CHAPTER 1

Theoretical Framework

The standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept.

Thucydides[1]

The great events, they are not our loudest, but our stillest hours. Not around the inventors of new noises, but around the inventors of new values does the world revolve. It revolves inaudibly.

Friedrich Nietzsche[2]

Introduction

In the closing months of 1978 the small and impoverished state of Tanzania, after repulsing marauding Ugandan rebel and regular troops in a region known as the Kagera salient on the shores of lake Victoria, hastily gathered its military forces and mounted a major offensive against neighbouring Uganda.[3] Eventually, driving deep into the furthermost districts of Ugandan territory, the Tanzanians ousted the brutal and oppressive regime of Idi Amin and his corrupt military forces. On Christmas day of that same year the Government of Vietnam ordered troops to launch the final major assault of their summer offensive against the murderous Khmer Rouge regime in Kampuchea. In a swift and overwhelming show of force, the veteran Vietnamese military quickly routed the Khmer Rouge forces, driving them from the capital Phnom Penh and surrounding provinces to the Thai border and remote mountainous jungle enclaves, thus ending the genocidal rule of Pol Pot and his radical social reconstruction program that saw as many as two million Kampucheans lose their lives.[4] On the morning of the 20th of September 1999 Australian defence force personnel led a UN

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[1] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (Middlesex: Penguin, 1978), p. 402. It is noted however that while Thudydides expresses this view of power it is not one that he approved of, rather he used it to demonstrate the poverty of Athenian moral thought at the time.

[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Middlesex: Penguin Classics, 1961), pp. 153 - 154. I am indebted to Richard Lebow for this quote as it also appears in his work. .*Richard Lebow, The Tragic Vision of Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2003).*

[3] Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey, *War in Uganda: The Legacy of Idi Amin* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1982).

[4] Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War: Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos since 1975* (London: Verso, 1990).

sanctioned multinational force (INTERFET) into the violence-wracked province of East Timor to restore peace and security, and to support the UN assistance mission (UNTAET) following the referendum to determine the territory's status with Indonesia. Quickly disarming the pro-Jakarta militia, the INTERFET forces gradually established security over the entirety of East Timorese territory, paving the way for the successful follow on UN mission to transition the province to independent statehood.[5]

As examples of military intervention by states (or in this latter case a coalition of states) into the affairs of other sovereign states, these episodes represent significant discontinuities with conventional realist accounts of military intervention. Although it is possible to give account of these cases primarily in terms of power and state interests, as realism does for military intervention, such explanation leaves as much unsaid about the causes of and reasons for these particular interventions as it does provide some form of framework of understanding. In particular, the most recent example in East Timor represents a dramatic shift in the use of military intervention as a means of forcing compliance upon one state by another. The former cases also do not appear to fit the usual pattern of interstate aggression, with no territory permanently changing hands, and the intervening state generally ending up in no 'better' condition than before the intervention, despite its obvious military successes.[6] Furthermore the notion that these states ultimately are engaged in contests of power and that explanation based on such is sufficient account of the 'real'[7] forces at play between states beggars belief. Yet such is what the dominant international relations theory suggests.

According to conventional realist accounts, great powers intervene to materially effect the balance of power between states within the system of states, be that to directly influence power relations to maintain or establish a particular *status quo* arrangement, or to shape the international environment in such a manner as to be consistent with their understanding of balance of power.[8] Intervention, as just one within a spectrum of actions, ranging from

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[5] James Dunn, *East Timor: A Rough Passage to Independence.* (Double Bay: Longueville Books, 2002).

[6] Although there are plentiful examples of states miscalculating the 'cost of war', it appears that these cases were undertaken with knowledge of the possible, and real, social, political, and economic costs of intervening, yet the states involved intervened despite the probable consequences.

[7] Realism in general tends to dismissively treat alternate theories of state behaviour as 'beside the point' or secondary to the 'real' dynamics of power.

[8] All realist positions share a fundamental conception of balance of power as the expression of power interests by the powerful over weaker states. Defensive and offensive realists disagree over whether states intervene to bring about status quo conditions or to maximise their power, however all agree that balance of power is the primary means of ensuring state interests. These distinctions will be discussed in detail below.

vigilance to war,[9] is a legitimate if controversial means of preserving or attaining balance of power. It is, according to the realist account, a manifestation of power relations in which powerful states use their military force to achieve certain advantage over less powerful states. Intervention therefore, in contemporary realist theory, is treated as a mode of operation primarily of great powers, (the principle means, of a number of means) which they employ in the pursuit of ends consistent with their interests. Fundamental to this theoretic account of intervention therefore, is the central realist concept of balance of power, and any account of intervention provided from a realist position will ultimately be underpinned by the notions of state interests, power, and the balance of power. Yet are these principles the best conceptual tools through which to 'make sense of' the diverse range of interventions, and are the sufficient basis of explanation?

The difficulty in current international relations theorizing is that the conventional realist account of intervention does not offer a sufficient or satisfactory explanation of intervertions that do not involve great powers or episodes of intervention that do not, except superficially, entail balance of power considerations. Although the history of interstate relations since 1648 is punctuated by the interventions of great powers into the affairs of others – for which realism offers reasonable explanation - there have been numerous examples in which the realist dynamics of balance of power, state interests and anarchy do not provide the best theoretic framework through which to understand the forces and ideas at play. To suggest for example, that Tanzania's military intervention into Uganda can best be understood through the concept of balance of power, or that ideology and history were but secondary influences in Vietnam's decision to intervene in Cambodia, or that Australia's intervention into East Timor can be properly understood without discourse concerning the evolving international normative context, is to attempt to forcefully fit the complex and dynamic causes and circumstances of these episodes into too parsimonious and constrictive an existing theoretic framework. The world of international affairs is far too dynamic and complex a reality to allow such satisfactorily. For whilst theory aims to simplify, isolate and abstract from complex reality to more manageable 'theory', it must, to the greatest extent possible, exhibit as complete fidelity with the reality it seeks to describe as is possible and consistent with practical use. The current debate within international relations scholarship is,

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[9] Edward V Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1955). Gulick proposed a range of modes of coercive interstate interaction that included *inter alia* diplomacy, intervention and war.

and has always been, primarily great power centric – and for good reason - given the propensity of relations between states to be dominated by the actions of the most powerful. However, as a system of states, the international system is numerically dominated by small, very small and middle powers and any theoretic proposition that claims, at any level, to give account of that system, must be applicable to more than just a minority of actors within that system. While no international relations theory can ever, or perhaps should ever, attempt to be a 'grand theory of everything' it should to the greatest extent possible account for the actionsof the variety of actors that inhabit the system in question. That is it should account for all states great and small. This thesis will demonstrate, through the examination of three cases studies of small state intervention, that indeed there is a problem within current international relations scholarship concerning the causes of, and reasons for, interventions by non-great power states. Furthermore, this insufficiency has potentially broad implication for international relations theory in general, although the enterprise of investigation here is far more modest and aims merely to highlight the deficiency and indicate possible future directions.

If indeed such a difficulty, as just described, does exist within current international relations theory, then the question that consequently arises is *how do we satisfactorily account for small state interventionary dynamics* or more simply, *why do small states intervene?* This question subsequently, forms the basis of this theoretic inquiry. Do small states intervene for the same reasons as great powers? Are the causes of, and reasons for, their interventions consistent with great power dynamics? Does the current realist paradigm give sufficient, accurate, and satisfactory account of these interventions? If not, why not? If not, does some alternate account offer better explanation? If not, how can we give sufficient account? Is it possible to enlarge the realist or alternative accounts to advance a new approach? These, it is suggested, are some of the issues that arise when we start to question the adequacy of current theoretic account of small state dynamics. Before addressing these questions however, it is necessary first to overview the current state of debate within international relations theory concerning intervention, to survey the major positions within current literature, and to highlight the gap that exists between current theoretic approaches and what is required to satisfactorily answer the fundamental question posed here.

Theoretical Framework/Literature Review

International relations theory today continues to be dominated, as it has since the 1950s, by mainstream realist approaches, particularly neorealism, and to a lesser extent its major antagonist, neoliberal institutionalism. The late 1980s however, saw the development of a more or less coherent constructivist approach, which although seriously challenging the mainstream positions, continues to be marginalized by skeptical established scholarship. Ted Hopf in a 1998 *International Security* article suggested the reason for this skeptical reception were threefold: "mainstream's miscasting of constructivism as postmodern and anti-positivist, constructivism's own ambivalence about whether it can buy into mainstream social science methods without sacrificing its theoretical distinctiveness, and constructivism's failure to advance a coherent alternative research program".[10] Although constructivism has progressed significantly since 1998 in addressing these shortfalls, and substantial works by Alexander Wendt,[11] John Gerard Ruggie,[12] and Martha Finnemore,[13] amongst many others, have added clarity and definition to the constructivist approach, there remains something of a void between the materialist program of the realist and neoliberals and the ideational agenda of the constructivists.

Mainstream international relations theory is typically characterized as a debate between the various strands of realism and the neoliberal institutional approach, in which realist 'structure' is set against the capacity of neoliberal 'institutions' to shape and condition the behaviour of states in an anarchic international environment. Within this debate however, both sides share key fundamental premises concerning the nature of the international system and the role of states as agents within it. Both share the Waltzian conception of structure as the distribution of material capabilities; both privilege power and interests as the currency of exchange within the system, and both are concerned to examine the causal dynamics of

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[10] Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): p. 17.

[11] Alexander Wendt, "Identity and Structural Change in International Politics," in *The Return of Culture and Identity in Ir Theory*, ed. Yosef Lapid and Freidrich Kratochwil (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1996), Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, vol. 67, *Cambridge Studies in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[12] John Gerard Ruggie, "Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Towards a Neorealist Synthesis," *World Politics* 35, no. 2 (1983), John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organisation* 52, no. 4 (1998).

[13] Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organisation* 53, no. 4 (1998).

relations between states. While both acknowledge that "ideas matter"[14] they do not conceive power and interests as themselves effects of ideas, rather they insist that, power and interests as the fundamental forces of the international system, shape and condition ideas. For many constructivists these shared fundamentals essentially negate the 'superficial' distinction between realism and neoliberal institutionalism, consequently they tend to treat both as equivalent materialist theories. Ruggie suggests that in fact neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism have converged around neo-utilitarian precepts and premises and he identifies both simply as 'neo-utilitarian' in distinction to the constructivist position.[15]

There is equally a tendency for many constructivists to collapse the distinction between the various forms of realism into the dominant form, as Wendt does when he identifies all of realism simply as neorealism.[16] As the dominant and most influential form of realism, Waltz's neorealism is often identified with all of realism, possibly because it embodies the most austere and parsimonious materialist conceptualisation of the nature of relations between states. Despite this there is considerable diversity and significant distinction between the various forms of realism such that a disaggregated treatment of them is warranted in this study.

The debate within international relations therefore, with the inclusion of constructivism as an alternate approach, can be usefully viewed as a three cornered one between realism, neoliberal institutionalism, and constructivism. This thesis however, is concerned primarily with the 'theoretic space' that exists between the various forms of realism, and the constructivist approach, because it is in this space that the two divergent sociologies are most starkly portrayed, and it is within this space that some form of synthesis is most difficult yet most necessary if international relations theory is not only to remain relevant and useful to the evolving patterns of interstate relations, but if it is to successfully account for non-great power relations such as the example provided by small state intervention.

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[14] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 19.
[15] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge." While from the perspective of the ideational-material distinction, Ruggie's characterisation is valid it is argued in this thesis that there are sufficient other differences between the various strands of realism and neoliberal institutionalism to warrant maintaining the distinction.
[16] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

Small State Intervention

The *objective* of this research is to better understand the dynamics of relations between actors within the international system of states by exploring the relations within a particular sub-set of states, notably small states. The *subject* of this research is concerned with military interventions between small states and how a sufficient theoretical account of these must go beyond conventional realist accounts which privilege exclusively materialist and structural explanation and, as will discussed in detail later, incorporate sub-systemic levels of analysis and an ideational ontology that acknowledges the constitutive and causal power of ideas to shape state behaviour. An analysis of three case studies of small state intervention is utilized as a convenient and appropriate *via media*[17] through which to elucidate this theoretic space, highlighting the insufficiency of the realist account and opening up the possibility of constructivist explanation. As Hopf has noted, constructivism's research program remains under-specified to the extent that little empirical study has been undertaken to develop its re-conceptualisation of some of the central themes of international relations such as, the meaning of anarchy and balance of power, and the relationship between state identity and interests.[18] This study utilizes the analytical methodology of case studies as the basis of empirical research into the 'causes of' and 'reasons for' these small state military interventions. The focus on small states was both deliberate and somewhat fortuitous. In providing substance for what is essentially a critique of the realist account of intervention, the domain of small state interventions provides not only fertile ground in which to examine one of the most basic and persistent forms of interstate interaction, but also ground that is largely fallow in international relations literature.

Small state intervention as a particular manifestation of intervention has attracted very little scholarly attention within the field of international relations, and this is quite possibly the result of several parallel factors. International relations theory is not only dominated by the realist school of thinking, it is dominated by the American realist school of thinking. As a theory of international politics, realism is unmistakably great power centric – focusing, quite reasonably, on the actions and dynamics of the great powers as the 'movers and shakers' of international political life. American realist theorizing tends unmistakably to be even more so – especially since the end of the Cold War and America's ascension to its position of

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[17] *Via media* here is used to mean a path or conduit to understanding, a means or medium through which to explore and enlarge understanding.
[18] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory."

preeminence in the 'uni-polar moment'.[19] This American great power centrism is not unwarranted but it has led by and large to the theoretical treatment of the dynamics of small power relations being overlooked. Although it is an area of some considerable dynamism it would appear to be substantially neglected in mainstream international relations theorizing. An examination of small state intervention therefore, deliberately explores a realm of international behaviour that is little treated in the literature and which, by virtue of its marginalization in realist theory, may provide valuable insight into the capacity of realism to provide a comprehensive theory of international politics vice merely a theory of great power politics. The study is likewise fortuitous to the extent that an examination of non-great power relations avoids the *a priori* great power centric realist explanatory framework. Within international relations scholarship there is a distinct and understandable tendency to fix into and focus on, *a priori* a great power scheme of relations and politics, as a scan of the relevant shelves of any university library will confirm. This tendency gives *prima facie* credence to the realist framework, and its implicit assumptions regarding agency, structure, and the material basis of causality. Within this realist framework the paradigms of great power/great power intervention are well accounted for within the logic of balance of power. While great power/small power intervention is usually cast as emblematic example of the 'Melian dialogue' type relationship in which the powerful do what they will, while the weak suffer what they must.[20] By examining small power interventions into other small powers it is hoped that the *a priori* privileging of the realist explanatory framework can be avoided thus allowing a more neutral and objective approach to be pursued.

The question remains however, why the particular dynamic of intervention was chosen as the form of interstate relations in which to situate this study? The study of the use of force and circumstances that lead to states employing force is a fundamental project within the study of international relations.[21] This work likewise is interested in those forms of relations between states that exist at the very edge of normal political intercourse – that is the

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[19] Charles Krauthammer, "America and the World," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990).

[20] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War.*

[21] Intervention, conflict and force dominate the study of international relations with works by Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force,* Herbert Tillema, *International Armed Conflict since 1945: A Bibliographic Handbook of Wars and Military Interventions.*, Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenbreg, "Armed Conflict, 1989 - 2000," *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 5 (2001)., Lawrence Freedman, "Military Power and Political Influence," *International Affairs* 74, no. 4 (1998). Being just a very few of the enormous number of volumes that deal specifically with intervention as a persistent feature of international life. These particular few works were cited specifically because they deal explicitly with intervention in this century as it relates to state identities and its purpose.

boundary between the political and the violent forms of interaction. Military intervention typically constitutes that boundary condition between diplomacy and outright war, and as a coercive form of politics it is inherently interesting and fundamentally informative of the nature of the international system and the relations between states. Equally as significant however, is that it would appear that the nature, form, and *raison* of intervention are evolving.[22] The notion of states intervening on the basis of humanitarian grounds for example, would have been skeptically recieved, and certainly unacceptable to the international community thirty years ago, yet by 2006 the precedence has been firmly established on several continents. Similarly the idea of *ad hoc* coalitions of states forming multinational interventionary forces would have been just as difficult to conceive during the Cold War. The changing nature of intervention is an active area of research within international relations scholarship with works by Nicholas Wheeler[23] and Rob DiPrizio[24] for example arguing that humanitarian intervention has become a legitimate practice in international society. Martha Finnemore in an excellent recent work *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force* examines some of the bases of this evolution, underscoring the ideational foundations to the use of force and the shifts in the normative international context that precipitate them.[25] Although a persistent and recurring feature of international political life, these changes in the form and purpose of intervention support the proposition, most clearly espoused by constructivist approaches, that a purely materialist conception of international politics is simply unable to satisfactorily account for such transformation. The possibility therefore, for a 'better' theoretic account of small state interventions would appear to be more likely from a position outside of mainstream realism.

Although the dominant position within international relations theory, realism is not the only approach, and a more satisfactory alternate account may be possible via an ideational approach that emphasizes the fundamental power of ideas to condition state behaviour and to

[22] Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force,* James Mayall, ed., *The New Interventionism 1991 - 1994* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Adam Roberts, "Humanitarian War: Military Intervention and Human Rights," *International Affairs* 69, no. 3 (1993), Anne Semb, "The New Practice of Un Authorised Intervention: A Slippery Slope of Forcible Interference?," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 4 (2000), Kenneth Watkin, "Controlling the Use of Force: A Role for Human Rights Norms in Contemporary Armed Conflict," *The American Journal of International Law* 98, no. 1 (2004), Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). These works in particular note the new role of humanitarian intervention as a legitimate and increasingly common form of intervention.
[23] Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society.*
[24] Robert DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002).
[25] Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force.*

constitute the social as well as material structural environment. The constructivist approach advances such propositions and argues that, although material conditions of power give context to state behaviour, ideas fundamentally motivate states to action, and that like individuals, states exhibit social behaviour, and derive meaning and identity from within the international community as social agents. Yet constructivism alone does not offer any more sufficient an account of interstate behaviour than does realism. As an approach to the study of international relations, constructivism promises much - not the least of which is a more nuanced and sufficient account of international politics - but that promise is not yet realized. Constructivism, as is typically noted by realist scholars, has yet to produce a comprehensive and coherent 'theory' of international relations vice a novel 'approach' to the subject, let alone seriously challenge realism as the dominant theoretic paradigm. This criticism stems from a number of shortcomings of constructivism as theory. Firstly, while 'ideas do matter' as constructivism argues, so too, the realists insist, does material reality. There is no escaping the 'reality' of the brute material conditions in which states find themselves, and which shapes the nature of relations between states and the forms of their interaction. Realism, as its adherents will readily acknowledge, has been the dominant international relations theory for some fifty years, and not without good reason. Although it clearly has limits to its general applicability and its explanatory power, as this thesis argues, it does say a few very important things about the way the world "hangs together"[26] and the importance of structure in international politics. Constructivism cannot overturn the significance of the materialist argument by simply presenting a contrary ideationalist argument, at best, it could hope to modify or transform the realist case by highlighting its inefficacy.

There are discernable persistent patterns of interstate behaviour that the realist structural explanation appears to give good and useful account of, and this account cannot be entirely overturned by the alternative constructivist explanation. The ideas, values, and beliefs, which animate the constructivist account are bounded by the structure of material reality, and although the deep motivation to state behaviour may be ideational, it finds expression within the material conditions which constitute the physical reality the states inhabit. Similarly, there are limits to the power of norms and conventions to condition state behaviour and structural circumstance, and as yet a coherent constructivist theory that operationalises the role of these norms and social forces to shape and animate international

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[26] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge."

behaviour is to be annunciated. Constructivism alone therefore, like realism, is considered insufficient to adequately account for the manifold forms of interstate relations, and in particular the interventionary behaviour of small states as discussed in the three case studies considered here. There exists therefore, something of a gap between the two competing approaches from within which a synthetic position that might meet the demands of a satisfactory account of small state interventions may be proffered.

Before exploring this theoretic gap and the possibility of developing some form of synthesis of realism and constructivism, it is necessary to briefly reiterate the major premises of the various realist positions and the constructivist approach so as to clarify what distinguishes these positions from each other, and to delineate the envelopes of the spaces that exists between them, noting theoretical cleavages and bridges that may divide and connect them respectively. It is useful also to define the notion of legitimacy within the international system and its usage in this study, and to very briefly discuss the concept of balance of power. Although well treated in domestic legal and political theory, the subject of legitimacy in the international system is relatively sparsely covered. In large part this is a result of the prevailing realist paradigm, which posits that the international realm is governed by considerations of power not legitimacy. This implies, as Nicholas Wheeler notes, that power and legitimacy are antithetical.[27] Citing Inis Claude, who in his 1966 work on collective legitimation as a political function of the United Nations, wrote, "the obverse of the legitimacy of power is the power of legitimacy, rulers seek legitimacy not only to satisfy their consciences but also to buttress their positions"[28] Wheeler argues that "legitimacy is constitutive of international action."[29] This sense of 'constitution' is the same as that which the constructivists utilize when they argue that 'constitutive' relations comprise the 'culture' of the international system.[30] This 'culture' of shared ideas and intersubjective values constrains the behaviour of states through the process of legitimation. Contra to E.H. Carr who argued that legitimacy was always the "product of dominant nations or groups of nations"[31] the legitimacy embodied in the norms and conventions of the international community acts to constrain the behaviour of even the most powerful states. As Wheeler

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[27] Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, p. 4.
[28] Inis Claude, "Collective Legitimation as a Political Function of the United Nations," *International Organisation* 20 (1966).
[29] Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*.
[30] Christian Reus-Smit also argues that legitimacy is a social phenomenon in that "ones actions are not legitimate unless they are recognised as such by other social actors.Christian Reus-Smit, "The Misleading Mystique of America's Material Power," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 57, no. 3 (2003).

acknowledges, clearly there is a relation between power and legitimacy but it is not as one-dimensional as Carr suggested.[32] Legitimacy, as will be discussed further in the case studies, is a persistent and powerful force within the international system, which it is argued here, conditions the behaviour of states as much as the material conditions of power.

Balance of Power

As has been noted, conventional realist account of intervention relies upon the concept of balance of power to explain the aggressive actions of states. Although contemporary realism posits a particular understanding of balance of power, it would appear that in fact balance of power is an historically difficult notion to define precisely and the typical realist use of the term has come to take on an especially circumscribed meaning that is exclusively structural.

As perhaps the single most significant dynamic accounting for interventionary action by states, balance of power represents a fundamental unifying idea within realist thought. Indeed it was the dominance and universality of this concept within realist thought, and its intuitively inappropriateness to the case studies examined here that led the author to question realisms ability to satisfactorily account for all forms of intervention. So central to realist theory is the concept that it is tempting to see it in fact as a construction of the realist school, however, the notion of powers, and balances of power in international politics, has a long and interesting history that predates its incorporation into theory by the realist school in the mid twentieth century. The notion of balance of power, in a political sense, has a history that stretches back to the works of Aristotle and Polybius. In David Humes' famous essay on *The Balance of Power*[33] he cites the work of Polybius and his maxim: "... and we should never contribute to the attainment by one state of a power so preponderant, that none dare to dispute with it even for their acknowledged rights"[34] as one of the very earliest examples of the notion of balance of power in the works of antiquity. Subsequent works by Françoise Fenélon, Frederick von Gentz, Herbert Butterfield, Martin Wight, Edward Vose Gulick and Hedley Bull, amongst many others, developed the notion of balance of power as a rich and nuanced concept that clearly exhibited normative and social, as well as, material dimension.[35]

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[31] Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Year's Crisis 1919-1939* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 111.
[32] Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, p. 7.
[33] Frederick Watkins, ed., *Hume: Theory of Politics* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1951).
[34] Polybius, Book I, 83, p 225
[35] For a more expansive treatment of the development of the concept of balance of power see Appendix A which traces some of the major ideas that underpin the concept in the works of Wight, Butterfield, Bull and Gulick.

The concept of balance of power today is as diffuse as it is difficult to define, and while this has always been the case, historically it was seen as the intentional product of statesmen, working within the particular temporal and spatial confines that constituted their historical political circumstance, to establish stability, order, and security to the international system. Contemporary varieties of realism have adopted particular conceptions of balance of power as central to their explanatory accounts, invariably however, the notions they utilize are far more narrowly conceived than the rich history of the concept would suppose. Consistent with their exclusively materialist conception of power, the realist school, in general, has adopted a narrowly materialist understanding of balance of power as a structural dynamic that ignores both the intentional nature and historic social dimension of balance as the product of shared values, beliefs, and norms within a community of states. Conceiving balance of power therefore, as merely a mechanistic process resulting from the logic of anarchic material conditions not only robs the notion of its rich explanatory power, but confuses 'function' with 'substance' in a manner that unnecessarily collapses the theoretic space that exists between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. There is scope therefore to reclaim balance of power, in its historically rich formulation, within some form synthesis between realism and constructivist accounts that acknowledges both the structural and ideational content of the process.

The Realist Positions

Realism is a general term that describes a body of parsimonious theory that attempts to account for the dynamics of international relations through a simple framework constructed of several basic elements that behave in law like fashion. These law like elements, which constitute the core assumptions of realism are state interests and power as material capability, which in an international environment of anarchy, shape the way in which states as unitary rational actors behave (interests, power, states and anarchy). States as the basic social actors in this environment are unitary political agents that rationally pursue their goals within the anarchic setting. Their goals or interests are fixed and uniformly conflictual, thus politics between states becomes a perpetual bargaining game over the distribution of finite resources. Finally, realism assumes that the structure of the international environment is dictated by the distribution of material resources which is reflected in the bargaining outcomes expressed in the relative costs of threats and inducements. Yet realism is far from a monolithic position. It is rather, and has been variously described as, a range of theoretic and normative

predispositions regarding the state of relations amongst nations, a set of normative emphases which shape theory,[36] or as Donnelly suggests, "a general orientation of thought primarily distinguished by its distinction in relation to utopian or liberal modes of rationality".[37] Amongst this range of normative predispositions however, this study has identified five generally agreed distinct and preeminent varieties of realist theory. Each of these positions is briefly outlined in turn below.

Classical Realism

The classical realist school is drawn largely from the works of Hans Morgenthau, Edward Hallett Carr, Reinhold Niebuhr, and John Herz, and is distinct in the realist tradition for its emphasis on human nature as the source of the objective laws that govern international politics. As the original form of modern realist theory, classical realism drew heavily from the political works of antiquity and sought to understand international political behaviour as the product of human social activity at the international level. In *Politics Among Nations,* which is the seminal statement of classical realism, Morgenthau details his principles of political realism as: political realism believes that politics like society in general is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature, state interests are defined in terms of power, interests are the essence of politics through the ages unaffected by circumstance of time or place, and universal moral principles cannot be applied to the action of states in their abstract universal formulation.

Morgenthau insisted that historic facts be examined through the eyes of the 'statesman' who must meet certain problems of foreign policy under certain circumstances,[38] and it is this insistence that defines his realist rationale as both historically contingent and agentially determinant. Interests therefore, which are identified with national survival, although fixed and exogenous, are interpreted (and pursued) by states through the filters of particular historic circumstance. In distinction to subsequent forms of realism, classical realism emphasizes the persistence of the 'quest for power' realized through the pursuit of state interests as the prime motivator of international political behaviour. Man's invariable quest for power is the basis of the objective laws of international politics, and the pursuit of national interests as the

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[36]Richard Mansbach and Yale Ferguson, "Values and Paradigm Change: The Elusive Quest for International Relations Theory," in *Persistent Patterns and Emergent Structure in a Waning Country*, ed. Margaret Karns (New York: Praeger, 1986).
[37] Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[38] Hans J Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 4 ed. (New York: Alfred a Knopf, 1968), p. 75.

collective expression of that quest in an anarchic international environment is the real foundation of politics among nations.

Morgenthau argued that the political realist would converse in terms of material power and that it would be in terms of power that relations between states should be understood. Consequently, in the anarchic international environment, competition between states would be likely, and the balancing of that competition – or balancing of power – would likely be the most effective technique for managing the unequal distribution of power and capability. For Morgenthau although balance of power was an inevitable consequence of the aspirations of states, the manner in which they did so was to degree conditioned by purposive and moral action. As he states:

> The confidence in the stability of the modern state system that emanates from all these declarations and actions derives, it will be noted, not from the balance of power, but from a number of elements, intellectual and moral in nature, upon which both the balance of power and the stability of the modern state system repose.[39]

Logically preceding the balance of power, therefore, and its restraints upon the power aspirations of nations through the interplay of competing forces, was the common agreement of the contending nations to restrain themselves by accepting the system of the balance as the common framework of their endeavours.[40] This ideational and ethical dimension of the operation of the balance of power *inter alia* distinguishes classical from subsequent forms of realism and is representative of classical realism's more nuanced understanding of the theoretic space between the material and ideational conceptions of international politics.

Neorealism

The body of neorealist thought is most comprehensively developed in Kenneth Waltz's 1979 work *Theory of International Politics.*[41] In this Waltz established his deductive theory on three fundamental premises: the significance and determinism of international political structure for interstate relations, the assumption that survival is the primary goal of states, and that power is one of the means to that end.[42] Waltz argued that persistent patterns of international behaviour arose from persistent structures of international anarchy[43] and that

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1 ed. (New York: Random House, 1979).
[42] Ibid., p. 27.
[43] Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations*, p. 62.

political structures were defined and distinguished by three factors: the ordering principle, the character of the units,[44] and by the distribution of capabilities among their units. Upon these Waltz's sought to develop his theory fundamentally in terms of systemic structure, whereby the actions and interactions of states were determined by the systemic dynamics arising from the conditions of anarchy in which states interacted, the distribution of capabilities across the system of states, and the manifestation of political relations between states who express their interests and interactions with others exclusively in terms of power.[45]

Power, although remaining a key variable in Waltz's neorealist conception, existed less as an end in itself than as a necessary and inevitable component of political relationships. Gone was the emphasis on the significance and influence of human nature on social structures and international relations, gone too was the emphasis on historical contingency, the hermeneutic tradition, and the importance of the distinction between actors within the system of states as expressed in classical realism. Waltz's structurally focused realism did not deny the existence, even the importance of, internal differences among states, it did however, attempt to "abstract from every attribute of states except their capabilities"[46] in order to highlight the ways in which the distribution of capabilities in an anarchic order shaped interstate relations.

Consistent with his assumptions regarding states in conditions of anarchy, Waltz insisted that differences among states in the means they possess for security represented the principle distinguishing characteristics separating one from another. As unitary actors whose primary goal is to ensure their own survival, the means of assuring their security became the most significant discriminator amongst states. It was the distribution of these various material capabilities throughout the system that constituted the characteristic structure of the international system.

Within the neorealist structure, balance of power was expressed as the central operative dynamic of international political relations that was a consequence of the enduring tendency of autonomous states to seek their own security in an environment of international anarchy. Waltz distinguished the realm of international politics from all other forms of political action. This distinction is significant, not only in that it served as a demarcation between domestic and international, but in its claim that political relations between national

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[44] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 93 - 97.
[45] Ibid., p. 84.
[46] Ibid., p. 99.

boundaries are constitutively different from those within national boundaries. Waltz asserted that: "If there is any distinctly political theory of international politics, balance of power theory is it",[47] and it is the mechanism of balance of power that described how states interacted in conditions of anarchy to ensure, at a minimum their own survival, and at most, their unfettered pursuit of national interests as they perceive them. For Waltz, this mechanism or recurrent dynamic, was a consequence not of the nature of the states, statesmen, or polities, that constituted the states in relation, but the overarching pressure of conformity to systemic structural condition.

Waltz was cautious not to suggest a literally complete distinction between unit and structural level politics, however, rather he attempted to determine causality at the structural level, without making assumptions about the internal state of the actors. He did not deny that internal state differences are significant for the way states behave at the unit level nor that this level does not influence structure, rather he argued that it was possible to separate the two spheres, but with just two assumptions concerning the states, and the condition in which they exist, that it was possible to construct a coherent and explanatory theory of the political relations between them.

Structural Realism

Charged by the aridity of neorealist theory, the structural realists sought to extend, through a re-conceptualisation of the realist understanding of the constitution of power, the solid basis of neorealism, in an attempt to build a more adequate foundation of a comprehensive theory of international relations. By proposing a richer more developed concept of power as the basis of relational dynamics between actors, the structural realists presented a multileveled understanding of structure. Structure, they suggested, included the *deep structure* of the international system, and a dependent super-structure or *surface structure* of international law, diplomatic procedure and social relations. It was a perceived need to reconcile the hermeneutic and structuralist traditions that spurred the structural realists to develop the re-conception of neorealist theory that could not only account for the continuity of structural forces, but also include explanation of the transformational processes that accord with the historicity of social science.

The structural realists claimed that in their conception, structure had become a way of addressing history rather than ignoring it or detaching theory from historic practice. Further,

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[47] Ibid., p. 117.

they argued that theoretical linkage was possible between units and structure, through the logic of what they termed 'structuration', and that finally through the structuralist approach it was possible to include not just the narrow political realm of interaction, but also other forms of state interaction, such as economic, military, and societal, which shape and influence the nature and form of interactions between units.

The structuralists argued that Waltz's definition of structure effectively identified the whole of the system level with structure. This reduction of the systemic to merely the structural meant that Waltz was thereby forced to locate all other forces and forms of interactive dynamic, that he did not consider systemic (structural), down to the unit level analysis, where he subsequently failed to engage them further.[48] Enlarging the conception of system, to include relational dynamics and media of interaction other than gross structural constraints, the structural realists distinguished between the narrow definition of international system, which equated to the system comprised of states and of political interactions between them, and the most general and inclusive definition which equated to the inter-human system incorporating the totality of human interaction.[49]

Having established that other forms of interaction were significant in the international system, the structural realists developed an expanded notion of structure itself. They identified a three-tier definition of political structure to include: the organising principle of the international system, the functional differentiation of the units, and the distribution of capabilities across units.[50] The first two of these tiers constituted the basis of the novel structural realist conception of *deep structure,* which in the structural realist usage referred to those durable or abiding basic patterns of political structure that are resilient through history and appear to be self-reproducing or self-perpetuating. At the unit level of analysis, the structural realists asserted that, agent and structure were mutually constitutive, anarchy and autonomy were directly related, and that states were constructed not only of forces and processes originating within the unit level, but were shaped and fashioned by structural level influences also. The area of most interest to the structural realists however, was not within the unit level but at the boundary between unit and structural - the theoretic space between deep structure and unit level analysis. Neorealism held that the distribution of capabilities was a systemic factor, structural realism however, emphasized the distinction between deep

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[48] Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little, *The Logic of Anarchy; Neorealism to Structural Realism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 22 - 25.
[49] Ibid., p. 30.

structures of organizing principle and functional differentiation, and the less deep structure of capabilities distribution, the major benefit of which was to allow for a more finely tuned structural hypothesis.[51]

For the structural realists, Waltz had aggregated the concept of power to include capability, thus distribution of capability came to be identified with distribution of power. This reduction of the plural concept of capabilities to the singular notion of power was not only problematic in the structural realists position, but served as the major departure between neoclassical and structural realist argument.[52] In response to this reduction of capabilities to power, the structural realists proposed the disaggregation of capabilities and the re-conceptualisation of power in differentiated terms.

The final major endeavour of the structural realist project was the re-conceptualisation of the interactions between units, from a unit level element in neorealist theory, to a distinct and new level of analysis in the structuralist conception. Systems, as structural realists define them, consist not only of units and structure, but of interactions also. For the structural realists there existed an enormous area of interest concerning the interaction of actors that belonged neither in the unit level of analysis, nor the structural[53] and it was the conceptualisation of this domain of interaction as a separate, distinct and significant component of international relations theory that marked the transformation of neorealist thought to structural realism.[54]

Offensive Realism

Offensive realism is most coherently stated in John Mearsheimer's recent work *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* in which he insists that great powers are always power maximisers, who strive continually to dominate the international system. Mearsheimer asserts that like all states, great powers' overriding goal is to maximise their share of world power, which ultimately means gaining power (relative) at the expense of other states. But great powers seek to become more than merely the greatest power; they strive to be the hegemon – the only great power in the system. The notion of status quo powers in the international system is subsequently, a nonsense except in the most unusual of circumstances. Although great powers constantly seek hegemony, none is likely to achieve it, thus the international system is

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[50] Ibid., p. 36.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., p. 54.
[53] Ibid., p. 66.

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characterised by relentless pursuit of power by the great states, and the perpetual manipulation of the balance of power. Mearsheimer proposes that the motivating force behind this great power behaviour lies in the three key structural features of the international system which propels states to act aggressively toward another. First and foremost is the absence of central authority to ensure individual state safety. Second, that states always have some offensive military capability; and finally, that states can never be certain of other states intentions and that they are compelled to act in light of this uncertainty. In sum these amount to a compelling case of security dilemma, which is the prime motivator toward offensive competitive interaction.[55]

For the classical realist the ultimate source of state interests derives from the inherent aggressive nature of man and his personal pursuit of power and advantage. Mearsheimer rejects such sub-state analysis and argues rather that no such human explanation is needed, sufficient cause is evident at the systemic level in which the nature of the international system forces states to maximize their relative power as the most sure and effective way of ensuring their survival. The systemic dynamics alone of anarchic environment and need for survival, are sufficient to cause aggressive behaviour to be ultimately a more optimal strategy than other forms of interaction. Mearsheimer thus equates aggression with state survival by abstracting all state characteristics except the desire for survival.

Whilst Waltz suggests that survival is the highest goal of states and that all else including power is secondary to it, Mearsheimer's argument indicates rather, that states pursue hegemony as the most certain way of ensuring survival. Mearsheimer insisted that great powers recognise the uncertainty of power estimations and consequently err on the side of 'too much' rather than too little. This uncertainty consequently leads to the pursuit of hegemony - as maximised power is the most certain course that states can chart in an uncertain world of power distributions. By suggesting that offensive military capability is the ultimate source of possible hostile action, not the intention behind such use of force (that is intention is unknowable to states), then calculations of offensive military capability suffice for states to estimate possible threat. Mearsheimer does however, acknowledge that such is not always possible and that, although as a principle great powers pursue power maximization, it is not always feasible, prudent, or rational for them to do so.

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[54] Ibid.
[55] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W Norton and Co., 2001).

Central to Mearsheimer's argument is his conception of the nature and operation of power in the international realm. Eschewing psycho-sociological definitions of power, Mearsheimer presents the ultimate materialist conception of power when he states that power: "Represents nothing more than specific assets or material resources that are available to a state".[56] Power is an instrumental measure of capability that distinguishes states from amongst each other within the international system, not by how or what it causes or enables states to do, but simply as a relative measure of the capacity of states to pursue interests, actions, or reactions according to forces and pressures not inherent in the power itself. Mearsheimer elaborates two primary forms of power; latent power which is the socio-economic capacity of a state, and military power which refers to military capabilities. Of these offensive realism treats military power as ultimately comprising a state's effective, that is, internationally significant, power.[57] Quite quickly, therefore, Mearsheimer is able to reduce power, in its significant form for his discussion, to a straightforward form of military capability. Balance of power, therefore, he reduces to balance of military power, and he justifies this by arguing that: "I define power largely in military terms because offensive realism emphasizes that force is the *ultima ratio* of international politics".[58]

Mearshiemer holds a particular and utilitarian understanding of balance of power - one that is informed more by the belief that balance is a general description of power relations between certain states, than it is a rich conception of systemic equilibrium or a normatively desirable end state. Absent in his work is any sense that balance is normatively desirable. Mearsheimer also rejects the idea that states want balance of power in the sense of equal proportionment of power, or stable relatively equable power distribution, rather balance of power in the offensive realist lexicon means the overwhelming advantage that all great powers pursue. Balance of power consequently contains no overtones of social interaction; indeed the sense of international community of states for the offensive realist is an unsustainable abstraction from reality. The offensive realist world is consequently a far more Hobbesian one than those proposed by earlier realists.

Neo-Classical and Contingent Realism

The final group, which is here treated under the umbrella of neo-classical and contingent realism, represents the efforts of several realist writers to enlarge the explanatory power of

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[56] Ibid., p. 57.
[57] Ibid., p. 55.
[58] Ibid., p. 56.

realist theory by expanding and deepening the levels of analysis that it incorporates. The space occupied by these theories is a complex and subtle one, in which they argue that relative material capability establishes the basic boundaries of a state's foreign policy, without the need for a deterministic direct relation between power and foreign policy action. The choices states make in the international arena are made by political leaders and elites who are influenced by a host of domestic issues and perceptions as well as their understanding of relative power/capability distributions. Thus states with relatively comparable capabilities may act very differently in any given circumstances as a result of a range of complex perceptual and structural domestic influences. Power therefore, is not simply a measure of material capability but includes the more subtle notion of the 'influence' that states can bring to bear upon each other,59 thus power is instrumental in shaping a state's immediate external environment. Rather than seeking security *per se*, neoclassical theorists suggest that states "respond to the uncertainties of international anarchy by seeking to control and shape their external environment".[60]

The neoclassical position treads a middle path between structural theory and constructivist theory, as, for the neoclassical realist there is an "objective reality of relative power", in that although unit level behaviour is significant it does not deny the reality of system level forces.[61] The promise of neoclassical theory therefore, is that it does not simply insist that state level variables matter, but it specifies the conditions under which they matter. Thus by exploring the ways in which domestic variables shape foreign policy, in ways different to what pure structural realist theory might predict, neoclassical realism claims to provide a more empirically verifiable account of state interactions.

Mastanduno, Lake and Ikenberry's 1989 work *Toward a Realist Theory of State Action*[62] is an other explicit attempt to connect the structural/international level of analysis with some state/domestic level considerations. By examining the interactions between states' domestic condition and objectives with their international position and agenda, the authors have attempted to demonstrate that state considerations at both levels are intimately related such that a state's international action is at least partly influenced by its domestic condition. Thus as one example of this logic, the foreign policy that a state can pursue is critically

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[59] Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* (1998).
[60] Ibid.: p. 152.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Michael Mastanduno, David Lake, and John Ikenberry, "Toward a Realist Theory of State Action," *International Studies Quarterly* 1989.

dependent on its domestic system.[63] The authors further propose "two complementary models of state action",[64] the first, which concerns the way states pursue international goals through domestic strategies, and the second, which examines the way states, pursue domestic goals through international strategies. The first of these follows from the standard realist proposition that states seek to acquire power and wealth so as to best ensure their survival and to enable them to pursue other interests within the anarchic environment, while the second model follows from the needs of the states apparatus to maintain domestic support. As a result of their analysis the authors are able to demonstrate that the separation of domestic and international state action is artificial and that a richer realist understanding of state action could be gained by the inclusion of but a few state level variables.

The second major new realist work, that of Glaser's contingent realism contained in *Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help* which appeared in the 1994-1995 issue of *International Security*, is an effort not so much to deepen the analysis to state level considerations but rather to broaden the current system level analysis to include cooperative interstate relations as well as competitive ones. Glaser's fundamental premise begins with a belief that "the standard structural realist argument is deeply flawed"[65] and continues that states within the standard realist anarchic environment, may act cooperatively as well as competitively for rational self-interested reasons arising from the same conditions of self-help, and upon the same basis of power primacy. Arguing wholly within the realist paradigm, contingent realism demonstrates how cooperative interaction is just as rational and systemically consistent an option of interstate relation as is competition. The ultimate end of survival, Glaser illustrates, is often as not, sought through the pursuit of cooperative international action as it is through competition. In essence Glaser's proposition is that the structural dynamics of the international system do not necessarily predispose states to competitive interactions only. Cooperation too is a viable, rational, and often preferable option available to states seeking the standard realist goals of security, survival, and interests.

Interlude

The preceding discussion illustrates the diversity that exists within the realist camp between the five major positions. Although all share the fundamental tenets concerning states,

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[63] Ibid., p. 460.
[64] Ibid., p. 461.
[65] Charles Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self Help," *International Security*, Winter 1994/95 1994, p. 58.

interests, anarchy and power, it is obvious that the classical and neo-classical positions share a decidedly different conception of how material power capabilities are translated through intervening variables at the unit level, to that of the 'structure only' position of the neorealist, structuralist, and offensive realists. This distinction has significant impact on the contours of the theoretic space between these classical positions and the constructivist approach. Similarly, the classical position conceives balance of power in fundamentally different terms than do the other positions. Classical realism posits an ideational dimension to the operation of balance of power as well as the purely mechanical logic, which suggests a more nuanced application of force in relations between states, and this too conditions the nature of any synthesis between classical realism and constructivism. There are other differences between the various forms of realism, such as structural realism's interaction capacity, contingent realism's acceptance of cooperative interaction between states, neoclassical realism's unit/system level interaction, or offensive realism's insistence on power maximization which, again condition the theoretic space between these positions and the constructivist approach, and these will be explored in some depth following the case study discussion.

Constructivism

While mainstream international relations scholarship today is largely dominated by realist theories, particularly Waltzian neorealism with its individualistic and materialistic ontology, there exists also a long and diverse tradition of what, from a social theory standpoint may be considered a constructivist approach to the subject. This constructivist or idealist[66] approach according to Alexander Wendt,[67] underpinned the classical international theories of Grotius, Kant, and Hegel and the later works of Deutsch, Haas, and Bull up to the late 1980. During this last period many of these varied ideas began to be synthesised into constructivist theory in the works of Ruggie, Kratochwil, Ashley, and Wendt amongst others. The constructivist approach has developed to the point where international relations discourse now often appears to be characterised by either, a three cornered debate between neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism as Wendt suggests,[68] or as a dichotomous one between the neo-utilitarian positions of the realists and neoliberal institutionalists, and the constructivists

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[66] It is sometimes disparagingly referred to in this way by mainstream/realist proponents.
[67] Alexander Wendt is one of the leading proponents of social constructivist theory and provides perhaps the most comprehensive account of the position in his 1999 work *Social Theory of International Politics*
[68] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 3.

as Ruggie characterises it.[69] This debate is one that is rooted not only in the different epistemological approaches these positions take but also in their ontological basis.[70] As Wendt writes:

> Neorealists see the structure of the international system as a distribution of material capabilities because they approach their subject with a materialist lens; neoliberals see it as capabilities plus institutions because they have added to the base an institutional superstructure; and constructivists see it as a distribution of ideas because they have an idealist ontology.[71]

It is this materialist–ideational distinction that most fundamentally separates the constructivist approach from the others, and it is the addition of the ideational dimension to the materialist one, not its substitution of it, that would appear to offer the most fruitful opportunity for theoretic synthesis.

While Wendt identified the roots of constructivist thought in the classical international theories of Grotius, Kant, and Hegel, Gerard Ruggie looked to the sociological works of Durkheim and Weber as the basis of the ideational/material divide.

> Both Durkheim and Weber held that the critical ties that connect, bond, and bind individuals with social collectivities are shared ideational ties, and they sought to establish these factors by rigorous social scientific means. In doing so, both rejected utilitarianism on the grounds of methodological individualism and because it failed to encompass normative self-understandings of the ends of social action-without which, they believed instrumental rationality was devoid of meaning.[72]

This sociological tradition subsequently strongly influenced the development of social constructivism in international relations, particularly the works of Nicholas Onuf in 1989[73] and Anthony Giddens and his 'structuration' theory.[74] Although this early constructivist work was seen largely as marginal to mainstream international relations theory, the past two decades have seen it develop substantially to open up the theoretic spaces around the issues

[69] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge."

[70] Sujata Chakrabarti Pasic, "Culturing International Relations Theory: A Call for Extension," in *The Return of Culture and Identity in Ir Theory*, ed. Yosef Lapid and Freidrich Kratochwil (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1996).

[71] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 5.

[72] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," p. 861.

[73] Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1989).

[74] Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Actions, Structure and Contradictions in Social Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1979).

of interests, identities, and the intersubjective bases of social action and order.[75] There are a number of key issues within the neo-utilitarian account that constructivism has problematised and exposed as areas of contemporary debate. The first of these lies in the distinction constructivism makes between causation and constitution and the significance this has for theorizing relations between states.

Neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism have very circumscribed views of the causative role of ideas. Being essentially materialist in nature they privilege causal relationships and effects in which the role of ideas, if at all addressed, is seen primarily in terms of *causes* of action, not *reasons* for action. Similarly the constitutive nature of relations between states is ignored such that, to borrow Wendt's example, an antecedent condition exists between states X and Y with one temporally prior to the other.[76] Constructivism by contrast privileges the mutually constitutive nature of relations between states such that state X is what it is, in virtue of its relation to state Y. The causal and constitutive relations are not mutually exclusive however, and as Wendt argues,[77] a blurring of the distinction between the two has led to considerable theoretic confusion within the discipline of international relations.

The second distinction between neo-utilitarianism and constructivism lies in their understanding of the causative role of ideas, particularly in shaping identities and interests. Again neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism have arid conceptions of the role of ideas in the causal dynamics between states, and as noted, virtually no conception of such in the constitutive nature of these dynamics. Both treat the identity and interests of actors as exogenous and given, and envisage an exclusively material basis of causation. Constructivism attempts to problematise this causation on two fronts. Firstly, by emphasizing ideational causation, that is the power of ideas to move states to act, and for those ideas to form the primary basis of interstate interaction. Secondly, in the role of ideas in shaping the identities and interests that states hold. As Ruggie notes, "neo-utilitarianism [has] no analytical means of dealing with the generic identities and interests of states *qua* states, it also excludes consideration of how specific identities of states shape their interests, and thereby patterns of international outcomes".[78]

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[75] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," p. 862.
[76] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 77 - 83.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," p. 863.

For constructivists, the notion that interests and identities are exogenously given conditions of the international system, completely ignores the root causes of those interests and mistakenly inflates material power considerations as comprehensive explanation. For constructivists it is ideas, as well as some basic (or rump) material conditions, that form the basis of, and conditions, identity. Identity subsequently shapes interests, and interests motivate action. Thus Ruggie can distinguish between American *hegemony* and *American* hegemony, in which it is every bit as important who is the hegemon as it is that there is a hegemon, as an example of how identity shapes behaviour and systemic structure.[79] Of particular note is the role of ideas in conditioning normative factors, such as international norms and conventions, in addition to states' identities in shaping their interests and behaviour.

Another point of difference between the constructivists and others is of a more philosophical nature and concerns the notion of what Ruggie calls 'collective intentionality'.[80] Fundamentally the constructivists assert that beliefs, ideas, and values can be collectively as well as individually held. The upshot of this for their international relations approach is that states as large collectives can hold values, ideals, and beliefs and can and do act on them within the international arena. The American philosopher John Searle calls these social facts 'collective intentionality' and they are manifest as socially agreed ideas, such as, sovereignty, legitimacy, human rights and humanitarian intervention.[81] Because collectives can hold intersubjective values as collective social properties, constructivists do not need to invoke some Hegelian 'world spirit' or 'collective conscience' to explain collective behaviour.[82] The ability to incorporate the existence of ideas such as sovereignty, legitimacy, and rights into a theoretical account is an especially important part of the constructivist approach.

Proceeding from the distinction between causal and constitutive relations, Searle builds upon the earlier work of Rawls, who makes the distinction between constitutive and regulatory rules, and incorporates it into the constructivist position.[83] Using the analogy of the rules of the game of chess as example of constitutive rules, Searle argues that constitutive

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[79] Ibid. Ruggie argues that it is every bit as important who is the hegemon, as it is that there is a hegemon, thus his distinction between *American* hegemony and American *hegemony*.

[80] Ibid.: p. 869.

[81] Ibid. Ruggie quotes Searle as suggesting that social facts are distinct from physical facts and exist in human agreement upon certain ideas.

[82] Ibid.: p. 869.

[83] Ibid.: p. 871.

rules "define the set of practices that make up a particular class of consciously organized social activity".[84] The relevance of this to international relations theory stems from the assertion that constitutive rules form the institutional foundation of all social life. As Ruggie insists, "no consciously organized realm of human activity is imaginable without them, including international politics."[85] For the constructivist position this represents a significant advantage over neorealist and neoliberal accounts which, lacking any concept of constitutive rules, are unable to provide an endogenous non-causal explanation for the origins of the key features of the international system, such as territorial states, the system of states, or any of the host of institutional forms that states utilize.[86] For the neorealist and neoliberal camps all of these must be assumed to exist already, and while the constructivists do not claim to fully understand constitutive rules and their role in international relations they maintain that they are working toward that goal and they have in constructivism the theoretical framework in which to do so.

A persistent criticism of realism in general is its inability to adequately account for transformation and change in the world polity.[87] Ruggie for example suggests that for realism to be able to give such account it would need a conception of constitutive rules – for change would necessitate realignment of structure and new constitutive rules to govern the new arrangement. The constructivists approach the matter by historicizing the concept of structure in international politics. Following Giddens' theory of structuration in which structure is seen as having both temporal and spatial dimension, constructivists suggest that a conception of structure must acknowledge its contingent nature – that is, as social practice situated in time and space.[88] Constituted of states with historically contingent identities and interests, structure too is contingent not just on material conditions, but temporally and spatially relevant ideational conditions also.

The final point of distinction is that of the question of agency in international relations. For the constructivists, agents and structure are not merely bound in a materialist

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.: p. 873.

[86] Ibid.: p. 871.

[87] Ruggie, Wendt, Hopf and others note that although constructivists acknowledge how persistent structure is and how difficult it is for change to occur, the approach embodies explanation that can account for transformation through changing the nature of the relationship between agent and structure. Realism in general lacks any such explanatory route.

[88] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," p. 875.

causal interaction but are 'mutually constituted'.[89] Unlike the neo-utilitarian position, which conceives states and their interests as essentially fixed and exogenously given, whereby states merely enact their role as minimally conceived agents within the structural context, the constructivists see the agential role of states as far more dynamic and constitutive. As Wendt insists, "structure exists, has effects, and evolves only because of agents and their practices"[90] and those agents are animated as much by their ideational content as by their material condition. This mutual constitution is perhaps one of the most significant insights of the constructivist project for through it structure, agent and context are thoroughly entwined in an holistic fashion. Through mutual constitution the systemic, structural, and unit levels of analysis are brought together with historically contingent context thus allowing for the development of theoretic synthesis.

Having outlined the areas of disagreement between the constructivist approach and the neo-utilitarian, it remains to briefly sketch the core features of constructivism as an alternate account of international relations, highlighting those key areas where the constructivist approach offers the most fruitful theoretic account. Like realism, constructivism is not a single unified theoretic position, it incorporates various streams of constructivist account including, from Ruggie, sociological variants, feminist variants, jurisprudential approaches, genealogical approaches and interpretive approaches.[91] Often various forms of constructivism are also referred to either as "thick" or "thin" forms of the approach depending on how radically they conceive the role of ideas to be. For the purposes of this study however, it is necessary to look only to the core features of constructivism, which in distinction to realist or neoliberal approaches form a common 'antithesis' to the materialist approach to international relations. In referring to 'constructivism' therefore, this dissertation proposes an 'ideal type' of constructivism which incorporates a rather 'thick' understanding of the core tenets of the approach.

The first core feature of the constructivist position is that of its ontological position. Wendt argues, "ontological issues are crucial to how we do and should think about international life".[92] Fundamentally constructivists, as a consequence of their ontological standpoint, ask different questions about the functioning of the international system, thus

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[89] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.
[90] Ibid., p. 185.
[91] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," p. 880.
[92] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 37.

problematising issues that realists and neoliberals have either assumed, ignored, or have been unable to comprehend because of their ontological position. Perhaps the most significant issue that the constructivists have problematised is that of interests and identities, arguing that rather than being exogenous and given, interests are endogenous to states, being generated by their internal identities and their constitutive/social interactive identities. While states do act in self-interested fashion, as realists claim, they also have the capacity to transcend this behaviour and to think and act socially, that is, to assume corporate identity as well as individual.[93] As Wendt notes, "the vast majority of states today see themselves as part of a 'society of states' whose norms they adhere to not because of on-going self-interested calculations that it is good for them as individual states, but because they have internalized and identify with them."[94] Armed with an essentially different understanding of interests and identities, constructivists are able not only to ask many more interesting questions about state behaviour, they are able to offer nuanced and detailed account of the great variety of state interaction in different historical circumstances at a level of specificity not available to the realist approach.[95]

The second core feature, as noted earlier, concerns the distinction between the materialist and ideational foundations of international politics. The constructivists hold that ideational factors have normative as well as instrumental dimension and that the meaning and significance of the ideational factors are not independent of space and time.[96] For Wendt, "the meaning of the distribution of power in international politics is constituted in important part by the distribution of interests, and that the content of interests are in turn constituted in important part by ideas."[97] He argues that ideas are not more important than power and interest, nor that they are autonomous from them, but that power and interest have the effects they do in virtue of the ideas that make them up. Concerned not just with the causal effects of ideas – as important as they are – but with the constitutive nature and effect of ideas, Wendt proposes his 'ideas all the way down' model of international politics.[98] It is this notion, that all relations between and within states are fundamentally based upon the ideas that constitute them, which sets constructivism apart from mainstream international relations scholarship,

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[93] Ibid., p. 242.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory."
[96] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," p. 879.
[97] Wendt, Social Theory of International Politics, p. 135.

and it is this approach that allows it to go beyond the mechanics of state behaviour and the limited logic of anarchy.[99]

A logical extension of the constitutive effect of ideas is that for the constructivists there can be no mutually comprehensible conduct of international relations without mutually recognized constitutive rules based upon collective intentionality.[100] This is the social foundation of constructivist theory – that collective identity is not only possible, but that it enables collective intentionalilty through mutually constitutive rules. International structure is social structure – comprised of socially competent actors whose behaviour is subject to material, ideational, and institutional constraints.[101] This social structure comprises not only material conditions, institutions, and ideas, but a matrix of shared ideas, intersubjective values, beliefs and norms. These shared ideas represent a substantial 'accretion of culture at the systemic level'.[102] As Wendt writes:

> States and scholars alike treat these shared beliefs as the background, taken-for-granted assumptions that any competent player or student of contemporary world politics must understand. What a 'state' is, what 'sovereignty' implies, what 'international law' requires, what 'regimes' are, how a 'balance of power' works ...and so on.[103]

Together these shared ideas, beliefs, and values form the social 'culture' of the international system and in fact constitute the 'structure' of the international system of states. Structure therefore, like interests is fundamentally not just a material condition but is ideational in substance and form.[104] The persistent patterns of relations, intersubjective values, and shared ideas which 'supervene'[105] on the material conditions, constitutes structure, thus for the constructivists, structure is historically contingent in space and time, as the ideas, values, and beliefs which bind the states in their mutually constitutive conditions of relation, change and evolve.

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[98] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory.", Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

[99] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory."

[100] Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," p. 879.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 158.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory."

[105] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 155 - 156. Wendt describes the concept of supervenience as a non-causal, non-reductive relationship of ontological dependency of one class of facts on another. The relationship is a constitutive one not a causal one.

The final core feature of the constructivist approach concerns the implications of the anarchic international environment. For the realists the anarchic international environment sets the pattern of state behaviour in a self-help context. This pattern or logic of anarchy is essentially fixed and although some of the most recent 'contingent' realist work emphasizes the cooperative possibility within anarchy, by and large the logic of anarchy is one of competition and self-interest. For the constructivists this logic, which in the realist account flows from the material conditions of power, is not fixed and immutable but rather is premised upon an ideational rather that material basis and consequently is contingent and dynamic. Wendt argues that anarchic structures vary at the macro level and can exhibit multiple logics. "Anarchy", he suggests famously, "is what states make of it" and that it "is an empty vessel and has no intrinsic logic; anarchies only acquire logics as a function of the structure of what we put inside them."[106] Thus the elaborate processes and mechanics of state relations that realism and neoliberal institutionalism describe, as 'necessarily' following from *the* logic of anarchy are not, according to the constructivists, the product of material conditions in a self-help environment, but contingent upon the structure of intersubjective values and shared ideas of the actors within the system. As Ted Hopf writes, "still more fundamentally, this opens the possibility of thinking of anarchy as having multiple meanings for different actors based on their own communities of intersubjective understandings and practice."[107] Balance of power therefore, as an example of the mechanics of the logic of anarchy, is far more a socially constructed response to given material conditions based upon a certain 'culture' within the society of states, than the 'necessary' reaction to power imbalance that the realists propose.

In summary, constructivism offers a novel and potentially very fruitful approach to the questions of international relations. With its social and ideational ontology it provides a *via media* into the nature of the political and social relations between states whilst offering a powerful critique of the circumscribed materialist neo-utilitarian mainstream international relations scholarship. Clearly the space between its ontological and epistemological endeavours and that of the realist positions is substantial at points, and this space varies between the different realist positions, widest most probably in relation to offensive realism, and closest perhaps to neoclassical realism. Whilst, as Wendt has noted, both approaches are not necessarily attempting the same theoretic project, it would appear that a synthesis

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[106] Ibid., pp. 6, 249.
[107] Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," p. 174.

between the two in regards to describing the general contours of interstate relations ought to be possible, and ought to be verifiable through empirical investigation.

Thesis

The foregoing discussion suggests that both the dominant realist paradigm and alternate constructivist accounts abstract and emphasise certain aspects of the complex realities of interventions, which are typically characterized as mutually exclusive. That is, the materialist realist approach is portrayed as fundamentally at discordant odds with the constructivist ideational perspective, and that the two offer competing explanation of interstate dynamics including *inter alia*, intervention. It is argued here that neither current realist theory, nor constructivist argument, individually offer a satisfactory or sufficient account of interventions by small states. This proposition is drawn directly from an examination and analysis of the three case studies of small state intervention in which the following key issues arise. Firstly, small states mount military interventions for a variety of reasons, ranging from relatively straightforward security concerns to reasons that have more to do with the moral dimension of humanitarian concerns. Secondly, small states confront an environment that varies with respect to the intensity of great power competition. The more a region is coupled to great power competition for example, the less room they have to pursue ideological, normative, and ideational agendas that contravene great power interests (broadly defined). Thirdly, the overarching terms of great power politics shape the normative environment that small states confront, and in consequence, the strategies of legitimation that small states adopt to justify their interventions, and the likelihood that other states will recognize these interventions as legitimate. Finally, the normative environment cannot be reduced to merely power-political considerations. Rather it exerts influence on the motives of small states and on their choices of legitimating frameworks for intervention. Together these propositions account for the general patterns across the three cases examined and lead to the conclusion that in order to more fully understand the dynamics of the particular forms of small state interaction, one must move away from exclusively realist or constructivist theoretic account toward a synthetic position that is conceived of residing within the theoretic space that exists between the two.

These conclusions are further supported by the case evidence that demonstrates that;

a. balance of power, as the fundamental realist concept that gives theoretic meaning to interventions, is demonstrably insufficient and/or inappropriate to these cases;

b. intersubjective values and shared ideas such as ideology are significant factors in the reasons for and causes of these interventions;

c. norms and power mutually implicate one another; and

d. variations in the distribution of capabilities and the intersubjective environment of international politics shape the causes and consequences of small state intervention.

Consequently, a 'better' theoretic account of small state interventions is necessarily one that adopts a synthetic approach between the powerful but overly parsimonious realist account and the crucial yet underspecified constructivist approach that acknowledges both the material constraints on state action and the ideational content of that action. Although as Wendt suggests, these two camps may never be reconciled in any truly synthetic position because of the competing directives of the two sociologies – one that "start[s] with material factors and account[s] as much as possible for the role of ideas in those terms"[108] and the other that attempts the reverse, there is, it is argued, scope to advance the development of a critical synthesis that acknowledges the dialectic nature of the relationship between the two positions. The two research traditions of realism and constructivism both provide substantial insight to the study of international relations, and this work attempts to bring the insights of both to bear to expose possibilities of synthesis. Hans-Georg Gadamer[109] suggested that through a "fusing of horizons" mutual illumination may be possible, and it is in this sense of mutual illumination and expanded horizons that this work strives to open up and explore the spaces that exist between these research traditions.

An understanding of this 'theoretical space', or series of 'theoretical spaces' that exist between the mainstream realist positions and constructivism, in which a synthetic approach - that acknowledges the strong pervasive influence of material power conditions whilst exploring the power of the ideational dimension to shape and condition the behaviour of states - is key to conceptualizing the synthesis. This space is bounded on either extremity by the borders of the main bodies of realism and constructivism, with the thresholds of each

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[108] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 26.
[109] Brice Wachterhauser, ed., *Hermeneutics and Truth* (Evanston: North West University Press, 1994).

coming into proximity in regions of some mutual compatibility or retreating on matters of dogmatic dispute. The shape of the space therefore is determined by the theoretical landscape over which each tradition has come to establish itself. For constructivism this is centred on the concept of the ideational content of action, the constitutive nature of social relations, and the role of culture in shaping state behaviour. The realist landscape by contrast is dominated by the centrality of the materialist conception of power, and the anarchic nature of the international environment. At various points of compatibility these landscapes converge around shared concepts, separated perhaps by the conditioning influence of other less compatible concepts that are relational within the theoretical framework of either realism or constructivism. Thus, the contours of each theoretical position and consequently, the spaces between them, are determined not just by the concepts that constitute each, but by the pattern of relations and connections amongst these concepts – such that for example, although the condition of anarchy is a common conceptual landmark, the manner in which it stands in relation to power, competition, and self-interest defines that concept within the realist position differently to that within the constructivist account.

By opening up and exploring these theoretical spaces, in particular the regions in which some compatibility exists, this research hopes to illuminate the possibility of critical synthesis and the potential for the development of a 'new way' of understanding the nature of relations between states. It is pertinent to note at this point that this research does not aim simply to expand or enlarge the realist position such that it subsumes constructivist claims – as Legro and Moravcsik argue some 'new' realist positions attempt – nor to simply meld constructivism and realism in one synthesis. As equally as significant as the points of compatibility between the two traditions, are the substantial and possibly insurmountable incompatibilities between the approaches. These differences are not just epistemological but ontological also and reflect not just the different means employed by each approach, but different and incompatible ends also. It is further noted that unlike Legro and Moravcsik who appear to advocate a form of 'epistemological relativism'[110] when they write: "Each major international relations theory paradigm enjoys a comparative advantage in explaining a different input into the bargaining game ...[and] for the analyst interested in explaining varying outcomes where preferences and beliefs are fixed, the interactive logic of realist or

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[110] Ernest Gellner, *Relativism and the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 90.

institutionalist theory, may be more useful."[111] the aim of this research is to highlight the potential for a new and critical synthesis that is drawn from, but is distinct from, either realism or constructivism alone.

In order to further this development it is proposed that what is required is not a synthesis of theory *per se* but a re-formulation or re-combination of concepts at the sub-theoretical level. In his 1996 work *Ideology and Political theory: A Conceptual Approach,*[112] Michael Freeden distinguished a hierarchy of ideas in which political ideas form the basis of political concepts, which in turn form the basis of ideologies and theories, thence philosophies. Of concepts in particular he wrote: "Political concepts acquire meaning not only through accumulative traditions of discourse, and not only through diverse cultural context, but also by means of their particular structural position, within a configuration of other political concepts."[113] In this sense realism and constructivism as theories provide the framework or 'configuration of concepts' in which those concepts acquire particular meaning. Thus the realist concept of 'balance of power' for example is given particular meaning by its contextualisation within realism. Freeden also argued that: "theory is to concept what language is to words – an organizer, regulator, a set of rules and uniformities, a grammar, a system."[114] Thus theories give particular meaning and syntax to concepts, and by reconfiguring concepts in a new arrangement and framework, new synthetic theory may be developed. This is the process that this study envisages for the development of a critical synthesis between realism and constructivism – one in which familiar concepts, such as interests, balance of power, or anarchy, are re-configured within the theoretical space between these traditions.

This is new and original work to the extent that such a synthesis although intuitively appealing and logically possible, has not previously been systematically demonstrated through empirical investigation, nor elaborated in a coherent, though as yet to be fully developed, theoretic framework. This study not only demonstrates that the distribution of capabilities and the intersubjective environment of international politics shape the causes and consequences of small state intervention, but it illustrates how these material forces condition state behaviour and which intersubjective values, norms and shared ideas materially influence

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[111] Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (1999): p. 51.
[112] Michael Freeden, *Ideology and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
[113] Ibid., p. 4.
[114] Ibid., p. 48.

the reasons for, causes of, and implications of these interstate dynamics. Furthermore, this study proposes a theoretic framework within which the actions of small states, which constitute the majority of states within the international system, can be directly accounted for. Previously, theoretic account of the actions of such states could only be inferred indirectly from the scheme of great power dynamics as proposed by realist and constructivist viewpoints. To the extent that no substantial work treating the dynamics of small states have been endeavoured, this study represents new scholarship within the field of international relations theory.

Methodology

This study seeks to expand international relations theory at a general level by the examination of particular case studies of interstate relations at the specific level. As such this would present an inductive method of inquiry, however, to the extant that this study frames its inquiry in the theoretic space parallel to the general realist account and the constructivist position, and tests it against the logic of those positions, it represents a deductive inquiry process. Following Finnemore and Ruggie[115], this 'to and fro' process may be termed 'abductive' and it will involve inductive insights being tested against deductively derived hypotheses to establish a tension that is irreconcilable within current theoretic parameters. These parameters are subsequently enlarged to accommodate the inductive propositions arising from the case studies, that is, the 'theoretic space' is elucidated. This study will examine three distinct case studies of military intervention by one small state into another. Each will follow a narrative/analysis form, which, Finnemore and Ruggie describe as the 'narrative explanatory protocol'. In this method the narrative is presented as a chronological sequence of events in which the 'facts' of the case are laid out. This is followed by analysis and contextualisation in which the 'abductive' method is utilized to give a coherent account of the event in terms that the inquiry is concerned to examine.

This method is chosen as it provides certain advantages over a purely, narrative, deductive or inductive approach. As discussed previously there currently exists no substantial deductive body of work on small state intervention, thus a deductive only approach was not feasible. A purely inductive method however, was also not appropriate given that this

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[115] Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force.*

research is undertaken adjacent to the established inductive realist and constructivist positions and attempts to synthesise them. Subsequently, the narrative explanatory protocol is the most appropriate method of dealing with the case studies as it allows presentation of the events in as objectively a manner as possible and then proposes to erect on top of this the structural and historical context.

In order to present a consistent and as transparent an analysis as possible of the cases, a standard template is developed through which the narratives are presented. This template as detailed at Appendix B aims not only to facilitate the narrative but also to guide the research, and to introduce the theoretic analysis by contextualising the events and framing them in such a way as to emphasise the aspects that are important to this study. By utilizing a single template of analysis across all three case studies it is hoped that commonalities will emerge between the individual cases that might not if a purely narrative form is used. There are several benefits to this approach, but acknowledged limitations as well. Firstly by utilizing a template that facilitates analysis at various levels, a broad approach is enabled that minimizes *a priori* assumptions about *the* relevant level of analysis to any particular case. For example, when discussing the Vietnam case the obvious implications of great power influence may predispose analysis that privilges the realist power structure explanation, thus missing the significance of other levels of influence. The object here is to provide as 'level a playing field' of analysis as is possible that avoids *a priori* theoretic models. Secondly, it imposes a measure of rigour to the analysis that forces the researcher to be as thorough as possible in the examination of all factors. It is acknowledged however that the application of a common template may inadvertently impose commonalities where none reasonably exist. To minimize this the author has consciously attempted to use the template judiciously and as 'naturally' as is possible trying to avoid forcing analysis to fit the template. It was found that the narratives easily 'fit' the template and although all aspects of the template were applied in each case study it is clear that not every aspect of the template received equal weighting in each case. Where appropriate and supported in the literature for example, the role of political elites was considered more or less significant as the narrative supported. Just because the template imposed a commonality of analytical framework does not mean that it imposed a commonality of explanation, indeed the variety, complexity and subtlety particular to each case became abundantly clear through the analysis consistent with a major thrust of this thesis.

Structure of Study

This chapter has laid out the fundamental problem that the author proposes exists with current theoretic accounts of small state intervention. It raises the question of *why small states intervene,* it surveys the relevant literature and theoretic background to the subject of small state intervention noting the major realist and constructivist positions which provide alternative account of this form of interstate dynamic, and suggested that a 'theoretic space' exists between the realist and constructivist approaches within which it may be possible to develop a synthetic account. Chapters Two, Three, and Four will present and discuss the three case studies of small state intervention, following the template described in Appendix B, leading to various conclusions regarding the efficacy of the realism and constructivism to adequately account for these interventions. Chapter Five subsequently will examine in some detail the events of the three episodes of intervention analysing the structural and unit level factors that shaped events in each case, before comparing the three interventions, discussing the similarities and differences between them and the theoretical significance of these. This analysis will subsequently inform Chapter six which draws together the parallel themes of this study to elucidate the 'theoretic space' that this work has opened up. This elucidation will examine the space between each realist position and the constructivist approach in an attempt to develop the framework of a synthesis between mainstream realist international relations theory and the ideational agenda of the constructivist project.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study is situated within the bounds of what is generally recognised as the study of international relations. As such it includes a range of assumptions about what is valid, interesting and appropriate to study about the world around us. Within this broad discipline this study is particularly concerned with opening up and exploring the theoretical space between mainstream realist theories and constructivist approaches, and again this entails certain assumptions about 'how the world hangs together', and what bits of it are pertinent to consider. In examining the dynamics of small state intervention, this paper makes a series of assumptions regarding the characteristics and conditions of the international system and the actors who comprise it. Even the characterisation of world politics as constituting an international 'system' of course is laden with preconditioning assumptions and values – this

is inescapable in this type of research but needs to be acknowledged as ontologically and epistemologically significant.

Perhaps the most significant assumption this paper makes concerns the nature of the agents that comprise the international system – states. In this study the mainstream assumption that states are the primary and most significant actor within the international system is adopted, and although it is recognised that non-state actors, such as NGOs and international institutions, can and do play significant part in international political and social life, for the purposes of this work their significance will emerge in relation to the framework of the interstate/international system. As Wendt writes, "since states are the dominant form of subjectivity in contemporary world politics this means that they should be the primary unit of analysis for thinking about the global regulation of violence."[116] States are assumed, not only to be the primary actors in international politics, but they are also considered rational in their own right, and as possessing an identity, both individual and corporate, and as capable of collective and individual intentionality, as the constructivist position holds. As a consequence of these collective capabilities states are assumed to be able to constitute a 'social' international system that is subsequently imbued with 'culture'.

Another fundamental international relations theory assumption that this work incorporates is that, in a scientific positivist sense, the international system can be 'explained' and that regularities of behaviour and 'law like' properties of the system can in fact be utilised to make sense of the international environment – to a point. Unlike neorealist scientific positivism that utilises an economic metaphor to describe international relations however, this work is far more sympathetic to the social understanding advanced by the constructivist approach, thus constitutive relations are considered as fundamental to the nature of international relations as are causal ones.

In addition to these assumptions there are a number of limitations to this research project that to varying degree impact the efficacy of its conclusions. The first concerns the scope of the research and the applicability of its findings to other circumstances. Only three case studies of small state intervention have been examined, and as the entire population of non-great power interventions since 1945 represents around 70% of all military interventions, a sample of just three does limit the ability to extrapolate these findings to the 'general' case

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[116] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 9.

– if such exists.[117] It will be argued however, that the pattern that these three case studies evinces gives evidence of the fundamental difference between the materialist and ideational perspectives which consequently re-conceptualises the nature of intervention between all states. In choosing these particular cases the author tried to meet just a few simple criteria that would provide a reasonable but small number of case studies so that each could be examined in some depth, while covering as much of the post WWII period as possible so that the cases would be more contemporary than historical and perhaps more familiar to the intended audience. Of all of the instances of military intervention since 1945[118] very few ultimately did not involve a great power to some extent. The author wished to examine only interventions involving small powers, primarily to investigate the claim that small states operate manifestly differently to great powers. Of these few exclusively small state interventions, three were chosen that represented a reasonable geographic spread across the globe, a reasonable historic spread (this was only partially successful), and had sufficient source material available to enable a thorough investigation. Finally of the remaining few choices left, the author attempted to be random in his selection, although admittedly the final case was of particular interest to the author and so some bias based on personal interest undoubtedly was involved in the selection of that case. Nonetheless this selection was not considered to be inconsistent with the rationale employed for the selection of the other cases nor incompatible with the aims of the research.

The second limitation concerns the admittedly arbitrary distinction between small states and others. While Tanzania, Uganda, and Cambodia are intuitively small powers, the cases of Vietnam and Australia are somewhat less uncontrovertible. Without engaging the debate concerning what constitutes great powers, this paper suggests that a state's ability to materially influence the state of world politics is a sufficient, if very rough, guide to power status. Whilst acknowledging the contradiction of defining status in terms of material power while arguing against an exclusively materialist conception of power, and not denying that small states can, and sometimes have, exerted considerable international 'sway', above that which their size and power might otherwise suggest, it is proposed here that both Vietnam and Australia, while regionally significant are not, by any global measure, great powers. Does

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[117] Tillema, *International Armed Conflict since 1945: A Bibliographic Handbook of Wars and Military Interventions*. Tillema's work categorises all overt military interventions since 1945 into those by 'super-powers', 'secondary great powers', 'new states' and 'others'. His findings show 75% of these interventions fell into the new or other states category although many of these were very minor in nature.

this therefore allow them to be categorised as 'small' states? To the extent that, *inter alia* in terms of population and GDP these countries are exponentially inferior to the greatest states, it is claimed that they rate as small to medium powers.[119] Again the point is made that for the purposes of this discussion, all of the states involved do not exhibit the capability or intent of great powers, particularly in regard to their ability to influence global balance of power.

The third limitation concerns the nature of the research source material and its sufficiency. All of the research, with the exception of a few translated French texts, was conducted within English texts, reports, conversations, and articles, and is drawn largely from second source material. Each case study could be extended to be the focus of a doctoral thesis in its own right, but in a comparative thesis of this type it is not possible to treat each case study in such depth. Only what was considered essential primary source material was referenced for these case studies, and although for a work of this type this is not altogether inappropriate, when questioning the *'reasons'* why states behaved as they did, primary source material undoubtedly would provide the most credible and substantial source.[120] Nonetheless at an abstract theoretical level of analysis, which this work purports to be, the historic facts as derived from multiple authoritative and varied sources, can be assumed to be sufficiently uncontested as to be reliable and sufficient.

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[118] Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force*, pp. 121 - 140. Finnemore amongst others includes a list of interventions since 1815.

[119] In 1978 Tanzania's population was approximately 17,512,610 persons, with a GDP of US$4b, a military strength of 51,700 soldiers, airmen and sailors and an annual defence budget of $195m. (National Bureau of Statistics Tanzania). Meanwhile Uganda had a population of approximately 13,120,00, with a GDP of US$3.5b, 21,000 men in uniform, and an annual defence budget of $136m. Despite their reasonably sizable populations, both countries were very poor, had small and under-funded, under-resourced and under-trained militaries, and held no significant natural resource reserves, or agricultural or manufacturing sectors. Physically Tanzania was far larger than Uganda with an area of some 886,037 square kilometres (roughly twice the size of California) compared to Uganda's 199,719 square kilometres (roughly the size of the state of Oregon), but neither was located adjacent to, or straddling, any internationally significant trade or communications routes. Unlike Tanzania and Uganda who were relatively equal by most usual measures of national power, Vietnam and Cambodia are decidedly unequal in a variety of criteria, yet both it is asserted are manifestly 'small' in the global context. In 1978 Vietnam had a population of some 52-53 million with a GNP of US$9 billion. Its military, following over two decades of almost incessant fighting was swollen to a disproportionate 615,000 including a viable Air Force and Navy. Kampuchea with a population of some7.3 million people (before the mass killings by the Khmer Rouge) and a GNP that was not able to be accurately quantified but was considerably smaller than Vietnam's had a standing military of between 70 – 100,000 members. Although a regional force, Vietnam in terms of world standing in 1978, was a decidedly small state, Cambodia by comparison was substantially smaller again. In 1999 Australia had a population of around 19 million with a landmass of over 7.6 million square kilometres. East Timor meanwhile had a population of less than 1 million with a total landmass of around 15000 square kilometres.

[120] It is noted that the author had some first hand experience with Defence matters pertaining to the East Timor intervention being a serving Defence member at the time actively involved with planning and execution of the Defence mission into East Timor in 1999 – 2000.

Finally it may be germane to offer some explanation as to the appropriateness of the case studies to this thesis, particularly the Australian case. The final case study does intuitively appear to be at odds with the other cases, it does not involve a small country repelling an aggressor state, it was a multi-national intervention, and it was an intervention by invitation, with UN sanction. These distinctions cannot be dismissed and may at first appear to diminish the cogency of the argument made in this thesis. However, one vital aspect of the argument made in this thesis is that the international normative environment not only materially effects the conduct of state behaviour, but that this environment is an evolving context that has changed considerably since the late 1970s. Thus the Australian case represents an emblematic example of how intervention as a form of interstate interaction has changed through the past century and how a more inclusive and nuanced account of it is required. Intervention may indeed now be more commonly attempted through coalition or multinational form, it may now more commonly seek international sanction and legitimation, and it may more commonly be complicated by mobilised international and domestic public opinion. Such variables need to be accounted for within a satisfactory theoretic account. The argument has already been made that Australia is still a relatively small power and so fits the criteria for selection that the author utilised to choose the case studies, the fact that the intervention was substantially different in character to the others is, it is claimed, a product of the evolving international environment rather than a deliberate choice to include a 'humanitarian' case study. Furthermore it was felt that a somewhat dissimilar case would only add legitimacy to the claims of the thesis if those claims could be sustained in this distinctive episode. Ultimately three cases were chosen with as little prejudice as possible and the best analysis of those cases made that was possible, to produce the conclusions that have been drawn. These cases were not 'handpicked' to support the thesis, rather they were chosen to meet a few simple criteria as described previously, then examined in an investigative manner to determin how well current international relations theory accounts for them. Three different case studies may possibly have produced a different set of variable that would need to be accounted for, however, it is asserted here that no matter what small state interventions were examined the key tenet of this thesis – that a critically synthetic theoretic account is the best approach – would still be supported.