

Kenneth's waltz
systems of theory of
int'l politics critique
and evaluation



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R. Preeti 4/8/2008 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS International Relations is a very comprehensive term today, which is inclusive of a plethora of elements, especially in this era of globalisation. " It includes much more than relations among nation states; and international organisations and groups. It includes a variety of transitional relationship at various levels, above and below the level of Nation States. Still, the nation state remains the main actor in International Relations", say Palmer and Perkins.

Over the centuries, especially after the two World Wars, International Relations have undergone a sea-change. Post the Second World War, Neo-Liberalism became a significant feature of International Relations. The concept gained impetus, with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community, now known as the European Union.

Then came about the Neo-Realistic Approach, put forth by Kenneth Waltz. This approach has been hailed as a more scientific approach. Waltz' 'Theory of International Politics' (1979) laid the basis of the behavioural theory. He does not concern himself exclusively with the ethics of state craft or moral dimensions of foreign policy.

In his first work, 'Man, the State and War-A Theoretical Analysis' (1959), he agreed with the classical realist argument that power-seeking state is also a creation of man. However, twenty years later, Waltz acknowledged the bipolarity and dominance of super-powers in this world. He traces the anarchical state system and highlights the neorealist tenets.

Waltz, in his theory, talks about the absence of a world government and states that International Relations is an anarchical system. He also talks about Sovereignty of states and that the International System comprises similar units. He goes on to say that states are similar functionally, but <https://assignbuster.com/kenneths-waltz-systems-of-theory-of-intl-politics-critique-and-evaluation/>

different in terms of power and capabilities. In 1980s, the Neo-Realistic theory was widely accepted, with the revival of the new Cold War. Thus, Neo-Realism attempts to explain patterns of International Distribution of Power.

Waltz' theory is also known as Structural Realism, for this reason.

In my opinion, the theory proposed by Waltz is extremely relevant in today's scenario. In spite of theories being put forth, stating that states are equal by virtue of their sovereignty, irrespective of whether or not they are big states; the pragmatic reality seems to confer more power to those states that are already powerful!

For instance, the United States is equivalent to every other state, theoretically, since all the states are sovereign by nature. However, in the practical plane, the United States is the most powerful state, owing to its supremacy in terms of possession of nuclear power and a strong military base. The economy of the United States is also a supportive base for its supremacy.

It is owing to this superiority that no other country can overrun a sanction or a decree made by the United States, practically. Theorists however, might not agree with this idea, but the developing and the under-developed regions are well-aware of this equation and distribution of power on the International Front.

Therefore, my opinion coincides with that of Kenneth Waltz; who states that states gain power owing to their military base, self- defence and economic status. Sovereignty, in the pragmatic sense is subdued by this concept of power.

REFERENCES

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