

# POLITICS FOR INDIA

## REALISM

Realism is considered as hegemonic (dominant) theory in international relations. Because it supposedly provides the explanation for the state of war, which is the regular condition of life in international system. (Globalization of World Politics by Baylis, Smith and Owens)

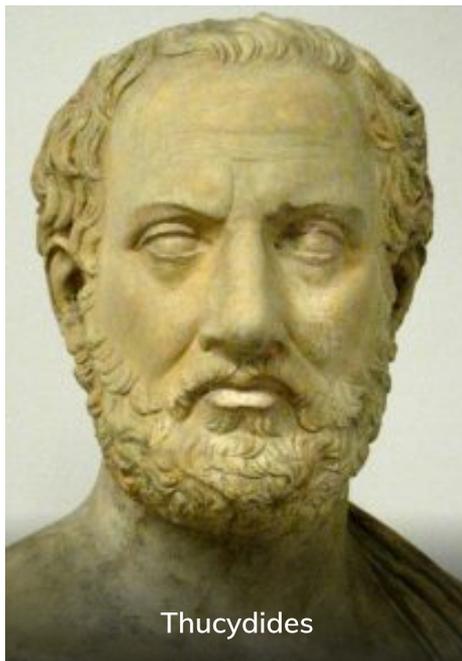
### History of Realism

#### Thucydides

*Right as world goes is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.*

Thucydides

The origin of classical theory of realism is witnessed in the works of Thucydides. He not only described history but also analysed it. In ancient Greece, Athens attacked Sparta for fear of its rise. Thucydides has suggested that the main reason for war is **fear** because we never know **intentions** of our partner. Thus limited room is available to statesman. They can only respond by increasing their strength. Other state perceives it as offensive and gives rise to arms race. He has given the concept of Thucydides trap which states that the beginning of the war was driven by the fear associated with a shift in balance of power.



Thucydides

## Decline of Classical tradition

Rise of Roman empire around 1st century AD brought concept of Pax Romana (Universal state civilisation). Thus there were no more competing states. Another superpower was Chinese empire and it never interacted with Roman kingdom. Thus there was no space of balance of power.

The development was also coupled with spreading of Christianity. It preached the values of Christian Universalism. A new interpretation which suggested history culminating in kingdom of heaven. Thus realism went at backstage of discussion in International Relations.

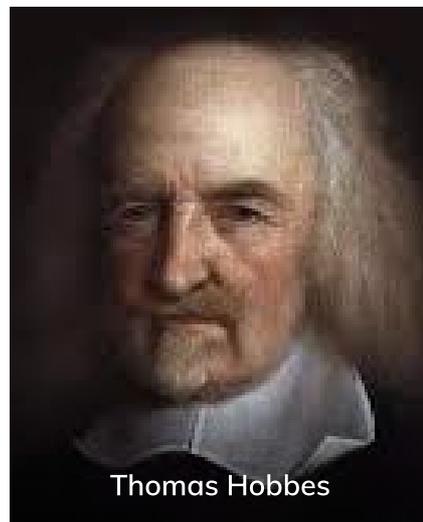
## Machiavelli

We witness the revival in Realism in works of Machiavelli and Hobbes. In his book, *THE PRINCE*, Machiavelli suggests that the only responsibility of prince is to protect his power and his subordinates. There is strict division between internal and international. There is no need of prince to win the favour of those who are not his subjects. And a Responsible ruler should not follow Christian ethics.

Machiavelli writes that the war and not peace is a normal condition in world affairs. Every solution, victory or compromise is only preparation of another war. *The promise given was a necessity of the past: the word broken is a necessity of the present.*



Machiavelli



Thomas Hobbes

## Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes deals with dilemma between internal order and international anarchy. According to him, internal order is source of international anarchy.

*in all times kings, and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independence, are in continued jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another. That their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms, and continual spies upon their neighbours, which is a posture of war.*

The main reason for rivalry and competition among states is their **independence**. And the second reason is their **jealousness**. States are just instruments in hands of rulers which are applied for the purpose of war.

Hobbes also suggest how it is not possible to establish world government. He calls state as Leviathan (a mythical beast in Bible, wielding highest strength). He suggests that the Leviathans (states) will always fight. It is impossible to establish Leviathan over Leviathan (International government). States will never give up their sovereignty. Further, people will also not agree to world govt. because of their concern for security.

## 2nd Decline in Classical Realism.

### Westphalian Peace Treaty.

An Intense, 'Thirty Years War' ended with Treaty of Westphalia. It is considered as the biggest achievement of international diplomacy so far and the main foundation of present international law.

#### **The three essential principles of Westphalian treaty are**

- 1] Whose realm, his religion. Religion must be exclusive internal affair. Fighting for religion, fighting for values & not material interest was forbidden by this treaty.
- 2] Every king is emperor in his own kingdom. All nations are equal and independent.
- 3] No one can be stronger than others. (Balance of Power). When one nation tried to become dominant in Europe, others should combine their efforts and resist. e.g. Napoleonic wars, WW1, WW2.

### The Revival in Works of Morgenthau

War has always been the driver of science of International Relations from ancient to modern times. From Peloponnesian war emerged the theory of Thucydides trap. The 'thirty years war' gave us the scholars like Thomas Hobbes, Hugo Grotius. It also gave us Westphalian treaty and its three principles i.e. non-interference, sovereignty and balance of power. On the same line, World War 1 led to the establishment of International Relations as a separate discipline. Scholars of political science started questioning 'why' the pre-world war order collapsed? The approach before World War was criticised for being utopian, and scholars like Morgenthau revived the doctrine of realism.

### Features of Realist school.

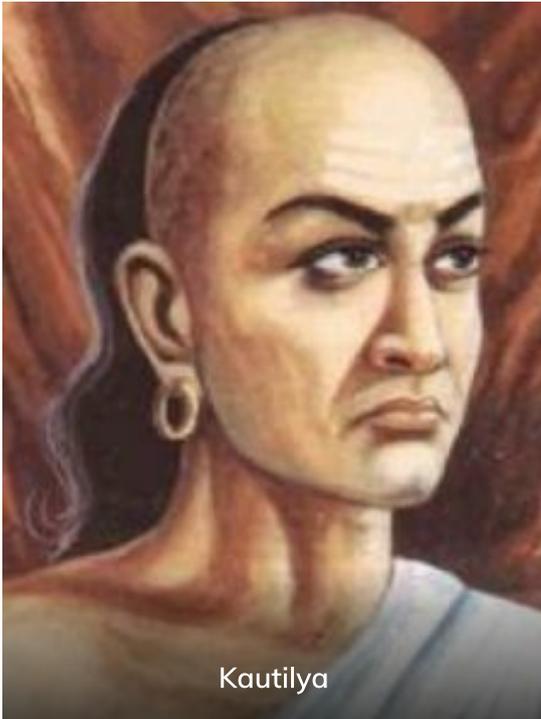
- 1\_It is state-centric view of international politics.
- 2\_According to them, international politics is in the state of anarchy.
- 3\_In the absence of world government, security of the states depend on self-help.
- 4\_Survival is the most important goal of nation states.
- 5\_In the state of anarchy, the only way for survival is through self help by increasing power.
- 6\_Nations suffer from security dilemma. According to the realist, power is a zero-sum game. When one country increases power, the other is bound to feel insecure and enters into the struggle for power.

### Three 'S's of Realism

- 1] Statism** – focus on state as a centre of world politics. Realism neglects importance of other actors, and considers them mere proxy for state.
- 2] Survival** – survival as the key national interest of states. It is the only purpose which drives actions of states.
- 3] Self Help** – self help as the best option (perhaps the only option) available for the state in the international system.

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## Realism in East



Kautilya



Sun Tzu

### **Kautilya**

According to him, the state of relations between states is like jungle where strength of lion prevails. Every neighbouring state is an enemy. The king must be *Vijigishu* (every hungry to acquire power).

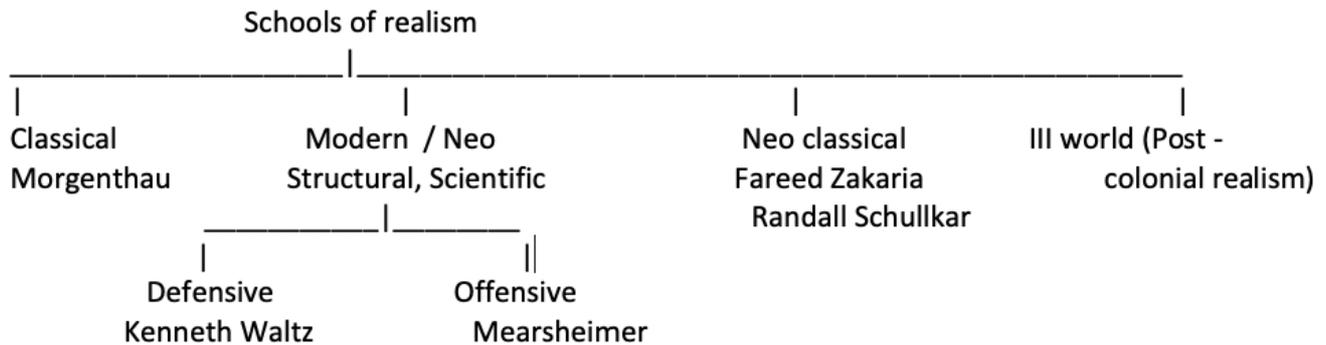
### **Sun Tzu**

The author of *THE ART OF WAR*. He has given various types of wars and strategies including guerrilla warfare.

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# Types of Realism

We can consider realism as a meta ideology. Though all realists share basic assumptions, yet there are different schools in realism.



Scholars of Realism

## Classical Realism.

**Morgenthau** was the first person to give systematic view of realism in international politics in his book *POLITICS AMONG NATIONS*, first published in 1948.

Morgenthau is influenced by Machiavelli.

### What is the context of his work?

Morgenthau was fearful of American foreign policy makers developing some idealistic trends because of the establishment of US hegemony, it is often seen that once a person becomes victorious, he develops the feeling of pity towards the vanquished. Hence Morgenthau has written the six principles of realism to warn American foreign policy makers. He called these principles as 'scientific principles'.

**1] Human Nature.** He claims his theory is scientific as it is based on the scientific analysis of human nature. Like all politics, international politics is also based on human nature. According to him, man is *animus dominandi*, power seeking animal. Since states are run by humans, states are also power seeking.

**2] National Interest.** Like all actions of human beings are guided by self-interest, nations are guided by

national interest. Survival is the fundamental national interest. Survival is the prime motivation of foreign policies. The only way to secure the fundamental national interest is through power. In the words of Morgenthau, 'whatever may be the ultimate end, power is always the immediate end of foreign policies'. Morgenthau suggests that in international politics, power is both – the means as well as end. It is called as the dual nature of power.

**3] On the nature of national interest.** Though national interest remains the permanent motivation, yet the national interest is highly dynamic. It keeps on changing because the world order keeps on changing. Hence countries have to consistently revise their national interests.

**4] Role of ethics.** Like Machiavelli, Morgenthau does not see the role of ethics in international politics. According to him, universal moral principles cannot be applied to the conduct of states. According to him, pragmatics is ethics of politics. Pragmatic means being 'politically correct'. It means we need not to look at what is right in all situations but what is right in given situation.

**5] Role of ideology.** He does not see any significance of ideology in international politics. Ideologies are the masks to hide real intentions. He even suggest that nation should not bring its ideas, ideologies, norms and values in its relations with other states.

**6] On nature of international politics.** Like Machiavelli, Morgenthau also suggests that international politics is neither ethics nor law nor even economics. International politics is autonomous, it has its own rules. Like Machiavelli, he also believes that international politics is not a inspiring field, but that is how it is.

Morgenthau does not see any role of international organizations, international law, he only believes that balance power, diplomacy, deterrence is the way to protect national interest. He classified countries on the basis of foreign policy into 3 types.

1\_Status quoist. e.g. USA. – Those who are benefited by present system and would like to maintain the system.

2\_Revisionists e.g. China. Those who want to change the system.

3\_Imperialists e.g. Germany under Hitler. (When you seek to expand your territory.)

*Whatever may be the ultimate end, power is always the immediate end of foreign policies.*

Morgenthau

## Criticism of Morgenthau (Realism)

It is said that theory of international politics is a dialogue between Morgenthau's supporters and Morgenthau's critics. Morgenthau's critics not only come from other schools but from within realism. Scholar like Kenneth Waltz criticised Morgenthau for not being scientific. Liberals criticised Morgenthau for taking the pessimistic view of human nature. Scholars like Benno Wasserman does not find Morgenthau's description of human nature, scientific. Stanley Hoffman suggest that Morgenthau suffer from 'Power monism'. (You are focusing only on one factor i.e. power. Like Marx talks about economic factor.) One of the major critics of Morgenthau are feminists. Ann J Tickner has reformulated the six principles of Morgenthau from feminists point of view.

# Feminist Critique of Morgenthau

Feminists school of international politics has gained significant importance in recent times. There are countries which are fast adopting the feminist foreign policy. Sweden is the first country which has formally adopted the feminist foreign policy. **What is feminist foreign policy?** Ending the neglect of women perspective in international politics, giving primacy to the rights of women. e.g. Hillary Clinton emphasized on the need that US should give primacy to the interest of women in conduct of its foreign policy with countries like Saudi Arabia. In the words of Hillary Clinton 'Human rights are actually women rights'. (*Hillary Doctrine*). Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallstrom has given the essence of feminist foreign policy.

1] Feminist foreign policy recognizes the limitations in the conventional understanding of security. (Ignoring human security).

2] Feminist foreign policy recognizes the actual experiences of the real persons in conflict situations. (Women are most vulnerable and are source of targeted violence.)

3] Feminist foreign policy aims to meet the greatest challenge to human rights i.e. women rights, not only in the situation of wars but also in the situation of peace.

4] Feminist foreign policy not only looks at women as victims but also as the agent of change. (If women are given primacy in international politics, it will be good for the world peace.)

Feminist consider that international politics is one of the most masculinist of all disciplines. Cynthia Enloe in her book *BANANAS, BEACHES AND BASES: MAKING FEMINIST SENSE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS*. has raised the question 'where are the women?'. She highlights the subordinate roles given to the women by the states. e.g. Workers in banana plantations owned by MNCs, Wives of diplomats hosting dinners, Sex workers at military bases.

She concludes that personal is international and international is personal. Thus the lack of presence of women in decision making structures is one of the factor not only for violence against women but also the recurrent wars in international politics.

Carole Cohen. In her article *SEX AND DEATH* suggests that excessive masculinist culture is responsible for the divorce of war from human emotions.

J B Elshtain. *WOMEN AND WAR*. According to her, the aim of feminist perspective is to create the sensitivity about the consequences of masculinist discourses which promote distorted world-view.

Ann J Tickner in her book *GENDER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON ACHIEVING GLOBAL SECURITY* has reformulated the six principles of Morgenthau.

Theme – 1] We cannot ignore ethics in politics. 2] Instead of territorial security, primacy should be given to human security.

## Six Principles

1. Disagreement with Morgenthau's description of human nature. The description of human nature by Morgenthau is culturally defined. Human nature is both – masculinist as well as feminist.
2. Disagreement with conception of national interest. National interest cannot be defined only in terms of power. We have to take the multidimensional view. International politics also involve cooperation.

3. According to Tickner, power cannot be defined only in the masculinist sense of domination. Power can also be seen in constructive sense of empowerment.
4. Politics cannot be separated from ethics. All political actions have moral significance.
5. If we will take moral principles into account, we can avoid wars. We cannot say that ethics carry no meaning. Human race cannot survive without observing ethics. We cannot absolve politicians from taking the moral responsibility of their actions.
6. She rejects the autonomy of politics from ethics, and suggest that it is an extremely narrow view of politics.

### Conclusion of feminist theory of international politics.

The feminist perspective has been at the periphery of the discipline of international politics which has been dominated by malestream theories (masculinist theories). It is not gaining recognition because conventional discourses are found to be distorting the reality. Feminist perspective is seen as more neutral and critical. It is not seen as a conspiracy bounded by any existing... rather a genuine concern for peace. There is a recognition in practice also e.g. 1) Countries are adopting feminist foreign policies. 2) UNSC resolution '1325' recognise the necessity to give women essential role in te decision related to peace and security from where they have been excluded historically. The resolution appeals that member countries, integrate feminist perspective in foreign policy. 3) Institutions like world bank, IMF, UN have recognized the centrality of women in development as well as security. Both Millennium Development Doal (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) recognise women empowerment.

Thus feminist believe that cause of war in international politics .... it is suggested that 'men make war because war make men'.



### Structural Realism [Neo realism]

#### Difference between Classical and Neo Realists?

There is no difference as far as basic assumptions about international politics. The basic difference is in methodology. Though Morgenthau claims his theory as scientific, yet his theory is not regarded as scientific. **Why?** Scientific theory cannot be built on the analysis of human nature. **Why?** There cannot be any scientific understanding of human nature itself. **Why?** It is unpredictable. Same person may not behave in a similar manner under similar circumstances twice. Hence Kenneth Waltz has changed the methodology. **What change?** From Actor level analysis (Unit level analysis) to Structure level analysis. Hence neorealism is rightly called as structural realism. Though it is also called scientific realism.

#### Purpose of Kenneth Waltz theory?

There has been a question mark on the status of realism as scientific theory. Hence Kenneth Waltz aimed to establish principles of realism on scientific basis. **How he does so?** Since no scientific theory can be based on human nature so he shifts the analysis from nature to structure. (Structure denotes the fundamental architecture).

## Context of the theory of Kenneth Waltz.

Kenneth Waltz is known as Detente Realist. Detente was a phase during cold war, during which there was relaxation of tensions between superpowers. Hence liberal scholars like Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye challenged the status of realism as the scientific theory of international politics. Hence Kenneth Waltz aimed to establish the scientific nature of realism and to prove that realism is 'timeless wisdom'. In 1979 we see the re-emergence of cold war, same year Kenneth Waltz book *THE THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS* was published.

## Prominent ideas of Kenneth Waltz on international politics.

1. Unlike Morgenthau who goes for unit level analysis Kenneth Waltz goes for structure level analysis.
2. Kenneth Waltz explained the structure of international politics as anarchical. Anarchy denotes the absence of world government. (/Not necessarily chaos always.)
3. The impact of anarchy – In order to understand the impact of anarchy, Kenneth Waltz has shown the comparison between the structure of international politics and the structure of domestic politics. **What is the basic difference?** The structure of international politics is anarchical whereas domestic politics is hierarchical. It is hierarchical because in domestic sphere, state exists. Hence in domestic sphere individuals need not to possess arms for their protection but in international sphere states have no option but to acquire arms. Thus the structure of international politics creates the situation of security dilemma and as a consequence international politics becomes the struggle for power.
4. Kenneth Waltz also makes the difference between domestic and international politics in terms of functional differentiation – functional differentiation exists in domestic sphere among the three branches of govt. No functional difference exists in international politics. **Why?** All states have to perform similar functions.
5. Capabilities – According to Kenneth Waltz, states in international politics may not differ in terms of functions which they perform but they differ in terms of capabilities. Capabilities denote the amount of power.
6. Thus on the basis of structure of international politics, Kenneth Waltz establish that the structure of international politics gives no freedom to the actors. It means whosoever is a foreign policy maker is compelled to go for power politics. The structure constrains the choices of the actors. Hence from his perspective it will not make any difference whether Pandit Nehru is shaping the foreign policy or Indira Gandhi. (Elimination of personality factor.) It also gives explanation as to why foreign policies reflect continuity /despite change in governments.



### Mearsheimer's contribution

Structural realist. Like Kenneth Waltz, he also shifts analysis from actors to structures. A post cold war realist. His book *THE TRAGEDY OF GREAT POWER POLITICS* was published in 2001.

### Context of the work of Mearsheimer.

There was a question mark on the status of realism as 'timeless wisdom'. **Why?** The end of cold war has shown the remarkable growth in cooperation. There has been phenomenal increase in the number of international institutions, regional organizations, global conventions. One of the biggest achievement was formation of WTO in 1995. USA has been trying to establish a platform to determine the rules for international trade since Bretton Woods conference in 1945. However such institution could not come into existence. The end of cold war led to the emergence of globalization denoting growth of interdependence. Thus it was advocated that realist politics has no more relevance and international politics will now be conducted on the lines suggested by liberals. It means nations need not to be concerned about arms race, they can pursue the politics of cooperation.

In above context Mearsheimer re-establishes the relevance of realism. **What is the focus of his work?** He focused on the future of US-China relations. **What was his observation?** He warned against the fantasies of American scholars emphasising on US-China cooperation. He prescribed USA 1) China is a challenge to US hegemony. 2) It would be foolish on the part of USA to support the rise of China. 3) It would be foolish of USA to accept the discourse of 'peaceful rise'.

Mearsheimer suggested that the objective of China is to increase its power not for its security but for its dominance. According to Mearsheimer, states are 'power maximisers' rather than security maximisers. He suggested that the sooner USA takes steps to contain China, better it is. The reason is the gap between the powers of US and China is disappearing fast. Never ever in the history the rise of any country in context of all dimensions of power has been so fast like that of China.

**Mearsheimer has suggested following policies/options.**

1. **Direct action.** There can be two methods 1) War – War may be effective but extremely costly. 2) Blackmailing – Blackmailing may be cost effective but may not work.
2. **Indirect actions.** 1) Buck-passing. It means shifting the burden to some other country. e.g. to India. It is to be noted that India is the ideal 'swing state' from the perspective of US administration. (Swing state means – negative connotation). 2) Bait and Bleed. Support one country and let the two countries bleed. It has been the traditional policy of USA to support the weaker country. e.g. Supporting Pakistan against India, India against China, Saudi Arabia against Iran. 3) Blood letting. Suppose two countries are fighting, then ensure that they continue to fight and thus weaken themselves. e.g. USA supplied arms to both the countries during Iran and Iraq war so that no one develops the capacity to emerge as a regional power.

## Difference between Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz

Though both are structural realists, yet there is a difference between the two. Kenneth Waltz is defensive realist, Mearsheimer is offensive realist. **What is the difference between offensive and defensive realist?** The basic difference is with respect to the amount of power country should acquire.

## Views of Kenneth Waltz.

1. There is no need to go for endless search for power.
2. Nation should acquire power which is sufficient for its defence.
3. Kenneth Waltz supports 'security maximization' rather than 'power maximization'.
4. According to him, unnecessary amount of power is counter-productive. **Why?** When nation goes for unending search for power beyond what is needed for its security, it force other countries to form 'counter coalitions' and thus balance the hegemon.

## Mearsheimer's view.

1. No amount of power is enough.
2. In this context, Mearsheimer comes closer to Morgenthau. For both the scholars power is an end in itself.
3. According to Mearsheimer USA should aspire for hegemony rather than balance.
4. USA should not allow any country to gain balance of power vis-a-vis USA.
5. The only guarantee of security is hegemony.
6. According to Mearsheimer, nations are not security maximizers, they are power maximizers.
7. China is acquiring power not for its security but for establishing its domination.
8. Mearsheimer believes that nations are offensive rather than defensive.
9. He also believes that 'offence is the best defence.'
10. He suggests that the history shows that the countries which have taken offensive actions have generally won the war rather than those who have defensive approach. Hence USA should go for offensive rather than defensive approach towards China.
11. Mearsheimer does not support Kenneth Waltz view that nations will form counter-coalitions in case country wants to become hegemon. He suggests that in such situations nations may prefer 'Bandwagoning'.

## Criticism of Structural Realism

1. Domestic politics is not taken into consideration at all. Neorealists argue that the structure of international system does not give any scope for domestic politics.
2. System level explanation cannot help explain issues like foreign policy decision making (if realism is held true, there is little scope for decision making or even deliberation), political culture etc.
3. Realists focus too much on security issues. This focus limits analytical instruments to explain only economic relations.
4. The role of non-state actors is undermined.
5. The end of cold war and structural reconfiguration of international system has brought strong conceptual challenge to neorealist theory.
6. \* The relevant points can be added to / from the criticism of Classical realism.

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## Neo Classical Realism

The basic difference between structural realist and neo-classical realist is that the neo-classical realist even include actor level analysis along with structure level analysis. **What does it imply?** 1) It is true that the structures of international politics constrains the choices and hence foreign policies show continuity. 2) Yet we cannot ignore the role of actors or personality factors in shaping foreign policy. Actors do make a difference. e.g. There is bound to be a difference if Nehru is shaping the foreign policy or Indira Gandhi. Hence if foreign policies reflect continuity, they also reflect change.

## Post colonial realism. / Third world realism

The post colonial scholars believe that the existing theories of international politics are Eurocentric. They are based on the experiences of European countries. They are not based on the history of non-western world. Even their suggestions may not be adequate for the non-western world. e.g. According to Mohammad Ayub, the concept of security dilemma is based on the European history and is of limited relevance for the states of third world, the reason being that the states in third world suffer more due to 'insecurity dilemma' i.e. Internal security challenges rather than external security.