IR

Wendt and Wight

Presented by (Name)

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Wendt's Three Cultures of Anarchy

Wendt views international relations as fundamentally anarchical, precisely because there are no international governmental structures that are significant beyond the states that participate in them (Lacassagne, 2012). Yet, there are three cultures in which such structures or theories of such structures fall into (Moravcsik, 1997):

Hobbesian: a Hobbesian culture assumes constant conflict between states, leading to limited shared ideas and a constant state of vying for power. The *enemy* is the subject position.

Lockean: Not a constant existential war, but still assumes major conflict is normal and that such conflict is strategies, aimed at the advancement of individual positions. The *rival* is the subject position.

Kantian: Commitment to non-violence and the necessity of mutual aid. Still no international structure to bring the world out of anarchy. The *friend* is the subject position.

Wight's Three Traditions Of International Theory

Wight categorized international theories along three historical/ideological lines (Wight & Porter, 1996; Boucher, 1998):

Realism: the pursuit of power is the aim of international actors (states) and power can only be defined in relative terms.

Rationalism: international intercourse is the defining feature of international theory and is entirely dependent on the social and cultural norms of each individual state in the system.

Revolutionism: the ideal international structure of one of a single world-state, not a single state serving a hegemonic role, though such a transition may include anarchical structures.

Constructivism

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The major point of agreement between the competing approaches of Wendt and Wight is constructivism.

"Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims: (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory; (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective rather than material; and (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature [as neorealists maintain] or domestic politics [as neoliberals favor]" (Behravesh, 2011).

Solidified Global Order

Wendt holds that the international structures hardens with each state holding onto territory nearly permanently.

No World State

A world government would be required to escape anarchy.

Escaping Anarchy

Escaping anarchy would necessarily mean the formation of a world government that superseded or challenged any hegemony.

Revolution

Wight recognizes the possibility of a world revolution that would result in some form of world-state or world-government.

Anarchy

Wendt is committed to an anarchical structure of international relations, while Wight is not.

IOs

The role of international organizations in international relations serves as both sources of agreement and disagreement between Wendt and Wight.

The UN as a World Government?

The UN is a world government, but one with no force or authority independent of individual states (Hawkins et al., 2006).

Current Role of IOs

IOs currently serve as facilitators between state relations, not dictators to such relations.

Dependence of IOs on States

The power of all IOs is entirely dependent on the military and soft powers of individual states.

Future of IOs

Wendt would argue that there can never be an IO independent of individual state power, while Wight holds that the formation of an empowered IO is possible under revolutionist positions.
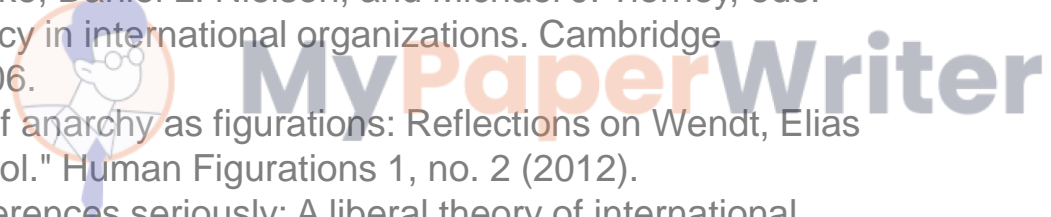
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Conclusion

- The constructivism perspectives on international relations are focused on historical and social constructions of the current IR systems.

- Wendt assumes anarchy, identifying historical shifts in IR and what can be viewed as advancements towards more friendly relations in an anarchical system.

- Wight views the historical trend as heading towards a global-state with a world government, escaping international anarchism.

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