

Westphalian order in pan-Arabism culture societies

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Abstract. *It is no secret that nationalist movements are making their presence felt more throughout the world. This comes as a result of people's consciousness being marked of the different policies adopted by multilateral institutions which negatively affect the state's perceived sovereignty. The anarchical structure of the international system reveals how order is only maintained once states hold the power of decision, whether it is through cooperation or independence. Studies underline how sovereignty has become an institution in itself and how states become increasingly dependent on it, in the last seventy years. The concept of a nation-state is not about total independence, but about finding the best economic, social and political solutions for the best outcome through mutual understandings within the Westphalian sphere.*

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Introduction

The structure of the international system is anarchic meaning there is no governing body to ultimately control state actions. The formation of the nation-state in the modern period acts as a response to anarchy, where the countries are their own governors under the sovereignty umbrella. Firstly, we show how the structure of anarchy does not lead to problems such as the security dilemma given the social constructivist argument. Secondly, we are going to look at the co-existent structure of the nation state and argue how it creates the bedrock for social and political order so that stability averts turbulence in the international system.

Wendt (1992) underlines that the micro-level world state formation is driven by the struggle of people for recognition of their subjectivity. At the macro-level this battle is channeled toward a world state by the logic of anarchy, which generates a tendency for military technology that could evolve to war between different actors. The process develops through five stages, each responding to the instabilities of the one before — a system of states, a society of states, world society, collective international security system and the world state.

Now that we have established the co-existing structures of the international system, we are going to start by deconstructing some key points and give certain perspectives. The main setbacks in the international system have to resemble the actions that create social disorder within the international system. Other key ideas include the epistemological concept of positivism adopted by both neorealists and neoliberalists. Neorealists such as Mearsheimer (2009) believe that states will act aggressively leading to a zero-sum game, due to the goal in preserving their security.

Firstly, we will be using a transcendence a priori logic in order to understand the opposing view taken by Alexander Wendt in his article⁽¹⁾, one possible way of understanding state actions, according to positivists. Alexander Wendt (1992) is against both neorealist and neoliberalist views that the anarchic structure of the system is the determinant of how states respond to one another and ultimately take decisions. He argues that the structure is determined in an opposite way, from an internal force of “process” based on interactions between states. To put it more clearly, Wendt (1992) does not deny the existence of anarchy but rather disagrees with the fixed views of the positivist ontology regarding on how things stand in the international system. He replaces this with a more realistic approach where the inter-subjective understandings between states determines the outcomes of certain events and the overall interest of states.

Literature review

Wendt (1992) comments against Mearsheimer’s a priori fatalistic logic by looking at a superficial example in which aliens would invade our planet. Assuming we do not know

anything about aliens, we cannot directly and inevitably react in an aggressive way, as we do not know any information regarding their interests. Once their first action translates into them wanting no harm, it then further enhances our knowledge about them and therefore makes us think they come in peace. This interaction is put in analogy with states, where states, through multiple interactions between them, create their own understanding about each other which would not necessarily be one where they result in being aggressive.

He exemplifies with 'real-life politics' by showing how the US will react to the building up of British missiles compared to Soviet missiles. It has been clearly observed during the Cold War the reaction of the US to Soviet missiles in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The tense reaction from the US of quarantining Cuba and thinking about invading was due to the conflicting relations with the Soviet Union fueled by the Cold War. It is clearly much more unlikely that US's more 'friendly' relationship with the Western countries and allies such as Britain would create tense reactions suggested by the fatalistic logic, were Britain to install their own missiles. This shows the social construction based on interactions between states which determines state interests and actions.

Secondly, we are going to look at how the 'sub-structure' of the Westphalian system will also not create disorder. In the globalized modern world, pressures towards the nation-state system only lead to disorder which means that the recognition of sovereign states is crucial for any economic, social or political equilibrium. These pressures could also be considered as Barnett (1992) defined them - "rival institutions". Barnett (1992) defined an 'institution' as a set of rules which provides the state with certain roles. We are going to analyze the real-world examples of pressures faced by the nation-state system and how the sovereign state structure survives in order to reach a preferable outcome especially when one talks about order in the international system. We will be looking at the modern state systems' ability to always survive which is because of its capability to create order (the fall of pan-Arabism).

Findings of the research

We look at how the structure of the nation-state system is inclined to survival given its ability to create order and not cause problems. The example we are going to use is the period of 'pan-Arabism' and its collapse. Fouad Ajami (1978) observes that after the Six Day War, the first signs of the pan-Arabism breakdown occurred when Palestine, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, refused to rely on the unified Arab states. The liberation of Palestine during the period after 1967 proved how Yasser Arafat thought of this 'revolution' as beneficial to the security and order of its state. It proves yet again how leaders started to recognize the importance of military, economic and social independence of a state. The assurance that the liberation of Palestine depended on its legitimacy as a sovereign state, came with Algeria's independence from France in 1962 which proved how

important it was for a state to have full trust of its own capabilities, therefore, relying on its sovereignty.

Fouad Ajami (1978) claims that the indignation of people in Arab states towards the universalist ideology of pan-Arabism was also largely due to their awareness that this devotion to a unified Arabism led to unfair terms where some states would pay for the economic consequences of co-states within the union and only some people being sent to war to fight for the wider Arab ideology (pan-Arabism). This example can be observed in analogy with the European Union and the rules where member states benefit from the 'free rider' problem by not being pressured to act economically responsible due to the currency value being strengthened and adjusted by the stronger economic members. This debt trap in EU could eventually lead to future economic crises which affect the whole European single market.

Hinnebusch (2019) considers Arabs as representing what he defined as a "proto-nation" (p 161) which means that they take their culture, language and historical events seriously in the formation of the nationalist concept. The fact that the concept of 'othering' (identification through difference) appeared during the period of the Ottoman Empire ('other' being the Turks) and the discrepancies caused by the imperialist stance of the Turkish empire over Arabs is the reason why borders and state-nation legitimacy would have released tension. One can clearly observe an increased number of conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq revolution of the 1980's where the border dispute regarding the Shatt al-Arab river was the bedrock for the creation of such friction. Western interventionism soon after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire demolished the fundamental "nationalist norm" of "one nation-one state" through the division of the territories against Arabs' national interests.

It has been argued that in the Middle East there is an increasing difficulty to set borders (nation-state building) because of the peoples' different choices of religious or national identities. The biggest obstacle to the process of nation-state building was the intervention of the great powers after WWI (Britain and France) which divided the Ottoman Empire between the Arabs and Jews, without taking into consideration any consensual opinion of the people, history and national identification. It was all according to their own interest which clearly would be against any foundational rule of proper and functioning nation-state building. More importantly, according to Hinnebusch (2019), pan-Arabism was most successful exactly in the states divided between the French and British (Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916) in Syria, Iraq and Jordan. Given the creation of these independent states by the Western powers, with no consideration whatsoever of sub-state identities such as kinship, national history and culture, leads to these states lacking the nationhood sentiment and therefore lacking the respective presence of national identity. This leads to people accepting Arabism as their main form of identity, which leads, given their artificial creation, to the pan-Arabism movement to gain acceptance in these states. These new states do not represent the original model of the Westphalian state system which is the one seen

across the majority of the world. It is clear that the unification of multiple independent states will only create disorder given the different interests of state leaders both economically, politically and socially.

Barnett (1996) also showed how the nation-state system, through a more social constructivist point of view, creates order within the international system. He looked at how the definition of 'nationalism' has fluctuated in time from representing "cultural autonomy" (to safeguard one's culture and rule a state independently) to then be represented by expansionist movements and threats to the nation-state system. This is because in the Arab world, unlike other parts of the world, during the pre-1967 period, nationalism actually translated into "transnationalism". After the Six Day War, where Israel managed to occupy vast territories against the Arabs, the nation-state became more accepted creating the specter for the reduced tension between Arab states. By looking from a social constructivist point of view rather than a positivist view, Barnett (1996) argues how Arab nationalism went from neglecting the possibility of its existence together with separate states to actually changing its definition to a 'nationalism' which is actually compatible with the independence of states. The fact that the Middle Eastern Arab states agreed upon this new definition, meant that they could respect each nation's sovereignty in its full sense which led to order.

He also stresses the point that state sovereignty is a "social institution" based on the behavior of state leaders and the interaction between them. One can argue that the problems of conflict and disorder which arise within the international system are because of "rival institutions" which are actually the root of the problems in the international system rather than nation-state structure being the cause of problems. In the case of the pre-1967 period, Arab nationalism was considered as a sole institution separate from the 'sovereignty institution' because this mere concept of nationalism had not been included in the definition of state sovereignty as it was required by the unification of states for the good of the Arab Nation. It doesn't mean that the institution of state sovereignty is weak, but rather that the pressures from these "rival institutions" disrupt its full functioning which should actually be respected for there to be order.

The first theory of games models was designed by von Neumann (1950) and ultimately enriched by the academia personalities within RAND corporation in the early 50s could lead to improved solutions for the region. His model, extended to cover non-zero-sum situations, became a fundamental structure for future theorems on the stability and decomposition of games. We should also take into account some of the conclusions of Lasker's studies (1941) which state that "the alliance of weak powers is enduring but not that of the strong and in a state of balance every piece has a political authority proportionate to its intrinsic power". Apart from this, we know that in the international arena as the model moves from two to three or more participants, the complexity rapidly increases because the combinatorial complications rise with every added player.

The state of order resulting from the triumph of the sovereignty institution can be looked from a more historical empiricist view to why this is the case. Stephen D. Krasner (1988) provides a good explanation which he also links with the discipline of economics to why such structural institutions survive over time by looking at “path-dependent patterns of development” just like genes mutating. They explain how initial decisions on a given set of rules and roles representing an institution, applied to state-actors in our case, remains the same along history due to it strengthening itself. Its increased efficiency is due to the teachings of past events but also due to “network externalities” where if an institution is adopted by more people (in this case states adopting the Westphalian state system) it becomes more efficient and therefore more prone to survival. This shows yet again why the nation-state structure is the foundation of a peaceful international system as long as there are no external institutional pressures disturbing its functioning. The ‘path-dependent’ theory states that the system will always have this structure and any attempt to disrupt it will only temporarily deviate its functioning, however, in the long-run, the modern state system will always thrive (it creates order rather than being a cause for the main problems in global politics).

Overall, how states are structured as presented by the anarchical system and the nation-state structure does not cause the main problems of the world, but rather it is what Barnett referred to as “rival institutions” which disrupt the social order. We have looked, through a social constructivist point of view, at how the security dilemma does not necessarily arise in an anarchical state. We have also looked at how the modern state structure leads to order rather than disorder through empiricist observation but also using the social constructivist view of how states agree on certain definitions. If positivists can impose a fixed set of rules of how states function, we can establish a complex set of outcomes based on state interactions which, by drawing a trend line, turn out to result into the same structure throughout time as that system arrangement is the one that creates order.

Conclusion

Pan-Arabism was built for creating a common universe for Arab culture and historic evolution. Initially, this ideology fueled the creation of modern states in the Middle East. Once this goal was achieved, pan-Arabism became the main obstacle in creating a Westphalian order between the conflicted interests of different players in the region. Due to the historical fact that the borders were settled artificially in the region guided by the singular interests of Western empires, we now face an explosive situation in the Middle East. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is just the actual example, but the list is way long and scary.

The conflicting interests of national states are facing the limitations imposed through the constraints of a Westphalian system. Present times demonstrate that order cannot be

achieved without a mutual recognition of common rules that constitute the foundation of the international system. The Middle East is probably the only region where conflicting national interests surpass dramatically the basic rules of an international system in which economic development can arise.

The zero-sum game that is continually played by the big powers in the region will lead to nothing but poverty and destruction. Every state has to accept the historical past and agree to limit the sovereignty impulses for a common good. Israel has to establish a demarcation line for its advancement, the two-state solution being the only option on the table for a political equilibrium in the region. Once this perspective is adopted, Israel will demonstrate the maturity of a great power who will surpass the demons of the past and provide a viable example for the future of other states in the region.

History demonstrates that zero-sum games ultimately lead to a loss for all the parties involved, the win of today cannot guarantee the survival of tomorrow. How can we achieve economic growth and a sustainable development if we continue fighting for moving the borders of a nation?

Present theories of international system cannot provide an answer to a political equilibrium in which national interests sustain an anarchic state of affairs. War provides a temporary political relief to Netanyahu, but a place in history is only reserved for the leaders that create a stable order for their nations. There is just one option on the table through the achievement of a Westphalian system in the region that harmonizes pan-Arabism culture with mutual respect between the states.

Pan Arabism, as a rival institution, still exists from an abstract point of view, as long as borders within the Middle East are artificially constructed. States within this region could only become 'nation-states' once the concept of a 'nation' is well defined in each and every one of them. The 'path-development' paradigm shows the triumph of the sovereignty institution is clearly developing an unique way within the Middle East. In order for it to be maintained, a new consensual agreement has to take place, setting terms for all religious, political and economic matters which form the legitimization of a 'Westphalian' system within the Middle East.

Note

⁽¹⁾ Alexander Wendt (1992), *Anarchy is what States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, The MIT Press, pp. 391-425.

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