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Kamminga, M.R.

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Social Neorealism: An Etzionian 'I&We' Communitarian Upgrading of Waltz's Theory of International Politics

Menno R. Kamminga ✔ ✗ *(International Relations and International Organization, University of Groningen)*

Abstract

Kenneth Waltz's neorealism has arguably been the most dominant international theory for the last three decades, although its popularity has decreased. Amitai Etzioni has recently criticized (neo)realism, arguing that not only military and economic factors but, increasingly, also normative ones shape international relations. Etzioni's challenge, one 'from within', is of particular interest and relevance, as it shares with Waltz's theory an intellectual rootedness in microeconomics, yet differs from neorealism in abandoning the prevailing neoclassical paradigm in favor of a communitarian, or social, one. This article argues that Etzioni's contribution should be taken as an 'I&We' communitarian upgrading of Waltz's neorealist theory. It proposes a 'social neorealism', which represents a dynamic, context sensitive, anti-utopian theory that assigns priority to national security and maintains the causal primacy of material factors, but also accepts that, insofar as a global community is forming in view of planetary wide (security) threats, normative factors are growing in importance and moderate the dangers of international anarchy.

Article body

Introduction

In Kenneth Waltz's authoritative version, neorealism has arguably been the most dominant international theory for the last three decades (Waltz 1979), although it has become less popular. One recent critique has come from sociologist Amitai Etzioni (2004a, 2007, 2009). Etzioni (2004a: 73, 213, 225; 2009: 160, 177) objects that (neo)realists like Waltz belittle or even dismiss normative power in international relations in their focus on economic power and military threats, whereas moral principles and values should be accorded a key role, too. Etzioni, then, claims that his 'I&We' communitarian paradigm should not merely guide the study of the economy and domestic society (1988, 1996a, 1996b), but is most urgently needed for the analysis of international relations, 'since the world is becoming ever more one social system…and economics - one of its sub-systems' (2008: 171). For Etzioni to regard neorealism as a major target is conceivable. 'I&We' originates from a critique of the 'amoral' neoclassical paradigm that has prevailed in microeconomics (Etzioni 1988) and found its way into International Relations (IR) through Waltzian neorealism (Guzzini 1998; Lipschutz 2009), albeit with some amendments. Waltz remains close to neoclassicism by accepting the image of the self-regarding individual actor - replacing the economist's firm, which operates within an anonymous market, with the state, which operates within an anarchical international system. Etzioni, however, insists that, domestically and internationally, actors are social entities who both pursue self-interest and, being community members, observe internalized moral values, norms, and obligations. Thus far, Etzioni has offered empirical evidence and moral arguments in order to 'contribute to a communitarian theory of international relations' (2004a: 213; cf. 2007: xiv). However, a coherent, distinctively communitarian international theory does not yet exist.

Etzioni's challenge is of particular interest and relevance, as it may be taken as a challenge 'from within', on neorealism's own playground. Thus, it shares with Waltz's theory an intellectual rootedness in microeconomics (in Adam Smith's thought even), yet differs from neorealism in abandoning the neoclassical paradigm (grounded in Smith's *Wealth of Nations*) in favor of a communitarian, or social, one (closer to the Smith of *Theory of Moral Sentiments*) (Etzioni 1988, 2008; Waltz 1979, 1997, 2004).
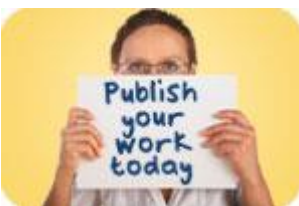
Waltzian neorealism assumes that states are the key actors within a separate, anarchic domain and have survival as their primary goal, from which it infers that states seek to be rather more powerful than their rivals in a balance of power (Waltz 1979). Two common complains about neorealist theory - ones reminiscent of complaints long made about neoclassical economics - are that it explains so little for being simplistic, minimalistic, too sparse (Ruggie 1986; Hollis and Smith 1990: 115; Wendt 1999: 17; Guzzini 1998; cf. Wæver 2009: 211; Etzioni 1988), and is morally suspect for hampering global solidarity and justice (Lumsdaine 1993) and offering inadequate guidance in addressing globally shared problems such as climate change, terrorism, nuclear weapons proliferation, and human rights violations (Etzioni 2004a, cf. 1988). It has long and consistently been Etzioni's concern to eliminate both such shortcomings.

In this article, I argue that Etzioni's contribution should be conceived as an I&We communitarian upgrading of Waltz's neorealist theory, instead as leading to the distinct theory Etzioni himself prefers.[1] I propose a 'social neorealism', which represents a dynamic, context sensitive, consistently anti-utopian (cf. Gvosdev 2005) theory that assigns priority to national security and preserves the causal primacy of material factors, but also accepts that, insofar 'as a global community is beginning to form' in view of planetary wide (security) threats, 'normative factors are growing in importance' (Etzioni 2004: 213) and moderate the dangers of international anarchy (cf. Kamminga 2010: 35). Indeed, I would hold that one major value of Etzioni's work is that it warrants a renewal of Waltz's respected neorealist theory in a less pessimistic, 'friendlier' version.

My argument for social neorealism will be twofold. First, theorizing adequately about international politics requires a broad, pluralistic conception of explanatory theory grounded in criteria of parsimony, reality, scope, and moral permissibility. Second, the core assumptions of neorealism need modest yet significant, 'social' extension: (i) the assumption of states, particularly the ones most capable and powerful, being the international system's main units should plausibly be extended with the presupposition that (powerful) states will strive for an added global community if shared problems would make this necessary; (ii) the assumption of states striving egoistically for security should plausibly be extended with the presupposition that states will behave altruistically for universal security once their own security has been ensured. In all, I intend to show that Etzioni's methodological and moral arguments and empirical evidence for communitarianism suggest a primary confirmation and a secondary expansion of Waltz's theory. Etzioni's analysis implies both the basic soundness of neorealism and the sensibleness of expecting (powerful) states to perform moral behavior globally.

A pluralistic conception of theory

First, I argue that sensible, fruitful international theorizing utilizes a broad, pluralistic conception of explanatory theory - one based on a careful balance between criteria of parsimony, reality, scope, and moral permissibility. Waltz is one of the few IR scholars who have thoroughly considered the issue of 'what is theory' (Wæver 2009: 202; Joseph 2010: 483; Waltz 1979: ch. 1, 1995, 1997). So has Etzioni (1988). Yet Waltz's view of theory, monistic as it is, can be shown to be good but not good enough. Etzioni's analysis of theory, even if not fully satisfactory as well, helps to improve Waltz's conception towards a richer one.

Theory, says Waltz, is not meant to predict, but to 'explain a circumscribed part of a reality of whose true dimensions we can never be sure' (1997: 913-914, cf. 1979: 7). Theory tries to do this by exposing only the vital elements and identify necessary relations of cause and interdependence. Reality is 'complex and often ugly'; theory is 'sparse in formulation and beautifully simple' (Waltz 2004: 3). Theory can only perform its task adequately if it remains distinct from reality. 'The question…is not whether the isolation of a realm is realistic, but whether it is useful. And usefulness is judged by the [theory's] explanatory…powers' (Waltz 1979: 8). The required simplification is reflected in a theory's assumptions. For Waltz (2004: 2), useful examples of simplifying assumptions are that mass concentrates at a point (Newtonian physics), people are economic maximizers (microeconomics), and states act to ensure their survival (neorealism). We should, then, resist the temptation of adding variables in order to bring a theory closer to reality (cf. Waltz 2004: 2, 1997: 916).

Waltz (1995: 77) claims his neorealism to be grounded in a 'heavily deductive' conception of theory. Thus, he strongly opposes the inductivist belief that explanation results from increasingly accumulating data and establishing cases (Waltz 1979: 4-8). A position inductively arrived at cannot correspond to objective reality, itself an elaborate, (re)constructed conception. Empirical 'knowledge' is problematic, often misleading, potentially infinite, and itself needs theory in order to be understood. Indeed, 'in itself induction leads to a theoretical dead end' (Waltz 1979: 8). Waltz adds that theory is built 'creatively', based on a 'brilliant intuition' or 'creative idea' (1979: 9), and so is 'artifice' (1995: 68).

As regards neorealism, one 'creative idea' of Waltz himself is his employment of the neoclassical theory of the firm as analogous to states. He actually formulates international politics as a kind of oligopolistic

competition among states - a neoclassical anomaly. Taking international politics as a separate domain for the purpose of theorizing (thereby inspired by the physiocrats' and Adam Smith's notion of an economy to be studied in its own right), Waltz (1979: 89-91) justifies his use of microeconomic metaphor in several steps. First, such reasoning by analogy is helpful, as theory for the domain of international politics is not well-developed, whereas theory for the domain of the economy is. Thus, the descriptively false, unrealistic assumptions micro-economists have made - the economy operates in isolation from its society and polity, and its acting unit, 'economic man', is a determined profit maximizer - have shown to be 'useful' in theory construction. Second, such reasoning by analogy is justified, as the domain of international politics is structurally similar to that of the economy. The market results from the actions of separate units - persons and firms - who have no intention to create an order but merely aim to fulfill their self-interests. Once formed, the market starts to exercise control over the actions of its units. Likewise, international political structures accidentally result from the actions of self-regarding individual units: primary political units such as city states, empires, or nations. Both systems are the outcome of and command 'self-help'. There is a major difference, however: economically, the government sets the boundaries within which self-help applies, but international politics lacks a government and so is almost a realm in which anything goes.

Etzioni (1988, cf. 2003) opposes explanatory theorizing about the economy as a self-sustaining, free-standing system. The market - and, presumably, international politics, too - should be treated as part of a social(-political) whole. For Etzioni (1988: 17), a 'productive' theory rests on assumptions of considerable reality, possesses explanatory power of significant scope, and avoids overdetermination (including even more variables to widen a theory's scope) without being simplistic. It makes no sense to construct theories that encompass a small range of phenomena or explain small parts of the variance of several kinds of behavior, rather than a major portion. '[P]arsimony…is a virtue, while overdetermination…is a danger. [However, a] theory that adds a few more variables but accounts for much more of the relevant variance, is to be preferred over simpler but much less encompassing theories,' Etzioni (1988: 17, cf. 48-50) writes. Etzioni (1988: 17) offers two reasons why the lack of realism that typifies neoclassical methodology is unjustified. First, the Friedman-based claim of economists that the absence of realism in their assumptions about human nature does not harm their theory because it engenders valid predictions is no argument at all against theories whose assumptions are both much more realistic and predict at least as well. Second, and most important, philosophers of science have almost universally rejected Friedman's position: the purpose of a theory is to explain. Otherwise, when predictions appear valid, we do not know why and under what conditions. Thus, although both firmly agree about the theoretical priority of explanation over prediction, Etzioni would find Waltz to be too easily satisfied with unrealistic assumptions and even incoherent about the theoretical relationship between assumptions and purposes.

Consequently, Etzioni challenges neoclassical economists and Waltz by strongly emphasizing induction. 'Above all, we need more induction. Science requires a judicious balance, admittedly fraught with tension, between logical (deductive) and empirical (inductive) elements…[A productive theory] is less deductive [than neoclassical economics] and aspires to be closer to the data' (Etzioni 1988: 19). Etzioni (1988: 15-16) claims to be 'painfully aware' of the theoretical risks involved. He mentions: the paradigm-dependence of all observations and criteria of reality-testing; the tentative nature of all findings; the great difficulties in bringing together the findings of induction and the conclusions of deduction; the theory-dependence of 'reality' (Etzioni 1988: 122-123). Yet, while logic does provide a much firmer base for inferences than empirical evidence, the deductive method makes science tend towards abstraction, fragmentation or compartmentalization. The corresponding reliance on one analytical discipline is bad for rational decision- and policy-making. Action requires dealing with all the main elements of a phenomenon, which together account for a significant chunk of the variance and also have results for their interactions (Etzioni 1988: 122-126). Thus, Etzioni proposes to include more induction for policy as well as explanatory purposes, insisting that theories actually have two major goals: first, to explain the part of the world they focus on; second, to help those who act within the world by providing an ethically adequate outline for decision and policy making (Etzioni 1988: 237-251).

Considering Etzioni's challenge, we may, to begin with, establish that Waltz's idea of theory plausibly emphasizes parsimony and deduction, and reasonably makes use of microeconomic analogy. Again, Etzioni will presumably not quarrel with Waltz about applying the microeconomic analogy to international politics (although he will differ about the right version, insisting on one more faithful to 'the other', more 'social', Adam Smith).[2] Also, both stress the criterion of parsimony and the inclusion of the deductive method, in agreement with philosophy of science standards. However, Etzioni's analysis plausibly suggests that Waltz *overplays* parsimony, that Waltz's conception of theory needs fortification, and that internal theoretical tension is both desirable and avoidable.

First, although Etzioni's view of the economy (and international politics) as a social subsystem seems too loose theoretically - the boundaries of the part of the world under study are hard to demarcate this way, if at all - he rightly implies that the gap in Waltz's analysis between theory (demarcated) and reality (non-demarcated) needs narrowing. That Waltz's theoretical demarcation of international politics may be too strict becomes clear especially in his treatment of the (un)reality of assumptions. Waltz endorses the

argument of economists about their assumptions being suitably unrealistic, but he ignores that they claim this for their purpose of creating convincing predictions, rather than explanations. As Etzioni points out, apart from that this does not affect theories based on more realistic assumptions, the (defunct) Friedman position is incompatible with the primary explanatory purpose of theory. Thus, the assumptions of a theory need to contain significant 'reality' if they are to be 'useful' for the purpose that both Waltz and Etzioni emphasize: explaining. This implies a more relaxed view concerning the need for demarcation, and accepting reality as a second criterion alongside parsimony. Also, it implies that Etzioni, even if he seems to overstress it, is right to emphasize the role of induction in theory construction and to suggest that a view more 'risky' than Waltz's 'heavily deductive' one is called for. Despite its problems, induction is the only way to achieve some closeness to reality.[3]

Second, Etzioni reasonably implies that Waltz's treatment of parsimony, albeit a good bulwark against opening the floodgates to include numerous extra variables, is dogmatic. Indeed, it seems to lack theoretical ambition in view of its unduly strong opposition to the inclusion of extra variables. Theorists should not overdo simplicity by persistently excluding extra variables in advance. Theorists should not be satisfied with being able to explain only 'a small number of big and important things' (Waltz 1986: 329, cf. 1979: 70) if they, as Etzioni states, become able to explain significantly more by including one or a few more variables - of course, without losing coherence. Thus, I add scope as a third criterion.

Third, although Etzioni (cf. 1988: 238) tends to overemphasize the practical usage of theory (guidance) at the expense of the more purely theoretical one (explaining), he plausibly draws attention to the ethical and policy implications of theory - features neglected in Waltz's conception of theory (though cf. Waltz 2008: vii). Precisely because theory is 'artifice' (Waltz) and cannot be fully realistic, we should seek the justification of theory also in morality, that is, in a moral(ly relevant) source of validity. Thus, theories should rely on morally sound, non-utopian yet serious, assumptions about the behavior of key actors. Now an appropriate moral base of a theory, especially one of international politics, cannot be found in pure, abstract ethics, as Etzioni (1988: 11-13) seems to suggest: the philosophical-ethical concern of how one ought to act may inform but does not determine (political) actors' behavior. One cannot expect an explanatory theory to assume what is just, or morally *ideal*; that is the business of (cosmopolitan) philosophical ethics. Yet, as an intellectual construct, a theory should still draw on what is morally *permissible*. Thus, a(n international) theory should assume actors to behave according to what, in view of limits and consequences, is morally desirable, or at least tolerable, behavior. A theory should explain and be helpful to actors to create a more beneficial world, even if it need not show just procedures or outcomes. Indeed, it is in this sense that explanatory theory must pay heed to the insight of critical theory that knowledge reflects its social and political context and so cannot be morally neutral (cf. Hollis and Smith 1990: 210).

While theory should certainly meet the parsimony criterion, we should not make a fetish of sparseness, elegance, or minimalism, by defining the boundaries of international politics so tightly. A theory, also one of international politics, should also possess reality, explanatory scope, and moral permissibility. Thus, my conception is pluralistic: all the four criteria - parsimony, reality, scope, and moral permissibility - are necessary, but none is sufficient. The upshot of the subsequent discussion will be that this pluralistic conception of theory demands a more flexible, more empirical and moral, neorealist theory of international politics than Waltz's.

Waltz's neorealist core assumptions

Before arguing straightforwardly for a social extension of Waltz's neorealist core assumptions in view of Etzioni's I&We communitarian challenge (this article's second argument), I shall expound those assumptions in the present section and reconstruct Etzioni's communitarian position in the next.

Waltz (1979: 93-95, cf. 131-134) argues deductively - by analogy with microeconomics - yet clearly also empirically why states, chiefly the larger ones, must be assumed to be the major units of the system. First, while states have never been the only international actors, they are the major ones and, so long as they remain so, therefore define the structure of international politics. Second, applying the economic analogy suggests that the international structure resembles a condition of 'oligopoly' rather than 'perfect competition', as it is dominated by a few 'firms' (states) rather than by many roughly equal ones. Third, the critique that states interpenetrate, are unable to control the setting of their action, and increasingly experience competition from multinational corporations and other non-state actors has insufficient force. Practically, states set the scene in which all actors must operate, they set the terms of the interactions between them and non-state actors, and even re-establish the rules other actors have to accept. Even weak states have often been able to keep strong international corporations in check. Indeed, non-state actors show no sign of developing to the point of rivaling or surpassing the great powers. Fourth, while many firms disappear, states seldom die.

Waltz (1979: 91-92, 98, cf. 118, 133-134, 1997: 915) justifies the state security egoism assumption as follows. First, a microtheory, whether of international politics or of economics, assumes, rather than realistically describes, the motivation of actors. To assume that states seek to ensure their survival - and thus need, first of all, to have their security guaranteed - is to make a radical simplification for the goal of theory construction. Second, this assumption seems useful, as it is possible to set up a theory based on it - a theory that may engender new and important insights. Third, this assumption is clearly sensible, because survival is a *sine qua non* for achieving any goals that states may have - endlessly varied ones such as conquering the world or being left alone, other than promoting self-disappearance - and the survival motive arguably fuels action in a world where the security of states is uncertain. Fourth, states are 'self-regarding' about their security, because under self-help conditions they cannot rely for this on other states.

Taken together, the neorealist assumptions seem to have notably pessimistic implications. Thus, Waltz (1979: 105, 115-116) reasons that international cooperation is subject to strong constraints. First, international-political structures limit the cooperation of states in much the way that oligopolistic markets limit the cooperation of firms, as both are systems of self-help. In any such system, units will worry about their survival, and their behavior will be conditioned primarily by this worry. Second, cooperation in international structures is even less likely or sustainable than in oligopolistic markets, because in the first case units act under anarchy, whereas in the second case units operate within rules dictated by governments. Regularly, states do work together, make agreements about arms limitation, and cooperate in establishing organizations, sometimes facilitated by hierarchic elements within international structures. However, firms in oligopolistic markets can afford to specialize and participate more fully in the division of economic labor than states can. The reason is this: the overall anarchy of the international system makes that states need to prepare to defend themselves physically.

Waltz (1979: 109-111) also points out that the neorealist assumptions imply that solving global problems is very difficult, if not impossible. How, he asks, can states resolve the tension between pursuing their own interests and acting for the sake of the system? He answers that, unfortunately, rational behavior will not lead to globally good results because of structural limitations. As states are constrained towards self-care, none of them can take care of the system. World-shaking problems cry for global solutions, but there is no global agency to provide them. Because only agents of great capability can carry out great tasks, states, especially the major ones, are called on to help make the world survive. However, states have to safeguard their own preservation, since no one can be relied on to do it for them. States facing global problems are like individual consumers trapped by the 'tyranny of small decisions'. In both cases, the only way out of the trap is to change the overall structure into a hierarchical one.

Etzioni's I&We communitarian position

Etzioni characterizes the I&We view as follows:

'At the core is the assumption of creative tension and perpetual search for balance between two primary forces - those of the individual, and those of the community…Individuals and community are both completely essential, and hence have the same fundamental standing…The I's need a We to be (Etzioni 1988: 8-9, emphasis omitted). The concept of I&We highlights…that individuals act within a social context [that] is not reducible to individual acts, and…that the social context is not necessarily imposed or derived from voluntary or conscious transactions among individuals. Instead, the social context is to a significant extent perceived as a legitimate and integral part of one's existence, as a "We" rather than a "They" (Etzioni 1996b: 157). A good society seeks a carefully crafted balance between the two, relying as much as possible on moral suasion and not on power' (Etzioni 2008: 170, cf. 1988: 206-213).

This quotation should not make one think that Etzioni downplays the role of power in social life. Quite the contrary: he claims that societies feature an overarching structure that does not arise from an aggregation of individual actions but contains two key elements: 'community' *and* 'power' (cf. Etzioni 1988: 181-236, 2003). About the economy, Etzioni argues that the significance of structure relates from one major structural attribute: the political power of select economic actors. Instead of assuming that the economy is basically competitive, and hence that economic actors (mainly firms) are basically subject to 'the market', having no power over it, he assumes that 'power differences among the actors are congenital, are built into the structure, and deeply affect their relationships' (Etzioni 1988: 5). What we see, then, is that Etzioni confirms Waltz's understanding of power as an element of the structure. Waltz holds that firms and, by analogy, states operate as individual actors, but emphatically within a holistic context featuring oligopolistic power - a concept the strict neoclassical paradigm ignores (Etzioni 1988: 218). He stresses the distribution of capability among units, with the more capable units shaping the realm's structure, creating the problems the others have to address. This being so, Etzioni would presumably agree with Waltz that the latter's theory is not as individualistic as critics who simply equate neorealism with neoclassical economics believe (Guzzini 1998: 129; Wendt 1999: 15-16). Yet Etzioni's challenges Waltz and his neorealist pessimism by also stressing the global community's role as part of the international structure:

softening the danger of anarchy and the power of oligopoly, so that a *centralized* - and thus utopian, if not dangerous - 'global agency' (Waltz; cf. 1979: 112, 1986: 340-341) will not be required for solving world problems.

Starting from the idea that 'nations' are to be the main I's within a developing global We (Etzioni 2004a: 4-5, 2007: 200), Etzioni defends the emergence of a global community.[4] Thus, Etzioni (2005a: 129, 1996a: 127) argues that the two features communities have - affective bonds and moral culture sharing - operate transnationally as well as domestically. Like how domestically community members participate in a network of affective bonds, the rise of transnational citizenship, affective communications, voluntary associations, and social movements suggest the transnational formation of some senses of identity and loyalty. Like how domestic communities share a moral culture, a shared set of values and norms exists transnationally, and increasingly so, including human rights, 'women's rights', environmental concern, rejection of unilateral and pre-emptive intervention, and 'sovereignty as responsibility' (Etzioni 2009: 153-180, 2007: 194-201). Yet, as communities are typically defined in separation from other human groups, the 'they' that will oppose the global 'we' cannot be but non-human. Etzioni (2004a: 195, 2005a: 141), then, asserts that 'the new "they" are weapons of mass destruction and pandemics; they fully qualify as enemies of humanity'. Furthermore, the world will strive for a global community, one protected by a state of its own, because it needs one for tackling global problems (Etzioni 2004a: 214). The 'old' regime of nation-states, great powers, international organizations, and transnational social movements is too slow when it comes to solving the problems of capitalist globalization, which include proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism, genocide, ethnic cleansing, famines, environmental degradation, and spread of infectious diseases. Therefore, a strong global architecture is needed in which morals, power, and costs are shared; and so it is emerging (Etzioni 2004a: chs. 9-13). The 'new' polity is not replacing the old system, but merely adds a supranational layer of institutions that deals with global threats while safeguarding many of the sovereign prerogatives of its member states. Etzioni argues that the way the new order is arising is through the United States-led formation of a 'global safety authority', which deals with terrorism but will also come to include nuclear deproliferation, and which paves the way for global authorities for health, environment, welfare, human rights, and social service. Also, 'the nation-states will gradually become more "invested" in the shared community, as nurturing it will become part of their commitment even when it conflicts to some extent with their particularistic, parochial, national interests' (Etzioni 2005b: 1660). The 'world government' that Etzioni expects to accompany the 'Global Nation' will not, and need not, be hierarchical; it will be 'limited in scope and authority' and not have 'full sovereignty' (Etzioni 2004a: 193, 195, 199, 201). What will result is a quasi-European Union global system, in which sovereignty is split between nations and supranational bodies (Etzioni 2009: 174, 2004a: 182-187, 191-193, 199).

It should be noted that Etzioni's challenge cannot entail a *full-blown* application of the I&We view to international relations. To do so would be incompatible with his own original application of I&We to the economy and domestic society. Obviously, 'the national I's do not need the global We to be', but have shown to be able to exist and flourish in the absence of an autonomous global community. Most fundamentally, a consistent global application is hard to maintain coherently. Etzioni (2004a: 212, 2007: 6) himself claims that states are there to protect, first and foremost, the security of their community and its members. On Etzioni's own communitarian grounds, the Global Nation cannot be but less essential, of less basic standing, than sectional nations protected by states (cf. also Etzioni 2002). Even if no aggregation of individual actors, the global community is to be less deep, 'thinner', more instrumental (cf. Etzioni 2004a: 197), and less constitutive of identity - also because of the typical absence of a (quasi-)human They. Arguably, this outcome is at least consistent with the neorealist view of the 'international' as basically different from the 'domestic', and thus offers a first reason to doubt the possibility of a distinctively communitarian international theory (cf. Kamminga 2010).

Etzioni holds that global community formation will trigger the impulse of nations to act altruistically and not just egoistically. As regards the economy, Etzioni (1988: 21-87) argues that the neoclassical assumption that people seek to maximize one utility (pleasure, happiness, consumption) should be replaced by the assumption that people pursue at least two irreducible 'utilities' and have two sources of valuation: pleasure (or profit) and morality, that is, authentic altruism. Neoclassicists are wrong to see morality as either reducible to pleasure and self-interest or as very limited in scope and hence ignorable (Etzioni 1988: 51). The individual experiences perpetual tension or conflict between the two 'utilities', with both reflecting socialization from a community (cf. Etzioni 1988: 63-64). Now as regards international relations, Etzioni's analysis suggests that the theorist should increasingly acknowledge two irreducible sources of 'utility' - national security and transnational altruism - but it does not suggest continuous tension between both. For one thing, Etzioni (2004: 192, cf. 88, 2007: 33) observes that states, superpowers such as America in particular, will never allow sacrifices that involve their 'vital interests'. For another, in emphasizing the typical moral duty of the state to protect the security of its citizens, Etzioni confirms the realist emphasis on 'the moral principle of national survival' (Morgenthau 1973: 10). In contrast to his understanding of personal morality, then, Etzioni does not regard international morality as primarily altruistic. In fact, Etzioni (1988, 2004, 2007) offers no reason (argument or evidence) whatsoever to dispute the neorealist claim that states aim to survive and have security as their top priority - a second reason for doubting a unique

international communitarianism. Thus, for Etzioni, international morality is a double-sided affair, of which transnational altruism requires increasingly influential theoretical recognition.

Accordingly, and against Waltz's (2004: 4) skepticism in this regard, Etzioni argues that an economically and military unipolar power such as the United States may be expected to act beyond its borders in the service of the global community for not just egoistic but also altruistic reasons (Etzioni 2004: 90-91). Thus, he opts for an American foreign policy of 'Security First' everywhere. One might believe democracy to be highly desirable, but security - that is, 'basic security', the conditions for human life without acute fear of being killed, injured, or terrorized - at least is achievable (Etzioni 2007: xiv, 2-3). '[F]ocusing on security… is not only in the best interest of the United States and its allies, but is also in the interest of most if not all peoples…It is effective *and* right, pragmatic *and* principled' (Etzioni 2007: xii-xiii, emphasis in original). Etzioni argues that 'the main reason that the right to security takes precedence over all [other, legal-political and socioeconomic rights] is that all the others are contingent on the protection of life' and that '[t]his is also the reason that the prevention of genocide is now considered a much more legitimate reason for intervening in the internal affairs of another nation, than is, say, democratization' (Etzioni 2007: 6, 7). Neorealists, says Etzioni (2007: 33), should acknowledge that such limited great power altruism is a matter of both pragmatic modesty and moral consistency. A nation that accepts moral limitations and adopts Security First as the moral justification of its foreign policy, cannot uphold this justification successfully if it is applied only to protecting the lives of its own citizens and not those of others. For a principle to be legitimate it has to be capable of being applied universally. And a Security First policy is not so demanding: the conflicts between its ideals and the vital interests of the nations involved are rather limited.

Social neorealist assumptions

My second argument, then, is that the core assumptions of neorealism need modest yet significant, social extension. For each assumption, I proceed by demonstrating why and how Waltz's position may be reinforced by invoking Etzioni's analysis, drawing on the pluralist conception of theory defended earlier. To begin with, I argue that the neorealist assumption of states, above all the ones most capable and powerful, being the international system's main units should plausibly be extended with the presupposition that (powerful) states will strive for an added global community if shared problems would require this.

I think that a balanced application of the four criteria for sound theorizing - parsimony, reality, scope, and moral permissibility - will lead to the conclusion that neorealism should take the Etzionian global community - a product of (great) states under guidance of the world's superpower, the United States, that does not seem to conflict with the neorealist assumption under discussion - on board. Naturally, adding such a global community would make neorealist theory less parsimonious, but my argument is that this loss is more than compensated for by gains regarding the other criteria. Concerning scope, it seems clear that including the global community modestly yet significantly expands neorealism's explanatory reach, which is a good thing, at least in principle.

As regards reality, the picture is more complicated. Thus, we should immediately note that an empirical trend toward a more peaceful global polity is not obvious. Realist Colin Gray (2005) simply dismisses Etzioni's assessment as communitarian wishful-thinking. Observing a re-emergence of geopolitical rivalries among states, Gray predicts 'the rise of China as [an] aggressive regional-plus superpower; the return of a forceful authoritarian Russia; and the slow emergence of a European superstate' that strives for 'collective political influence to match its economic weight in a world characterized by competitive multipolarity' (2005: 1621). Yet Etzioni's assessment does have significant empirical plausibility. As necessity is at least one force that drives social change (Etzioni 2005b, 2004: 160), the world may not need a 'menace from outer space' (Gray 2005: 1619) to unite for cooperation against global superthreats. It is also a rational assessment of the (security) situation that will lead states to take steps towards forming effective global authorities. And while Gray may be right that Etzioni's vision lacks conclusive historical support, he admits that it cannot be proved that such a change in international relations will always remain impossible. Finally - and Gray acknowledges this, too - Etzioni realistically stresses the gradualism of the global trends and the need to conceive communities as flowing. Etzioni (2005b) explains his project with ample caveats and generous time allowances, acknowledges the possibility of serious setbacks, and includes the prior formation of regional communities. Thus, the trend towards globalism seems realistic enough to be taken very seriously.[5] Nevertheless, it remains true that adding the global community would not unambiguously increase the extent of realism to Waltz's state-centric assumption.

However, it is the criterion of moral permissibility that tips the balance decisively in favor of including Etzioni's community. Pessimistic expectations such as Gray's are not only not inevitable (as Gray himself admits) but also morally undesirable, if not intolerable. Etzioni (2004: 214) plausibly emphasizes that 'the stakes are high', as access to and production of WMD are becoming easier and terrorism more popular, and many transnational problems (particularly environmental degradation) cannot be treated effectively by

a cumbersome system - indeed, an observation consistent with Waltz's analysis - but require a more global approach. As Etzioni (2004a) argues, the global community is morally valuable - at least relatively speaking. The 'evolving global normative synthesis' leads toward a 'good society' (Etzioni 2004b: 244). Fortunately, 'East and West are…moving toward the middle of the autonomy/social order spectrum, and…each has covered part of the way' (Etzioni 2004a: 30, cf. 2004b: 15). The 'West' brings to the transnational dialogues that engender this synthesis a heavy stress on individual rights and choice in political and economic matters. The 'East' contributes respect for the common good, authority, and social obligations. The synthesis, then, features both 'Western' autonomy and 'Eastern' social order. Accordingly, the global society is based on a carefully crafted balance between autonomy and order; it continuously re-examines its autonomy-order balance; and its order is based more on 'normative controls' than on political coercion (Etzioni 2004a: 20-22, 2004b: 218-219; cf. Kamminga 2009). Indeed, Etzioni plausibly implies that - as the stronger the moral prohibitions against violence and the stronger the social bonds are, the less need exists for coercive governmental action - a global community would soften the international condition of anarchy by lessening the need for *centralized* world government, costly (requiring more 'police', 'courts', 'jails') as that would be (cf. Etzioni 1988: 213; see also Waltz 1979: 113-114). Therefore, we may expect of (powerful) states that they contribute to the creation of a global community.[6]

Having established that adding an Etzionian, conflict-diminishing global community will improve Waltz's state-centric assumption, I now argue that the neorealist assumption of states striving egoistically for security should plausibly be extended with the presupposition that states will behave altruistically for universal security once their own security has been ensured. Waltz's neorealism allows for secondary moral behavior, but merely as one option among endless other forms of behavior. I aim to show, however, that it makes sense to assume instead that states pursue their security first and (at least some) altruism second, again invoking Etzioni's communitarian analysis and utilizing my pluralist conception of theory.

I believe that a balanced use of the four theoretical criteria will lead to the conclusion that a secondary variable - 'security altruism' in this case - should be included into the neorealist assumption under discussion. True, Waltz's warning against an easy violation of the parsimony criterion is well-taken. Yet, again, it seems sensible, or fruitful, not to overdo parsimony in neorealism. As altruism as well as egoism may well be assumed to be part of human nature and find support in empirical evidence as well as argument (Etzioni 2003; 1988), and insofar as a global community is indeed forming, it seems parsimonious enough to assume that states, once secure themselves, will give expression to the transnational altruistic concerns of their members.

Furthermore, adding altruism as a secondary factor will expand neorealism's reality and explanatory scope, as particular - indeed, fairly 'low cost' - practices within international politics such as foreign aid (Kamminga 2007) and, most significantly, humanitarian intervention now come within its purview. It is commonly believed that neorealism cannot explain humanitarian intervention. Etzioni (2007: 32), too, appears to hold that neorealists believe that a state is (or should be) concerned first and foremost about its own security, and will (or should) not include humanitarian interventions in its foreign policy, unless they happen to serve a more immediate national security interest. Martha Finnemore (1996) argues that (neo)realist (and liberal) theories do not provide good explanations for the increase of humanitarian intervention since the end of the Cold War by states to protect citizens other than their own. National interest does not seem to be the driving factor. In her view, one must consider, along constructivist lines, the changing normative context within which such interventions occur. Now, to begin with, neorealism is designed to explain international politics, not humanitarian intervention. Even so, neorealism is capable of explaining humanitarian intervention indirectly: it may (without theoretical self-damage) 'permit' states to accept the importance of limiting themselves by moral judgments, and their willingness to let soldiers fight and die for the security of people living in faraway countries when their own security is not at stake or put at risk by intervening (Kamminga 2010: 22). However, my main point here is that, by expanding the state security egoism assumption to make it come include universal security altruism, social neorealism seems capable of a direct explanation also - arguably of an explanation more comprehensive than the constructivist one. Thus, (only) those states who have their security guaranteed and are powerful - an element that Finnemore seems to neglect, as in her account it is the norms that, in shaping interests and actions, do most, if not all, of the work - will be capable and willing to intervene in other states primarily (without there being some geostrategic or political advantage to be gained) to save human lives and make (within limits, to be sure) sacrifices for this purpose, as good members of the global community and its (changing) norms. Hence the crucial role of the United States, other Western states, and NATO - states that have little reason to worry much about their security (cf. Waltz 2004: 5; that is, until recently, which may explain why humanitarian intervention has now fallen into disfavor).

As regards moral permissibility, there is also good reason to follow Etzioni in his critique of Waltz's disinterest of secondary goals 'beyond the survival motive', especially in the case of great powers. Etzioni's analysis does much to liberate neorealism from impeding the attack and solution of global problems, making the theory more satisfactory from the ultimate perspective of morality. Neorealism, then, should take Etzioni's altruistic 'security first' on board in order to broaden the present assumption towards a more

sensible, fruitful one. We may expect of powerful states, once secure themselves, that they not pursue goals endlessly varied, but promote security elsewhere, also because that is most attainable, without squandering their resources (cf. Etzioni 2007), and facilitates the tackling of further global problems by the global community. Ethically, one may plausibly insist that great powers, such as the United States, have the responsibility to pursue 'subsistence' as well as 'security' elsewhere (Shue 1996).[7] However, one cannot ask of an explanatory international theory to assume that states will also promote subsistence universally, at least not directly, also because it may well threaten their own survival. On the other hand, more indirectly, we may expect states to address this task once the global community has reached the stage 'beyond security' (cf. Etzioni 2004a). Increasing global socialization will presumably expand the depth and scope of transnational altruism.

In short, adding a modest moral dimension as a 'secondary utility' would turn the neorealist state security egoism assumption into a much more productive one, so that it is worthwhile to sacrifice parsimony somewhat for this purpose.

Conclusion

With Etzioni's recent work on international relations as my guide, I have argued that the core assumptions of Waltz's neorealism should be restated into what I call 'social neorealism'. My thesis has been not that Waltzian neorealism is wrong, but that it is incomplete and lacks empirical and moral dynamics. It should not be replaced by a full-blown I&We communitarianism, yet be modified into communitarian direction. Anarchy, polarity, and the balance of power are thereby not deleted, but rendered more stable and peaceful. Indeed, a social neorealist theory is much more entitled to state that socialization as well as competition as workings of the structure affect behavior. Waltz has been rightly criticized for his shallow reference to the function of societies' established norms of behavior in international relations (1979: 74-77, 127-128; see notably Wendt 1999: 101-102; cf. also Etzioni 1988). Waltz writes that '[s]ocialization brings members of a group into conformity with its norms' (1979: 75-76), yet ignores that states do not only egoistically strive to maximize their security, but may also perform (inherently) beneficent behavior. The Etzionian changes I have proposed may seem modest yet are significant. They strengthen Waltzian neorealism as they make its core assumptions more concrete and actual by linking its traditional concern of 'national security' with more recent concerns of 'human security'. In so doing, they may help Waltzian neorealism-oriented research programs to regain their earlier popularity.

I end by suggesting two critical test cases for social neorealism, both of which have been hard for neorealism to explain, but might be tackled better from the perspective of social neorealism. First, it has often been argued that neorealism cannot account for post-war European integration. Thus, Simon Collard-Wexler (2006) clams that neorealism poorly explains the breadth and depth of European integration and European Union formation. Now, to begin with, neorealism does make a contribution in terms of 'permissive' causes (Kamminga 2007). Thus, from the bipolar international system time onward, the United States as a great power has spent enormous financial resources to provide for its own security and that of its smaller allies, notably the Western European ones, which, having become 'consumers of security' could effectively work for unity, argues Waltz (1979: 70-71, cf. 1993: 77, 2004: 5). Waltz's neorealist point is that American hegemony has been necessary for European unification as the desired institutionalization of a specifically European identity to become possible. Yet Collard-Wexler is surely right to argue that neorealism can hardly, if at all, explain European integration directly. However, social neorealism might do better, as that insists that secure states may create an added community based on shared interests and values and will become capable of altruistic behavior.

Second, Etzioni's (2004a: 120-128, 2007: 220-222) deproliferation argument seems particularly relevant for investigating whether social neorealism would be a progressive amendment, with improved moral adequacy and closer correspondence to reality. Waltz (2003) has argued that a measured spread of nuclear weapons may be a positive development. However, Etzioni might rightfully foresee major powers cooperating for a world less nuclear and more secure, generally characterized by power configurations softer than the ones neorealists have observed to date (cf. Kamminga 2010: 35). It would be important to establish whether social neorealism is able to offer a satisfactory explanation for such a development.

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Notes

[1] I thank Herman W. Hoen and Nienke De Deugd for their constructive comments.

[2] Note that IR, by nature, is a '"borrowing" subfield' greatly indebted to economics (Elman and Elman 2003: 51).

[3] Waltz himself concedes that 'by deduction nothing can be explained, for…what is deduced is already present either in theoretical major premises or in empirical minor premises dealing with matters previously observed…Both induction and deduction are indispensable in the construction of theory' (1979: 11; cf. Joseph 2010).

[4] Cf. for this paragraph Kamminga (2009, 2010).

[5] I now think that my earlier criticism of Etzioni in this respect (Kamminga 2009) was rather too harsh (cf. Kamminga 2010).

[6] Note that this is not to say that the Etzionian global community will be ethically just (cf. Kamminga 2009).

[7] Again, altruism for universal security only, while beneficent, may not be what justice requires (cf. Kamminga 2009).

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