

# Example of essay on realism and neo-realism

[Politics](#), [International Relations](#)



Structural realism or Neo-realism is a well recognized theory of international relations, in the book of “ Theory of International Politics”, outlined by Kenneth Waltz. His argument favoured a clear and systematic approach of the international relations structure. Considering Neo-liberalism, the topic of neo-realism is considered a great and influential approach to the discipline of international relations (Keohane & Robert, 1986). These perspectives have had a great dominance to international relations over a long period. The topic of neo-realism came from North America as a discipline of political science, and continues to reformulate and dominate the tradition of classical realist of Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, and E. H. Carr. The main argument of Realists is that the most important factor in international relations is power. There are two main subdivisions in Neo-realism, the offensive and defensive neo-realism. This article outlines the reflection of the development of international relations as a social science in the tradition of positivism and the nature of the international structure.

## **The Theory**

Neo-realism argues that the international structures nature is clearly defined by its respective ordering principle, distribution of its capabilities, and its anarchy. The distribution of its capabilities is a measure of the great powers within the international structure system. Due to decentralization of the anarchic ordering principle of the international structure, there is the lack of any central authority, and each state is formally equal within the system (Keohane & Robert, 1986). Actions are taken on the basis of self-help within the states, implying that these states seek their individual interests and do not subordinate these interests to the interest of other sovereign states.

## **Struggle for power**

In the Anarchy and struggle for power, it is argued that great powers are always scrolling in search for opportunities to gain more power over their rivals, with the main goal of hegemony. This is a perspective that does not give room for status quo powers. It only allows the unusual states that achieve preponderance (Keohane & Robert, 1986). The system is instead, filled with big powers that certain revisionist intentions within them. Great powers always vie with each other for power and continue to strive for hegemony. This is derived from practical assumptions from the international system. The assumptions depict a global world in which states have realistic reason to think and behave aggressively. The system put emphasis on the need for states to source for available opportunities in order to maximize their power over other states.

## **Bedrock assumptions**

This talks about the first assumption as the international system being anarchies. This does not imply that the international system is rived by disorder or it is chaotic. Realism depicts a world that is characterised by security competition and war. In its own setting, the notion of realism has nothing to do with conflict (Vasquez, 1998). It is a principle of an ordering nature, which shows that the system has independent states with no central authority governing them. Having no higher ruling in the international system, sovereignty inheres in the states. There is no specific government over other governments.

The second assumption talks of great powers possessing some effective military capabilities. This ability gives this powers them a leeway to destroy

and hurt each other. These states are considered potentially dangerous to each other. Other states have more military than others, therefore, more dangerous than others. The military power of the state is identified by the particular weaponry at their disposal. In the event that there are no weapons, individuals of a given state could still use they're hands and feet to attack other states (Vasquez, 1998). It is considered the case of lack of weapons that, for every single neck, there are two hands available to chock it.

The third assumption argues that states can never be sure and certain about the intentions of other states. There is no surety of a state that another state will or will not use its military capability to counter and attack at them. This does not mean that, at any instance, states have hostile intentions, but no one can predict or be certain about their plans or intentions at any instance. In this world, there are several factors that promote aggression; therefore, no state can be certain if another state is motivated by one of these factors. In the fourth assumption, survival is perceived as the primary goal for great powers. States work hard in ensuring that they maintain their territorial integrity as well as the autonomy of their domestic and political order (Vasquez, 1998). Survival is a factor that dominates other motivates. In the event that a state is concurred, it has minimal chances to be in a position to follow other goals. States have the option of pursuing other goals, but security is a priority and one of the most important objectives. With the security, states are in a prepared position for war with other states.

## **Political Power**

Political power can view from the perspective of being a means to a nation ends. International politics mostly entails the struggle for governance and power. In all the programs, plans and events that take place in the international politics setting, power is always an important factor (Vasquez, 1998). There is a clear distinction made between power and force, power and influence, legitimate and illegitimate power, and usable and unusable power. Political power is different from force from the view of the actual coexistence of violence. Threats which are made in the form of physical violence by the police, capital punishment, imprisonment, or war are an intrinsic element of government politics. The abdication of political power is signified by the actuality of violence in favour of military power. When it comes to international politics, the most important factor in making for the political strength and power of a nation is the armed strength as potentiality or threat.

In the concept of international politics, two clear conclusions can be cited. Not every action performed by the nation is done with respect to another nation of different political nature. Many activities of this nature are performed without considering power ( Buzan, Bary, Charles, Jones & Richard, 1993). The second conclusion made is that; not all nations are involved in political to the same extend. The degree of involvement in international politics varies from the maximum, currently attained by the US government, to the minimum involvement by countries like Venezuela. Same extremes of these variations can be realized in the history of particular countries. For Instance, Spain is considered as one of the most active

participants in the fight and struggle for power on the international scene in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Other countries that participated in this movement include Sweden, Australia, and Switzerland. A dynamic quality is realized from the relation of nations to international politics.

## **International morality**

When dealing with international morality, there are two extremes of either understanding it by completely denying the statement that diplomats are moved anything or overrating the influence of certain ethics upon international politics (Buzan, Bary, Charles, Jones & Richard, 1993). There is a confusion made between the moral rules people observe with those they do pretend to observe. Writers and scholars have argued that the moral precepts that need to be taken by diplomats and statesmen are ensuring trust in making their deals, keeping of promises, protection of minorities, and respect for international law. By doing this, it helps make relations between different nations more peaceful and reduces instances of war.

## **Conclusion**

Neo-realism argues that the international structure and system can be defined by its main ordering principle, the anarchy. It is measured by the distribution of what they are capable of, and the level of great power within the international system. The survival of the state is ensured by pursuing their goals because this is the only prerequisite involved. The most influencing force of a state survival is a major factor influencing their behaviour. It also ensures that a given state develops effective offensive military, in order to carry out foreign interventions and also as means to

increase their respective relative power. Therefore, in order to balance power, there are two major ways in which a given state should follow. These are the external balancing and internal balancing ( Buzan, Bary, Charles, Jones & Richard, 1993). Internal balancing helps a state grow its own capabilities by increasing military spending and the economic growth. External balancing on the other hand assists the state when it enters into a variety of alliances and check for more powerful states

### **Works cited**

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