

Theories of International Relations

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- Realism (Hans Morgenthau)
- Neorealism (Kenneth Waltz)
- Constructivism (Alexander Wendt)
- System Approach (Morton Kaplan)

Realism

It assumes that nation-states are unitary, geographically based actors in an anarchic international system with no authority above capable of regulating interactions between states as no true authoritative world government exists. Secondly, it assumes that sovereign states, rather than intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, or multinational corporations, are the primary actors in international affairs

Neorealism

- Neorealism contends that the effect of structure must be taken into account in explaining state behaviour. It shapes all foreign policy choices of states in the international arena.
- According to neorealists, structure is considered an extremely important element in IR and is defined twofold as: a) the ordering principle of the international system which is anarchy, and b) the distribution of capabilities across units.

Constructivism

- Constructivism argues that international reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures which give meaning to the material world.
- Constructivist theory criticises the static assumptions of traditional international relations theory and emphasizes that international relations is a social construction.
- Constructivists also believe that social norms shape and change foreign policy over time rather than security which realists cite.

System Approach

- Systems Approach seeks to analyse international relations as a system of interactions which are interdependent and interrelated. It studies international relations as a system of behaviour of international actors. Each nation acts and reacts in the international environment and its behaviour is characterised by regularities.
- The six kinds of systems are- The Balance of Power System; The Loose Bi-polar System; The Tight Bi-polar System; The Universal System; The Hierarchical System; The Unit Veto System.

Marxist International Relations Theory

- Marxist theories attack the realist/liberal view of state conflict or cooperation, instead focusing on the economic and material aspects. It tries to reveal how the economy trumps other concerns, which allows for the elevation of class and class conflicts as the focus of the study.
- World System Analysis
- Dependency Theory

Feminism and IR

- A feminist approach is grouped in the broad category of theoretical approaches known as reflectivism, representing a divergence from approaches adhering to a rationalist outlook based on the premises of rational choice theory; reflectivist approaches, which also include constructivism, post-structuralism, and postcolonialism, regard state identities and interests as continuously in flux, so that norms and identity play as much a role in shaping policy as material interests.
- Cynthia Enloe
- Carol Cohn