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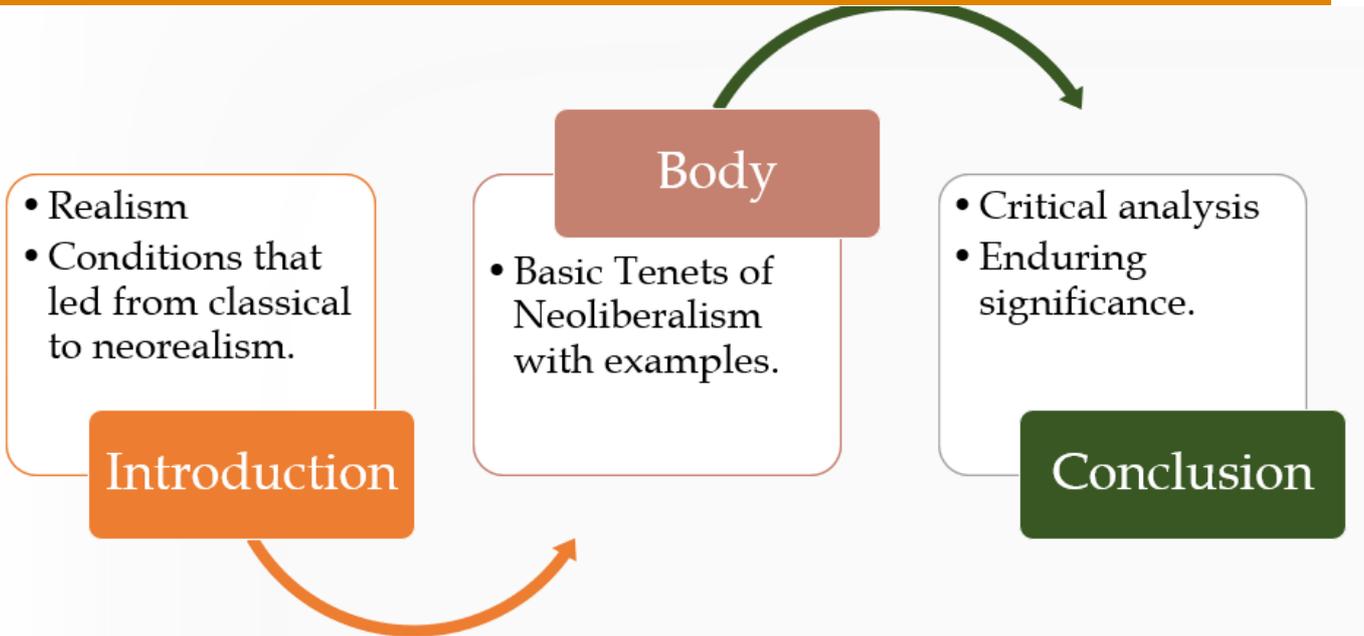
# Political Science & International Relations Crash Course

*Lecture - 11*

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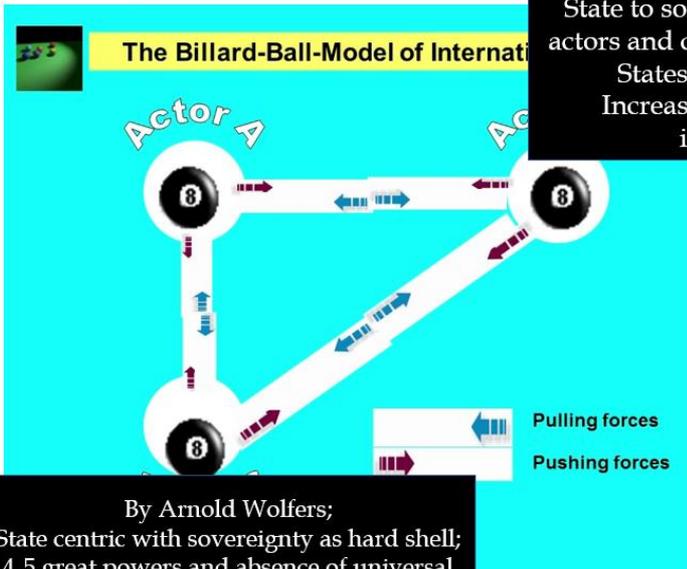
## 1) Discuss the emergence of neo-realism and its basic tenets. [2021]



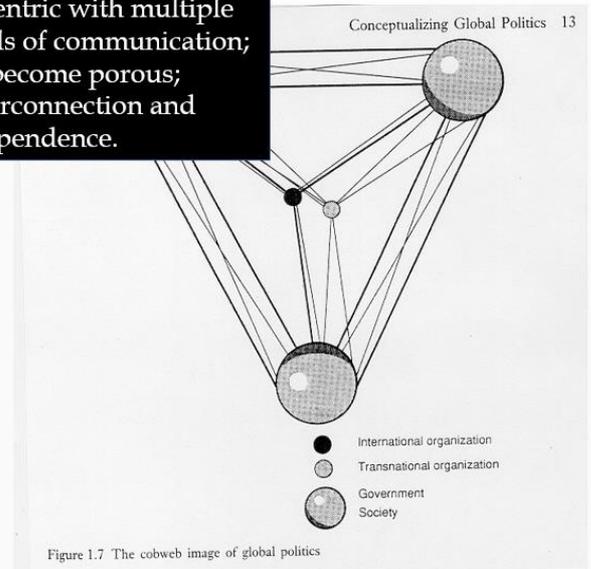
Realism has been the dominant theory of world politics and also one of the oldest theories of the world being espoused by ancient scholars like Thucydides (Peloponnesian War), Kautilya (Arthashastra), Machiavelli (The Prince), and Hobbes (Leviathan).

### Emergence of Neo-Realism:

- Neo-realism emerged from the North American discipline of political science, and reformulates the classical realist tradition of E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan and Reinhold Niebuhr.
- Challenges faced by the classical realism like **increased cooperation** through bodies like WTO and UNO, highly **interdependent world economy**, decline of state due to **globalization**, and emphasis on **empirical research** post second world war, lead to a search for an alternative.

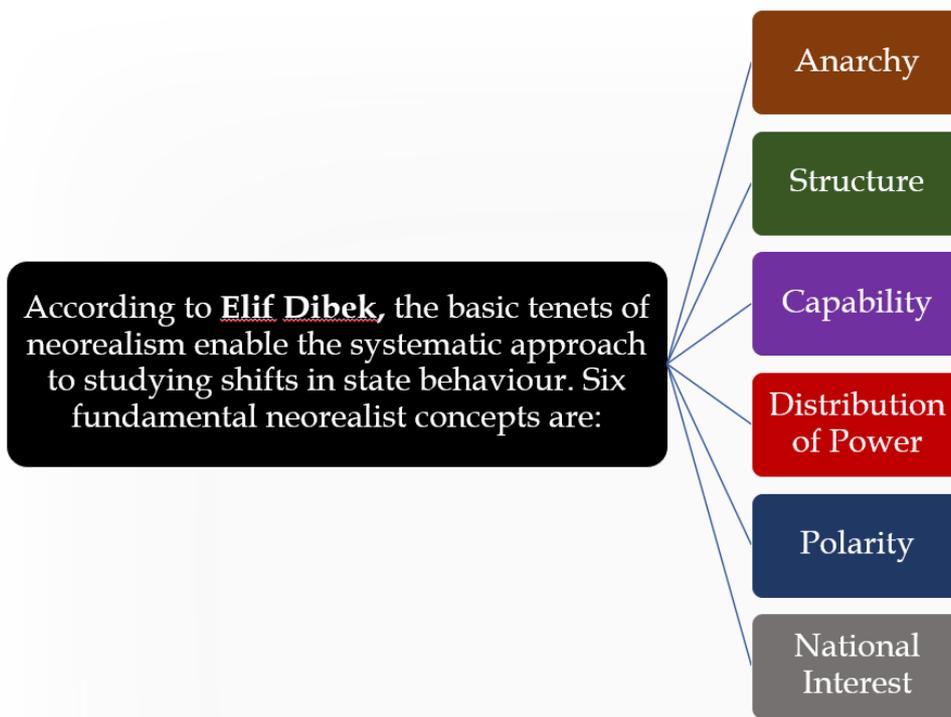


By John Burton-  
State to society centric with multiple actors and channels of communication; States have become porous; Increased interconnection and interdependence.



By Arnold Wolfers;  
State centric with sovereignty as hard shell; 4-5 great powers and absence of universal actor; Self-reliance through balancing.

- **Kenneth Waltz** criticized classical realism on several aspects.
  - ❑ First, classical realists locate the roots of international conflict and war in an imperfect human nature while neo-realists maintain that its deep causes are found in the structure of anarchic international system. Neorealism as an "outside-in" theory.
  - ❑ Second, as argued by **Hobson** the state is ontologically superior to the system in classical realism, in contrast to neorealism, allowing more space for agency in the former approach.
  - ❑ Third, classical realists differentiate between status-quo powers and revisionist powers, while neorealism regards states as unitary actors. (Schweller)
  - ❑ Fourth, neo-realists attempt to construct a more rigorous and scientific approach to the study of international politics, heavily influenced by the behaviorist revolution of the 1960's while classical realism confine its analyses to subjective valuations of international relations (Georg and Sorensen).



### Anarchy' and 'structure'

- **Anarchy' and 'structure'**; are intertwined. The 'structure' of the international system is said to be 'anarchic'. According to **Waltz**, 'Anarchy' does not imply the presence of chaos and disorder but to the absence of a world government. International politics is structured by '**anarchy**', in contrast to domestic politics that is structured by '**hierarchy**'.
- As states are separate, autonomous and formally equal political units, they must ultimately rely on their own resources to realise their interests- "self-help system". Due to the same, relationships between and amongst states are always characterized by uncertainty and suspicion- **security dilemma** (Booth and Wheeler). For example Russia's pre-emptive attack on Ukraine. Waltz says that each state is formally 'the equal of all the others. None is entitled to command; none is required to obey'.

### Capability

- A neorealist assessment of the 'capability' of a state is determined by five main criteria; its natural resource endowment, its demographic, economic, military and technological capacity.
- Conflict is also encouraged by the fact that states are primarily concerned about maintaining or improving their position relative to other states; that is, with making relative gains.. This is referred to as 'relative capability'.
- Germany's increasing defense spending can be the befitting example. Capabilities are instrumental for states to ensure their survival.

### Distribution of power and Polarity

- There exists a difference between the Defensive and Offensive realists with regard to the magnitude of power to be secured. Waltz is seen as a **'defensive realist'** who believes that the state is security maximiser, **Mearsheimer**, on the other hand, is seen as **'Offensive realist'**, **argues that states is a power maximiser.**
- With regard to the **'distribution of power'**, the varying distribution of capabilities results in **Great Powers determining the fate of the international order.** This also is related to the notion of 'Polarity' in neorealism framework.
- Neorealists like classical realists resort to BoP for conflict to be contained. However, while classical realists treat the balance of power as a product of prudent statecraft, neorealists see it as a consequence of the structural dynamics of the international system, and specifically, of the distribution of power (or capacities) between and among states.
- **Neo-realist stability theory-** Bipolar systems tend towards stability and strengthen the likelihood of peace while multipolar systems tend to be inherently unstable as Multipolarity creates a bias in favour of fluidity and, perhaps, instability, as it leads to shifting alliances as great powers have external means of extending their influence.

### National interest

- Within a neorealist conceptual framework, 'national interests' of states are best understood with reference to their relative capability ranking. The level of capability a state possesses vis-à-vis others, constrains or equips states to pursue such interests. In striving for security, states seek to expand their capabilities vis-à-vis rival states to pursue their national interest. India's expanding defense ties with USA can be seen in this light.

### Conclusion:

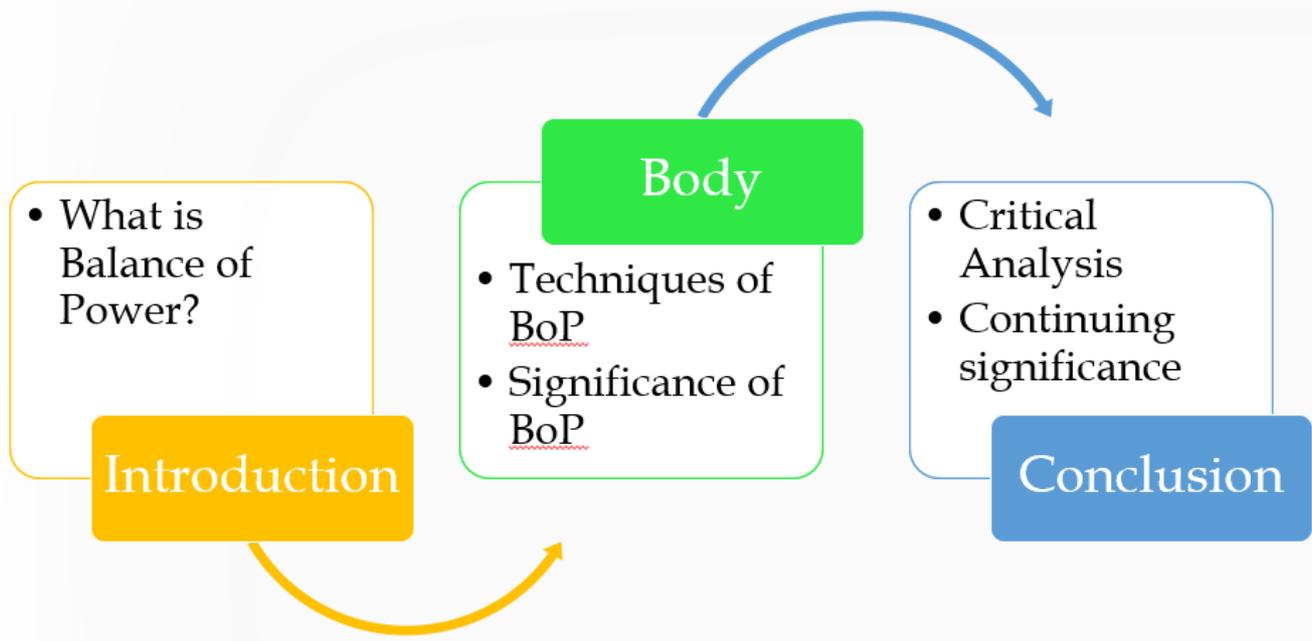
Neo-realism was challenged by **Neo-Classical realism (Fareed Zakaria)** as it fails to explain the role of individuals influencing foreign policy.

Also, other schools like **English school under Hedley Bull** challenged neo-realists for their static view which, as per them, is far from being scientific and

**Neo-liberals like Robert Keohane** criticised neo-realists on four broad parameters 1) origins of states' preferences, 2) the agent- structure problem, 3) Waltz's specific definition of political structure and 4) the internal logic of neorealists.

Despite the criticism, realism has remained the **'Timeless Wisdom'** in international politics as witnessed from the recent **Russia-Ukraine war and resultant NATO expansion plan, Afghanistan crisis and Chinese incursions** towards the bordering states.

2) Explain the concept of Balance of Power? What are the various techniques for maintaining Balance of Power? [2020]



### What Is Balance Of Power?

- Balance of power is **a realist conception of peace**. It is based on the principle that in an anarchical situation where self help international politics prevails, the most effective check on the power of a state is the power of other states.
- The power must be distributed in such a way that no state is strong enough to dominate others.

According to Quincy Wright, following are the basic assumptions that underlie the theory of Balance of power:

States are determined to protect their vital national interests such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, security etc. by the means at their disposal, including war.

It is natural for any state to opt for power maximisation (offensive realism) to gain preponderance of power.

War is a recurring feature of balance of power. Also, no actor is ousted from the system, defeated states are brought back.

### Techniques Of BoP

- **Territorial compensation:**
  - It usually entails the annexation or division of the territory of the state whose power is considered dangerous for the balance. **For example division of Germany in the aftermath of WWII.**
- **Alliances and counter alliances:**
  - Alliance is a device by which a combination of nations creates a favourable balance of power by entering into military or security pacts aimed at augmenting their own strength vis-a-vis the power of their opponents. **For e.g NATO and Warsaw pact during the Cold War or the present QUAD alliance to counter China-Russia.**
- **Buffer State:**
  - Another method of balance of power is to set up a buffer state between two rivals or opponents. For example Russia wants Ukraine to be the buffer state between NATO and Russia or Nepal between India and China.
- **Arms Race:**
  - Accumulation of arms and weapons provide the double benefit of self-sufficiency and deterrence as was seen between US and USSR during Cold War.
- **Disarmament** and as imposed on Germany after WWI is also a known technique to maintain BoP.
- **Nuclear Power:** Similar to arms power it provides self-sufficiency and deterrence. For example India's nuclear programme was meant to counter the belligerent powers like China and Pakistan in its immediate neighbourhood.

### Relevance OF BoP:

- According to **Morgenthau**, states like men are Animus Dominandi and suffer from a security dilemma.
- Similarly, **Balmer and Perkins** held that as long as the nation-state system is the prevailing pattern of international society, balance of power policies will be followed in practice, and in all probability, they will continue to operate, even if effective supranational groupings on a regional or world level are formed.
- However, Liberals question the continuing relevance of BoP as the conditions that were prevailing during the golden age of BoP i.e. 1848-1914 are no longer existing.
  - **Nehru** called it a nervous state of peace as there is always fear of war. There is always a risk that a local issue might take the form of world war
  - In today's world, where nation states are tied in complex interdependence and like minded countries use political platforms like UNSC to check rival powers, there is no need to rely on BoP to secure peace.

- Besides, the main threat to global peace and security does not come from nation states, but from non-state actors and uncivil society example ISIS, terrorist groups or non-traditional threats like climate change or pandemics like Covid19.

## Conclusion

- BoP is based on the Westphalian notion of monistic view of sovereignty today's world looks more like **John Burton's Cobweb Model** where nations are not just interconnected but also possess pluralistic sovereignty.
- But despite the interconnectedness we can see countries trying to balance their rivals e.g India's Act East policy and USA's Pivot to Asia to counter China in Asia Pacific or increase in NATO's membership bids by neutral countries like Finland and Sweden.
- As per Parag Khanna, world is experiencing structural and systems change, which is where we not only have states but also have commonwealths, cities, companies, and communities as well. So **Balance of Innovation is key to Balance of Power.**



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