

An Appraisal of Multiple Channels of Complex Interdependency: The Case of Nepal

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This article is a representative vision of reality. The main thrust of the present study is to analyze the realist view of international cooperation, identify the liberalist view of international cooperation, explore the multiple channels of the theory of complex interdependence, and assess state and non-state cooperation in the case of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. This study is a descriptive and analytical research based on secondary data of a qualitative nature. All the relevant information was thematically analyzed. From the foregoing analysis, it could be deduced that multiple channels of theory of complex interdependence are neither an utter relegation of the realist assumption nor a total supportive theory of the liberalist school. It is important to note that neither inter-state nor non-state cooperation is less important to each other; rather, there is coexistence among different actors in the international system, and that coexistence diminishes the dividing line between interstate cooperation and non-state cooperation. While the fundamental role of the state is to provide security and create an enabling environment for cooperation among these actors, the non-state actors seem to be more effective in economic, social welfare, and environmental issues; hence, both of them function as integral parts of the international system. So cooperation among these actors will ensure a healthy system. It is advisable that further studies on international cooperation be focused on the strength of the mutuality that exists among the different participants (including the state and non-state actors) in the international system.

Keywords: interstate cooperation, non-interstate co-operation, complex interdependency, multiple channels, earthquake of Nepal

Background

Currently, in the international system, cooperation as a form of interstate relations is implemented more often than conflict. However, their practical aspects have been little conceptualized in international relations, especially in the context of the fact that these forms are categories of dialectics. In this regard, in order to determine the role of inter-state cooperation in international relations, it is necessary to correlate cooperation with its paired category (Rozanov et al., 2020).

Though non-state cooperation has been increasing since the second half of the 20th century, this work neither supports that cooperation among non-state actors is becoming more important than interstate cooperation nor does it agree that cooperation among states could be prioritized over non-state cooperation. However, being fully aware of the paramount roles played by both state actors and non-state actors, the work tries to examine the often-

neglected mutuality that exists between these actors in international relations. Before the second half of the 20th century, the global political system and cooperation were predominantly defined by their state-centric nature. Nation-states were seen as key actors in international relations; hence, it was their sum total of interactions, communications, exchanges, and cooperation that shaped the international system. This was, however, the assumption of realist scholars like Thomas Hobbes, who argues that the international system is defined by anarchy and that the state is considered the most significant actor because it has a monopoly of power in a given territory, which could be used to control communications, exchanges, transactions, and relations among various actors in the international community. Other classical realist scholars who supported this claim include Niccolò Machiavelli, Hans Morgenthau, et al.

However, by the second half of the 20th century, there seemed to be an ideological shift in analyzing international relations and cooperations. This gave rise to a lot of focus on non-state actors, otherwise known as transnational institutions (Keohane & Nye, 1977). This era seems to have magnified the contributions of non-state actors like transnational corporations, non-governmental institutions, private individuals, etc. in world politics and economy, which overtly challenged the traditional approaches to international relations and cooperation that had hitherto assumed that the state was the only important unit in the international system.

With the growing importance of these non-state actors since the 1940s, some authors have argued that inter-state cooperation is gradually diminishing in relevance, thereby giving way to the growing dominance of non-state cooperation (Waltz, 1979). It is on this note that this work aims to debunk this assumption as well. The basis of this study will try to collapse the dividing line that has been instituted by these dominant schools of thought (the realist and the idealist). The objective of the study is to show that neither state nor non-state actors are more important; rather, there is mutual coexistence between the two actors. To buttress this further, the argument in this work will rest on the multiple channels of the theory of complex interdependence as propounded by Keohane and Nye (1977). According to Thomas Weiss, Conor Seyle, and Kelsey Coolidge (2013), the speed, intensity, and volume of global interactions show the level of interdependence among the actors in the international community. The remainder of this work will extensively examine the concept of international cooperation from the point of view of realism, idealism, and multiple channels of complex interdependence. The conclusion of the work will rest on the inferences drawn from these schools.

Problem

The problems of world politics, international relations, and everything that happens in the international arena have always been at the center of attention. Aspects directly relate to our search for methods to implement foreign policy decisions, or how to do so. In other words, aspects of diplomacy were of interest, rather, to a narrower circle. The reasons for this attitude toward diplomacy are understandable and partly justified. It is necessary to understand what is happening, outline the main foreign policy priorities and approaches, and then only look for ways to implement them.

Realists view international relations as both a constant battle as well as a struggle for survival. Even if some states do not try to raise their power and are happy with the way things are going, they cannot trust other states to think in the same way. If another state suddenly decides to stop cooperation, the security of the first state will be under serious threat. All states try to protect themselves by seeking control, forming alliances with other states, and building up their military capabilities. This leads to another realistic concept: the security dilemma. Realism

ignores the significance of different concepts of identity as well as culture in different nations. For instance, districts with the same culture and religion are more likely to cooperate with each other. The main obstacle to cooperation is the lack of a sufficient number of international institutions. According to liberalists, if world-created international organizations promoted peaceful change, disarmament, and the implementation of international laws, cooperation would be much easier to achieve (Rozanov et al., 2020). Liberals believe democratic states act peacefully towards each other, so most of the conflicts and threats in the world come from non-democratic states. The current study is intended to answer: “Is interstate cooperation becoming less important than non-interstate cooperation?” and similar questions.

On the basis of the above statement of the problem, the following research questions are posed:

1. What is the realist view of international cooperation?
2. What is the liberalist view of international cooperation?
3. What are the multiple channels of the theory of complex interdependence?
4. What is state and non-state cooperation: the case of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal?

Significance

Interstate cooperation and non-interstate cooperation are two of the most burning and perplexing issues in the current arena. Besides, conflicts and cooperation are the most significant features of international relations and cooperation.

International cooperation has been a central concern of international relations (IR) scholarship since the establishment of the field and lies at the heart of many of the most significant theoretical debates. However, the focus of these debates has shifted significantly over time from a demonstration of the possibility of decentralized cooperation and its limits to a detailed analysis of the role of institutions and governance arrangements in promoting cooperation. This entry provides a guide to these developments (Duncan & Michael, 2020).

Another important aspect is needed to ensure mutually beneficial economic interaction between states. At the same time, a country's foreign economic relations are a whole area that includes various forms of international cooperation with other countries and international organizations. Mutual relations and cooperation are very important for every country because if any disputes or problems arise, they can be easily solved by making different agreements. Therefore, help and cooperation among the different countries are essential. Only mutual understanding and support can bring about development.

Research Methodology

This study has a descriptive and analytical research design. Basically, this research is based on secondary data of a qualitative nature. Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore and better understand the complexity of the phenomena of interstate and non-interstate cooperation. The secondary data have been derived from books and journals. Since the research study of this type requires procedures that help reduce bias and increase reliability, the authors checked the plausibility of the research with experts in international relations and/or colleagues before embarking on a detailed research design. Similarly, to enhance the reliability and validity of the data and analysis, all the research processes are made transparent. Ethical issues are paramount matters not only in primary research in particular but also in terms of using secondary data sets because there are ethical issues relating to a fair and unbiased selection of sources and analysis. Data analysis has started after the collection of raw data from various sources. All the relevant information was thematically analyzed.

Analysis and Presentation

Interstate cooperation may be summarized as the sum total of actions, interactions, exchanges, transactions, and communications involving states. These states often sign agreements to work together in different areas, including security and economics. On the other side, non-state cooperation involves other international actors rather than the state. These include individuals and other transnational groups like non-governmental organizations, multinational business corporations, and the like. The commonality among both interstate and non-state actors could be categorized based on the number of participants and geographical locations of the actors.

Regarding the commonality by number: Bilateral cooperation: This is a kind of cooperation that takes place between two actors (whether state or non-state actors). For example, the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1950) was a peace agreement signed between India and Nepal whose aim was to strengthen the security of the two countries and promote peace among these countries. Multilateral cooperation: Multilateral cooperation occurs among more than two states or non-state actors. It has no geographical constraints. Both regional and global cooperation are multilateral in nature. The United Nations, FIFA, Economic Community of West African States, European Union, etc. are all products of multilateral cooperation.

Regarding the commonality of geography: Regional cooperation: This is the type of cooperation that takes place among state and non-state actors located on the same regional map. The region is often defined by its geographical locations and borders, though arguments have been raised against the definition of border in this context. Questions like whose responsibility it is to create the border and issues of acceptability have perturbed scholars of international relations. Examples of regional cooperation are European Union, ASEAN, African Union, NAFTA, and even football associations like European League, CAF, Asian League, North American League, etc. These organizational arrangements were established to promote economic, political, social, legal, and security ties among the members of these countries.

Global cooperation: As the name implies, it is the cooperation among various state and non-state actors on the world stage. The most pronounced global cooperation is structured under the umbrella of the United Nations and Amnesty International. Their objectives have been to promote peace, security, friendliness, and all forms of cooperation among member states. For instance, their recent fight has focused on nuclear non-proliferation and terrorism, climate change, inequality against women, the eradication of poverty, child abuse, etc.

The Realist View of International Cooperation

Realists' assumptions are referred to as the traditional approach to defining the international system. They see the international system as a struggle for power among states that is dominated by organized violence. In their view, states that are active in international politics are either preparing for war, which they are actively involved in (whether consciously or unconsciously), or recovering from war (Morgenthau, 1985). The basic arguments of the realists are: One, states are coherent units in international politics that are concerned with their own security and act in pursuit of their own national interests. Though the realists rarely agree that states cooperate, some of the propagators of realism believe that states cooperate to protect themselves and their national interests when the need arises; two, the realists contend that force or power is the only policy instrument in states' relations and that it is only states that have the monopoly (Korab-Karpowicz, 2006, p. 234). This implies that, due to the fact that other non-state actors lack the instrument of power, they are less qualified to be active players in international politics; three, they also argue against the hierarchy of issues in world politics. They place more

emphasis on military issues than economic and social affairs (Ruggie, 1983). Military issues in any country are the sole responsibility of the state. Non-state actors have no control over the military. For this reason, realism fails to recognize the importance of non-state actors. The basic characteristic, which is also the limitation of the realists' argument as challenged by both the idealist scholars (Michael Doyle) and the theory of complex interdependence (Keohane & Nye, 1987; 1977), is its focus on states as the main unit of analysis.

The Liberalist View of International Cooperation

Liberalists' assumptions are critical and self-conscious rejections of realism (Smith, 1989, p. 12). It focuses on the non-state actors, which were entirely disregarded by the realists. In the 1950s, there were increasing activities by non-state actors like multinational corporations (MNSs), transnational organizations, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, etc. This led some scholars to question the state-centric nature of the international system (Smith, 1989). Scholars like Keohane and Nye (1971) argued that realism was no longer sufficient to explain the international system due to technological advancements in transportation and communication, which were driven by private institutions. The main argument of the liberal school is that international institutions play a key role in cooperation among states. With the correct international institutions and increasing cooperation (including economic and cultural exchanges), conflict will be reduced in the international system. Amnesty International, OXFAM, Greenpeace, professional bodies like the lawyers' guild, medical associations, accounting bodies, and business associations like agricultural, mining, and manufacturing bodies, etc. have effectively and harmoniously cooperated in tackling one global issue or another. As a result of numerous inventions and innovations in technology, the private sector has been able to interact with their counterparts overseas. They serve as drivers of the global economy, being at the forefront of campaigns against climate change, human rights issues, environmental degradation, etc. However, owing to the increasing level of cooperation among these non-state actors, some scholars have argued that inter-state cooperation is becoming less important than non-state cooperation.

Multiple Channels of Theory of Complex Interdependence

To answer the puzzle of this study: "Is inter-state cooperation becoming less important than non-state cooperation?", it would be expedient to adopt the "multiple channels of theory of complex interdependence" (Keohane & Nye, 2001). Complex interdependence is defined as "an economic trans-nationalist concept that assumes that states are not the only important actors, social welfare issues share center stage with security issues on the global agenda, and cooperation is as dominant a characteristic of international politics as conflict" (Genest, 1996, p. 140). The theory of complex interdependence emphasizes the complicated ways in which actors in international relations become mutually dependent, sensitive, and vulnerable to each other's actions and inactions, which results from the growing ties among them in the international arena. The theory was propagated by Keohane and Nye (1978), and it is often regarded as a neo-liberal theory. They opine that interdependence in world politics is a situation characterized by reciprocal effects among state and non-state actors in different countries (Keohane & Nye, 1977, p. 8).

This theory came during the post-Cold War era, when the nation-states seemed to be realizing the pre-requisites for achieving world peace and economic stability, which were regarded as far beyond military power. That gave birth to a renewed focus on economic development and technological advancement. In this limelight was the theory of "Complex Interdependence", which challenged the fundamental assumptions of traditional and

structural realism and classical liberalist argument. Complex interdependence is an integral component of neoliberal arguments. The thesis of its argument is the emergence of transnational institutions as well as the state; in other words, it tries to marry the realists' ideologies with those of the liberalists.

According to the explanation offered by Keohane and Nye, both state and non-state actors perform peculiar roles in the international system. They described international cooperation as "informal ties between governmental elites as well as formal foreign office arrangements; informal ties among non-governmental elites (face-to-face and through telecommunications); and transnational organizations (such as multinational banks or corporations)" (1977, p. 25). The summary of their description shows that international cooperation is the sum total of relations between states (inter-state), beyond governmental institutions (trans-governmental), and outside governmental institutions (transnational). In international relations, this is widely regarded as "multiple channels", as denoted by Keohane and Nye in their work, *Power and Complex Interdependence*. It is therefore antagonistic to the unitary state ideology of the realist school. The world is in a complex state of interdependence, which does not only involve formal interactions among government elites but also informal relations among non-governmental and transnational organizations whose activities are gaining more importance and recognition. These actors, apart from promoting and pursuing their own interests, also "act as transmission belts, making government policies in various countries more sensitive to one another" (Keohane & Nye, 1977, p. 26).

One of the fundamental characteristics of this definition is that it tries to bridge the gap between realist and idealist assumptions. The definition also tries to magnify the correlation between cooperation between states and non-state actors. However, this definition is not without flaw, as it fails to draw a line between bad and good cooperation (Robinson, 2008) and at what point the states can cooperate with the non-state institutions. To this end, it might be difficult to determine if organized crimes like terrorism, the trafficking of illicit arms, narcotics, etc. are all part of international cooperation and if states are willing to cooperate with non-state actors.

International cooperation is the sum total of actions, interactions, exchanges, transactions, and communications involving states and non-state actors. This simply means that both state and non-state actors are integral parts of this process and play a complementary role to each other in international cooperation. It will be fallacious to argue that inter-state cooperation is becoming less important than cooperation with non-state actors. As articulated by Keohane and Nye, the true nature of international cooperation is modeled by the attribute of coexistence among states and non-state actors. There exists interdependence among the actors in the system. Though non-state actors like multinational companies, NGOs, the private sectors, and international organizations have been successful in setting agendas on many economic, health, human rights, and environmental issues, they have not succeeded in setting military agendas. While the anarchical nature of the states has been reduced by increasing economic ties among actors in the international system, the states' relevance has not withered away. It still plays its fundamental role of making and enforcing laws within the system. The states ensure that the activities of all the actors are regulated within a social order. They still monopolize and coordinate military power, which has the ability to affect the outcome of overall international cooperation (Gilpin, 1987).

It is important to note that while non-state actors are needed to drive the global economy and create social order, the state is still needed to create the enabling environment for non-state actors to thrive in performing this function. For instance, Amnesty International is a global movement of people who campaign against human rights abuse and advocate for internationally recognized human rights for all. They try to persuade the states to recognize and respect the rights of individuals in their countries. On the other hand, the United Nations has been trying to maintain peace and security around the world. Most often, the United Nations carries out its activities

with the help of non-state actors; this, however, shows the mutual existence between state and non-state cooperation.

State and Non-state Cooperation: The Case of 2015 Earthquake in Nepal

25th April 2015 was one of the series of earthquake shocks that left devastating mark in the hearts of the people of Nepal. This earthquake was an all-time high of 7.8-magnitude near Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. This earthquake was accompanied by a series of large aftershocks, which included another 7.3-magnitude earthquake the following month of May 2015. According to reports, this disaster affected about eight million people, involving 9,000 deaths, countless number of injuries and about 2.8 million internally displaced people. As the case has always been when such incidence occurs, this attracted a lot of attention from the international community, both government and non-government organizations.

What captivates the interest of the writer amidst this happening is the level of cooperation between the government of Nepal and the international relief associations, especially the non-governmental organizations that responded to this emergency. Though the government was criticized by some local NGOs of its lackluster response to the incident, you would agree with the writer that criticism is inevitable in every art of governance. While many international NGOs were flooding into the country with all kinds of relief assistance, the government on its own part tried to put up some mechanisms to make process saner. First level of cooperation was the openness on the side of the Nepali Government. The latter could be applauded for being receptive to the international NGOs. This could be compared to Myanmar's case after the Cyclone Nargis in 2008, when that country rejected all kinds of assistance from NGOs despite glaring evidence of the enormous needs the government was not able to provide for. More so, the Nepalese Government took some commendable steps by waiving custom duties for relief materials. This was however to ensure effective timeliness in meeting the need of the earthquake. The government also put up some mechanisms to checkmate the importation of sub-standard materials the country. In a nutshell, the case of Nepal in this disaster management is glaring evidence that international cooperation is either state-centric or privately managed. It comprises a total involvement of both state and non-state actors to ensure a workable global system

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis, it could be deduced that multiple channels of theory of complex interdependence are neither an utter relegation of the realist assumption nor a total supportive theory of the liberalist school. The role of military power is not downplayed. Its relevance and significance still contributes to shaping actors' relations in the international arena. It has the capability of affecting the outcome of overall interdependent relations. Though it has often been argued that military power has always been relevant in subduing the weak institutions to the whims and caprices of the powerful institutions, its counterstrategies have also been relevant in curtailing both the economic and socio-political vulnerabilities of the weaker institutions. This article does not explore which of the actors in international relations is more powerful than the other, which is against the claims of the realist school of thought (which is state-centric). It rather recognizes that in the politics of interdependence, both state and non-state actors are powerful.

In summary, neither inter-state nor non-state cooperation is less important to each other. As captured by Waheeda Ran (2015),

It can be said that we are living in a hybrid world. In one part of our world, prevalent rules are of the realist and neorealist paradigms, where, under anarchic scenario, states/actors are trying to maximize their strengths/benefits. In other part of the world prevailing paradigm is Complex Interdependence where nations, keeping aside their conflicts, are cooperating with each other for economic gains.

The recognition of the multiple channels in the theory of complex interdependence could be regarded as a major breakthrough in international relations. This is making the world more globalized. More so, some multinational corporations like Samsung, Apple, Toyota, IBM, etc. control equal or more finances than many countries, and they also have a great deal of influence that transcends their countries of origin. Some of these corporations have also cooperated with many states in many areas of development: economic, political, and socio-cultural. Furthermore, the role of some international Non-governmental Organizations like Oxfam, Red Cross Society, Green Peace Rotary International, etc. cannot be overemphasized. At various points in time, they have cooperated with many foreign countries to improve the conditions of the people living in society. International organizations and transnational movements transcend national borders.

In conclusion, it is important to note that neither inter-state nor non-state cooperation is less important to each other; rather, there is coexistence among different actors in the international system, and that coexistence diminishes the dividing line between interstate cooperation and non-state cooperation. While the fundamental role of the state is to provide security and create an enabling environment for cooperation among these actors, the non-state actors seem to be more effective in economic, social welfare and environmental issues; hence, both of them function as integral parts of the international system. So cooperation among these actors will ensure a healthy system.

It is advisable that further studies on international cooperation be focused on the strength of the mutuality that exists among the different participants (including the state and non-state actors) in the international system.

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