College of Political Science
Department of Political System and Public Policy
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Contemporary International Issues

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Introduction: Terminology

International Society

The idea of international society relies on the assumption of the "societal" nature of inter-state relations. This concept is usually taken to mean that order in international politics is maintained due to social bonds between states

Hedley Bull authored the most concise definition, according to which international society.

exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions".

Its simplest exposition, international society is one of the ways of characterizing relations between states both historically and in the present.

The idea relies heavily on a particular historical narrative used to account for the emergence of the European interstate system

International System

World-systems theory

World-systems theory traces emerged in the 1970s. Its roots can be found in sociology, but it has developed into a highly interdisciplinary field.[World-systems theory was aiming to replace modernization theory, which Wallerstein criticised for three reasons:

its focus on the nation state as the only unit of analysis

its assumption that there is only a single path of evolutionary development for all countries

its disregard of transnational structures that constrain local and national development.

A world-system is a socioeconomic system, under systems theory, that encompasses part or all of the globe, detailing the aggregate structural result of the sum of the interactions between polities.

World-systems are usually larger than single states, but do not have to be global.

A world-system is a crucial element of the world-system theory, a multidisciplinary, macro-scale approach to world history and social change.

World-systems are defined by the existence of a division of labor.

The modern world-system has a multi-state political structure (the interstate system) and therefore its division of labor is international division of labor.

In the modern world-system, the division of labor consists of three zones according to the prevalence of profitable industries or activities: core, semi periphery, and periphery.

Countries tend to fall into one or another of these interdependent zones core countries, semi-periphery countries and the periphery countries.

Core Nations

The core countries are the industrialized capitalist countries on which periphery countries and semi-periphery countries depend. Core countries control and benefit from the global market. They are usually recognized as wealthy nations with a wide variety of resources and are in a favorable location compared to other states. They have strong state institutions, a powerful military and powerful global political alliances.

Semi-Peripheral Nations

the semi-periphery countries are the industrializing, mostly capitalist countries which are positioned between the periphery and core countries. Semi-periphery countries have organizational characteristics of both core countries and periphery countries and are often geographically located between core and peripheral regions as well as between two or more competing core regions. Semi-periphery regions play a major role in mediating economic, political, and social activities that link core and peripheral areas.

Peripheral Nations

The periphery countries are those that are less developed than the semi-periphery and core countries. These countries usually receive a disproportionately small share of global wealth. They have weak state institutions and are dependent on. These countries are usually behind because of obstacles such as lack of technology, unstable government, and poor education and health systems.

International Security

International security, also called global security, is a term which refers to the measures taken by states and international organizations, such as the United Nations, European Union, and others, to ensure mutual survival and safety.

These measures include military action and diplomatic agreements such as treaties and conventions.

Threats are no longer primarily coming from states, Threats are coming from ethnic groups obsessed by hyper nationalism, from criminal gangs, Mafiosi governance, from epidemics, AIDS, terrorism, dangerous food, from poverty, from economic mismanagement, from over-population, from failed stated, from flows of refuges, and from pollution.

International security has taken new forms in twenty-first century, the concept of international security as security among states belongs to twentieth century. Threats are no longer primarily coming from states, Threats are coming from ethnic groups obsessed by hyper nationalism, from criminal gangs, Mafiosi governance, from epidemics, AIDS, terrorism, dangerous food, from poverty, from economic mismanagement, from over-population, from failed stated, from flows of refuges, and from pollution.

A useful and rewarding exercise is to distinguish between six levels of security, each defined by the security actors that at the same time are victims of the security-related threats at that level:

1. Security for the individual (individual security).

2. Security for the social group, the community, "nation," organized national or ethnic entity (societal security).

3. Security for the state or "nation," in the US terminology (national security).

4. Security for the region, that is, a coherent security region, not necessarily one based on proximity (regional security).   5. Security for the society of nations or what could be referred to as "international society," consisting of all, or most states in the world (international security).   6. Security for the globe, meaning "Spaceship Earth" or the planet (global security).

Balance of Power

The balance of power theory in international relations suggests that states may secure their survival by preventing any one state from gaining enough military power to dominate all others. If one state becomes much stronger, the theory predicts it will take advantage of its weaker neighbors, thereby driving them to unite in a defensive coalition. Some realists maintain that a balance-of-power system is more stable than one with a dominant state, as aggression is unprofitable when there is equilibrium of power between rival coalitions.

The balance of power theory is a core tenet of both classical and neorealist theory and seeks to explain alliance formation. Due to the neorealist idea of anarchism as a result of the international system, states must ensure their survival through maintaining or increasing their power in a self-help world. According to Kenneth Waltz, founder of neorealism, "balance-of-power politics prevail wherever two, and only two requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive"

Balance of power, in international relations, the posture and policy of a nation or group of nations protecting itself against another nation or group of nations by matching its power against the power of the other side. States can pursue a policy of balance of power in two ways: by increasing their own power, as when engaging in an armaments race or in the competitive acquisition of territory; or by adding to their own power that of other states, as when embarking upon a policy of alliances.

International Issues

All the issues, phenomena, events and activists that are happening in the international community and have some international relations and are related to more than one actor in the international community.

International issue features

1. Its work will be in the international arena
2. More than an actor to participate in it
3. Be on the international field

Contemporary International Issues

All these issues, phenomena, events, and activists, which are happening in the international community, have not yet received the total ity of the well-being of some international countries and are related to more than one actor in the international community

1. It has a work on more than an actor
2. So far, the solution has not been completed
3. The root shall be returned to the past of the international problems

Actors in world politics

Actors in world politics, states and non-state actors, according to Professor Ryo Osiba of Hitotsubashi University, can be defined as the entities which have the following three features: (a) They should have the autonomous capacity to determine their own purposes and interests; (b) They should also have the capability to mobilize human and material resources to achieve these purposes and interests; (c) Their actions should be significant enough to influence the state-to-state relations or the behavior of other non-state actors in the global system.

States remain the main actors in world affairs and today there are less than 200 states (national governments) in the global system. On the other hand, non-state actors are increasingly the focus of analysis among scholars as territoriality, the defining feature of the Westphalian state, has been steadily diminishing in relation to non-territorial, non-state actors.

State is a politically organized body of people at given territory and characterized by public authority and legal use of violence. State should: a) maintain monopoly in (legal) use of force at their territory. B) Be recognized as sovereign state by other states. C) Set up a public and legal government.

Why state play essential role in international system?

1. Define structure of the international system.
2. Have monopoly to use force within their sovereign territory.
3. Are able to consolidate much more financial, military and other resources than any other actor.
4. Possess different aspects of power, not just economic or social.
5. Create legal space for non-state actors and international organization to function, and can eliminate them, if they want.
6. Any individual or companies have a legal connection to certain state operate according to state regulation.
7. Stated are the only universal organization forms of political space. Non universal alternative to state emerged.
8. Only state sovereignty allows nation to get independence and determine their own development and future.
9. State is necessary for democracy: democracy without states is impossible.
10. Political life and territories without state are chaos (failed state).

Non-State Actors

The concept of non-state actors is generally understood as including any entity that is not actually a state, often used to refer to armed groups, terrorists, civil society, religious groups, or corporations; the concept is occasionally used to encompass intergovernmental organizations. The term non-State actors are a superordinate concept that encompasses all those actors in international relations that are not → State[s].

It comprises individuals (→ Individuals in International Law) as well as entities, the latter spanning a large range of organizations and institutions on the global, regional, sub-regional as well as the local levels. These entities cannot be identified by common sociological features as they include, inter alia, international organizations, corporations, → non-governmental organizations ('NGOs'), → de facto regime[s], trade associations, and transnational corporations, terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations.

Non-State actors are increasingly gaining relevance in international relations, though this may not be commensurate with attaining legal capacity.

Non-State actors may be classified in two broad categories, one being international organizations or formations of States, as well as sub-State actors (→ Federal States); these non-State actors retain state or governmental characteristics.

Types of non-state actors:

1.   NGOs (Non-governmental organizations)

2.   INGOs (International non-governmental organizations)

3.   MNCs (Multi-National Corporations)

4.   VNSAs (Violent Non-State Actors)

Violent non-state actor

In international relations, violent non-state actors (VNSAs), also known as non-state armed actors or non-state armed groups (NSAGs), are individuals or groups that are wholly or partly independent of governments and which threaten or use violence to achieve their goals.

VNSAs vary widely in their goals, size, and methods. They may include narcotics cartels, popular liberation movements, religious and ideological organizations, corporations (e.g. private military contractors), self-defense militia, and paramilitary groups established by state governments to further their interests

While some VNSAs oppose governments, others are allied to them. Some VNSAs are organized as paramilitary groups, adopting methods and structure similar to those of state armed forces. Others may be informally structured and use violence in other ways, such as kidnapping, using improvised explosive devices, or hacking into computer systems.

1) Criminal organizations, Drug cartels, for example, may carry out assassinations, kidnappings, thefts, extortions; operate protection rackets; and defend their turf from rival groups and the military.
2) People's movements or sections of them that have chosen guerrilla tactics (also known as asymmetric warfare) to pursue their aims. An example is the Naxalite-Maoist insurgency in central India.

3) Pirates, outlaws that rob ships or take hostages in order to get a ransom. Recent examples include piracy off the coast of Somalia. Some pirates also state that they serve as "coastguards" in place of a failed state[

4) Special military companies, which have military service companies. For example, this is the spring of weapons in the Indian region. Sometimes they are hired to oppose maritime theft.

5) Religious and ideological groups, like Boko Haram in Nigeria and its surroundings, use violence to eradicate violence.

6) Local militias, either to protect an area, or to attack. For example, the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq.

7) Paramilitary groups, which make use of military methods and structures to pursue their agenda, such as the now-decommissioned Provisional Irish Republican Army.

8) Warlords, who are leaders using armed violence to exercise military, economic, and political control over territory within a sovereign state. Warlords have a long history in Afghanistan, for example