Not In)Compatible with Realism

The central presence of "characteristically realist" actions, outcomes, variables, or conclusions probably does make an explanation (not in)*compatible* with realism. Although perhaps of interest for the "dueling theories" contests that are still popular in some parts of the discipline, this tells us little if anything about the character of an explanation—which is my concern here.

Few if any important features of international relations can be completely encompassed by realist (or any other type of) explanations. Therefore, few if any parts of international relations are the unquestionable provenance of realist explanations. Nonetheless, realism, as indicated by its persistent prevalence, has something to say about much of international relations.

This helps to explain why starting points, elements, and conclusions are not decisive—and why perspective is almost always both central and essential. How one weaves together the various threads of an argument or explanation is crucial to its character.

The point is especially clear if we turn, briefly, from explanation to action. *How* a state responds to external power in anarchy[7] is at least as important as *that* it does. One reasonable, and quite common, response is to seek to create rules or institutions that make such power less threatening. These, however, are institutionalist, not realist, responses.

Most if not all international actors take into account material capabilities and their distribution. (It would be a strange theory, model, or approach that suggested they did not.) "Realist" actors and actors employing other perspectives often will approach and respond to external power rather differently.

Explanations, it needs to be emphasized, do not sort neatly into realist and not realist. Realists have a "story"—or, rather, a genre of

[7]It may bear repeating that external power in anarchy is a universal feature of international systems and that has no special connection to realism (even if realism does have a special attachment to some of the problems it poses).