

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2018 · 10 marks

Bring out the major differences between the Classical Realism of Hans Morgenthau and the Neorealism of Kenneth Waltz.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

R1 common realist ground (power, anarchy, self-help) → one root difference: the source of the power-struggle **R2** both realist → disagree on where power politics begins → that root drives every other difference

Intro routes

Morgenthau: cause in human nature (*Politics Among Nations*, objective laws from that nature) → **Waltz**: cause in system structure (*Theory of International Politics*, anarchy + distribution of capabilities; leaders/human nature downplayed, structure compels) → purpose of power: end (classical) vs means to survival (neorealism) → method: subjective/philosophical vs systematic/scientific, modelled on microeconomics → ethics: prudence present in **Morgenthau** vs largely absent in **Waltz**

Body flow

despite the differences, both stay within realism → shared self-help + balance of power → a reworking of the foundation, not a break

Counter-view

R1 evolution from a human-centric to a system-centric account of IR **R2** structural rigour gained, but **Morgenthau's** attention to statecraft and ethics set aside

Conclusion routes

Both Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz work within realism where power, anarchy and self-help are common ground. They differentiate on where the struggle for power begins and that difference shapes every other one.

Morgenthau located the cause of conflict in human nature. According to him, in *Politics Among Nations*, international politics runs on objective laws derived from nature. Waltz relocated the cause to the structure of the international system. For him, in *Theory of International Politics*, anarchy and the distribution of capabilities decide behaviour; leaders and human nature are downplayed because structure compels them.

For classical realism power is an end but for neorealism it is a means to survival. Their methods differ too: Morgenthau's realism is subjective & philosophical, while Waltz makes it systematic and scientific, modelled on microeconomics. Prudence and ethics matter for Morgenthau but are absent in Waltz.

For all these differences, both remain within realism, sharing self-help and the balance of power.

The move is therefore an evolution from a human-centric to a system-centric account of international relations, not a break from realism.