

A thematic preview

of subsequently developed thought pattern

A quest for understanding a system of states in (political) reality proposes its triadic differentiation into posture (status, position), potency (material, contextual power) and basic project (objectives) of state-like actors. Political realism as doctrine postulates the reciprocally operative relationship of the three facets. Distinct from ideal-typical condition of quantitative-qualitative correspondence productive of stability (i.e. virtual immobility) of the systemic arena is the actual, vertically proceeding extension or diminution (rise and decline) of the actors and their horizontally operated interaction (conflict or collusion).

As an abstract norm, the ideal-typical condition allows for relatively minor (i.e. routine) potency-posture-project disparities susceptible of correction via (re)-equilibration. Major reciprocal imbalances will provoke actor-in-arena crises, which supply the motor for the mechanism of evolution generated conflictually. Operative necessarily in space, the attendant dynamic introduces time, via destabilizing mutation-or-transformation of the real system (i.e. agenda-in-arena) as the indisposable dimension of a spatio-temporal context and/or conception of world politics.

Concern to uphold existing posture relative to the equally adequate potency – and vice-versa – constitutes the perennial minimum project of actor policy; adjusting either's inadequacy to the other's level is more strenuous. Self-preservation is consequently undifferentiable from self-aggrandizement, if not also self-effacement. An ostensibly diversified project is only distilled into specifically indeterminate and practically controversial concept such as 'national' interest. However, the proposed sundry definitions of basic impetus to policy are equally 'realistic' (if unequally generalizable substantively). They differ from an 'idealistic' commitment to survival/transcending values.

Even a non- or anti-idealistic view may or intermittently has to admit appeal to, or invoke, ideal values altering the essentially realistic project into a normatively superior distinctive purpose. Likewise, the implicitly rational strategy may be injected with the non-rational affect of passion in response to a crisis situation. The operational/purposive image of realism has to expand from a rationalistic (as well as static) power-interest version, as theoretical abstraction, to include a further range of itself as actually lived phenomenon.

As part of it, the temporal dimension adds the anterior and posterior phase to the posture-potency-project equation of actor development from a primitive social entity to state-like community and beyond to decay and decline. The evolution from instinctual urges to rational-strategic designs is inseparable from likewise

temporally manifested spatial expansion of a minor actor's project of (local) autonomy to major actor's aspiration to hegemony.

The arena passes conjointly from primitive anarchy within fluid *ad hoc* configurations to system-wise more law-like order susceptible to hierarchy – a variant of de facto stratification in associations to be managed by regionally or globally dominant actual or would-be hegemon in keeping with the 'feudal' principle of rights but also duties attaching to privileged posture.

A normatively legitimized administration of force employs instruments serving as leverages of strictly military-to-supporting economic kind, capable only of increasing institutionalization. Multiple internal and external, material and immaterial determinants are the motives at work in expansion from merely local to empire-like scope, while the functional equivalence of ostensibly diverse motivational or instrumental leverages diminishes the difference's strategic weight. Offensive-defensive ambiguity of attendant drives and constraints rules out incidentally *a priori* differentiation of intrinsically aggressive-expansionist (autocratic) and pacifically disposed (liberal-democratic) states – a last resort conformity subject mainly to the contrasting attributes of space-occupying insular and continental powers.

The expansive urge of primitive social organisms in excess of their potency tends to dissipate as a result of internal disorganisation. Historically traceable are stages in foreign policy's evolving specific (posture and/or potency-related) objects on the part of consolidated long-lived states. These only include expansion, among other dispositions, as the externally operative stimulus to a counter-acting response constitutive of balance-of-power kind of interactions. Historically disclosed and evidenced events and transactions illustratively corroborate otherwise but postulated tendencies in regard to both the rise-decline trajectories and power-balancing interactions.

A genealogically construed emergence of both types of dynamic is the distinctive attribute of more than historically illustrative, a historicist meta-rationally speculative, approach to understanding intra- and inter-state politics. The quasi-philosophic mode of compounding a merely analytic description of world politics complicates further its mid-level theorization in terms of the mainly spatial dimension (structure) and also temporal facet (process). If space-articulating structure connotes mass (i.e. mainly potency), alterations connote movement (from a specific object to another). A finite range of both structural and processual components promotes repetitive recurrence in time as part of migration and/or circulation in space

Specifically concerned is the tendency for structure to divide within any spatial orbit into foci of energy unlikely to exceed their number beyond five, permitting both agenda's operational manageability and actors' significant status. An actually and potentially pentagonal structure will tend to be polarized between

two values-defined rivals, equally pretending to sole hegemony. Absent a condominium-oriented quest for parities, the (two) rivals' competition will promote a third party or parties as agents of change from head-on (zero-sum) confrontation into all-systemically conditioned plural interaction. Consequent alternation of bi- and multi-polarities entails an equally conflictual generation of to-be rising and attrition of (to-be) declining powers. Attendant evolution is punctuated by crises, as potency-deficient hegemon is unable to perpetuate its preeminent posture by means of either depreciation of forceful rules of the game or their conversely ultra-violent compulsive application.

Altering the rules of the game is the end-goal of a normative revolution that would replace a traditional implementation of the potency-posture-project triad in favour of a transcendent purpose that would employ futuristic legal and jurisdictional principles and institutional practices to more than modify self-regarding actors' individuality into transnational community. Converting the diversely material determinants into immaterial motives overdifferentiates the normative from sundry functional, (i.e., economic, military etc), revolutions by substituting for diverse but functionally equivalent instrumental leverages imaginary purposes shriven of a henceforth inapplicable equivalence principle. A radically progressivist jurisprudential doctrine proposes to cut short to a post-revolutionary of the world order, achievable ideally by restoration integrating the normative innovations into supposedly henceforth dysfunctional tradition.

Selectively opportunistic attribution of international-law quality and authority to addressing peripheral incidents entails a comparably fictitious legitimization of actually pragmatic-political and more than commonly ambiguous resolutions by the core organ of a world organization – either of the two modes impractical enough to practice in again prevailing forms of warfare and too indefinite to be defined. Both constitute ineffectual (if not contrary) attempts to superimpose radically altered norms on the intrinsically law-like strategically rational conduct, susceptible at best of only widely concerted, tested, and practical formal institutionalization. Despite their shortcomings both were incidentally to significantly initiate the extension of inter-state agenda of the crisis-free alternation in provisional preeminence of parties to essentially peaceable competition, the key factor of post-revolutionary restoration inside countries consequent on alternating reactionary and reformist interludes.

Projecting the unique accomplishment only underlying a normatively positive internal achievement into an internationally operative technique would avoid denying claims to parity if not also appropriate potency-posture relationship to materially ascendant but legally-institutionally underprivileged powers. A resulting sequence of catastrophic violence could be avoided only in materially more equalized confrontation of parties to (resurgent) polarity of diverse value systems co-responsible for neglecting a parities-multiplying condominiumal alternative to the destruction of one and near-automatically following self-destruction of the other protagonist.

The chance for post-revolutionary restoration of world politics, implying practically a crisis-free routinization of hegemonial ambition-centered contentions, has passed on to a restituted concert-type dynamic of a henceforth again pentagonal system of great powers implementing collectively monitored mandates. Conceptually continuing intersection of normative revisions with traditionally realistic potency-posture-project permits actual appeasement provided that the speculative expansion of realism with both affective-passional and developmentally-temporal dimensions be absorbed into actual attitudes and agenda.

It remains plausible to postulate historically and conceptually evident continuities over ostensible changes in general and progression from anarchy to hierarchy and from autonomy to hegemony in particular. Continuity is compatible with cyclical rhythm of periods differentiated also or mainly by normatively and technologically extreme revolutions, but absorbed into a *status quo* through restorations that attempt a practically viable synthesis of tradition with innovation. Both continuity and cyclicity coexist with constants in the sum of diverse forum and locus of violence, as potency interrelates with posture and project more or less coherently into degrees of stability approximating unevenly the ideal-typical condition.

Search for understanding will accordingly move from plausibility of assertions and hypotheses to their probability and, extending the length of considered time span, from tentative presumption to virtual certainty. An intellectually rigorous procedure is not, in this perspective, demonstrated in regard to transiently salient individual phenomena but in orderly progression of largely intuitive ideas and concepts to their increasingly comprehensive application via systematic recapitulation, avoiding consistently a narrative exposition of facts and events unless and until subsumed under preconceived principles of interactive dynamics and evolutionary tendencies.

If the ideas and concepts are intuitive, their source is not so much in the innate quality of the searching mind, inborn genius, and also perhaps mainly, in prior and continuing immersion in past history felt not as a record of facts and data but as theater of men's timeless striving for fulfillments by way of the protagonists' self-fulfillment. The secular drama's understanding, to issue in intuition, must be not so much analytic or critical as sympathetic – in the sense both of self-identification and empathy. The criteria of methodological unity and correspondingly substantive continuity is, therefore, boiled down to simplicity, not what is being thought, said, and written, but how it is comprehended and conveyed, a distillate of essentially aesthetic contemplation as much or more than of rational(istic) investigation – because the only intellectually valid criticism is in juxtaposition of a credibly imagined superior other to a questioned is – or was.