



International Order and Cognitive Evolution

...
a Big History approach to the Concert of Europe
(1815-1848)

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How realist is the IR realist school?

Common tenets:

Rational Decision-Making:

- Maximization, cost-benefit, perfect information

Balancing and Bandwagoning:

- To balance against a rising power or

- To align with the stronger power for security reasons

But are policymakers really rational agents?

How realist is the IR realist school?

Cognitive biases:

Confirmation Bias: interpretation that confirm preexisting beliefs and views

Availability Heuristic: an emphasis on recent events or information easily accessible

Prospect Theory: risk-averse (potential gains), risk-seeking (potential losses)

Endowment effect: overvaluation of a possessed asset

International decisions are not taken by rational-full informed statesmen

Decisions in the international arena are deeply affected by the unconscious mind.

Origins of social archetypes

Chimpanzee behavior as an evolutionary *proxy*:

A likely reference for the Last Common Ancestor (LCA) social behavior (6 Ma)

Chimpanzee *ingroup* formation

Prosocial behavior toward group members

Social conflict escalation (lethality) is defused by social ethology

Social ethology produces *ingroups* as hierarchical communities with lethality prevention

Hierarchies are highly volatile, with successive takeovers and downfalls

No status positions are permanent in chimpanzee society

Origins of social archetypes

Chimpanzee *outgroup* formation

Violent and lethal behavior toward chimps from neighboring social groups.

Chimps from neighboring groups do not belong to the internal hierarchical structure.

There are no status disputes between outgroup chimpanzees.

Relations are restricted to aggressive and violent behavior, mostly lethal in its results.

No truces or peaceful encounters with strangers are included in their behavioral portfolio

The statesmen as social primates

Homo sapiens inherited the LCA ethology in the form of unconscious archetypes

Ingroup formation behavior becomes the “archetype of peace”

Behavior toward outgroups becomes the “archetype of war”

The statesmen as social primates

Homo sapiens has a transdominial mind architecture:

Inherited cognitive algorithms as archetypes can be applied to any circumstances.

In other primate species, ethological content is purpose and object-specific

In humans, inherited ethological content has an open-ended application

Humans employ the 'archetype of war' and the 'archetype of peace' to make sense of all sorts of interactions, with other humans, non-humans, living organisms, or even abstract objects

Post-Napoleonic order as a product of social primate minds

The European system was designed as a "balance-of-power" system.

From 1815 to 1854, major wars (wars between Great Powers) did not occur.

The Concert of Europe was described as under a "spirit of European solidarity."

It encompasses public law, treaties, and negotiated action.

A new concept of reconciling interstate agendas: diplomacy through conferences.

Recognition of a European community of interests.

Observe the metaphors: they are clues for the "archetype of peace" activation.

Social ethology in action

First:

The Four Great Powers are unconsciously **imagined as an ingroup**.

Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Britain seek a code of conduct transcending the ideological divide.

Semi-formal procedures to avoid offending any national and patriotic sensibilities.

"A special group of peers," European, Christian, civilized.

Procedures and diplomacy fulfilled an **ethological expectation of averting lethality**

In case of disputing agendas, compensations were expected to **preserve all peers' status positions**.

So, any dispute for status among the Four Great Powers would be expected to be "prosocial."

Social ethology in action

Second:

Europe is unconsciously imagined as an ingroup.

The Four Great Powers are imagined as an emergent entity in a community with lesser powers.

This individual bears asymmetric power over the community.

The struggle for status among lesser powers was firmly repressed.

Lesser powers were urged to renounce any national agendas.

All European powers were urged to have "collective responsibility and consciousness."

Moral deterrence: appropriate and legitimate behavior.

Why the Concert of Europe was a socio-ethological failure?

Cognitively conceived as an ingroup, the Four Great Powers **didn't admit any sort of struggle for status** among them.

They should have, because all human-chimpanzee **ingroups** are structured as **volatile hierarchies**.

So, this is an **unconscious expectation** of any (human) statesman.

The idea of "balance of status" **violated an ethological expectation for ingroup social relations**.

It made the Great Powers' **statesmen prone to** bypass political limitations to **status-seeking**.

Why the Concert of Europe was a socio-ethological failure?

The Great Powers behaved as a single entity **permanently at the top** of the status pyramid.

No circulation of status among lesser and greater powers was allowed under the Concert.

Because status circulation was prevented, **statesmen in weaker nations had difficulty in framing Europe as an ingroup.**

The temptation to "fly high and solo" grew, especially in the context of the revolutions of 1848.

A balance of power would require the “archetype of war”

A **balance of power** can meet ethological expectations only if the “**archetype of war**” is used to frame international relations.

Chimpanzee groups **refrain from coalitional lethal violence** against other groups when they **cannot achieve power superiority** (in number of fighting males).

Thank you for your attention