



INNOSCIENCE PRESS

To What Extent is Cooperation between Countries Possible Under Conditions of Anarchy?

Yiling Ding*

Nankai University, Tianjin 300000, China

**Corresponding author:* Yiling Ding, dingyiling0211@gmail.com

Abstract: There are about more than two hundred countries in the world today, each with its own cultural system and background. Countries communicate with one another at the national, organizational, and individual levels, but there is also a lack of a system of government or authority. Various interactions between the countries are difficult to define by power. It's a choice between confrontation and cooperation. The question is to what extent is cooperation between countries possible in situations of anarchy, which is a complex and comprehensive question.

Keywords: International cooperation; Anarchy

Publication date: June 2021; **Online publication:** June 30, 2021

1. Introduction

In this article, the author discusses in detail about the feasibility of international cooperation under anarchy. First, background research on anarchy is essential. The author explains what is anarchy and what kind of research this background has with international cooperation. Second, the author starts from the three mainstream theories of international relations and discuss in turn whether international cooperation can be achieved from the perspectives of realism, liberalism, and constructivism. As well as give a critique of these views. Third, the author will start with how to achieve cooperation between countries, and use game theory as an example to explore the difficulties faced by international cooperation. The final conclusion is where international cooperation can be achieved, but it is difficult to form an ideal purely mutual beneficial behavior. Countries can work together to address major issues affecting humanity. When faced with differing interests between countries, however, whether cooperation can be achieved is determined by a country's attitude and a detailed analysis of the cooperation. In conclusion, cooperation between countries is possible under certain conditions, even in the background of anarchy.

2. The Background of Anarchy

First, in this case, the main term anarchy is an unavoidable background condition. The various distributions of rights around the world, as well as interactions between several countries, comprise a whole international system network. In normal circumstances, anarchy means that in the entire international system, there is no higher authority than national sovereignty. Each country represents the highest authority within its borders and expresses its independence to the outside world, regardless of its overall military strength. As early as the signing of the Westphalian Contract in 1648, countries demanded to recognize the territorial sovereignty of other countries and respect the independence of other countries. This also provides a basis for the sovereign state as the main actor under anarchy in the current

world system.

Second, does anarchy hinder international cooperation? Anarchy means there is no upper power or legislation ahead of the sovereign of each country. However, the absence of higher authority does not mean that the international system is in chaos. The international system also has its own internal operating rules and mechanisms. As the British institution named it, the international community has its own operating mechanism. In this system, the politicians mainly include independent countries, intergovernmental multinational organizations, non-governmental multinational organizations, multinational companies, etc. At the same time, anarchy means that there is no higher authority to lead or manage other countries, but it does not mean disorder. In contrast, under the conditions of anarchy, cooperation is the common pursuit for most of the countries and obviously presents unplaceable advantages. Equal sovereign countries may gradually seek cooperation in mutual interaction.

3. Attitudes Towards Cooperation Between Countries by Three Main Stream Theories in International Relations

In the field of international relations, there are three main stream theories manifest distinct perspectives upon the issue of cooperation between countries under conditions of anarchy. Although the three theories have different attitudes towards cooperation, and its own characteristics, but they complement each other, learn from each other, and provide a solid theoretical foundation for international cooperation research.

3.1. Perspective of realism

Realists believe that in the field of international relations, human nature has its inherent limitations. According to the law of the jungle, human nature is selfish, cruel and dark. Like rational people, absolute security is the greatest pursuit among nations. Power struggle is the essence of international exchange activities. Countries pursue relative gains rather than absolute gains. Under this background, international cooperation is impossible. In other words, even if it can be achieved, cooperation is limited to low-political areas such as education. In high-political areas, such as the struggle for international power, countries cannot compromise with each other. In Waltz's structural reality theory, the country is the constituent unit of the international system, and the arrangement of the country in the system forms the structure of the system. The anarchy of the international system determines the self-help nature of country's behavior, and such a self-help system creates a security dilemma between countries. Therefore, international cooperation cannot be achieved in substance ^[1].

3.2. Perspective of liberalism

As the mainstream theory of international relations theory, liberalism can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome. This genre mainly emphasizes personal freedom, rationality and progress. Aristotle proposed that the supreme purpose of the city-state is to enable human beings to live a moral life. Later, philosophers and thinkers such as Locke, Adam Smith, Bentham, and Kant all developed and improved liberalism. However, the early liberal international political thought did not withstand the test of reality. The outbreak of the World War proved that liberal thought is more similar to a utopian thought. It did not distinguish clearly how it should be from what it actually is and equated good wishes with reality. Liberalism is therefore called idealism, and idealism quickly fails in the debate with realism. However, with the subsequent development of the world economy, the degree of cooperation between countries continued to deepen, liberalism gained momentum for development, and neoliberalism emerged. Compared with idealism, neoliberalism is no longer so radical. It emphasizes that under the guidance of rationality and through appropriate channels and mechanisms, human beings can overcome the adverse effects of anarchy and achieve cooperation and peace between nations. At the same time, some scholars

applied the research methods of modern social science to liberal philosophy, and gradually developed commercial liberalism,

republican liberalism and neoliberal institutionalism.

In liberals' perspective, human nature is indeed progressive, pursuing for freedom, thus, the weakness of human intrinsic quality can somehow be improved. Also, substantial cooperation can finally be reached after the appropriate joint efforts. Specially, liberalist emphasize on the necessity of the effects conducted by international institutions. Liberalist emphasize that, effective international mechanism can effectively reduce the barriers to information, through the exchange of information, finally realizes the cooperation between the different countries [2].

Take prisoner's dilemma as an example, when conducting a rational analysis with the group as the goal, cooperation between the two parties can achieve the least overall sentence reduction. However, from a personal point of view, non-cooperation is the best choice for reason. This shows that individual rational behavior is not necessarily the best choice for the group. This involves the importance of organizational structure and information barriers. If the organization is set up properly, it can effectively coordinate all parties to achieve a rational choice of the group. At the same time, the reduction of information barriers can help both parties understand the situation and promote cooperation. In this case, the importance of information transparency and fluency, as well as cooperative organizations has gradually become prominent. After reaching a sufficient number of cooperation, people realize that cooperation is more beneficial, in this case, cooperation is more possible [3].

3.3. Perspective of constructivism

The constructivist's re-understanding of the politicians' structure and interests brings a new understanding of the feasibility of cooperation. Around 1990, the concept of constructivism was put forward by some scholars. The main idea is that matter and ideas are mutually constructive, that is, our understanding of things plays a vital role in shaping the material world, and at the same time, the material world in turn affects our cognition. Among them, the more representative one is the issue of the structure of politicians. Constructivists have also inspired us to face the problems of international cooperation. Take the important factors, interests and identity in cooperation as examples. Constructivists believe that the identities and interests of politicians in the international system are not established, but depend on the politician's perception of the two factors. Additionally, benefits are not necessarily money, rights, etc. in the usual sense, but may also be different due to different situations and different cognitions of the cooperating participants. Benefits alone are not enough to explain behavior. Benefits only help explain the motives of behavior. Behavior also depends on the realization of benefits in a given environment. In this way, identity determines interests, and interests determine behavior. Only by considering identity, interests, and knowledge, can behavior be explained [3].

4. Discussion of the Feasibility of Cooperation from the Cooperation Itself

Even if there is a willingness and possibility to achieve cooperation between countries in the international system, cooperation is not easy to achieve, because cooperation itself is a very complicated matter, and many factors may affect it. Among them, the degree of cooperation is affected by factors such as cooperation conditions, cooperation process, and specific politicians of countries participating in the cooperation [4].

The problem can be viewed in accordance with the theory of the cooperation. The number of politicians participating in the cooperation, the judgment of their own interests and the expectation of future benefits will affect whether the subjects of international relations choose to cooperate. First of all, in the international society, cooperation and competition between countries cannot exist in a single pair of countries, but at multiple levels. Therefore, when a country considers whether to choose cooperation in an

event, it will

consider whether it will affect cooperation in other related fields. This multi-level cooperation makes the country more seriously consider the cost of rejecting it, so it is more likely to happen in this case. For example, although South Korea is an ally of the United States and relies on the protection of the United States in terms of security, South Korea has a relatively strong dependence on China in terms of economy. If South Korea does not cooperate with China on some issues, South Korea will lose a lot of benefits. Therefore, over the years, China and South Korea have always maintained a relatively good cooperative relationship.

The cooperation process can also be affected by double level games. Since negotiation is indispensable in the process of cooperating with the store, international negotiations are bound to be affected by both domestic and international dimensions. At this time, what represents whether a country can achieve cooperation is not a rational politician of the country, but a specific representative responsible for the cooperation. Negotiators need to start playing chess on the chessboard of foreign negotiations on the basis of meeting domestic needs. For domestic purposes, the choice of negotiators and the domestic situation are crucial ^[4]. For foreign countries, the alliance structure and the international situation are also very important. Sometimes, because the negotiator or the institution responsible for the negotiation cannot obtain sufficient information about the overall situation, the country cannot make a completely rational optimal choice in the process of cooperation. At this time, sometimes the negotiator will choose a plan that satisfies the lowest demand and satisfies him. It can be seen that the degree of cooperation is related to many factors, including leaders, domestic and international situations, and is often closely related to the participating countries' awareness and research on the situation ^[5].

5. Conclusion

As analyzed above the opinions on whether cooperation can be achieved varies a lot. However, as we can see from reality, appropriate international cooperation is indeed likely to be attained, and the point is what extent to be achieved. For instance, the establishment of WTO brought benefits to both the current and future generations, also serve the interests of the world. Thus, during the pandemic of covid-19, various countries have carried out extensive cooperation on epidemic prevention experience and medical rescue. Some countries represented by China have carried out humanitarian assistance to other countries. At the same time, when an earthquake occurs in a country, other countries will also send rescues accordingly. For example, in the Wenchuan earthquake, China received a total of 42.364 billion yuan in donations from other countries, including the United States, which has been in tension with China. Similarly, in August 2005, after Hurricane Katrina disaster in the United States, the Chinese government donated 5.1 million US dollars as aid. We believe that from a realistic perspective, international cooperation can be achieved to a certain extent, but the degree will vary. For example, in the face of issues where participants can benefit from it, cooperation is more likely to be achieved. Since, the possibility of cooperation also depends on the type of income, the importance of the income to the participating countries, and the influence of the income distribution structure among the partners. How to cooperate and to what extent, but looking at the cooperation itself, from the perspective of cooperation theory, there is another argument. It is generally believed that cooperation can only occur if the Pareto optimal configuration is reached. Plus, how to achieve cooperation is a comprehensive issue ^[6].

In summary, although cooperation can be achieved is a question, but to what extent and how to maximize it are another two questions. It's a sophisticated question to figure out to what extent can cooperation between countries can finally be achieved. This is intimately regarding to not only the configuration of power distribution in international system, the establishment of the international institutions and special mechanism, the degree of the transparency of information communication, the distinct cultural context of each country, but also the structure of benefits distribution during cooperation,

nevertheless the specific attitude and analysis respectively aiming at each cooperation opportunity. It is even related to the process of cooperation, a country's domestic and foreign political organization structure procedures. We cannot guarantee that, every country's cooperation participant to form of cooperation, in a comprehensive and accurate judgment, but the cognition of cooperation is conducive to eventually reach of cooperation. For the sake of an optimistic wish of cooperation, once the needs of each country have been identified, it can hopefully be achieved.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Waltz K, 1979, *Theories of International Politics*. Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.
- [2] Cao W, 2020, *International Relations Theory Course*. China Social Sciences Press.
- [3] Jervis R, 1978, Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma, *World Politics*. 30(2):167-214.
- [4] Wang L, 2001, International cooperation under anarchy: Analysis of international relations from the perspective of game theory, *World Economy and Politics*. (8)
- [5] Oye KA, n.d, Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy: Hypothesis and Strategies, *World Politics*. 38(1):1-24.
- [6] Robert A, Robert OK, n.d., Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions, *World Politics*, 38:226-264.