

International Seminar
“Next-Generation Human Resource Development for Harnessing the Forces of Culture and Nature
for Peace and Sustainability”
(March 19, 2024)

Politics through Environmental Protection: A Case Study on the “Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)”

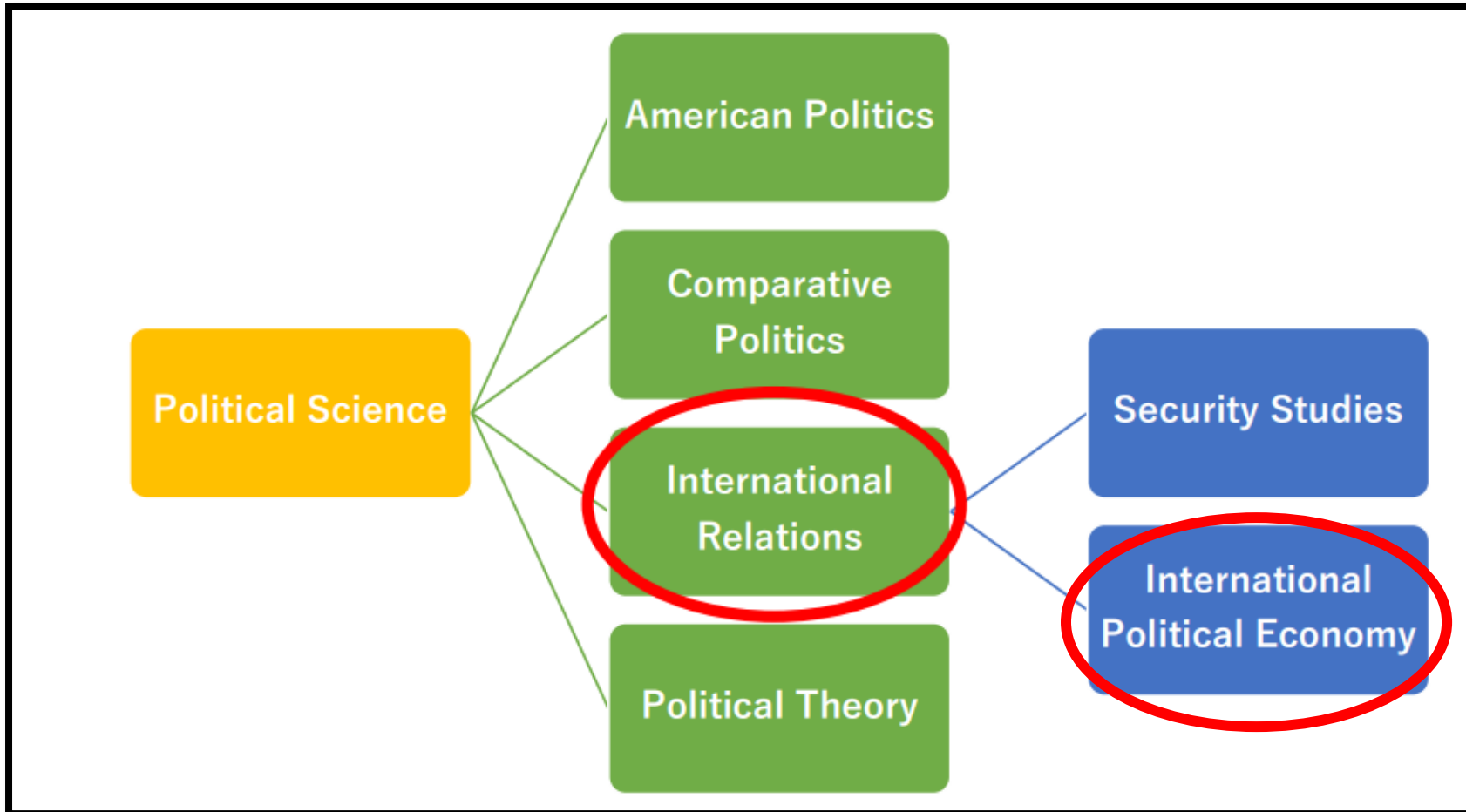
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Outline

- Introduction to the Field of International Relations
- Classical Dichotomy of Realism and Liberalism
- Recent Studies in International Institutions
- Case of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)
- Conclusion
- References

Introduction to the Field of International Relations

- Purpose of this Presentation
 - Introduction to how political scientists address the issue of sustainability



Sub-disciplines within the field of Political Science in the American Context, figure by Tomoko Takahashi.

Introduction to the Field of International Relations

- Classical Theme in International Relations
 - How can we maintain peace?
 - **Realists: “It is the balance of major powers that determine the stability in international order”**
 - Emphasis on states as actors, and reality?
 - Exemplary theories: Balance of Power, Hegemonic Stability Theory
 - **Liberals: “The free exercising of sovereign power should/ can be checked by rules and norms”**
 - Emphasis on the diversity of actors (nexus of domestic and international arenas), and policies and ideals?
 - Exemplary theories: Dependency Theory, Democratic Peace Theory, Capitalist Theory

Murray, Robert W. 2013. “The Politics of the Realist/Liberal Divide”, E-International Relations, last visited on March 12, 2024 at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/07/12/the-politics-of-the-realistliberal-divide/>.

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Introduction to the Field of International Relations

- **Realists:** “It is the balance of major powers that determine the stability in international order”
 - **Regarding Sustainability: It can be considered under exceptional circumstances**
 - They presume that it is only when realist mechanisms are taking a “break” that states can cooperate (Mearsheimer 2018)
 - Ex. Working towards sustainability under hegemonic stability

(Left) WIRED, Picture of a Billiard Ball Game,
Downloaded on November 30, 2023 at:
<https://wired.jp/2015/12/01/elliptic-pool/>.

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Photo omitted from the publicized slide.

(Right) John Mearsheimer. Photo downloaded
on December 19, 2023 from the following
Website. “Photos”, John J. Mearsheimer Website,
<https://www.mearsheimer.com/photos/>.

Classical Dichotomy of Realism and Liberalism

- **Liberals:** “The free exercising of sovereign power should/ can be checked by rules and norms”
 - **Regarding Sustainability: They elaborate on the conditions for international cooperation**
 - Whether it continues without the hegemon
 - Whether the relevant norms are internalized in member countries
 - Gave rise to **neoliberal institutionalists and International Political Economy** scholarship



(Left) The United Nations Office at Geneva, the former center of the League of Nations. Photo taken in 2017 by Tomoko Takahashi.

Photo omitted from the publicized slide.

(Right) John Ikenberry. Photo downloaded on December 19, 2023 from the following Youtube clip. “A Conversation with G. John Ikenberry”, SAIS Events Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gy7ewTKUqms>.

Recent Studies in International Institutions

- Neoliberal institutionalists
 - Regime theories
 - Relation with hegemony
- International Political Economy (IPE)
 - Interaction with realism (hegemonic stability theory)
 - Power transition and international trade regimes
 - Relative capabilities matter

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Robert O. Keohane, Photo downloaded by Tomoko Takahashi on December 19, 2023 at:
<https://rkeohane.scholar.princeton.edu/>.

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Robert Gilpin, Photo downloaded on December 19, 2023 at the following website: "Robert George Gilpin Jr., expert on international political economy, dies at 87", Princeton University Website, <https://www.princeton.edu/news/2018/07/13/robert-george-gilpin-jr-expert-international-political-economy-dies-87>.

Joseph Grieco, Photo downloaded on December 19, 2023 at the following website. " Duke@ Scholars", Duke University Website: <https://scholars.duke.edu/person/grieco>.

Recent Studies in International Institutions

- Grand theories are no longer the norm
 - Empirical testing of specific hypotheses are seen as rigorous studies in the field today

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Morin, Jean-Frédéric, Clara Brandi, and Jakob Schwab. 2024. "Environmental agreements as clubs: Evidence from a new dataset of trade provisions." *The Review of International Organizations* 19: 33-62.

Distelhorst, Greg, and Richard M. Locke. 2018. "Does Compliance Pay? Social Standards and Firm-Level Trade" *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (3): 695-711.

Recent Studies in International Institutions

- Popular Topics (some examples)
 - Regime Complex of Environmental/ Trade Regimes
 - Multiplicity of Norms in the Concept of Human Security
 - Economic Value Chains and the Dissemination of Environmental Protection
- Popular Methods
 - Social Network Analysis
 - Survey Experiments
 - Anthropological Field Work
 - Case Studies/Archival Research

They all resonate with the blurred boundaries between diverse issue areas related to sustainability
Ex. environmental, humanitarian, developmental issues...

Case of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

- Screenshots omitted from the publicized slide.

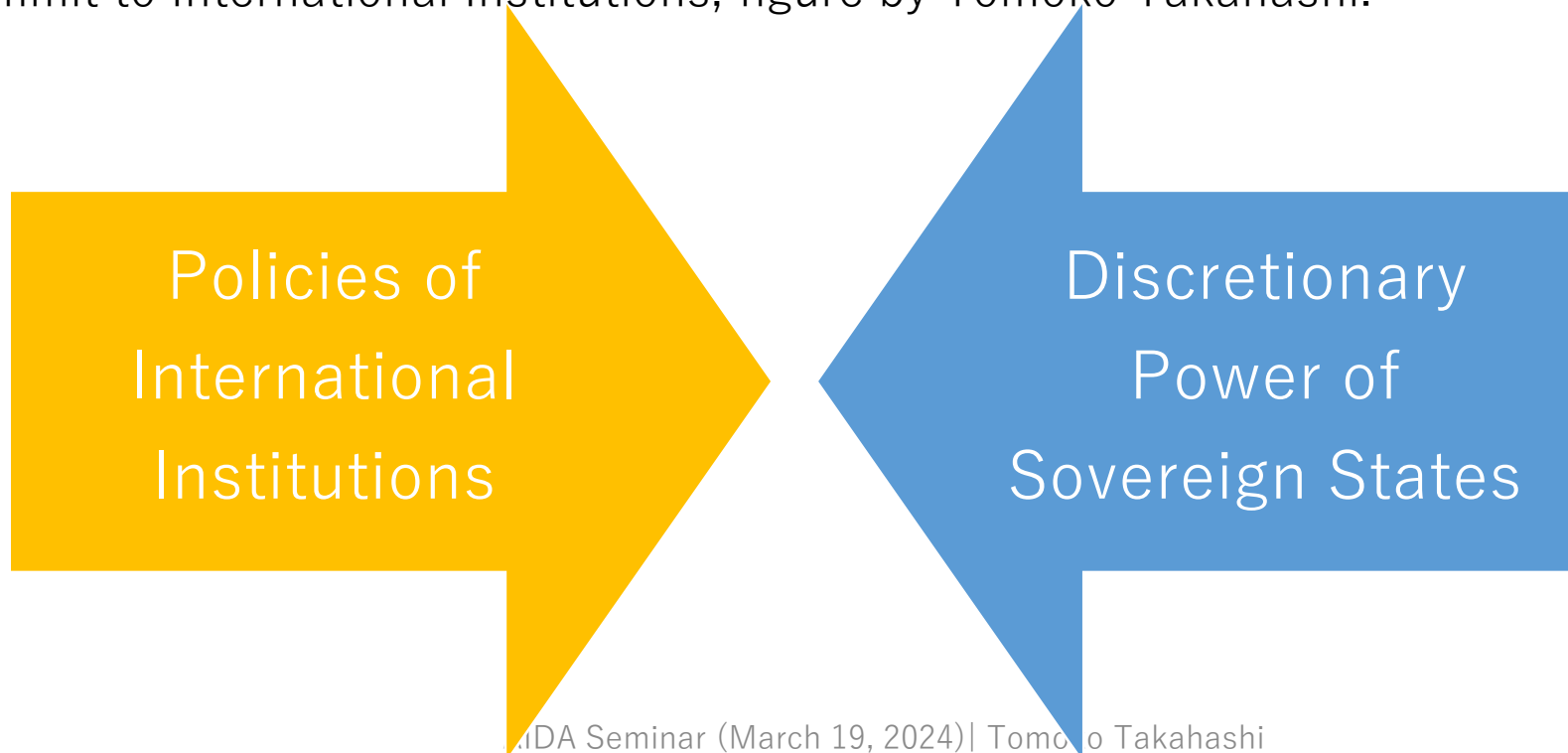
(Above) United Nations General Assembly. Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. A/CONF.232/2023/4 (Adopted on June 19 and 20, 2023). Last visited on March 12, 2024 at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/n23/177/28/pdf/n2317728.pdf?token=3VN1CjrlTnpbZsx9jm&fe=true>.

(Left) Takahashi, Tomoko. 2019. [“China’s Interest Seen at the Crossroad of International Institutions -Case Studies on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea-”](#). International Relations 197, Japan Association for International Relations: 120-135 [in Japanese (refereed, first-tier journal in Japan/ sole author)].

Case of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

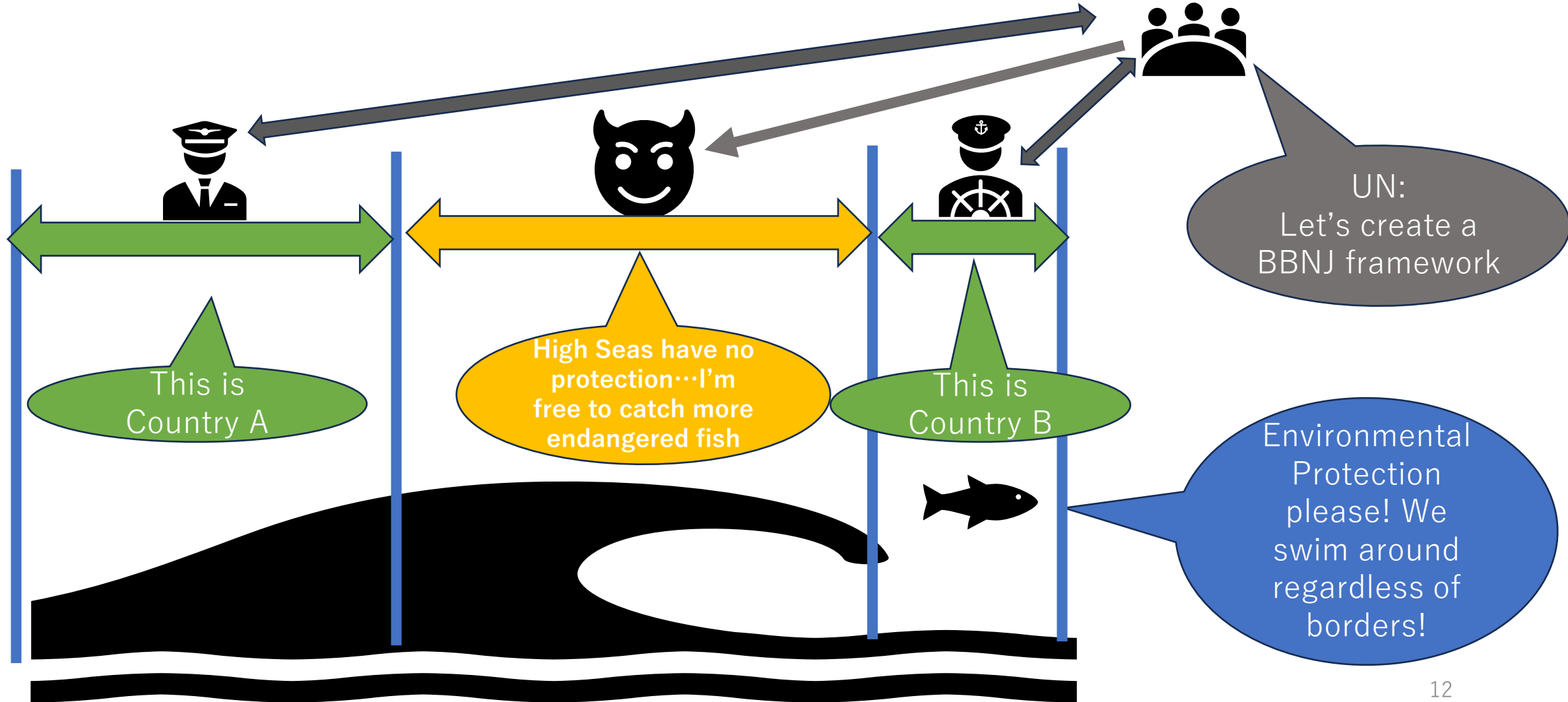
- Existing Research
 - **Talks about the design of international institutions from a bird's eye perspective**
 - **Need to take a state-centric viewpoint (Takahashi 2019)**
 - Lack of researchers at the Cross-Road of International Institutional Research and Comparative Politics/ Area Studies

Figure: The “erosion” of Discretionary Power of Sovereign States that Commit to International Institutions, figure by Tomoko Takahashi.



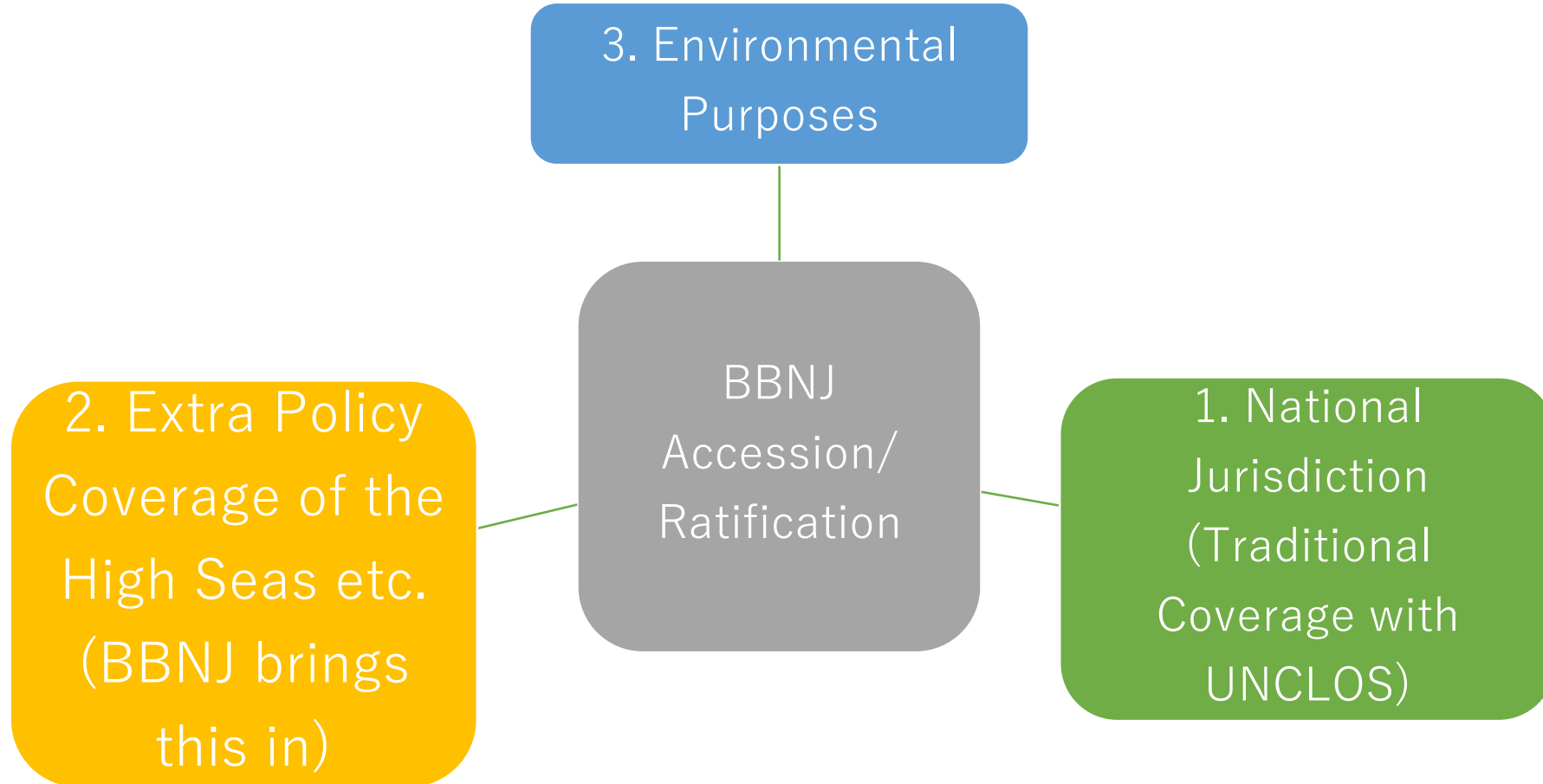
Case of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

- Argument (Takahashi 2019)
 - BBNJ as a case to show how negotiation on environmental protection can converge into the battle between states on their range of national jurisdiction
 - Figure: Essence of the Discussions on BBNJ, figure by Tomoko Takahashi.



Case of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

- Argument (Takahashi 2019)
 - BBNJ as a case to show how negotiation on environmental protection can converge into the battle between states on their range of national jurisdiction
 - Figure: Tripartite Vectors of Discussions on BBNJ, figure by Tomoko Takahashi.



Case of the Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

Narratives from both the international and Chinese levels (Takahashi 2019)

• Narrative on the International Level

- Phase 1:
 - Utter need to protect the environment (beyond national jurisdiction), Vector 3
- Phase 2:
 - Area-based management tools (ABMTs) become an issue, Clash of Vector 1 and 2
 - Marine genetic resources (MGRs) become an issue from Vector 1 (North-South divide)
- Phase 3: Inevitable commitment to imposing policies on areas beyond national jurisdiction
 - Even Vector 3 focal points end up being fought over regarding Vector 1 and 2

• Narrative on the Chinese Level

- Phase 1:
 - Agreement with Vector 3
- Phase 2:
 - Agrees to an international jurisdiction regarding ABMTs, Push for Vector 2
 - Balancing between the North and the South regarding MGRs (“common well-being of mankind” (not “common heritage of mankind”))
- Phase 3:
 - Accepting the usage of Vector 2 for the sake of national interest (maximization of national jurisdiction ≠ maximization of national interests)
 - ex. deep seabed exploration

Conclusion

- The field of International Relations (IR) has been traditionally split into two groups
 - The divide was prominent regarding the feasibility of international cooperation
 - Recent scholarship (in international institutional studies that stem from IPE) emphasizes concrete hypotheses and their testing
- Case of BBNJ as a study that contributes to the maintenance of sustainability
 - Questions regarding commitment to international institutions as erosive factors for national jurisdiction
 - Inevitability of state-centric calculations on stakes → Realism?

Implications

- Latest researchers often lack a specific preference on the whereabouts of norm contents
 - Too much emphasis on dialogues in the “niche” theories and “robust” empirical analysis?
- Collaboration with public policy debates may be necessary to make a difference in real life
 - Assessment of regime complex situations etc.
 - However, we need to keep a “healthy” distance, not just towards governments but also toward international organizations

References

- Distelhorst, Greg, and Richard M. Locke. 2018. "Does Compliance Pay? Social Standards and Firm-Level Trade" *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (3): 695–711.
- Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Relations*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018.
- Morin, Jean-Frédéric, Clara Brandi, and Jakob Schwab. 2024. "Environmental agreements as clubs: Evidence from a new dataset of trade provisions." *The Review of International Organizations* 19: 33-62.
- Murray, Robert W. 2013. "The Politics of the Realist/Liberal Divide", *E-International Relations*, last visited on March 12, 2024 at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/07/12/the-politics-of-the-realistliberal-divide/>.
- Takahashi, Tomoko. 2019. "[China's Interest Seen at the Crossroad of International Institutions -Case Studies on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea-](#)". *International Relations* 197, Japan Association for International Relations: 120-135 [in Japanese (refereed/ sole author)]. (高橋知子「国際制度の交差に見る中国の国益—国連海洋法条約の事例から—」『国際政治』第197号、120-135頁。)

Thank you for listening

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