

6 Power politics revisited

Are realist theories really at odds with the new security threats?

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the emergence of the so-called new security threats associated with it gave the impression that realism, formerly the leading paradigm of International Relations (IR) theory, especially in Europe, has lost relevance. While realism still plays a strong role in US academia (see Chapter 1 by Glaser in this volume), European scholars stated that the discipline had been ‘hypnotized’ (Fozouni 1995: 508) for more than forty years by a wrong-headed theory, which, as an American historian added, ‘should not continue to command the intellectual energy and resources of the field’ (Vasquez 2003: 90). In academia, the historical turn of 1989–90 boosted various non-positivist theories,¹ while the appearance and lingering of the unipolar momentum – which most realists had considered transitory (Waltz 2000a)² – made it seem as though the theory which had ‘occupied the intellectual energy’ of IR scholars for more than three decades no longer had anything to offer (Halliday 1994: 11). The question of whether realist theories could productively contribute to twenty-first century security politics was answered by many scholars in the negative.

However, this chapter intends to make an argument for the continuing relevance of realist theories in addressing the new security threats or risks that states, societies, and even individuals, now face. Two aspects of realism support this: first, that a realist view on security studies, defined by Joseph Nye and Sean Lynn-Jones as the study of the threat, use and control of military force (Nye and Lynn-Jones 1988), is closely connected to the concept of national security. Although the term is highly contested, national security puts the state at the forefront of any security studies analysis. According to the classical definition realist scholars subscribe to, national security ‘has a more extensive meaning than protection from physical harm; it also implies protection, through a variety of means, of vital economic and political interests, the loss of which could threaten fundamental values and the vitality of the state’ (Jordan et al. 1999: 3)³. In times when most security studies scholars deal with non-military, societal and individual, regional and global security issues,⁴ realist security studies scholars remind us of the centrality of the use of force and the state in world politics (see Chapter 1 by Glaser in this volume).

Second, as this volume deals with new security issues, realist security studies scholars can help to bring more logical rigor to the debates by pointing out that some (but not all) of the issues scholars label as ‘new’ security issues are in fact rather old. Failed states, ethnic conflicts, the return of religion, the rise of new great powers, global and regional power shifts – all these phenomena have characterized the international systems for centuries. Realist scholars, especially those who work with historical case studies, make the point that most of the issues labeled as new are actually ‘not-so-new’, having already been a part of the security concerns of policy makers in the past.

For these reasons, security studies can profit from realist scholarship in the future. Yet this will also require an openness to dialogue on the part of realist scholars, as this chapter argues.

The first part of this chapter argues that realism is not a paradigm or a coherent theory. Instead I will make the point that realist scholars share some minimal theoretical assumptions, but are otherwise members of a broad church instead of a homogeneous school of thought. The second section of this chapter will show that realist theories have a hard time explaining the unipolar moment because of a fundamental misreading (or misinterpretation) of the effect that the structure of the international system has on great powers.

From here, the third section will claim that realist theories do have a relevance (or explanatory power) when it comes to some new security threats, which the introduction of this volume by Schlag et al. outlines and this section’s chapters on financial security (Chapter 9 by Boy), democratic peace (Chapter 7 by Geis and Wagner) and environmental security (Chapter 8 by Methmann and Oels) elaborate in greater detail. I will argue that those are rather new permutations of old threats (the rise of major powers and the increasing irrelevance of international security institutions).

It may be a surprise that part four argues that realist theories also have a normative role to play with regard to recent developments in international security policy (e.g. liberal or neoconservative interventionism, securitization moves with regard to international terrorism and other ‘new’ threats). However, in order to do this, realist scholars must be aware that their theories have a hidden normative agenda (Masala 2011a). Admitting the normative bias of their theoretical designs would enable realists to engage with other schools of thought in security studies, namely post-positivist scholars, who – despite epistemological and ontological differences – come to very similar conclusions with regard to real-world policy issues.

Finally, I will make the point that realist scholars should redefine their future role within the universe of IR theories. Instead of seeking to regain the paradigmatic high ground, realists should consider themselves as a kind of ‘IR guerrilla’, reminding established theories that material power and the use of force still play a major role in today’s real-world international relations.⁵ At the same time, realists are well-equipped to remind policy makers of the potential negative consequences of their actions.

Is anybody still a realist? About the core and the peripheries

For more than three decades realist scholars portrayed themselves as a unified research program based on Kenneth Waltz's seminal book *Theory of International Politics* (1979). The standard neorealist narrative can be framed by Imre Lakatos' famous description of scientific research programmes. According to Lakatos, every research program has a 'hard core' of theoretical assumptions that cannot be abandoned or altered without abandoning the program altogether. If the hard core seems to be under threat, more modes or specific theories are developed in order to protect it (Lakatos 1977). If realism is evaluated against this standard, one could rightly ask whether anyone still is or ever has been a realist (Moravcsik and Legro 1999). Yet this is a reading of realist theory which says very little about the actual development of realist theories. I argue instead that realism is a group of theories which share a central core of assumptions, but developed – and are still developing – outward in different directions or trajectories from this core.⁶ It's not the aim of any realist scholar to protect Waltz's seminal work, and it was not Waltz's idea back in 1979 when he wrote *Theory of International Politics* to create a research program.⁷

If one accepts the notion that realist theories have a common core out of which they each developed differently, the idea of multiple realist theories is acceptable, and there is no such thing as a unified realist research program.

But what does this core consist of? In reference to William Wohlforth (2009: 9), I argue that all realist scholars share three assumptions:

- a) *Groupism*. Politics take place within and between groups. Group solidarity is essential to domestic politics, and conflict and cooperation between polities is the essence of international politics.
- b) *Egoism*. When individuals and groups act politically, they are driven principally by narrow self-interest.⁸
- c) *Power-centrism*. The key to politics in any area is the interaction between social and material power, an interaction that unfolds in the shadow of the potential use of material power to coerce.⁹

But outside these commonalities, there is a lot of disagreement within Realism itself: between offensive (Copeland 2001; Mearsheimer 2002) and defensive realists (Snyder 1991; van Evera 1999); structural (Waltz 1979) and neoclassical realists (Mercer 1996; Schweller 1998); hegemonic stability (Gilpin 1981) and power transition realists (Kugler and Lemke 1996); structural and second image realists; and between balance of power (Waltz 1988), balance of threat (Walt 1987) and unipolar realists (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008). This incredible diversity of approaches ought to remind the reader that realism is a varied and philosophical way of thinking about international relations (see Chapter 1 by Glaser in this volume).

Realism and the unipolar moment

Since polarity is an important variable to explain the security policies of major (and sometimes mid-range and minor) powers in most realist theories, one would expect realist security studies scholars to be well suited to deal with the occurrence of the unipolar moment in the 1990s. However, most realists failed to explain security politics under unipolarity, especially the behaviour of the United States. In a nutshell, most realists argued that unipolarity would be brought to an end by other states or a coalition of states due to the 'iron law' of balance of power (Art 2004; Pape 2005a; Paul 2005). Only Wohlforth countered this argument by pointing out that the United States were simply too powerful to be balanced (Wohlforth 1999). The dominance of this argument stems from the importance assigned to it in the *Theory of International Politics*, where Waltz identified balance of power as the only law in international relations (Waltz 1979: 126). Other now nearly forgotten realists like Robert Gilpin, Raymond Aron or A.F.K. Organski and his power transition school, expressed doubts about whether balance of power was really the 'chief operating mechanism' as Waltz had claimed (Waltz 1979: 124). Wohlforth recently reminded us that realists like Robert Gilpin developed much more sophisticated theories of international relations than Waltz:

Had Robert Gilpin's *War and change in world politics* been given equal billing, international relations research would have unfolded quite differently over the past three decades. Scholars would not have been bewildered by change, bewitched by the balance of power, blind to numerous potentially powerful realist theories, and bothered by endless and unproductive zero-sum debates among representatives of competing paradigms. And had all those pathologies been absent, we would be far better prepared today for the intellectual and policy challenges of a world in which underlying power balances appear to be changing quickly, and the status quo inter-state order is ever more contested.

(Wohlforth 2011: 502)

The hegemonic position of Waltz and Mearsheimer's version of realist theory blinded realists (and even their critics) to two facts: First, that Unipol, which, like other states, acts and interacts under the condition of anarchy, faces fewer structural constraints than second-rank powers, and domestic politics are thereby more important to explain the actions of the preponderant power; and second, that every hegemon in history turned out to be a revolutionary power trying to shape its environment to its own favour (Tenenbaum 2012). Had realists been able to see these two arguments, they would not have been so optimistic about changes in the global distribution of power and would not have been surprised by the policies of the George W. Bush administration.

After being wrong on an issue they themselves would claim to be well suited to deal with despite the fact that their theories could explain a great deal about

security policies under unipolarity, it comes as no surprise that critics questioned the relevance of realism to twenty-first century security studies.

Realism and not-so-new security threats

As previously mentioned, there is, especially in European academia and to a lesser extent in the US, a widely shared assumption that realism has almost nothing to offer with regard to twenty-first century security politics. The security and survival bias of realist theories seemed incapable of explaining the loss of relevance of military power and the rise of economic and 'soft' power within the international system.¹⁰ This view has been relaxed in the years since the rise of new regional powers (e.g. India, Brazil, Nigeria) and one potential peer competitor to the United States – China – brought hard security issues back to the IR agenda. Especially in the US, some offensive versions of neorealism have experienced a revival, since they point to the competitiveness of the international system. The most extreme prediction comes from the godfather of offensive neorealism, John Mearsheimer, who argues that a future military confrontation between the United States and China is almost unavoidable (Mearsheimer 2010: 395). But this is only one realist view on future relations between the United States and China. As I have shown elsewhere, other realisms have different, sometimes more modest takes on the future of this relation (Masala 2011b). Even for realists, the rise of China and the potential for a future bipolarity (or even power transition) does not necessarily lead to a head-on confrontation between the two powers. Hegemonic stability or power transition realists make convincing arguments that the rise of China may lead to strong tendencies towards conflict-generating power politics, but not necessarily to war. The benefits of realism in dealing with the rise of China and other regional powers is that realist scholars remind us that great powers are concerned with their territorial security and that, from the point of view of their leaders, military power still matters.

Realist scholars may also be able to productively weigh in on the observable tendency that international institutions and organizations (especially in the field of security policy) are being increasingly side-lined by the major powers among their member-states. While institutional theories taught us that international institutions are actors in their own right and can permanently influence the behaviour of their members (Keohane 1988), all realist theories have expressed scepticism about the extent to which international institutions are able to act independently from the policies of its most powerful members. Hence, to realists it was no surprise that the end of the post-Second World War order has been accompanied by an increase of informal fora for security cooperation between great and major powers (PSG, RMSC, etc.), or in realist vocabulary, the establishment of directorates (Daase and Kessler 2008). These directorates are set up to deal with specific policy issues, they have no (or minimal) organizational structures and they are dissolved once a policy is implemented successfully (see Chapter 2 by Fehl in this volume). Realist theories remind us 'that institutions are based on the self-interested calculations of great powers, and they have no independent effect

on state behaviour' (Mearsheimer 1994/1995: 7). However, what remains understudied is the relation between these directorates and the still-existing institutions. From the perspective of a great power, are they legitimate alternatives or just tools to exert pressure on international institutions and organizations in order to reform them (Williamson 2009)? Studying these questions would require more interaction between realist and institutional theories. So far this development has not taken place from either side (see Chapter 2 by Fehl in this volume).¹¹

These two examples – the rise of new great powers and the increasing weakness of international security institutions – serve as examples to illustrate the continuing relevance of realist theories to security studies. And it seems obvious that the old realism horse can run this course, since the above outlined security challenges are – from a realist perspective – not new but rather old and centred around states and institutions, subjects familiar to realist theories. In this debate (about the not-so-new security challenges) realist scholars can contribute knowledge derived from the use of historical case studies (Walt 1991: 217) and, more importantly, by focussing on the central role of the state and military power in dealing with these issues. The insight that International Relations, and especially security studies, deals with repeating patterns is something realist theories can offer the debate. The question of what realist theories can contribute to explaining 'really new' security threats or risks lies at the heart of the next section.

Realism and really new security threats

The preceding section argued that some of the so-called 'new' security threats are indeed not-so-new and that realism has explanations to offer in regards to these kinds of security threats. However, other so-called new threats are indeed new to the extent that they are de-territorialized and emanate from non-state actors. The classic examples of these are international terrorism or global epidemics. Until now, realist theories have remained silent about these new security threats. With the exception of Robert Pape's realist-inspired analysis on suicide terrorism (Pape 2005b) and Barry Posen's attempt to adopt the power and security dilemma to ethnic conflicts (Posen 1993), realist theories have a hard time grasping these new security threats. This is partly because all realist theories are state-centric and largely ignore the relevance of non-state actors in twenty-first century security policy. This disregard of new security threats by realist scholars stems from a misunderstanding of one of the realist theory fundamentals: the role of the state. The central role of states in all realist theories is the result of the historical prominence and centrality of states in international relations since the creation of the Westphalian system. But the central role of the state is not carved in stone. The system, according to Waltz, can be populated by 'tribes, nations, oligopolistic firms, or street gangs' (Waltz 1979: 67). Which group is the most relevant for the structure of the system is a matter of the distribution of capabilities. But until 'non-state actors develop to the point of rivalling or surpassing great powers' (Waltz 1979: 95), states remain the most important actors. Hence, realism is actually a *group-centric* rather than state-centric school of thought. If realist scholars

took this insight seriously, there would be no major difficulties in applying their theories to every social group which acts and interacts in the arena of international politics. So the absence of strong realist voices in analysing new security threats is the result of the scholar's bounded understanding of the basic assumptions of realist theories rather than an inherent weakness of realist theories.

However, this failure of realist scholars to readjust their theories has not led realists to remain silent about these new security threats.¹² On the contrary, realist scholars have actively participated in and even led government policy debates over the past two decades.

In the following short overview I will pick up on two subjects in which realist scholars are prominently engaged and argue that their engagement is driven by a hidden realist normative agenda (Masala 2011a). The two areas in which realists raise their voices are the interventionist agenda of liberal democracies (see Chapter 7 by Geis and Wagner in this volume) and the securitization (see Chapter 3 by Fierke in this volume) of certain issues. This might come as a surprise since both issue areas are commonly known as being rooted into two different theoretical approaches: the liberal one (humanitarian interventions/democratic peace) and the constructivist one (securitization).

With regard to the growing tendency of liberal democracies to intervene militarily to spread democracy and human rights across the globe, realists are concerned that such policies contribute to a growing instability in the international system. Their concern is driven by three fundamental observations, which derive directly from the philosophical foundation of their theories:

- a) The attempt to universalize norms and values and thereby contribute to global justice faces the problem that justice cannot be objectively defined. For realist scholars, 'justice' is the fighting word of the powerful (Waltz 1979: 201). The task of realist scholars is to show that the true nature of policy is concealed by moral justifications and rationalizations (Morgenthau and Thompson 1985: 101; see also Cozette 2008).
- b) Overwhelming power leads to growing instability in the international system because unbalanced power tends to use its power to promote change abroad for the sake of its own security.
- c) The use of military and economic power will face resistance since it will be confronted with growing nationalism within the societies subject to change (Mearsheimer 2011).

For the above-mentioned reasons realist scholars recommend that liberal democracies, especially the United States, cultivate a 'security culture of restraint' (Walt 2005: 224), sometimes labelled a strategy of 'offshore balancing' (Layne 1997, 2006).

For most scholars unfamiliar with the philosophical foundation of realist theories it comes as a surprise that realists are not 'warmongering Neanderthals' but actually are rather sceptical about the use of force (Edelstein 2010). As one prominent realist recently argued:

It turns out that contrary to the conventional wisdom, realists are much less willing to use military force than most people on either the left or the right in the US. When I say the left, I'm talking about liberals. When I talk about the right, I'm basically talking about neo-conservatives. The fact is that when you look closely at the American national security elite, and this includes academics, you discover that many liberals and neo-conservatives are powerfully disposed to using military force around the world to serve US interests. Realists, on the other hand, tend to be much more wary about using military force. This means that in many situations – and we saw this in the run-up to the Iraq war – the realists end up opposing hawkish policies being pushed by liberals and neo-conservatives. In those circumstances, what you often find is that realists have more in common with people on the far left, and here I am talking about individuals who are clearly outside of the mainstream or the consensus.

(Mearsheimer 2012)

The other area where realists are engaged in policy debates is the growing number of issues which are securitized by governments in order to justify 'the use of extraordinary means in the name of security' (Buzan et al. 1998: 15; for a constructivist criticism see Chapter 3 by Fierke in this volume). Realists worry about two tendencies: that securitization undermines the democratic foundation of societies by gradually turning them into garrison states (Laswell 1941), and that it is used to legitimize military adventures abroad. From a realist perspective, 'states, like people, are insecure in proportion to the extent of their freedom. If freedom is wanted insecurity must be accepted' (Waltz 1979: 129).

This kind of policy engagement by realist pundits seems to contradict the realist claim of being a moral- and value-free theory which 'only' describes the world as it is. Their aim to change governmental policies seems to be at odds with their philosophical claim that the 'real political world cannot be changed' (Oren 2009: 283) and that realism 'doesn't take a normative or ethical position [...] and [...] is essentially amoral' (Walt 2009). Engaging in the marketplace of ideas seems contradictory to the realist belief that the international system has a deep structure that constrains states to behave in a certain way (Kaufmann 2004). This public engagement of realist scholars in conjunction with their scholarly work is criticized by other academics. As Samuel Barkin, a political scientist from the University of Massachusetts complained, 'some contemporary realists want to have it both ways,' i.e. to both explain states' behaviour and dictate how they ought to behave (Barkin 2009: 203). This kind of ontological critique calls upon realism to abandon its positivist epistemology and ontology and introduce more reflexivity. Both Oren and Barkin recommend that contemporary realists go back to the more 'sophisticated epistemological thinking of classical realists like Carr or Morgenthau (Oren 2009: 283; Barkin 2009: 243–5). From their point of view, if realists abandoned their claims to objectivity, their public engagement would be in line with their scholarly work (Ish-Shalom 2009). Following this train of thought, realism could then enter into a fruitful dialogue with modern theories of security studies.

But is there no middle ground that would allow contemporary realists to stick to their positivist epistemology while contemporaneously engaging in such a dialogue?

The concept of 'Weberian activism' Daniel Drezner has introduced might help open a venue for more dialogue between realist and non-positivist approaches (Drezner 2009: 6). According to Patrick Jackson and Stuart Kaufmann, 'Weberian activism' is characterised by the attitude to inform policy debates by educating stakeholders and the public about the relevant empirical relationships underlying pressing policy decisions and global processes (Jackson and Kaufman 2007: 96; see also Carpenter 2013). Under the notion of Weberian activism, scholars engage in policy advocacy as an epistemic community rather than 'adopting an explicit normative position' (Drezner 2009: 6). If this notion is accepted, then realists do not have to abandon their positivist epistemology in order to engage in policy discourse. As part of an epistemic IR community, realist scholars can object to distortions of their scholarship and take responsibility to ensure that their theories are not distorted in the public sphere. And if governments reference realism to advance non-realist goals, it is part of the realist's duty to cry out publically.

Interestingly, some of the realist warnings are quite similar to postmodernist policy advocacy. Chantal Mouffe, for example, calls upon a multipolar world in order to balance overwhelming power. In her words, 'the only conceivable strategy for overcoming world dependence on a single power is to find ways to "pluralize" hegemony' (Mouffe 2005: 118). And postmodernist Italian philosopher Danilo Zolo argues in favour of the establishment of regional blocks in order to balance US supremacy in the twenty-first century (Zolo 2002: 85). Recently Giorgio Agamben (2013) proposed the creation of a Latin empire under French leadership in order to balance Germany and the Nordic countries in Europe. This comes pretty close to the standard realist analysis, and is even compatible with the realist policy advice that only a multipolar world could balance the United States' tendencies to structure the world along their own moral principles and security goals (Waltz 2000b). Peter Gowan, a Marxist historian, surprisingly noticed that the left can learn more from John Mearsheimer's *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* than from any number 'of treaties from the coming wonders of global governance' (Gowan 2002: 67).

At first sight, problem-solving theories and critical theory look like strange bed fellows.¹³ But a closer look, especially when it comes to policy advocacy, reveals that both share the attitude of 'challeng[ing] the existing order' despite the fundamental difference that realists are utterly sceptical about the possibility of 'human emancipation' (Cox 1996: 53). Realists have to accept that their theories have an analytical and a normative dimension. Finding out the truth behind power describes best their desire to explain. Speaking truth to power on the other hand is the critical potential that is inherent in realist theories and explains their public engagement. Once realist scholars can accept this double dimension of their scholarly works, the discursive floor for a potentially fruitful dialogue with critical theory is at least partly open. For their part, critical theorists should accept that having positivist epistemology is not an impediment to engaging in public discourse.

Conclusion: the realist as guerrilla

This chapter shed light on the question of whether realist theories in the field of security studies have something to offer in the twenty-first century. The record is mixed. If one accepts the notion that there is no single realism, but instead many realist theories, then these theories surely have something to offer IR in the analysis of what I have called not-so-new security threats. The rise of great powers, the still-existing concern of states with their territorial security, the importance of military power, all these are subjects where realist theories can help explain and understand real-world events.

However if we talk about ‘really new’ threats, realism has difficulty dealing with them if it does not take one of its core assumptions more seriously, namely that international politics are characterized by *guerrilla*.

With regards to both phenomena, realism has to reach out to interact more with other theoretical schools or approaches. But to do this, realists need to recognize the contingent nature of their own theory, as well as its explanatory limits. This might be a problem for ‘die-hard realists’ à la Mearsheimer and it might be a problem for ‘realist bashers’ à la Moravcsik. But in general such an engagement would produce better results in answering real-world questions. Secondly, realist scholars should give greater voice to the critical potential of their theories. By focusing on the aspect of speaking ‘truth to power’, realists would be able to engage in a dialogue with other critical approaches – postmodern approaches are well-suited candidates for such a dialogue. However there are also obstacles, which, even if they did engage in such dialogue, would set limits to this. First, realists do not believe in the potential for human emancipation and second, they will not abandon their positivist epistemology (as some critical scholars would like them to do).

But it takes two to tango. Even with realists willing to engage in such a dialogue there needs to be preparedness on the other, postmodernist side to see the critical potential of contemporary realist theories and to approach realist theories with fewer prejudices. Surely this engagement won’t be easy, but nevertheless it seems promising to try.

Finally, realists ought to redefine their self-understanding as scholars. The declining salience of paradigm wars and the relative decline of realism’s centrality in the discipline (especially in Europe) offer unique advantages to realist scholars, which some of them have not yet fully embraced. Since they are no longer forced to maintain or to strive for the theoretical high ground, realists can behave like guerrillas, operating in academic territory mainly controlled by other theoretical forces, reminding other theoretical schools of their deficits, pointing to the still existing importance of material power and the national interest, and criticizing governments for foolish policies. Since it is widely believed that realists are status quo defenders and supporters of militarized foreign policies, challenging such policies and their theoretical foundations (e.g. humanitarian intervention and cosmopolitanism, external democratization and democratic peace theory) has the effect of a surprise attack. Besides realism’s already existing impulse to explain, a sceptical interpretation of real world policies and an attitude of speaking truth

to power should be characteristic of future realist scholarly work. The advantage of being at the margins of IR theoretical debates is obvious and very similar to guerrilla tactics: You win just by not losing.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, Kurki (2006), Lapid (1989), Linklater (1995), Buzan and Little (2001), Barkawi and Laffey (2006), Jackson and Sorenson (2003).
- 2 A realist exception is Wohlforth (1999).
- 3 See this book for a debate of the various definitions of national security.
- 4 See the graphic (Figure 1) in the introduction to this volume by Schlag et al.
- 5 I am fully aware that in the recent past classical realism has been re-discovered by critical scholars who aim at excavating the critical potential of classical realism. But their intentions differ fundamentally from mine. Critical scholars aim to deconstruct the myth that there is a linear train of thought from classical to contemporary (especially Waltzian) realism trying to tie classical realism to constructivist theories (see Williams 2008). When I talk about realists as guerillas I intend to advocate a research strategy in which realists concentrate on speaking truth to power and pointing to the importance of material factors in explaining real world events (just to mention two things). Hence, while critical scholars intend to deconstruct realist theories I aim for re-positioning realist theories in the field of IR.
- 6 The reason why I think that realist theories (like other theories) cannot be judged against Lakatos' criteria is that, firstly, scholars of IR rarely consider themselves as part of a sect where defending the 'true religion' is the main purpose of their scholarly existence, and secondly, that Lakatos himself used to be extremely sceptical when his description of a scientific research program was applied to the discipline of social science.
- 7 'First, a research program is not fashioned by the creator of the initiatory theory but by the creator's successors. The original theory may be a good one, but the successor theories weak and defective. If the program should run off the tracks, we would still want to know how good the original theory may be. Second, the problem of evaluating a theory endures, whether or not the theory spawns a succession of theories. Third – an acute problem in the social sciences in applying the "novel facts" test – how are we to decide which facts are to be accepted as novel ones? Some will claim that their theories revealed one or two; others will say, we knew that all along. Fourth, if assaying a theory in itself is not possible, then how can anyone know whether launching a research program is worthwhile?' Quoted from Waltz (2003: xi).
- 8 At first sight it might appear a-logical that selfish individuals would sacrifice their lives for selfish collective actors. Classical Realism, especially Reinhold Niebuhr, has dealt with that problem extensively. According to him (Niebuhr 1932), individuals in their personal dealings are often able to transcend 'self' interest. But collective actors such as nations dealing with other nations, or social classes with other social classes, have little or no capacity for 'self' transcendence. 'They have a limited understanding of the people they harm by their unjust "self" assertion; they lack appreciation for the often complicated laws and institutions through which such injustice is perpetuated; and they are more inclined to embrace rationalizations of "self" interest than prophetic denunciations' (Berke 2000).
- 9 As connoisseurs of IR will notice, structure is not included. Structural realism is one branch of realism, which for a long time has been dominant in the realist theory family. But ultimately structural realism is just one brand of realism, not a defining characteristic.
- 10 For more on the security and survival bias, see Chapter 1 by Glaser in this volume, for more on soft power, see Nye (2011).