

**Explaining
and Understanding
International Relations**

**MARTIN HOLLIS AND
STEVE SMITH**

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Preface

Books which bring together International Relations and philosophy are rare enough to call for comment. This one has grown out of joint teaching which began in 1984, and out of many lively discussions in consequence. We would like to thank all the students who have taken Martin Hollis's Philosophy of Social Science course in the period, both those also studying international relations with Steve Smith and those majoring in other areas of social science or in philosophy. Their keen interest and their comments, especially those by Tim Dunne, have helped in many ways, not least by convincing us that issues which are fertile for the social sciences at large are well exemplified in the discipline of International Relations.

The book is aimed chiefly at those engaged in reflecting theoretically on international relations. We hope to show how many of the central questions in such reflection belong to wider debates in the theory and philosophy of the social sciences, and how the discipline can gain from setting them in this wider context. Very little has been written on this subject, the most notable exception being Charles Reynolds's 1973 book *Theory and Explanation in International Politics*.¹ Reynolds's absorbing study is not undermined by more recent developments in the philosophy of science, and its contrast between 'scientific' and 'historical' approaches remains instructive. But whereas his 'historical' explanations are always particular, we have sought to establish a dimension of 'understanding' which permits a range of hermeneutic disputes between individualism and holism. Yet we are not offering simple answers. Indeed, as we explain in the introduction and demonstrate in the dialogue of the final chapter, we are not even offering agreed answers. The theme foreshadowed by our title is that Explaining and Understanding are alternative ways to analyse international relations, each persuasive but not readily

¹ Charles Reynolds, *Theory and Explanation in International Politics* (Oxford: Martin Robertson).

Introduction: Two Traditions

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE.

The social sciences thrive on two intellectual traditions. One is founded on the triumphant rise of natural science since the sixteenth century. The other is rooted in nineteenth-century ideas of history and the writing of history from the inside. This book is guided by our belief that both traditions are fertile for the study of international relations, despite a lively tension between them. In international affairs, and throughout the social world, there are two sorts of story to tell and a range of theories to go with each. One story is an outsider's, told in the manner of a natural scientist seeking to explain the workings of nature and treating the human realm as part of nature. The other is an insider's, told so as to make us understand what the events mean, in a sense distinct from any meaning found in unearthing the laws of nature. Thus our title does not use two words where one would do. 'Explaining' is the key term in one approach, 'understanding' in the other.

The 'inside' story is the more familiar one. The media tell it whenever they present international relations as a dramatic encounter between world leaders who personify their countries. Think of the popular picture of US-Soviet relations as Bush-meets-Gorbachev, or of the US-UK 'special relationship' in the 1980s as a special personal relationship between President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher. The air of human drama and of history in the making is especially potent in times of crisis, when leaders can be shown locked in combat, for example Reagan with Gadafi over the US bombing of Libya in April 1986. Reporters try to establish what the unfolding events mean to the principal actors concerned. They report their statements, analyse their actions, and re-create their thoughts, so as to convey the reasons which account for why each step was taken rather than any other. The actors themselves are generally keen to help, both in person and through the mouths

of officials at the time, and (often telling a rather different tale) in tranquil autobiographies afterwards.

No one supposes that international relations can be fully understood just by assembling a patchwork of what the actors say was in their minds. Nor should the media habit of personalizing events and trends be taken too seriously. Drama is easier to convey than analysis, rather as the political decisions of kings and queens make for more comprehensible history in the schoolroom than do gradual shifts in economic and social patterns. All the same, the actors' view is a starting point and, advocates of Understanding will say, the only starting point. We must know how the actors defined the issues and the alternatives, what they believed about the situation and each other, what they aimed to achieve, and how. Only then can we ask more pointed questions about their clarity of vision, their underlying reasons, and the true meaning of the episodes.

There is a distinction to be drawn here between simplifications and assumptions. It is a simplification to banish all but the principal actors from the international stage. The pretence is that the White House spokesperson is the voice of the President; the reality is closer to being that the President is the voice of the White House and other agencies of decision-making. There are a thousand other actors in the wings and the official tale about the President's intentions and reasons is never full and rarely frank. Everyone is well aware that the considered official record is as much a simplification (even if of a different sort and for different reasons) as is the news story filed by reporters for press and television—the actors, the reporters, the academic researchers, and, one hopes, the public too.

The assumptions raise deeper questions. For instance, there is usually a starting assumption that individuals make history, at least by the sum of their actions and even if not quite as they intended it to be. In that case the simplification is warranted because it encapsulates a truth about what is going on. But the general proposition that human affairs must be understood from within does not require the assumption that *individuals* make history, except perhaps as a convenient device for identifying what calls for deeper understanding. Individualism is a possible, indeed common, trump suit in the search for the meaning and true interpretation of social events: but, we shall find in later chapters, it is by no means

the only possible one. An 'inside' story can also be told in terms which subordinate individuals to some larger social whole.

At this stage, therefore, we shall say nothing about the range of theories which can be brought to bear on international relations, if one believes in working from the inside in pursuit of understanding. But it is worth pointing out one obvious hostage given by treating the 'inside' as a matter of the desires and beliefs of individual actors. It is that the actors' desires, beliefs, and resulting reasons for action may be generated in turn by external factors. In the jargon of social science, they may be intervening and not independent variables. Although there are 'inside' ways of trying to rescue the hostage, as we shall see, the point will serve to introduce the rival 'outside' story about explanation.

The 'outside' way of accounting for behaviour is modelled on the methods of natural science and is usually described as a search for causes. To explain an event or state of affairs is to find another which caused it. This bald statement conceals much dispute about the exact relation between a cause and its effect, about the right way to define 'cause', and about the nature of causality, both as a concept and in the world. So what follows is very preliminary. But the broad idea is that events are governed by laws of nature which apply whenever similar events occur in similar conditions. Science progresses by learning which similarities are the key to which sequences. That catches the familiar dictum that science explains particular events by generalizing and by making them cases of laws at work. To this is often (but not always) added an idea that a cause makes its effect happen, implying perhaps that to find a cause is to show why the effect had to happen as it did.

If these ideas are taken together, and if three centuries of physics and chemistry are taken as the model to emulate, it is tempting to suggest that it really does not matter what the actors on the international scene have in their minds. In the strongest version of this approach, behaviour is generated by a system of forces or a structure, external not only to the minds of each actor but also external even to the minds of all actors. In that case it is a basic mistake to reduce US–Soviet relations to the personalities of individuals. Bush and Gorbachev merely represent the forces which brought them to office and merely pursue an agenda so predetermined that its outcome could have been predicted in advance. If either were run over by the proverbial bus, his

replacement would carry on as before. Similarly, the special relationship between Thatcher and Reagan was a meeting of ideologies, which in turn expressed congruent interests within a larger system of forces. To call it a personal relationship or to believe that the individuals contributed more than its pleasantries is an illusion.

It must be said at once that nothing remotely as strong as this is required by the proposition that to explain an event is to find its cause. That would mean crossing most brands of psychology and economics off the list of social sciences. Theories cast in terms of external structures and systematic forces are at the 'holist' end of a range of causal theories, just as theories which take actors as the final authority are at the 'individualist' end of a range of theories in search of understanding. What marks the 'explanation' range is the assertion of only the weak determinism involved in claiming that similar effects always occur in similar conditions. The rest is a matter of dispute, as we shall find in Chapter 3, and there is no objection in principle to a psychological explanation of international relations or to one cast in terms of individual behaviour.

All the same, there is still point in contrasting 'insider' and 'outsider' accounts. The point could be simply made if psychology modelled on the natural sciences were always 'behavioural' and concerned with the actors' brains rather than with their minds. But, in international relations as in economics, there is scope for applying scientific method to the beliefs and desires of individuals. The crucial move is to insist that every individual works basically in the same law-like way, with individual variations depending on systematic differences in, for instance, preferences and information, or, more broadly, nature and nurture. Admittedly the difference between understanding from inside and explaining from outside will seem to be pretty thin, if beliefs and desires can appear in scientific explanations. But we ask for patience until Chapter 4.

Meanwhile, the contrast is best made for introductory purposes by thinking about the middle of the range, where individuals take the stage in a social capacity, as, for instance, Prime Minister or Secretary of State. In Figure 1.1 we have represented the holism-individualism range on the vertical axis and the explaining-understanding contrast on the horizontal, with the actors in their social capacities located on the dividing line, where, one might say, structure meets action. *X* is an actor conceived in the spirit of

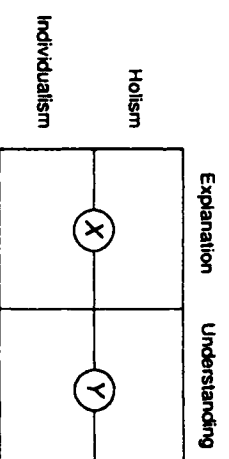


FIG. 1.1

the scientific tradition, *Y* the counterpart in the spirit of the interpretative tradition. For both there is a pull in two directions. On the one hand, *X* and *Y* are human beings with beliefs and aims, and we are interested in what is in their heads. On the other hand, their situation is structured, and ('holism' here standing for the idea that the parts of a whole behave as the whole requires) we are interested in the social constraints on their actions. Both pulls are strong and theories which purport to reconcile them tend to be fragile, even though they capture a stout commonsense conviction that, as Marx put it, 'Men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves.' But let us suppose that there are theories robust enough to hold the tension.

The contrast shows up in the different notions of 'social capacity'. Being part of the natural world and a proper object of scientific study, *X* is predictable on the basis of *X*'s preferences and information, which are in turn the result of *X*'s nature and nurture. There is a disputed question about the proportions of nature (psychology) to nurture (sociology), but, to keep *X* on the border between top and bottom boxes, both are important. Since no two mice are identical, let alone two human beings, replacing *X* would make a difference. Yet the situation is full of constraints and the difference is not as large as Mrs Thatcher, if she were *X*, might like to think. Social capacities are a useful source of predictions, since they greatly reduce the range of alternatives that an actor is likely to pursue.

The fabric of *Y*'s social world is woven from rules and meanings, which define relationships among the inhabitants and give interactions their purpose. Social capacities are normative or prescriptive, in that they include responsibilities for whose discharge the

actor can be praised or criticized. Other actors are entitled to expect *Y* to live up to them, even if they would be wise not to count on it when temptations arise. In other words, *Y* is expected to pick an intelligent course through a variety of social engagements, to which actors bring something of themselves in exercising their social capacities. What this comes to will be clearer by the end of the book, but we need to mention both a normative element and a personal one, if *Y* is to be located neither above nor below the dividing line. The social world must be seen through the actors' eyes because it depends on how they see it and it works in whatever way social capacities are exercised.

It may sound as if *Y* has free will and *X* does not. But that is too simple. Some philosophers maintain that to act freely is to do what one wants and to act rationally is to do what will best satisfy one's desires. In that case it is no obstacle to freedom that actions are predictable; indeed, free *and* rational action is possible only in a predictable world. By this test *X* is a free agent. Other philosophers argue that free agents need to be self-directed (or 'autonomous') and hence need to choose in a sense not cashable as the effective satisfying of desires. In that case *X* is not a free agent, but it is not yet clear whether *Y* is one. So we cannot characterize the difference between inside and outside in terms of freedom vs. determinism.

The crucial contrast between *X* and *Y* lies in the stuff of their social worlds. For *X* the social world, like the rest of the natural world to which it belongs, is an environment, independent and to some extent predictable. For *Y* it is a construction consisting of rules and meanings. This contrast brings with it different theories of social action and how to study it. It also implies different analyses of human nature. Hence, to give warning, we shall find no easy way to combine a natural science approach with an interpretative one. For the moment, we repeat that there are two plausible stories to tell, one from outside about the human part of the natural world and the other from inside a separate social realm. One seeks to explain, the other to understand. We are well aware that many have attempted to combine these two stories, for example Anthony Giddens in his work on the concept of structuration.¹ However, we believe that readers will come to

¹ A. Giddens, *Critical Issues in Social Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1979), ch. 2.

understand by the end of the book that combining the two stories is not as easy as it at first seems. Although it is appealing to believe that bits of the two stories can be added together, we maintain that there are always two stories to tell and that combinations do not solve the problem.

With this broad theme in mind we turn to the subject of International Relations and then to an outline of the book.

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS: 'TOP-DOWN' AND 'BOTTOM-UP'

The study of international relations deals with a peculiar area of politics. Whereas domestic politics occur within a political system which includes a government to make and enforce laws, the international system is anarchic. By this we mean not that it is chaotic but simply that there is no government above the states which comprise it. The individual nation state is often therefore presented as a self-contained unit, analytically prior to its international relations. It may turn out not to be the final or the only unit of analysis but, even so, to contend that it were would not be so wildly wrong as treating America as fifty states without mentioning the Federal Government.

Our approach to theories of international relations will be based on a distinction between system and units, and will make central what the literature calls 'the level-of-analysis problem'. This was originally posed by David Singer in 1961 as the problem of whether to account for the behaviour of the international system in terms of the behaviour of the nation states comprising it or vice versa.² We propose to extend the problem in two dimensions. One dimension concerns the identities of system and units for purpose of what is, on reflection, a very general problem indeed. Singer's question was about the international system and national units. One answer to it might be that there are systemic forces strong enough to propel the nation states through their orbits, rather as if they were planets in a solar system in dynamic equilibrium. In that case one might hope to account for the working of the system without enquiring into the internal organization of the units. But if

² J. D. Singer, 'The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations', in K. Knorr and S. Verba (eds.), *The International System: Theoretical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 77-92.

it turns out that the units make an independent contribution, then there is a further level-of-analysis problem. Are we to account for the behaviour of the state in terms of the behaviour of its constituent bureaucracies (and other agencies), or vice versa? Then, if the answer requires us to take the bureaucracies as making an independent contribution, there will be yet another level-of-analysis problem. Are we to account for the behaviour of a bureaucracy in terms of the behaviour of the human individuals comprising it, or vice versa? At each stage the 'unit' of the higher layer becomes the 'system' of the lower layer. We shall distinguish the three layers just indicated, and on each shall contrast an analysis which proceeds 'top-down' (from system to unit) with one which proceeds 'bottom-up' (from unit to system).

That way of describing the level-of-analysis problem is markedly scientific in tone. Our other dimension concerns the contrast between explaining and understanding. There is also a level-of-analysis problem for theories which try to work from the inside. Again, there are three layers. The highest requires that we think of the international system as a set of norms or purposes which shape the process of history. If a fully systemic answer to the problem were to prevail, something very ambitious would be needed, for instance the positing of a World Spirit to guide human history, as Hegelians and Absolute Idealists have sometimes seemed to suggest. But we ourselves shall not tackle such grand theories. In what follows the interpretative dimension will come alive only on the next layer of the problem, where we ask whether social rules and institutions account for the performance of social roles, or vice versa. In other words, we think international institutions too fragile to permit a fully systemic answer on the highest layer and so incomplete that an answer which favours the international units must yield to curiosity about how these units work. But it is certainly possible to argue for a systemic answer in which nations or cultures or, to use a phrase from Wittgenstein, 'forms of life', account for what goes on within them. Equally, it is possible to deny it, and the lowest layer of the level-of-analysis problem is broached by asking whether individual actors construct institutional rules and roles, or vice versa.

The three layers of the level-of-analysis problem are set out systematically in Figure 1.2, with the debate on each being a matter of whether to proceed 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'. In the

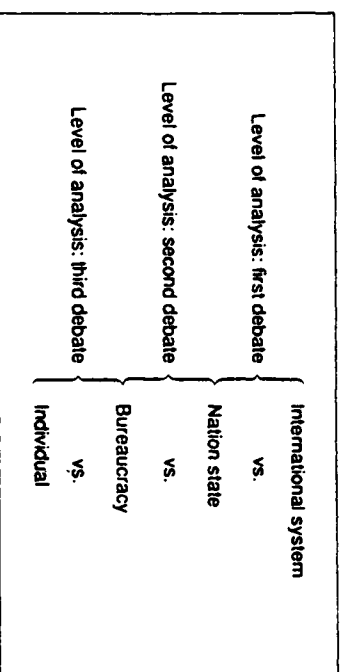


FIG. 1.2

first debate, 'top-down' makes the international system wholly dominant and 'bottom-up' retorts that it is the sum of what nations do. It is possible to conduct this debate without either side maintaining that the internal organization of the units matters (witness what will be said about Game Theory in Chapter 6). In the second debate, 'top-down' sees the state as a single agent responding rationally to its situation, whereas 'bottom-up' sees the state's behaviour as the outcome of bargains (and other manoeuvres) among bureaucratic agencies. (It may be helpful to note a parallel dispute in economics about whether firms respond rationally to their market situation or need to be analysed in terms of how they are organized internally.) In the third debate, 'top-down' contends that bureaucratic demands dictate individual choices, whereas 'bottom-up' makes individual choices central to the analysis of collective decisions.

Then there is the other dimension, whether the aim is to explain or to understand. It will be seen that Figure 1.1, which introduced two individuals *X* and *Y*, is a case of the third debate. We began there, because the contrast between explaining and understanding is likely to be less familiar than the contrast between holism ('top-down') and individualism ('bottom-up'). Also, it takes an austere mind not to believe that the scope and limits of individual human action are an absolutely central theoretical crux for the social sciences. But, in principle, there are ways of understanding the social world which dispense with individuals, at least as prime movers, and ways of explaining it which rely on them.

SOME KEY TERMS

Leaving the theme to develop as we go along, we shall next specify our use of some key terms. Let us start by saying that we shall never use 'explaining' (or 'explanation') and 'understanding' interchangeably. When we want a neutral word it will be 'analysing' (or 'analysis'). Thus, the 'level-of-analysis' problem is conveniently neutral between a level-of-explanation problem and a level-of-understanding problem, as we have just stated. The senses which we attach to 'explaining' and 'understanding' will emerge more clearly in Chapters 3 and 4.

In speaking of international relations, we shall sometimes be referring to the international world and sometimes to the theories of that world which comprise the discipline called 'International Relations'. To avoid a muddle we shall use initial capitals—'International Relations'—when we mean the latter and small letters—'international relations'—when we mean the former. Thus, International Relations is a discipline, where theories of international relations compete. These, for the most part, are theories about international relations (hence the small letters), although we may occasionally take note of theories about the conduct of the discipline itself (i.e. theories of International Relations).

There are some key terms that are sure to cause trouble because they have different meanings in International Relations and in philosophy. The first is 'Realism', which in International Relations refers to a school of thinking opposed to 'Idealism'. Realism, given classic expression in Hans Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations*,³ calls for the explanation of international behaviour in terms of national interests and without regard for the moral sentiments and hopes which nations profess or which observers may have in their heart. It is squarely in the scientific tradition and is a conscious attempt to apply scientific method to international relations. In philosophy, 'realism' (usually with a small 'r') is broadly the view that whether a thing exists is a question about the world independent of questions about how we could know it or what statements concerning the thing mean. Thus, on a realist view, there are truths about the past which are distinct from all present

³ H. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 1st edn. (New York: Knopf, 1948).

evidence and may therefore remain unknown to us. Similarly, a realist claim that electrons exist is a claim not about the instrumental observations or theoretical predictions of physics but about an independent world which physics investigates. This is the broad definition of 'realism' in the philosophy of science, theory of knowledge, and metaphysics, and it licenses talk of unobservable structures which cause observable behaviour. Sometimes, however, it has a more specific sense, when used by authors with a materialist view of nature and human history.⁴ But since this use implies the broader one, which is all we need in this book, we shall not pursue it.

Correspondingly, 'Idealism' in International Relations names an approach concerned with the human will and institutional progress. Arising in the aftermath of the First World War, it took the view that disasters are due partly to failures of understanding and partly to the lack of suitable institutions to encourage co-operation. Hence it is often seen as primarily normative, in contrast to a more scientific Realism. But it also involves a descriptive account of human nature and institutions. Its liberal hopes of progress are grounded in the beliefs that human beings individually have reconcilable goals like peace, health, and prosperity and that institutions are a human construct, not always deliberate and, once created, having effects of their own on people's thoughts and actions. Philosophically it inherited something from the Absolute Idealism of the Hegelians and other nineteenth-century opponents of materialism, thus refusing to think of 'reality' as distinct from ideas of reality. Meanwhile, 'idealism' (with a small 'i') is a broad philosophical term for theories which work in terms of experience, conceived as 'ideas' in the mind. Hence, although the connections are not automatic and are not embraced by all who call themselves idealists, there is an affinity between Idealists, idealists and an interpretative approach, just as there is between Realists, realists and a scientific one.

The other term is 'positivism'. In the social sciences at large the word has often been used very loosely for any approach which applies scientific method to human affairs, conceived of as part of the natural order. Thus, it is not uncommon to find Comte, Durkheim, Marx, and Weber all described as positivists, even

⁴ e.g. R. Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (Brighton: Harvester, 1978).

though from many points of view they make strange bedfellows. But current usage tends to be more precise, perhaps influenced by the philosophical meaning. For philosophers, the epitome of positivism is 'Logical Positivism', the hard-headed empiricism of the Vienna Circle popularized in English by A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*.⁵ Here the stress is on experience (on observation and testing) as the only way to justify claims to knowledge of the world, and hence on methods of verification as the key to the meaning of scientific statements. When 'positivism' is so construed, it is opposed to realism and insists that theory is a guide to prediction rather than a source of substantive hypotheses about what could not, even in principle, be observed. This makes it empiricist in a very sharp and disputable form, which has lately cost it allegiance even among most other empiricists.

But Logical Positivism has retained more influence in the social sciences. When economists speak of 'Positive economics' they mean a predictive science, governed solely by the test of experience. The empiricism here is not so tight that all theoretical terms and assumptions must refer directly to observables, but all substantive hypotheses must be able to be confirmed or falsified. Notions of real structure are at least suspect and often rejected altogether. In this, Positive economics is typical of other 'Positive' sciences, although perhaps clearer and more developed in its approach. In International Relations, however, a further step is usually taken, in that 'Positivism' tends to be associated with quantitative analysis. The connecting thought is that, since only behaviour can be observed and measured, only behavioural data can provide a proper scientific basis. Hence Behaviouralism, the version of a more general behaviourism specific to International Relations, which we shall meet in the next chapter, is commonly spoken of as a Positive approach and often contrasted with Realism on this score. Certainly Realists are inclined to a belief in the structures which a Logical Positivist would reject. But, from the standpoint of current usage in other social sciences and the philosophy of science, Realism aspires to be a Positive science and Behaviouralism is a particular version of it with an austere view of what is testable. Since this brings out what they have in common and shows them to be on the same side, we too shall use 'Positivism' to include the Realist approach.

⁵ A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

The book falls into two main parts. The first, comprising Chapters 2-4, introduces the main debates in International Relations and the philosophical considerations which bear on them. Accordingly, Chapter 2 summarizes the growth of the discipline of International Relations, focusing on Idealism, Realism, and Behaviouralism as its principal phases. It will end with a brief survey of contemporary debates, including those revolving around the issue of whether the nation state is still the major actor on the international scene. But, without dismissing the claims of other actors such as transnational corporations or revolutionary groups, it will conclude that they do not affect questions about explaining and understanding, which are more clearly raised by considering better established theories that address the state. Chapters 3 and 4 explore philosophically the two traditions with which we began. Chapter 3, 'Explaining', asks what is involved in applying the philosophy of natural science to international relations and Chapter 4, 'Understanding', asks a similar question about international relations approached from the inside. The whole first part provides a framework for what we have just described as a level-of-analysis problem with three layers and two dimensions.

The second part, Chapters 5-8, conducts the three debates catalogued in Figure 1.2. Chapter 5 asks whether it is possible to develop a theory of international relations wholly at the level of the international system. We look at some of the main attempts to do so, spending most time on Kenneth Waltz's systems account.⁶ Chapter 6 sets out the counter-case for an analysis in terms of the state, working 'bottom-up' from states to system. The vehicle chosen is Game Theory, which treats the state as a closed, utility-maximizing unit and so denies the need to 'open the box' to see how states are organized. In Chapter 7, however, we do 'open the box', by taking bureaucracy as a rival to the state in what is thus the second debate about the level of analysis. We use Graham Allison's Bureaucratic Politics model to see whether foreign policy can be convincingly portrayed as the result of bureaucratic bargaining.⁷ If it cannot, that might mean victory for the state in

⁶ The best source is K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

⁷ The best source is G. Allison, *Essence of Decision* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

the second debate. But, alternatively, it might mean that there is a further debate to conduct. Accordingly, in Chapter 8 we 'open the box' again and ask about the bureaucrats, the men and women who do the bargaining. Are they rational decision-makers of the kind proposed in microeconomics and Game Theory? Or are they mere voices of the bureaucracy (which, in this third debate, is the 'system')? A possible reply is that they are neither. That leads us to examine Wittgensteinian ideas of action and meaning, and to consider a very different notion of a 'game' in social life, where the actors are players of roles.

The debates will turn out to be less clear and clean than they seem in this outline. Argument on each layer tends to have half an eye to what is at issue on the others. Thus, objections to a full-blown systems theory such as Waltz's come both from those who think of the state as a rational closed unit and from those who think that its internal organization matters. Similarly, Game Theory faces objections both from systems theorists and from those opposing a Bureaucratic Politics model to every form of Rational Actor model. When, in Chapter 8, we reach what one might have hoped was, so to speak, the basement, we shall find that some arguments about the nature of role-play lead back up to the previous layer. To this extent our framework is artificial and offered only as an *aide-mémoire* for theoretical intricacies richer than we have made them. But we stand by our contention that the issues which we simplify are genuine, very much alive, and illuminated by philosophical treatment as well as by reference to the International Relations literature.

That the issues are very much alive becomes plainer still in the final chapter, Chapter 9, where we admit to disagreeing on them! The chapter begins by summarizing the common ground—that analysis can proceed 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' on all three layers and in the dimension either of 'Explaining' or of 'Understanding'. But, although the common ground is large and includes almost everything said in the first eight chapters about how to fill in the framework and conduct the disputes, unity then becomes too much for us. One of the pleasures of writing the book has been the attempt to settle an amicable debate of our own. We are not sorry that it failed and that, accordingly, Chapter 9 breaks into dialogue. Hollis (the philosopher) opts for 'Understanding' and a position just below the horizontal dividing line in Figure 1.1; Smith (the

International Relations scholar) for 'Explaining' and a position just above the dividing line. Stopping only to emphasize that this is not because we belong to different disciplines and that several other final positions are open to anyone from either discipline, we then leave readers to make up their own minds, or else to decide that there is no monopoly of wisdom to be had.