How Fear Shapes World Politics

Rathbun states that paradigms in most of International relations (IR) theory, "constitute the first step in approaching a research question" (Rathbun 2007, p.534). Considering this observation, I aim to explain the ways in which fear shapes world politics mostly through the realist paradigm. It is important to note that fear in world politics encompasses an array of situations. As Booth and Wheeler (2008a) mention, "states fear being attacked, fear dropping in the prosperity league, fear leaving themselves open to attack, fear losing prestige, fear being oppressed by outsiders – and on and on" (p.138). In other words, the problems that states face when relating to each other is fuelled by some type of fear, tangible or intangible, real or imagined.

I will argue that fear shapes world politics in its ability to affect the way states behave in the international system mainly through their interpretation of other states' intentions or motives and through their response. Hence, I will structure my argument under the headings of interpretation and response, mirroring Booth and Wheeler's two-pronged definition of the Security Dilemma (2008b, p.4). Furthermore, the arguments I will put forward of the ways in which fear shapes world politics encompasses the dual roles of fear- fear as an assumption in realism and fear as an emotion influencing state individuals within the dynamic process of IR.

The essay will begin with a brief explanation of the dual role of fear. Using examples throughout, the second part will examine the various ways in which fear shapes world politics. Arguing that fear shapes world politics through its ability to affect a state's interpretation of information regarding another state's intentions and mould their response. Moreover, I will strive to critically analyse arguments which do not consider fear to have such a shapely role in world politics, as it relates to each point. Lastly, I will conclude that fear deriving from inescapable uncertainty, does not simply play an assumptive role in the international system, but is a central notion and emotion within IR that can arise within any context to shape states' behaviour.

Dual Role of Fear

Firstly, the notion of fear in world politics is endorsed by the realist's anarchical international society plagued with power-maximizers and self-help thinking. (Mearsheimer 2014, p.32). Its assumption derives from uncertainty, the constant inherent variable in international politics. As Bleiker and Hutchinson (2008) state "fear can be attributed to the feeling that something untoward may happen" (p.124). Additionally, Rathbun (2007) defines uncertainty as "fear induced by the combination of anarchy and the possibility of predation" (p.533) Through an offensive realist lens, his definition highlights that fear is the inevitable emotional outcome of uncertainty and a constant reminder of the risks and perils of the international system. Though fear is not the only emotion that can influence world politics (see Linklater 2014; Crawford 2014), it is known as the emotion that characterises the international system, drives states to competitive action, directly affects the dilemmas they face and has the potential to cease efforts of cooperation and impede trust. It has been described as "a symptom of pervasive conflict and political unhappiness" (Robin 2004, p.3) and the "dog that does not bark in international relations" (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, pp.62-63) emphasizing its silent, but omnipresent role in shaping world politics in both times of peace and war.

Secondly, fear in world politics also transcends its assumptive role in the theoretical framework of realism to operate within humans. Regardless of states being the referent object in IR, they relate to each other through humans and are made up of humans. State actors and leaders are representatives of the state and their cognitive and emotional

How Fear Shapes World Politics
Written by Natalie Alfred

practices can determine how a state acts (Brent 2011, p.453).

Fear within individual political actors is more obviously manifested in the assigning of enemy images to the adversary state(s). If such fears operate in individual state actors, it can prove to be the difference between states having spiralling relations or building a cooperative, reassuring relationship (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, p.7) Fear can also be used as a tool by political actors to serve and justify a political agenda (Bleiker and Hutchinson 2008, p.119) as was done following the 9/11 attacks. This embodied role of fear can also be seen to shape world politics in the arguments that follow.

The Shape of Fear: Interpretation

In international politics, states seek to know the intentions of other states, to inform their subsequent relations. This requires the interpretation of words, actions and signals of the other state, which the notion of fear influences. Since fear is the result of uncertainty, the interpretation of information about intentions and motives tend to be pessimistic. Therefore, fear shapes world politics by causing states to interpret other states' intentions pessimistically and create "conflicts of interest even where there might not be any in reality" (Rathbun 2007, p.540). Fear promotes scepticism about states' motives and intentions regardless of the information being received. Consequently, states are sometimes compelled to assume the worst (Tang 2008, p.453). This is the reasoning offensive realism endorses thus purporting that states seek to maximise their power (usually through militaristic means), in pursuit of security (Mearsheimer 2014, pp.33-34; Tang 2008, p.453). States act competitively because of fear derived from uncertainty and because "it pays to be selfish in a self-help world" (Mearsheimer 2014, p.33). Defensive realists, on the other hand, warn of the dangers of assuming the worst and believe that the maintenance of their positions in the system ensures security (Glaser 1997). However, this is easier said than done because states can never be sure of future changes in the balance of power that may affect their security and therefore change their behaviour. After the Cold War ended and the United States (US) became the sole regional hegemon, North Korea, began to pursue nuclear armament in a deterrent security effort, since their ally the Soviet Union was no longer a great power. Their underlying fear of the US was brought to the surface once the balance of power shifted against them, forcing them to adapt quickly. The US interpreted North Korea's ambition for military power as simply a sign of malign intent, failing to perceive how fear has contributed and continues to drive their actions.

Defensive realists also claim that because fear stems from uncertainty, cooperative measures and the building of international organisations and regimes are ways in which states' fears may be alleviated (Tang 2008, pp.456-457). Institutionalists especially believe in the power of international organisations and institutions in reducing uncertainty and fear among states through the norms and laws constructed that govern how states relate to one another. Such organisations lengthen the "shadow of the future" (Axelrod and Keohane 1985) and make the international system more predictable and less hostile. However, for cooperation to even exist, a first step must be taken by a state. Fear is what hinders such a step from being taken. Even if a state does not assume the worst and takes that first step, to maintain cooperation the other state must interpret it as benign otherwise the process ends before it begins.

Sustained cooperation is also susceptible to being undermined by fear, leading to defections. Thus, fear shapes world politics in its ability to provoke defection and end cooperation. Going back to North Korea and US relations, fear of attack from the US and the US's counter fear of North Korea's nuclear weapons program has led to defections over many years with North Korea having complete disregard for international law. Their relationship continues to feed a spiral model (Jervis 2015, pp.69-73) in which neither states recognise how each other's actions fuel the other's fear and mistrust (Wheeler 2018, pp.84-87). Despite attempts to cooperate with each other over the years through the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970, The Agreed Framework of 1994 and the Six-Party talks initiated in 2003, their mutual fears and North Korea's fear specifically, of losing the gains they have made in Nuclear development, continues to hamper progress. Consequently, fear can force a state to disregard any progress made through cooperation in pursuit of self-interested goals. This kind of reaction shows that states' behaviours are largely influenced by feelings of insecurity and fear, which primes other states to interpret their actions as antagonistic. This leads to my next argument within the process of interpretation, that fear can also influence how states interpret signals from other states.

How Fear Shapes World Politics
Written by Natalie Alfred

Fear shapes world politics by undermining signalling efforts. In state communication and interaction, signalling is considered as part of a process of reducing uncertainty and fear about another state's intentions (Rathbun 2007, p.535). Therefore, states usually wish to signal peaceful type in interactions. However, through the assumptive role of fear, signalling renders useless since states continue to be aware of the uncertainty of intention looming (ibid). During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union's mutual fear of the other's intentions hindered them from effectively signalling peaceful type to each other. In 1955, Khrushchev's withdrawal of troops from Austria was stated to be a signal of peaceful intent but was treated suspiciously by the US (Larson 1997, p.710). Therefore, both states had the tendency to "best-case its own motives while worst-casing those of the other" (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, p.53). 'Hobbesian fear' (Butterfield 1951) continued to blind the superpowers in their interpretations of peaceful signals, making them unable to exercise security dilemma sensibility (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, p.7) in understanding the ways in which they contributed to the fear and mistrust of each other.

More specifically, fear can shape world politics through an individual state actor's perception having implications for their process of interpretation. This process in a state actor is more subjective- based on their thoughts, convictions and emotions such as fear- and predisposed to the historical and situational contexts of the states in question. Holsti (1962) was able to show through the content analysis of former United States Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles' speeches, that he had developed an inherent bad faith thinking against the Soviet Union which meant that all signals intended as peaceful were interpreted as deceptive or a trick to lull the US into a false sense of security (Larson 1997, p.704). The strive for consistency in his belief system, which feared the Soviet Union and viewed them as inherently evil, led to the conclusion that they only had malign intent against the US. As Larson (1997) observes, "beliefs about the other side's character affect interpretation of its actions" (p.716). This shows the ability of fear, on the human level, to shape world politics in its moulding of individual perceptions which in turn can contribute to false interpretations of intentions and the undermining of peaceful signals.

As observed in the examples so far, weapons are always an asset in world politics and play a role in sparking and sustaining fear between states. Therefore, fear shapes world politics in its ability to maintain the need for weapons. Interpreting a state's intentions is made more complicated by the fact that states continue to develop weapons. The fear of weapons is made more acute in the current nuclear age because they threaten a state's survival. Weapons are considered "the violent materiality of the existential condition of uncertainty" (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, p.42). Therefore, being ignorant of a state's motive behind their weapons development (for offensive or defensive purposes) sustains fear between states and for offensive realism, qualifies as a reason to remain pessimistic (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, pp.42- 45; Wheeler 2018, pp.82-87). Defensive realists will argue that the ambiguity of weapons does not have to cause fear in states because it is possible to still communicate peaceful intent (Wheeler 2018, p.82). However, such communication does not preclude a state from still pursuing offensive military capabilities due to fears of future uncertainty. Whilst fear of the unknown forces weapon development, fear is also a psychological reaction to the presence of weapons in individuals because its very existence and use are to hurt others (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, pp.42-61) regardless of what a state claims it is for. No matter how insistent North Korea is about their nuclear weapons program being for defensive purposes, it will continue to elicit fear in South Korea's and the US's mind about their intentions (Wheeler 2018, p.85). Consequently, fear sustains a cyclic relationship with weapons since it is the reason weapons are produced whilst also being the product of the existence of weapons. The fear weapons cause affects states' interpretation of other's intentions, shaping state relations.

The Shape of Fear: Response

Fear also shapes world politics within the dilemma of response. It can shape how and why states choose to respond in a certain way. If a state concludes that another state simply has benign intent, then it is more likely to respond in a cooperative manner. However, as already discussed, this can eventually be undermined by fear and the possibility of betrayal. If a state is considered to have malign intent, as will now be discussed, then fear of that intent can influence the response of the state to the threat.

The historical, social and political backstory that the emotion of fear brings highly influences states' response to the feeling on the international stage (Robin 2004, pp.27-28). When a state is fearful, it attempts to cope with the feeling by trying to avoid the look of fear. In other words, "men are not supposed to show fear" (Booth and Wheeler 2008,

How Fear Shapes World Politics

Written by Natalie Alfred

p.64). This can transpose in world politics to states carrying out quick, overcompensating actions when faced with a threat to their security in order to appear tough. Furthermore, with a heightened level of fear, states are more likely to make errors of judgement in their threat assessment of enemy states and their response (Dyson and 'T hart 2013, p.414). This was the case after the 9/11 attack which led then-President Bush to describe Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an "axis of evil" (Bush 2002), assigning enemy images to these states. The fear the US suffered from also manifested into an offensive realist move of waging a preventive war against terror. The level of fear the severity of the attack caused led the state to believe that they faced an existential threat to which the only way to respond was by invading Iraq. This shows a way in which fear shapes world politics as it led to an overestimation of hostility and an inflated response to a security threat.

Fear can also shape world politics through a state's response, in its extreme ability to both alter the nature of a state within the political system and to bring states together in solidarity. Expanding on the US's response to the 9/11 attacks, it has been argued that their response altered the nature of the US from a status quo power to a revolutionary one (Booth and Wheeler 2008, p.70). The institutionalisation of fear by the Bush Administration and the assigning of enemy images to these states depicted an 'us against them' mentality re-emerging the conviction of ideological fundamentalism (Booth and Wheeler 2008b, p.65; Wheeler 2018, p.93) in world politics. This practice also referred to as identity blaming (Suh 2006), hinders cooperation and trust and promotes hostility and fear. Conversely, the fear deriving from the 9/11 attack drove cohesion amongst states with the same political identity or agenda to depict the states that were different as the enemy. As Mercer (2005) states, emotions "drives in-group cooperation and out-group discrimination" (p.97). It could be argued that in this context, the US's response exposed the problem with offensive realism in their overestimation of hostility, however even if a defensive realist move had been made and the war on terror never occurred, fear would still have played a part in public perceptions and the securitisation of terrorism domestically and worldwide. This shows its versatility in the avenues it can use to shape world politics.

Though the examples given concerns conflict situations, a state's fear do not have to concern a conflict. The reason and subject of fear can vary and encompasses non-violent decisions and actions. Using the United Kingdom's (UK) current exit from the European Union as an example, it was brought about because of national fears concerning security, relative gains, national identity and sovereignty. These fears are also visible not just amongst the political elite, but also through the significant divide in the citizens of the UK, meaning fear cannot simply be taken as an abstract concept in international politics that has limited meaning, but rather as an imperative emotion that influences state and individual choices and actions.

Conclusion

Due to the ever-changing undercurrents of IR, fear continues to shape world politics. It can be linked to a political issue, subject or person in IR. Structurally, perpetuating uncertainty about the future (most seen in the changing leadership of states), gives an inherent reason for fear to exist and shape world politics. Overall, fear influences a state's interpretation of motives, intentions and signals. It also shapes a state's interpretation on the human level through its moulding of political actors' individual perceptions. It is the main driver of weapons development. It has the potential to undermine cooperative measures and hinder trust through its encouragement of defection. It has also proved to influence states' responses to threat and drive cohesion between states. It is a strong emotion in IR dynamics that cannot be ignored on either the structural level or the human level. Though other theoretical perspectives have attempted to minimize its shapely role in world politics, fear has continued to demonstrate its power in steering the direction in which state relations and international politics go through its ability to push states apart and bring them together. Summarily, I have argued that it impacts the deciphering of the security dilemmas of interpretation and response, making it an important notion and emotion that propels states' relations from the beginning to the unforeseeable end.

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How Fear Shapes World Politics

Written by Natalie Alfred

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Date written: January 2019