

# *Theory Talks*

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## THEORY TALK #40

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### KENNETH WALTZ – THE PHYSIOCRAT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

#### Theory Talks

is an interactive forum for discussion of debates in International Relations with an emphasis of the underlying theoretical issues. By frequently inviting cutting-edge specialists in the field to elucidate their work and to explain current developments both in IR theory and real-world politics, *Theory Talks* aims to offer both scholars and students a comprehensive view of the field and its most important protagonists.

**Citation:** Schouten, P. (2011) 'Theory Talk #40: Kenneth Waltz – The Physiocrat of International Politics', *Theory Talks*, <http://www.theory-talks.org/2011/06/theory-talk-40.html> (04-06-2011)

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## KENNETH NEAL WALTZ – THE PHYSIOCRAT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS



Sometimes a *Theory Talk* needs no introduction. This special issue of *Theory Talks* with Kenneth Waltz, who has been hailed recently as the ‘King of Thought’, is such an occasion. He describes his own work as an attempt to understand the impact of the invention of nuclear weapons on international politics, but his influence reaches far beyond that specific issue. A

historical analogy is in line. Systemic thinking in economy started with the physiocrats, who conceived of a structure of economics independent of actors and constituting their behavior. Before that, no systematic theory of the economy existed, and the economy could not be seen as a ‘field’. Much in the same way and based on economic thinking, Kenneth Waltz developed a structural theory of international politics. Kenneth Waltz is the godfather of modern theory of international politics.

In this *Talk*, Kenneth Waltz discusses, amongst others, the economic origins of his thinking about international politics, what good theory is, the impact of nuclear weapons in the contemporary world, and if the United States is behaving in accordance with what realist theory would predict.

What is, according to you, the central challenge or principal debate in International Relations? And what is your position regarding this challenge/in this debate?

For me, the central question is how to contain and moderate the use of military force by the United States. This is certainly not the only big issue but it is one of the big issues. The United States has been—not unexpectedly—a very war-like country ever since it became a world dominant power. As Alexander Hamilton said, a country disposing of dominant power cannot be expected to behave with moderation, and the United States certainly bears that out. Historically, it is hard to think of a country disposing of dominant power that did behave moderately for any large period of time. The United States fits neatly into the category of dominant powers that have not behaved moderately.

There is only one way that a country can reliably deter a dominant power, and that is by developing its own nuclear force. When president Bush identified the countries that he said constituted an “axis of evil”—namely, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—and then proceeded to invade one of them—namely, Iraq—that was certainly a lesson quickly learned by both Iran and North Korea. That is to say, that if a country wants to deter the United States it has to equip itself with nuclear force. I think we all have seen that demonstrated very clearly.

### **How did you arrive at where you currently are in your thinking about IR?**

Well, I suppose Hans Morgenthau in the modern period has been more widely influential than any other single author. And I was influenced by him, surely, as most people were.

Regarding important events, I think the most powerful shaping event occurred in August 1945 with the dropping of two atomic bombs. That was a world decisive event. The impact the bombing of Japan had on my thought about international politics was pervasive. Even though it was a world transforming event, I am not sure if that is now fully appreciated, although we act in accordance with the world-transforming effects—“transforming” meaning that everything changes, and all truths become false, all beliefs become irrelevant, and axioms that we used to lived by are turned on their heads. All those things are implied in a world-transforming event, if we use the word “transforming” in its true meaning. There are so many illustrations of that, that it boggles the mind.

Just to think of a few, it has always been very difficult to fight limited wars, historically speaking. That is, one can start and try to fight a limited war, but it is hard to continue to observe the limits. All this, in a conventional world... In a nuclear world, you can *only* fight limited wars, since it is impossible to fight all-out wars. When we talk about “nuclear wars” we are using words very loosely. As [Desmond Ball](#), a considerable expert on nuclear weapons, and an Australian commentator, said: “it’s impossible to fight a nuclear war after nuclear warheads numbered in the

tens have gone off, nobody will be knowing what's happening. And if no one knows what's happening, then you cannot fight a nuclear war." The 'fog of war' that Clausewitz referred to is nothing at all compared to the fog of war that would ensue even if only a few nuclear warheads were exploded.

So if you can only fight nuclear wars, and if it is very difficult to keep wars limited, because they tend to escalate, the question becomes: why fight wars at all? And, again, countries with nuclear weapons would behave according to that thought. If you do not have nuclear weapons, you can fight wars just as in the old days. But once a country has nuclear weapons, these weapons strongly deter other states. In fact, one cannot make "never-statements" when thinking historically, but one can with nuclear weapons. Never, in 65-plus years, have countries having nuclear weapons or enjoying their protection, fought each other. That is an astonishing statement, and it is true. So in sum, my work, in a way, has been an attempt to theoretically deal with the implications of the invention and application of nuclear weapons.

### **An alternative adage to the Kantian one, that Liberal states do not go to war?**

Historically, all kinds of states have gone to war. Whether they were democratic or authoritarian, they have all fought wars, and the great powers especially—wars we all know, like French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, wars like World War I and World War II, wars "to end all wars" but that in fact never ended conventional war.

Now, with the invention of nuclear weapons, countries that possess them or enjoy their protection have never fought one another. The implication would be that, if you love peace, you should love nuclear weapons. I do not think that this fact is well appreciated because not many people seem to love nuclear weapons; but they have been awfully good for the world. It is rather anomalous that some people—like for example president Obama—look forward to the abolition of the weapons that have, in fact, abolished war.

### **What would a student need to become a specialist in IR or understand the world in a global way?**

I think one obvious prerequisite is high intelligence, and also a good sense of history. Without knowing what has happened in the world in the past it is very hard to understand the present. I think that in the study of international politics it is especially important to be aware of why wars have occurred, how they have developed, what has caused countries to fight bloodier wars, less

bloody wars... One has to contemplate these things and all kinds of other things in order to understand the international politics of the past, and to be able to understand the difference between conditions that have promoted war in the past and those that work against the fighting of wars in the present. So I would say that first, a good sense of history is required. So I would certainly advise reading the classics. My idea of the classics is, I think, most people's idea of the classics. I do not want to be accused of forgetting the names, but it all began with Thucydides—at least in the Western world—and proceeded with Machiavelli, Hobbes, and later, of course, Morgenthau. It is a pretty impressive literature. It is very important for students of international politics to read, and read carefully, those old warhorses. They stood the test of time and they are certainly among the books most worth reading carefully.

There are other pivotal issues, as well, that a student should pay close attention to, like the role of technology and its importance in warfare, the relevance of economic capabilities, the importance of leaders of all sorts, and the conditions under which deterrence will—and will not—work.

**And does the same go for theorizing, or does that require a different set of skills?**

As I put it at the beginning of *Theory of International Politics*, theory is a picture of the world that one is concerned with—but it's not the whole world. For example, in the world of international politics, as in our case, one has to develop a mental picture of that world and then identify the major variables at work and the principal connections among them. That is something that is both difficult to do and rarely done.

There isn't much theorizing going on in international politics. And the word "theory" is so loosely used that people begin to think that anything that is not directly empirical or factual must be theory, and that is certainly a misconception. To develop a theory is difficult, and all the more difficult if one defines theory as it should be defined. For example, as Einstein said, there is no inductive route that leads to theory. That is, simply knowing more and more, having more facts at one's command, does not lead one to the ability to develop theories. That is something that many students of international politics have not understood. As **J. David Singer** put it, "we"—that is the people who were working on the dimensions of war approach to understanding warfare—"decided to go very far down the inductive route before we try to develop theory," as though more and more induction would somehow get you closer to theory. And that is exactly the opposite of what Einstein saw and understood, that is, there is no inductive route to theory.

**In 1979 you published perhaps the most cited handbook of International Relations Theory, *Theory of International Politics*. How has the state of IR theory changed since the publication of *Theory of International Politics*?**

Well, as I said, there is almost no theory written or developed. It is very rare to find real theories in any field, and certainly it is very difficult to find them in the study of international politics. So only by a very loose use of the word “theory” can one say that there is any development or advance in the realm of theory. And one shouldn’t expect it. I mean, theory is a pretty rare thing and one seldom finds it in the social sciences, outside perhaps of economics. I would say that one of the great social science theorists was Durkheim, and once one recognizes this, one gets the sense of how rare it is to find theories of society or, as in our case, theories of international politics. But one would expect that: theories don’t grow on bushes.

So in sum, in IR as in any field, one expects theory to be scarce. So most of the work done is empirical work; one hopes it is informed by theory, but often it is not. Most people don’t have a real sense of what theory requires or might look like. It is difficult for a lot of people to grasp theory. And that accounts for a lot of the problems among theories of international politics.

**If you were to write the book again, now that bipolarity has come to an end, what changes—if any—would you make to it?**

I certainly would add something about unipolarity. I wrote about multipolar systems and bipolar systems, that is, structural changes that produce changes in behavior. I identified these two different kinds of structure. And it did not occur to me that we would move from bipolarity to *unipolarity*, which of course we did with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In any kind of balancing system, the major players have to continue to exist as major players for the system to remain unchanged. You cannot have a bipolar balance without two parties being the participants in that balance. So, as soon as the Soviet Union disappeared as a great power, the bipolar balance collapsed, just as the multipolar system of balance collapsed with the fighting of World War II, and the emergence from that war of two—and only two—great powers. The balancing takes place within a structure; when the structure changes, the type of balancing, or whether or not there is any balancing, is directly affected or determined, in fact. So I would have written, or added a chapter, on what a unipolar world might be like, and what the advantages and disadvantages of such a world were likely to be. I have written quite a bit about the implications of the dominance of the United States, so though it is not in the form of a chapter, I think I have written a good deal about that.

**How do you respond to critics who say that if *Theory of International Politics* is right, then IR cannot undergo meaningful change, and that the belief that such change is impossible is a major impediment to making a better world?**

I certainly believe that, as long as the world continues to be anarchic, the theory that I developed will maintain its direct relevance. One cannot expect the world to change unless the structure of the world changes. That is, structure affects behavior directly, and as long as the world remains as it is—anarchic—that is going to condition the behavior of the states that exist within that world. Although not directly, the behavior is strongly influenced or shaped by the structural condition within which the behavior takes place. So, one will not expect profound changes in behavior, or important changes in behavior, until—and unless—the structure changes. As long as the world is anarchic, it perpetuates certain kinds of behavior by the major players within the anarchic arena.

**Why do you think *Theory of International Politics* became such a lightning-rod for criticism?**

That is one of the things good theories do, they attract a lot of criticism. It's not surprising and I am not surprised by it. Of course, a lot of the criticisms are made by people who fail to deal with theory as theory, and rather deal with some of the other things I said, many of which I see as following from the theory, but many people don't think that way. I have never been bothered by the criticisms at all. I expect theories to be criticized, and they should be. I wish the criticisms were even more telling than they have been, but that is beyond my power of influence.

**One of the most original and enduring contributions of *Theory of International Politics* is the concept of “structure,” conceptualized as a “positional picture” that abstracts from “every attribute of states except their capabilities.” The three definitional components of structure are (1) ordering principles, (2) the character of the units, and (3) the distribution of capabilities (Chapter 4). In your response to Robert O. Keohane's critique in *Neorealism and its Critics* (1986), you contrast structural theory with “the behavioral mode of thinking.” Can you please explain how these way of thinking about world politics are different? And what advantages you seen in the structural approach?**

I think one can see it very clearly, very easily and very directly if one contrasts Hans Morgenthau's work with *Theory of International Politics*. Hans Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations* was a great contribution; it was the major book on the first half of the twentieth century in the field of international politics. I have great respect for it. But Hans Morgenthau, in his search for

what he sometimes called a “rational theory,” was able to deal only with how the acting units affected the outcomes produced. In other words, his approach to international politics was in the mainstream of political science in its day, in the sense that it inferred from the acting units what the outcomes would be. There was nothing but the acting units to shape those outcomes. In other words, there was no concept of a structure of international politics because he had no concept of the structure of international politics. That is, he only saw the behavior and the interacting units, and did not see them within some kind of a structure, so the outcomes inferred had to depend directly on the qualities of the actors. And that is where we got these typical statements that “good states produce good outcomes,” or “democracy produces peace.” That is inferring from the quality of the actors what the outcomes will be, and those are the only causal conceptions within the theory that Morgenthau developed. There can be no cause other than the causes that are found in the principal actors.

Now the advantage of the *structural* approach is that one sees the effect of the environment—precisely defined—on the acting units and how this precisely defined environment affects the outcomes we are concerned with, so that one gets away from the kind of causal thinking that Durkheim satirized when he gave such examples as the question: why did the Greeks produce all of that immensely impressive philosophy? And the answer typically given is that the Greeks were a very philosophic people. Or why did the Germans produce all of that magnificent music? Well, the answer given is that the Germans were a very musical people! In other words, the cause is found in the acting or behaving units. That is entirely behavioral! Structural thinking breaks away from that. It is a very difficult jump to make for a lot of people; very difficult. As Henry Kissinger said, “moderate and legitimate states produce moderate and legitimate systems of international politics.” That is exactly the kind of thinking Emile Durkheim was satirizing.

**Given the fact that Liberal theories are often associated with an economic view of the world, in which way does your background in economics influence your perspective and the way you theorize in international politics?**

I think it is a very direct and important influence. Economists, especially classical and neoclassical, have a very keen sense of how the structure affects behaviors and outcomes. Economists call it “the market.” And the market is the structure—in my terms—in which the units are acting and behaving, and producing what seems to be their outcomes. But their outcomes are very much conditioned by the structure—in this case the market—in which the behavior occurs. So, the market *shapes* the behavior and *shapes* the outcomes. One can understand this very easily in economics, but it is harder to understand it in politics, because in politics, there was no clear conception of a structure. Morgenthau, in his groping for what he called a “rational



theory of international relations,” was not able to come up with that notion because he could not see anything beyond the behaving units.

Another pivotal influence from economics on my understanding of international politics is the competition among a large number of roughly equal units, which can be contrasted to the behavior of firms in oligopolistic settings. Those are the direct counterparts of states in international politics, for if you have a world of many great powers you will expect different kinds of behaviors and outcomes than what you would find in a world where there are only two competitors. Or whether there is no competitor at all and there is just one! That would be a monopoly, of course. So the analogy between economics and international politics is very interesting. When the conditions in international politics approximate the conditions in economic theory in important ways, then the analogy holds; if they don't, it doesn't.

**How does your theory relate to the rational actor assumption? Are states rational actors, or *should* they be?**

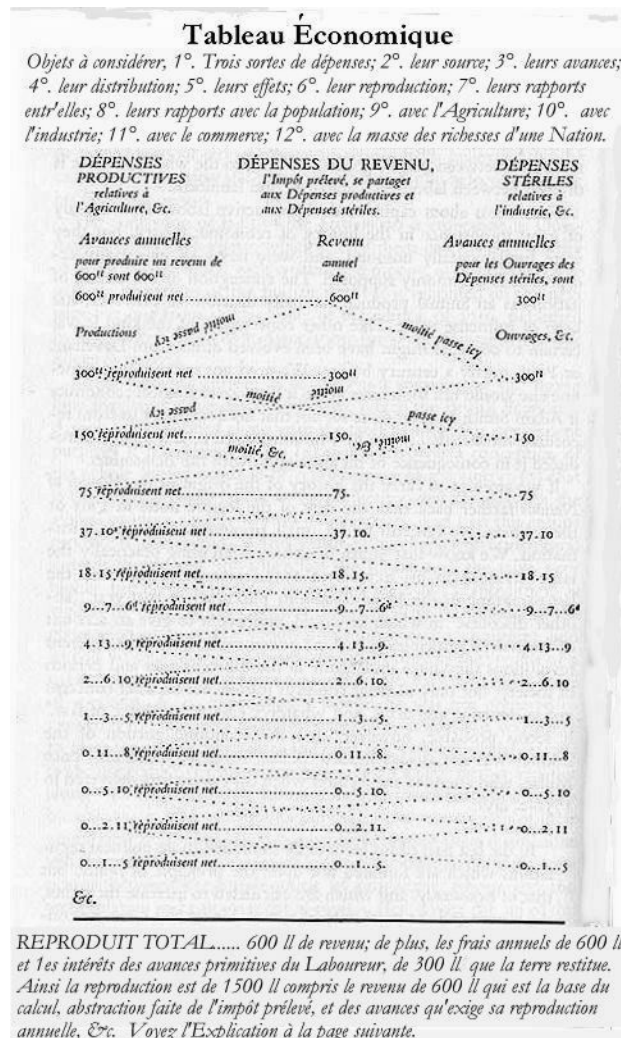
I do not even know what “rational actor” means empirically. A rational actor assumption may enter into a theory but has no direct, empirical representation. One can define rationality only within narrow settings, as for example in game theory, where one can define what a rational actor is and work out some outcomes under assumed conditions. Of course economists presuppose that economic actors are rational. People of course in a very loose sense prefer to do less work and get higher rewards. That is a good way of putting it now, but there is no reason in economics to think that a bunch of actors are going to be rational. Some of them are going to do better than others; some are going to be a lot smarter; some are going to be a little bit luckier than others; some are going to be better at cheating than others. All those things affect outcomes, but rationality—in its empirical form—has really little to do with it. The notion of rationality is a big help in constructing a theory, but one has to go back and forth between the theory and what goes out in the real world. But in the real world, does anybody think “I'm rational, or you're rational”? Let alone, that *states* could be rational? It has no empirical meaning.

**What are the principal writings in economics that influenced your dealings with the field of international relations theory?**

I think that one of the biggest influences was the contrast between pre-physiocratic and pre-Adam Smith economics, and the kinds of economic notions, concepts, and theories that developed first with the [physiocrats](#) and then with Adam Smith. In fact, Adam Smith was very

much indebted to the physiocrats, who we now kind of dismiss as people with very peculiar ideas. Some of their ideas were indeed peculiar, but they were the first ones to grasp the idea of an economy as such. That is to say, an economy made up of identifiable parts and an economy experiencing repeated behavior.

In one of the editions of a physiocratic book, maybe in the first edition, there was a picture of “an economy,” (the *Tableau économique* by François Quesnay, 1759, see image below) and of course it is a picture of the unseen and the unseeable, but it starts in the soil—that is the origins of wealth are conceived as being in soils and mines that produce gold, metals, and agricultural products. The picture then traces how these natural resources are worked up from that beginning into machines and items that can be bought, sold, used and reused, exchanged, eaten and all that.



And then, they introduce the notion of “circulation” in the economy. Basically, the idea that this process is constantly repeated, causing a system. That is the very beginning of the conception of the economy—one has to have a notion of a domain for that activity. In other words, one has to

be able to identify the domain, mark out the borders, identify the important variables within that domain, the interconnection of those variables, and the kinds of outcomes they produce. The physiocrats were the first people within the social sciences who did that. They invented the concepts they needed, such as “propensities,” “to consume” and “to produce,” and all that. It was a great contribution. Very few people have an appreciation, as Adam Smith did, of how the physiocrats developed a system, and what that meant, compared to the sort of household economy concepts that were applied to a larger scale before. If you read the pre-physiocratic literature and compare it with what came later, the contrast is very, very sharp. It was entirely un-theoretical before, and became a *theoretical* literature with the physiocrats around 1760.

**In 1981, you argued that “more nuclear weapons may be better,” as having nuclear weapons will deter countries from behaving aggressively. Is this still reflected in the post-Cold War situation?**

Some few people take that to mean “the more, the better,” and I am probably somewhat guilty of having encouraged that view by using the subtitle “more may be better.” But the question is: how many more? I do not think that anybody believes that it would be great to have a hundred nuclear powers, or two hundred nuclear powers. I meant “more may be better” as not just two but maybe five or, as we have now, around nine nuclear states. I do not see much prospect for that number to increase dramatically. We had a maximum at about twelve, I believe, when the Soviet Union broke up and some of its parts were states that were “born nuclear”, that is, they inherited the nuclear weapons. But some of them, of course, got rid of those weapons, leaving the count at about nine nuclear states. I do not see that we are likely to have, all of a sudden, twenty or thirty, as president Kennedy was so worried about. Every now and then, we have an additional nuclear power joining what remains the world’s most exclusive club. After all, Sweden got rid of its nuclear weapons, although—as I understand it—Sweden still has the capacity to build a nuclear weapon.

Anyway, it is quite natural that countries that worry about deterring the United States would turn to nuclear weapons. I mean, when a president identifies an “axis of evil,” names three countries, and then invade one of them, the other two are bound to think: “Hey! We better have nuclear weapons because it is the only way we can deter the United States.” That is apparently what Iran began to do, and maybe already did; and that is exactly what North Korea did—and we know North Korea did it. So, the expected effect was realized in practice, at least in the case of North Korea.

**Could it be fair to say, then, that having Iran as a nuclear power might be not that bad because as its position in the structure becomes different, its behavior will adapt accordingly, and they might become somewhat of a more responsible power?**

Yes. It is hard for people to understand that every new nuclear state has behaved exactly the way the old nuclear states have behaved. One can describe the way all nuclear states have behaved in one word: responsibly. When the United States contemplated the Soviet Union one day having its own nuclear weapons, we were horrified by the prospect. How could we live? How could the world live with such a country as the Soviet Union—which we saw as bent on world domination—having nuclear weapons? And when China developed its own nuclear weapons, we repeated the same way of thinking—“My God! China? China is crazy!”

But in fact, if you think of the Cultural Revolution, China took very good care of its nuclear weapons. They ensured that they would not fall under the hands of the revolutionaries and came through that horrible ten-year period. The fact is that people worry that a new nuclear country, once it gets a nuclear shield, would then begin to behave immoderately or irresponsibly under the cover of its own nuclear weapons. Well, that has never happened. Every country that has had nuclear weapons has behaved moderately. If you think of the Soviet Union and China, both behaved much more radically *before* they had nuclear weapons. Stalin’s bravado in the face of American nuclear weapons was extremely impressive, or depressing—depending on how you want to look at it—but once they got the nuclear weapons, the Soviets calmed down. And the same thing was true for China.

So, what people fear is the opposite of what, in fact, has happened. That is rather typical in the nuclear business: we do not look at the past and say “Well gee, every nuclear country has behaved like every other nuclear country. What do we worry about?” In fact, the effect of nuclear weapons is that it moderates the behavior of their possessors; and that is very easy to understand!

**But, of course, that level of moderate behavior applies to great power interactions. Countries in possession of nuclear weapons can start behaving quiet nastily and brutishly to non-nuclear powers.**

Oh, but that is repeating the old worries which have never been realized. I do not understand why we repeat those expectations. I would expect an Iran with nuclear weapons to behave more moderately, not less moderately, and to take fewer risks, not more risks. By possessing nuclear weapons, you make yourself a target, and nuclear countries are very much aware of that. They have to be because once you get into the nuclear business you begin to realize it is a real serious

business, and if something goes wrong... In contrast, with conventional weapons, countries worry about winning or losing. Historically, that has proven to be bearable. Germany, for example, lost World War I and then, of course, it repeated the process—that is not a learning process, but a repeating process, which is very striking and typical for a conventional warfare-world. With nuclear weapons, countries began to behave moderately. But, as we said, people do not understand it yet. For example, when India and Pakistan both got nuclear weapons—I was paying very close attention to this, of course—the expectation by journalists, by political leaders, by academics—was “this means war on the sub-continent!” Well, what it meant was: *peace* on the sub-continent. We know that now, but there are some people now who say “no, that is not right, because the Indians and Pakistanis continue to fight over Kashmir.” Nevertheless, as both some Indians and some Pakistanis have said, the effect of nuclear weapons was to abolish war from the heartland, not to abolish skirmishes in peripheral areas. Now, whether or not they understood in advance, or began to understand it after both got nuclear weapons, they learnt they could no longer fight major wars. I mean, of course the Pakistanis have continued fighting over things like Kashmir after independence, and that fighting amounted to about 1.000 deaths, which makes it a war for most political scientists. But come on, 1.000 casualties is not a war, it is a skirmish! It shows they’re very careful to avoid all-out war for the risk of nuclear escalation.

**States should accommodate to their position in the international system, which is determined in big part by the shifts in relative capabilities between states. Has the United States, in your view, adapted well to the position it is currently in? And if not, what system does it seem to respond to?**

It responds to the situation all giant countries have responded to. And it responds in the very same way: it abuses its power, singling out poor, weak countries—that’s what we specialize in—and beating them up! That is what we do! Six wars in the twenty years since the 1980s; they were all cases in which we singled out small and weak countries like Granada or Panama, and we proceeded to beat them up. It is sad, but this is a typical behavior of powers that are dominant, or used to be dominant in their regions and now are globally dominant. The United States is the globally dominant power, and that is why there is only one way that other states can deter the United States: by acquiring nuclear weapons. Nobody can deter the United States conventionally anymore because we dispose of a military budget that is nearly the equal of all the other countries in the world combined. So, how can anybody deter the United States without resorting to nuclear weapons? They cannot.

**Does it mean that, by bullying smaller countries, the U.S. has in fact adapted well to its position in the system?**

That is what you would expect dominant powers to do. One does not like it; I do not like it; and I am sure the countries that experience the bullying do not like it; but it is expected behavior. That is the way countries behave when they have dominant power—globally or within their region.

**In 2002, you wrote about globalization. The fact is a contradiction in terms, I would say, because globalization does not really matter much for Realism. So, why do you still feel the need to write about its good or bad attributes?**

I was really writing about interdependence, which is now called globalization. There was a very marked tendency, and it was very common for people—political scientists and economists—to refer to the world as increasingly “interdependent” and to draw inferences from that supposed condition. I first developed this idea when I was the only political scientist in a faculty seminar, while all the other members were economists. That seminar was led by a person named Raymond Vernon, who was a big name in interdependence. I made some comments about how little interdependent the world was and the conception that high inequality is low interdependence. And I still believe that. I think it is a simple truth that in a world of inequality (and bear in mind that inequalities across states are much greater than the inequalities within states), interdependence is low. In other words, some states are highly independent and other states are highly dependent on those states that dispose of greater economic or military power than the others do. I think that is still extremely important, and not extremely well understood.

**How does your theory apply to the dynamics one can witness on the African continent?**

You know, I did not set out to be an international politics person. I started out to be a political philosopher; but there were not any jobs available, and they were in the field of international politics, so that is how I ended up in international politics. When I did, my wife and I realized you cannot pay attention to everything, so I said to myself “one continent that I am going to leave aside is Africa.” I preferred to concentrate on Europe and China. I did a pretty good deal of work on China because I saw it ripe to become one of the most important parts of the world of which I knew nothing. So, I proceeded to do a lot of work on China in order to know something about it. But Africa is kind of a blank spot for me, apart from casual observation. Even though, I would say that the whole notion of anarchy applies very well to Africa.

In fact, a criticism people used to make to me was that Africa was clearly an anarchic arena, and yet African states did not fight much among themselves. How, then, would a Realist like myself explain that? Well, I did by invoking [Turney-High's](#) book in anthropology, which was published—I believe—in the 1920s. There, he made the very valid point that countries have to obtain a certain level of self-consciousness as being a political entity, and a certain level of competence before they are able to fight one another. Turney-High's illustration was very clear with his study of the peoples he referred to as the “Californians,” who were such a primitive people that they did not have the ability to form groups or fight as a group. A consciousness and competence at a certain level is needed before a group is able to systematically impose on another group—whether in the form of warfare or in other ways. I think that, for a long time, Africa was in that condition, and that, as it proceeds away from that condition, African countries will be able to fight wars against one another. In a historical sense, though, that is an implication of advancement.

**Kenneth Neal Waltz (born 1924) is a member of the faculty at Columbia University and one of the most prominent scholars of international relations (IR) alive today. He is one of the founders of neorealism, or structural realism, in international relations theory. Among his publications are *Man, the State, and War* (1959) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979).**

#### *Related links*

Read Waltz's *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better* (Adelphi Papers 171, 1981) [here](#) (html)

Read Waltz's *Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory* (Journal of International Affairs 44 1990) [here](#) (pdf)

Read Waltz's *The Emerging Structure of International Politics* (International Security 18 (2) 1993) [here](#) (pdf)

Read Waltz's *Evaluating Theories* (American Political Science Review 91 (4) 1997) [here](#) (pdf)

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Read Scott Sagan, Richard K. Betts and Waltz's discussion *A Nuclear Iran: Promoting Stability or Courting Disaster?* (Journal of International Affairs 60 (2), 2007) [here](#) (pdf)

Homepage of the *Conversation with History* with Kenneth Waltz by Harry Kreisler in 2003)  
[here](#)

On the physiocrats, read Henry Higgs' *The Physiocrats - Six lectures on the French économistes of the 18th century* (2001) [here](#) (pdf)

**Theory Talks would like to thank former interviewees who have contributed to this special Talk by formulating excellent questions for Kenneth Waltz. A special thanks also to Nicolás Terradas for editing and transcription.**