
 <p><u>Norbert Merkovity</u></p>	 <p><u>14-19 minutes</u></p>	<p>Thing to remember:</p> <p>The neo-neo debate is not a debate between two polar opposite worldviews.</p>
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The ‘Neo-Neo’ Debate

The neo-neo debate has been the dominant focus in international relations theory scholarship in the US for the last 20 years.

More than just theories, neorealism and neo-liberalism represent paradigms or conceptual frameworks that shape individuals’ images of the world and influence research priorities and policy debates and choices.

There are several versions of neorealism or neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism in the academic world refers most often to

neoliberal institutionalism.

In the policy world, neoliberalism is identified with the promotion of capitalism and western democratic values and institutions.

Neorealist and neo-liberal theories are status-quo oriented problem-solving theories.

These theories share many assumptions about actors, values, issues and power arrangements in the international system.

Neorealists and neoliberals study **different worlds**. Neorealists study security issues and are concerned with issues of power and survival. Neoliberals study political economy and focus on cooperation and institutions.

Neorealism today

Neorealism is often used inter-changeably with **structural realism**.

[Kenneth Waltz's structural realism](#) has had a major impact on scholars in international relations. Waltz claims that the structure of the international system is the key factor in shaping the behaviour of states. Waltz's neorealism also expands our view of **power and capabilities**; however, he agrees with traditional realists when he states that major powers still determine the nature of the international system.

Structural realists minimise the importance of national attributes as determinants of a state's foreign policy behaviour. To these neorealists, all **states are functionally similar units**, experiencing the same constraints presented by **anarchy**.

Structural realists accept many assumptions of **traditional realism**. They believe that force remains an important and effective tool of statecraft and **balance of power** is still the central mechanism for order in the system.

[Joseph Grieco represents](#) a group of neorealists or modern realists who are critical of neoliberal institutionalists who claim states are mainly interested in **absolute gains**.

Grieco claims that all states are interested in both absolute and relative gains. How gains are distributed is an important issue. Thus, there are two barriers to international cooperation, fear of those who might not follow the rules and the relative gains of others.

Neoliberalism today

REMEMBER: Neoliberal institutionalists see institutions as the mediator and the means to achieve cooperation in the international system. Regimes and institutions help govern a competitive and anarchic international system and they encourage and at times, require, multilateralism and cooperation as a means of securing national interests.

Neoliberal institutionalists recognise that cooperation may be harder to achieve in areas where leaders perceive they have no mutual interests.



Neoliberals believe that states cooperate to achieve absolute gains and the greatest obstacle to cooperation is “cheating” or non-compliance by other states.

The Basic Tenets of the Neo-Neo Debate

The neo-neo debate is **not** a debate between **two polar opposite worldviews**. They share an epistemology, focus on similar questions and they agree on a number of assumptions about international politics. This is an intra-paradigm debate.

Neoliberal institutionalists and neorealists study different worlds of international politics. Neorealists focus on security and military issues-the high politics issue area. Neoliberal institutionalists focus on political economy, environmental issues, and lately, human rights issues. These issues have been called the low politics issue agenda.

Neorealists explain that all states must be concerned with the **absolute and relative gains** that result from international agreements and cooperative efforts. Neoliberal institutionalists are less concerned about relative gains and consider that all will benefit from absolute gains.

Neorealists are more cautious about cooperation and remind us the world is still a competitive place where self-interest rules.

Neoliberal institutionalists believe that states and other actors can be persuaded to cooperate if they are convinced that all states will comply with rules and cooperation will result in absolute gains.

This debate does not discuss many important issues that challenge some of the core assumptions of each theory. For example, neorealism cannot explain foreign policy behaviour that challenges the norm of national interest over human interests.



NOTE:

Neither theory addresses the impact of learning on the foreign policy behaviour of states.

Neither theory can account for problems of religious and political violence that fall outside of their reasoned world-view.

Neorealists think that **states are still the principle actors** in international politics. Globalization challenges some areas of state authority and control; but, politics is still international.

Neorealists are concerned about **new security challenges** resulting from uneven globalization, namely, inequality and conflict.

Globalization provides **opportunities and resources** for transnational social movements that challenge the authority of states in various policy areas. Neorealists are not supportive of any movement that seeks to open critical security issues to public debate.

Free market neoliberals believe globalization is a **positive** force. Eventually, **all states will benefit** from the economic growth promoted by the forces of globalization.

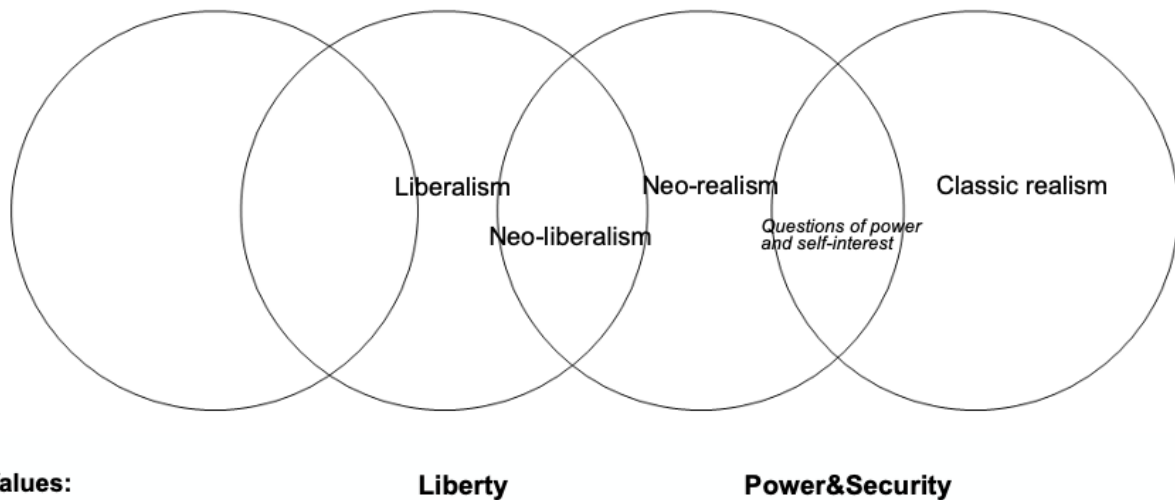
Some neoliberals believe that states should intervene **to promote capitalism with a human face or a market that is more sensitive to the needs and interests of all the people**. New institutions can be created and older ones reformed to prevent the uneven flow of capital, promote environmental sustainability, and protect the rights of citizens.

Globalization has contributed to a shift in political activity away from the state. Transnational social movements have forced states to address critical international issues and in several situations that have supported the establishment of institutions that promote further cooperation and, fundamentally challenge the power of states.

The neo-neo debate (an explanation from Australia):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRdV9bnNMIw>

Progress



Questions

1. Is the *neo-neo debate* just one debate between neo-realism and neo-liberalism?
2. To what refers neo-liberalism usually in the scholarship?
3. What kind of problem-solving theories are the neorealist and neo-liberal theories?
4. What are the starting points in the debate for theories?
5. What is neorealism today?
6. What is neoliberalism today?
7. What are the basic tenets of the neo-neo debate?
8. How the neorealists and neo-liberals see the question of cooperation?
9. How the globalization shapes the role of a state according to neorealists?
10. How neoliberals see globalization?

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