

NORMATIVE THEORY IN IR: FROST'S CONSTITUTIVE APPROACH

Dr. Zerrin Ayşe Bakan

Ege Üniversitesi
İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi
Öğretim Görevlisi



Uluslararası İlişkilerde Normatif Teori: Frost'un Kurucu Yaklaşımı

Özet

Soğuk Savaş'ın bitimiyle, dikkat çeken normatif sorunların analizinde başvurulacak en önemli teorilerden biri olarak Normatif Teori, Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri arasında gelişme imkanı bulmuştur. Makalede, Normatif Teorinin teorinin çalışma alanı çerçevesinde ele aldığı konular ve kullandığı temel yaklaşımlar incelenip, teorinin Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplinindeki yerine değinilmektedir. Ayrıca, Soğuk Savaş döneminde teorinin gelişmesini engelleyen çeşitli nedenler ve yapılan eleştirilere de yer verilmektedir. Makalenin ikinci kısmında ise, Normatif Teoriye önemli bir katkıda bulunan Mervyn Frost'un 'Kurucu Teorisi' genel hatlarıyla ele alınmaktadır. Kurucu Teori, Frost'un tanımıyla uluslararası ilişkilerdeki 'zor meseleleri' anlamada ve onlara çözümler üretmede Normatif Teoriye yeni bir ivme kazandırmaktadır. Uluslararası İlişkilerdeki 'yerleşik normları' temel olarak alan Kurucu Teori, belli başlı normatif meseleleri çözmek için bir 'arka plan teorisi' oluşturmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bireysel haklar ile devlet egemenliği arasındaki normatif ikilemi çözmeyi hedefleyen Kurucu Teori, Dworkin'in hukuk alanındaki teorisinden yararlanmaktadır. Ayrıca, pozitivistizmin eleştirildiği/terk edildiği ve post-pozitivist teorilerin Uluslararası İlişkileri anlamada yeni açılımlar sunduğu Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Normatif Teorinin bir başka hayati görevi de, Uluslararası İlişkiler akademisyenlerine disiplinin özündeki etik taahhüde sadık kalmalarını hatırlatmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Teori, normatif teori, kurucu teori, uluslararası normlar, uluslararası ilişkiler.

Abstract

This article focuses on the revitalisation of Normative Theory in the post-Cold War era; and it introduces Mervyn Frost's 'Constitutive Theory' as a crucial contribution to Normative International Theory. With the end of the Cold War, the political map of the world has changed dramatically; new normative issues have emerged; the old ones have come to the fore in world politics. While discussing why Normative Theory has had a marginal position in the discipline of IR, the article also examines its content. Then, the article moves onto the overview of Frost's 'Constitutive Theory': it tries to establish a 'background theory' with which the 'hard cases' of international relations could be examined and solved. With his approach, Frost attempts to reconcile the two settled norms of international relations, namely rights and sovereignty. Moreover, Frost emphasises that the IR theorists and academicians have to take normative positions and make them explicit since the original commitment of the discipline is normative itself.

Keywords: Theory, normative theory, constitutive theory, international norms, international relations.

Normative Theory in IR: Frost's Constitutive Approach

For decades, normative theory has been neglected within the discipline of International Relations (IR) due to a set of reasons which mutually reinforced each other's stances: the dominance of positivism, the dominance of realism in IR, and the blocking effects of the Cold War era. In the last two decades we have been witnessing the resurgence of normative theory in IR coinciding with the rise of post-positivist and reflectivist theoretical approaches to the discipline. This paper seeks to explore the role of normative theory in general and Mervyn Frost's 'constitutive theory' in particular.

Normative theorists attempt to clarify basic moral issues and dilemmas of international relations. Frost emphasises that "there are no easy answers to these [ethical] questions and that engaging in normative theory is complicated, difficult and of great practical importance" (Frost, 1994:110). Nevertheless, the centrality of normative issues has been now more widely acknowledged in world politics. As one of the leading contemporary IR normative theorists, Frost puts forward 'a secular Hegelian ethical theory', which he calls 'the constitutive theory of individuality'. With this theory, he tries to construct a 'background theory' which justifies the 'settled norms' of the modern state domain of discourse and which can be used to generate solutions to 'hard cases' of international relations. In doing so, Frost attempts to reconcile state sovereignty with the individual rights. However, Frost's main theoretical concern is not only to clarify 'the ethical standing of institutions', but also to point out the ethical stances of IR theorists. Frost claims that "it is high time that ... international relations theorists be required to spell out and defend their normative positions" (Frost, 1994: 118). Thus, Normative theorists and all of the other IR theorists have an inevitable task to provide necessary theoretical grounds for their peers and the discipline itself so that they would take normative theory seriously in order "to avoid falling behind in its own subject area" (Frost, 1998: 132).

The paper will take the following form: Firstly, I will briefly look at what normative theory attempts to do and which issues it takes as its subject of inquiry. Secondly, I will outline the arguments against normative theory, which all had been obstacles for the development of normative theorising in IR. Thirdly, I will give an overview of Frost's constitutive theory by looking at how he identifies the normative issues and the settled body of norms in international relations and how he tries to reconcile rights and sovereignty. Finally, I will emphasise Frost's crucial claim that we should take ethics seriously and that the ethical standing of IR theorists do matter.

I. CONTENTS OF NORMATIVE THEORY AND ITS ROLE IN IR

Ethics, which is defined as the philosophical study of morality, has developed in three sub-fields as follows: 'Meta-ethics', which is the study of the nature of moral judgement, engages in critical reflection on the meaning of moral judgements and the types of justifications that might be given for them. 'Applied-ethics' is described as the study of right conduct in particular circumstances; and finally, 'Normative-ethics', refers to the study of general theories about right or wrong/good and bad that expounds the systems of moral values (Brown, 1992: 85).

According to Brown, "by normative international relations theory is meant that body of work which addresses the moral dimension of international relations and the wider question of meaning and interpretation generated by the discipline" (Brown, 1992: 3). In other words, normative theory addresses the ethical nature of the relations within the state-centric global practice in a wide context of liberty, distributive justice, sovereignty, violence, just war, human rights and so on. As Frost claims, "all normative issues in world politics today refer, either directly or indirectly, to the state, inter-state relations and the role of individuals as citizens of states" (Frost, 1996: 79). Hence, the main question of normative theory is how to link the ethical values of individuals to social institutions in which they live within, such as family, civil society, religious formations, the state, and the system of sovereign states. Moreover, normative theory has a central concern with how to relate the core normative concepts (such as freedom, equality, justice, democracy, state autonomy, the meaning of war, etc.) with these social arrangements. Frost summarises normative theory's main objectives as follows:

Normative theory always presupposes that actors in the practice of international relations do have alternatives and real choices, and can change their conduct. ...Similarly, normative theory in international relations

presupposes that the international order itself can be deliberately changed in specified ways. In short then, normative theory presupposes that there is an important sense in which people's normative ideas [norms, morals, and principles] can shape the order in which they live (Frost, 1996: 52).

The debates on ethical issues in IR have been brought under two main approaches in order to provide background foundations for normative theories. These are 'cosmopolitan' and 'communitarian' approaches. In the 'cosmopolitan/communitarian' divide, several normative issues are viewed from distinct perspectives: they attempt to sort out the ethical limitations of state sovereignty, the demands on human rights, the issue of distributive justice, the ethics of intervention, and the environmental issues, etc. (Hoffman, 1994: 27-44).

According to the communitarian approach, the autonomy of states is derived from the nature of individuals as being a member of a community. That is to say, individuals gain their status as a result of their membership of a particular community. The communitarians assert that the state, the only legal representative of a community, has an absolute right to autonomy. Thus, the individuals must accept and live according to the limitations that are determined by this highest authority, namely, the state. Nevertheless, the cosmopolitan approach rejects such an understanding and puts forward a universalist notion. They suggest that the autonomy of states is derived from the nature of individuals as a member of humankind. According to the cosmopolitans, all individuals are a part of the humanity and they are born with certain natural rights, which are applied to any human beings on an equal basis. As a result, the universal rights possessed by the individual override the state autonomy. In other words, the autonomy of a state can be limited by the universal rights.

On human rights issues, for communitarians, individuals do not exist as autonomous entities but they receive their identities as a result of being a member of community. Therefore, each community has a right to develop its own social, political, or economic system, and individuals can not make claims beyond the limits of these systems. Cosmopolitans take an universalist position advocating that human rights are possessed by individuals as autonomous moral agents, rather than as members of a community. For them, rights are gained by an individual because of his own status, and therefore they are independent from any particular system of community.

Whereas communitarians adopt the norm of non-intervention underpinning order in international society, cosmopolitans accept intervention only if it is justified under specific conditions such as in the preservation of human rights and social justice. On claims for distributive justice,

cosmopolitans take account of equality on the basis of individuals as ends; it is required to fulfil the obligations through social institutions in order to achieve distributive justice. On the other hand, communitarians argue that, “social institutions are constitutive of the moral individual, and therefore justice claims against others are necessarily limited to particular communities – they cannot be universalized.” (Hoffman, 1994: 36).

From the cosmopolitan perspective, environmental issues have normative concerns and there is a need to develop more globalist theoretical views and common principles underpinning ‘global common good and responsibility’ for the environment. On the other hand, communitarians do not accept such a global approach to the environmental issues: since each environmental problem requires a different solution and that states would act to protect their own environment in favour of their national economic interests, it is not likely to develop an universalist response for these issues. Therefore, environmental issues are to be considered one of the aspects of state interests.

In sum, normative theory faces with a wide range of ethical questions to deal with such as: to what extent is state sovereignty more important than human rights? Do human rights override state autonomy? What is our responsibility for preserving human rights and justice? What kinds of wars are just? What are the justifications for intervention? To what extent is environmental issues a global concern? We can add many more to these.¹ As Frost points out, “there are no easy answers to these questions and engaging in normative theory is complicated, difficult and of great practical importance.” (Frost, 1994b : 110).²

1 For good accounts discussing normative implications of these wide range of issues, see: Walzer, Michael (2000), *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (USA: HarperCollins Publishers) & Nardin, Terry (2002), “The Moral Basis of Humanitarian Intervention,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, 16/1: 57-70 & Singer, Peter (2004), *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*, (New Haven: Yale University Press) & Sterba, James P. (2005), “How to Achieve Global Justice,” *Journal of Global Ethics*, 1/1: 53-68.

2 For accounts discussing normative issues in Turkish, see: Dağı, İhsan D. (2001), “Normatif Yaklaşımlar: Adalet, Eşitlik ve İnsan Hakları,” Eralp, Atilla (ed.), *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Yaklaşımlar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları): 185-226 & Bakan, Zerrin Ayşe (2002), “Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında Devlet Egemenliğinin Sınırlarına Normatif Bir Bakış,” *Avrasya Dosyası*, 8/3: 140-153.

So, where is normative theory standing within the discipline of IR?³ Is international ethics an old fantasy, an intellectual fad, or a new field? (Brown, 1994: 1-12). Brown argues that there is no compelling reason to label international ethics as a fantasy since it “*is* a project and not an accomplishment.” (Brown, 1994: 3). Examining the second alternative, which takes international ethics as a fad, Brown discusses two possible theses on how ethics has shifted from the margins of the field to a closer place of the centre: Is the revival of normative theory a response to the decline of American hegemony, or is it a result of post-Cold War politics? According to Brown, the latter is more plausible. If international ethics is neither a fad nor a fantasy, is it “a “field” - a legitimate specialised area of inquiry, of knowledge?” (Brown, 1994: 6). He claims that international ethics has not fulfilled the requirements of being a field yet, and it is not possible to be sure about its future. Nevertheless, theoretical debates and contributions continue to foster the normative theory as one well-known example of this being Mervyn Frost’s attempt to create a new theoretical approach to the ethics in IR.

II. ARGUMENTS AGAINST NORMATIVE THEORY

Until the last decade or two, theoretical attempts made by IR theorists have been mostly focusing on explaining and predicting general trends and certain prior conditions under which inter-state practices occur. In the inter-paradigm debate each paradigm which “is itself part of a general mental map” (Banks, 1985: 7) rely on its own assumptions. The traditional/rational theories of IR presuppose a positivist approach, which underlines a scientific explanation of their object of inquiry in a value-free way avoiding any ethical judgements. In this positivist formulation of theorising, normative theory has been neglected in IR for a number of different reasons, which involve the predominance of positivism in social sciences, the dominance of realism in the discipline of IR, and the blocking effects of the Cold War politics.

The predominance of the positivist approach to the study of IR has invalidated the recognition of the ethical grounds of several issues. Nevertheless, as Neufeld puts it, “the rise of interpretative approaches to the study of society have challenged positivism’s hegemony, and have created a space for the full recognition of the non-reductive power of human

³ For a detailed work on the content and role of normative theory, see: Cochran, Molly (1999), *Normative Theory in International Relations: A Pragmatic Approach*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

consciousness” (Neufeld, 1995: 93). The positivist tenet of the ‘value-free’ nature of scientific knowledge has been challenged. Moreover, it has been claimed that positivism also has a ‘hidden normative content’ (Neufeld, 1995: 98-106). Primarily, researchers using a positivist approach within the study of IR have to choose a research field as well as a theory in order to examine the topic they have chosen. At this stage, they “may be influenced by their personal values in the pre-scientific choice of topic” (Neufeld, 1995: 99). Moreover, the theory which social scientists use to explain their research topic is already embedded in certain normative preferences. So the chosen theory determines the facts, which will be taken into account according to its mainstream assumptions. In the next stage, in order to explain the issue faced with, it is required to make an interpretation viewing from the each side of the problem. For a comprehensive understanding of each side’s claims, value systems should be considered. Furthermore, the researcher’s act of interpretation itself should be interpreted in the highlighting of his own values.⁴

Consequently, as Frost points out, “International Relations scholars have to take normative positions” (Frost, 1994: 118). Moreover, he asserts that “there is no way in which social scientists may legitimately avoid becoming involved in normative theory” (Frost, 1996: 34). This is primarily due to the fact that “the material which social scientists study is human actions and that these actions cannot be simply observed but need to be understood” (Frost, 1996: 40). In order to do this, the observer or the investigator must engage in normative theory. Neufeld expresses a similar view asserting that, “the nature of positivism’s hidden normative content is now manifest ... [since it contains] explicit and implicit value judgements, and controversial normative and ideological claims” (Neufeld, 1995: 105) despite its value-free and objective talk.

Another reason, which contributed to keep normative theory in the margins of the discipline, has been the dominance of realist theory in the field of IR. Briefly, realism defines a ‘balance of power’ system in which the primary actor, namely the state, pursues its own national interests (often defined in military terms), utilising a rational decision-making process. In this sharp view of the world, there is no space left for ethical judgements in the realm of ‘high politics’. However, “realist concern with power and the balance of power

⁴ This approach is known as the *Verstehen* approach to social sciences, which is also referred as ‘interpretative social science’ and sometimes as ‘humanist social science’. In 1958, Peter Winch combined the insights of these earlier theorists and published his conclusions in his work called *The Idea of a Social Science*.

is closely related to the value commitments of statesmen who see order as essential to national security” (Viotti/Kauppi, 1993: 536). The rational-actor model, which is central to realist thinking, is not value-free itself. Firstly, determining the national objectives requires value choices; and secondly, the means, which will be used to achieve these goals, has to be chosen according to the decision on which one is the best or more efficient. This type of decision-making underlines a value choice. Additionally, Frost claims that the primary actor-state, in its origin, has built into certain normative implications. Frost draws attention to the deep value commitments such as sovereignty and the right to self-determination that have been claimed by states:

Participating in a (social) practice (be it a game or a political arrangement like the state or the system of states) requires that the participants recognise themselves as bound by a set of rules; that is as bound by certain norms. Thus where a state exists there must be a group of people who see themselves as constituting a state through their mutual recognition of a specified set of rules. ... Thus a state is not a reality which exists independently of the ideas (including normative ones) that people adhere (Frost, 1996: 60).

According to Frost and Brown, another reason that has invalidated normative theory is the Cold War system itself. In the Cold War period, it was meaningless to make ethical claims within a bipolar system of power and nuclear deterrence. As Frost puts it, “in a ‘life or death’ struggle there did not appear to be much point in spending time and effort discussing the shape of a just world order” (Frost, 1996: 5). Therefore, the end of the Cold War, the emergence of new states bringing new ethical problems, and the rise of ethical concerns in world politics paved the way for normative theory to flourish in the last two decades.

III. MERVYN FROST’S CONSTITUTIVE THEORY OF INDIVIDUALITY

Mervyn Frost’s *‘Ethics in International Relations: A Constitutive Theory (1996)’* offers many insights into the IR theory and the practice of world politics. In his work, Frost attempts to construct a ‘background theory’, which will provide guidelines and justification for the consideration of what he calls ‘hard cases’ of IR. To this end, he applies Dworkin’s jurisprudential constructivist method to IR. By using Dworkin’s theory of legal argument in order to cope with the hard cases in law (which are not clearly covered by any settled rule of law or precedent but come up for decision before a judge), Frost tries to generate solutions to the hard cases of IR: “According to Dworkin’s model, it is possible to settle hard cases, ...but not without getting involved in

“deep” discussions about the basic justifications for the institutions within which these issues arise” (frost, 1996a: 98). This entails, according to Frost, the construction of a background theory for the institution within which the hard case in question arises. In his construction of a normative theory of international relations, Frost identifies the following steps:

First, we must list all those norms in international relations that are considered settled in terms of the modern state domain of discourse. Second, we must attempt to construct the best possible background justification for this settled body of norms. Third, following through on step two, we must apply the procedure of reflective equilibrium. [This is a back-and-forth procedure, by moving back and forth between the settled rules and the background theory the judge seeks equilibrium.] Fourth, with the aid of the background theory we must generate answers to some of the hard cases facing international relations theorists (Frost, 1996a : 104).

Therefore, Frost offers a list of the settled norms in IR. He considers “a norm as settled where it is generally recognized that any argument denying the norm requires special justification” (Frost, 1996a: 105). However, that does not mean that he proposes that most people or states do in fact obey the norm. But rather it means that the states attempt to provide special justifications for their non-compliance with the norm. The settled body of norms in international relations within the modern state domain of discourse is introduced by Frost under four main headings: the sovereignty (S) norms, international law (L) norms, modernization (M) norms and domestic (D) norms. The list of these settled norms within the modern state domain of discourse, as identified by Frost, is as follows:

It is settled that the following are goods:

- S1. The preservation of the society of states.
- S2. State sovereignty.
- S3. Anti-imperialism.
- S4. The balance of power.
- S5. Patriotism.
- S6. Protecting the interests of a state’s citizens.
- S7. Non intervention.
- S8. Self-determination.
- L1. International law.
- L2. *Ius ad bellum*.
- L3. *Ius in bello*.

- L4. Collective security.
- L5. Economic sanctions (under specified circumstances).
- L6. The diplomatic system.
- M1. Modernization.
- M2. Economic cooperation.
- D1. Democratic institutions within states.
- D2. Human rights (Frost, 1996a: 111-112).

At this point of his argument, Frost focuses on constructing a background theory “which will enable us to justify and reconcile these two sets of seemingly antagonistic norms on the list of settled norms, ... which assert that state sovereignty and the preservation of the system of states is a good, and those norms premised upon the notion that individual human rights are a basic good” (Frost, 1996a: 137-138). In order to elucidate his point, he offers a neo-Hegelian account of how not only individuals within societies, but also individual states within the society of states play mutually constitutive roles, establishing, Frost believes, a meaningful link between constituted individuality and the society of states. He labels this theory as ‘the constitutive theory of individuality’, which “aims to bring to light the internal connections between being an individual rights holder of a particular kind and being a member of a certain kind of social or political institution, where both the rights and the institution are conceived of as being components of a wider practice” (Frost, 1996a: 140). Examining the individuality and the family, civil society, the state and the society of sovereign states he infers that individuals with the rights are “constituted within a system of mutual recognition which includes within it the institutions of family, civil society, the state and the system of sovereign states” (Frost, 1996a: 158).

Frost’s attempt to construct a background theory for reconciling the demands for sovereignty with the declaration of human rights, has generated scholarly positive criticism acknowledging Frost’s theorising as a crucial attempt in furthering normative international relations theory.⁵ Moreover, in

⁵ For such acknowledgements on Frost’s constitutive theory, see: Bacon, Paul (1996), “Settled Norms: A Critical Evaluation of the International Theory of Mervyn Frost,” *Global Society*, 10/3: 279-301 & Sutch, Peter (2000a), “Global Civil Society and International Ethics: Mervyn Frost’s Restatement of Constitutive Theory,” *Review of International Studies*, 26/3: 485-489 & Sutch, Peter (2000b), “Human Rights as

one of the mainstream IR textbooks, Smith identifies Frost as one of the “particularly influential theorists” (Smith, 2001: 230) on the normative question of the moral value to be assigned to state autonomy. In another one, Jackson and Sorensen evaluate Frost’s work as follows: “A less widespread but in some ways more fundamental attempt to interrogate the morality of individuals and the morality of political communities is set forth by Mervyn Frost (1996). ... According to Frost, ... the aim of normative theory is to sort out ‘the ethical standing of institutions’ in relation to each other” (Jackson/Sorensen, 2001: 242).

In spite of the revival of ethical concerns in the discipline of IR, “normative theory has still not moved centre stage in the discipline” (Frost, 1996a: 7). One of the main reasons of why the normative turn is still not taken, is because of the role of the IR theorists who “for the most part of [their theorising on a whole range of issues in IR] their ethical stances are concealed under a disguise of scientific objectivity” (Frost, 1998b: 119). Although all social theorists as well as IR scholars have to take normative positions, Frost believes that these are always kept implicit because of the shadow of positivism. However, he asserts that “it is high time that ... international relations theorists be required to spell out and defend their normative positions” (Frost, 1994b: 118). This is due to the very fact that every person, every citizen, every family and every state make ethical claims and they take certain ethical stances when they face with normative questions in everyday life. Like them, IR theorists as being human-beings, citizens of a state, members of the global civil society and actors in world politics via their theorising, also find themselves to hold ethical beliefs about typical kinds of issues such as terrorism, war, human rights, environmental problems, migrants, economic and social distributions of food, water, housing education, health care, etc. (Frost, 1998b: 120). If this is the case, then that means that IR theorists have certain ethical stances in everyday life and that they also “entrench ethical positions through the kinds of theorizing they do. [Therefore,] it is time that they publicly defended the ethical choices they promote” (Frost, 1998b: 132).

IV. CONCLUSION

Having examined the reasons, which contributed to keeping normative theory out of the centre of IR, I briefly looked at the contribution of normative

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theory and its role in the discipline. I have also overviewed Frost's crucial attempt to create a background theory, which he calls 'the constitutive theory of individuality'. Finally, I have emphasised the ethical turn that the IR theory and theorists should take, which is one of the central points in Frost's normative theorising.

So far, normative theory has been ignored in the field of IR until the recent changes, which occurred both in the order of political system (i.e. the end of Cold War) and in the emergence of more intensive academic concern to normative issues within the post-Cold War environment. These developments both in theory and practice have given way to the revival of normative theory gaining a place much closer to the centre than a decade ago. In the highlighting of these changes, Neufeld suggests that IR theory must move in a non-positivist direction, and should commit itself to human emancipation. Neufeld takes recent developments such as postmodernist, feminist and normative approaches as evidence of such a current shift in the discipline. Additionally, he claims that, "If International Relations theory is to remain 'true to its moral commitment', the restructuring process now underway must be brought to its 'subversive and revolutionary' conclusion"(Neufeld, 1995: 125).

Therefore, attempts to flourish normative theory, as one of which has been done by Frost, assist to fulfil IR theory's original concern: to understand the reasons underlying war and to find out the ways to achieve peace. In this respect, normative theory provides a crucial account of how we should understand world politics and how the distinct claims in terms of main themes of international relations (sovereignty, freedom, human rights, humanitarian intervention, justice, etc.) might be reconciled. Although it seems hard not to agree with the suggestion that normative theory is not still central to the discipline, and it does not form a unified field of opinions on academic studies; it does not require to ignore the fact that it is necessary to the study of world politics. Since several normative issues and ethical considerations have emerged in the post-Cold War politics, normative theory has an inevitable task to provide theoretical grounds to the practice of world politics.

Consequently, this paper concludes that even though the recent resurgence of normative theory in IR has marked a crucial point in opening up space for 'ethical international theorising', there are still more that needs to be done in terms of improving the theory itself and its prescriptions for the practice of world politics. Thus, by setting forth a fundamental attempt to reconcile the morality of individuals and the morality of political communities, Mervyn Frost takes his place amongst the most influential normative theorists. Furthermore, in line with Frost, the paper suggests that regardless of their theory or methodology, IR theorists should accept their implicit or explicit normative

positions and reveal their ethical standings as this is indispensable for moving towards theorising for an ethical international relations, which should be the true nature of the discipline.

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