

Long-Term Change in International Relations

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Abstract:

Human societies have been, are, and will continue to be in a state of constant change. Change in this article refers to fundamental changes that have long-term consequences and lead to the rise and fall of political systems. Why and how societies change is a controversial issue, to which different approaches and perspectives have given different answers. This article seeks to highlight some of these approaches and perspectives.

Keywords: Political System Change, Cyclical Models, Realism, Structuralism, Pluralism.

INTRODUCTON

Since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the formation of new states in Eastern Europe, the nature and causes of long-term changes in international relations, or in other words, the rise and fall of political systems, have once again attracted the attention of scholars in this field. Of course, change in human societies is a constant process, these changes can be minor and limited, having short-term effects, or they can be major and long-term.

Change here refers to major changes that sometimes cause the rise and fall of empires. This article aims to examine the causes and how these changes occur from the perspective of various approaches (realism, structuralism, pluralism, evolutionism, etc.).

REALISM AND LONG-TERM CHANGE

The classical realist school of thought believes that systems that are subject to change are state-centered and autonomous. Autonomous means that there is no global government to oversee the functioning of such states. In such systems, the state is the main player and dominates all aspects of people's lives, from politics to economics to culture, and so on. The international system is a collection of states and institutions designed to meet the needs of these states. (This has been the case at least since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.)

From the point of view of classical realism, states are constantly in competition with each other, each of which strives to gain advantages and achieve a position of superiority. Change therefore occurs as a result of competition arising from the interests of states, which are often in conflict with each other

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and sometimes even coincide. Today Classical realism has many critics. Neo-realism, which is a mixture of realism and elements of structuralism, is one of these critics. One of the neo-realists is Gilpin, who believes that:

The international system, whether bipolar or multipolar, has elements of instability and is subject to fluctuations due to small changes in its structure.¹ In his opinion, one of the reasons for The essence of change in the international system is its cost-benefit. That is, if states recognize that the benefits of changing the international system outweigh its costs, they will not hesitate to make such a change. Gilpin's view of change is based on "rational choice," which emphasizes the influence of market factors. According to him, an international system is stable as long as its benefits exceed its costs. However, if the economic costs of stability rise faster and higher than normal, this system is exposed to change.

Increasing costs will cause the system to become unstable, and this instability will lead to change. Of course, despite the emphasis he places on economic factors, Gilpin also considers the importance of political factors influencing any change. One of these factors that plays a fundamental role in political developments in the world is war.

Gilpin uses economics to provide a framework or cyclical structure for the rise and fall of states. To provide this structure, he examines a 2,400-year period of Western history. In his view, the result of political and economic developments is a cycle consisting of four periods of development, equilibrium, confrontation and decline, and the growth process of any society follows an S-shaped pattern. In Gilpin's view, the cycle of the rise and fall of great powers is constantly repeated.

Gilpin's view is similar to the structuralist view in terms of its emphasis on economic factors and the role of hegemony in political developments. But it is similar to the realist view in the importance it attaches to the role of states and competition between them, and most importantly, war. Another theorist who has a view almost similar to Gilpin is Modelski. Modelski attaches great importance to war as a key factor in the development of international politics. And like Gilpin, he believes that international politics is fundamental. Modalski considers the year 1500 AD as the beginning of the modern international system. From that time until now, he believes, there have been "four stages in the history of international politics, each of which was dominated by a single state."²

The decisive factor in the transition from one stage to the next has been the war in which the victorious state has changed the international system to its own advantage. The basis of these cycles is the difficulties faced by dominant states in confronting new competitors and the unbearable costs of this confrontation in order to maintain their position in the system. Thus, states rise and fall based on political and economic factors and competition between states for dominance. Another approach that places great importance on non-state actors is Samuel Huntington's "civilization" approach. Huntington believed that the post-Cold War era would witness the emergence of great cultural and religious divisions in world politics. These divisions would provide the basis for conflicts that would be the final chapter of the "clash of civilizations".

¹ Gilpin Dawn,1981:127.

² Modelski,1987:35.

PLURALISM AND LONG-TERM CHANGE

Pluralism, which is now often used to refer to neo-liberalism, gives particular importance to theories of change. Many of the neoliberal theories, such as “interdependence,” “regime theory,” and the triumph of the free-market economy and democracy and the decline of the nation-state, are based on historical interpretations. Pluralists believe that the pace of change and the main parameters of international politics may change over time. The first point to consider about the neoliberal approach to change is the question of progress.

Of course, there is disagreement among them about whether progress is a permanent and continuous process or not, and also whether progress actually exists in practice or is merely a potential issue, but they all agree that progress is a long-term issue, they agree. The neoliberal emphasis on progress has taken the form of a global development theory that believes that human history is moving towards the triumph of liberal and democratic values. This can be seen in Fukuyama’s theory of the “end of history”.

This conclusion, which represents the triumph of liberal democracy, assumes that there has been a directional change throughout human history. In general, pluralists, especially neoliberals, see change as closely related to economic factors such as economic growth, transnational ties, and interdependence between states. They use the concepts of interdependence and regime theories to understand and explain how change occurs in contemporary international economic relations. For example, Krasner believes that “disasters and crises can trigger changes that lead to the formation of new international regimes.”¹

Economic perspectives on change therefore play an important role in neoliberal theories of international politics. But neoliberals, more than realists, see a causal and key role for intellectual factors in bringing about change in international politics. They argue that special importance should be attached to the role of “epistemic communities” in bringing about political change. Perhaps the most well-known analysis of the pluralist approach to change is by Rosenau. He believes that there is a clear link between small-scale action and large-scale change. Drawing on the theory of complexity in mathematics and physics, Reznau compares international political systems to water and weather systems. He believes that “international politics is a combination of evolutionary (gradual) and sudden changes.” (breakpoints) become “.”². Gaddis has an approach almost identical to Reznau’s. Both take advantage of new advances in mathematical complexity theory, and fundamental changes in evolutionary biology.

STRUCTURALISM AND LONG-TERM CHANGE

The structuralist paradigm is not a single approach and is therefore not easily defined. Structuralist approaches are a group of perspectives that firstly adopt a global scale for analysis, and secondly believe that structures or frameworks of action play an important role in global politics. These

¹ Krasner, 1983:14.

² Rosenau, 1990:134.

approaches include Marxist and non-Marxist perspectives and theories based on economics and other fields. The best-known structuralist approach is “world systems analysis” developed by Wallerstein.

This approach is closely related to Marxist theories of change, although it itself denies this connection. At the same time, Wallerstein attaches great importance to the simultaneous role of political and economic factors in the emergence and collapse of world systems. In his view, “world systems They are primarily economic patterns that are created by economic factors, but these patterns also have political dimensions and act as causal factors in creating political changes in the long run.”¹ Wallerstein believes that through the reshaping of economic structures, many countries are driven into a kind of peripheral relationship with the world system, and that this pattern of center-periphery relationship is recurring, and the only way The change in this relationship is the change in the capitalist system.

Some of Wallerstein's supporters believe in the existence of this type of relationship even in the economies of prehistoric world systems, in the classical and medieval periods in Europe and in the Mediterranean region and Asia. Another view that has been put forward on long-term changes in international relations is Wilkinson's "civilizational approach". This perspective studies civilizations over long time scales.

Wilkinson means a civilization as a group of cities that interact with each other politically, without regard to any cultural values. These interactional patterns create networks of communication that result in the creation of systems that reflect a type of center-periphery relationship. Halliday uses the approach of “historical materialism” as a basis for analyzing long-term changes in international relations. Halliday’s approach is clearly historical, emphasizing the totality of human history. Halliday focuses on the socio-economic fabric of world politics and gives causal priority to economic factors. He considers the role of class antagonism and revolution to be the most important in the analysis of the cause of change and considers the process of change to be the result of the operation of economic factors.

Rosenberg's theory of long-term change bears a great deal of resemblance to Marxist theories of history. This theory is also clearly materialist, emphasizing concepts such as "class" and the socio-economic method of analysis. According to Rosenberg, “social structures have a decisive influence on the functioning of international systems and should be explained in terms of the Marxist “theory of value.” That is, explaining world politics in terms of social and economic relations and taking into account the temporality of political forms.”²

Cox attaches great importance to the functioning of socio-economic factors within nations and groups of nations with common interests. According to Cox, these groups can form a political bloc and influence international structures to secure their interests. According to Cox, change occurs when these interests change or economic factors cause these groupings to change.

SOCIOLOGY AND LONG-TERM CHANGE

Sociology has been concerned with change since its beginning. Comte sought to discover the laws that cause change. Durkheim gave great attention to the problem of change, which he saw as an

¹ Wallerstein,1991:59.

² Rosenberg,1994:178.

evolutionary movement. In fact, sociology in the twentieth century has been largely concerned with the study of how change occurs. Since Spencer, sociology has used Darwinian concepts of evolution as a basis for explaining changes in human social groups and their organizations. A key point in this view is that throughout human history there has been a progression toward increasing complexity. Of course, two important exceptions to this general trend in sociology regarding the interpretation of change based on evolutionary theories and historical materialism are the approaches used by Sorokin and Pareto.

According to Sorokin, every change has a specific pattern, and the study of any change must take this pattern into account. Sorokin covers a period from the seventh century BC to the twentieth century AD, using a world scale analysis. Sorokin believes that there are only “a limited number of types of basic systems that recur throughout history, and that change is the result of changes in these basic systems.”¹ In his view, the cause of change must be sought within the systems and that human factors play a minor role in these changes. Change must therefore be understood as an intrinsic and internal phenomenon in all systems, and as a long-term repetition of a few cycles of the original systems.

Pareto takes a psychological view of change, seeing it as the result of the psychology of the elite and its relationship to the psychology of those who are governed by the elite. And using the concept of Equilibrium, as a factor in maintaining systems, sees change as the result of the breakdown of this equilibrium. According to Pareto, the key factor in maintaining equilibrium in a political system is the rotation of different types of elites. The American sociologist Dahrendorf sees change as the result of contradiction. According to him, “Contradiction and change are intrinsic and internal elements of every society.” These conflicts are based on the belief that “life chances” are the possibilities of satisfying needs and interests.²

Change should be understood as the result of internal factors and the pursuit of interests and needs. Another sociological view of change is presented by Parson. Parson believes that every society consists of individuals who seek to maximize their own strategies. And with Using evolutionary and functionalist concepts, functionalism has developed the concept of equilibrium to explain the maintenance of systems and, consequently, change over time. Of course, not all sociological analyses of change are evolutionary approaches. One well-known critic of evolutionary and Marxist approaches is Anthony Giddens, whose theory of structuration has many supporters. This The theory states that “in every society there are structures that limit freedom of action but also enable us to take action.”³

What Giddens calls the “structural duality.” According to Giddens, social life takes place within these structures, but the individual is not simply a passive element in society. In fact, the individual initiates and participates in change. Therefore, instead of emphasizing materialist determinism or epistemological perspectives, structuralism places greater importance on the decision-making and deliberation of actors. The main point in Giddens's view is that the individual in society is an "informed strategic actor" who makes his decisions based on his experiences and knowledge. Thus,

¹ Sorokin,1999:17.

² Dahrendorf,1991:87.

³ Giddes,1984:143.

“social reproduction” is the re-production of structure over time as a result of the repetition of existing structures.

However, the role of the individual can help to change the structures and, consequently, the logic and foundations of society itself. Thus, structures can not only enable or constrain actions, but also have a reflexive relationship with the participants in those structures. The emergence of structures and structuration results from the interaction between individuals and the structures within which they live, and between individuals and each other, and the transformation of these structures. Consequently, while structures can be reproduced in order to maintain social systems, they can also be transformed and create new social frameworks. Such a perspective encompasses both the material and human worlds, and can therefore also include structures such as geographical location and resources.

Another aspect of Giddens’s theory is the recognition of the importance of the unintended consequences of action. He emphasizes the importance of the perspectives and opinions of the individuals who participate in these social activities. Therefore, changes can be the result of intentional or unintentional actions of individuals in the process of reproducing and changing the shape of structures.

HISTORY AND CHANGE OVER TIME

Historical views on the question of change can be divided into two groups: Marxist and non-Marxist views. Marxist views can be divided into four groups: classical, Gramscian, structuralist, and critical. Classical Marxism sees the root cause of change as economic factors, which are considered as the substructure, and change follows a specific pattern that reaches its final goal through stages.

In Gramsci’s Marxist historiography, mental factors as well as interaction play a more important role, and the role of hegemony, which here refers to the undisputed power of ideology, is emphasized. Structural Marxists go beyond economic factors and attribute a more important role to mental factors and the control of information in creating change.

The critical perspective questions the goals and methods of such perspectives and attempts to identify the effects that these approaches and interpretations have on society. Non-Marxist perspectives on change are very diverse and do not fit into a single, specific framework. One of those who can be referred to in this field is Fernand Braudel, who emphasizes the importance of analyzing change based on a set of interrelated temporal and spatial scales.

According to Braudel, these scales can be short-term, medium-term, or long-term. He believes that processes operating on these time scales are potentially interconnected, but that distinct types of processes can operate on different time or space scales. At different scales, different explanations may be more useful. But this does not mean resorting to economic or environmental determinism. According to Braudel, “mental factors operate at all scales, and ecological, economic, and social factors also play a major role in creating change.”¹

In the analysis and analysis of change, a combination of temporal and spatial scales is important, and processes are not the same at all scales, and not every process necessarily operates at the same scale.

¹ Braudel, 1993:12.

One of the non-Marxist approaches among historians is the “historical particularist” approach. Thus, history is simply a collection of heterogeneous events that can be understood as narratives. This collection of events can be grouped in terms of time or thematic. These events can focus on political events, social narratives, or economic actions. But they are all based on the same theoretical concepts. This view holds that there are no processes or structures operating in history, and that there are no universal, universal laws in history. Paul Kennedy has combined the views of historical particularism and historical materialism to present a theory on the basis of which heterogeneous events can be explained using economic terms and expressions.

And by examining the entire history of the rise and fall of great powers from the sixteenth century onwards, he concludes that “there is a close relationship between the economic growth and the decline of great powers, states that occupy a privileged position among their contemporaries.”¹

Kennedy sees this close connection or nexus as the costs of maintaining dominance, in addition to the correlation between economic and military dominance, which links economic factors to political factors.

MATHEMATICAL APPROACHES AND LONG-TERM CHANGE

Mathematics also has its own theories about change. Some mathematicians, such as Zeeman, believe that these theories can also be applied to human societies. Mathematical approaches that are considered relevant to the analysis of change in human societies include: “decision analysis,” “network analysis,” “catastrophe theory,” “systems theory,” and “mathematics of complexity.”

Given the importance of decision-making in creating political change, we begin by analyzing how decisions are made. This issue can be approached in two main ways: by analyzing the decision-making process itself, and by examining the set of possible decisions facing an individual or organization at a given time.

It may be argued that in any given situation there is a set of decisions facing an individual, each of which could lead to different outcomes. In one sense this is true, but in another sense decision-making can always be broken down into a simple choice between yes and no.

By adopting such a dual approach, it must be accepted that choosing the good option involves time for reflection (information gathering) and procrastination, as well as outright denial. Such contrasts can lead to the development of various theories of decision-making. These theories include the analysis of the probabilities of possible outcomes and the logical evaluation of the stages of decision-making. Network analysis, which is widely used in sociology and anthropology, The approach used is mathematical. Network analysis views social relationships as a series of links.

These networks can represent static relationships, or moments in the flow of more complex and dynamic relationships, or they can be used to analyze patterns that exist in different forms over time. Understanding social and political organization as a network can be linked to any of the mathematical theories In terms of dynamics, that is, systems theory, catastrophe theory, and complexity theory, it is

¹ Kennedy1988: 93.

combined. Systems theory considers each part of a larger system as potentially connected to its smaller constituent parts, called subsystems.

Change is considered as flows within this subsystem. Flows that reinforce change are called “positive feedback,” and those that reinforce stability are called “negative feedback.” Systems approaches usually place great importance on systemic equilibrium or stability, and this has led to the recognition of the variety of forms that equilibrium may take in a dynamic system.

The concept of trajectory (a pattern or set of changes that a system undergoes over time) and the concept of subsystem interconnections link this approach to another mathematical view of change, namely catastrophe theory. Catastrophe theory is a mathematical theory of sudden change that has been widely applied to human institutions and organizations.

Catastrophe theory It is based on the view that the gradual accumulation of seemingly minor factors can result in sudden negative changes. Catastrophe theory, by emphasizing the importance of minor factors in creating fundamental changes, has been a useful complement to gradual explanations of change.

The specific path followed by catastrophic systems allows us to identify the type of change even without the use of mathematical analysis. Catastrophe theory allows us to understand how rapid changes can occur between one form of a system (state) and another. Complexity theory seeks to apply mathematical concepts to the modeling of the formation and transformation of diverse but structured systems.

Complex systems fall within the scope of fixed structures (crystals) and amorphous structures that have no fixed shape. (hot gases) exist. The definition of complex systems was given by Anderson. According to Anderson, “complex systems are those that are large and complex and exhibit behavior that is not simply the sum of their parts. It is also said that complex systems are distinguished from other systems by the characteristic of their capacity to retain and store information.”¹ Complex systems can also organize and construct themselves.

CONCLUSION

Different schools of thought have looked at the issue of change in human societies from different perspectives, and each has its own reasons for it, but what they all agree on is the existence of the phenomenon of change and its permanence. Some see the main cause in internal factors, others in external factors, and some in a combination of internal and external factors.

Even among those who adhere to the same approach, there is no consensus. In the realist approach, some see the cause of change in the lawlessness of some states and the lack of a strong international institution to monitor the behavior of such states, as well as competition between them and, most importantly, economic factors.

At the same time, Gilpin emphasizes rational choice and considers the ideology of war and the emergence of crises to be important. Pluralists, and especially neoliberals, while considering a set of

¹ Anderson, 1992:81.

factors to be involved in this matter, emphasize the role of the human factor and the progress and ultimate victory of the values of democracy and liberalism.

In the structuralist approach, some (non-Marxist) attribute the cause of change to the existence of a center-periphery relationship between states, while others (Marxist) emphasize historical repression and class antagonism. In sociology, two main perspectives can be identified: evolutionary and non-evolutionary, which have different views.

Historical approaches to the issue of change are also very broad, but they can be divided into two main Marxist groups: and non-Marxist, which are themselves divided into other groups. Mathematical approaches also consider change as an inevitable problem and mainly believe that seemingly small factors, when accumulated, can become the source of fundamental changes.

Summarizing the issues raised above, it can be said that despite the important differences of opinion about the cause of change in Human societies exist, but there is no doubt about the origin of their existence.

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