

What is Realism

The term "Realism" is used with such frequency that it appears to defy the need for definition - all that needs to be known about the concept is encapsulated in the word. Yet closer examination a great deal of variation. Each of the principal Realist theorists - Carr, Morgenthau and Waltz - offer their own definitions, but often focussing on the aspects they wish to emphasise.

Divisions of opinion exist between the classical (or traditional) Realists and the structural Realists (neorealists); and within these broad groupings there are further variations and shades of opinion. All share a large part of a common body of thought, but many have particular aspects on which they differ. Too precise a definition excludes some individuals; too broad loses some common threads of thought.