



Is the International System or Domestic Politics more Dominant? Revisiting Neoclassical Realism Through the Case of Gaza Post October 7

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Abstract: This article criticizes the realist assumption that the international system is above domestic politics. Neoclassical realism, which can be considered as the latest version of the realist tradition, provides a fruitful analytical framework for this critique due to its approach that integrates the system and domestic politics while maintaining the assumption of the system's dominant role by taking foreign policy institutions as intermediate variables of domestic politics. However, this article proposes that international institutions should also be considered as intermediate variables of the system and that a mechanism of interaction should be established between the system and domestic policy rather than a hierarchical relationship. To achieve this goal, the article proposes three extensions to neoclassical realism: 1) Include the classification of states, 2) Include the operation of the mechanism of interaction between the system and domestic politics, and 3) redefine international pressure. This paper chooses the international political process following the October 7th Aksa Flood operations in Gaza as a case study and discusses the consequences the pressures from US domestic politics has had on the system in terms of the mechanism of interaction between the system and domestic politics.

Keywords: neoclassical realism, international system, domestic politics, foreign policy, international institutions

Öz: Bu makale, uluslararası sistemin iç politikaya karşı baskın olduğu yönündeki realist varsayımı eleştirmektedir. Realist geleneğin son versiyonu olarak değerlendirilebilecek neoklasik realizm, dış politika kurumlarını iç politikanın ara değişkenleri olarak ele alarak sistemin baskın rolü varsayımını korurken, sistemle iç politikayı bütünleştiren yaklaşımı nedeniyle bu eleştiri için verimli bir analitik çerçeve sunmaktadır. Ancak bu makale, uluslararası kurumların da sistemin ara değişkenleri olarak değerlendirilmesi ve sistemle iç politika arasında hiyerarşik bir ilişki yerine bir etkileşim mekanizması kurulması gerektiğini önermektedir. Bu amaca ulaşmak için makale, neoklasik realizmin sistem-iç politika ilişkisindeki analitik çerçevelerine üç yenilik önermektedir: 1) Devletlerin sınıflandırılmasını eklemek, 2) Sistemle iç politika arasındaki etkileşim mekanizmasının işleyişini eklemek ve 3) uluslararası baskıyı yeniden tanımlamak. Bu makale, 7 Ekim'de Gazze'de gerçekleşen Aksa Tufanı Operasyonu'nu takip eden uluslararası siyasi süreci bir örnek olay olarak ele almakta ve ABD iç siyasetinin sistem üzerindeki baskılarının sistem ve iç siyaset arasındaki etkileşim mekanizması açısından nasıl sonuçlar doğurduğunu tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Neoklasik Realizm, Uluslararası Sistem, İç Politika, Dış Politika, Uluslararası Kurumlar

Acknowledgement: The article was submitted to the journal in August 2024, and after that date, many events have occurred, like the election of Donald Trump as the president of the US, the tremendous increase in the violence of Israeli genocidal attacks on Gaza, many rejections of ceasefire calls in the UN Security Council, recognition of Palestine in UN Summit in September 2025 as an independent state by the permanent members of UN Security Council except the US, huge protests in many European countries and many initiatives like Madleene, Handala and Sumud filotillas, and so on. The dynamism in the case study of this article should be borne in mind. However, those developments up to the writing date of this acknowledgement also support the arguments of that article. In addition, the hypothesis of the article in its theoretical part for recommendations to neoclassical realism doesn't need to be changed.

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Introduction

When global politics witnesses a series of events that have profound implications for the times ahead, the episodes themselves and the interrelations among them necessitate a comprehensive interpretation, and the existing manifestations of current theories might not offer sufficient data for comprehending these events. In periods such as these, scholars and decision-makers must undertake theoretical elaborations. Nonetheless, within the current global political landscape characterized by the complex national interests, identity politics, various forms of power, cultural strategies, and economic instruments all in the same political landscape, the task of developing such theoretical extensions becomes exceedingly challenging. This is because the dimensions that existing theories focus on may appear plausible but are limited in their ability to examine the increasingly complex realm of global politics. Indeed, these dimensions are commonly limited due to the constraints theories have at providing a comprehensive view of world politics and the period since Hamas' attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023. Israel's numerous offensives in Gaza have also increased the limitations of existing theories. Israel's aggression against Palestinian civilians and actors in other regional countries such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthis in Yemen, in addition to Israel's 75-year occupation of Palestinian land, becomes the increasing factor that limits existing theories. Beyond these regional risks, the probable intertwining of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, the regional conflicts in the Middle East, and the escalating tensions in the Balkans will generate a risk of World War III, which would mark an absolute turning point in world political history.

These kinds of academic expectations also have reflections in the practical world. For instance, in addition to the threat of regional conflicts in the Balkans, Northern Black Sea, and the Middle East, Austrian Prime Minister Victor Orban had emphasized the need for global vigilance up to the US. elections in November 2024 in order to prevent the potential for a third world war (Ozturk, 2023). Russian President Putin has issued warnings to NATO Allies, underscoring that Russia did not develop nuclear weapons for mere display (Trevelyan, 2024). China's military maneuvers and the US responses to the Taiwan situation present a looming risk of war between these two global powers vying for dominance (Ng & Wingfield-Hayes, 2024). As for the theoretical reflections of the practical world in these examples, while realists don't pay attention to the cultural processes that have been building incentives for China and Russia to engage in military operations, post-structuralists don't attempt to understand the systemic pressures that are forcing China and Russia to decelerate their political purposes. Therefore, existing theories must

broaden their perspectives, as they are not inherently tied to practical applications that grasp the fundamental aspects of social, political, economic, and cultural shifts across various regions, such as is occurring with these conflict risks. On the other hand, these differences between theoretical reflections of the practical world imply that theories can enhance themselves only after events have reached a significant threshold. Consequently, one could reasonably anticipate that the recent occurrences in global politics since October 7, 2023 will drive academia to develop new theories or expand existing ones by addressing theories' lacunae.

As Collingwood (2010, pp. 36–37) suggested when he said, “The best way to understand the writings of philosophers is to seek out the questions they were attempting to answer,” this paper aims to identify the deficiencies in neoclassical realism as the most recent iteration of the realist school by questioning the relationship between the system and domestic politics. For this purpose, the manuscript has been structured as follows. The first section is predominantly theoretical, delving into the perspective of neoclassical realism within the realm of international relations academia. In this context, the correlation between the international system and internal politics has been identified as the pivotal juncture required by neoclassical realism. The next section then goes on to employ this pivotal juncture for analyzing the Gaza situation since October 7, 2023 by elucidating the potential roles that international organizations could play in Gaza. The third section will then elucidate the practical implementation of this pivotal juncture within neoclassical realism, with the final section providing a summary and conclusion.

Revisiting the Neoclassical Theoretical Stance: The System Above Domestic Politics

The correlation between the international system and domestic politics has been a prominent subject of debate since the culmination of the World Wars. The inception of the United Nations (UN) can be viewed as the commencement of the rise of international mechanisms as a sign of the international system's increasing dominance over domestic politics (Cardenas, 2003, p. 30). After this milestone in world politics, the required grounds for numerous global multilateral legal organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been established for diverse objectives, including the provision of regional security and promotion of economic collaboration. These international bodies have emerged as pivotal influencers, leading to the emergence and ongoing development of various interpretations of realism and critical viewpoints. For example, neorealists sought to broaden the scope of traditional realist ideologies focused solely on interstate interactions. Nevertheless, the expansion neorealism

brought about proved inadequate at comprehending the connection between the system and domestic politics, as it overlooked the impact local entities have on global affairs. While Waltz (2018, pp. 172–186) acknowledged “the capability of international institutions to limit global politics” and bridged this gap in the literature, neoclassical realists also identified inadequacies of viewpoints that approached global politics solely from a domestic standpoint. Akin to neorealism, neoclassical realism expanded the theoretical landscape by incorporating domestic political elements into the realm of global relations. Essentially, neoclassical realism represented a refined iteration of neorealism, critiquing the tendency of neorealists to disregard the influence domestic political forces such as interest groups have on foreign security policies (Ripsman, 2009, p. 170).

Neoclassical realism can be interpreted as giving more weight to domestic politics compared to neorealism and as disrupting the equilibrium neorealist principles had established in favor of the systemic elements stemming from this extensional impact. Nevertheless, the dichotomy between the system and domestic politics offers neoclassical realists the opportunity to remain within the realist framework. Ripsman (2009) articulated the initial approach by referencing Gideon Rose’s renowned publication: “Neoclassical realism suggests that the international system primarily influences national security choices, yet global imperatives are modulated by the domestic political context, leading to diverse reactions by states to common international pressures” (Rose, 1998; as cited in Ripsman, 2009, p. 174). Consequently, as the first aspect of this interpretation, domestic political entities are not direct participants in international affairs, according to neoclassical realists; rather, they influence foreign policy decision makers. The intermediary link between domestic political entities and international relations through foreign policy decision makers and institutional operations enables neoclassical realism to retain realist principles. The second aspect involves distinguishing between high-threat and low-threat environments. In summary, neoclassical realists posit that high-threat environments diminish the correlation between domestic and international politics, whereas low-threat environments strengthen this connection. Consequently, the primary determinant influencing foreign policy decision makers shifts from interest groups’ influence over domestic politics to international threats, underscoring the supremacy the international system has over domestic politics, which aligns with realist doctrines.

Nonetheless, neoclassical theorists do not posit the primacy of the global system over internal political actors simply due to their adherence to the realist paradigm. Walt’s (1985) conceptualizations regarding the balance of threats and Schweller’s (2006) identification of the four factors contributing to ineffective threat balancing, which are considered foundational in neoclassical realism, offer valuable insights

into the motivations behind this emphasis on global dominance. Initially, Walt's (1985) analytical framework on the balance of threats placed the focal point on threat equilibrium rather than sheer power, thereby shifting the emphasis to the core of threat perception. Consequently, strategists and policymakers have somewhat disregarded the traditional power dynamics. Because threats to states can originate externally rather than internally, the international system assumes a central role in shaping foreign policy perspectives.

Similarly, Schweller (2006) posited that the inefficacy in balancing threats arises from four key factors: elite consensus, government susceptibility, social unity, and elite cohesion. These factors hold substantial importance for comprehending states' inability to effectively counter international threats, ultimately leading to the erosion of the state's unified realist structure. Essentially, the disparities in nations' foreign policies become more apparent when one acknowledges that states cannot be viewed as cohesive entities due to the dissonance between state institutions and societal components. Conversely, all these factors are intrinsic to states themselves. Therefore, the failure to balance threats can be attributed to internal state dynamics rather than external pressures, with Schweller's analysis primarily focused on internal factors rather than external forces. By prioritizing internal structural elements over external ones when elucidating the shortcomings in states' foreign policies, the fact becomes evident that the global system's ascendancy over domestic politics serves as an additional rationale for neoclassical realism.

Neoclassical realism's ability to uphold the realist tradition within the realm of the international system amidst the dilemma of system-versus-domestic politics can be viewed as the outcome of its classification as a theory centered on foreign policy (Lobell, 2009; Taliaferro et al., 2009). Indeed, I argue that neoclassical realists should consider neither the international system nor domestic politics as the primary actor when analyzing states' foreign policies. Positioned within Waltz's (2018) spectrum of images (i.e., first being human nature, second the state, and third the system), neoclassical realism falls between the second and third images. Essentially, neoclassical realism aims to bridge the gap between the state and the international system by leaning toward the latter, prioritizing it over domestic politics (Rathbun, 2008, p. 296). To achieve this goal, neoclassical realism incorporates the perceptions of policymakers and domestic interest groups as intervening variables in order to examine the dynamics between the international system and domestic politics.

However, one notable omission appears to be present in this narrative, and this article aims to clarify it by analyzing Gaza post October 7. Expounding upon the theoretical dimension of this omission is critical before delving into the interpretation

of the Gaza War in 2024. This omission pertains to the distinction among the positions states hold within the global system. Rose's (1998, p. 169) seminal work that introduced the concept of neoclassical realism underscored the necessity for scholars in this field to consider the varying state structures as an additional mediating factor. Nevertheless, Rose failed to underscore the significance of the stratification among states within the international system when shaping their interactions with it. For example, examining the perspectives of foreign policy decision makers in the US and Uruguay can shed light on how both countries conduct foreign policy. Furthermore, the diverse structures of foreign policy establishments offer valuable insights into the trajectories of the foreign policies the United States (US) and Uruguay pursue. Nonetheless, analyzing how the foreign policies of the US and Uruguay diverge cannot solely rely on the disparities in the structures of their foreign policy institutions and policymakers. The differing positions or influence the US and Uruguay wield within international bodies represent another factor contributing to the differentiation between these two nations' foreign policies.

Beyond comparing the US and Uruguay with regard to power, exemplifications from the cases of Türkiye, Russia, and China can provide different factors for migration, military, and international law issues than power does in order to criticize the missing point of neoclassical realism. As for the first example, Türkiye had to respond to international pressures originating from the European Union (EU) pertaining to refugee movements, especially since the beginning of the Syrian civil war. The refugee movement from Syria has been perceived as a big challenge to the sustainability of many European countries' demographic regimes. Because of its significant geographical location, Türkiye is at the crossroads of these refugee movements, and the EU needed the support of Türkiye to halt or balance these refugee movements. This perspective can only show the EU's dependency on Türkiye. The Turkish population residing in various European nations, the EU's need for Türkiye's exports, the EU's accession process, and the political vulnerabilities of Muslim nations such as Bosnia in European politics are some of the factors that make Türkiye dependent on the EU. The result of the negotiation process between Türkiye and the EU about the future of the refugee problem has ended with the signing of the Readmission Agreement between the parties. Although this was a risky agreement for Türkiye's demographic balance, what pressed Türkiye to sign this agreement was the international pressure from the EU in different fields. Just by looking at this story from the perspective of this result, the story can be considered a justification of neoclassical realism, because Türkiye agreed to the EU's expectations, regardless of whether the EU agreed with what Türkiye was concerned about. However, when considering how the national interests of EU member states have a determinant role

in these institutional decisions of the EU, the interpretation in favor of neoclassical realism appears to fail. Because the EU cannot and has no such mission to make decisions in contrast to the national interests of its member states, Türkiye can be interpreted as being under the pressure of EU member states' national interests as shaped by these states' domestic political actors. Therefore, one must accept the need to define international pressures more accurately by considering the stratification of states in international mechanisms.

The identical occurrence can be extended to the allegations leveled against China concerning individual liberties: a nation recognized as a global hegemon. The state of freedoms within China has been a pivotal subject for numerous years. In a report on China in August 2022, the Office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations Human Rights (OHCHR, 2022) highlighted the deteriorating conditions faced by specific segments of Chinese society, particularly within the prison system, and admonished China to align itself with universal human rights standards. Contrary instances of human rights violations, such as those at the Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib Prisons in the US, receive significantly less attention in international forums compared to reports on China's transgressions. Notably, American delegates to the UN have not been compelled to address any official or lawful inquiries in recent times, while China has been required to respond to official investigations over the past few years, as indicated in official correspondences. Although the disparate treatment of different nations by international bodies cannot be solely attributed to US or China's domestic policies, this does serve as a clear demonstration of how countries are stratified within the decisions international institutions make, consequently leading to the imposition of international pressures.

Another illustration can be observed regarding the situation in Russia, particularly at the onset of the Ukrainian conflict. In 2022, Russia initiated a military confrontation with Ukraine, despite it being a blatant infringement of the international laws governing state sovereignty. In response, Ukrainian forces promptly retaliated against Russia's military assaults, leading to a full-fledged war between the two nations. Concurrently, EU member states and the US swiftly imposed economic sanctions on Russia across various sectors following its involvement in the Ukrainian conflict. The fact that these sanctions were not solely aimed at upholding international law and safeguarding state sovereignty is worth noting. NATO's expansionist agenda also plays a covert role in the conflict in Ukraine, a narrative Putin frequently articulates. The endorsement from the US and EU, along with Zelensky's stance during the most recent NATO summit in July 2024, lend credence to Putin's assertions. Moreover, NATO's increased military and political assistance to Ukraine has intensified the global pressure on Russia. Similar to the situation in China, the mounting international

pressure on Russia does not solely stem from NATO members having a united front against Russia but is primarily driven by the national interests of the US, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK). Despite Türkiye's amicable ties with Russia after the failed coup attempt in Türkiye on July 15, 2016, the escalating tensions within NATO that the Biden administration orchestrated persist in challenging Russia. Beyond the Russian context, this underscores the importance of stratification not only among powerful states but also among weaker states. The US may opt to provide unwavering support to Ukraine through NATO by means of Russia while simultaneously withholding aid to Palestine in its conflict with Israel. Hence, stratification serves as an indispensable analytical framework within neoclassical realism for elucidating the disparities regarding the stances of weaker states within international organizations.

As a result of these occurrences concerning the absence of emphasis in neoclassical realism regarding the origin of international pressures from strong state's domestic political entities within the global system, introducing an additional principle into its theoretical structure is plausible here: *International pressures stem from the domestic politics of powerful nations rather than weaker ones*. Furthermore, the influence exerted by weaker states is incapable of applying pressure on other countries within the international mechanisms. Consequently, countries' ability to address international pressures is contingent upon their standing within these mechanisms. To elaborate, a country that holds a more central position in international mechanisms can effectively counteract international pressures. Additionally, the international pressures that encompass the cumulative influence from peripheral countries are unable to exert influence on such central states within the international mechanisms, as evidenced by events such as the US military interventions in Afghanistan (2003) and Iraq, Israel's Gaza invasion since 2006, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine since 2022. Given that this represents the most recent and compelling illustration of the interplay between the international system and domestic politics, the subsequent section will scrutinize the evolution of the Gaza invasion post October 7 as a pivotal case study highlighting the consequences of state stratification within international mechanisms from a neoclassical realist perspective. These findings will underscore the imperative for reassessing the efficacy and legitimacy of international mechanisms in global affairs, thus prompting suggestions for expanding neoclassical realism to furnish a more comprehensive framework for comprehending contemporary world politics.

Revisiting the International System after Gaza post October 7

October 7, 2023 marked a pivotal moment in global politics due to its implications at the local, regional, and international levels. Serious alterations in both political

and economic equilibriums have been observed since this particular date. Notably, a remarkable decline has occurred in the alliances centered around Israel within the realm of global politics. One impressive instance illustrating this diminishing trend involves the aftermath of the legal proceedings South Africa initiated against Israel at the International Criminal Court (ICC). The diminishing level of backing from Western allies such as the US, UK, and Germany for Israel, partly due to escalating public dissent within these nations, serves as another indication of how crucial this juncture was for Israel within the global arena. Historically, Israel has never been seriously or substantially punished by UN institutions, including Resolution 242 of the Security Council in 1967 which deemed the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and Eastern Quds illegal (Aral, 2019, p. 128). The erosion of Israel's international alliances can be construed as a form of global pressure exerted on Israel and its advocates. Nevertheless, the reactions of both the US and Israel to this systemic pressure shed light on the reciprocal relationship between domestic politics and the international order. A comprehensive analysis necessitates a retrospective examination spanning from the events in Gaza on October 7, 2023 to the NATO Summit in July 2024. Furthermore, an exploration of the dynamics between Israel and the US concerning the rationale behind and the strategies employed to safeguard their alliance amidst substantial systemic challenges is imperative. The "why" component will unveil the underlying motivations rooted in US domestic politics, while the "how" aspect will elucidate the broader impact domestic politics have on the international framework.

In the realm of investigating why, a critical perspective has surfaced in scholarly works regarding the irrationality of the alliance being rooted in national interests and has been proposed by the realist tradition. This suggests that national interests may not serve as a driving force for the US to uphold its alliance with Israel, particularly during periods of significant escalating international pressure on Israel. Conversely, the alliance typically grows stronger amidst mounting international pressures, particularly those concerning Israel. Essentially, as Israel faces heightened international scrutiny in global politics, US support for Israel promptly intensifies. Such a correlation within the alliance must stem from motives beyond national interests. Consequently, the influential power the Israeli diaspora's lobbyists have to manipulate US domestic political landscape has been highlighted as the nucleus of this alliance (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2008, p. 13). For instance, during the televised presidential debate between Trump and Biden on June 27, 2024, Trump accused Biden of aligning poorly with Palestinians during the Gaza War, despite Biden facing allegations in the international community of being pro-Zionist. This move clearly aimed at securing the backing of the Israeli lobby in the November 2024 presidential elections. The debate on who

demonstrates a stronger pro-Israel stance underscores the Israeli lobby's influence on the US government. It also underscores the enduring nature of this influence, irrespective of potential turbulent shifts in US presidential leadership across the political spectrum. Therefore, the relationship between the US and Israel continues to be characterized by Israeli lobbies as a "fateful partnership", with former US Presidents such as Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Obama, Trump, and Biden portraying the alliance as a product of "shared values" between the two nations (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.).

The irrationality of the explanations concerning the perpetuation of the US-Israel alliance being rooted in national interests offers valuable insights into the pivotal role the current paper plays in the realm of neoclassical realism, which is hoped to lead to repercussions not just within the internal dynamics of both the US and Israel but also to impact the standing of international institutions. Israel has consistently expressed opposition toward the numerous resolutions the General Assembly has passed pertaining to the various actions Israel has taken, such as its settlement policies in the West Bank and the occupation of Gaza. Similarly, the US has consistently extended support to Israel, whether by overlooking Israel's persistence in pursuing its policies or by moderating responses towards Israel within the global community. However, the current post-October 7th scenario distinguishes itself from past crises involving Israel and the international community due to the frequency of appeals for ceasefires, the scale and prevalence of anti-Israel demonstrations worldwide, and the perceived disproportionate nature of Israel's military responses to Hamas. Consequently, Israel finds itself under mounting pressure from the international community and from international bodies such as the ICC, which has issued a call for an urgent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas while also accusing Israel of engaging in genocidal actions. In light of these calls from the global community and the determinations international organizations have made, an Israeli diplomat publicly destroyed the UN Charter within the assembly hall on May 10, 2024 (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2024). During periods of heightened tensions between Israel and the international community, the US has typically tended to either restrain Israel or avoid antagonizing the global consensus (Roth, 2009, p. 378). Deviating from its usual stance, however, the US has actively thwarted the adoption of urgent ceasefire proposals on four occasions, despite facing escalating pressure not only from the international community but also from domestic social groups within the US. This shift has seen the US support for Israel manifest not just in diplomatic rhetoric but also through military means. Notably, the deployment of a nuclear-powered military vessel to the Eastern Mediterranean has marked a significant departure, as the US has now directly engaged in the conflict with its military might. This unprecedented

direct US military intervention has brought the Palestinian predicament to the forefront in the discourse of regional nations. Consequently, the US has not only invoked Israel's right to self-defense but also directly shielded Israel.

The unwavering and boundless US backing of Israel carries significant implications for the global system. Initially, the legitimacy of international organizations notably and drastically diminished with regards to their objectives. To illustrate, despite the UN being established to promote and safeguard peace worldwide, its effectiveness at maintaining global peace has been called into question. As Weiss (2017, p. 28) referenced, the inability to apply the Uniting for Peace Resolution after being invoked 10 times against Israel (the last time in 1997) due to Security Council members vetoing it rightly exemplifies the various cases of considerable skepticism present toward the UN (Weiss, 2017, p. 28). Essentially, the UN faces the prospect of meeting the same fate as the League of Nations, whether it is replaced by another entity or transformed structurally. Irrespective of the outcome concerning the UN, which stands comparatively as the most influential and all-encompassing international body, all international institutions are now vulnerable to a loss of trust in their ability to achieve their mandates. Consequently, the investments required for establishing new essential international bodies may escalate for nations. Moreover, the anticipated performance of existing international entities is likely to diminish. The subsequent ramification is the deterioration of the efficacy of the pivotal international entities that are crucial for maintaining the system. The disproportionate influence of the US within UN frameworks precipitates the emergence of political disparities and existential challenges to international bodies. For example, certain US senators have issued threats to prosecutors and judges at the ICC should they rule that Israel's actions in Gaza amount to genocide. The ICC prosecutors have been granted the unprecedented mandate to "independently and impartially select situations for investigation where atrocity crimes have been or continue to be committed on their territories or by their nationals" (International Criminal Court, n.d.). Under this charge, ICC prosecutors and judges must inherently be shielded from any form of intimidation. The potential for threats against ICC prosecutors from any party may result in a void of authority within the global community on various matters or lead to deliberations on the fairness of ICC rulings. Consequently, the efficacy of international bodies in fulfilling their mandates has been compromised.

The narrative concerning international institutions following Israeli aggression since October 7 sheds light on the nature of the international system evolving toward increased anarchy due to the heightened high-threat environment. Rose (1998) argued that the presence of such a high-threat environment creates a disconnect between the international system and domestic politics, as ordinary citizens' expectations

from foreign policymakers may not align with the strategic imperatives necessary to mitigate high threats and international pressures. This neoclassical realist perspective emphasizes the primacy of the international system over domestic politics, with international pressures carrying more weight than domestic ones in the eyes of foreign policymakers. In cases such as Gaza where international institutions are discredited and ineffective, however, international pressure is limited in its ability to compel states to adhere to certain behaviors independently of their citizens. Essentially, international institutions serve as conduits of systemic pressures within the international system, as embodied by entities such as the ICJ and ICC. While neoclassical realism does not explicitly assert that systemic pressures solely emanate from international institutions, in the context of contemporary global politics, such pressures are predominantly channeled through these mechanisms. Therefore, any decline in the efficacy of international institutions results in a weakening of systemic pressures. Consequently, not addressing the role of international institutions in global politics diminishes the relevance of neoclassical realism, a modern iteration of classical realism. This is because classical realism already portrays a world of international politics characterized by anarchy. Hence, a reassessment of the post-October 7th nexus between the system and domestic politics must consider the role and status of international institutions in the realm of world politics.

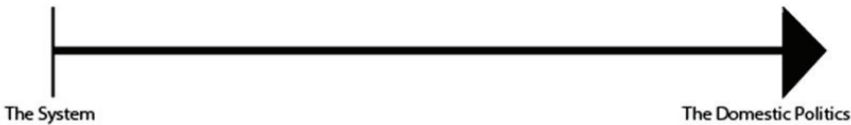
Discussion on the Post-October 7th Interaction Between the International System and Domestic Politics

This study contends the extent of international influences on local governance to remain ambiguous and to vary from one region to another. Nevertheless, alternative dialogues exist regarding the correlation between the global framework and internal political dynamics. The discourse typically revolves around whether the systemic influences dictate local politics or vice versa. Within this paper, I have demonstrated that the internal political landscapes of certain nations also possess the capability to influence the global framework, thereby creating systemic influences. Conversely, the issue also involves alterations in local politics due to systemic influences, as well as changes in the framework due to pressures influential nations' internal politics exert, as exemplified by the shifts observed in international institutions in response to pressures from the US. Thus, the connection between the framework and local politics necessitates a comprehensive critical perspective. Nevertheless, while constructing such a perspective proves more feasible for critical standpoints, this paper endeavors to align itself with the realist paradigm in order to enrich the neoclassical realist literature by expanding its postulations rather than attempting to disprove them.

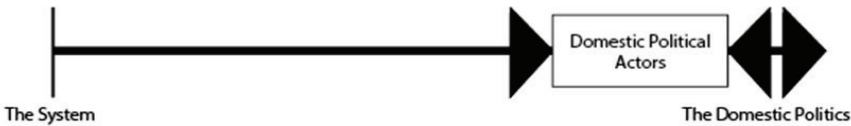
The initial extension to the assumptions of neoclassical realism involves categorizing states within the framework of the anarchy assumption. Furthermore, according to the realist school of thought, interstate interactions frequently lead to disputes, political upheavals, and even armed conflicts due to the lack of a central body governing over states in an anarchic global system. In line with various other theories in the field of international relations such as world system theory, dependency theory, hegemon theory, and developmental state theory, however, all states are acknowledged to possess varying degrees of power, and acknowledging these power differentials is essential when analyzing global politics. By incorporating this fundamental reality concerning power disparities into the realist assumption of anarchy, states are deduced to wield varying degrees of influence over the transformation of tensions into conflicts and warfare. Within such a setting, the domestic politics of different states do not uniformly respond to the pressures in the anarchic international system. Consequently, states with lesser power may struggle to mount robust responses to international pressures, whereas more powerful states are better equipped to deliver stronger ones. Recognizing that this proposition diverges from neoclassical interpretations due to two key distinctions is crucial. The variance of this expansion based on the perspective Ripsman (2009) put forth concerning the response of domestic politics to high-threat and low-threat international environments lies firstly in the differences between focal points and secondly in the essence of the subjects in both arguments. Put differently, while Ripsman's arguments center on the international system as the primary focus with respect to the initial distinction, this article places states at the forefront. Additionally, whereas Ripsman delves into the characteristics of the international system in terms of high and low threat environments regarding the secondary distinction, this article hones in on the categorization of states within the international system.

The second extension refers to the nexus between international mechanisms and domestic politics, potentially leading to shifts in the international system. This transition from dominance to interaction can be instigated by a constructivist or post-structuralist theoretical framework. Despite sharing the assumption of anarchy, however, this study does not align with a constructivist or post-structuralist perspective. In this context, not only does a relationship exist between the system and domestic politics, but so does an interaction. This signifies the international system, which is comprised of state pressures, to be influenced by both exerting and responding states through international institutions, while these states are in turn impacted by the international system via the perceptions of foreign policy decision makers. Neoclassical realism examines how the international system affects domestic politics by considering policymakers' perceptions with foreign policy

institutions as the mediating variable. Conversely, this paper proposes international mechanisms such as institutions and the application of international law to also be able to serve as mediating variables in order to explore what influence stratified states' domestic politics have on the international system. Recognizing this dynamic makes comprehending why certain countries are able to exert influence on the international system while others cannot feasible, despite the system's overarching global dominance over domestic politics.



The Relationship between System and Domestic Politics in Classical Realism and Neorealism



The Relationship between System and Domestic Politics in Neoclassical Realism



The Relationship between System and Domestic Politics in extended-Neoclassical Realism

Figure 1: Versions of the relationship between system and domestic politics in the different realisms

As a result of extending interactions, the structure of the international system, not its anarchical nature, and/or the role of states through changes in their domestic politics in the international system, are the only things that can be changed. For instance, the establishment of the UN can be considered the result of the League of Nations failing to provide peace and security between the World Wars I and II,

and the source of this was the conflict of interests among the continental European countries. Additionally, the negative perceptions that state leaders of continental European countries such as Adenauer, the incumbent president of the West Germany, had toward the Soviet Unions were the root causes behind European leaders' inclination to transform the League of Nations to the UN. Therefore, the UN, which has a determinant role in shaping contemporary world politics, had been established because of state leaders' perceptions. In other words, the central institution of the international system was established based on European countries' domestic politics.

However, the transformation from League of Nations to the UN didn't achieve transformation within the anarchical structure of international relations. Although the Security Council that was founded in 1946 had the greatest power to shape the future of the world, this didn't mean it had authority over states. Since its foundation, the Security Council in practice has only intervened in humanitarian crises while being conditioned by US national interests. The case of Gaza post October 7 is a clear exemplification of the Security Council's status. Therefore, the Security Council and the UN cannot possibly be claimed to be institutions that remove the anarchical nature from the international system. Consequently, the transformation from the League of Nations, which was just an interstate connection mechanism, to the UN, which is merely an international semi-jurisdictional mechanism, has not changed the anarchical nature of the international mechanism. Therefore, I suggest the second extension to involve the presence of a mechanism of interaction between the international system and domestic politics. Both can influence and cause changes in each other's structures through the intervening variables of international institutions and foreign policy executives.

Concluding Remarks

The case of Gaza post October 7, 2023, pushes international scholarship to reevaluate not only the changing geopolitical balances and political-economic conditions in world politics but also to reexamine the theoretical bases of our academic understanding. Therefore, this article attempts to fill this gap and prefers to examine neoclassical realism's stance regarding the relationship between the international system and domestic politics. The reason for preferring neoclassical realism according to this paper is related to the greater potential it has compared to other realist perspectives for contributing to international relations scholarship with the increasing requirement of combining domestic politics and foreign policy. As a result of the examinations, this paper argues that IR scholarship needs to take a step forward toward understanding contemporary world politics, just as it did after the end of the Cold War. In those years, the red line between AussenPolitik and InnerPolitik was partially removed due

to the transition to a kind of unipolar international system. Just as in those years, world politics has also been transiting from a unipolar to a multipolar international system, and taking a step forward has again become necessary.

This paper has revealed two important considerations. The first involves avoiding the neoclassical realist view regarding the stratification of states when interpreting international politics. Avoiding this causes neoclassical realism to view all states equally. This article recommends two important extensions to the neoclassical realist interpretations in order to take on this troubleshooting. The first involves stratifying states according to their relationship with the system, because different states can influence the international system's mechanisms differently. While international mechanisms are unable to resist the demands of powerful states that have whatever aim regarding international politics, weaker states are unable to ignore the policies of international mechanisms, even with regard to their own domestic relations. Therefore, as in the case study of Gaza, some states can be claimed to be above the system in some cases. Therefore, the stratification of states has been determined as the first missing point in neoclassical realism. In this regard and in addition to Rose's (1998) recommendation to study the impacts of regime differences on foreign policy differentiations by state, this article suggests investigating the impacts state stratification has on the status of the international mechanisms that are the system's reflection points.

To realize that suggestion, this article has recommended three theoretical extensions to neoclassical realism. While neoclassical realism extended the neorealist perspective from concentrating on systemic pressures to concentrating on the influences of domestic actors, neoclassical realism also had trouble analyzing the status of international institutions in the relationship between the international system and domestic politics, and this article's recommended extensions concern the status of international institutions. The first extension involves integrating the stratification of states into analyses. The second extension involves the interaction between the international system and domestic politics through international mechanisms and foreign policy executives. As a result of being able to carry out this integration, a new version of the realist tradition that goes beyond neoclassical realism is able to claim that dominance in international politics, whether by the system or by domestic politics, is capable of changing according to the power of a state.

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