

The Anarchic Structure Of World Politics

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In this article, Kenneth Waltz begins to define how politics is ordered as a system, composed of a structure and its interacting units (p.49). However, he goes on to state, structure is only useful in definition if interactivity between the units is completely ignored, but their positions or relations to one another are concentrated on. We must ignore the personality, behavior, and interactivity between the actors, and only look at their relative positions within society. Domestic politics and international politics are quite different from one another, and their structures are quite different as well.

The domestic political structure is defined by the principle of which it is ordered, the specifications of its functions, and the distribution of capabilities (p.51). According to Waltz, domestic political structure is hierarchical and centralized. By hierarchical, what he means is that there are certain "rulers" (in the case of the United States, the President and Congress) that pass legislation onto the "ruled" (citizens). Also, it holds that the U.S., for example, is centralized in that all the states can make their own laws, but the government in Washington, D.C. has the final word. Society in the domestic sense is ordered and functional. However, just the opposite is true in the international political structure. The "government" here is anarchic and decentralized, which we agree with. There are no "world rulers" who pass absolute laws onto the citizens of the world. Each state has its own laws and ideas on what it wants to do. The world is separate, in a sense chaotic, and because of the lack of an overall government, anarchic.

To explain how international political structures come about even in their anarchic state, a comparison to the economy is brought up by Waltz, p. 53. He argues that units' own interests are spontaneous and individual in origin. To increase their productivity, units converge with others like themselves. In the real world, this corresponds to the fact that some states bond with others for reasons like safety and security. They are looking out for their own good by depending on another state.

Because states are the most important actors in the world of politics, international political structures are in terms of the states. That is not to say, however, that this will never change. If individuals, for example, became the most important actors, international political structure would be in terms of them. Think about this: our economy is defined by the businesses that make it up. And what are businesses? The most important actors. Just like in international politics, states play the biggest roles in trade, foreign policy, and foreign relations, so international politics is in terms of the states. Specifically, international politics is like states/units following the same patterns of actions.

In international/anarchic forms, like units/states interact with one another, while in domestic/hierarchical forms, *unlike* units/states interact. This is quite logical. Within the U.S., many of the states are inherently different. Florida has the weather to grow citrus fruits, Michigan is a prime source of fresh water, New York is an important trade area, etc. All of these different states interact with one another to satisfy as many needs as possible, all within one nation. However, the U.S. interacts most with states like itself in terms of the economy and stability, like Canada and Europe. We want to remain stable by diversification within a state, and interact with other stable states such as ourselves.

But, not all states are alike in their forms of government or ideas on how international politics should be run. So how is world fighting kept at bay? Through the use of power. The states with the most power are those with the greatest capabilities. The entire structure of the political system can be changed with changes in the capabilities of certain states. Take our own country, the U.S. We have money, intelligence, military arms, and technology- all the *capabilities* to take over smaller nations, solve problems, etc. Our ability to accomplish so much is what gives us power. Furthermore, the only way big things can be accomplished is by states with grand capabilities. This is one of the major

The anarchic structure of world politics is a fundamental concept in international relations that describes the nature of the global system. This framework posits that the international arena operates in a state of anarchy, meaning there is no overarching authority or global government to enforce rules or maintain order among states. The implications of this structure are profound, influencing the behavior of states, the nature of international conflicts, and the dynamics of cooperation. In this article, we will explore the concept of anarchy in world politics, its historical evolution, its theoretical underpinnings, and its implications for state behavior and international relations.

The Concept of Anarchy in World Politics

Anarchy in the context of international relations does not imply chaos or disorder; rather, it signifies the absence of a central authority. States operate in a self-help system where they prioritize their own survival and interests. The following points elucidate the nature of anarchy in world politics:

- Decentralization: Unlike domestic politics, where a central government enforces laws and maintains order, the international system lacks a supreme authority. Each state is sovereign and operates independently.
- Self-Help: In an anarchic system, states cannot rely on others for security. They must depend on their own capabilities and resources to ensure their survival.
- Power Competition: Anarchy fosters a competitive environment where states strive to maximize their power and influence. This often leads to rivalries and conflicts.