THE CONCEPT OF ANARCHY FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF REALISM, LIBERALISM AND ENGLISH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the concept of anarchy, which is a fundamental concept in the discipline of international relations, from the perspectives of realism, liberalism and the English School. The meaning that each theoretical approach attributes to the concept of anarchy profoundly affects the nature of the international system and the ways in which it interprets relations between states. While the realist approach sees anarchy as an inevitable and unchangeable feature of the international system, liberalism considers this situation as an obstacle that can be overcome through institutions and cooperation. The English School, on the other hand, does not only identify anarchy with chaos; it also considers it as an element of order that makes possible the formation of international society. In this context, the study aims to reveal how the concept of anarchy is interpreted in different intellectual traditions by comparatively examining the basic assumptions of these three theoretical approaches regarding anarchy.

Keywords: Anarchy, Realism, Liberalism, English School

REALİZM, LİBERALİZM VE İNGİLİZ OKULU PERSPEKTİFLERİNDEN ANARŞİ KAVRAMI

ÖZ

Bu makale, uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininde temel bir kavram olan anarşi olgusunu realizm, liberalizm ve İngiliz Okulu perspektiflerinden ele almaktadır. Her bir kuramsal yaklaşımın anarşi kavramına atfettiği anlam, uluslararası sistemin doğasını ve devletler arası ilişkileri yorumlama biçimlerini derinden

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etkilemektedir. Realist yaklaşım anarşiyi uluslararası sistemin kaçınılmaz ve değişmez bir özelliği olarak görürken, liberalizm bu durumu kurumlar ve işbirliği yoluyla aşılabilir bir engel olarak değerlendirmektedir. İngiliz Okulu ise anarşiyi yalnızca kaosla özdeşleştirmemekte; aynı zamanda uluslararası toplumun oluşumunu mümkün kılan bir düzen unsuru olarak da ele almaktadır. Bu doğrultuda çalışma, söz konusu üç kuramsal yaklaşımın anarşiye dair temel varsayımlarını karşılaştırmalı bir şekilde inceleyerek, anarşi olgusunun farklı düşünsel geleneklerde nasıl anlamlandırıldığını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Anarşi, Realizm, Liberalizm, İngiliz Okulu

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of international relations has been shaped by theoretical frameworks that attempt to make sense of the interactions between states and the dynamics that emerge at the global level. At the center of these frameworks is the concept of anarchy as a fundamental assumption regarding the nature of the international system. Anarchy, in its most general sense, refers to the lack of hierarchical authority in the international system. While this means that states assume the responsibility for ensuring their own security, it also forms the basis of theoretical discussions on how to define many other concepts such as cooperation, conflict, balance of power and order.

The anarchic structure of the international system is interpreted in different ways by different theoretical approaches. While realism considers anarchy as an inevitable consequence of conflict and insecurity, liberalism argues that this structure can be overcome through cooperation and international

institutions. On the other hand, the English School evaluates anarchy not as an absolute disorder but within an "international society" shaped by certain norms, rules and institutions. These three approaches differ not only in the nature of anarchy, but also in their proposals for how to ensure order, security and cooperation in international relations.

In this study, a comparative analysis will be made by examining the concept of anarchy from the perspectives of realism, liberalism and the English School. Our aim is to reveal the meaning that each theoretical approach attributes to anarchy, to discuss similarities and differences, and finally to evaluate the place of the concept of anarchy in international relations thought more comprehensively. In this way, we will try to show that anarchy is not only a theoretical abstraction, but also a fundamental intellectual ground that guides international political practice.

1.   THE CENTRALITY OF ANARCHY

Anarchy is a foundational concept in international relations (IR). In other words, the international relations discipline is somewhat built upon the concept of anarchy which serves as the theoretical backdrop. To explain the history and the structure of the international system, anarchy is the most commonly used term. The norm of anarchy constitutes the foundation of academic IR, and it can be said that the rest of the discipline took formation around this concept[1]. The most fundamental reason of why anarchy occupies such an importance comes from the fact that IR as a modern branch of social sciences is conducted above a level separated from domestic level policy making. Put differently, IR is concerned with an atmosphere that is not governed by a central authority and all actors within this picture interact and exist without the regulations of a supervisor or a governor. As it is implied, such absence results in political problems to say the least when there is no police to warn the states acting badly. In a very broad sense, the school of IR discipline can be defined as the one which studies the state behaviour in such circumstances where Hobbes' Leviathan is nowhere to be found. The concept of anarchy is accepted to come into existence with the monumental agreement of Westphalia in 1648 which declared the sovereignty of statehood. Likewise, other notions like social contract and microeconomics theories paved the way for such normative consensus in the field under the term anarchy.

At its core, anarchy refers to the absence of a central governing authority which distinguishes it from domestic politics where hierarchical authority exists. This lack of overarching authority profoundly shapes how states interact and defines their behaviour and the structure of global politics. Why does it matter so much? The anarchy implies the absence of a body to solve the disputes that bear the power to end

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[1] Schmidt, Brian, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998).

up detrimental for the parties involved. Also, since there is no central authority, the international system is doomed with lack of an institution like a constitution, law or the enforcer of those that will supervise the actors. With actors who are sovereign within their own internal affairs and independent and equal actors, the inevitability of conflict becomes more obvious. Although this nature of the international system seems to be an untouchable and self-explanatory one, each line of thinking within the school of IR looks into this phenomenon from a different angle. Starting from realism and later followed by liberalism and English school, this paper will be focusing on how each of theories situate the concept of anarchy within their framework. While doing so, there will be an effort to actualize the issues like around which problems do the anarchy emerges and what substantive elements feeds into it. Although there are some criticisms towards the centrality of the concept, the initial goal is concentrated around gathering a deeper understanding of it first.

2.   REALIST APPROACH

The set of most fundamental premises of realist school of thought can be driven out from Thucydides. State-centric approach to politics as well as egoism and anarchy are laid out in the classical piece of his "History of Peloponnesian War"[2]. Within the framework of Peloponnesian War, Athenians warns Melos about the reality of how independent states survive in their interaction with others only if they are powerful enough without any legitimate authority that can enforce order. The historically recorded Melian dialogue can be taken as the initial reference point in where the nature of the anarchical world order was mentioned in such clarity. Other classical thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and Machiavelli were also pioneers in the development of realist thought who referred to the reality of systemic anarchy long before modern interpretations and theorization of the idea. Realists like Kenneth Waltz and Hans Morgenthau regard anarchy as the defining characteristic of the international system. For them, anarchy means the absence of a central authority above sovereign states who would enforce rules or resolve disputes between conflicting actors[3]. In this self-help system, states are defined as the primary actors and are driven by the need to ensure their survival. Waltz applies these three ideas to the international system by analogy. Interactions between states would change if the anarchy-based organizing pre-condition was altered with. There is no functional distinction between the various components that create a self-help system in the boundaries of anarchy. Therefore, anarchy and relative capability which are defined in terms of power are the two critical aspects of the international system. Waltz further contends that states are the only significant actors under these circumstances. Although he acknowledges the existence of other actors, he claims they

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[2] Finley, M. I., ed., *History of the Peloponnesian War* (London: Penguin UK, 1972).

[3] Walt, Stephen M., "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): pp. 3–43.

are irrelevant by default. The concept that governs a structure's order comes first and it is followed by the units' differentiation and lastly the distribution of capabilities among the units.

Classical realists like Morgenthau emphasize the role of human nature in building up the conflict in an anarchic system[4]. Morgenthau argues that the indigenous flaws and ambitions of human beings translate into the behaviour of states. Also, those states are governed by human decisionmakers as well. Morgenthau attributes the competitive and conflict-prone dynamics of international politics to the egoistic aspect of human nature unlike structural realists who focus on the external pressures imposed by anarchy. He asserts that this inside drive for power leads states to seek their own interests and contributes to the inevitability of conflict. The lack of a central authority in the anarchic system amplifies this dynamic are left to navigate their survival in an environment where trust and cooperation are precarious. For Morgenthau, understanding international relations requires a recognition of these fundamental human tendencies. According to Waltz, the international system's guiding concept is anarchy or in other words the lack of a centralized authority. For him, states seek to ensure their survival at any cost. Although nations' interests may change from one to another, survival is a necessary first interest in a world without security. "Internationally, the environment of states' action, or the structure of their system, is set by the fact that some states prefer survival over other ends obtainable in the short run and act with relative efficiency to achieve that end"[5]. The state of anarchy removes the need for the differentiation of units. The coordination across units is a prerequisite for anarchy. States continue to function as a single entity as long as anarchy remains in its place. Anarchy means that there is always a risk of violence even though it does not necessarily take place frequently in the international system. It also indicates that self-help is a widely accepted norm in the global system. Waltz mentions two ways of cooperation being constrained by the international system's structure. Firstly, their cooperation is undermined by the state of insecurity. A state is concerned about a potential distribution that would favour others over themselves. Secondly, a state may decide to restrict its collaboration with other states due to the concern of growing dependent on them through trade and/or cooperation. States do not voluntarily put themselves in more independent positions. In a self-help system, political interest takes the first place in the list of concerns above economic benefit due to security concerns. States are forced to this type of behaviour by the structure. The structural change is the only way to break free which is very hard to do so. Waltz identifies benefits to anarchy with the fact that primarily states can maintain their autonomy and that the enormous costs of organization in a hierarchical structure are avoided.

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[4] Morgenthau, Hans J., *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).

[5] Waltz, Kenneth N., *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

Anarchy creates the norm of insecurity as states must rely on their own capabilities to protect themselves. This leads to power rivalry and a balance of power concern. Offensive realists suggest that anarchy convinces states to seek hegemony within their region to maximize their own security[6]. Mearsheimer is a key figure in offensive realism and as such he emphasizes the anarchic structure of the international system as a fundamental driver of great power competition. Anarchy signifies the absence of any authority above states to regulate their interactions for him. This lack of authority creates a security dilemma as states cannot trust each other to protect their interests. This lack of trust also compels them to maximize their relative power. Consequently, Mearsheimer argues that states seek regional hegemony to ensure their survival. In essence, power maximization becomes a rational strategy in an anarchic world. The uncertainty that is inherent in anarchy feeds into the fear about the intentions of other states. It leads them to assume the worst and act aggressively to safeguard their position. On the other hand, Stephen Walt is associated with the balance of threat theory. This theory of his acknowledges the anarchic nature of the international system but places greater emphasis on perceptions of threat rather than power. He argues that states do not necessarily balance against the strongest power but instead against they balance against the greatest threat in accordance with their perception. These threats are shaped by factors such as geographic position, offensive capabilities and perceived powers. States may choose to either bandwagon with great powers for protection or balance against them to mitigate potential dangers in response to these threats..

3.   LIBERAL APPROACH

As one of the pioneers of the liberal thought, John Locke's political philosophy and his concept of the state of nature builds the basis of the liberal view on anarchy. Indeed, Locke did not equate the absence of a central authority with chaos or war as Hobbes did. Unlike Hobbes, Locke saw the state of nature as it is governed by natural law and accessorized individuals with inherent rights and reason. He argued that people could cooperate and agree to protect their rights even without a common sovereign authority above themselves. Anarchy is not inherently conflictual but is a neutral condition in which states can engage in cooperation to protect shared interests[7]. Locke's ideas suggest that states composed of individuals ought to act as individuals. So, they are capable of forming social contracts to mitigate the risks associated with anarchy. These social contracts may take the form of international institutions or alliances. Llikewise, Kant was another founding figure in liberal thought and he expanded on the liberal view of anarchy through his essay "Perpetual Peace" (1795). Kant in his book envisioned a global order that could transcend the anarchic state of international relations. He understood that the international system operates without a central

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[6] Mearsheimer, John J., *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

[7] Seliger, Martin, *The Liberal Politics of John Locke* (London: Routledge, 2019).

authority but also he believed that this condition does not necessarily mean directly a perpetual conflict. Instead he saw the possibility of rationality and moral progress and how they could lead states to establish republican constitutions to begin with. But also, he saw room for respect for international laws and joining a federation of free states to secure peace. He came up with certain conditions under which peace would be possible under anarchy. Firstly, the regime type must be a democracy for Kant. Republican governments and accountable politicians are less likely to engage in war. This understanding constitutes the foundation of the democratic peace theory as well. Secondly, conomic interdependence fosters cooperation and reduces the chance of conflict by creating mutual benefits fro the parties involved. Thirdly, Kant's vision of a federation of free states are drawn as a picture of modern organizations like the United Nations as they are designed to regulate behavior and reduce the anarchic tendencies of the system. In addition to this prior conditions, Kant also emphasized the potential for human progress. He argued that the development of shared norms and institutions could mitigate the risks of anarchy while promoting cooperation.

As part of more contemporay scholars of liberal thought, Keohane and Nye acknowledge that the international system is anarchic like their theoric ancestors. However, they argue that anarchy does not inevitably lead to conflict and power struggles as realists suggest[8]. Instead, anarchy provides a basis in the face of other factors such as economic interdependence and institutions which can change the course of politics altogether. For them, anarchy is not conflictual. It simply represents the absence of a central authority and states are rational actors. They seek to maximize benefits and cooperation can be rational even under anarchy. In their work "Power and Interdependence" they introduce the concept of complex interdependence and they argue against the realist assumption that military power and security dominate state relations in an anarchic world. Within the understanding of complex interdependence states are interconnected not just through political channels but also through economic and social ties. Non-state actors also play an influential role in shaping international relations in this picture of IR. Unlike realism which prioritizes military security, complex interdependence acknowledges that economic and social issues can be equally important in shaping state behavior. While anarchy remains in the picture, the economic and political interdependence make military force a less viable option for resolving disputes or exerting influence. Keohane particularly in his other piece "After Hegemony" highlights the role of international institutions in reducing the uncertainty and transaction costs associated with anarchy[9]. Institutions provide a framework for cooperation by establishing norms and procedures that can reduce uncertainty. They are

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[8] Keohane, Robert O., and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

[9] Keohane, Robert O., *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

ought to promote transparency and to build trust among states. Even in the absence of a central authority, regimes help states cooperate in areas like trade and security. Indeed, today we see even more areas of cooperation like environment and human rights. Through these institutions, states can overcome the collective action problem by aligning their incentives. There are also rooms for creating mechanisms for enforcement. They also address the area of the future that bears the possibility of fostering long-term cooperation and repeated interactions. Keohane and Nye argue that under anarchy, states are not obliged to act in a self-help system. Instead they are rational actors capable of seeing mutual benefits. Cooperation is possible when states identify shared interests and work in the scope of institutions to reduce transaction costs and manage interdependence. The anarchic system can evolve toward greater cooperation especially in areas where absolute gains outweigh relative gains.

Keohane and Nye recognize that anarchy creates constraints but they do not view it as the defining characteristic of international relations. While anarchy creates uncertainty it is the interaction between anarchy, interdependence, and institutions that determine the outcomes. The international system is not static. That is why the effects of anarchy can be mitigated through deliberate institutional designs and deepening of the interdependence. Unlike realists, liberals believe anarchy does not directly lead to conflict. They focus on how democracy and international organizations can create pathways for peace. For instance, the democratic peace theory mentions that democracies are less likely to engage in conflict with one another due to shared norms and institutional constraints[10]. Although there is anarchy, its consequences are not deterministic. Those consequences can be managed through governance structures and shared interests. Other scholars view anarchy as a structural condition that complicates but does not undermine cooperation among states in the international system[11]. Using game theory there are efforts to identify how different payoff structures may shape the likelihood of cooperation by influencing states' actions. There are arguments of cooperation and how it becomes more feasible when states extend the their view on the future through repeated interactions and trust-building. When institutions provide transparency and enforcement mechanisms it becomes even more feasible. Oye also highlights that managing the number of actors involved in these organizations can mitigate the challenges posed by anarchy. At the end, they are enabling rational states to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

4. ENGLISH SCHOOL'S APPROACH

As another school of thought and a new one for that matter, English School acknowledges the anarchic structure of the international system as the prior ones as well. They do so as done by realists, but

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[10] Doyle, Michael W., "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1986): pp. 205–235.

[11] Oye, Kenneth A., *Cooperation Under Anarchy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

they contend that this does not mean the absence of order. Instead for them, states form an international society based on common interests and norms and this society mitigates the cruel nature of anarchy. The English School adopts a more nuanced view of anarchy. It emphasizes the existence of an international society within the anarchic system. Scholars like Hedley Bull argue that states form a society of states that adhere to common rules and norms[12]. Bull acknowledges anarchy as the absence of a world government but he furher argues that states establish an international society to manage their interactions. In this society, they actually reduce the chaos of anarchy. This society is maintained through shared norms and rules. It is also accompanied by institutions such as diplomacy and international law. For Bull, the existence of order within anarchy is achieved by recognizing certain fundamental goals. These goals are preserving the society of states, upholding sovereignty and maintaining peace above all else. From this perspective, anarchy is not identical with chaos. But it is a condition in which order can emerge through shared practices. States interact both based on power and also based on shared sense of legitimacy and mutual recognition. The concepts of sovereignty, diplomacy, and international law are seen as mechanisms that sustain order in this anarchic world system.

The English School offers a nuanced perspective on anarchy as mentioned before. By integrating normative and structural insights, it examines the interaction of order and disorder in IR. Martin Wight is a central figure to this tradition as Bull. He categorizes international theories into three distinct traditions as realism (Hobbesian), rationalism (Grotian) and revolutionism (Kantian)[13]. He approaches anarchy through a rationalist lens by emphasizing the duality of IR. Power politics coexists with international law and diplomacy. There are also pursuit of normative frameworks. In his view, anarchy is a persistent condition but its effects are mitigated by the institutions to foster order which are also constructed by the states. This perspective creates and brings about a balance between the realist emphasis on the inevitability of conflict and the rationalist belief in the potential for cooperation. Building on Wight's foundations, Bull's "The Anarchical Society" provides another cornerstone for the English School's approach to anarchy. Bull argues an international society can emerge where states seek and create shared norms and institutions despite the absence of a central governing authority[14]. This concept of international society highlights the potential for anarchy to be managed through cooperation. Buzan expands Bull's framework a step further. He explores the evolution of international society and introduces the distinction between an international system and an international society[15]. The former is characterized merely by interactions among states and the latter is

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[12] Bull, Hedley, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

[13] Wight, Martin, *Power Politics* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978).

[14] Bull, Hedley, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

[15] Buzan, Barry, and Richard Little, "From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School," *International Organization* 47, no. 3 (1993): pp. 321–347, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027983.

characterized as where states share common values and institutions. His analysis indeed added a layer of complexity. It is because of the fact that it emphasizes the degree of societal development within an anarchical system and how it can vary across regions. This in other studies gave rise to what he termed "regional security complexes" as well. These complexes illustrate how anarchy is not experienced uniformly but is instead shaped by the specific contexts of different regions fed by different histories and cultures.

Like the ones that are discussed, Andrew Linklater enriched the English School by incorporating a critical theory too. He broadened its focus to include the role of individuals and non-state actors in international society as well[16]. While Wight and Bull concentrated on the state as the primary actor, Linklater argued that international society is undergoing a transformation and it evolves toward a cosmopolitan community. This cosmopolitan community woul reflect moral progress and justice eventually too. He emphasized that anarchy does not dismiss the potential for ethical advancement. Although new social and political movements increasingly challenge state-centric perspectives, they advocate for the inclusion of marginalized voices in global governance additionally. This evolution reflects an ongoing redefinition of international society to accommodate a broader range of actors. It is also aimed to suggest that anarchy is dynamic and responsive to shifts in global consciousness. Tim Dunne (1998) complemented these contributions by delving into the historical past of anarchy and the practices of states have constructed to manage their relations. His work highlighted how the character of anarchy and the responses to it. They have varied across time and space ansd they are shaped by the historical experiences of states. Dunne's emphasis on the historical origins of international society is aligned with Wight's and Bull's views. Indeed, Dunne provides a deeper understanding of how the social practices of states have been instrumental in tempering the effects of anarchy. While analyzing the scholars from English School, the theory draws anarchy as an wholly negative condition and as a framework within which states navigate their relations at the same time. While realism highlights the constraints out of anarchy, the English School's approaches demonstrate order can emerge through shared institutions and moral progress.

5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The realist, liberal and english School's perspectives on anarchy come up with distinct interpretations. They highlight different views on the nature of IR and the possibilities for order and cooperation. Realism with its Hobbesian roots views anarchy as the fundamental condition of international politics. Under the roof of realims, states operate in a self-help system and this system is characterized

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[16] Linklater, Andrew, *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

bypower struggles and insecurity. Realists believe that states must rely on their own capabilities to survive in the absence of a higher authority. This leads to an emphasis on military power and national interest. From this angle, anarchy inevitably causes conflict. It is expected since states are driven with their primary need to secure their survival. Indeed, this can happen often at the expense of others. In other words, the international system is essentially a zero-sum game. On contra to realist school, liberalism sees anarchy as a less deterministic force. Liberal thinkers agree that the absence of a central authority exists but they argue that it can be mitigated through cooperation and international law. They emphasize the role of international organizations such as United Nations and World Trade Organization. Those institutions are ought to promote cooperation and to create mechanisms for conflict resolution. There is a belief in liberal school that through trade and diplomacy, states can build trust to reduce the risks of anarchy. This line of thinking makes cooperation possible and beneficial for all. The English School occupies a middle ground between realists and liberals. It views anarchy as a structural condition and a social phenomenon that is shaped by the practices and norms. Scholars like Bull argue anarchy does not necessarily result in perpetual conflict. Rather, international society which is built on shared norms and institutions can emerge within this anarchy. They create order in the international system. The ES distinguishes between an international system and an international society. In the first one states simply coexist and in the second one states cooperate based on mutual interests. Anarchyis not a deterministic force for scholars in ES tradition but it is a one that interacts with state practices. They suggest that order is possible in an anarchic world through diplomacy and commitment to shared social structures. Overall, while realism views anarchy as a driver of conflict and liberalism sees it as a condition that can be mitigated through cooperation, the ES sees anarchy as a challenge and a context in which states can develop systems of stability and order.

Anarchy is likely to remain a relevant concept in the future of IR but its implications may evolve in response to changing dynamics. While the nature of IR is undergoing significant transformations such as the rise of transnational issues and the increasing influence of non-state actors, it can be assumed that anarchy will continue to be an important framework for understanding global politics. Firstly, the core structural condition of anarchy remains largely in place. Despite the expansion of international organizations, these bodies do not have the power to fully transcend the sovereignty of states. They are also unable to create a binding global governance mechanism with the authority of a central authority. States retain the ultimate authority in matters of war and peace. Many international disputes continue to be resolved based on power dynamics rather than institutionalized mechanisms. As long as states are the primary actors in global politics, the idea of anarchy will continue to shape states interaction. Their pursue of interests like security and diplomacy will also take formation within this nature as well. However, the concept of anarchy is not set to stone. Globalization alongside with the rise of non-state actors still challenge

traditional understandings of anarchy. There are also increasing interdependence between states too. The growing influence of international law and institutions address transnational issues like climate change and human rights. Issues like economic inequality may fall into this examples too. They all suggest that the world may be moving toward a more interconnected and cooperative international society. This could lead to a reimagining of anarchy eventually. In this new form cooperative frameworks and collective action can become more prominent and the state-centric nature of international relations can increasingly complement by non-state actors.

Moreover, the concept of "regional anarchy" may gain more importance. There also discussions on varying levels of order within different regions as well. As scholars like Buzan have argued, regional security complexes show how anarchy is experienced differently in different places on earth. While some regions may experience more cooperation others may continue to face conflict and insecurity due to historical or political differences. This suggests that anarchy may become a more nuanced concept. It will continue to be understood as a singular global condition but also as a one that is shaped by regional and local dynamics. Finally, the critical and post-positivist schools of IR challenge state-centric and power-based interpretations of anarchy. They may push for a rethinking of the concept from the beginning. Scholars in these traditions argue that anarchy should not only be seen through the lens of state competition. They aim for considering it as the role of human agency and ethical progress in IR. This shift may lead to an understanding of anarchy that is more inclusive of non-state actors. It will also seek to expand the scope of international society to address global inequalities and the rights of individuals and communities. In conclusion, the traditional conception of anarchy as a structural feature of international politics remains relevant. But definetely, its application and interpretation are evolving by the minute. Anarchy will continue to be a useful concept in understanding power dynamics and state sovereignty. The actions of state regarding their security will make more sense with anarchy with its explanatory poweer. But its role in shaping the future of IR will be increasingly influenced by global cooperation and non-state actors for sure. The ethical dimensions of international politics will occupy certain area for anarchy discussion as well. The concept will likely need to adapt to reflect the complexities of an interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

Anarchy, one of the most fundamental concepts in the theoretical foundation of the discipline of international relations, has historically been reinterpreted within the framework of different epistemological traditions and methodological approaches, and has thus become the subject of discussions on the axis of continuity and rupture within theoretical plurality. This study aims to analyze the theoretical meanings attributed to the concept of anarchy by realism, liberalism and the English School, and to provide a comparative reading of how each approach conceptualizes anarchy. The findings obtained show that the

phenomenon of anarchy is not only a structural feature of the international system; it is also a multi-layered intellectual construction shaped within each theory's own ontological and normative framework.

The realist paradigm positions anarchy as an ontologically fixed and unchangeable structure inherent in the nature of the international system. Although there are differences between the neoclassical and neorealist variants, the idea of anarchy emerges as a plane of necessity that directs the state's search for security in all realist readings. Here, anarchy functions as a "structure of distrust" that encourages conflict and pushes states to behave in mutual skepticism and zero-sum relationships. This understanding is based on the assumption that the state maximizes its own interests as a rational actor, and it grounds the idea that the international order can be sustained through temporary compromises rather than permanent cooperation.

The liberal theoretical approach interprets anarchy not on a reductionist structural plane, but through the interaction and institution-building between actors. For the liberal perspective, anarchy is a situation that can be shaped by regulatory mechanisms rather than carrying an absolute potential for conflict. In this approach, elements such as international law, normative frameworks, multilateral institutions and economic interdependence are evaluated as structures that minimize the negative effects of anarchy. Therefore, anarchy is not a fixed condition; it is a transformable condition. In this respect, liberalism represents a more optimistic ontological position in international relations and theoretically defends the existence of cooperation opportunities beyond structural imperatives.

The English School, on the other hand, approaches the concept of anarchy on a dual level, suggesting a "middle way" with reference to both the power politics emphasis of realism and the normative structures of liberalism. In this approach, theorized with the contributions of Hedley Bull, anarchy does not only mean the absence of order, but is also an order that makes the existence of an "international society" possible. By positioning anarchy within a conceptual framework that carries normatively inherent meanings, the English School claims that states can build an order around common norms, rules and institutions. This approach suggests that anarchy and order are not mutually exclusive, but rather dynamics that can coexist within the same system, and thus reveals that the concept of anarchy cannot be reduced to one-dimensional interpretations.

Ultimately, the concept of anarchy is not only a theoretical construction in international relations thought, but also a conceptual mirror in which each theoretical approach reflects its own ontological assumptions, epistemological priorities and normative orientations. Different interpretations of anarchy do not only reflect theoretical divergences; they are also frameworks that determine which strategic approaches will be adopted in policy-making processes. In this context, the conceptual pluralism of anarchy points to the theoretical richness and diversity of interpretation of the discipline of international relations. Therefore,

instead of reductionist approaches in evaluating the phenomenon of anarchy, adopting an interdisciplinary reading style that prioritizes a pluralistic and critical perspective will produce more functional results in terms of both theoretical depth and applied politics.

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