



Understanding of international institutions

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1 INTRODUCTION

International Institutions, including International Law, are extremely important for the contemporary global context, which is why discussions about their role in shaping the behavior of States and other actors are highly relevant.

Institutionalist theorists claim that institutions can redefine state interests by altering established processes in the anarchic international environment. In this sense, they add that they matter for international relations.

Therefore, regardless of the theoretical approaches that make up international relations, it will be observed that they grant a certain relevance – some more, others less –, to the role of Institutions in the international environment, especially in conducting the behavior of States (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

2 OBJECTIVE

Analyze discussions on the role of International Institutions, from the perspective of the various approaches that make up the doctrine of International Law and International Relations. It is not about listing the dichotomies between the different schools, but rather highlighting the complementation between them.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research was developed based on studies presented in the literature of International Relations and International Law, that is, based on books, doctrines, and articles that are relevant in the academic environment.

4 DEVELOPMENT

4.1 ENGLISH SCHOOL APPROACH

Theorists of the English School, mainly through the studies of Hedley Bull, advocate the thesis that the existence of the International Society is only possible within an International System (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

In other words, the existence of an International System (two or more States have sufficient contact with each other, with sufficient reciprocal impact on their decisions, such that they conduct themselves, at least to some extent, as parts of a whole), does not make the existence of an International Society unfeasible



(group of States, with certain values and common interests, form a society, when they consider themselves linked, in their relationship, by a common set of rules, and participate in common Institutions) (BULL, 2002).

Considering that States form an International Society, this implies saying that they share common interests and values, in addition to being bound by rules – for example, the need to respect sovereignty, compliance with international agreements, and the limitation to the reciprocal use of force-, as well as cooperate for the functioning of Institutions - for example, the practice of International Law, diplomacy and International Organizations, in addition to customs and conventions of war (BULL, 2002).

Thus, it can be said that for Bull (2002), the rules and the Institutions are indispensable instruments for International Society, mainly because the Institutions help in the adherence to the rules through the formulation, communication, administration, imposition, interpretation, legitimation, and adaptation of them.

This means that institutions fulfill certain functions that make the effectiveness of the rules possible, that is:

- (i) Make and promulgate the rules as norms;
- (ii) Disclose their existence, so that the parties are aware of them;
- (iii) Implement measures aimed at ensuring compliance;
- (iv) Carry out the hermeneutic exercise, to resolve conflicts between the rules and violations of them;
- (v) Ensuring due compliance through sanctions or other forms of coercion;
- (vi) Legitimize, that is, make States accept it as valid;
- (vii) Create ways to change and replace them to keep up with international reality;
- (viii) List instruments aimed at ensuring their implementation (BULL, 2002).

Therefore, in an International Society, the order is the consequence of some contingent facts, among them the Institutions that help to make the rules effective. Therefore, the States are the main Institutions responsible for making the rules effective, since they formulate, legislate, execute, and communicate through their actions (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

In this way, the other Institutions do not remove from the State the main role of implementing the political functions of the international society. In short, it can be said that the other Institutions collaborate with the States in the performance of their political function, since they symbolize the existence of an International Society (BULL, 2002).

4.2 APPROACH TO REALISM

Considering the view of realism, especially from Morgenthau (2003), is one of the main exponents of this theoretical current, it will be observed that this author sought to list a theory about international politics, endowed with an empirical and pragmatic nature, and not a priori and abstract. According to the



author, the structure of international relations - reflected in political and diplomatic institutions and legal adjustments - tends to distance it from the reality of international politics, being irrelevant to it (MORGENTHAU, 2003).

This means to say that the events that occur in the international world cannot be explained considering only traditional concepts, institutions, and procedures. Thus, international politics is not reduced to rules and legal institutions, although it operates within the framework of such rules and through institutions (MORGENTHAU, 2003).

In this sense, Morgenthau (2003) sought to understand the forces that determine political relations between nations and how these forces act on each other and political relations and International Institutions. Consequently, he defined international politics as the struggle for power, since regardless of the ends of international politics, power is always the immediate objective. Likewise, offensive realism, defended by John Mearsheimer (2007), considers Institutions as the set of rules capable of promoting cooperation between States, as well as the occurrence of conflicts between them.

Therefore, political power is composed of the mutual relations of control between holders of public authority and between the people. It is a relationship between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised. Thus, power allows control over the actions of others, based on the impact they have on them. It should be noted that the impact derives from three sources: (i) the expectation of benefits; (ii) the fear of disadvantages; (iii) and, respect or love for individuals or institutions (MORGENTHAU, 2003).

4.3 APPROACHES TO NEOREALISM AND NEOLIBERALISM

Liberals understand that Institutions contribute to the establishment of interstate relations supported by cooperation to guarantee international peace and security since they are seen, by such theorists, as instruments that tend to reduce international conflicts (KEOHANE, 1993; KEOHANE; NYE, 200).

In this sense, cooperation is possible in anarchy, which enables international actors to settle conflicts peacefully. Therefore, Institutions are seen as spaces that enable intermediary countries to participate and influence the international system, which would lead to changes in the behavior of States (KRASNER, 1983; KEOHANE, 1993).

However, institutionalist theorists do not claim that institutions, by themselves, can prevent the occurrence of war conflicts, but they can contribute to generating bonds of trust based on shared transparency among their members. In this way, trust generates a change in state behavior, which promotes a certain expectation and security about the behavior of the other, and, above all, about the fulfillment of promises (KEOHANE; NYE, 2001).

Currently, the debate between realists and liberals has as its starting point discussions on the structure of the international system, the processes that occur through interaction, and, finally, the role of institutions.



Thus, the debate between neorealists and neoliberals is premised on the postulates of rationalism (KEOHANE, 1993).

Rationalists offer a behavioral conception of processes and institutions. Thus, they consider that institutions change the behavior of international actors, but not their identities or interests. That is, neorealists and neoliberals have similar assumptions about agents, as they see states as the dominant actors in the system and define security in terms of “self-interest”. That is, both consider the State as a self-interested actor (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

Meanwhile, neorealists believe that anarchies are self-help systems and, in this sense, claim that self-help is not an institution, although it sets the terms for the interaction and is not affected by it. Therefore, the neorealists, when weaving the postulates of the systemic theory, reduce the process to the dynamics of behavioral interaction between exogenously constituted actors (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

Neoliberals agree with neorealists on the causal powers of anarchic structure, but believe that the process can generate cooperative behavior even in an exogenously given self-help system. Therefore, these liberals defend the causal powers of anarchy, as well as accept the limited behavioral conception of rationalism about the causal powers of Institutions - in this sense, they are considered more realists before liberals. Meanwhile, he believes that institutions can shape and change powers and interests, a point that differs from the realists (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

4.4 CONSTRUCTIVISM APPROACH

Among the schools of International Relations, social theories that seek to explain the identities and interests of international actors flourish. Keohane calls this theory reflexive, and Onuf called it constructivist, as it focused on the social construction of subjectivity (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005). Despite the differences, these social theories are concerned with the sociological question, ignored by the rationalists, that is, the formation of identities and interests.

Given this, modern and postmodern constructivists seek to know how practices constitute subjects, which is not something far from the liberal interest in knowing how institutions transform interests. They adopt a cognitive and intersubjective conception of the process, in which identities and interests are endogenous to the interaction, therefore, they do not adopt the rationalist-behavioral conception, in which they are exogenous to the interaction (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

Likewise, they claim that International Institutions can transform the identities and interests of States. In this sense, Wendt (1992) – one of the main exponents of the constructivist current – does not agree with the realist view that states that self-help is given by the anarchic structure exogenously to the process. Unlike the realists who claim that anarchy justifies disinterest in the institutional transformation of identities and interests (rationalist systemic theories), Wendt (1992) states that self-help and power politics do not follow anarchy, self-help is due to the process, not the structure.



Consequently, self-help and power politics are Institutions, not essential features of anarchy. In other words, anarchy is what states make it. And, self-help and power politics are socially constructed under anarchy. There are therefore three ways in which identities and interests are transformed under anarchy: (i) by the institution of sovereignty; (ii) by an evolution of cooperation; (iii) and by intentional efforts to transform selfish identities into collective identities (WENDT, 1992).

Moreover, Wendt (1992) does not agree with the realists who claim that anarchy justifies the lack of interest in the institutional transformation of identities and interests since self-help is an intersubjective structure. Thus, the fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act towards objects, including other actors, based on the meaning that objects have for them.

Given this, the distribution of power affects the calculation of the State, but how this happens depends on intersubjective understanding and expectations, on the distribution of knowledge, about oneself and others. It is the collective meaning that constitutes the structures that organize the actions since the actors acquire identities by participating in the collective meanings. Therefore, identities are the bases of interests, and Institutions are the set or relatively stable structure of identities and interests. Thus, self-help is an Institution, one among others that can exist under anarchy (WENDT, 1992).

Therefore, power and institutions are not opposites in foreign policy, as anarchy and the distribution of power only have meaning for the State due to the understandings and expectations that constitute institutional identities and interests. Furthermore, the International Institutions make up the International System itself, directing the behavior of the actors, and being, at the same time, constructed by it, individually and collectively. In this way, agents and structure are mutually constituted based on social practices (WENDT, 1992).

Institutions are not just bureaucratic instruments, but practices or norms that influence the behavior of agents, that is, they are institutionalized practices that allow the formation of collective identities, based on intersubjective structures, which shape and give rise to new interests. . It is a dynamic process, which changes all the time, based on the norms published by the Institutions themselves, shaping and directing the interests of the States, constraining their behavior and constituting their identities (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

Finally, it remains to be mentioned that the constructivists, especially Wendt (1992), claim that the Institution is a relatively stable set or "structure" of identities and interests. That is, they are cognitive entities that do not exist apart from actors' ideas about how the world works. They are real and objective, not beliefs. Consequently, they can change powers and interests, in addition to transforming the identities and interests of states.

Thus, as collective knowledge, Institutions have an existence above and above the individuals who incorporate them, since they are able to confront individuals as more or less coercive social factors. Finally, it should be noted that the actors are aware of the role of Institutions, since the process of creating them is



one of internalizing new understandings of oneself and others, by acquiring new functions of identity, not just creating external restrictions on the behavior of exogenously constituted actors (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

4.5 CRITICAL THEORY APPROACH

In the view of Robert Cox (1981), the State and civil society are interconnected, forming a complex that participates in the international system to complete each other's actions. Given this, the Institutions are responsible for spreading the values present in the central countries, being, therefore, an instrument in favor of the interests of the leading groups of the dominant countries. Consequently, this reality contributes to the establishment of an international hegemony, as well as enabling the continuity of domestic hegemony itself, especially of the dominant class (COX, 1981).

Institutions turn out to be a combination of ideas and material power, solidified in legal and political bases, influencing the behavior of actors. Therefore, Institutions reflect dominant power relations and manage to generate collective images based on power relations. In this way, institutions manage to gain a life of their own, influencing the development of ideas and material capabilities (COX, 1981).

In addition, Institutions provide conflict management means to minimize the use of force and manage to express hegemony. Therefore, it can be said that the Institution is not the hegemony itself, but its expression. Thus, considering hegemony as a coupling between power, ideas, and institutions, Cox claims that this allows seeing and understanding the problems of the theory of state domination, as an instrument or necessary means for the constitution of a stable international order (COX, 1981).

Taking into account the theoretical constructions of International Institutions, it will be observed that the different views are similar to each other, in some aspects. Therefore, it is clear that International Institutions are of great importance since they can translate the interests of international actors, although they cannot combine, in perfect harmony, the desires of all. In short, International Institutions reveal themselves to be the expression of power relations between state actors since they are imbued with their interests. In this sense, the States are able to translate the institutional postulates, as they are the main institutions in the international environment (NOGUEIRA; MESSARI, 2005).

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

International Institutions are patterns of activities or a complex of rules limited to a temporal and spatial aspect. Therefore, they manage to dictate the behavior of international actors, as they are responsible for formulating, communicating, administering, imposing, interpreting, legitimizing, and adapting the rules in the international scenario. Therefore, they are indispensable instruments for reducing transaction costs



between actors, as well as facilitating cooperation between them, by generating security and predictability of behavior (JACKSON; SORENSEN, 2018).

Thus, even the sovereignty of States, and the power game, are seen as International Institutions, by making changes in the order of interest and identity of state actors possible. In other words, the Institutions formulate the institutional standards that are created by themselves, and, the State as the main institution, manages to create the international policy. Thus, the international structure shapes the policies of agents and actors, and vice versa (JACKSON; SORENSEN, 2018).



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