Defending the Realist Interest:
Policy Advocacy and Policy Planning in an Anarchical World

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November 2009

ROUGH DRAFT

To be presented at the conference on Power in a Contemporary World, honoring Stephen D. Krasner, Stanford, CA, December 2009. A Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs fellowship was essential for acquiring the necessary background knowledge for the drafting of this paper. The usual caveat applies.

Introduction

The past decade of Stephen D. Krasner's career has been marked by a concerted turn towards policy activism.[1] He has published articles outlining clear policy positions on the International Criminal Court (Goldsmith and Krasner 2003) and the sovereignty of failed states (Krasner 2004). Beyond his writings, Krasner also entered government service. He served on both the State Department's policy planning staff and the National Security Council in George W. Bush's first term, and then took over as director of policy planning for the first two years of Bush's second term. Krasner's analytic insight and strong ties with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice enabled him to be one of the more successful policy planning directors in recent memory (Drezner 2009) . He played an important role in the reorganization of U.S. foreign aid bureaucracy (Krasner and Pascual 2005), the OECD's Partnership for Democratic Governance (OECD 2007), and the "responsible stakeholder" orientation towards China (Zoellick 2005). Despite his successes, Krasner (2009) argued after his departure that policy planning itself was an oxymoron – it achieves little without generous dollops of political capital and good fortune. This is consistent with a "garbage can" theory of political organizations (Cohen, March and Olsen 1972; Kingdon 1984) – but not necessarily consistent with the realism long associated with Krasner's scholarship. .

Krasner's recent career path intersects with an emergent, ontological critique of the realist paradigm in international relations theory. These critics argue that prominent realists cannot assert that realism is a objective scientific paradigm with predictive power, while simultaneously inserting themselves into policy debates as advocates of a particular position. This criticism potentially covers the arc of Krasner's research. In his work on international political economy and international institutions, Krasner has persistently argued from a structural realist perspective (Krasner 1976, 1978, 1983, 1985a, 1991) that is potentially at variance with his policy publications. Then there is his actual policymaking experience, in an administration known more for its neoconservativism than its realism. Could it be possible that Stephen D. Krasner, heretofore known for his conceptual probity, has contradicted himself?

This essay evaluates the ontological critique of realism in light of Krasner's body of work, and whether Krasner's past decade of policy advocacy, policy planning, and post-policy musings are consistent with his prior work and the empirical world. I deliver a mixed verdict. On the one hand, the ontological critique of realism is somewhat exaggerated. Krasner's policy activism is also consistent with his prior work. Krasner's scholarship has always demonstrated an appreciation for structural constraints while remaining cognizant of the ways in which agency still exists in realism's intervening variables.

[1] By policy activism, I mean actions explicitly designed to influence U.S. foreign policy outcomes. It would be safe to characterize all of Krasner's work as "policy relevant."

On the other hand, Krasner's "garbage can" model of policy formulation is incomplete as a description of the empirical world. Scholars of international relations tend to embrace the virtues of bureaucratic politics models when they enter government service. The "scholar-policymaker" argument is nevertheless vulnerable to the perils of inductive generalization. In these musings, Krasner fails to appreciate the extent to which the structure of the international system affects the policymaking process. In particular, shifts in the global distribution of power can have pronounced effects on both the problem recognition and political incentives of great power policymakers – essential prongs of the garbage can model. If the ontological critique of realism overemphasizes the ways in which systemic effects ostensibly constrains policymakers, Krasner's post-policy paradigm underemphasizes the importance of those same systemic constraints.

This essay is divided into five sections. The next section discusses the emerging ontological critique of realism for policy advocacy in recent years. The third section considers whether this critique applies to realism in general and Krasner's collected *oeuvre* in particular, considering his past writings and recent government experience. The fourth section discusses whether Krasner's dissection of policy planning fits with the empirical world. The final section summarizes and concludes.

Realist theory, advocacy and practice

There are many varieties of realisms: classical realism (Morgenthau 1948), neoclassical realism (Rose 1998), post-classical realism (Brooks 1997), offensive realism (Mearsheimer 2001), defensive realism (Snyder 1991), structural neorealism (Waltz 1979). Nevertheless, realists share a common worldview and a common negative heuristic, to use the language of Lakatos (1971). They assume that the international system is a Hobbesian one, in which anarchy makes it impossible to fully trust other countries. In such a world, the global distribution of power plays a vital role in forming state preferences. Although there is more dissension among realists at the foreign policy level, the paradigm does generate a set of core foreign policy priorities (Drezner 2008). States should be guided solely by national interest, with the top priority being the defense of American borders and territorial integrity. Governments should be prepared to balance against rising great powers, before they amass sufficient power to become a peer competitor.

Since the United States became the global hegemon, realist scholars have inserted themselves into the public debate when they judged American foreign policy to be at variance with realist tenets. Classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau were prominent critics of the Vietnam War. The removal of the structural constraints imposed by bipolarity caused many realist scholars to add their voice to post-Cold War policy debates. The liberal internationalism of the Clinton administration, followed by the neoconservatism of George W. Bush's first term, led realists to adopt a critical and public stance on major issues of U.S. foreign policy. By and large, realists opposed the expansion of NATO (Brown 1995), U.S. intervention in Kosovo (Desch 2003), Operation Iraqi Freedom (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003), and the aggressive pursuit of democracy

promotion. Realists were particular vocal in their criticism of the Bush administration (Rosen 2005). John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt raised a public firestorm when they argued that a powerful domestic lobby of Israel supporters has harmed American foreign policy throughout the Middle East (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007).

On a parallel track, prominent realists have also entered into government service, directly affecting foreign policy outputs. Both Henry Kissinger (1960) and Condoleezza Rice (2000) articulated *realpolitik* policy principles prior to becoming national security advisor and secretary of state. George F. Kennan was the first director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff. Other prominent realists have also occupied that office since Kennan – including Richard N. Haass and, obviously, Krasner.

As realists have articulated their policy preferences with greater voice, critical theorists have argued that realists policy advocacy is ontological inconsistent with realist scholarship. In their scholarship, realists insist that they have developed a scientific paradigm in the Lakatosian tradition of progressive problem-solving. A key component of the paradigm's negative heuristic is the argument that the existence of anarchy, combined with the particular distribution of power in the world, acts as a powerful constraint on state action. Realists posit that systemic constraints force governments into acting in a *realpolitik* manner. Indeed, in their scholarly work, prominent realists have rejected the idea that either the marketplace of ideas or the public sphere has any appreciable impact on foreign policy outputs – at least when compared with autonomous state power (Mearsheimer 1994/95; Kaufmann 2004).

This assertion by realists, however, flies in the face of their behavior. As previously noted, prominent realists have ventured into both the public sphere and the federal government. If realists believe that systemic factors are preeminent in world politics, why do they bother with public advocacy? Critics have begun to highlight this logical inconsistency. Rodger Payne (2005:508) observes, "neorealist theoretical arguments about IR would appear to have little to do with any individual realist's understandings about national foreign policy choices or decision-making processes." Samuel Barkin (2009: 203) complains that, "some contemporary realists want to have it both ways. They try at the same time to tell us about how states will behave, and to make arguments about how states should behave." Ido Oren (2009:283) concludes, "the passionate and often-critical interventions of realist scholars in policy debates appear to contradict both the philosophical claim that the 'real' political world cannot be changed by political thought and the empirical claim that realist theory accurately describes the world."

It should be noted that these ontological critics are not unsympathetic to realist policy prescriptions. Rather, they argue that the logical contradictions between realist theory and realist advocacy demonstrate the futility of trying to maintain scientific objectivity in the study of international relations. Oren (2009:284), for example, argues that realism should reject its positivist epistemology and ontology and embrace the "sophisticated epistemological thinking of prominent classical realists." Barkin similarly (2009:242-5) calls for more "reflexivity" in realist approaches, to allow for the possibility that policymakers respond to and learn from past policy discourse. Ish-Shalom (2009) argues

that in order to prevent the abuse of theories in the public sphere, political scientists should abandon both epistemological and ontological claims to objectivity.

Does this ontological critique of realism apply to Krasner? To be fair, he is not one of the prominent targets in the literature.[2] That said, however, Payne (2007:506) cites Krasner in his critique. Furthermore, based on Krasner's publishing and policymaking activities, he would seem to be covered under this scholarly indictment. He has written in the past on the need for international relations scholarship to adopt a more scientific cast (Krasner 1985b). Over the past decade, however, Krasner adopted public positions on the International Criminal Court (Krasner and Goldsmith 2003), the need to rethink sovereignty (Krasner 2004), and the reorganization of foreign aid (Krasner and Pascual 2005).

Furthermore, unlike many realist commentators, Krasner injected himself directly into policy activism by actually becoming a policymaker. Following his government service, he then articulated a theory of policy formulation somewhat at odds with realist theory. Rather than the rational calculation of national interests, Krasner (2009:161) suggested a different way of thinking about the development of foreign policy, arguing that the foreign policymaking process is best described by the "garbage can" model of political organizations. He concludes that the ability for sound strategy to influence foreign policymaking is highly contingent and circumscribed:

> Preferences may be opaque or contradictory. Actors move in and out of the policy process. There are disagreements among agencies and bureaus. Jurisdictional boundaries are not clear. Technologies are uncertain; it is not clear how inputs into a process are turned into outputs…. Given uncertain preferences, changing actors, and unproven technologies, past experiences often guide action, and trial and error is inevitable. Fully rational decisionmaking in which principals assess all policy options and chooses the one that maximizes their utility is impossible for all the familiar reasons.

And so we arrive at a crossroads. Either the ontological critique of realism is flawed, Krasner's corpus of work is logically flawed, or Stephen D. Krasner is not *really* a realist.[3] Are any of these propositions true?

Criticizing the critique

The first response point to be raised is that it is possible to combine modern realism's positivist ontology with policy advocacy. Indeed, this acknowledgment is buried within

[2] Indeed, the principal target appears to be John Mearsheimer, which is not terribly surprising. His theory of offensive realism (Mearsheimer 2001) claims to be a theory of both international relations and foreign policy. Among the community of realist scholars, he also adopts some of the most strident critiques of American foreign policy during the post-Cold War era.

[3] As suggested by Robert Keohane and Peter Katzenstein in their contributions to this conference.

the ontological critiques themselves. Oren and Ish-Shalom allow for the possibility that scholars can engage in "Weberian activism" while maintaining their ontological positivism. Under this rubric, scholars engage in policy advocacy as an epistemic community of experts, rather than adopting an explicit normative position in the political arena (Haas 1992; Jackson and Kaufman 2007). In their capacity as scientists, and not advocates, realists can object to distortions of their scholarship. Indeed, Ish-Shalom (2009) posits that social scientists have "task responsibility" to ensure that their theories are not distorted in the public sphere – and that doing so does not contradict a positivist ontology. Critical theorists like Oren and Ish-Shalom would like realists to go further and abandon their positivist ontology – but they acknowledge that this is not a logical requirement to engage in policy discourse. .

Weberian activism explains a great deal of realist advocacy, including the Coalition for a Realist Foreign Policy and Security Scholars for a Sensible Foreign Policy (Jackson and Kaufman 2007). Many individual realists entered policy debates in recent years precisely because they believed the U.S. government was using the rhetorical tropes of realism while altering the content. In both the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) and in its case for invading Iraq, the Bush administration appropriated realist discourse. The 2002 NSS, for example, discussed the creation of "a balance of forces that favors freedom." Snyder (2003:34) characterizes that phrase as Orwellian, concluding, "[Bush] administration strategists like to use the terminology of the balance of power, but they get that concept exactly backwards." Similarly, Mearsheimer characterized the Bush administration's case for eliminating Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction program as a "hard-nosed realist argument."[4] Jackson and Kaufman (2007:98) concur, labeling the official rhetoric as, "a Realist logic focused on response to threat." If the U.S. government used realist rhetoric to advance non-realist policy aims, then one could argue that realists are obligated to try and set the record straight.

Does realist engagement in the marketplace of ideas undercut the structural logic of the paradigm? This leads to the second flaw in the ontological critique of realism: the level of analysis problem. Most of the articles contrast realist predictions at the systemic level with actions taken at the domestic level of foreign policy. Barkin (2009), for example, allows that the realist paradigm is primarily systemic in the sources of its negative heuristic and predictive power. If realists were calling for systemic policy advocacy, then the claims of logical inconsistency might hold up. The types of policy advocacy highlighted in the ontological critiques, however, are at the level of foreign policy. Most of the policy discourse promulgated by realists is targeted at American foreign policy. Even the most structural of structural neorealists (Waltz 1967, 1979) allows that explanations of foreign policy are likely to include non-systemic variables.[5] Waltz (1979, p. 71-2) explicitly states that reductionist theories of foreign policy are useful for

[4] For Mearsheimer's quote, see "America Amnesia interview with John Mearsheimer," http://int.usamnesia.com/Mearsheimer-2.htm.

[5] Mearsheimer (2001) is the significant exception here, as his theory of offensive realism claims to have predictive power at both the international and foreign policy levels. This explains why he occupies such a prominent position in the cited critiques. It is safe to say, however, that the realist paradigm is comprised of more than John Mearsheimer.

understanding "why different units behave differently despite similar placement in a system."

This distinction is important. Structural approaches will often posit substitutable causal processes through which the independent variable can affect the dependent variable (Most and Starr 1984). A great power might choose to advance its global policy preferences by coalition-builing within a universal-membership international organization or engage in forum-shopping to a club-membership organization governance (Krasner 1985a, 1991; Gruber 2000; Drezner 2007a). The offense/defense balance can affect the likelihood of war through multiple influences, including changes in grand strategies and leader perceptions (Van Evera 1999:259-262). Structural effects can take different forms at different junctures, *depending on the foreign policy choices made by a powerful state*. Realists are well-positioned to offer policy advice than minimizes deadweight losses in situations where the equilibrium outcome is clear – but the variegated pathways to that equilibrium outcome have different costs and benefits.

Consider, for example, the advice a realist policy advocate might provide to a rising military power. Realists do not claim that all great powers necessarily act in a security-maximizing manner. Realists do predict, however, that any state that aggressively expands its power and capabilities will trigger concern among other actors about the implications of rising power in an anarchic world structure. That concern would likely be translated into either an arms race or a balancing coalition. Either of those policy responses will constrain the rising power's autonomy. Knowing this, a realist could proffer policy advice that encourages a government to husband its power so as to avoid triggering the balancing coalition. Note that whether the advice is heeded or not, the outcome is eventually the same – the rising power's autonomy is circumscribed. The difference is *how* that power is circumscribed – through self-restraint, an arms race, or the creation of a balancing coalition.

To use more generic language, a realist is not being logically inconsistent when proffering generic advice along the lines of: "No matter what you do as a policymaker, the inevitable outcome is going to be X. However, if you choose policy action α, X will happen with a lot of military brinksmanship that could trigger unnecessary bloodshed and expenditure. If you choose policy action β, X happens with a minimum of negative policy externalities and collateral damage. As realists, we recommend option β." This is also thoroughly consistent with Waltz's (1979) refusal to assume states are rational actors. He assumes that the evolutionary processes created by the anarchical world structure force irrational states out of existence. This allows for structure to impose serious long-term constraints on state action, while allowing for the possibility of deviations away from realist prescriptions in the short term.

This kind of realist theory – in which the causal effects of structural variables emerge via multiple intervening variables – is thoroughly consistent with the arc of Krasner's theoretical work.[6] In "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," Krasner

[6] Indeed, Krasner's generation of realist IPE scholars were quite comfortable with the inclusion of domestic politics within their explanations. Gilpin (1981) identified citizen resistance to lowering consumption rates

(1976) posited that powerful domestic interests could act as a temporary constraint that prevented great powers from altering their foreign economic policies in response to shifts in the distribution of power. In *Defending the National Interest* (1978), the ideational power of Hartz's (1955) "liberal absolutism" combined with structural factors to cement American preferences with respect to raw materials investment. In the conclusion to *International Regimes* (1983), Krasner concluded that global governance structures largely functioned as intervening variables – an argument that dovetails with his later work on the international telecommunications regime (Krasner 1991). Throughout his sovereignty work, Krasner has engaged with the world society literature from sociology (Meyer et al 1997).

It could be argued that Krasner's brand of realism is not *really* realism – in other words, Krasner has strayed so far from the paradigm's negative heuristic that his theoretical work should not be labeled as realist. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the question of whether the different strands of realism listed above are truly coherent.[7] I would suggest, however, that Krasner's modifications to realism largely consist of two tactics that are fully consistent with the paradigm. The first is the introduction of intervening variables – a "protective belt" around realism's negative heuristic of core assumption. As previously noted, these intervening variables to possess some agency, but in the long run are conditioned by systemic factors. The second is an extension of the realist paradigm into the domestic political sphere. Just as realism predicts that powerful states will structure international outcomes, Krasner argues in his IPE work that dominant domestic interests would play a role in guiding the formulation of foreign economic policies. This is consistent with other realist IPE scholarship (Gilpin 1981; Drezner 2007a) and represents an attempted expansion, rather than contradiction, of the paradigm's explanatory power. It would appear that Krasner's realist bona fides remain in good standing.

When theorists become policymakers

Krasner appears to be safe from the ontological critique of realism discussed above. Is he immune from logical or empirical critiques? Does Krasner's policymaking and post-policymaking analysis contradict his earlier work? Looking at the content of Krasner's policy ideas, the answer would appear to be "no." Krasner's policy advocacy during his government service is fully consistent with his earlier work on the sovereignty *problematique* (Krasner 1999, 2004). The idea behind the OECD's Partnership for Democratic Governance (PDG) was Krasner's proposals for "shared sovereignty" in cases of state failure. Indeed, Krasner (2009:170) labels the PDG as "one of those relatively rare instances in which an academic idea became a policy reality."

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as one factor that contributes to the rising costs of hegemony. In the 1970s, state strength was treated as an intervening variable rather than a constant (Katzenstein 1978). Gilpin (2001:3) acknowledged the need to consider the domestic dimension in explaining the foreign economic policies of great powers. See Drezner (2010) for more on this point.

[7] On this, see Legro and Moravcsik (1999), Feaver et al (2000), and Drezner (2010).

Similarly, the "responsible stakeholder" policy towards China – originally developed by Evan Feigenbaum, who worked in Krasner's policy planning staff[8] – was fully consistent with the Bush administration's *realpolitik* approach towards great power politics. Administration officials recognized that without the active support of rising powers, existing global governance structures would have waning legitimacy and effectiveness (Drezner 2007b). By rewarding rising powers like China and India with greater influence within global governance structures, the administration hoped that these countries would act as status quo powers rather than revisionist states.

Krasner's after-action report on his policymaking days is a bit more problematic, however. In his post-policymaking analysis, Krasner emphasizes the "garbage can" nature of foreign policy organizations, arguing that stasis and path dependence can profoundly affect policy outputs. This is clearly a trend that recurs among scholar-policymakers – an *ex post* appreciation for the role that decision-making and bureaucratic politics play in determining foreign policy outcomes that did not necessarily exist *ex ante* (Krasner 1972).[9]

To be sure, the idea that foreign policy institutions can have path-dependent qualities is hardly unique to Krasner (Drezner 2000; Zegart 2000; Erdmann 2009). It is difficult for political scientists to dispute scholar-policymaker emphases on these political processes, as they usually rest on biographical experiences that are difficult to replicate or falsify. That said, developing generalizable propositions about foreign policymaking from first-person accounts are vulnerable to the same hazards that hover over inductive analysis in international relations more generally (Achen and Snidal 1989; Collier and Mahoney 1996). To be sure, inductive approaches can be a fruitful area for theory development (George and Bennett 2005). However, approaches developed from first-person experience can also present incomplete cases that fail to properly consider structural as well as process effects on policy outcomes.

It is likely that the "garbage can" model Krasner currently embraces plays a role as an intervening variable in determining policy outcomes. It is even more likely, however, that systemic factors imposed strong boundary conditions on the independent effect of the garbage can. Kingdon's model suggests three "streams" that feed into policy creation: the recognition of a problem, the development of policy alternatives, and the political incentives faced by key principals. If the realist model holds any empirical validity, then policy responses by other governments and shifts in the distribution of power should have pronounced effects on the first and third of these factors.

To provide an illustrative example, let's reconsider the "responsible stakeholder" formulation towards China. According to Krasner (2009), this was a case where a

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[8] It should be noted that Feigenbaum received his Ph.D. in political science from Stanford, where he was a student of both Rice and Krasner.

[9] One likely cause of this transformation is simple psychology. A structural theory necessarily implies the irrelevance of any particular policymaker. A structural account essentially argues that the motives of individual policymakers. No individual – regardless of how aware they are of social science theories – likes to be stripped of their agency. When Dean Acheson rejected his status as a "dependent variable" in favor of being an "independent variable," he was only half-joking (George 1993:7).

rational policy calculation could not have emerged without the right personnel being in the right position. Feigenbaum initially proposed similar language in 2002, but it fell on deaf ears. It was not until Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick came on in February 2005 that the idea received the necessary political backing to become policy. To Krasner, this represents a classic garbage can process – only when Zoellick was appointed did the "responsible stakeholder" idea move from the "policy primeval soup" to an articulated position of the United States government.

This line of analysis is correct, but also incomplete. First, it would be hard to argue that the State Department's policy principals in 2002 – Colin Powell and Richard Armitage – were unsympathetic to this kind of policy formulation. Both Powell and Armitage had reputations as prudent internationalists committed to a harmonious working relationship with China. Despite this receptivity, they did not embrace the stakeholder idea. For another, Krasner fails to ask the bigger questions. Why were the conditions not ripe for the idea in 2002? What were the forces that led Robert Zoellick to become Deputy Secretary of State in 2005?

It is quite easy to posit a structural realist answer to both questions. In 2002, regardless of Powell and Armitage's personal policy preferences, the United States was arguably at the apex of its relative post-Cold War power. By most capability metrics, American power was unparalleled (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008). The U.S. economy was responsible for more than 30% of global economic output – a significantly higher percentage than at the end of the Cold War. The U.S. military advantage over every other great power seemed painfully obvious. The fall 2001 ejection of the Taliban and Al Qaeda from Afghanistan augmented the reputation of U.S. power, which had yet to be tarnished by Iraq. As Paul Kennedy (2002) famously wrote at the time, "Nothing has ever existed like this disparity of power; nothing. I have returned to all of the comparative defense spending and military personnel statistics over the past 500 years that I compiled in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, and no other nation comes close."

Given this growth in American power, it was not surprising that U.S. leaders resisted any formulations that diluted their policy autonomy. The "responsible stakeholder" formulation implied that the United States was willing to cut China into key global governance structures, thereby giving Beijing more influence in return for their support of the status quo. With U.S. relative power seemingly on the increase, however, it was not surprising that U.S. policymakers would have been reluctant to proffer such a bargain at that point in time. Even advocates of multilateralism allowed that the relative increase in American power partially explained the Bush administration's first-term foreign policy preferences (Ikenberry 2003; Skidmore 2005). In all likelihood, even if Powell and Armitage had advocated the "responsible stakeholder" formulation, President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and other NSC principals would not have embraced the concept.

By early 2005, however, the landscape had shifted. At the aggregate level, U.S. power had started to ebb (Pape 2009). The military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan were bogged down, sapping U.S. military strength and diminishing America's reputation for the competent exercise of power. U.S. foreign policy actions had increased the

transaction costs of bargaining with allies and rivals on policy issues (Walt 2005; APSA 2009). At the same time, China's economic growth was continuing at an unparalleled rate, with a concomitant rise in its soft power (Kurlantzick 2007).

Contemporaneous accounts suggest that President Bush clearly recognized these facts as problems that needed to be addressed. After re-election, he expressed a preference for a State Department that could repair relationships that were damaged during the previous four years (Bumiller 2007:249). In making this determination, Bush wanted Rice to be his next Secretary of State. Rice, in turn, rejected suggestions that she appoint John Bolton, a prominent neoconservative, as her deputy. Instead, she selected a cadre of seasoned diplomats to staff the upper echelons of the State Department (Kessler 2007; Bumiller 2007). This included the appointment of Zoellick, who took a demotion from a cabinet level position as the U.S. Trade Representative in order to beef up Foggy Bottom's bureaucratic power. The "responsible stakeholder" language with regard to China was just one of a series of foreign policy actions designed to repair relations with old allies and accommodate rising powers into the international system – including rapprochement with European allies over how to bargain with Iran, using the United Nations Security Council to punish North Korea, and reallocating IMF quotas to favor developing states (Gordon 2006; Kessler 2007; Drezner 2007b).

Krasner is undoubtedly correct in his characterization of day-to-day policymaking as an example of "organized anarchy." Had Rice rather than Zoellick take ownership of the China portfolio, it is possible that "responsible stakeholder" would never have seen the light of day; she did not embrace the language as much as her deputy, finding the formulation "a little odd" (Kessler 2007:253). However, stepping back from the granularity of Krasner's perspective, it is certainly the case that structural factors played a major role in shaping the process factors behind that decision. International responses to America's aggressive unilateralism, combined with shifts in the global distribution of power, created a context that led to Zoellick's appointment. Put more plainly, perhaps the windows of opportunity discussed in garbage can theory are the residue of macro-structural forces.

Taking a further step back, structural factors clearly enhance or dilute the effectiveness of policy outputs regardless of whether they emanate from a "garbage can" model or a rational policymaking process. Consider one of the Bush administration's greatest foreign policy accomplishments: the expansion and transformation in foreign aid. Programs like the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the PDG boosted and reformed U.S. aid programs. Stephen Krasner played a significant role in developing and implementing these policy innovations.

Unfortunately, these innovations have come at a time when the U.S. ability to apply aid conditionality has eroded (Naim 2007). A decade ago, the World Bank and the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) wrote the global rules of the aid game. Since then, however, China, India, and other non-OECD donors have dramatically increased their aid allotments. China alone nearly tripled its aid flows between 1998 and 2007. As

one World Bank official put it, "the Bank cannot turn around in Africa without bumping into China." The rise of Chinese foreign aid in particular has undoubtedly weakened the bargaining leverage of western aid donors. China's principles for foreign aid explicitly reject the idea of attaching conditionality or other restrictions on aid flows. In response to aid from a new donor, countries as diverse as Angola, Chad, Ecuador, and the Philippines have either cut off negotiations with international financial institutions or demanded fewer conditions (Woods 2008).[10] Despite significant improvements in U.S. foreign policy in this arena, shifts in the distribution of power have severely dampened the effects.

Conclusion

Realism has been accused of many, many sins. The ontological critique of realism argues that realist scholars cannot simultaneously advance a positivist, structuralist account of their theory while simultaneously acting as a policy advocate and practitioner. This paper has assessed this critique in light of Stephen D. Krasner's scholarship, policy advice, and post-policymaking assessments. It concludes that, on the whole, this critique is overblown. Critical theorists have overestimated the extent to which systemic factors constrain policymakers in the short run, and ignore the ways in which realists can articulate a policy message consistent with their negative heuristic. This certainly applies to Krasner, as his brand of realism affords a greater role to intervening variables.

That said, Krasner's post-policy assessments are vulnerable to an empirical and ontological critique. Krasner, like other scholar-policymakers, commits the sin of inductively generalizing from their own policymaking experience. In doing so, Krasner provides only a partial understanding of causal factors driving American foreign policy. Even if the U.S. State Department represents a "garbage can" style of organization, structural factors affected both the problem recognition and politics that created opportunities for Krasner's policy planners.

[10] China's ability to undercut U.S. policy preferences on foreign aid should not be overestimated, either. See Chin (2010).

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