Ethics and Leadership in Foreign Policy: The Case of Singapore

> I find it immeasurably moving when a mature human being—whether young or old in actual years is immaterial—who feels the responsibility he bears for the consequences of his own actions with his entire soul and who acts in harmony with an ethics of responsibility reaches the point where he says, "Here I stand, I can do no other." That is authentically human and cannot fail to move us. For this is a situation that *may* befall *any* of us at some point, if we are not inwardly dead. In this sense an ethics of conviction and an ethics of responsibility are no absolute antitheses but are mutually complementary, and only when taken together do they constitute the authentic human being who is capable of having a "vocation for politics."
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> Max Weber, 1919[1]

> You've got to grow calluses on your heart or you just bleed to death.
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> Lee Kuan Yew, 1978[2]

[1] Max Weber, edited by David Owen and translated by Rodney Livingstone, *The Vocation Lectures* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), p. 92.
[2] "Singapore, Already Crowded, Further Tightens Stringent Policy Restricting Refugees from Indochina," *New York Times*, November 12, 1978.

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This case study discusses moral dilemmas that statesmen face in international affairs. It does so by considering Singapore's approach towards global issues that can only be alleviated through the collective effort of international society. By examining Singapore's foreign policy towards issues such as rights violation, extreme poverty and climate change, this study raises two questions for discussion. How should we understand the tension between global justice and national interest? What are the grounds for states to contribute more towards global justice?

Two sets of ideas will be surveyed to help the reader arrive at some conclusions on the above two questions. One set is located within International Relations (IR) theory, involving views from the realist, liberal and constructivist schools. The other is located within international political theory, where we consider the tension between the sovereignty of the state and the rights of the individual. The theoretical nature of the discussion will be balanced by the world of practice, through key events and speeches in Singapore's foreign policy history. To get a sense of moral dilemmas in international affairs, let us begin with the story of a British vessel that picked up close to 300 refugees from the high seas in May 1979, during the height of the Vietnamese "boat people" crisis.

I. The Vietnamese Boat People

Following the fall of Saigon in 1975, many Vietnamese fled the country to avoid persecution. The communist government was, according to the *New York Times*, "determined to expel virtually all the members of its ethnic Chinese minority" because the government regarded "the Chinese as of doubtful loyalty and as unproductive city dwellers." To encourage their departure, the government subjected the Chinese "to harassment, including loss of jobs, closure of schools, curfews, intimidation by the police and the creation of detention camps." It also exacted "hundreds of millions of dollars from them before their departure."[3] Because many Vietnamese fled the country by boat, they became widely known as the boat people. The communist regime's policy of expulsion became a humanitarian crisis, because many Southeast Asian states did not allow boat refugees to land on their territories without guarantees of ultimate responsibility from the flag countries of rescuing vessels.[4] The crisis was exacerbated by Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia in 1978 and China's invasion of Vietnam in 1979.

The regional crisis drew the attention of the international community. The United Kingdom, under the leadership of Prime Minister James Callaghan, agreed to accept refugees rescued by British vessels, if other countries of resettlement did not accept them within a certain period. British registered vessels were thus bound by both international and domestic law to render assistance to those found in distress on the high seas. The British position was part of a

[3] "Hanoi Regime Reported Resolved To Oust Nearly All Ethnic Chinese," *New York Times*, June 12, 1979.

[4] "Vietnam: Home Office letter to No. 10," *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, May 29, 1979, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/118056 (June 24, 2016), p. 1.

broader international resettlement effort. By 1979, the United States had accepted more than 250,000 refugees, France about 60,000, Canada 11,000 and Australia 18,000.[5]

In May 1979, a British vessel called the M.V. Sibonga arrived at Hong Kong with 900 Vietnamese boat refugees on board. Margaret Thatcher, who just took over the Callaghan Administration, was prepared to accept the 900 refugees because there were already 34,000 refugees in the small British colony. But there was another British vessel called the M.V Roach Bank that had arrived at Taiwan with almost 300 refugees on board, 80% of them children. On a previous occasion involving a different vessel, the Taiwanese government refused to accept the British guarantee of responsibility and insisted that the refugees be airlifted directly to the United Kingdom. The Taiwanese government was prepared to take the same line with respect to the Roach Bank.

Politics, Precedent and Public Opinion

To accept an additional 300 refugees, however, was politically problematic for Thatcher. Thatcher felt that "there would be political trouble if the UK accepted the Roach Bank refugees, immediately after accepting 982 from the Sibonga, unless the Government was seen to have made a real effort to stand them off."[6] She was also concerned that the acceptance of a large-scale commitment towards Indo-Chinese refugees would set a precedent, leading to an influx of immigrants which the British government would be unable to control. Related to the issue of precedence was the question of public opinion. Thatcher was concerned that the press would question her judgment of accepting refugees from a non-British territory. In contrast, Lord Carrington, Thatcher's foreign secretary, said "that the Government would get an even worse press if the Roach Bank children were turned away." Carrington recognized that the Roach Bank "was no more than the smallest tip of a vast iceberg" since the "Vietnamese Foreign Minister had said… that the Vietnamese government was determined to get rid of between 1 million and 1,200,000 ethnic Chinese." Carrington therefore agreed with Thatcher that the British Government should take a firm stand and put pressure on Taiwan. But Carrington felt that the politics should come "after, rather than before," they "had admitted the Roach Bank refugees."[7]

Commercial Consideration

Politics aside, it would be genuinely difficult for Thatcher to reduce the British commitment, or reverse the previous Administration's policy of giving guarantees to countries that the United Kingdom would in the last resort accept those rescued by British vessels. For that

[5] *Ibid*., p. 1
[6] "No. 10 Record of Conversation," *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, May 29, 1979, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/118037 (June 24, 2016), p. 1.
[7] *Ibid*., p. 2.

would discourage captains of British vessels from rescuing those in danger of drowning. Notwithstanding the spiritedness of the British sea captains, their rescue operations often came with a degree of cost. In a letter to Thatcher, David Ropner, then President of the General Council of British Shipping, noted: "Masters of ships are under a legal obligation to render assistance to persons in danger at sea and British shipowners and their Masters would not, of course, wish to do otherwise. But the consequences for them, if once they have these refugees on board and are unable to disembark them, are obviously most serious. First, there is the health risk and the maintenance of order. Then there is the commercial aspect. The ships in question will be unable to trade, contracts will be broken and the financial penalties to owners may amount to very large sums. Particularly in the depressed state of the shipping industry, no owner can afford losses of the order involved." Ropner was sympathetic to the refugee crisis but he urged Thatcher to provide a clearer policy that would relieve British vessels the obligation to keep the refugees on board their ships for longer than was absolutely necessary.[8]

Lee Kuan Yew's Perspective

Because the British Government did not have a formal representation in Taiwan, Thatcher sought Lee Kuan Yew's help to make a private appeal to the Taiwanese authorities to accept the Roach Bank refugees. Lee Kuan Yew was then the Prime Minister of Singapore. Although Lee Kuan Yew said that he was not well qualified to make the plea—because Taiwan's policy was no different from Singapore's—he would ask the Taiwanese authorities to consider making the Roach Bank case an exception. He was not optimistic of the outcome because the Taiwanese were as concerned as other Asian countries that thousands more would come in the wake of such a gesture.[9]

During his visit to London in June 1979, Lee Kuan Yew furthered explained to Thatcher that, for the Taiwanese as for him, the refugee crisis "was not simply a lack of space." The more serious issue, for Lee Kuan Yew, "was the fact that the non-Chinese minorities[10] would bitterly resent the take-over of any more land by the ethnic Chinese and that this would create political problems. The Taiwanese, for their part, were primarily concerned by the possibility of subversive infiltration by Chinese Communist agents posing as refugees." In Lee Kuan Yew's view, "the best solution would be for the United Nations to purchase one or more islands, from Indonesia, Malaysia or the Philippines, to which the refugees could go." Given an island, he believed that the tenacious and talented Vietnamese "could create another Singapore" within

[8] "President of the General Council of British Shipping, David Ropner, letter to MT," *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, May 29, 1979, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/118038 (June 24, 2016).
[9] "Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore letter to MT," *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, June 5, 1979, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/118048 (June 24, 2016).
[10] Lee Kuan Yew was probably referring to the non-Chinese in many Southeast Asian countries.

twenty years. Neither he nor the Indonesians would welcome that prospect, "but it would solve the problem."[11]

II. Road Map, Scope and Objective

In what follows is a series of paradigms, both theoretical and practical, to help us adjudicate the above scenario and similar moral dilemmas in international affairs. Section III sketches three dominant IR theories—realism, liberalism and constructivism—to provide the reader unacquainted with the disciplinary study of IR a handle in understanding the broad patterns of international affairs. Section IV applies the IR theories, by situating Lee Kuan Yew's view of the refugee crisis within the broader paradigm of Singapore's foreign policy.

The ethical issues discussed in Section I through IV are symptomatic of a broader tension between the sovereignty of the state and the rights of the individual. Section V examines this tension by considering a debate between Michael Walzer and his critics. Among political theorists, Walzer is sometimes mistakenly caricatured as a traditional "communitarian" or rigid "statist" indifferent to the rights of individuals, in his seminal works such as *Just and Unjust Wars* and *Spheres of Justice*.[12] Understanding Walzer's rejoinder to his critics will help us develop a nuanced perspective on the practical difficulties of resolving the theoretical tension between sovereignty and rights.[13]

Because this case study alternates between theory and practice, Section VI concludes by examining the tension between theory and practice in the study of international affairs. This under-discussed theme is important for present purpose because it is not uncommon for members from both sides of the divide to criticize each other's enterprise: the scholar for being overly theoretical and therefore irrelevant in the world of real politics, and the statesman for being overly practical and therefore at risk of being unprincipled. To what extent are these criticisms valid? This case study concludes by unpacking the (dis)unity of theory and practice and its bearing on our moral reflections as scholars and statesmen of international affairs.

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[11] "No. 10 Record of Conversation," *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, June 20, 1979, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/118062 (June 24, 2016), p. 3.

[12] See Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), and Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977). Walzer's critics include Gerald Doppelt, "Walzer's Theory of Morality in International Relations," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 8:1 (1978); David Luban, "Just War and Human Rights," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9:2 (1980); Richard Wasserstrom, "Review of Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*," *Harvard Law Review* 92:2 (1978); Charles R. Beitz, "Bounded Morality: Justice and the State in World Politics," *International Organization* 33:3 (1979).

[13] For an example of Walzer's rejoinder, see Michael Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9:3 (1980).

Before we continue, let us be clear about the objective of this case study. First, this case study is *not* about the construction of broad principles to resolve moral dilemmas in international affairs. "You don't have to read Aristotle, Machiavelli, or Oakeshott to know that politics is an art, not a science, and that the chief virtue in politics is prudence, which comes not from theory but from experience," says Terry Nardin, a well-regarded philosopher in international political theory. "In politics we tackle problems that are not clearly defined and for which there are no stock solutions."[14] From Nardin's view, any stock solution is likely to be blunt, crass, or general to the point of providing little utility.

Second, this case study is *not* a criticism or endorsement of Singapore's foreign policy. More broadly, this study eschews any attempt to adjudicate the rightness or wrongness of actors in international affairs. There are two reasons for this. One is related to interpretation. On matters of high politics, the true or full picture of a political decision is often hidden from, or distorted by, the public view, and it is difficult to come to a clear judgment of the things at hand. For example, *The Guardian* mistakenly reports Lee Kuan Yew's somewhat radical solution to the boat people crisis (i.e. purchasing an island to resettle the refugees) as Thatcher's original proposal, but one that was "blocked by Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore" who "feared" that the new island "might become a 'rival entrepreneurial city.'"[15] Two is related to the incommensurability of values. As the Roach Bank case suggests, the kind of casuistry involved in adjudicating international affairs demands different kinds of judgment—utilitarian, deontological, commercial and so forth—each exerting a pull and counter-pull at the domestic and international level. Any attempt to construct an objective standpoint for social criticism is likely to be general to the point of providing little critical leverage in adjudicating the circumstantial decisions of statesmen.

What, then, is this case study about? The case study takes it cue from Max Weber. For Weber, the indeterminacy of the political and moral world does not imply, for the politician, an unprincipled political life—as the epigraph of this case study suggests. In Weber's view, the central education of the politician is to develop a sense of judgment, prudence and proportion. A mature politician, for Weber, is one who recognizes that political decisions are often made under circumstances in which the consequences are not apparent, yet is able to act with conviction and take responsibility for the consequences of his or her action. To be politically mature is to face the realities of the world honestly—yet with personal and intellectual integrity.[16]

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[14] Terry Nardin, "Interview," *E-International Relations*, June 18, 2013, http://www.e-ir.info/2013/06/18/interview-terry-nardin/ (24 June 2016).

[15] "Margaret Thatcher reluctant to give boat people refuge in Britain," *The Guardian*, December 30, 2009, http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/dec/30/thatcher-snub-vietnamese-boat-people (24 June 2016).

[16] For an elaboration of this view, see Weber's essay "Politics as a Vocation" in *The Vocation Lectures*; also see the editor's introduction in *The Vocation Lectures*, pp. xxxiv – lxii.

In short, this case study hopes to sensitize the reader to the kind of moral dilemmas that she may face in her future capacity as a politician, policymaker or practitioner of international affairs. By providing a snapshot of some common debates in the moral study of international affairs, this case study hopes to provide the reader a starting point to embark on her own political education, and to arrive at personal conclusions on how she should act when her private values intersect with the demands of her public life.

III. Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism

For better or worse, much of the debate in IR theory is either a defence or criticism of realism in international affairs. There are at least four variants of realism in the extant literature: classical, structural, offensive and neoclassical. Classical realism, which can be traced to Machiavelli, examines the domestic art of statecraft in the conduct of international affairs.[17] Structural realism, also called neorealism, brackets the domestic characteristics or "agency" of the state and examines the recurring patterns of great power politics within the constraint or "structure" of international system.[18] Offensive realism, most famously associated with *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* by John Mearsheimer, presupposes the neorealist approach of treating the state as a black box, but departs from its defensive premise by contending that great powers do not merely aim to "balance" but aspire to be regional or global hegemons.[19] Neoclassical realism, a relatively recent research program, reopens the black box to explain the domestic characteristics and variation of foreign policies across states, within the fixed constraint and recurring patterns of international system.[20]

Despite the family squabbles within and between each school of thought, realists share a few common premises. One, the world is anarchic in the sense that international society lacks a global authority to enforce laws. Two, states seek longevity, security and glory; this fundamental quest results in a constant struggle for states to seek relative or absolute gains in defence and economics. Three, natural resources are necessarily scarce in the light of this constant struggle. For realists, the aforementioned constitutes the timeless nature of the human condition.

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[17] A contemporary form of classical realism can be found in the works of Henry Kissinger and Han Morgenthau. See Henry Kissinger, *World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812—22* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), and Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948).

[18] The most seminal work for neorealism is Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2010).

[19] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

[20] For a review of this research program, see Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell and Norrin M. Rispman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, eds., *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), chapter 1.

In contrast to realism, liberalism presupposes an optimistic view of international society. There are many strands of liberalism just as there are many variants of realism. Of relevance here is Robert Keohane's institutional liberalism, also known as neoliberal institutionalism. Keohane's research program is guided by two central questions. Under what conditions can countries cooperate in the world political economy? Can cooperation take place without hegemony? The latter question is especially important for Keohane in the light of the perceived decline of American hegemony (and the broad consensus among many IR scholars that the stability of the international system is contingent on a hegemonic power that has the capacity to maintain global peace and order). Keohane's answer to both questions is yes.

As the subtitle of Keohane's seminal book—*After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*—suggests, cooperation and discord are two sides of the same coin in international affairs.[21] And international policy coordination may lead to either scenario. Keohane agrees with realists that the international system is constituted by the struggle for power, but he argues that some of the realist claims are exaggerated because it ignores the role of the *regime*, defined by him as a set of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures in international society. For Keohane, the international trade regime and the international human rights regime are "intervening variables" that mediate the distribution of power on the one hand and state behaviour on the other. These regimes foster cooperation despite underlying shifts in the overall balance of power. Wars are averted insofar as gains from cooperation outweigh the costs of discord.

Constructivists disagree sharply with neo-realists and neo-liberals, because they find that the two schools of thoughts often converge around similar utilitarian premises. In particular, neo-realists and neo-liberals treat interests as exogenous and given but they cannot explain how states acquire those interests, or how social forces shape interests. Not only are interests socially constructed, constructivists contend that interests must share the stage with a host of other ideational factors, such as religion, rights and the rule of law. Whereas neo-realists and neo-liberals focus on circumstances that constrain behaviour, social constructivists focus on the making of circumstances.[22]

One of the more prominent books on ethics and foreign policy from a constructivist perspective is *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* by Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore.[23] This book is a response to neo-realists and neo-liberals who

[21] Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
[22] John G. Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization* 52:4 (1998).
[23] Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organization in Global Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

claim that international organizations (IOs) exist for the main purpose of safeguarding domestic interests against foreign interests. Whereas neo-realists presume that great powers dictate the scope and agenda of IOs, neoliberals suggest that the prerogatives and priorities of IOs such as the UN and the IMF are mere reflections of changing state preferences. The cold and calculated projections of national interests and state preferences ground the purpose of international society, where the political is always prior to the moral.

Barnett and Finnemore overturn this instrumental perspective by suggesting that the moral is prior to the political in certain situations. They argue that when states establish or join an IO, they create a new purpose that is categorically distinct from the original motives that first impelled states to participate in the new collective. As Alastair Iain Johnston, a constructivist, says: "Actors who enter into a social interaction rarely emerge the same."[24] Barnett and Finnemore further argue that the collective purpose of an IO often entail a moral dimension. Even the IMF, whose initial mandate was to ensure monetary stability through healthy balance-of-payments, later took on ethical duties such as protecting the environment and alleviating global poverty, since those issues are central to the overall economic health of member states. For constructivists, norms entrepreneurs are central in international affairs.[25] Compelled by their moral conviction, norms entrepreneurs are willing to go the extra mile in navigating bureaucratic and political structures in IOs and other regimes to advance ethical policies that are above and beyond the self-serving agendas of member states.

IV. The Realism of Singapore's Foreign Policy

Realist, liberal and constructivist perspectives can explain Singapore's foreign policy. But the realist paradigm is the lodestar of Singapore's foreign policy. "Independence was thrust upon Singapore" and the "fundamentals of our foreign policy were forged during those vulnerable early years," said Lee Kuan Yew in a 2009 lecture.[26] Central to Singapore's vulnerability, according to Lee Kuan Yew and the early architects of Singapore's foreign policy, is the "structural" condition of Singapore's geopolitical environment: a small and predominantly ethnic-Chinese city-state in a large and somewhat unpredictable Malay Archipelago. Like "a cork afloat in a potentially raging sea."[27] Singapore's territorial integrity and self-determination was tested by events in the 1960s such as the country's unceremonious exit from the Malayan hinterland and the existential threat from communism and Indonesia's Confrontation.

[24] Alastair Iain Johnston, "Treating International Institutions as Social Environments," *International Studies Quarterly* 45: 4 (2001).
[25] *Ibid*., p. 508.
[26] "Speech by Mr Lee Kuan Yew, Minister Mentor at the S. Rajaratnam Lecture," *Prime Minister's Office Singapore*, April 9, 2009, http://www.pmo.gov.sg/mediacentre/speech-mr-lee-kuan-yew-minister-mentor-s-rajaratnam-lecture-09-april-2009-530-pm-shangri (June 24, 2016)
[27] Michael Leifer, *Singapore's Foreign Policy: Coping with Vulnerability* (New York: Routledge, 2000) p. 5.

At the turn of Singapore's fiftieth anniversary, Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's third Prime Minister, delivered a speech that echoed Lee Kuan Yew's realism. "Singapore will always be a small country in an uncertain and sometimes dangerous world. We are still surrounded by bigger neighbours, and located in the middle of Southeast Asia... We still have no natural resources."[28] Part of Lee Hsien Loong's speech turned on a famous passage from Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War*, a standard text for realists.

> The Peloponnesian War was between Athens and its allies and Sparta and its allies. Athens was the hegemon of the Delian League, one of two superpowers in the Greek world of city states. Athens wanted to force Melos, a weak island state, to join the Delian League. So it sent an army to invade Melos, and before the fight, it sent delegates and envoys to persuade the Melians to submit and pay tribute, or else be destroyed. Melos is a little island in the Aegean Sea. The Melian Dialogue is Thucydides' reconstruction of what the Athenians would have said, the arguments and the rejoinders. It is an analysis of the power of the motivation and considerations on both sides. The Melians put up pragmatic and moral arguments why Athens should not attack Melos. The Athenian envoys gave this brutal answer: "The strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must". The Melians nevertheless rejected this. So the Athenians proceeded to wipe out Melos, killed all the men, sold the women and children into slavery. That was 2,400 years ago, but it would not be completely unfamiliar in this modern world... Singapore, small as we are, has refused to accept this as our fate. We are determined to be masters of our own destiny. Our foreign policy is a balance between realism and idealism.[29]

Undergirding Singapore's foreign policy doctrine, as it was in 1965 and will remain so in the future, is the realism that no one owes Singapore a living and a "small country must seek a maximum number of friends while maintaining the freedom to be itself as a sovereign and independent nation."[30] Such is Singapore's way of accepting yet transcending the Thucydidian premise: in international affairs, the strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must. By allying with both the Athens and Spartans of its day, Singapore forecloses its fate as another Melos in the South China Sea.

Singapore's realism explains the neo-liberal and constructivist aspects of its foreign policy. From a neo-liberal perspective, it makes sense for Singapore, as with many other states,

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[28] "PM Lee Hsien Loong at the 8th S Rajaratnam Lecture," *Prime Minister's Office Singapore*, November 27, 2015, http://www.pmo.gov.sg/mediacentre/pm-lee-hsien-loong-8th-s-rajaratnam-lecture-27-november-2015 (June 24, 2016).
[29] Ibid.
[30] "Speech by Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the S. Rajaratnam Lecture," April 9, 2009.

to be an active member of key economic regimes such as the WTO and APEC.[31] From a constructivist perspective, some scholars note that Singapore, together with its Southeast Asian neighbours, have to some extent constructed a new orthodoxy in managing the rise of China. According to Alastair Iain Johnston and Amitav Acharya, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is an institution that demonstrates the complementarity of constructivism and realism. From a realist perspective, the ARF was designed to mitigate extra-regional powers such as China, which periodically demonstrates bellicosity in its sovereign claims on the South China Sea. In contrast with, say, the hard power capabilities of institutions such as NATO, the ARF seeks to mitigate the rise of China by leveraging ASEAN's institutional culture of consensus and consultation. By emphasizing the norms of national independence as a code of conduct among fundamentally realist ARF members, and focusing on confidence building measures through "Track II" security dialogues, the ARF ensures that Sino-ASEAN relations can develop at a pace that is comfortable with everyone. The ARF approach reflects a realist yet constructivist way of Southeast Asian states changing the "structural order" of Sino-ASEAN relations, through the distribution of shared knowledge using security dialogues and other confidence building measures.[32]

Singapore's realism by no means implies an indifference to global concerns. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs website states: "Singapore supports the achievement of the MDGs [UN Millennium Development Goals] and recognizes the challenges that many developing countries face in achieving them. Within our means, we share our development experience—in particular, in human resource development and economic development—with other countries through MFA's Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP)."[33] Singapore has also played an active role in global environmental issues, especially issues that have a direct impact on Singapore's interests, such as climate change. "Singapore is hardly a major emitter of greenhouse gases… But our Ambassadors for Climate Change have played active roles, lobbying for supporting and acting as a bridge between developed and developing countries," said Lee Hsien Loong.[34] Domestically, Singapore also passed a law in 2014 called the Transboundary Haze Pollution Act, targeted at Indonesian-based palm oil companies whose "slash and burn" practices often led to unhealthy levels of haze in Singapore.[35]

[31] "PM Lee Hsien Loong at the 8th S Rajaratnam Lecture," November 27, 2015.
[32] See Amitav Acharya, "Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order: Norms, Power, and Prospects for Peaceful Change," in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); and Alastair I. Johnston, "The Myth of the ASEAN Way? Explaining the Evolution of the ASEAN Regional Forum," in Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane, and Celeste A. Wallander, eds., *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 320 – 321.
[33] "International Organisations and Initiatives: UN," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore*, https://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/international_organisation_initiatives/un.html (June 24, 2016)
[34] "PM Lee Hsien Loong at the 8th S Rajaratnam Lecture," November 27, 2015.
[35] "New paradigm needed for Indonesian ties with S'pore" *The Straits Times*, May 24, 2016.

The Pragmatic Idealism of Tommy Koh

From the above, Singapore's foreign policy can be summarized as "a balance between realism and idealism."[36] In a different vocabulary, Tommy Koh, a distinguished diplomat and statesman in Singapore, called this balance "pragmatic idealism." In his speech titled "Can Any Country Afford a Moral Foreign Policy?" Tommy Koh explained that he was neither a realist nor a moralist but a pragmatic idealist.[37] On the one hand, realism does not reflect the reality of an international society held together by law. "We live in an imperfect world. It is not, however, a lawless world."[38] International law, unlike domestic law, is unenforceable, but international law is not totally ineffective. The realist's argument that states should act exclusively on the basis of its national interest is "flawed because... no state, no matter how powerful, can entirely ignore the interests of other states, the rules of international law and ... the opinion of mankind."[39] On the other hand, the moralist often insufficiently accommodates the odd circumstances in which the politician is compelled to override considerations of law and morality for the sake of national interest. From the standpoint of pragmatic idealism, governments should pursue domestic and international policies according to the demands of morality—but there would be rare and extreme circumstances in which morality had to bow before politics.

Tommy Koh's picture of the morally conscientious politician—one who can clinically look at the harsh realities of the world and yet act according to the best of his moral judgement—echoes Weber's view regarding the vocation of the politician. For Weber, politics is no child's play and it is naive to think that one could enter and leave politics without dirtying one's hands. To enter politics is to make a pact with the devil, and there is always the Faustian danger of losing one's soul. What is important, then, for the mature politician is the cultivation of two ethics: an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of conviction. "For ultimately there are only two kinds of mortal sin in the field of politics: the lack of commitment to a cause and the lack of a sense of responsibility that is often, but not always, identical with it."[40] The Weberian politician is someone who, at the crossroad of his personal values and the circumstances of his public life, acts with conviction and takes responsibility for the consequences of his conviction. It is this inner moral bearing that explains Weber's characterization of politics as a *vocation*—a word often used for the divine call to a religious life—rather than as a *profession*.

But there are two aspects of pragmatic idealism that deserve further elaboration: one concerning the right to do wrong in extreme situations and two concerning a calculated approach

[36] "PM Lee Hsien Loong at the 8th S Rajaratnam Lecture," November 27, 2015.
[37] Tommy Koh (November 18, 1987), "Can Any Country Afford a Moral Foreign Policy," in Amitav Acharya, ed., *The Quest for World Order: Perspectives of a Pragmatic Idealist*, Singapore, Times Academic Press for Institute of Policy Studies, 1998.
[38] *Ibid*., p. 6.
[39] *Ibid*., p. 7.
[40] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, p. 77.

towards humanitarian issues.[41] Towards the end of his speech, Tommy Koh said: "In extreme cases, when the very survival of a state is in question, a government may even feel justified in acting beyond the law… On the rare occasions when the pursuit of my country's vital national interest compels me to do things which are legally or morally dubious, I ought to have a bad conscience and be aware of the damage which I have done to the principle I have violated and to the reputation of my country."[42] It is unclear what Tommy Koh meant by his claim that "a government may even feel justified in acting beyond the law" for the sake of national interest. Neither is it clear how conscience could remedy the consequence of a "legally or morally dubious" decision. The force of Tommy Koh's speech seems to lead to a justification for the right to do wrong in extreme situations, a kind of emergency ethics that is a subject of much debate among moral theorists.

Here is not the space to engage the question of emergency ethics at a philosophical level. But many scholars are concerned with the fact that history is replete with examples of governments justifying their extreme decisions as morally impermissible yet politically excusable for the sake of the collective. Churchill's unnecessary order for British pilots to drop phosphorus-based incendiary bombs on Dresden, which claimed the lives of close to a 100,000 civilians—when Germany was already near defeat—is one example. Another example in recent history is Bush's order for a pre-emptive strike against Iraq for its so-called possession of weapons of mass destruction. To quote a commentator, these are examples of "romanticism, full of bad pathos, theatrical, self-pitying, out of which National Socialism came."[43] Many scholars are thus concerned that, without clarifying the objective demands of morality, international society is dangerously close to the "hubristic picture of leaders who… sin greatly for the sake of the collective."[44]

From the standpoint of pragmatic idealism, humanitarian issues that are of significant cost (political, social and economic) to the national interest are necessarily handled in a cold or calculated manner. "You've got to grow calluses on your heart or you just bleed to death," said Lee Kuan Yew, in his interview with the *New York Times* at the height of the boat people refugee crisis.[45] Singapore, like many countries in Asia, accepted no refugees for permanent asylum during the Vietnamese crisis. The *New York Times* noted that Singapore allowed ashore people who are guaranteed to be accepted by another country within 90 days, but the number of those

[41] In what follows is not a criticism of Tommy Koh's distinguished diplomatic career or Singapore's foreign policy, but a sketch of how the idea of "pragmatic idealism" is opened to criticism.
[42] Koh, "Can Any Country Afford a Moral Foreign Policy," p. 8.
[43] J.M Cameron, "Morality and War," *New York Review of Books*, December 8, 1977.
[44] *Ibid*.
[45] "Singapore, Already Crowded, Further Tightens Stringent Policy Restricting Refugees from Indochina," *New York Times*, November 12, 1978. The author of this case study regards Lee Kuan Yew and Lee Hsien Loong as pragmatic idealists, in Tommy Koh's sense of the term. The author's claim is, of course, debatable.

allowed ashore under guarantee of speedy departure was limited to 1,000 at any given time.[46] The reasons behind Singapore's policy toward the Vietnamese refugees were pragmatic in nature. "Can I afford to have people festering away in refugee camps, being hawked around to countries which are supposed to have compassion for long-suffering humanity?" asked Lee Kuan Yew.[47]

Arguably, Lee Kuan Yew was not completely unsympathetic to the humanitarian crisis. In a press conference held in London in June 1979, Lee Kuan Yew said: "If you have seen some of these boats, you will know what a horrendous experience it is. I have to read these reports, it's part of my job. And although I have been through this hundreds of times, each time it is like putting your heart into a meat grinder."[48] From a political perspective, the boat people were "chips in a great game" between the Soviet Union, China and Vietnam, a game that Lee Kuan Yew did not want Singapore be a part of. "As of now, the refugees are just so many chips in that game. We are not yet chips, we don't intend to be chips. We don't even want to be players in the game." For Lee Kuan Yew, the only way "to minimize the number of chips crushed up in this game" was to get the world to understand who the key players were, as a way to persuade or pressure them to stop their game of trading human lives for political benefit.[49]

From the above, we may say that the pragmatic idealism of the chief architects of Singapore's foreign policy is, in the final analysis, realism of a different sort: realism as moral scepticism rather than as realpolitik.[50] Realism as moral scepticism does not deny the importance of morality in domestic politics, but it asserts that morality is often—but not always—incompatible with international politics. The upshot of international moral scepticism is this: just as it is unrealistic to ignore the constraints of great power politics, it is equally unrealistic to completely ignore the rules of international society for the sake of relative and absolute gains. Most governments are concerned about human rights violations in their own countries. They may even be concerned about unethical behaviour on a massive scale in neighbouring countries, arguably not for altruistic reasons but for the practical concern that injustice elsewhere may trigger "spill-over" problems in their backyards. Singapore's approach towards humanitarian issues outside of its borders arguably fits within the paradigm of realism as moral scepticism.

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[46] *Ibid*.
[47] *Ibid*.
[48] "Transcript of a Press Conference Held by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in London," *National Archives of Singapore*, June 21, 1979, http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/speeches/record-details/7329327e-115d-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad (June 24, 2016).
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] Within political theory, various expressions of this position can be found in the works of William Galston, Raymond Guess and Bernard Williams. See, for instance, William Galston, "Realism in Political Theory," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9:4 (2010), Raymond Guess, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) and Bernard Williams, *In the Beginning was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

V. Sovereignty of the State and the Rights of the Individual

An underlying subtext in the foregoing discussion is a tension between the sovereignty of the state and the rights of the individual. This is arguably the key tension that animates many of the moral dilemmas in international affairs. This tension comes to the fore in extreme cases of rights violations such as genocide, ethnic cleansing and other crimes against humanity. In this section, we shall switch gear and consider how political theorists try to relieve this tension in theory, and how this has a bearing on our moral judgment for cases such as the Vietnamese refugee crisis. Let us discuss this tension between sovereignty and rights in the form of a debate between Michael Walzer and his critics. Walzer has been criticized by many as defending a statist view of international politics that insufficiently considers the moral standing of individuals in global society. His statism, according to his critics, is evident in his book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, which is concerned with the limits to the use of force between states. Let us therefore briefly consider the main premise of this book to unpack the debate.

Just War Theory and the Legalist Paradigm

Just and Unjust Wars is a reconstruction of a longstanding debate among legal scholars concerning the justice of war. Traditionally, just war theory has two categorically distinct moral domains: *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Whereas *jus ad bellum* is concerned with the question of whether a war has been started justly or unjustly, *jus in bello* is concerned with the question of whether soldiers have fought justly or unjustly, regardless of whose side started the war.[51] Here, we do not need to be concerned with the moral precepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Rather, we shall use just war theory as an arena to tease out the tension between the sovereignty of the state and the rights of the individual, and understand how this tension has a bearing on our moral judgement in international affairs.

Central to Walzer's just war theory is what he calls the "legalist paradigm,"[52] which is a set of principles that guides the moral conduct of states in international society:

1. There exists an international society of independent states.
2. This international society has law that establishes the right of its members—above all, the rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty.

[51] Another helpful distinction, provided by Beitz, is to understand *jus ad bellum* as a concern with the ends of war and *jus in bello* as a concern with the means of war. See Beitz, "Bounded Morality: Justice and the State in World Politics," p. 411. For purpose of space, this case study will only consider Beitz's criticism of Walzer. See footnote 12 and 13 for a set of readings that will provide a more comprehensive picture of the debate between Walzer and his critics.

[52] Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, pp. 58 to 63.

3. Any use of force or imminent threat of force by one state against the political sovereignty or territorial integrity of another constitutes aggression and is a criminal act.
4. Aggression justifies two kinds of violent response: a war of self-defence by the victim and a war of law enforcement by the victim and any other member of international society.
5. Nothing but aggression can justify war.
6. Once the aggressor state has been military repulsed, it can also be punished.

From the above, we can see that the legalist paradigm broadly captures the principles of international law, of which the most fundamental principle is the principle of non-interference, i.e. the proposition that states cannot attack other states for reasons other than self-defence. States can be imagined as "citizens" of international society, whose rights to territorial integrity and political sovereignty are as inalienable as citizens' rights to life and liberty in a domestic legal system. So, for instance, the use of force by one state against another is an act of aggression that is no different from that of an armed robbery or murder. Unlike domestic society, however, international society cannot enforce morality the way a government does, for there isn't a global government to begin with. The lack of a global authority explains why it is permissible for a state, in a time of imminent duress, to take justice into its own hands and militarily repulse an aggressor. In sum, states cannot attack other states for reasons other than that of self-defence. War must be the last resort to peace, and peace is best secured by the principle of non-intervention.

But there is another principle at work in international politics: the principle of self-determination, which is concerned with the individual's potential to be an autonomous agent in his or her life choices without coercion, influence or intervention by other agents or institutions. One of the more controversial arguments made by Walzer is that states should be regarded as self-determining communities even if their internal political arrangements are illiberal. The state is the best institution for citizens to learn, develop and exercise their right of self-determination. Even in authoritarian regimes, it is in the best interest of the community to rely on themselves to orchestrate reforms and revolutions because any foreign intervention would jeopardize their learning chances in the school of self-determination. The principle of self-determination is for Walzer a strong justification for the principle of non-intervention.[53]

Importantly, Walzer says that there are times when it is not immediately clear if a community is in fact self-determining or if the principle of non-intervention is still relevant. This is especially so when a government is engaged in an extreme violation of human rights such that it is preposterous for moralists to think in terms of non-intervention, in cases of genocide and similar "acts that shock the conscience of mankind." In such extreme scenarios, Walzer argues that the moral basis of a just war that proceeds from the idea of self-defence is no longer

[53] *Ibid*., chapter 6.

relevant. In such cases, a military intervention by a neighbouring state or international society for reasons other than self-defence is permissible. Walzer's overall just war theory, then, is informed by the doctrine of human rights. For Walzer, the rights of individuals, understood as persons rather than citizens (i.e. as members of a common humanity rather than as members of a political community), constitute the moral basis of military intervention.

Grounding intervention in a doctrine of rights does not mean that states can embark on moral crusades and ride roughshod over other territories under the banner of human rights concerns. Walzer argues that the rights to life and liberty can only be meaningfully exercised within the context of a political community. States must respect the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of other states even if the institutions are illiberal or not substantially just. Walzer therefore sets a high threshold before international society can disregard the principle of non-intervention for reasons other than self-defence.

The Cosmopolitan Critique

Against the statism of Walzer, "cosmopolitan" theorists argue that Walzer does not pay enough attention to human rights. What is cosmopolitanism? "Cosmopolitanism, as a normative idea, takes the individual to be the ultimate unit of moral concern and to be entitled to equal consideration regardless of nationality and citizenship. From the cosmopolitan perspective, principles of justice ought to transcend nationality and citizenship, and ought to apply equally to all individuals of the world as a whole," says Tan Kok Chor.[54] In a similar vein, Beitz says that cosmopolitans agree with statists in rejecting political realism and in affirming the importance of moral judgments in international affairs. But cosmopolitans disagree with statists insofar as cosmopolitans hold that state boundaries are not morally fundamental. "The effect of shifting from a statist to a cosmopolitan point of view is to open up the state to external moral assessment (and, perhaps, political interferences) and to understand persons, rather than states, as the ultimate subjects of international morality."[55] Many cosmopolitans argue that Walzer's theory is not permissive enough for the international community to intervene and right the wrongs of authoritarian regimes.

Beitz, in his review of *Just and Unjust Wars*, argues that Walzer overemphasize the moral importance of a state's territorial integrity and political sovereignty.[56] Beitz disagrees with Walzer's view that military intervention (or what Beitz calls "reform intervention") is only permissible in acts that shock the conscience of mankind, but impermissible for all other cases of domestic iniquity. To begin, he finds that Walzer has provided insufficient evidence or arguments on why it is in the best interest of the community to rely on itself rather than the

[54] *Justice without Borders: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and Patriotism*
[55] Beitz, "Bounded Morality: Justice and the State in World Politics," p. 409.
[56] *Ibid*., pp. 412 – 413.

international community in authoritarian or repressive regimes. Beitz argues that states that fail to satisfy the condition of protecting the basic rights of its citizens cannot claim the rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty. Regimes that violate its members' right to build a common life therefore justify reform interventions that can redress systematic and extensive racial discrimination.[57] From Beitz's perspective, then, the Vietnamese communist regime's treatment of its ethnic Chinese members during the 1970s and 80s would have disqualified the regime's immunity from military intervention. "States whose institutions fail this test [of protecting the basic rights of citizens] could not claim such rights, although it might still be argued that reform interventions would be wrong for other reasons," for instance, the probability of the intervention's success.

But Walzer rejoins that lowering the criterion for military intervention will not only deny citizens their opportunities to shape the collective life of their political community, it will also invite the risk of moral crusades. Territorial integrity and sovereignty are important for Walzer because they constitute a legal barrier against the threat of foreign arbitrary power, paternalistic practices and imperial projects in international politics. Walzer recognizes the empirical fact that many regimes enjoy immunity from the principle of non-intervention while violating the principle of self-determination. But, in the absence of a world government, helping the distant needy is morally speaking an imperfect duty: "On the one hand, everyone must have a place to live, and a place where a reasonably secure life is possible. On the other hand, this is not a right that can be enforced against particular host states."[58]

An imperfect duty does not deny the moral force of protecting oppressed or stateless communities or individuals. Rather, it means that some principles outside of the legalist paradigm must be applied. For instance, Walzer's view on stateless individuals like the refugee is based on deontological principles of morality and not international laws (or the propositions of the legalist paradigm). Although refugees have been forced out of their state, no state is obligated by law to accommodate them either. In such a context, Walzer argues that states ought to help refugees out of good will. The extent of a state's help can in turn be subjected to prudential considerations such as its capacity and resources to accommodate scores of refugees.

VI. Conclusion: The Scholar and the Statesman

This case study has been an attempt to sensitize the reader to moral dilemmas in international affairs. It does so by providing various paradigms at the practical and theoretical level. The discussion in Section I and IV were practical in nature, to help the reader get a raw picture of the realities on the ground. Section III and V were theoretical in nature, to provide the reader with a conceptual handle to interpret and adjudicate the realities on the ground. The overall spirit of this

[57] *Ibid*., p. 415.
[58] Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, p. 50.

study is not to provide any stock solutions to global issues, or sweeping criticisms of states and statesmen in international affairs. Rather, this study seeks to provide a framework for the reader to arrive at some personal conclusions on navigating the tension between global justice and national interest, in her future capacity as a practitioner of international affairs.

This case study shall conclude with a comment on the relationship between theory and practice. There are two reasons for this discussion. One, because this case study alternates between theory and practice, it makes sense to conclude with a comment on the relationship between theory and practice, and consider how this relationship (or non-relationship) has a bearing on our reflections on moral leadership in foreign policy. Two, because this is a study written from the standpoint of political science and political theory, it may help to clarify—for the reader unacquainted with the social sciences and the humanities—the vocational difference between the scholar and the statesman. Understanding this vocational difference is important, because it is not uncommon for members from both sides of the divide to criticize each other's enterprise: the scholar for being idealistic and abstruse, and the statesman for being pragmatic and unprincipled. This harmless squabble becomes toxic when the scholar mechanically applies a theory in the realm of practice, or the statesman uncritically privileges his practical knowledge as the only legitimate knowledge in society. Clarifying the vocational difference between the scholar and the statesman will help to diffuse this squabble. One way to understand this vocational difference, then, is to consider the (dis)unity of theory and practice in the study of politics.

Theory and Practice as Distinct in International Affairs[59]

The voluminous literature on the relationship between justice and international affairs is matched by an equivalently vocal view that justice is a non-subject in the real world of international affairs. Related to the latter is a more fundamental view that theory and practice are distinct—and ought to be kept separate. What is the difference between theory and practice? One way to understand this difference is to understand a parallel difference between the vocation of the scholar and the vocation of the statesman. The scholar can be distinguished from the statesman by the former's focus on *understanding* politics and the latter's focus on *doing* politics. Whereas the scholar's vocation is fundamentally theoretical, the scholar's vocation is irreducibly practical. *Practice* entails pragmatism but is not reducible to it. To be pragmatic is to act reasonably in specific situations, often at the exclusion of idealistic concerns. But the statesman is often equally concerned with idealistic goals. *Practice* is therefore similar to Aristotle's idea of *praxis*, which can be distinguished from *poiēsis*. Humans and animals are capable of *poiēsis*, which is concerned with production, as in the case of bees producing honey.

[59] This segment takes its cue from an essay by Terry Nardin, although Nardin's thesis is concerned with a different sort of inquiry. See Terry Nardin, "Oakeshott on Theory and Practice" *Global Discourse: An International Journal of Current Affairs and Applied Contemporary Thought* 5:2 (2015).

But only humans are capable of *praxis*: the art of undertaking a "purposeful activity... for the sake of realizing an ideal."[60]

Practice as *praxis* is distinct from theory as *epistêmê*, which for Aristotle can be understood as knowledge, science, or scientific knowledge. We must not confuse science with the modern usage that covers physics, chemistry, biology *et cetera* in contrast to subjects like philosophy and history. For Aristotle, *epistêmê* is simply a term to demarcate a branch of knowledge that is universal, invariable and context-independent. *Epistêmê* can be contrasted with *phronêsis* (practical wisdom), which is a categorically different kind of knowledge based on experience, context, and deliberation—and one that is arguably more relevant for the statesman in the world of politics.

How should we understand theory as *epistêmê* within the context of contemporary research on international affairs? Before answering this question, it is helpful to note, for the reader unfamiliar with political science, that *international relations theory* (c.f. Section III) and *international political theory* (c.f. Section V) are two specialized subjects commonly taught in many departments of political science. What is the difference between the two subjects, and relatedly, the difference between the two kinds of theory? At the risk of oversimplifying, one may say that scholars of international political theory are concerned with *normative* theories and scholars of international relations theory are concerned with *empirical* and/or *positive* theories. This is a stylized contrast and inaccurate in many ways, but they serve to fix ideas. Whereas a normative theory is concerned with how the world *ought* to be—ought not in the sense of a utopian imagination of a perfect world but how states ought to conduct themselves in ways that are just—an empirical or positive theory addresses how the world *is*. Importantly, the difference between the *ought* and the *is* does not extinguish the categorical difference between theory and practice.

Immanuel Kant is a prominent philosopher whose ideas are central in the study of international political theory. What qualifies a theory as an *epistêmê*? Kant and Kantian philosophers like John Rawls may begin by qualifying that a theory is relatively indifferent to the particularistic concerns of the practical world. A theory qualifies as *epistêmê* insofar as it has internal coherence (i.e. the internal logic and soundness of precepts). Kant's categorical imperative in his theory of morality and Rawls's difference principle in his theory of justice are founded on *a priori* precepts about human nature or the human condition rather than the parochial preferences of man. Their first-order concern is with the coherence of their precepts, rather than with the second-order concern of how their philosophical systems are applicable or universalizable in the practical world.

[60] Aristotle, edited and translated by Roger Crisp, *Nicomachean Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 241.

Something similar to the above distinction between theory and practice can be adduced in Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, a seminal book in IR theory. According to Waltz, many IR theories are bedevilled by the proliferation of "reductionist" theories, i.e. theories that try to identify the causes of broad patterns and behaviours in international relations at the individual or national level. "With a reductionist approach, the whole is understood by knowing the attributes and the interactions of its parts."[61] For Waltz, the distinction between theory and practice often collapses under the weight of reductionist theories because these so-called theories are a mere summary or description of international practice. Part of Waltz's objective in *Theory of International Politics* is to construct a non-reductionist theory that can explain and predict change and continuity in the international relations of great powers. Without venturing into the question of whether Waltz is successful in avoiding the reductionist trap, we can say that a theory as *epistêmê*, for Waltz, is not "a reproduction of reality." Although a theory is "related to the world about which explanations are wanted," it is "distinct from that world." Conversely, a theory is "not divorced from the world of experiment and observation," but is "indirectly connected with it."[62]

In sum, the distinction between theory and practice parallels the distinction between the vocation of the scholar, whose task is to theorize politics, and the vocation of the statesman, whose mission is to do politics. Whereas the scholar is concerned with the "isms" of the day—for example, realism, Marxism, and postmodernism—the practitioner of international affairs is purely concerned with advancing the national interest, in a rough-and-tumble world very unlike the privileged seclusion of the ivory tower. It is important for scholars as social critics to bear this distinction in adjudicating the morality of high politics in international affairs. "Many of the political principles and arguments that we are familiar with from just war theory or other kinds of international discourse are relevant, but they cannot be applied mechanically. The most tedious kind of so-called just war theory is on display when the author of an article, textbook, or newspaper editorial tries to arrive at an answer about what to do in a particular conflict by running through a checklist of criteria – just cause, proper authority, right intention, last resort, and all the rest of it. This is bad theory and bad practice," says Nardin. Nardin's comment is directed at the theorist. But there is also a word of advice for the student set on plumbing the depth of practice. As noted earlier, political leadership "is an art, not a science, and that the chief virtue in politics is prudence, which comes not from theory but from experience… Practical wisdom involves having principles but it also involves knowing how to use them and which ones to use."

To conclude, then, we can say that the distinction between theory and practice does not entail a complete non-relationship between the two. For the scholar, the political world often provides the raw ingredients for theorizing. For the statesman, deliberations at the international

[61] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 18.
[62] *Ibid*., pp. 5 – 8.

level often demand a sound interpretation of moral principles, in addition to a clear understanding of the circumstances in particular cases. Moral theories are important for moral practice, even though morality is often in tension with politics, whose decisive means, according to Weber, is the use of force:

> Anyone who wishes to engage in politics at all, and particularly anyone who wishes to practice it as a profession, must become conscious of these ethical paradoxes and of his own responsibility for what may become of *him* under the pressure they exert. For, I repeat, he is entering into relations with the satanic powers that lurk in every act of violence… But the man who can do this must be a leader… The only man who has a 'vocation' for politics is one who is certain that his spirit will not be broken if the world, when looked at from his point of view, proves too stupid or base to accept what he wishes to offer it, and who, when faced with all that obduracy, can still say "Nevertheless!" despite everything.[63]

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[63] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, p. 93 – 94.