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CHAPTER

The Difference between Theory and Approach

After reading the chapter, the reader will be able to develop an analytical understanding on the following:

- What is an approach?
- How is it different from theory?
- Classification of approaches
- Development of a theory

THEORY AND APPROACH

To study an academic question, if one uses a certain act of standards that governs the inclusion and exclusion of questions and data, it is called an 'approach'. The criteria to select problems and approaches depend upon the scholars. Thus, there is no limit to the number of approaches, since, as the number of scholars increase, so does the number of approaches. Since there is a limit we need to set in the study of approaches, we need to classify them into certain categories. For the purpose of using the knowledge of approaches in the study of IR for the paper in General Studies (UPSC), we will study the approaches of Idealism, Realism, Liberalism and Marxism in depth. The subsequent chapters in this part help us deepen our understanding of these approaches. Before we proceed, we need to keep in mind that an approach helps to build a theory. A scholar begins with a phenomenon, tries to explain it, makes predictions, and uses techniques, thus developing a distinct theory.