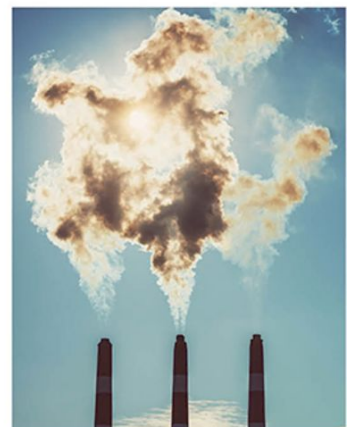
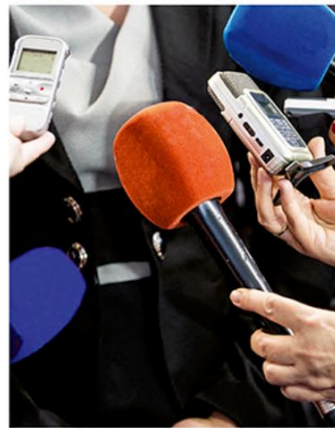


OXFORD

introduction to  
**INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

theories and approaches

*eighth edition*



GEORG SØRENSEN | JØRGEN MØLLER | ROBERT JACKSON

# Introduction to International Relations



introduction to

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

theories and approaches

*eighth edition*

GEORG SØRENSEN | JØRGEN MØLLER | ROBERT JACKSON

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Impression: 1

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*In memory of Robert Jackson*



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This eighth edition has benefitted from helpful comments made by the readers of the first seven editions as well as a careful review process and input from a number of new readers. We were encouraged to stay with the basic aim and format of the book: a succinct and readable introduction to the major IR theories and approaches. However, we were also encouraged to put more emphasis on the relevance of these theories for real world developments. We have therefore altered the structure of this eighth edition. The book now comes in three parts: (1) Studying IR; (2) Major IR Theories and Approaches; (3) Theory Meets the Real World: Policy and Issues.

These are turbulent times, and as part of our attempt to make theories speak more directly to real world developments, we have followed suggestions to further review and discuss some of the key challenges that face the global community. A new Chapter 12 uses IR theories to shed light on the state of the present world order. How stable is it and to what extent does it live up to expectations about securing progress for states as well as for individuals? Second, we have included a substantial section on climate change as part of 'major issues in IR' in Chapter 11. This section describes the present challenges related to climate change and asks what the consequences are for international relations, and to what extent existing IR theories can help us make sense of these challenges. Third, we have expanded the engagement with a number of more recent theoretical perspectives, including feminist theories and theories from the Global South.

All chapters have been brought up to date in the light of current international events and ongoing debates in the discipline. Questions linking theory to practice are included at the end of each chapter. The supporting website has been revised and expanded. A revised glossary with key terms is included at the end of the book.

We are grateful for support from a large number of people. For this edition, we thank Will Bain, Michael Corgan, Olaf Corry, Tonny Brems Knudsen, Morten Valbjørn and Anders Wivel for advice and inspiration. Sarah Iles was a great help as commissioning editor for this eighth edition. Assistant editors Katie Staal and Anna Galasinska kept us on our toes and were always ready with support and encouragement. Special thanks to Anna for a very careful reading of the manuscript and many helpful suggestions for improvements. Annette Andersen again handled the paperwork with her usual efficiency and punctuality. Birgit Enevoldsen and Gustav Olsen Dyppel suggested new figures, revised tables, and helped revise various elements of the book's online resources with Oxford University Press. We owe special thanks to those readers who provided us with useful comments on the seventh edition, including ten anonymous referees. We have tried to deal with their many excellent suggestions for improvement without sacrificing the aims and qualities of previous editions on which most of them commented very favourably. We are confident that both instructors and students will find that this eighth edition has managed to achieve that goal.

We are grateful once again to our families for their support in our continuing endeavour to produce an IR textbook that can communicate to readers not only in North America and



Europe but everywhere that international relations is taught and studied as an academic discipline. Our greatest debt is to Robert Jackson, without whom this book could not have been written. Robert passed away during the work on this eighth edition, but his elegant writing style and sharp analytical mind are reflected on almost every page of the text. We can only hope that we have been able to live up to the high standards set by his work.

*Georg Sørensen and Jørgen Møller, Aarhus,  
January 2021*

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

- The book has been restructured. It now contains an extended Part 3 called Theory Meets the Real World: Policy and Issues, with four chapters. A chapter on Foreign Policy is followed by chapters on Major Issues in IPE and Major Issues in IR, respectively.
- The final chapter in Part 3 (Chapter 12) is a new addition to the book. It asks the big question about the current state of world order, and discusses to what extent and in what ways the different theories introduced in the book help us understand where the world is going.
- Substantial revisions have been made to all chapters. Particularly important revisions have been made to the chapters on Liberalism, Post-positivist approaches, Foreign Policy, Major Issues in IPE, and Major Issues in IR.
- Chapter 11 now includes an extended discussion of the challenges presented by climate change and how far different IR theories take us in understanding these new challenges. We also introduce the 'Green Theory' approaches.
- All chapters have been brought up to date in the light of current events and ongoing debates in the discipline. The book contains a large number of new text boxes and figures.



# OUTLINE CONTENTS

Detailed Contents	xiii
About This Book	xix
How to Use this Book	xxii
How to Use the Online Resources	xxiv
Political Map of the World	xxvi

## **PART 1 Studying IR 1**

1	Why Study IR?	3
2	IR as an Academic Subject	33

## **PART 2 Major IR Theories and Approaches 65**

3	Realism	67
4	Liberalism	103
5	International Society	137
6	International Political Economy: Marxism, Mercantilism, Liberalism	170
7	Social Constructivism	191
8	Post-positivist Approaches: Post-structuralism, Postcolonialism, Feminism	220

## **PART 3 Theory Meets the Real World: Policy and Issues 247**

9	Foreign Policy	249
10	Major Issues in IPE: Economic versus Political Power, Development, Globalization, How to Study the Real World	275
11	Major Issues in IR: Climate Change, Terrorism, Religion, Power and Hegemony	309
12	The Big Question: World Order or World Chaos?	350
	Glossary	377
	Bibliography	387
	Subject Index	423



# DETAILED CONTENTS

About This Book	xix
How to Use this Book	xxii
How to Use the Online Resources	xxiv
Political Map of the World	xxvi

## Part 1 Studying IR 1

<b>1 Why Study IR?</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 International Relations in Everyday Life	4
1.2 Brief Historical Sketch of the Modern State System	11
1.3 Globalization and the State System	20
1.4 IR and the Changing Contemporary World of States	22
1.5 Conclusion	29
KEY POINTS	30
QUESTIONS	31
GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	31
<b>2 IR as an Academic Subject</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1 Introduction	34
2.2 Utopian Liberalism: The Early Study of IR	35
2.3 Realism and the Twenty Years' Crisis	40
2.4 The Voice of Behaviouralism in IR	43
2.5 Neoliberalism: Institutions and Interdependence	46
2.6 Neorealism: Bipolarity and Confrontation	48
2.7 International Society: The English School	50
2.8 International Political Economy (IPE)	54
2.9 Dissident Voices: Alternative Approaches to IR	56
2.10 Criteria for Good Theory	59
2.11 Conclusion	62
KEY POINTS	62
QUESTIONS	63
GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	64

## Part 2 Major IR Theories and Approaches 65

<b>3 Realism</b>	<b>67</b>
3.1 Introduction: Elements of Realism	68
3.2 Classical Realism	70
3.2.1 Thucydides	70
3.2.2 Machiavelli	72

3.2.3	Hobbes and the Security Dilemma	74
3.2.4	Morgenthau and Classical Realism	76
3.3	Schelling and Strategic Realism	79
3.4	Waltz and Neorealism	82
3.5	Mearsheimer, Stability Theory, and Hegemony	88
3.6	Neoclassical Realism	93
3.7	Rethinking the Balance of Power	95
3.8	Research Prospects and Programme	96
3.9	Integrating International and Domestic Factors	98
	KEY POINTS	100
	QUESTIONS	101
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	102
<b>4</b>	<b>Liberalism</b>	<b>103</b>
4.1	Introduction: Basic Liberal Assumptions	104
4.2	Sociological Liberalism	106
4.3	Interdependence Liberalism	109
4.4	Institutional Liberalism	114
4.5	Republican Liberalism	118
4.6	Neorealist Critiques of Liberalism	124
4.6.1	The Retreat to Weak Liberalism	126
4.6.2	The Counter-attack of Strong Liberalism	128
4.7	Realist Resurgence?	132
4.8	Integrating International and Domestic Factors	133
	KEY POINTS	134
	QUESTIONS	135
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	135
<b>5</b>	<b>International Society</b>	<b>137</b>
5.1	Basic International Society Approach	138
5.2	The Three Traditions	144
5.3	Order and Justice	145
5.4	World Society	149
5.5	Statecraft and Responsibility	151
5.5.1	National Responsibility	151
5.5.2	International Responsibility	152
5.5.3	Humanitarian Responsibility	152
5.6	Humanitarian Responsibility and War	154
5.7	History and the International Society Approach	156
5.8	Critiques of International Society	159
5.9	Research Agenda after the Cold War	164
5.10	Integrating International and Domestic Factors	165
	KEY POINTS	166
	QUESTIONS	167
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	168

<b>6</b>	<b>International Political Economy: Marxism, Mercantilism, Liberalism</b>	<b>170</b>
6.1	Introduction: What Is IPE?	171
6.2	Mercantilism	174
6.3	Economic Liberalism	177
6.4	Marxism	180
6.5	Conclusion	188
	KEY POINTS	189
	QUESTIONS	189
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	190
<b>7</b>	<b>Social Constructivism</b>	<b>191</b>
7.1	Introduction	192
7.2	The Rise of Constructivism in IR	193
7.3	Constructivism as Social Theory	195
7.4	Constructivist Theories of International Relations	201
7.4.1	Cultures of Anarchy	202
7.4.2	Norms of International Society	203
7.4.3	The Power of International Organizations	205
7.4.4	A Constructivist Approach to European Cooperation	207
7.4.5	Domestic Formation of Identity and Norms	208
7.4.6	Constructivist IPE	210
7.5	Critiques of Constructivism	211
7.6	The Internal Debates among Constructivists	214
7.7	Integrating International and Domestic Factors	216
	KEY POINTS	217
	QUESTIONS	218
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	218
<b>8</b>	<b>Post-positivist Approaches: Post-structuralism, Postcolonialism, Feminism</b>	<b>220</b>
8.1	Introduction	221
8.2	Post-structuralism in IR	224
8.3	Postcolonialism in IR	230
8.4	Feminism in IR	235
8.5	Critique of Post-positivist Approaches	240
8.6	The Post-positivist Research Programme	242
8.7	Integrating International and Domestic Factors	243
	KEY POINTS	244
	QUESTIONS	245
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	245

### Part 3 Theory Meets the Real World: Policy and Issues

247

<b>9</b>	<b>Foreign Policy</b>	<b>249</b>
9.1	The Concept of Foreign Policy	250
9.2	Foreign Policy Analysis	251



9.3	How to Study Foreign Policy: A Level-of-Analysis Approach	255
9.3.1	The Systemic Level	255
9.3.2	The Level of the Nation-state	259
9.3.3	The Level of the Individual Decision Maker	264
9.4	Going to War in the Persian Gulf: A Case-study	266
9.5	A Note on Donald Trump and US Foreign Policy	270
9.6	Integrating International and Domestic Factors	271
	KEY POINTS	272
	QUESTIONS	273
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	274
<b>10</b>	<b>Major Issues in IPE: Economic versus Political Power, Development, Globalization, How to Study the Real World</b>	<b>275</b>
10.1	Four Major Issues in IPE	276
10.2	Power and the Relationship between Politics and Economics	278
10.3	Development and Underdevelopment in the Developing World	285
10.4	What Is Economic Globalization and Who Benefits?	293
10.5	IPE: How to Study the Real World?	299
10.6	Integrating International and Domestic Factors	303
10.7	Conclusion	305
	KEY POINTS	306
	QUESTIONS	306
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	307
<b>11</b>	<b>Major Issues in IR: Climate Change, Terrorism, Religion, Power and Hegemony</b>	<b>309</b>
11.1	Introduction	310
11.2	Climate Change	310
11.2.1	What Does Climate Science Say?	312
11.2.2	International Cooperation on Climate Change	317
11.2.3	What Does International Relations Theory Say?	318
11.3	International Terrorism	325
11.3.1	Terrorism: Past and Present	325
11.3.2	International Terrorism and IR	329
11.4	Religion in IR: A Clash of Civilizations?	331
11.4.1	Huntington and the Clash of Civilizations	332
11.4.2	IR Theory and Religion	334
11.5	Balance and Hegemony in World History	337
11.5.1	Mapping State Systems	338
11.5.2	Strong and Weak Balance of Power Theories	342
11.5.3	Why Europe?	344
11.5.4	Implications for the Current State System	345
11.6	Conclusion	346
	KEY POINTS	347
	QUESTIONS	348
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	348

<b>12</b>	<b>The Big Question: World Order or World Chaos?</b>	<b>350</b>
12.1	Introduction	351
12.2	The Concept of World Order	354
12.3	New Contenders: The Rise of China and the Challenge from Russia	356
12.4	New Challenges in Old Democracies	360
12.5	Fragile States in the Global South	362
12.6	International Institutions: Governance or Gridlock?	365
12.7	Room for Optimism after All? The Interwar Analogy and the Problem of the Half-filled Glass	367
12.8	Conclusion	370
	KEY POINTS	373
	QUESTIONS	374
	GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	374
	Glossary	377
	Bibliography	387
	Subject Index	423



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

Today, virtually the entire population of the world lives within the borders of those separate territorial communities we call states—well over seven billion people are citizens or subjects of one state or another. For more than half a billion people living in the developed countries of Western Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, basic security and welfare are often taken more or less for granted, because it is guaranteed and sometimes directly provided by the state. But for several billions of people who live in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and the former Soviet Union, basic security and welfare are not something that can be taken for granted. Protection, policing, law enforcement, and other civil conditions of minimal safety for all cannot be guaranteed. For many people, it is a daily challenge to provide adequate food, clean water, housing, and similar socioeconomic necessities. The academic subject of international relations (IR) revolves around the interactions between actors in the international system, including most prominently states. It seeks to understand how the interplay between international factors and domestic conditions shapes these interactions. Only in this way can we understand how people are provided, or not provided, with the basic values of security, freedom, order, justice, and welfare.

### What Is in the Book?

First and foremost, this book is an introduction to the academic discipline of IR. What is a ‘discipline’? It is a branch of knowledge, aimed at the systematic understanding of a subject. As is often the case in the social sciences, in IR there is no one best way to master the subject. Instead, what we have are several significant theories and theoretical approaches or even just schools of thought: Realism, Liberalism, International Society, Social Constructivism, International Political Economy, and what we with an umbrella term call Post-positivist approaches. They interact and overlap in interesting and important ways that we investigate in the chapters that follow. However, each one explores the subject of IR in its own distinctive way. Realism, for example, is focused on the basic value of security, because according to realists war is always a possibility in a system of sovereign states. Liberals, on the other hand, argue that international relations can be cooperative and not merely conflictive. That belief is based on the idea that the modern, liberal state can bring progress and opportunities to the greatest number of people around the world.

All the most important theories and theoretical traditions of IR are presented in the chapters that follow, and the book also carefully discusses what these theories have to say about some of the major issues of contemporary global politics. There is no need to give a detailed account of each chapter here. But a brief consumer guide may be helpful. What is it that this book has to offer? The main elements can be summarized as follows:

- This eighth edition provides an introduction to the analytical tools that the discipline has on its shelves: IR theories and approaches. They are Realism, Liberalism, International Society, theories of International Political Economy (IPE), Social Constructivism, and the Post-positivist approaches (Post-structuralism, Postcolonialism, Feminism) that have gained prominence in recent years (Green theory is introduced in Chapter 11 as part of the issue on Climate Change). A separate chapter presents theories involved in foreign policy analysis.
- Theories are presented faithfully, by focusing on both their strengths and their weaknesses. Our vantage point is a pluralist recognition that, to this day, there is no clear set of criteria for science that can be imported by IR scholars. Different theories and approaches anchored in different views of what constitutes science therefore have analytical value for students of IR—though some theories and approaches are of course likely to be more theoretically important or have greater empirical value than others, depending on the problem that a student seeks to solve. The main points of contention between theories are thoroughly discussed. The book makes clear how major theoretical debates link up with each other and structure the discipline of IR.
- The book places emphasis on the relationship between ‘IR theory’ (academic knowledge of international relations) and ‘IR practice’ (real-world events and activities of world politics). The third part of the book is devoted entirely to this theme. Chapters on foreign policy, major issues in IPE and IR and a chapter on ‘world order or world chaos?’ discuss important aspects of the theory/practice interplay. Theories matter for their own sake, and theories also matter as a guide to practice. The book carefully explains how particular theories organize and sharpen our view of the world. We often assume that the sword is mightier than the pen, but—as Lord Keynes famously recognized when pointing out that practical men are usually the slaves of some defunct intellectual—it is the pen, our guiding ideas and assumptions which usually shape the ways that swords are put to use.

## Learning Aids

To facilitate a rapid entry into the discipline of IR, the chapters have the following features:

- Summary: each chapter begins with a brief summary of the main points.
- Key Points: each chapter ends with a list of the key points brought forward in the chapter.
- Questions: each chapter provides a number of study questions that can be used for discussions or as topics for essays.
- Guide to Further Reading: each chapter provides a brief guide to further reading on the subject of the chapter.
- Glossary: key terms are highlighted in bold throughout the text and then presented in the Glossary at the end of the book.

- The companion website contains case-studies organized by chapters, additional study questions, videos, and web links that include links to specific countries/regions and to essential international organizations. It can be found at: [www.oup.com/he/sorensenmoller8e](http://www.oup.com/he/sorensenmoller8e).

Every chapter is guided by our aim to enable students to acquire knowledge of IR as an evolving academic discipline. Although we have written the book with introductory-level courses foremost in mind, it also contains much information and analysis that will prove valuable in higher-level courses, making it possible for students to advance more swiftly in their study of IR.

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

## Chapter Summaries

Identify the scope of the material to be covered, and what themes and issues you can expect to learn about, with Chapter Summaries at the beginning of each chapter.

**Summary**

This chapter sets forth the liberal tradition in IR. Basic liberal assumptions are: (1) a positive view of human nature; (2) a conviction that international relations can be based on cooperation rather than conflict; and (3) a belief in progress. In their conceptions of world politics, liberal theorists emphasize different features of world politics. Institutional liberals highlight transnational non-governmental ties between societies, communication between individuals and between groups. Interdependence liberals highlight particular attention to economic ties of mutual exchange and mutual dependence between peoples and governments. Institutional liberals underscore the importance of cooperation between states; finally, republican liberals argue that liberal democratic institutions and forms of government are of vital importance for inducing cooperative relations between states. The chapter discusses these four schools of thought.

## BOX 5.3 Key Concepts: International system, international society

A system of states (or international system) is formed when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's behavior to make the behaviour of each a necessary element in the calculations of the other. A society of states (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they consider themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another and share in the working of common institutions.

**Bull (1995: 9–13)**

## Key Concepts

Deepen your understanding with discussions of Key Concepts.

## BOX 5.10 Key Developments: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011) on Libya

*Determining* that the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security, *Acting* under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Demands* the immediate establishment of a ceasefire and a complete end to violence, including attacks against, and abuses of, civilians;
2. *Stresses* the need to intensify efforts to find a solution to the crisis which respects the legitimate demands of the Libyan people;
3. *Demands* that the Libyan authorities comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law and take all necessary steps to protect civilians and meet their basic needs, and to ensure the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance.

## Key Developments

Contextualize your knowledge with information on Key Developments in International Relations.

## BOX 4.2 Key Arguments: The importance of individuals in global politics

Citizens have become important variables . . . in global politics . . . [for] a number of reasons:

1. The erosion and dispersion of state and governmental power.
2. The advent of global television, the widening use of computers in the workplace, the growth of foreign travel and the mushrooming migrations of peoples, the spread of educational institutions . . . [have] enhanced the analytic skills of individuals.
3. The crowding onto the global agenda of new, interdependence issues (such as environmental pollution, currency crises, the drug trade, AIDS, and terrorism) has made more salient processes whereby global dynamics affect the welfare and pocketbooks of individuals.
4. The revolution of information technologies has made it possible for citizens and states alike to literally 'see' the aggregation of micro actions into macro outcomes. People can now observe the consequences of their actions in real time.

## Key Arguments

Identify controversies, debates, and arguments, and challenge your preconceptions, with Key Arguments boxes, which draw out specific arguments for your consideration.

## BOX 5.4 Key Quotes: President Gorbachev on Soviet-US collaboration (1985)

You asked me what is the primary thing that defines Soviet-American relations. It is the immutable fact that whether we like one another or not, we can either live or perish only together. The principal question that must be answered is whether we are at last ready to recognize that there is another way to live at peace with each other, whether we are prepared to switch our mentality and our mode of acting from a confrontational to a peaceful track.

**Quoted from Kissinger (1994: 790)**

## Key Quotes

Gain insight into the subject area with important and relevant Key Quotes from renowned scholars.

## Key Thinkers

Put your learning into context with information about Key Thinkers in the discipline of International Relations.

### BOX 5.1 Key Thinkers: A short history of the International Society approach

The International Society approach draws on the work of political theorists such as Grotius and Emer de Vattel and the historian Arnold Heeren. It owes much to the work of the School of Economics (LSE) Professor Charles Manning's interwar work on international society. Its main institutional home has been the so-called British Committee for the Theory of International Politics, which was formed in 1958 and which aimed to bring together academics from fields such as History, Philosophy, Theology, and International Law together with practitioners, mainly diplomats. The committee can be seen as the first generation of International Society scholars. It was chaired, in succession, by Hans Herzog, Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, the diplomat Adam Watson, and the philosopher Hedley Bull. It was dissolved in the 1980s, at about the time the International Society approach was being developed.

### ★ Key points

- The theoretical point of departure for liberalism is the individual. Individuals and collectivities of individuals are the focus of analysis; first and foremost nations, corporations, organizations, and associations of all kinds. Liberals maintain that conflict but also cooperation can shape international affairs.
- Liberals are basically optimistic: when humans employ their reason they can achieve mutually beneficial cooperation. They can put an end to war. Liberal optimism is connected with the rise of the modern state. Modernization means progress for human life, including international relations.
- Liberal arguments for more cooperative international relations are divided into four strands: sociological liberalism, interdependence liberalism, institutional liberalism, and republican liberalism.

### Key Points

Consolidate your knowledge at the end of each chapter with Key Points, which summarize the most important ideas and arguments discussed.

### Questions

Review your knowledge of core themes and develop your analytical and reflective skills with critical end-of-chapter questions.

### ? Questions

- Liberals are optimistic about human progress, cooperation, and peace. What are the reasons for that optimism? Are they good reasons?
- Has international history been as progressive as liberals claim? Use evidence to support your answer.
- Identify the arguments given by the four strands of liberalism. Which strand of liberalism is more fundamentally important, or are all strands equally important?
- Some liberal theories only operate at the level of the international system, while others operate at the domestic level. What are the pros and cons of each of these strands of liberalism?
- What arguments can you make, for and against, the assertion that there has been striking progress in the world during the past decades?

### ■ Guide to further reading

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- Evans, G. (2008). *The Responsibility to Protect*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Foot, R. and Walter, A. (2010). *China, the United States, and Global Order*. Cambridge University Press.

### Guide to further reading

Find out more about the issues raised, and locate the key academic literature in the field, with guided further reading lists.

## GLOSSARY

**anarchical society** A term used by Hedley Bull to describe the worldwide order of independent states who share common interests and values, and subject themselves to a common set of rules and institutions in dealing with each other. The concept of 'anarchical society' combines the realist claim that no world 'government' rules over sovereign states, with idealism's emphasis on the common concerns, values, rules, institutions, and organizations of the international system.

**Anthropocene** An increasingly influential naming of a geological period where humans have had a significant

influence on the world. The term is used to describe a period in which decision-making is based primarily on the organization of the state. This approach, therefore, focuses on the relationship between decision-making and the state. This approach, therefore, focuses on the relationship between decision-making and the state. This approach, therefore, focuses on the relationship between decision-making and the state.

### Glossary

Look up and revise key terms, which appear in colour throughout the text, and are defined in a glossary at the end of the book.



## HOW TO USE THE ONLINE RESOURCES

**Case studies:** Reinforce your understanding of chapter themes and learn to apply theory to practice with a range of case studies and accompanying assignments.

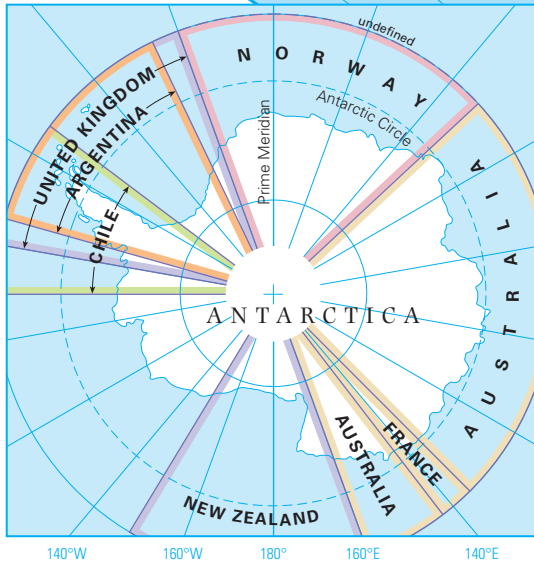
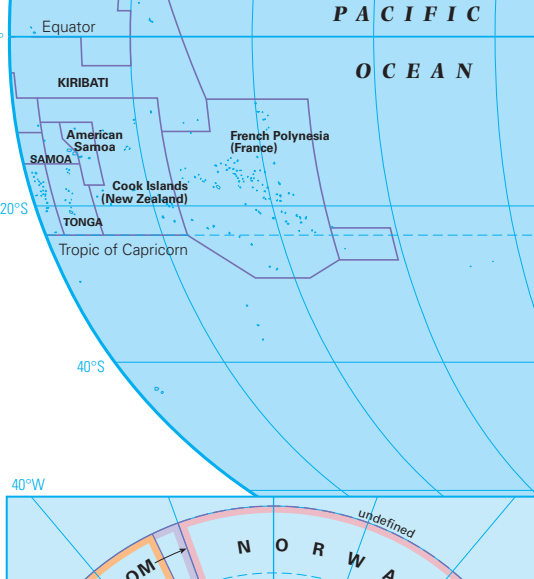
**Review questions:** Test yourself and revise for exams with additional review questions.

**Web links:** Broaden your learning with a series of annotated web links, organized by chapter, which point you to a wealth of relevant and reliable information.

**Flashcard glossary:** Revise key terms and concepts from the text with a digital flashcard glossary.

**Videos:** Extend your knowledge of International Relations by watching a curated playlist of videos selected by the authors to deepen your understanding of the subject.





—	international boundary
⋯	disputed boundary
AR	ARMENIA
AZ	AZERBAIJAN
BANG	BANGLADESH
BE	BENIN
BR	BRUNEI
BU	BURKINA
BUR	BURUNDI
CAR	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



- |     |                         |
|-----|-------------------------|
| G   | THE GAMBIA              |
| G-B | GUINEA-BISSAU           |
| IS  | ISRAEL                  |
| L   | LEBANON                 |
| Q   | QATAR                   |
| R   | RWANDA                  |
| TU  | TAJKISTAN               |
| U   | UGANDA                  |
| UAE | UNITED ARAB<br>EMIRATES |
| ZIM | ZIMBABWE                |



Note: In February 2019, FYRO Macedonia changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia.



# PART 1

# Studying IR

1	Why Study IR?	3
2	IR as an Academic Subject	33





## CHAPTER 1

# Why Study IR?

1.1	International Relations in Everyday Life	4	1.4	IR and the Changing Contemporary World of States	22
1.2	Brief Historical Sketch of the Modern State System	11	1.5	Conclusion	29
1.3	Globalization and the State System	20		KEY POINTS	30
				QUESTIONS	31
				GUIDE TO FURTHER READING	31

### Summary

This chapter answers the question ‘why study IR?’ It begins by introducing the historical and social basis of international relations, or IR. The aim of the chapter is to emphasize the practical reality of international relations in our everyday lives and to connect that practical reality with the academic study of international relations. The chapter makes that connection by focusing on the core historical subject matter of IR: modern sovereign states and the international relations of the state system. Why do states and the state system exist? Three main topics are discussed: the significance of international relations in everyday life and the main values that states exist to foster; the historical evolution of the state system and world economy in brief outline; and the changing contemporary world of states.



## 1.1 International Relations in Everyday Life

**IR** is the shorthand name for the academic subject of international relations. It can be defined as the study of relationships and interactions between countries, including the activities and policies of national governments, international organizations (IOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and multinational corporations (MNCs). It can be both a theoretical subject and a practical or policy subject, and academic approaches to it can be either empirical or normative or both. It is often considered a branch of political science, but it is also a subject studied by historians (international or diplomatic history), and economists (international economics). It is also a field of legal studies (public international law) and an area of philosophy (international ethics). From that broader perspective, IR clearly is an interdisciplinary inquiry. Aspects of international relations, and in particular war and diplomacy, have been scrutinized and remarked upon at least since the time of the ancient Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu and the ancient Greek historian Thucydides, but IR only became a proper academic discipline in the early twentieth century.

The main reason why we should study IR is the fact that the entire population of the world is divided into separate political communities or independent countries, nation-states, which profoundly affect the way people think and live. Nation-states are involved with us, and we are involved with them. In highly successful nation-states, most of the population identify, often quite strongly, with the country of which they are citizens. They are proud of their country's flag. They sing the national anthem. They do not sing the anthems of other countries. They see the world's population as divided and organized in terms of separate nation-states. 'I'm American, you're French, he's German, she's Japanese, the man over there is from Brazil, the woman is from South Africa, the other fellow is Russian . . .' And so it goes right around the world.

As a practical matter it is difficult and probably impossible for most people to escape from the various effects of nation-states on their daily lives, even if they wanted to. The state is involved in protecting them and providing for their security, both personal and national, in promoting their economic prosperity and social welfare, in taxing them, in educating them, in licensing and regulating them, in keeping them healthy, in building and maintaining public infrastructure (roads, bridges, harbours, airports, etc.), and much else besides. That involvement of people and states is often taken entirely for granted. But the relationship is profound. People's lives are shaped, very significantly, by that reality.

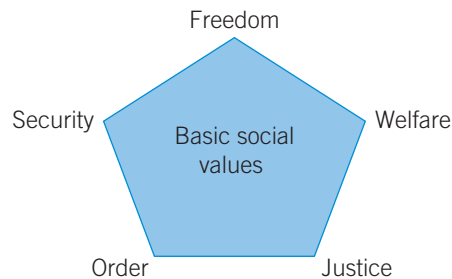
IR focuses on the various activities of nation-states in their external relations. To pave the way for this, some basic concepts are required. An independent nation or **state** may be defined as a bordered territory, with a permanent population, under the jurisdiction of a supreme government that is constitutionally separate—i.e., independent—from all foreign governments: a **sovereign state**. Together, those states form an international state system that is global in extent. At the present time, there are almost 200 independent states (see Figure 1.4). With very few isolated exceptions, everybody on Earth not only lives in one of those countries but is also a citizen of one of them and very rarely of more than one, although that possibility is increasing as the world becomes ever more

interdependent. So virtually every man, woman, and child on Earth is connected to a particular state, and via that state to the state system which affects their lives in important and even profound ways, including some of which they may not be fully aware of.

States are independent of each other, at least legally: they have sovereignty. But that does not mean they are isolated or insulated from each other. On the contrary, they adjoin each other and affect each other and must therefore somehow find ways to coexist and to deal with each other. In other words, they form an international state system, which is a core subject of IR. Furthermore, states are almost always involved with international markets that affect the economic policies of governments and the wealth and welfare of citizens. This requires that states enter into relations with each other. Complete isolation is usually not an option. When states are isolated and cut off from the state system, either by their own government or by foreign powers, people usually suffer as a result. That has been the situation at various times recently with regard to Myanmar, Libya, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Like most other social systems, the state system can have both advantages and disadvantages for the states involved as well as their people. IR is the study of the nature and consequences of these international relations.

The state system is a distinctive way of organizing political life on Earth and has deep historical roots. There have been state systems at different times and places in different parts of the world, in, for example, ancient China, ancient Greece, and Renaissance Italy (Watson 1992; Kaufman et al. 2007). However, the subject of IR conventionally dates back to the early modern era in Europe, when sovereign states based on adjacent territories were initially established. One of the prominent ideas in IR, namely that interstate relations should be kept in a form of ‘balance’, first seems to have been formulated by the Florentine statesman Lorenzo de’ Medici in the late fifteenth century (Watson 1992: 161). In the sixteenth century, it gained a more general traction in learned circles in Europe as a reaction against the **hegemony** aspirations of the Spanish Habsburg rulers Charles V and his son Philip II (Boucoyannis 2007: 713). Ever since the eighteenth century, relations between independent states have been labelled ‘international relations’. Initially, the state system was European. With the emergence of the United States in the late eighteenth century, it became Western. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, the state system expanded to encompass the entire territory of the Earth—east and west, north and south (Buzan and Lawson 2015). Today, IR is the study of the global state system from various scholarly perspectives, the most important of which will be discussed in this book.

The world of states is basically a territorial world. People must live somewhere on the planet, and those places must relate to each other in some way or other. The state system is a way of politically organizing populated territory, a distinctive kind of territorial political organization, based on numerous national governments that are legally independent of each other. To understand the significance of IR, it is necessary to grasp what living in states basically involves. What does it imply? How important is it? How should we think about it? This book is centrally concerned with these questions and especially with the last one. The chapters that follow deal with various answers to that fundamental question. This chapter examines the core historical subject matter of IR:

**FIGURE 1.1** Five basic social values

the evolution of the state system and the changing contemporary world of states. History is important because states and the state system had to come into existence, had to be a practical reality, before they could be studied theoretically. It is also important because it shows us that IR as a discipline largely generalizes from the European state system that eventually became the first global state system in history (Buzan and Lawson 2015; see Chapter 11).

*Why study IR?* To begin to respond to that question, it may be helpful to examine our everyday life as citizens of particular states to see what we generally expect from a state. There are at least five basic social values that states are usually expected to uphold: *security*, *freedom*, *order*, *justice*, and *welfare* (see Figure 1.1). These are social values that are so fundamental to human well-being that they must be protected or ensured in some way. That could be by social organizations other than the state, e.g., by families, clans, ethnic or religious organizations, villages, or cities. In the modern era, however, the state has usually been the leading institution in that regard: it is expected to ensure these basic values. For example, people generally assume the state should underwrite the value of security, which involves the protection of individual citizens and the people as a whole from internal and external threats. That is a fundamental concern or interest of states. However, the very existence of independent states affects the value of security; we live in a world of many states, almost all of which are armed at least to some degree and some of which are major military powers. Thus, states can both defend and threaten people's security. That paradox of the state system is usually referred to as the '**security dilemma**'. In other words, just like any other human organization, states present problems as well as provide solutions.

Most states are likely to be cooperative, non-threatening, and peace-loving most of the time. But some states may be hostile and aggressive at times and there is no world government to constrain them. That poses a basic and age-old problem of state systems: **national security**. To respond to that problem, most states possess armed forces. Military power is usually considered a necessity so that states can coexist and deal with each other without being intimidated or subjugated. Today there exist a number of countries without armed forces (including microstates such as Andorra, island states such as Samoa, and Central American states such as Costa Rica and Panama), so military power is not a defining attribute of a state. But unarmed states are extremely rare in the history of the state system. That is a basic fact of the state system of which we should never