
International relations systems and theories

PID_00265486

Just Castillo Iglesias

Recommended minimum time required: 4 hours



Just Castillo Iglesias

Political scientist specializing in International Relations. He teaches Politics and International Relations at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) and at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). He has spent his professional and academic career in prestigious institutions throughout Europe and Asia, including the European Institute of Public Administration (2007-2010), Osaka University (2011-2015), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2012), the Ocean University of China (2015-2017) and Waseda University (2017-2018). In 2014 he was awarded a PhD in International Public Policy by Osaka University with a thesis on the EU's political and security relations with Japan and China.

The assignment and creation of this UOC Learning Resource have been coordinated by the lecturer: Lluç López i Vidal (2019)

First edition: September 2019
© Just Castillo Iglesias
All rights reserved
© of this edition, FUOC, 2019
Av. Tibidabo, 39-43, 08035 Barcelona
Publishing: FUOC

All rights reserved. Reproduction, copying, distribution or public communication of all or part of the contents of this work are strictly prohibited without prior authorization from the owners of the intellectual property rights.

Index

Introduction	5
1. Concepts and theories of the discipline of International Relations	7
1.1. What are international relations?	7
1.2. Basic concepts	8
1.2.1. A matter only of states?	8
1.2.2. An anarchical international system	12
1.2.3. Power	13
1.3. How long have international relations been in existence?	13
1.3.1. The configuration of today's world	15
1.4. IR theories. What is theory for?	16
1.5. History of IR as an academic discipline	17
1.6. Main paradigms of the IR discipline	20
1.6.1. Realism	20
1.6.2. Liberalism	26
1.6.3. Constructivism	29
2. Structures and processes in international relations	34
2.1. The international system as an instrument of analysis	34
2.1.1. Levels of Analysis approach	35
2.2. Types of actors in international relations	37
2.3. Structure of the international system	37
2.4. Processes / dynamics of the international system	41
Summary	47
Bibliography	49

Introduction

This module is written as a guide for students who will study the discipline of International Relations for the first time. It aims to offer a condensed but comprehensive overview of the main **conceptual and theoretical tools of the discipline**, as well as looking at its evolution and its most relevant **theoretical approaches**.

When we talk about "international relations" we refer to several different things. One of the possible meanings of this broad concept is roughly a synonym of the phenomena that constitute world politics or international affairs – conflict, war, peace, cooperation and regional integration, among others – and the array of interconnected factors that shape them: politics, economics, law. We commonly refer to this notion as **international relations** in lower case letters.

On the other hand, when we write **International Relations** in capital letters we refer to the academic discipline that aims to study, understand and explain these factors and also try to anticipate predictions about them.

Most of this module revolves around the second notion as our objective is to become familiar with International Relations (IR) as an academic discipline.

Before we begin, it is a good idea to ask ourselves why we should study International Relations. The first question that our readers must ask themselves is the following: why should we study international relations? We might be tempted to think of world affairs as something that we hear about on the news, which is "out there," but which does not really impact our daily lives. However, in a globalized world like ours, nothing could be further from the truth. Almost three decades into the 21st century, our world has become complex and highly interconnected. We can all be affected by things that happen on the other side of the planet. Our world faces such challenges as environmental degradation, forced migrations or international terrorism, and the scope of these challenges transcends national borders. Our state or the state where we live engages in foreign relations with other states and perhaps it is even a member of a supranational organization such as the EU. In addition, some of our tax money goes to fostering international cooperation or perhaps even to fighting wars.

The study of international affairs is not only an exciting endeavour: it is also key if we want to understand how our world works. And this is what International Relations does as an academic discipline! This module sets out to provide the reader with the **concepts, analytical tools and theoretical foundations** needed to embark on the academic study of **world politics**.

This module is organized into two parts. The first part is an overview of the main conceptual and theoretical tools of the IR discipline. First, the basic concepts of the discipline – eg *anarchy, states, power* – are discussed. Then, the debates that have shaped IR as a modern academic discipline are presented, as well as the main paradigms or *families of theories* and core tenets – ie beliefs – of each of them.

The second part starts by revisiting the concept of *international system* so as to conceptualize it as an instrument of analysis of the IR discipline. Then it goes on to review the key components identified by the systemic approach to the study of IR: actors, structures and processes.

1. Concepts and theories of the discipline of International Relations

In the first part of this module the conceptual and theoretical foundations that the reader will need to tackle in the study of International Relations are introduced.

The section begins with a brief description of what the International Relations (IR) discipline is and does. Secondly, it presents some of the key concepts of the discipline, such as anarchy, international system or *actorness*. Then it goes on to briefly discuss the historical development of the current international order, placing special emphasis on the the post-Cold War period that has shaped today's world. The role and importance of theory in the IR discipline is also discussed, followed by an overview of the development of IR as an academic discipline. The first section finishes with a presentation of the three mainstream paradigms in the contemporary IR discipline: realism, liberalism and constructivism.

1.1. What are international relations?

In the introduction we mentioned to the two main meanings of "international relations". When it is expressed in lower case it refers to the different interrelated phenomena that constitute world affairs. In contrast, when it is written in uppercase (International Relations) it refers to the academic discipline that studies these phenomena.

As an academic discipline, International Relations is concerned with both ontological questions – *what* to study – and epistemological questions – *how* to study it. As will be discussed throughout the module, the IR discipline has come up with several theories that help us understand and analyze the reality of international relations – or world politics –, each one built upon the basis of different ontologies and epistemological approximations.

It is therefore very important that the reader can clearly distinguish these two spheres. The IR discipline does not constitute the reality of the world. Instead, it provides us with a series of conceptual, theoretical and analytical tools to help us unravel, understand and explain the phenomena that surrounds the field of international politics. We will return to this point in section 1.4 when we discuss the role of theory in the IR discipline.

1.2. Basic concepts

This section is an overview of the key concepts in the IR discipline. So as to avoid repetition, the concepts that belong primarily or exclusively to the conceptual cloud of a given paradigm have not been included in this section. These concepts will be addressed in section 1.7 when discussing these paradigms.

1.2.1. A matter only of states?

If we restrict ourselves to the etymology of the concept, *international relations* refers to the interactions or relations that "exist, occur, or are carried on between countries or states."

However, this is too narrow a definition to be of any use to us. First, because despite the continued preeminent role of the state as an actor in international relations, there are other important actors that participate and have a stake in world politics. Second, because such a narrow definition leaves out a whole range of phenomena that are essential to understanding our world today, but whose scope transcends the boundaries and sovereignty of individual states. What happens with globalization or with the processes of regional cooperation and/or integration that exist around the world? And what about international terrorism?

Note

International: *inter* (between, among) + *nation* (country, state).

Nations, states, nation-states

In English, the terms country, nation or state are commonly used interchangeably. However, the IR discipline refers to sovereign actors exclusively as *states* as the other two terms have different connotations.

The term *nation* refers to a group of people that recognize each other as sharing a common identity, one which is usually attached to a homeland. If a nation corresponds exactly to the population of a state, we may refer to it as a Nation-State. However, the nation and the state may not necessarily coincide. Several nations may exist within the territory of a state and a group of people may think themselves as belonging to a nation across state borders.

1) States

States have been (and continue to be) the most preeminent actor in international relations. What constitutes a state? In International Law there are two main theories used to determine what a state is: the *constitutive* and *declaratory theories of statehood*.

According to the **constitutive theory** of statehood, a state comes into existence when it is recognized by at least another state. Only through recognition does a state become a person and a subject of international law – that is, an international actor.

By contrast, according to the **declaratory theory** of statehood, a state is considered a "person of international law" if it meets four criteria: 1) having a permanent population; 2) possessing a defined territory; 3) having authority or sovereignty, that is, the monopoly of coercion upon its population and territory, and 4) having the capacity to conduct relations with the other states. The principles of the declaratory theory of statehood are most famously exposed in the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, enacted in the Uruguayan capital in 1933.

Political entities with various degrees of recognition

Throughout the world there are cases of political entities with various degrees of recognition that, nevertheless, function *de facto* as independent states. The most widely known case is perhaps that of the Republic of China-Taiwan. The island meets the criteria of statehood according to the declarative theory. It even has the ability to interact with other states, although this ability is constrained by the demand by China – who claims sovereignty over the island as an integral part of its territory – that countries willing to maintain full relations with Beijing should abide by the so-called One-China Policy. As a result, only 16 out of the 193 UN members plus the Vatican State currently recognize the Republic of China. Even though many states in the world maintain some sort of economic and cultural ties with Taiwan, they do not recognize it as a sovereign state as they aim to maintain full diplomatic relations with Mainland China (the People's Republic). Instead of embassies, these countries usually have cultural or commercial offices in Taipei.

Other similar cases exist in the post-Soviet space. For example, two *de facto* independent entities, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, are only recognized by a handful of states, most notably Russia. Another example is Transnistria, a self-proclaimed state that has no international recognition.

Given their limited recognition, neither of these entities – regardless of whether they can exercise the maximum authority over their population and territory – can participate in international affairs as full members of the international community. The most direct consequence of this is that neither of them has membership in the United Nations.

The modern state is a European creation. The modern concept of a sovereign state dates back to the **Treaty of Westphalia** of 1648. Prior to that, political structures throughout history have served to organize the increasing complexity of human societies: tribal communities, city-states, imperial states, unions and religious domains, to name but a few. After spreading first into the Americas and then towards Asia and Africa, the modern state is today the most common form of political organization in the world. Practically every piece of inhabitable land on the planet is under the jurisdiction of a state. This does not mean, however, that the world map has remained stable since the emergence of the modern state. The political map of the world has changed notably throughout history. After the end of World War II, the processes of decolonization and the demise of the USSR paved the way for many nations to attain statehood through processes of self-determination. Since 1945, UN membership has risen from 51 states to the current 193.

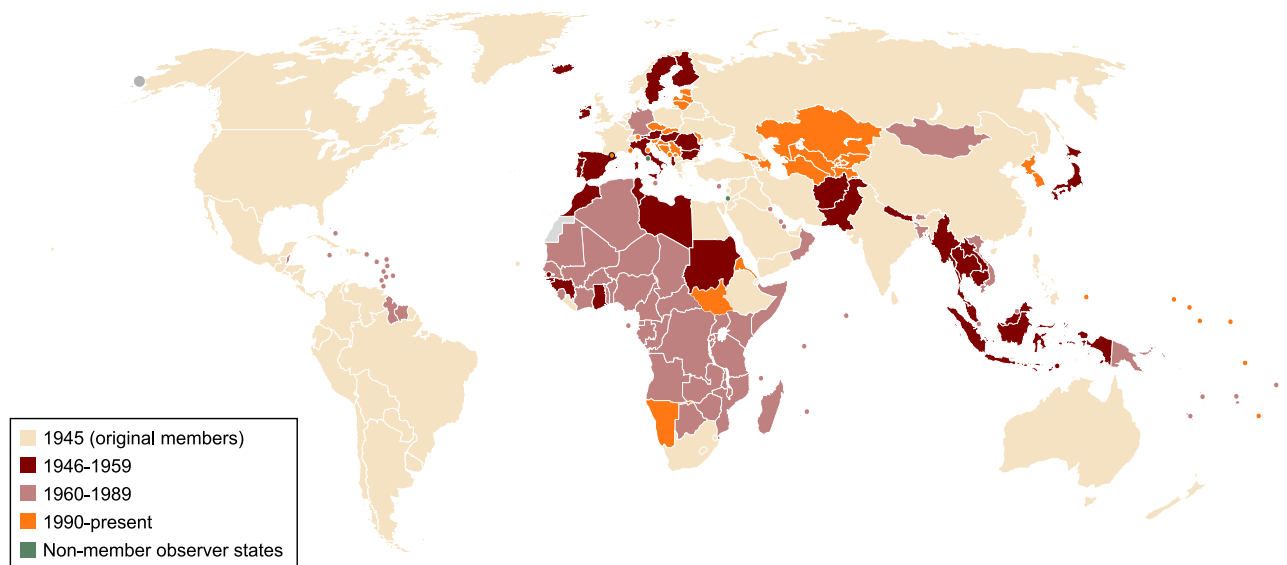
Recommended link

Full text of the Montevideo Convention:
<<https://www.jus.uio.no/english/services/library/treaties/01/1-02/rights-duties-states.xml>>.

Recommended link

Historical evolution of UN membership since 1945:
<<https://www.un.org/en/sections/member-states/growth-united-nations-membership-1945-present/index.html>>.

Figure 1. UN Membership by date of admission into the organization



2) Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)

Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), or simply international organizations, are organizations whose full legal membership is only available to states. Only states can be members. The decision-making authority within an IGO lies with the representatives of its member governments. According to their membership, they can be classified as universal – that is, without limitations – such as the UN or UNESCO, or as regional, such as the EU, ASEAN, OAS and the Arab League, among others. Regarding their field of action or objectives, IGOs can be classified as diversified, such as the UN, the African Union or the OAS, or as specific, such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) or UNESCO. Finally, with regard to the EU, it is important to note that the organization displays elements of both supranationalism and intergovernmentalism.. Because of this, it is often referred to as a *sui generis* international organization.

3) International non-governmental actors

These are groups and individuals that conduct international activities but are not representatives of a state. Within this group, we can distinguish several subcategories:

- **International non-governmental organizations (INGOs):** INGOs are organizations whose members are non-governmental parties. INGOs are of many kinds. Its members can originate from single-country NGOs, political parties and companies, and they can even be individual people. In everyday language, INGOs are commonly linked to associations that raise critical voices in society or fight for certain rights or good deeds. Most readers would have organizations such the Red Cross or Amnesty Interna-

tional coming to mind. However, having an altruistic field of action is not a necessary condition to be classified as an INGO.

- **Transnational corporations (TNCs):** also known as multinational corporations (MNCs), these companies operate in more than one country despite being headquartered in a "home country". This term also refers to companies that have affiliates in foreign countries. There are more than 100,000 of these types of companies worldwide, so it is easy to find examples: General Electric, Volkswagen or Microsoft.
- **Transnational social movements:** these movements engage in efforts to promote or resist change beyond borders. Those involved are from at least two states. Illustrative examples are the anti-globalisation movement and the anti-nuclear movement.
- **Transnational criminal or terrorist groups:** these non-state actors use or threaten to use violence to influence citizens or governments in pursuit of political or social changes.

Figure 2. 120,000 people attended an anti-nuclear protest in Bonn, West Germany, on 14 October 1979, following the Three Mile Island accident. The anti-nuclear movement is an example of a transnational social movement



Source: Hans Weingartz/Wikipedia

4) Governmental non-central actors

These actors are primarily local or regional governments that carry out international activities. A myriad of examples are found throughout the world, from cities participating in international twinning or cooperation frameworks to the international presence of sub-state entities such as Scotland or Catalonia.

5) Single-country non-governmental organizations

These organizations are mainly private groups whose activities are primarily confined within a single state and that maintain direct relations with international actors outside of governmental channels. Several subcategories of this type of actor can be distinguished:

- Single-country non-governmental organizations or NGOs: these NGOs operate within a single state. It is estimated that there are 11,000 of such entities throughout the world. As an example, we can cite the American Heart Association in the US.
- Political parties: national political parties usually conduct relations with parties of the same political orientation in other countries. They may do so bilaterally or through established federations or organizations.
- Other entities such as the Swedish Academy, which grants the Nobel Prize.

6) Individuals

Not all classifications include or consider individuals as international actors. However, some people with a certain prestige maintain a high profile and visibility in international affairs as individuals rather than as holders of an institutional position. For example, activists, scholars, Nobel Prize winners and sportsmen.

1.2.2. An anarchical international system

The international system is the conceptual space in which international relations take place. It is sometimes referred to as the "international arena."

The international system is characterized by being anarchical. There is no higher authority in it than that of individual states. In practical terms, this means that there is no "world police" able to enforce its authority upon the states in the system. States are factually different in their characteristics, although theoretically – and legally – they are considered to be equal in their sovereignty.

A football game without a referee

A metaphorical analogy of the international system that might be useful for the reader is that of a football game in which there is no referee. The pitch (the international system) is the conceptual space where the players (states and other international actors) play the game. Even though their physical characteristics may be different – some are strong and big while others are small and weak – formally speaking they are all equal, that is, they all play in the same game. Finally, since there is no referee in the game (anarchy of the system), it is down to the players to provide for their own safety and carry out their interests.

The international system is one of the key conceptual tools of the International Relations discipline. Besides designating the conceptual space where international relations take place, the concept is also used as an instrument of analysis, as will be discussed in section 2.1.

1.2.3. Power

A general definition of *power* is the ability or capacity of a political actor – in this case an actor in international relations – to achieve its goals. Another common definition found in the literature is the ability of one actor to influence others within the international system.

On the basis of this definition, the relevance of the concept of **power** varies across the different schools of thought in IR theory.

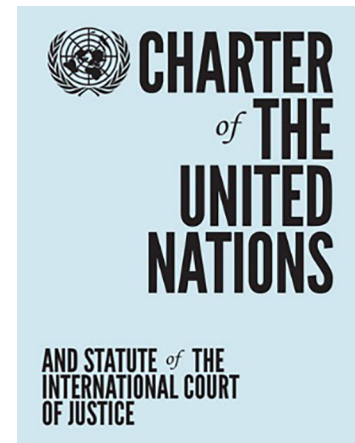
Power is a key concept in the realist paradigm. According to realists, power is directly related to the possession of capabilities which allow a state to exert a greater influence. Consequently, realists define power in terms of resources, such as military assets, the sheer size of a state's geography, economy and population. According to the realist ontology, possession of these resources translates into greater influence. This material notion of power is often described as **hard power**.

By contrast, scholars within the liberal tradition – most notably Joseph Nye – have highlighted another important dimension of power in world politics, what they describe as the "soft" dimension of power. *Soft power* describes a state's ability to exert influence over others by means of persuasion, attraction, emulation or by bringing them to agree with one's position rather than using forceful means such as coercion or military threat.

1.3. How long have international relations been in existence?

The modern state first appeared in 17th century Europe with the Treaty of Westphalia. Hence, contemporary international relations are the consequence of the different events that, since then, have shaped the evolution of the international system as we know it today:

- The **Treaty of Westphalia** (1648), which signified the official recognition of the **sovereignty** of states. Their power became separated from that of the Pope.
- The **Treaty of Utrecht** (1713-1715) established between the belligerents in the War of Spanish Succession is an excellent example of the concept of **balance of power**. We will discuss this concept with regard to realism in section 1.6.1.
- The **Congress of Vienna** (1815) established the Concert of Europe, which was the arena for European international politics until the outbreak of World War I. This is yet another illustrative example of the balance of power in Europe and a multilateral international order (see section 2.3).
- After the end of World War I, the **League of Nations** emerged from the Treaty of Versailles (1919). This organization was the precursor to the UN and the first truly international IGO.
- The **UN Charter** (1945) established the UN System with the aim of fostering peace and stability in the world while avoiding the pitfalls that hindered the League of Nations' ability to prevent World War II.
- The **processes of decolonization** throughout the 1960s and 1970s greatly increased the number of states in the world after many nations, especially in Africa and Asia, attained statehood.
- During the **Cold War** (late 1940s to 1990-91) the world was divided into two blocks (*bipolarity*) articulated around the two competing superpowers, the US and the USSR (see section 2.3).
- With the collapse of the Communist block and the **end of the Cold War** (1991) the US was left as the only superpower. However, the rise of new powers, especially China, suggests that our world is moving towards an incipient multipolar order.



The UN Charter (1945)

The fact that modern international relations are primarily the product of an evolution that started in 17th century Europe, however, does not mean that international relations are exclusively a modern phenomenon. Alongside other characteristics, history is full of **pre-modern examples** of what could be considered as international relations. Human societies have always engaged in interactions of power, wealth, acquisition, conquest, and so on. As a result of that, they have had to devise different "diplomatic" mechanisms to solve problems or disputes such as treaties, pacts, international law of war, political marriages, the taking of hostages or slavery, to name but a few. Pre-modern examples of international relations can be traced back to ancient civilizations. Ancient Greeks set up agreements to solve conflicts between cities and states.

Imperial China forged a self-centred system of international relations in which neighbouring states that wished to conduct relations with China paid tribute to its emperor.

1.3.1. The configuration of today's world

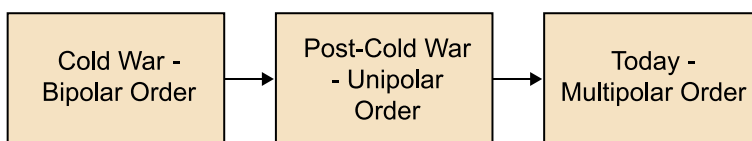
In the last three decades, the world has experienced profound transformations.

During the Cold War, our world was divided between two differentiated spheres of influence, each one dominated by one of the two superpowers of the time, the US and the USSR. This particular structure of the international system is known as the bipolar world order.

With the demise of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, the international system shifted to unipolarity. The U.S. remained the single superpower in the world. Back then, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama went so far as to claim that the end of that ideological confrontation meant the end of history. He envisioned that the collapse of the communist model meant it was no longer possible to have an alternative to liberal democracy and free market economy, which was the system that had emerged victorious from the bipolar confrontation. As a result, he argued, the entire world would eventually turn towards this system.

In hindsight, however, many authors consider that the unipolar world order of the immediate post-Cold War period was just a temporary phase. Some talk about an "illusion" of unipolarity, while others talk about a "unipolar moment". The emergence of new powers – most notably China, but also Russia, Brazil and India, among others – suggests that our world is going through a period of transition towards an incipient multipolar order.

Figure 3. Evolution of the international order since the end of the Cold War



Source: the author.

This, together with the long-term consequences of the **terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001** has cast some doubts on the validity of Fukuyama's perhaps overly optimistic interpretation. Some of the defining features of this changing world are stated below:

- The nature of security concerns has changed: during the Cold War, the main source of security concerns were the threats from other states. In the post-Cold War period, the so-called non-traditional threats, such as

terrorism, climate change or migrations are an important aspect in the security agenda.

- New powers are (re)emerging: the role of the US as the only superpower in the world is being challenged by the new rising powers. Apart from the well-known case of China, which aims to become the dominant power in the Asia-Pacific region, the other countries in the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa) are becoming more relevant in world affairs.
- The sovereignty of states has experienced a relative erosion or weakening. The origins of this process come both from within and from outside, due to the forces of globalisation and, in some contexts such as Europe, to the consolidation of regional integration processes.

1.4. IR theories. What is theory for?

"Theory is essential in every discipline for an understanding of phenomena, for thinking about interrelatedness, for guiding research, and – to mention a more immediately useful objective in the social science – for recommending sound policy action" (Dougherty and Pfalzgraf, 1990).

The objective of every science and every academic discipline is to explain complex phenomena. Theories construct a simplified view of the world that can be used to analyze reality. They help us to organize scientific thought, ask relevant questions, establish causal explanations and, in some cases, even predict outcomes.

In the case of the discipline of International Relations, theories allow us to understand and make sense of the world around us. Theories are formulations or sets of principles that simplify a complex world.

Each theoretical approach or school approach, formulates a series of principles, assumptions and simplifications relative to the world (ontology). An analogy that may be useful for the reader is to think of theories as different sets of glasses that we have to analyze a given reality or phenomenon. If we put on blue-tinted glasses, the world will look blue to us. If we switched to pink-tinted glasses, then the same reality would look pink. Therefore, depending on the glasses we put on – the theory we choose to work with – our view on a particular phenomenon will be different.

Each theory aligns with a particular approach to the study of the reality of international relations (epistemology). A helpful analogy is to think of theories as maps. Each map is made for a reason, which in this case is to answer the research questions formulated within the ontology of a given theory. The map includes or highlights those elements needed in order to direct the user towards the intended destination. All other details are left out to avoid con-

fusion and present a clearer picture. Hence, each theoretical approach of the International Relations discipline places different elements on the map, depending on what the theorists of that approach believe it to be important. Among many variables, they can choose to highlight states, IGOs, NGOs, certain individuals, economic aspects, history, ideas, gender or race.

It should be clear that IR theories are toolkits that we use to analyze international relations. A common mistake among first-year students of international relations is to think that theories reflect reality when in fact they don't. **Theories interpret reality, they do not reflect it.** Therefore, we should not think of theories as "right or wrong," but as "useful or useless."

In the IR discipline we have several competing paradigms. As we will see in section 1.6, each one makes its own assumptions about and simplifications – often mutually incompatible – of the world and how to best study it.

1.5. History of IR as an academic discipline

Although interest in the systematic study of world politics did not emerge until the early 20th century, philosophers and thinkers have been theorizing about international societies and their problems – in particular war – since antiquity. As early as in the late 6th century BC, Sun Zi (sometimes Romanized as Sun Tzu) analysed the military strategy and tactics of ancient China in his treatise *The Art of War*. A few decades later, in ancient Greece, Thucydides observed the existing patterns in strategic interactions between states – city-states in his context – and came up with concepts such as "system of states" in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

There are three main traditions of thought in pre-modern International Relations: the Hobbesian tradition, the Kantian tradition and the Grotian tradition.

a) The Hobbesian (or Machiavellian) tradition – of which the most representative authors, apart from Hobbes and Machiavelli, are Hegel, Frederick the Great, Clemenceau and, arguably, Thucydides and Sun Zi – forms the basis of the realist view of international relations. This tradition has a conflictual view of international relations that is based on the pessimistic view of human nature that many of its authors held. Therefore, this tradition understands International Relations as a war of all against all. The behaviour of states (polities) should not be tied to questions of morality or legality. Concepts such as *raison d'état* or *Realpolitik*, still very relevant for the discipline today, were coined by authors within this tradition.

b) The Kantian tradition, which builds upon the thought of the "fathers of liberalism" such as Locke, Bentham or Kant, is in sharp contrast with the positivist or realist ontology of the former tradition. Idealism is its defining feature. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) theorized that a "perpetual peace" could be

achieved in international relations if all members of the international community accepted three conditions. First, the premises of Constitutional Republicanism based on Montesquieu's separation of powers; second, the *Foedus Pacificum*, a sort of pacific union of states or confederation in which the parts would agree on abolishing war and establishing a supranational authority, and third, the primacy of International Law.

c) Finally, the **Grotian tradition** based on Hugo de Groot's thoughts – Latinized as *Grotius* – (1583-1645). The Grotian tradition sits somewhere between Hobbesian realism and Kantian idealism and is often categorized as rationalist. De Groot believed that the most important interactions in the international system were economic and social. As a Dutchman, he believed that commerce was the activity that best described the world. Consequently, it was necessary or desirable to advance towards a society of states defined by peace and order.

Nevertheless, International Relations as a distinct field of study is something relatively recent. It is a new discipline for the study of very old problems: conflict, war, cooperation. The birth of the modern IR discipline is generally linked to the establishment of the Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics at the University of Wales in 1919 (currently the University of Aberystwyth).

Since then, the discipline has evolved into its current state through a series of four **Great debates**. In these debates, scholars confronted shared their views on key concepts and variables that they thought were significant in explaining the reality of international relations.

The **First Great Debate** was a debate between **idealism and realism** which span from the 1930s to 1945. The destruction caused by World War I had given notoriety to Idealist voices such as U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, whose Fourteen Points inspired the establishment of the League of Nations with the aim of avoiding another conflict of the same extent and devastation as the previous one.

As stated in point number 14 of Wilson's Fourteen Points, "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike".

However, the interwar period was short. By the late 1930s the League of Nations had not been able to prevent another Great War and soon after that Europe and the world plunged into World War II. This brought idealism to a crisis. By contrast, realism emerged as a theory that could provide better answers to the most poignant questions of the time: conflict, power politics and war. That is why realism became the dominant paradigm in IR theory. Therefore, the First Great Debate of the discipline is an **ontological debate** (discussions revolved around the worldview by the different theories).

Recommended link

Full text available at: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp>.

During this period, the discipline also witnessed the beginning of the so-called behaviouralist revolution. Behaviouralists emphasized the use of objective, often quantitative methods of mathematics and biology in the social sciences, and they also did so in IR and Political Science.

This led to the **Second Great Debate** of the IR discipline, which occurred the 1960s. The Second Great Debate revolved around the most adequate methods of enquiry in the discipline. That's why it was mainly an **epistemological debate** (related to knowledge itself, about *how* to study international relations). On the one hand, behaviouralists preferred a more "scientific" approach to IR. On the other, there were scholars that advocated for a more "classical," interpretative approach that was based on the methodology of History. Because of this, the Second Great Debate is often referred to as a debate between traditionalism and scientism.

The second debate finished with the acceptance of scientific methodologies by realist scholars (the dominant IR paradigm).

The **Third Great Debate** (inter-paradigm debate) occurred in the 1970s and early 1980s. Its main protagonists were the proponents of **realism** and **liberalism**. The Third Great Debate revolved again around **ontological questions**. Realists held on to a state-centric view of IR, which allowed them to account for the events that occurred in the international system of the Cold War. By contrast, liberals advocated for a more globalist approach to analyse questions such as economic interdependence, regional integration or the role of international organizations. To them, these questions were key to explaining important developments of the time, such as the process of European integration, collapse of the Bretton-Woods system or the Oil Crises of the 1970s. The proponents of Marxism were also a relevant alternative in this inter-paradigmatic debate.

Finally, the **Fourth Great Debate**, which occurred after the end of the Cold War, had both an epistemological and ontological dimension. The debate stemmed from philosophical discussions about postmodernity, which were prevalent in the 1980s, and their criticism of the traditional role of sciences.

In this Fourth Great Debate, the so-called **rationalist thinkers** – who were a synthesis between neorealists and neoliberals (see section 1.6.2) – confronted their positions with those of **reflectivists**. Rationalists argued that scientific knowledge of international relations was possible through the study of its material characteristics. By contrast, reflectivist authors studied the role of ideas, perceptions and discourse and denied that scientific knowledge of reality is possible in the social sciences. Constructivism is a result of the **Fourth Great Debate**; we will further discuss this debate in section 1.6.3.

1.6. Main paradigms of the IR discipline

The word *paradigm*, which comes from Classical Greek παράδειγμα (*parádeigma*) and Late Latin *paradigma*, defines a series of metaphysical (abstract) premises and analytical methods that are shared by a group of specialists within a field. Theories that share ontological and epistemological assumptions form a paradigm. Paradigms are sometimes referred to as *schools of thought*.

Most IR specialists agree that there are three major paradigms in the contemporary IR discipline: realism, liberalism and constructivism. However, this view does not reflect the wide plurality of theoretical approaches in the discipline, leaving out relevant approximations such as Marxism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism or feminism.

In the following sections we will review the main postulates of the three aforementioned paradigms: realism, liberalism and constructivism.

1.6.1. Realism

Since the First Great Debate, realism has been the leading paradigm of the IR discipline. Its core premises derive from the Hobbesian (or Machiavellian) tradition reviewed earlier. To sum, it stresses the conflictual side of international relations.

The epistemology of realism is explanatory. In other words, it holds the view that the world is something that exists externally and that can be analyzed and theorized about. Hence, the objective of the paradigm is to describe and explain the reality of international relations.

The core tenets of realism can be summarized in four points:

a) First, realism has a **state-centric or statist view of international relations**. States are the main actors of the international system and the ones that matter the most. This does not mean that realists deny the existence of actors in the international system such as IGOs. Instead, they regard their power and capacity of influence as limited and secondary to that of states.

b) Second, realists see the **state as a unitary actor**. Neorealists assume that, given an external stimulus, all states would react the same way. Therefore, domestic politics (such as factions or domestic institutional settings) do not play a part in explaining how a state behaves in international relations. An analogy that may be useful to the reader is to imagine the international system as a billiard table, and international actors – the states – as billiard balls. The balls are opaque, so we can't see what happens inside them (domestic politics).

Hierarchy of issues

Realists state that there is a hierarchy of issues in international politics and make the distinction between **high politics** and **low politics**. High politics are those issues that rank highest in the agenda, which according to realists are war, security, military threats and capabilities.

However, this is irrelevant according to realism because, given an external (international) stimulus – when a ball is struck with the cue – the reaction of any ball is expected to be the same.

c) Third, decision-makers are assumed to be **rational-choice actors** that pursue the national interest of their state. The implication of this assumption is that states are assumed to seek survival in a competitive environment. Any action that would jeopardise the state or go against its national interest would be irrational and it is therefore not contemplated. Because of its tradition and because it relies heavily on the study of the past, realism sees human nature as hostile and ambitious for power and resources. States – and their leaders – are no different. Their behaviour is not conditioned by ethics; it is only conditioned by their ambition to satisfy the national interest as much as possible, provide for the security of the state and ensure its survival.

d) Fourth, **anarchy** is the defining feature of the international system. In the absence of a higher authority in the system, states can only rely on themselves to ensure their survival and security. The international system is therefore a self-help system. The best way for states to minimize the consequences of anarchy is to maintain the **balance of power** with regard to other states. From a realist ontology, one can never have too much power.

Table 1. Outline of the Realist paradigm

View of the international system	Anarchical international system. Conflictive. A self-help system.
Objective of the paradigm	Explain and describe the situation in the world (explanatory epistemology).
Unit of analysis	States (Nation-States).
Research interests	Security, power and balances of power.
Variables that explain the actors' behaviour	Power, interest.
Keywords	Survival, power, independence, self-reliance.
View on globalisation	Globalisation does not change the fact that states are the main actors in the system.
Role of institutions	Very weak.
Strong points	Realist arguments are very persuasive and relevant when there is a conflict situation because they are very good at explaining them.
Weak points	They do not consider domestic politics.

Origins of realism

- **Thucydides – Chronicles of ancient Greece** (fifth millennium BCE). Describes a world dominated by the stronger ones. The strongest power conquers weaker powers.
- **Niccolò Machiavelli – *The Prince*** (1532). Theorizes that a ruler should give priority to maximizing the national interests. Their actions should not be determined by ethical or moral questions.
- **Thomas Hobbes – *The Leviathan*** (1651). The strong powers of a ruler ensure security and sovereignty.
- **E. H. Carr – *Twenty Year Crisis*** (1939). Criticizes the failure of the League of Nations for being too idealistic.
- **Hans Morgenthau – *Politics Among Nations*** (1948). The national interest is always defined in terms of power.

1) Balance of power

Balance of power is one of the key concepts in realist thought. As rational actors in a self-help system, states pursue their own survival from a minimalist position and seek world domination from a maximalist position. In seeking their own survival, states end up developing expansive or hegemonic intentions. If they are unable to dominate the world, they seek to preserve the status quo and their relative position with regard to others instead. Accordingly, from this point of view the world is doomed to a permanent competence between the Great Powers.

The balance of power can be pursued in two ways, either at the internal level, that is, by enhancing the capabilities of the state through, for example, military build-up or modernization or at the external level, that is, by forging alliances with others. Despite recognizing that this possibility exists, realists will assume that any kind of cooperation will be based on rational self-interest, and that it will be conjunctural – ie not durable in time, almost as if it was coincidence. After all, "today's friend may be tomorrow's foe."

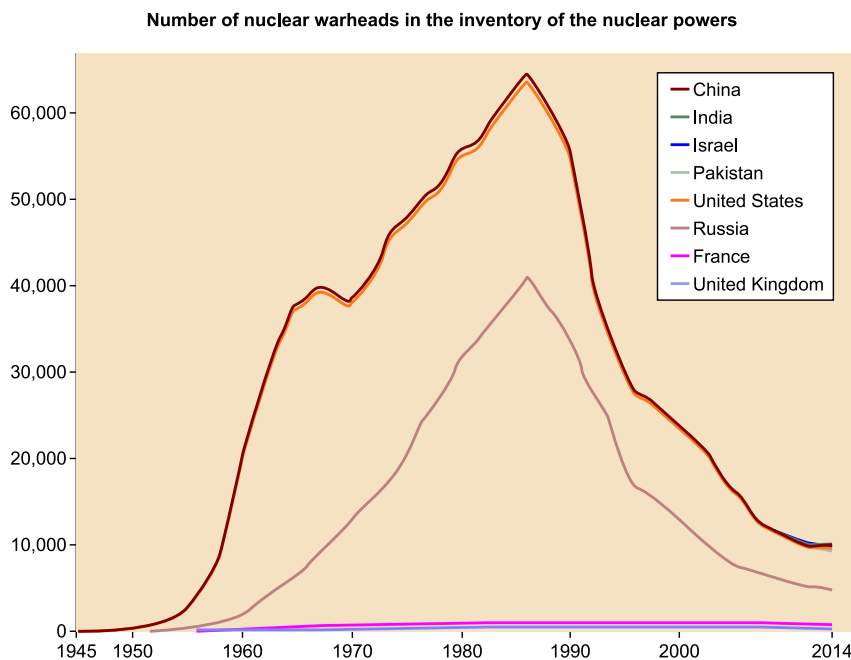
When the preservation of the status quo is too costly, realism expects states to seek other strategies until the situation changes. Some of these strategies can be *buck-passing*, which is trying to shift the burden of dealing with the problem to another state; *bandwagoning*, which means aligning with a stronger power hoping that the benefits will be greater than the costs, or *appeasement*, which is making concessions to a stronger power in order to avoid conflict and preserve the status quo.

2) The security dilemma

One of the consequences that derive from the pursuit of power balancing strategies is the appearance of security dilemmas. In seeking to guarantee its security and survival, a state –let's name it A – may decide to increase its offen-

sive capabilities. As a result, its needs for security are better met at the end of the process than at the beginning. However, when this happens, other states – for example, state B – perceive A's enhanced capabilities as a potential threat to their own security. In turn, they decide to boost their own capabilities in order to maintain – if not improve – their relative position power with respect to A. When B does this, however, A feels again the need to catch up and, if possible, surpass B's newly acquired capabilities. This, in turn, triggers the same fears in B, which sets the cycle in motion once again.

Figure 4. During the Cold War, the security dilemma between the two superpowers led to a quick proliferation of their nuclear arsenals. Each side had enough nuclear stockpile to destroy the other (Mutual Assured Destruction-MAD)



Source: FAS Nuclear Notebook; <https://ourworldindata.org/nuclear-weapons>

This kind of logics were a prevalent feature of the competitive relationship between the US and the USSR during the Cold War. The continuous circle of threat perception and power balancing leads to what is known as an **arms race**.

3) Security as a zero-sum game

The concept *zero-sum game* originates in game theory, which is the study of models of strategic interaction between rational decision-makers in economics. It is used to describe a situation in which a gain or loss of utility by one participant is balanced exactly by the losses or gains of other participants in such a way that the total sum of gains and losses in the situation will be zero.

Due to the anarchical characteristics of the international system and their competitive view of human nature, realists see security as a zero-sum game. Any gains by an actor in terms of security is seen as a loss by other actors and vice-versa. Consequently, this competitive view of power politics makes agreements and/or cooperation difficult to attain.

4) One realism or many?

We discussed earlier that theories that share ontological and epistemological assumptions form a paradigm or a school of thought. Under the umbrella of the realist paradigm we can distinguish at least three main theoretical approaches. According to their development in chronological order, these approaches are classified as twentieth-century classical realism, neorealism and neoclassical realism.

a) Twentieth-century classical realism: this version of realism, whose representative work is Hans J. Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* (1948), draws heavily on the classical works of Machiavelli and Thucydides. It places emphasis on human nature to explain how states behave. Morgenthau emphasized power over morality, which needed to be avoided in foreign policymaking. For Morgenthau, the most fundamental interest of a state in terms of foreign policy is to ensure its security and physical survival. Any action in foreign policy is therefore aimed at either keeping, increasing or demonstrating (ie projecting) power.

Accordingly, the key variable to understanding international politics is the concept of **(national) interest**, which is defined in terms of power. One of Morgenthau's most repeated propositions encapsulates the core tenets of his thought: "International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power" and "Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim."

b) Neorealism, or structural realism, is today the dominant approach in the discipline. It was defined in Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Neorealism emphasizes the structure of the international system (see section 2.3), which is the variable that, according to neorealists, explains the behaviour of states. Neorealists look at three elements in order to define the structure of the international system: organizing principles, which are anarchy and hierarchy; the differentiation of units (ie states), which they argue are functionally similar, a fact that renders domestic-level differences almost as unimportant, and the distribution of capabilities among actors, which is the key to understanding outcomes in international politics.

The distribution of power in the international system is, according to neorealists, the most important variable in trying to understand war, peace, alliances and the balance of power. For them, the overall structure of the international

Recommended reading

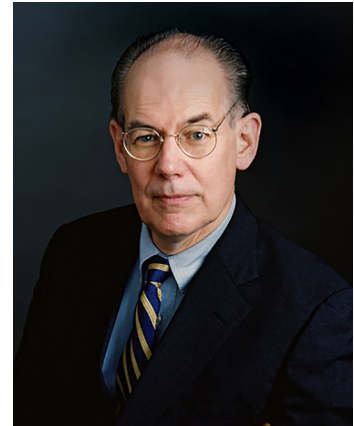
Morgenthau, H.J. (1978). "The Six Principles of Realism". In: *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (5th, revised ed., pp. 4-15). New York: Alfred A. Knopf. <<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/morg6.htm>>.



Kenneth Waltz (1924-2013) established the neorealist paradigm.

system is determined by the number of Great Powers. For example, during the Cold War the system had a bipolar structure, whereas today it can be seen as a unipolar system in transition to multipolarity.

Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* provides the foundations of what is known as **defensive realism**. The proponents of this theory argue that due to the anarchical structure of the international system, states are encouraged to seek the maximization of their security and peace of mind through "moderate and reserved policies." They believe that the structure of the international system does not encourage expansionist policies, since aggression causes a counterbalancing behaviour by other actors. By contrast, **offensive realism**, whose paramount work is John J. Mearsheimer's *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), argues that the structure of the international system pushes states to seek expansion in order to maximize their relative power of power position with respect to others. The underlying premise is that one can never be sure of the intentions of the other states.



John J. Mearsheimer is a prominent offensive realist thinker.

c) **Neoclassical realism**, a theoretical approach which was proposed by Gideon Rose in his article "Neoclassical Realism and the Theories of Foreign Policy" (1998), argues that the explanation of world politics provided by structural realism is incomplete. Neoclassical realist thinkers suggest that structural realism should be complemented with unit-level variables to understand how power is perceived or exercised in a particular state. In other words, neoclassical realists do not think that all states react the same way when confronted with an external stimulus. In order to explain how a state behaves, we should also look at how the external (international) stimuli are perceived or "processed" within the domestic institutions of that state.

5) Realism "in practice"

Realist thinkers are particularly skilled at explaining the conflictual dynamics of world politics. Through the following points we can review the core tenets of the realist paradigm:

- North Korea's nuclear arms program. Is the regime in Pyongyang just seeking to defend itself from possible threats (defensive realism) or is it trying to maximize its power capabilities (offensive realism)?
- Arms race during the Cold War. At the highest point of the bipolar confrontation there were over 70,000 nuclear warheads in the planet. How can we explain this?
- Mutual-Assured Destruction (MAD), another feature of the bipolar confrontation during the Cold War. Can it be understood as the maximum expression of the balance of power?

1.6.2. Liberalism

Liberalism is associated with thinkers of the **Age of Enlightenment**, as these set the philosophical foundations of modern democracy. Liberalism is both a theory of domestic government – which inspired, for example, the US Declaration of Independence and lay down the foundations of its political system – and good governance among states and peoples in the world. In the context of the IR discipline, it has been regarded as the traditional alternative to realism.

Classical liberal thought (Locke, Bentham and Kant, among others), states that the purpose of governments is to ensure everyone's right to life, liberty and property. Liberals, like realists, acknowledge that human nature is ambitious and competitive, but also rational. For liberals, this rationality means that human interactions should not necessarily end up in conflict. Instead, humans are often able to define common interests and come up with cooperative solutions to their problems. Inspired by the Kantian view on human nature, liberals argue that through the use of reason people can define situations in which mutual benefits and improvement are possible.

Liberals explain the international conduct of states by making an analogy between their view of human society and the society of states. States, like individuals, can adjust their behaviour to their preferences. It is possible to reach a state of security – of absence of threat – through **coordination** and **cooperation**. Liberals see cooperation as causing **interdependence**. Hence, as cooperation intensifies, interdependence deepens and becomes reinforced. In turn, greater interdependence leads to increased cooperation.

Liberals argue that increased interdependence and cooperation favour the resolution of disputes through diplomatic means, as for example by developing shared institutions instead of being aggressive with one another. Therefore, as interdependence grows, the costs of causing or becoming involved in a conflict grow. For liberals, this explains the development, improvement and evolution of the international community.

According to the liberals, the international system is made up of a plurality of actors. Without denying the fact that the state has a preeminent position in world affairs, in their analyses of international affairs liberals give great importance to the study of IGOs, transnational corporations and international NGOs, among others.

Table 2. Outline of the liberal paradigm

View of the international system	Anarchical international system, but anarchy is not the cause of war. The ill effects of anarchy can be mitigated by interdependence, institutions, norms and/or cooperation.
Objective of the paradigm	Explain the situation in the world and describe its evolution (explanatory epistemology).

Unit of analysis	States (nation-states) and non-state actors: IGOs, NGOs, etc.
Research interests	Human rationality. The development of states and international politics.
Variables that explain actors' behaviour	Interests, rationality.
Keywords	Interdependence, coordinated national interest, collective security.
View on globalisation	Globalisation is the evolution of international politics. It represents the interconnectedness and interdependence of today's world.
Role of institutions	Strong.
Strong points	Explaining international organizations, democracy, capitalism.
Weak points	The concept of power is still very important in international relations and conflicts continue to exist.

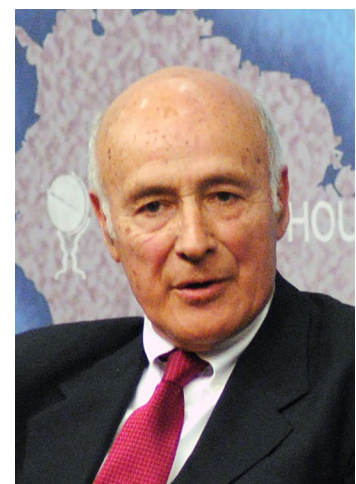
Origins of liberalism

- **John Locke – *Two Treatises of Government* (1689).** "All men are born free and equal in rights to life, liberty and estate". Social contract. Human rationality.
- **Jeremy Bentham – *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789).** Utilitarianism. Rational diplomacy. Respect for international law.
- **Immanuel Kant – *To Perpetual Peace* (1798).** Idealism. Moral obligation to transcend the state of nature. Equality between men; mutual respect between states. International law as a path to perpetual peace.
- **Woodrow Wilson – *Fourteen Points* (1918).** Idealism. League of Nations.

1) Neoliberalism

Today, the mainstream approach within the liberal paradigm is neoliberal institutionalism, commonly referred to as **neoliberalism**. Its most representative work is Robert Keohane's and Joseph Nye's *Power and Interdependence* (1977). A key concept of neoliberalism is **complex interdependence**. Neoliberals describe international relations as having become more pluralistic in terms of number of actors involved and with regard to the fact that these actors have become more dependent on each other.

The theory of complex interdependence makes four assumptions about today's world: increased links between state and non-state actors; a new agenda of international issues that does not distinguish between high and low politics as realism did (see section 1.6.1); multiple channels of interaction between actors that transcend national borders, and decline of military force as an instrument of foreign policy.



Joseph Nye cofounded neoliberalism with Robert Keohane.

The development of neoliberalism is linked to the **Third Great Debate** of the IR discipline. In 1979, realist Kenneth Waltz criticized liberal arguments about the decline of the state and the degree of interdependence among units in the international system. During the course of the debate, neoliberals accepted some of the core assumptions of neorealism, namely the anarchical characteristics of the international system, the central role of the state, and an epistemological approach based on that of the natural sciences. However, neoliberals still disagree with neorealists in two aspects. First, they do not see the anarchy of the international system as an obstacle to the establishment of durable cooperative arrangements. Cooperation can be achieved through establishing international regimes and international organizations that reduce information asymmetry, reinforce reciprocity and make defection from the agreements easier to punish and hence more costly. Second, neoliberals argue that actors can cooperate if gains can be distributed among participants. For neorealists, who emphasize conflict, what matters is having **relative gains** – that is, the benefits that a state can obtain relative to others. Conversely, neoliberals emphasize that mutual or **absolute gains**, that is, any kind of gains regardless of their distribution, can motivate cooperation.

Neorealism vs. neoliberalism

- **Points of agreement:** anarchy of the international system; preeminent role of the state in international relations; scientific approach to social science enquiry.
- **Points of disagreement:** do states pursue absolute (neoliberalism) or relative (neorealism) gains? Despite the anarchy of the system, neoliberals see cooperation possible through international regimes and/or organizations.

2) Democratic peace theory

The democratic peace theory is one of the main contributions of liberalism to IR theory. According to this theory, conflict situations especially at their most intense, especially at their maximum intensity – war – do not occur between democracies. Liberals offer two reasons to sustain this claim. First, democratic states in their domestic political systems have mechanisms in place to restrict the exercise of power (*checks and balances*). Second, democracies normally see each other as legitimate and non-threatening actors that emphasize cooperation over conflict more than non-democratic regimes do.

Research suggests that there is enough evidence to sustain the veracity of the democratic peace theory. Nevertheless, it has been the object of an intense debate between its advocates and detractors, especially realists. Some commonly addressed criticisms are the following: which definition of democracy should we adopt? Is economic interdependence what causes peace, rather than democracy? What about recent or non-consolidated democracies? How do we account for cases in which there is peace but there is no democracy?

3) Liberalism "in practice"

Liberal thinkers are particularly skilled at explaining certain aspects of world politics such as cooperation and the role of institutions. The following points can be used to review the core tenets of the paradigm:

- Collective security: how can we explain the existence of arrangements such as NATO?
- And what about the Kyoto Protocol?
- The European Union: how can we explain that sovereign states have relinquished some core aspects of their sovereignty in favour of a supranational institution?

1.6.3. Constructivism

Constructivism states that the social world – including international relations – is something of our making; a social construct.

The reality of international relations is not something external that is "out there" to be discovered. Instead, it is formed by the ideas and meanings that are shared intersubjectively by each of the actors, whether they are states or not. Therefore, actors – which are themselves the product of a particular social/cultural environment – continually shape and reshape the social world.

Departing from a rather modest position, constructivism placed itself as one of the main paradigms in the IR theory landscape in the early 1990s in the context of the **Fourth Great Debate** of the discipline. Given their focus on material aspects, the so-called rationalist theories – the term coined to describe the synthesis between neorealism and neoliberalism or the "neo-neo" debate –, were unable to offer a **comprehensive account** of the end of the Cold War. In contrast with the two mainstream theories, constructivism's less materialistic ontology made an analysis possible in which the agency of individual people – a key explanatory factor to understand how the end of the bipolar world occurred – could be observed.

Although the first author to use the term *constructivism* was Nicholas Onuf, the best-known constructivist scholar is Alexander Wendt. In his ground setting article "Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics" (1992), Wendt highlighted the materialistic ontology of neorealists and neoliberals as their main flaw. He went on to argue that even core realist assumptions were, in fact, socially constructed.

For constructivists, therefore, international relations do not just occur naturally. The national interest, the balances of power and any perceptions of threat and enmity are all constructed realities. This applies both to its ontology – the social world and what we can know about it is socially constructed – and to its epistemology: constructivism sees the methods of the social sciences as unable to predict or reproduce the "irrational" or "human" component – intentions, will, perceptions – of the social world.

In his work, Wendt puts forth an illustrative example of the **social construction of reality**. He wonders how it is possible that, from an American perspective, five hundred British nuclear weapons are less threatening than just five North Korean nuclear weapons. According to Wendt, the answer lays not in the material structures – the weapons themselves – but in the ideational structures that are intersubjectively shared by both states, that is, the perception/understanding of the US-UK relationship as amicable.



Alexander Wendt is one of the most renowned constructivist scholars.

Table 3. Outline of the Constructivist paradigm

View of the international system	It is a socially constructed reality. Its nature is changing, sometimes it is cooperative and sometimes conflictive.
Objective of the paradigm	To describe reality as a constructed process.
Unit of analysis	The structure of states and that of the international community. Plurality of actors in international relations.
Research interests	Ideas, discourse, identity, perceptions in international relations. Agent-structure problem.
Variables that explain actors' behaviour	Ideas, identities, norms and interests.
Keywords	Ideas, identities, norms and interests, culture, history.
View on globalisation	Globalisation is an opportunity to change the world.
Role of institutions	They help to create shared identities.
Strong points	Skilled at pointing out the contradictions in the explanations provided by other paradigms, especially realism.
Weak points	It is often criticized for its high level of abstraction.

Origins of constructivism

- **Max Weber** – *The Nature of Social Action* (1922). Human society is different from natural phenomena. Society has a very important subjective component.
- **Nicholas Onuf** – *A World of Our Making* (1989). Words, norms, power control mechanisms and so on are used depending on their advantage for the user. Norms are valid instruments when all actors accept them as such and obey them. A fact or a reality is often "constructed" by repetition: 'X person is right...!.
- **Alexander Wendt** – *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999). Anarchy is what states make of it (it depends on them). After decades of Cold War confrontation, Reagan and Gorbachev decided one day that they were no longer enemies and that the Cold War was over. The security dilemma can also be a dimension of collective security and not only individual security.

1) Agency and structure

The view of constructivists with respect to the agency-structure dichotomy is that structures and agency are mutually constituted. Structures influence agency and agency influences structures. Agency refers to the capacity of action, whereas structure refers to the international system in both its material and ideational components.

We can illustrate this with an example. Japan's relations with North Korea are characterized by mistrust and enmity. This social relation constitutes a structure which is intersubjective. This means that there are a series of beliefs and ideas that are shared by both states and constitute the "framework" – in this case ideational – of their relations. By contrast, Japan and North Korea as actors have the capacity to act (agency) to either change or perpetuate the existing relationship (structure).

Note that, by contrast, realists, argue that the anarchical structure of the system is what determines the actors' behaviour. In addition, realists see the structure of the system under a materialist ontology, meaning that it is mostly constituted by the distribution of capabilities among the actors and not by ideational aspects.

2) Identities and interests

Identities and interests are another central element of the constructivist paradigm. Identities are socially constructed and always formed in relation to others. Constructivists argue that identities shape interests in the sense that knowing who we are helps us determine what we want. Like people, states can have different identities that are socially constructed through their interactions with others. The actions of a state will be aligned with its identity as otherwise that identity would be questioned.

Let's consider the illustrative example of Japan. Constructivists argue that since the end of World War II Japan has built the identity of a peaceful and antimilitaristic nation and is therefore expected to behave accordingly. Similarly, Switzerland bears the identity of being a neutral nation.

3) Social norms

American scholar Peter J. Katzenstein, a prominent proponent of constructivist thinking, defined social norms as standards of behaviour that are appropriate for actors with a given identity. In other words, states are expected to comply with the norms that are seen as adequate for their identity. This process is known as the *logic of appropriateness*. It can also work the other way around: states behave in a certain way because they believe a particular behaviour to be appropriate – the right thing to do – regardless of the costs and benefits.

Logic of consequences

In contrast with the *logic of appropriateness*, the *logic of consequences* explains the actions of actors as rationally chosen according to the anticipated benefits and costs.

The constructivist literature identifies three types of norms. Regulative norms are those that regulate already existing behaviours; for example, the Rules of the Road. Constitutive norms create new actors, new interests or categories of action – in other words, they make a given activity possible. Not only do basketball rules establish what can or cannot be done in the game but they also define the game itself. Similarly, the rules of sovereignty make the very existence of sovereign states possible. Finally, prescriptive norms are those that have an ethical or moral component; a pattern of behaviour that should be followed in accordance with a given value system.

4) Securitization

Securitization is a constructivist concept that describes the process by which, through acts of speech, rhetoric and argumentation, among others, an issue becomes a matter of security.

From a practical point of view, the concept is relevant because through the process of securitization a government can, for example, justify an allocation of resources to an area that would not be a priority otherwise. The justification for the Iraq War in 2003 is a paramount example of the securitization process. Even though no weapons of mass destruction were found in the country, the rhetoric prior to the intervention was filled with threatening messages in this vein. Other examples could be found regarding illegal immigration, climate and territorial disputes, among others.

5) Constructivism "in practice"

Constructivists are skilled at explaining the role of ideas, identities and norms in international relations. The following think points can be used to review the core tenets of the paradigm:

- The social construction of the "national interest": from the point of view of constructivism, the national interest is not something given. Then, what is the process to decide what constitutes it? Who has the power to decide? The government or the public opinion? The majority of voters or only those who are more "visible"? What happens if there is a diversity of views?

2. Structures and processes in international relations

2.1. The international system as an instrument of analysis

In the first part of the module we described the international system as the conceptual space where international relations take place. In this section we will revisit this concept, in this case, as an instrument of analysis in the discipline of IR.

For the concept of international system to be useful as an instrument of analysis in IR we must first provide a working definition that can be accepted and used by analysts and theorists that subscribe to different paradigmatic and epistemological understandings. Therefore, our working definition must be able to generate a framework of analysis by itself that is useful for research.

With these prerequisites in mind and based on Braillard (1977) and Kaplan (1957), Barbé (2007) proposes the following definition:

The international system is constituted by an aggregate of actors whose relations generate a particular configuration of power (structure) within which a complex network of interactions takes place (process) according to certain rules.

This definition lays the foundations for the analysis of international relations from a **systemic** perspective.

What are the advantages of this approach? First, a systemic approach allows the identification of common **patterns of interaction** between international actors while, at the same time, the notion of system itself serves as a variable to explain the behaviour of the units that form it. This is because systemic approaches begin by considering the totality – the aggregate consisting of the actors in the system – with the objective of extracting the key variables that explain their behaviour, even in the absence of a higher authority. The underlying idea is that even in a system without a higher authority it is the configuration of the system itself (the configuration of the aggregate) that conditions the actors' actions.

A second advantage of the systemic approach is that it focuses on the **interactions between the actors**. This makes the systemic approach very adjustable because it allows us to conduct analyses either holistically (considering the whole system) or by making concrete approximations. Concrete approxima-

tions can either be by field of action (regional or by *issue-area*) or by level of analysis (focusing either on individuals, states or the entire system – see the following section). In consequence, a systemic analysis can be performed with different frameworks of reference, such as the Northeast Asian system or the international financial system.

To conclude, let's recall the three main components of the international system that the definition above refers to: actors, structures and processes. In the upcoming sections we will discuss each of them in depth. But first we will review the Levels of Analysis approach, yet another useful analytical tool in the IR discipline.

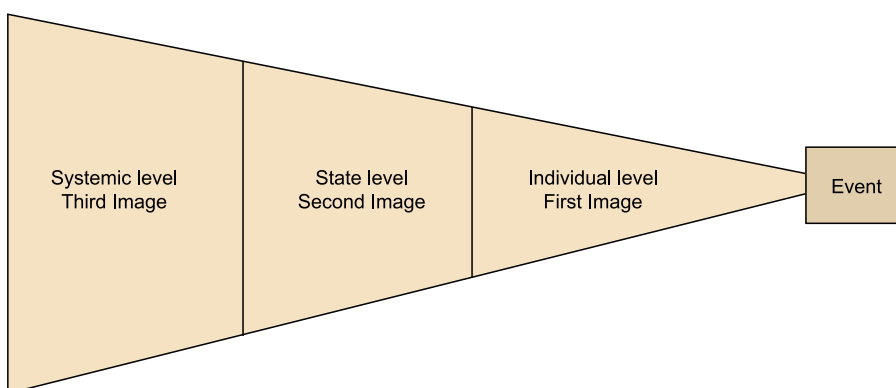
2.1.1. Levels of Analysis approach

The **Levels of Analysis** approach was proposed by Kenneth Waltz in his work *Man, the State and War*. In his analysis of the causes of war, Waltz distinguished three "images" or levels of abstraction (levels of generalization) from which to analyze any given event in international relations. The three images that Waltz identified are the individual level, the state level and the systemic level.

Each of the images or levels offers a different view over the same event. Each one has its unique value, provide us with different information and they all complement each other. In order to have a complete view and understanding of the event, the three levels cannot be used separately. In the words of the scholar M. Genest (2004),

"No single level by itself can provide a complete explanation of events and changes in world politics. Each level organizes the facts in its own particular fashion, and each level focuses on different facts."

Figure 5. Representation of the Level of Analysis approach



Source: the author

- The **individual level** focuses on understanding everything related to human characteristics of leaders or decision-makers: perceptions, images, knowledge, understandings, psychology, personality and choices, among others. This level gives us the closest look to a given phenomenon or

Note

There are other books and authors that propose alternative adaptations of this approach that include additional levels. A common alternative view distinguishes between the individual level, the state level, the inter-state level and, finally, the global level. Nevertheless, for its simplicity and versatility, here we will discuss Waltz's original three-levelled approach.

event. At this level, we learn a lot of things, although we may certainly be lacking a bigger picture.

- The analysis at the **state level** focuses on aspects that help us understand how states make decisions. It looks at aspects such as government and domestic institutions, the economy, the role of interest groups and the national interest. At this level we get the picture of the middle ground, which is not very specific but not overly general, either.
- Finally, the analysis at the **systemic level** gives us the broadest perspective. It focuses on the interactions that occur within the system and the factors that determine them: relations between states, between states and non-state actors, international norms and rules, and so on. At this level, we may lack depth with regard to details, but we get a general picture of our object of study that is useful.

The aggregate of the three levels of analysis gives us a holistic – ie a complete – picture of the phenomenon under analysis. It allows us to gain perspective on an event in international relations from the widest possible viewpoint (the systemic level) to the narrowest (the individual level).

As an illustration of its application, let's suppose we want to analyze why North Korea clings to its nuclear development policy despite the continued sanctions imposed by the international community. The **Levels of Analysis approach** can be a useful analytical tool to tackle this case. First, by focusing our analysis on the individual level we may understand how the personality, perceptions, preferences, fears, ambitions or character of North Korea's leader influence the decisions he takes. Second, when we shift our focus towards the state level, we will get a clearer picture of how the domestic structures of the North Korean state contribute to the formation of its national interest and, in turn, to its choices and behaviour internationally. Third, the analysis at the systemic level will give us a picture of the regional structure in which North Korea is embedded and how its relations with other states in the region or its power capabilities relative to them determine the state's behaviour. The aggregate of the three levels will give us the complete, all-inclusive, multidimensional perspective of the factors that explain this particular phenomenon or case of international relations.

"The third image (the systemic level) describes the framework of world politics, but without the first and second images (state and individual levels), there can be no knowledge of the forces that determine policy; the first and second images describe the forces in world politics, but without the third image it is impossible to assess their importance or predict results."

K. Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* (1959)

2.2. Types of actors in international relations

Actors are the first of the three components that we identified as we looked at the concept of international system as an instrument of analysis, together with structures and processes.

The typology of actors in international relations was reviewed in the first part of the module. So as not to repeat ourselves, here is a table that summarizes the main types of actors that can be found in international relations. To learn more about each type of actor, see section 1.2.1.

a) States. There are roughly 200 in the world, of which 193 are UN members.

b) Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). There are currently 262. Examples include the UN, NATO, the EU, OPEC or the OAS, to name but a few.

c) International non-governmental actors. Groups that carry out international activities without being representatives of a state. Several subcategories can be distinguished:

- International non-governmental organizations (INGOs).
- Transnational corporations (TNCs).
- Transnational social movements.
- Transnational criminal groups.

d) Governmental non-central actors. Regional or local governments that carry out international activities.

e) Single-country non-governmental actors. Private groups whose activity is primarily focused within a state and which maintain direct relations with international actors outside of governmental channels. Several subcategories can be distinguished:

- Single-country non-governmental organizations or NGOs.
- Political parties.
- Other entities.

f) Individuals.

2.3. Structure of the international system

The structure of the international system can be defined as the configuration of power that emerges from the interactions between its actors. However, scholars often prefer to restrict the actors that configure the structure of the international system to the **system's powers** as they are the only ones that have enough structural power to determine the "rules of the game" in the international system. Therefore, we will define the structure of the international system as the **configuration of power generated by the system's powers**.

Two essential criteria are followed in the establishment of typologies of international systems. The first criterion is the number of centres of power in the system (**polarity**). Depending on that number, scholars have defined three types of system structures: **unipolar type**, **bipolar type** and **multipolar type**. The second fundamental criterion is more abstract. It refers to the value systems held by its powers. According to this second criterion, we can differenti-

Structural power

The notion of structural power, formulated by Susan Strange, entails a control over security, production, finances and knowledge. Nevertheless, other dimensions of power, especially in its soft dimensions, are particularly relevant nowadays.

ate between **homogeneous** and **heterogeneous systems**. The systems whose states (or powers) adhere to the same or similar value systems are considered to be homogeneous. By contrast, the states in heterogeneous systems do not share fundamental value systems or principles. Heterogeneity makes communication within the system more difficult because the different value systems can be fundamentally opposed or even presented in terms of enmity.

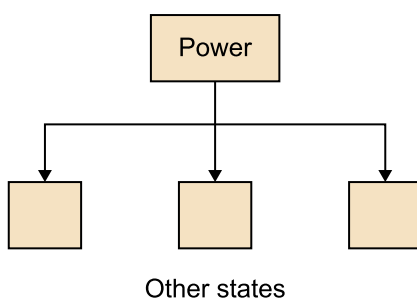
Studying the structure of the international system allows us to answer relevant questions with respect to the way the international order is organized. For example, who has **agenda-setting power** in international relations? Who can exert the greatest influence in international negotiations? Who has the capacity to formulate or even impose solutions?

1) Unipolar systems

In unipolar systems, a single state – ie a single power – controls all sources of power. This state sets the agenda, establishes norms and concentrates all the coercive power, which is greater than the power held by all other states combined. Therefore, the state with greater capabilities is able to organize political and military action throughout the system. According to our second criterion, this type of international system is homogenous.

The stability of unipolar systems is maintained because its power relations are exercised vertically (see Figure 6). However, these systems can fall into a crisis if, on the one hand, the development of horizontal relationships between other units ends up eroding the power of the dominant unit, and if on the other changes are induced from outside the system.

Figure 6. Representation of a unipolar system



Source: the author as based on Barbé (2007).

2) Bipolar systems

Bipolar systems are determined by the existence of two poles or centres of power that are in equilibrium or balance. The two powers have equivalent capabilities, which are in turn greater than those held by all other states combined. Because of that, bipolar systems need a mechanism to maintain the

Unipolarity and hegemony

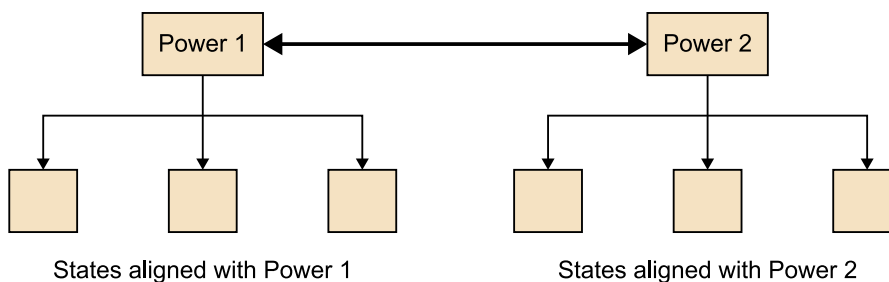
Unipolarity and hegemony are terms that are often confused. Unipolarity refers merely to the structure of the international system in which one power has far greater capabilities than other states. Unipolarity is complemented by hegemony when the single power – in this case known as *hegemon* – has a structure of influence that matches its superior capabilities.

bipolar equilibrium or balance. Nuclear deterrence played this role during the Cold War: the system remained stable because the two superpowers kept each other in check by the threat of nuclear retaliation.

In bipolar systems the two powers set the agenda, dictate the rules that prevail in the system and have sufficient coercive power to impose their will upon the rest of actors. Bipolar systems can be homogeneous if the two powers share a particular value system or heterogeneous if they do not. During the Cold War, the international system was heterogeneous given the profound ideological differences that existed between the US and the USSR.

There are various ways in which bipolar systems can fall into a crisis. First, if there is a failure in the mechanism that maintains the bipolar balance of power. Usually, this scenario would lead to war between the two powers. Second, if one or both the two powers lost influence or leadership with respect to its/their respective aligned states. In other words, this would happen if the power and capabilities of one of the centres become significantly eroded. And third, a general erosion of the entire system could lead to a crisis. In bipolar systems, this could occur if the aligned states on both sides established inter-block relations (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Representation of a bipolar system



Source: the author as based on Barbé (2007).

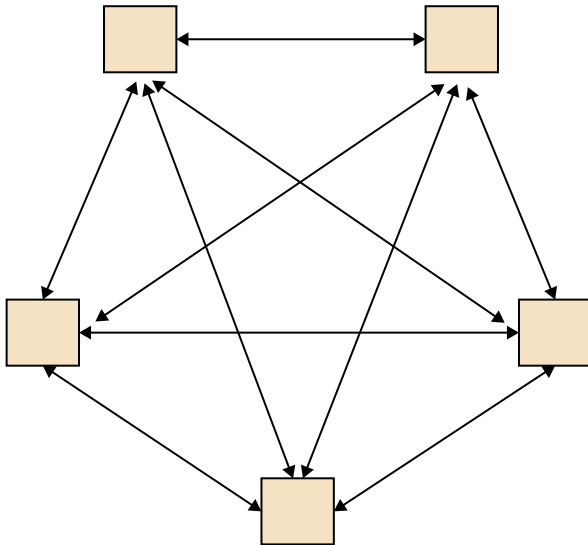
3) Multipolar systems

Multipolar systems are determined by having three or more powers in equilibrium. A paramount example of a multipolar system is the European system of states of the 18th and 19th centuries.

In a multipolar system each power has similar or equivalent capabilities. Since the capacity of coercion is less concentrated than in the former systems – because it is divided among a larger number of powers in the system –, the multipolar equilibrium is usually based on an alliance between the powers involved. The alliance opposes any attempt by either of the powers to attain hegemony, thereby keeping the system in balance. In practical terms this means that force is the element that maintains balance within the system.

Multipolar systems can be homogeneous – as it happened in Europe during the early 19th century (Congress of Vienna, see section 1.3) – or heterogeneous. Heterogeneous multipolar systems, however, have a higher degree of uncertainty. For example, the Great Powers of the time in 1930s Europe adhered to value systems as diverse as liberal democracy, socialism and fascism.

Figure 8. Representation of a multipolar system



Source: the author as based on Barbé (2007).

4) Polarity and stability

The link between polarity and stability has motivated a longstanding debate in the IR discipline.

Classical realist authors such as Hans Morgenthau or E. H. Carr claim that multipolar systems are more stable than bipolar ones. By contrast, neorealist thinkers, most notably Kenneth Waltz, argue that bipolar systems are more stable than unipolar or multipolar ones. According to Waltz, the latter type is more prone to major wars – such as a World War – than bipolar systems. Why? Waltz claims that the bipolar structure reduces uncertainty since the two powers only need to focus on one another. In addition, Waltz claimed that each of the poles in bipolar systems mainly relies on its own resources to balance out the other. Because of that, the need to compete over third parties is eliminated. John Mearsheimer – a key proponent of structural realism (neorealism) – also claimed that the Cold War was a period of peace and stability due to the bipolar structure of the system. He went as far as to affirm that, with the collapse of that system, the world would see a return to great power rivalries and tensions and therefore to a system of greater instability.

Recommended reading

Mearsheimer, J. (1990). "Why We Will Soon Miss The Cold War". *The Atlantic Monthly* (Vol. 266, Issue 2, pp. 35-50) <<http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0014.pdf>>.

Figure 9. French political cartoon representing the repartition of China by foreign powers (1898)



2.4. Processes / dynamics of the international system

Having reviewed the typology of actors in the international system and its structure, this section discusses the third key component that defines the international system as an instrument of analysis of the IR discipline: the processes of the international system.

When we talked about the structure of the international system we described the static elements of this system. The structure indicates the place that actors in the system occupy in relation to others. By contrast, the process refers to the dynamic component of the international system, that is, the **network of interactions, links and relations that originate among the actors that form the system**. Because of this, many authors do not speak in terms of process but in terms of dynamics of the international system.

The process – or dynamics – of the international system can be seen along a **continuum between conflict and cooperation**. Along this continuum, some scholars distinguish four main types of dynamics: war, conflict, cooperation and integration.

Figure 10. The dynamics of conflict and cooperation can be placed along a continuum

Conflict		Cooperation	
War	Conflict	Cooperation	Integration

1) Conflict

Conflict is certainly one of the most studied phenomena in IR. In consequence, the literature provides us with a wide range of definitions for it. Conflict can be defined as a situation in which actors have incompatible interests that bring them to opposition. The divergence can be motivated either by the ambition to possess scarce goods or resources or by the realization of values that are mutually incompatible. The existence of conflict does not necessarily entail violence or war, although it may lead to it if the conflict increases in intensity and evolves in that direction.

There can be several reasons for a conflict to start, material – if the actors in the system compete for material goods or resources that are scarce – or immaterial – if opposition occurs over aspects that are related to the identity of the involved actors, such as religion, ideology and ethnicity.

The study of conflicts involves an analysis of both the problems that cause them – ie the reason –, the parties at stake – ie the distribution of force and capabilities between them and the parties' attitudes – and the process – ie the development or evolution – of the conflict.

If we focus on conflicts between states – ie interstate conflicts – we can establish two basic typologies. On the one hand, we can talk about **global conflicts**, which are global in scope and include examples such as the Cold War or today's fight against terrorism. On the other hand, **regional conflicts** are those that take place within a particular context, either geographically, politically, or militarily defined. Regional-scale conflicts are often associated with territorial disputes, ethnic rivalries, diverging economic interests or quests for regional hegemony and generally occur in contexts with a low intensity of regional cooperation.

2) War

War is the ultimate expression of discord between actors in the international system and the highest level and intensity of conflict. The existence of war requires the intervention of military or armed forces and a high number of victims, which current conventions place at one thousand.

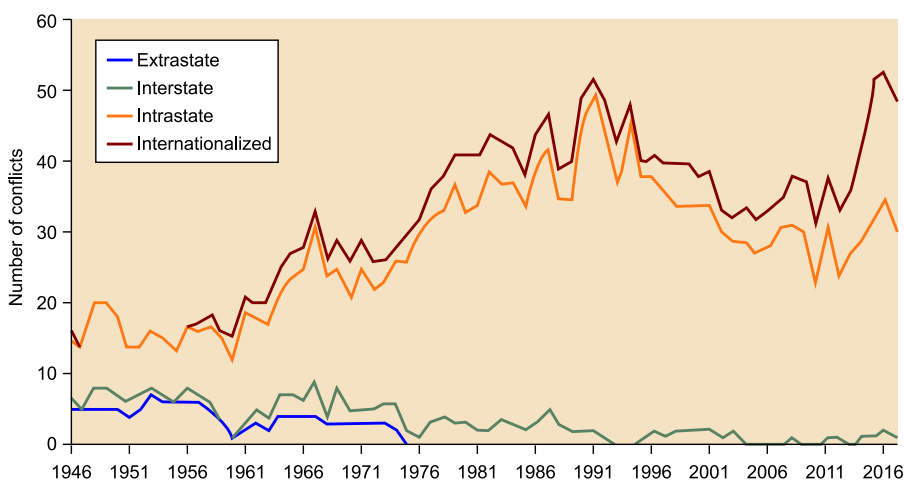
The Prussian military theorist **Carl von Clausewitz** defined war as an act of violence directed at submitting the adversary to one's will. According to this definition, the objective is to impose one's will, while physical violence is the means to achieve it. War is therefore both a political and a military act.

Among the different dynamics of the international system, war is certainly the one that attracts the most attention from academia and the media. However, the reader must be aware that, within the complexity of the aggregate of interactions that occur in the international system, war is a relatively rare event. Fortunately, only a very limited number of conflicts end up in war.

A typology of war can be established on the basis of two criteria. The literature talks of **total war** when the objective is the complete destruction – the term used in World War II was "unconditional surrender" – of the adversary. Total war entails the mobilization of all the possible means and resources in pursuit of that goal, including whole populations. Total wars tend to affect the entire international system, as exemplified by World Wars I and II. By contrast, **limited wars** are those whose geographical scope and number of participants are limited to a particular geographical area, region or state. These wars do not aim to completely destroy the enemy or cause them to surrender; their aims are more reduced in scope and defined under certain limitations. In addition, wars can also be limited by the typology of weapons used.

The nature of wars has changed greatly since the end of World War II. First, the number of interstate wars (ie between countries) has almost been reduced to zero. Most armed conflicts in the world today are intrastate conflicts, although some become internationalized as in the case of Syria (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Number of armed conflicts by type of conflict (1946-2017)

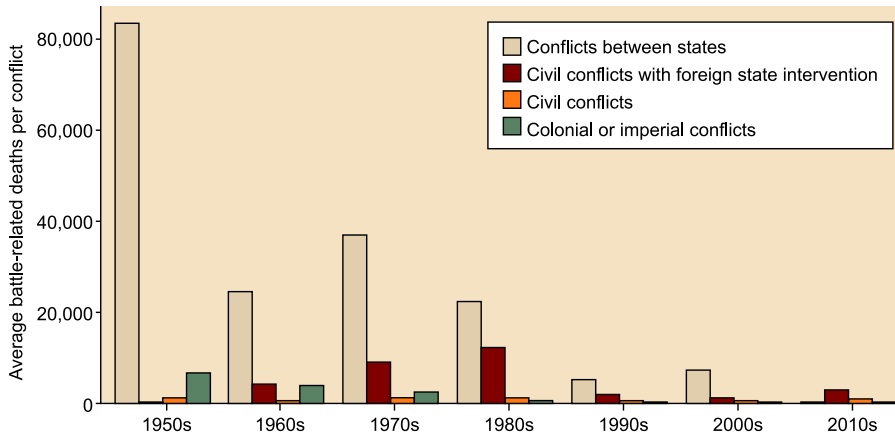


Source: Dupuy and Rustad (2018)

Second, the number of battle-related deaths has declined significantly, in great part due to the modernization of warfare (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Average number of battle-related deaths per conflict since 1946, classified by type

Only conflicts in which at least one party was the government of a state and which generated more than 25 battle-related deaths are included. Deaths due to disease or famine caused by conflict are excluded. Extra-judicial killings are also excluded.



Note: The war categories paraphrase UCDP/PRIO's technical definitions of 'Extrasystemic', 'Internal', 'Internationalised internal' and 'Interstate' respectively. In a small number of cases where wars were ascribed more than one type, deaths have been apportioned evenly to each type.

Source: UCDP/PRIO <<https://ourworldindata.org/>>

Third, non-state actors such as terrorist groups or mercenaries now play an important role in many of the existing conflicts.

3) Cooperation

Cooperation is defined by the existence of a **compromise** between the parties that allows them to share projects, resources, ideas, and so on in order to **achieve shared objectives**.

Any situation of cooperation starts with an individual calculation by the actors that suggests that the best way to achieve a given objective is through cooperation with another party. Based on that calculation, cooperation can arise if three conditions are met. First, the parties must have convergent interests, for example due to the identification of shared problems. Second, the costs, benefits and risks of the activities to be carried out in cooperation can be shared among the parties. Third, the parties each place some trust on the other parties not defecting from the commitments undertaken.

Cooperation can be classified according to four criteria:

a) According to its objectives or the field of action in which cooperation is focused. In this regard, we can distinguish between political, economic or technical cooperation. The three types of cooperation are highly developed in the contemporary world, so we can find several examples of each kind. First, regarding political cooperation the Franco-German Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation (1963) – commonly known as the Élysée Treaty – established with the aim of enabling high-level consultation between these two powers after decades of rivalry and confrontation. Another contemporary example is the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan (1960). Second, examples of economic cooperation include the

frameworks established by the WTO in order to facilitate trade and the Bretton-Woods system that existed between 1945 and 1971. Third, we can find many examples of technical cooperation in a number of fields, from military aspects such as NATO through to the working programs of the UNDP or the technical cooperation mechanisms established to enable scientific research in Antarctica.

b) According to the degree of formality of the cooperation arrangement.

Here we can distinguish between highly formalized cooperation mechanisms – generally established through legal acts such as international treaties – and informal cooperation, which can be based on political agreements.

c) Cooperation can also be classified according to the participating actors.

Here we can distinguish between the number of actors – according to which cooperation can be either bilateral or multilateral – and by the geographical location of the involved actors. In the latter case, we can distinguish between cooperation at a regional scale – for example, among the states in Southeast Asia or among the states in Latin America – or at a global scale.

d) Finally, another relevant criterion is the degree of equality between the cooperating parties. This is particularly relevant in the case of Official Development Aid (ODA), a particular type of cooperation which is characterized by the asymmetry between the parties (donors and recipients).

4) Integration

Integration lies at the other end of the conflict-cooperation continuum. Integration is the maximum expression of cooperation in the international system. Supranational mechanisms must be established if we want to talk about integration and not simply about close cooperation.

The literature points out that integration demands the complete absence of mistrust or discord among the parties. This is generally achieved by engaging in a preliminary process of sustained cooperation. In addition, the parties must share something more than only material objectives; they must adhere to similar ideals or value systems.

Official Development Aid (ODA)

These are activities carried out by developed countries with the aim of assisting underdeveloped countries to overcome their disadvantageous situation. ODA entails a transfer of resources to countries in the so-called Third World. Recipients of ODA are often subjected to conditionality clauses demanded by the donors.

Regional cooperation vs integration

These two concepts should not be confused. A necessary condition to talk about integration is supranationalism; that is, the pooling of sovereignty by the participants in order to establish a hierarchically superior body. The EU is the paramount case of regional integration. The EU has mechanisms of both supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. A policy area in which the EU has exclusive competence – and is therefore dealt with at the supranational level – is commercial policy. EU member states cannot negotiate trade agreements individually since they have transferred their sovereign capabilities to the EU. Therefore, only the European Commission can negotiate trade deals in the EU on behalf of all its members.

Other than the EU, there are other regional organizations in the world, as for example ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) where only intergovernmental mechanisms have been established. In this case we can talk about regional cooperation but not of regional integration.

Summary

As exposed in the introduction, this module is intended to assist students in their first approximation to the study of International Relations.

In the first part we have presented the main **concepts**, **history** and most **relevant theoretical approaches** of the IR discipline. In the second part we have adopted the concept of **international system** as an instrument of analysis and we have reviewed its main components: **actors**, **structures** and **processes**.

Since this document is only meant to be a comprehensive introduction to a topic that is very wide in scope, we did not offer a detailed analysis and discussion of its parts and related aspects. In any case, below is a list of useful resources for students to further explore this exciting field.

Bibliography

- Barbé, E.** (2007). *Relaciones Internacionales* (3rd ed.). Madrid: Tecnos.
- Baylis, J.; Smith, S.; Owens, P.** (eds.) (2017). *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations* (7th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dougherty, J. E.; Pfaltzgraff, R. L.** (1990). *Contending Theories of International Relations: a Comprehensive Survey* (3rd ed.). Pearson.
- Dunne, T.; Cox, M.; Booth, K.** (eds.) (1998). *The Eighty Years' Crisis: International Relations 1919-1999*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, G.; Newnham, J.** (1998). *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*. USA: Penguin Books.
- Fukuyama, F.** (1992). *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
- Genest, M.** (2004). *Conflict and Cooperation: Evolving Theories of International Relations* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson.
- Gilpin, R.** (1981). *War and change in World Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goldstein, J. S.; Pevehouse, J. C.** (2017). *International Relations*. Boston: Pearson.
- Griffiths, M.** (1999). *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Griffiths, M.** (2013). *Encyclopedia of International Relations and Global Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Griffiths, M.; O'Callaghan, T.** (2013). *International Relations: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.
- Groom, A. J. R.; Light, M.** (eds.) (2010). *International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory*. London: Pinter.
- Hershey, A. S.** (1911). "The History of International Relations During Antiquity and the Middle Ages". In: *American Journal of International Law* (Vol. 5, Issue 4, pp. 901-933). doi:10.2307/2186529.
- Holsti, K. J.** (1983). *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Jackson, R. H.; Sørensen, G.** (2013). *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaplan, M.** (1957). *System and Process in International Politics*. New York: Wiley.
- Katzenstein, P. J.** (1996). *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kegley Jr., C. W.; Wittkopf, E. R.** (2016). *World Politics. Trend and Transformation* (8th ed.). Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's.
- Keohane, R. O.; Nye, J.** (1977). *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Keohane, R. O.; Nye, J.** (eds.) (1972). *Transnational Relations and World Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Krasner, S. D.** (1983). *International Regimes*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Linklater, A.** (2000). *International Relations. Critical Concepts in Political Science* (Vol. 5). London: Routledge.
- Little, R.; Smith, M.** (eds.) (2005). *Perspectives on World Politics* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- McGlinchey, S.; Walter, R.; Scheinplug, C.** (eds.) (2017). *International Relations Theory*. Bristol, England: E-International Relations.

- Mearsheimer, J. J.** (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton.
- Mitrany, D.** (1943). *A Working Peace System*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Morgenthau, H. J.** (1978). *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (5th ed.). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Nye, J. S.** (2004). *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*. London: Routledge.
- Onuf, N.** (1989). *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Plano, J. C.; Olton, R.** (1982). *The International Relations Dictionary*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clío.
- Powell, R.** (1991). "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory". In: *The American Political Science Review* (Vol. 85, Issue 4, pp. 1303-1320). doi:10.2307/1963947.
- Rose, G.** (1998). "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy". In: *World Politics* (Vol. 51, Issue 1, pp. 144-172).
- Russett, B.; Starr, H.** (2009). *International Politics. The Menu for Choice* (9th ed.). New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Strange, S.** (1998). *States and Markets*. London: Pinter.
- Viotti, P. R.; Kauppi, M. V.** (1999). *International Relations Theory. Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Waltz, K. N.** (1959). *Man, the State, and War. A Theoretical Analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Waltz, K. N.** (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Wendt, A.** (1987). "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory". *International Organization* (Vol. 41, Issue 3, pp. 335-370).
- Wendt, A.** (1992). "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics". In: *International Organization* (Vol. 46, Issue 2, pp. 391-425). doi:10.1017/S0020818300027764.
- Wight, M.** (1991). *International Theory. The Three Traditions*. London: Leicester University Press.

Other resources

ISA and Oxford University Press (2019). Oxford Research Encyclopedias: International Studies. <<https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/>>.