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Liberalism

How well do the assumptions of realism capture what is important about IR? Where are the problems in the realist framework—the places where abstractions diverge too much from the reality of IR, where realism is “unrealistic” in its portrayal?

This chapter revisits the realism-idealism debate, discusses current liberal approaches to international security, and then considers several broader and more interdisciplinary alternatives to the realist framework—feminism, constructivism, postmodernism, and peace studies. Each of these research communities seeks to radically recast the terms of reference in which we see IR.

Traditional Liberal Critiques

Since the time of Mo Ti and Sun Tzu in ancient China, idealism has provided a counterpoint to realism. This long tradition of idealism in IR holds that: morality, law, and international organization can form the basis for relations among states; human nature is not evil; peaceful and cooperative relations among states are possible; and states can operate as a community rather than merely as autonomous self-interested agents.

To review the core concepts of realism, states (the central actors in IR) use power to pursue their own interests in the context of an anarchic system lacking central enforcement mechanisms. Power capabilities come into play as leverage in bargaining among states over the outcomes of conflicts. Leverage can be positive (rewards) or negative (punishments); in both cases the purpose is to influence the rational decisions and actions of another state so as to bring about a more favorable outcome for the actor using the leverage. Military force is an important form of leverage—emphasized by realists over all other forms—because of the inherent insecurity of living in an anarchic world.

Traditionally, liberals have offered four major lines of criticism against these assumptions of realism. First, the key assumption of international anarchy is no more than a partial

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truth. Of course, international interactions are structured by power relations, a position the realists are happy to accept. But order also evolves through norms and institutions based on reciprocity and cooperation, even on law. Realists have a harder time reconciling the ever-expanding scope of international interdependence and cooperation with the assumptions of anarchy, of the inevitability of security dilemmas, and of the primacy of military leverage.

Second, liberals criticize the notion of states as unitary actors, each with a single set of coherent interests. As the study of foreign policy reveals (Chapter 4), state actions often do not reflect a single individual set of preferences. Rather, state behavior is shaped by internal bargaining among and within bureaucracies, interest groups, and other actors with divergent goals and interests. Nonstate actors—individuals, NGOs, IGOs, and ethnic groups, among others—further confound the idea that IR can be reduced to the interactions of a small number of well-defined state actors pursuing national interests.

Third, the concept of rationality is problematical. If states are single actors with coherent interests, they often seem to do a poor job in maximizing those interests. Of course, it is hard to tell from an actor’s unexpected behavior whether the actor was irrational or merely pursued a goal, interest, or value that we would not consider normal or productive. Central to the debate over rationality is the notion of preferences. Most realists are happy to assume states desire power. Critics contend that we need not assume these desires but rather investigate why actors in IR value the things they do.

Fourth, military force as a form of leverage does not seem nearly as all-important as realism implies. It is a costly way to influence other actors (see Chapter 6), as compared with diplomacy, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and other nonmilitary means. International organizations, laws, and norms create stable contexts for bargaining, making nonmilitary leverage increasingly effective as international organization develops (see Chapter 7). This criticism of realism applies even more to international political economy (Chapters 8 through 13) than to security affairs.

In addition to these general criticisms of realism, some liberals have argued that changes in the way IR works have made realist assumptions obsolete. Realism may once have been realistic, when European kings and queens played war and traded territories as property. But states are now interconnected, a reality contradicting the assumptions of autonomy and sovereignty. Borders are becoming fluid, making territorial integrity increasingly untenable. The evolution of norms regarding the use of force has substantially changed the ways in which military force contributes to international power. This line of argument has been prominent in liberal interdependence approaches to IR since the 1970s.

What Is Rationality?

At the core of the liberal approach is a concept of rationality that differs sharply from the realist concept. Realists see rationality as an individual actor’s attempt to maximize its own short-term interests. Liberals believe that rational actors are capable of forgoing short-term individual interests in order to further the long-term well-being of a community to which they belong. Such actions are rational because they contribute to the actor’s individual well-being, indirectly or over the long term. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant argued, 200 years ago, that states, although autonomous, could join a worldwide federation like today’s UN and respect its principles even at the cost of forgoing certain short-term individual gains. To Kant, international cooperation was a more rational option for states than resorting to war. Thus, in realist conceptions of rationality, war and violence appear rational (because they often advance short-term state interests), but liberals tend to see war
and violence as irrational deviations that result from defective reasoning and that harm the (collective, long-term) well-being of states.4

Liberals argue that trade increases wealth, cooperation, and global well-being—all while making conflict less likely in the long-term since governments will not want to disrupt any process that adds to the wealth of their state. Realists are skeptical, however, arguing that one state’s reliance on another creates more tensions in the short-term because states are nervous that another actor has an important source of leverage over them.5

Liberal and realist approaches to power reflect the distinction between rationality as seeking narrow self-interest and rationality as seeking to share in long-term collective benefits. Realists define power as the ability to get another actor to do something—or as the capabilities required to so influence an actor (see pp. 57–58). This is power over others—a concept that some liberals consider inherently oppressive, rooted in a need to control or dominate other people. This is the power of the bully, to make others comply. But are bullies really the most powerful actors? Do they achieve the best outcomes? And do we really live in an international world populated by bullies?

An alternative definition of power is based not on power over others but on power to accomplish desirable ends. This kind of power often derives from capitalizing on common interests rather than gaining an edge in bargaining over conflicting interests. Such empowerment often entails the formation of coalitions and partnerships, or the mobilization of the resources of multiple actors for a common purpose. For many liberals, this is a truer, more useful concept of power.

**Neoliberalism**

In the 1980s, a new liberal critique of realism emerged. The approach stressed the importance of international institutions in reducing the inherent conflict that realists assume in an international system. The reasoning is based on the core liberal idea that seeking long-term mutual gains is often more rational than maximizing individual short-term gains. The approach became known as “neoliberal institutionalism” or neoliberalism for short.

The neoliberal approach differs from earlier liberal approaches in that it concedes to realism several important assumptions—among them, that states are unitary actors

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rationally pursuing their self-interests in a system of anarchy. Neoliberals say to realists, “Even if we grant your assumptions about the nature of states and their motives, your pessimistic conclusions do not follow.” States achieve cooperation fairly often because it is in their interest to do so, and they can learn to use institutions to ease the pursuit of mutual gains and the reduction of possibilities for cheating or taking advantage of another state.

Despite the many sources of conflict in IR, states do cooperate most of the time. Neoliberal scholars ask how this is possible in an anarchic world. They try to show that even in a world of unitary rational states the neorealists’ pessimism about international cooperation is not valid. States can create mutual rules, expectations, and institutions to promote behavior that enhances (or at least doesn’t destroy) the possibilities for mutual gain.

Neoliberals use the Prisoner’s Dilemma (PD) game (see pp. 71–72) to illustrate their argument that cooperation is possible. Each actor can gain by individually defecting, but both lose when both defect. The narrow, self-serving behavior of each player leads to a bad outcome for both, one they could have improved by cooperation. Similarly, in IR states often have a mix of conflicting and mutual interests. The dilemma can be resolved if the game is played over and over again—an accurate model of IR, where states deal with each other in repeated interactions.

A strategy of strict reciprocity after an initial cooperative move (nicknamed tit for tat) can bring about mutual cooperation in a repeated PD game, because the other player must conclude that any defection will merely provoke a like defection in response. The strategy parallels just war doctrine (see pp. 000–000), which calls for states never to initiate war but to use war in response to war. In international trade, such a strategy calls for opening one’s markets but selectively closing them in response to another state closing its markets (see pp. 000–000).

Reciprocity is an important principle in IR that helps international cooperation emerge despite the absence of central authority. Through reciprocity, not a world government, norms and rules are enforced. In international security, reciprocity underlies the gradual improvement of relations sought by arms control agreements and peacekeeping missions. In international political economy (IPE), where cooperation can create great benefits through trade, the threat to restrict trade in retaliation for unfair practices is a strong incentive to comply with rules and norms. The World Trade Organization (WTO) and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), function on this principle—states that defect on their obligations by increasing tariffs must suffer punishment by allowing other states to place tariffs on their goods.

Although reciprocity is an important norm, it is just one among many norms that mediate states’ interactions. For example, diplomatic practices and participation in international organizations (IOs) are both strongly governed by shared expectations about the rules of correct behavior. As dilemmas such as the Prisoner’s Dilemma crop up in IR, states rely on a context of rules, norms, habits, and institutions that make it rational for all sides to avoid the self-defeating outcomes that would result from pursuing narrow, short-term self-interest. Neoliberals study historical and contemporary cases in IR to see how institutions and norms affected the possibilities for overcoming dilemmas and achieving in-

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international cooperation. Thus, for neoliberals the emergence of international institutions is key to understanding how states achieve a superior rational outcome that includes long-term self-interest and not just immediate self-interest.

**Collective Goods**

The problem of the security dilemma (p. 75), which helps explain costly arms races, is an example of a PD-like dilemma in international security. Such examples are even more common in IPE, where protectionism and other forms of economic nationalism attempt to increase national wealth (relative to other states), at some cost to global wealth (see Chapter 8). The overall efficiency of the world economy is reduced, but the distribution of gains from trade shifts toward one's own state or groups within it. The problem is that if other states take similar actions, global efficiency decreases and the distribution of benefits remains about the same. So all states end up worse off than they could be.

All these situations are examples of the **collective goods problem**. A collective good is a tangible or intangible good available to all members of a group, regardless of their individual contributions, and difficult to withhold from those who do not contribute to providing it. As in the security dilemma or Prisoner's Dilemma, participants can gain by lowering their own contribution to the collective good, but if too many participants do so the good cannot be provided.

For example, it costs less to drive a polluting car than to pay for emission controls, and the air that the car owner breathes is hardly affected by his or her own car. The air quality is a collective good. If too many car owners pollute, all will breathe dirty air. But if just a few pollute, they will breathe fairly clean air; the few who pollute are **free riders**, because they benefit from someone else’s provision of the collective good. Moreover, we cannot make the free riders breathe only their dirty air while others breathe clean air. These important concepts in IPE come up again in later chapters, especially in discussions of the global environment (Chapter 11) and of international organization and law (Chapter 7).

Within domestic society, many collective goods problems are solved by governments, which enforce rules for the common good. Governments can punish free riders who are tempted to avoid contributing. Governments can pass laws against polluting cars or force citizens to pay taxes to support collective goods such as national defense, highways, or schools. In the anarchic international system, the absence of
Central government sharpens the difficulties created by collective goods. It is difficult to maintain multilateral cooperation when each government is tempted by its own possibility of free riding.

In general, collective goods are easier to provide in small groups than in large ones. In a small group, the defection (free riding) of one member is harder to conceal, has a greater impact on the overall collective good, and is easier to punish. The advantage of small groups helps explain the importance of the great-power system in international security affairs. And it is one reason why the G7 (Group of Seven) industrialized countries have frequent meetings to try to coordinate their economic policies, instead of relying only on groups such as the World Bank or WTO (each of which has more than a hundred member states). Small groups do not solve the problem entirely, however. Whether in small groups or large, the world’s states lack a government to enforce contributions to collective goods; states must look elsewhere.

**International Regimes**

Because of the contradictory interpretations that parties to a conflict usually have, it is difficult to resolve such conflicts without a third party to arbitrate or an overall framework to set common expectations for all parties. These considerations underlie the creation of IOs in the international security field (see Chapter 7). Norms of behavior are at least as important in international economics as in international security because of the great gains to be realized from maintaining a stable framework for smoothly carrying on large economic transactions.

A **international regime** is a set of rules, norms, and procedures around which the expectations of actors converge in a certain issue area (whether arms control, international trade, or Antarctic exploration). The convergence of expectations means that participants in the international system have similar ideas about what rules will govern their mutual participation: each expects to play by the same rules. (This meaning of regime is not the same as that referring to the domestic governments of states, especially governments considered illegitimate or in power for only a short time.)

Regimes can help solve collective goods problems by increasing transparency—because everyone knows what everyone is doing, cheating is more costly. The current revolution in information technologies is strengthening regimes particularly in this aspect. Also, with better international communication, states can identify conflicts and negotiate solutions through regimes more effectively.

Regimes are an important and widespread phenomenon in IR. Several will be discussed in the remaining chapters on international security. For example, the Ballistic Missile Technology Control Regime (see pp. 000–000) is a set of rules and expectations governing the international trade in missiles. In IPE, regimes are even more central. The frameworks within which states carry on trade and monetary relations, communications, and environmental protection policies are key to realizing the benefits of mutual cooperation in these areas.

IR scholars conceive of regimes in several different ways, and the concept has been criticized as too vague. But the most common conception of regimes combines elements of realism and liberalism. States are considered the important actors, and states are seen as

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autonomous units maximizing their own interests in an anarcho context. Regimes do not play a role in issues where states can realize their interests directly through unilateral applications of leverage. Rather, regimes come into existence to overcome collective goods dilemmas by coordinating the behaviors of individual states. Although states continue to seek their own interests, they create frameworks to coordinate their actions with those of other states if and when such coordination is necessary to realize self-interest (that is, in collective goods dilemmas). Thus, regimes help make cooperation possible even within an international system based on anarchy— exactly the point neoliberalists focus on.

Regimes do not substitute for the basic calculations of costs and benefits by states; they just open up new possibilities with more favorable benefit-cost ratios. Regimes do not constrain states, except in a very narrow and short-term sense. Rather they facilitate and empower national governments faced with issues where collective goods or coordination problems would otherwise prevent governments from achieving their ends. Regimes can be seen as intervening variables between the basic causal forces at work in IR — for realists, the relative power of state actors — and the outcomes such as international cooperation (or lack thereof). Regimes do not negate the effects of power: more often they codify and normalize existing power relations. For example, the ballistic missile regime just mentioned (see p. 104) protects the status quo in which only a few states have such missiles. If the regime works, it will keep less-powerful states from gaining leverage they could use against more-powerful states.

**Hegemonic Stability**

Since regimes depend on state power for their enforcement, some IR scholars argue that regimes are most effective when power in the international system is most concentrated— when there is a hegemon to keep order (see "Hegemony" on pp. 82–84). This theory is known as **hegemonic stability theory**. When one state's power is predominant, it can enforce rules and norms unilaterally, avoiding the collective goods problem. In particular, hegemons can maintain global free trade and promote world economic growth, in this view.

This theory attributes the peace and prosperity of the decades after World War II to U.S. hegemony, which created and maintained a global framework of economic relations supporting relatively stable and free international trade, as well as a security framework that prevented great-power wars. By contrast, the Great Depression of the 1930s and the outbreak of World War II have been attributed to the power vacuum in the international system at that time— Britain was no longer able to act as hegemon, and the United States was unwilling to begin doing so.

Why should a hegemon care about enforcing rules for the international economy that are in the common good? According to hegemonic stability theory, hegemons as the largest international traders have an inherent interest in the promotion of integrated world markets (where the hegemons will tend to dominate). As the most advanced state in productivity and technology, a hegemon does not fear competition from industries in other states; it fears only that its own superior goods will be excluded from competing in other states. Thus hegemons favor free trade and use their power to achieve free trade.

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Hegemony, then, provides both the ability and the motivation to maintain regimes that provide a stable political framework for free international trade, according to hegemonic stability theory. This theory is not, however, accepted by all IR scholars.12

What happens to regimes when hegemons lose power and decline? Regimes do not always decline with the power of hegemons that created them. Rather, they may take on a life of their own. Although hegemony may be crucial in establishing regimes, it is not necessary for maintaining them.13 Once actors’ expectations converge around the rules embodied in a regime, the actors realize that the regime serves their own interests. Working through the regime becomes a habit, and national leaders may not give serious consideration to breaking out of the established rules.

This persistence of regimes was demonstrated in the 1970s, when U.S. power declined following the decades of U.S. hegemony since 1945. Diminished U.S. power was evident in the loss of the Vietnam War, the rise of OPEC, and the malaise of the U.S. economy. Some IR scholars expected that the entire framework of international trade and monetary relations established after World War II would collapse once the United States was no longer able to enforce the rules of that regime. But that did not happen. The international economic regimes adjusted somewhat and survived.

In part, that survival is attributable to the embedding of regimes in permanent institutions such as the UN, NATO, and the International Monetary Fund. As the rules of the game persist over time and become habitual, formal institutions develop around them. These institutions become the tangible manifestation of shared expectations as well as the machinery for coordinating international actions based on those expectations. In international security affairs, the UN and other IOs provide a stable framework for resolving disputes (Chapter 7). IPE is even more institutionalized, again because of the heavier volume of activity and the wealth that can be realized from cooperation.14

Institutions gain greater stability and weight than do noninstitutionalized regimes. With a staff and headquarters, an international institution can actively promote adherence to the rules in its area of political or economic life. Important institutions in international security and IPE are discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively.

Collective Security

A major application of liberal conceptions of international security affairs is the concept of collective security—the formation of a broad alliance of most major actors in an international system for the purpose of jointly opposing aggression by any actor. The rationale for this approach was laid out by Immanuel Kant. Since past treaties ending great-power wars had never lasted permanently, Kant proposed a federation (league) of the world’s states. Through such a federation, Kant proposed, the majority of states could unite to punish any

one state that committed aggression, safeguarding the collective interests of all the nations while protecting the self-determination of small nations that all too easily became pawns in great-power games.\textsuperscript{15}

After the horrors of World War I, a League of Nations was formed. But it was flawed in two ways. Its membership did not include all the great powers (including the most powerful one, the United States), and its members proved unwilling to bear the costs of collective action to oppose aggression when it did occur in the 1930s, starting with Japan and Italy. After World War II, the United Nations was created as the League’s successor to promote collective security (see Chapter 7).

Several regional IGOs also currently perform collective security functions (deterring aggression) as well as economic and cultural ones. In Latin America and the United States, there is the Organization of American States (OAS). In the Middle East (including North Africa), there is the Arab League. In Africa (also including North Africa), there is the African Union (AU).

The success of collective security depends on two points. First, the members must keep their alliance commitments to the group (that is, members must not free ride on the efforts of other members). When a powerful state commits aggression against a weaker one, it often is not in the immediate interest of other powerful states to go to war over the issue. It can be very costly to suppress a determined aggressor.

A second requisite for collective security is that enough members must agree on what constitutes aggression. The UN Security Council is structured so that aggression is defined by what all five permanent members, in addition to at least four of the other ten members, can agree on (see “The Security Council” on pp. 000–000). This collective security system does not work against aggression by a great power. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, or the United States mined the harbors of Nicaragua, or France blew up the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior, the UN could do nothing—because those states can veto Security Council resolutions.\textsuperscript{16}

Collective security worked in the 1990 Iraqi case because the conquest of Kuwait brought all the great powers together and because they were willing to bear the costs of confronting Iraq. It was the first time since the founding of the UN that one member state had invaded, occupied, and annexed another—attempting to erase it as a sovereign state. The invasion was so blatant a violation of Kuwaiti sovereignty and territorial integrity that the Security Council had little trouble labeling it aggression, and authorizing the use of force by a multinational coalition.\textsuperscript{17}

In the case of Bosnia, the aggression was somewhat less clear-cut, since it followed on the disintegration of what had been a single state, Yugoslavia. What would have been an internal matter became an international one when Croatia and Bosnia were recognized as separate states independent of Serbia. But members of the UN (especially the great powers) were reluctant to pay a high price to reverse aggression when their own vital national interests were not threatened. Eventually they patched together an international response that contained the conflict at a modest cost.

In 2002–2003, the Security Council repeatedly debated Iraq’s failure to keep the agreements it had made at the end of the Gulf War, in particular the promise to disclose and destroy all its weapons of mass destruction. In late 2002 the Council unanimously

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passed Resolution 1441, faulting Iraq’s compliance and providing a final chance to disarm, with UN weapons inspectors sent back into Iraq (they had left in 1998). The great powers split, however, on the question of what to do next. In early 2003, a proposed U.S.-British resolution authorizing military force was withdrawn after France promised to veto it; Germany, Russia, and China had all strongly opposed it, and the war. Public opinion around the world, especially in predominantly Muslim countries, unified against the war, making governments wary of backing the U.S. position. When the UN did not act, the United States, Britain, and Australia sent military forces and overthrew Saddam Hussein by force, accusing the UN of acting like the toothless League of Nations (see p. 107).

The concept of collective security has been broadened in recent years. For example, failed states have very weak control of their territory, making them potential havens for drugs trafficking, money laundering, and terrorist bases. Essentially, domestic politics look rather like international anarchy. In these cases, there is a duty for the international community to intervene in such states in order to restore law and order and thus provide collective security for the international system.18

Liberals have sought to reform rather than radically reshape the international system as we know it. Liberal scholars and liberal state leaders alike have argued that international cooperation and the avoidance of violence are ultimately better for states themselves and more rational for state leaders to pursue.

The remainder of this chapter considers more revolutionary critiques of realism. These approaches broadly reject the terms of reference—issues, assumptions, language—that realists use to discuss IR. As a result, there has not been much productive debate between realism and these schools of thought. Yet, with growing numbers of IR scholars taking these critiques seriously, they provide perspectives that compete with realist and even liberal approaches.

Feminism

Feminist scholarship has cut a broad swath across academic disciplines, from literature to psychology to history. In recent years, it has made inroads in international relations, once considered one of the fields most resistant to feminist arguments. Feminist scholarship in IR has produced a rapidly growing literature in the past two decades.19

Why Gender Matters

Feminist scholarship encompasses a variety of strands of work, but all have in common the insight that gender matters in understanding how IR works—especially in issues relating to war and international security. Feminist scholarship in various disciplines seeks to uncover hidden assumptions about gender in how we study a subject such as IR. What scholars traditionally claim to be universal often turns out to be true only of males.

Some feminists have argued that the core assumptions of realism—especially of anarchy and sovereignty—reflect the ways in which males tend to interact and to see the world. In this view, the realist approach simply assumes male participants when discussing foreign policy decision making, state sovereignty, or the use of military force.

This is a somewhat complex critique. Because in fact the vast majority of heads of state, of diplomats, and of soldiers are male, it may be realistic to study them as males. What the feminist critics then ask is that scholars explicitly recognize the gendered nature of their subject (rather than implicitly assuming all actors are male). In this view, our understanding of male actors in IR can be increased by considering how their gender identity affects their views and decision processes. And females also influence IR (more often through nonstate channels than males do)—influences often ignored by realism. Feminist scholars argue that we can better understand IR by including the roles and effects of women.²⁰

Beyond revealing the hidden assumptions about gender in a field of scholarship, feminists often challenge traditional concepts of gender as well. In IR, these traditional concepts revolve around the assumptions that males fight wars and run states, whereas females are basically irrelevant to IR. Such gender roles are based in the broader construction of masculinity as suitable to public and political spaces, whereas femininity is associated with the sphere of the private and domestic. An example of this gendered construction was provided by White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan’s comment at a 1985 Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting that women do not care about throw weights of ICBM’s (see p. 000) and would rather watch Nancy Reagan. Later he said that U.S. women would not support sanctions against white-ruled South Africa because they would not want to lose their diamonds (a South African export). Feminists call into question, at a minimum, the stereotypes of women as caring more about fashion and jewelry than arms control and apartheid.

Beyond a basic agreement that gender is important, there is no single feminist approach to IR but several such approaches—strands of scholarship and theory. Although they are interwoven (all paying attention to gender and to the status of women), they often run in different directions. On some core issues, the different strands of feminism have conflicting views, creating interesting debates within feminism.

One strand, difference feminism, focuses on valorizing the feminine—that is, valuing the unique contributions of women as women. Difference feminists do not think women do all things as well as men or vice versa. Because of their greater experience with nurturing and human relations, women are seen as potentially more effective than men (on average) in conflict resolution as well as in group decision making. Difference feminists believe there are real differences between the genders that are not just social constructions and cultural indoctrination (although these contribute to gender roles, too). Some difference feminists believe there is a core biological essence to being male or female (sometimes called essentialism), but the majority think women’s difference is more culturally than biologically determined. In either case, feminine perspectives create a standpoint from which to observe, analyze, and criticize the traditional perspectives on IR.21

Another strand, liberal feminism, rejects these claims as being based on stereotyped gender roles. Liberal feminists see the “essential” differences in men’s and women’s abilities or perspectives as trivial or nonexistent—men and women are equal. They deplore the exclusion of women from positions of power in IR but do not believe that including women would change the nature of the international system. Liberal feminists seek to include women more often as subjects of study—such as women state leaders, women soldiers, and other women operating outside the traditional gender roles in IR.

A third approach combines feminism with postmodernism, discussed later in this chapter. Postmodern feminism tends to reject the assumptions about gender made by both difference and liberal feminists. Where difference feminists consider gender differences to be important and fixed, and liberal feminists consider those differences to be trivial, postmodern feminists find them important but arbitrary and flexible.

To some extent the divergent views of feminist strands—difference, liberal, and postmodern—overlap with the general themes of conservative, liberal, and revolutionary world views, respectively. But these parallels are only rough.

The Masculinity of Realism

Difference feminism provides a perspective from which to reexamine the core assumptions of realism—especially the assumption of autonomy, from which flow the key realist concepts of sovereignty and anarchy. To realists, the international system consists of autonomous actors (states) that control their own territory and have no right to infringe on another’s territory. Do these concepts rest on a “masculine” view of the world? If so, what would a “feminine” approach to international security be like? Some difference feminists have argued that realism emphasizes autonomy and separation because men find separation easier to deal with than interconnection.

This view rests on a psychological theory that boys and girls grow up from a young age with different views of separateness and connection.22 In this theory, because a child’s primary caretaker is almost always female in the early years, girls form their gender identity around the perception of similarity with their caretaker (and by extension the environment in which they live), but boys perceive their difference from the caretaker. From this experience, boys develop social relations based on individual autonomy, but girls’ relations are based on connection. As a result, women are held to be more likely than men to fear abandonment, whereas men are more likely to fear intimacy.

In moral reasoning, according to this research, boys tend to apply abstract rules and stress individual rights (reflecting their sense of separation from the situation), but girls pay more attention to the concrete contexts of different situations and to the responsibility of group members for each other. In playing games, boys tend to resolve disputes through arguments about the rules and then keep playing, but girls are more likely to abandon a game rather than argue over the rules and risk the social cohesion of their group. In social relations, boys form and dissolve friendships more readily than girls, who are more likely to stick loyally with friends. All these gender differences in children reflect the basic concept that for girls connection matters more than independence, but for boys the reverse is true.

Realism, of course, rests on the concept of states as separate, autonomous actors that make and break alliances freely while pursuing their own interests (but not interfering in each other's internal affairs). Such a conception of autonomy parallels the masculine psyche just described. Thus, some feminists find in realism a hidden assumption of masculinity. Furthermore, the sharp distinction that realists draw between international politics (anarchic) and domestic politics (ordered) parallels the distinction in gender roles between the public (masculine) and private (feminine) spheres. Thus, realism constructs IR as a man's world.

By contrast, an international system based on feminine principles might give greater importance to the interdependence of states than to their autonomy, stressing the responsibility of people to care for each other with less regard for states and borders. In the struggle between the principles of human rights and of sovereignty (noninterference in internal affairs), human rights would receive priority. In the choice of forms of leverage when conflicts arise between states, violence might be less prevalent. The concept of national security might be based on common security (see p. 108) rather than narrow self interest.

The realist preoccupation with the interstate level of analysis presumes that the logic of war itself is autonomous and can be separated from other social relationships such as economics, domestic politics, sexism, and racism. Difference feminism, however, reveals the connections of these phenomena with war. It suggests new avenues for understanding war at the domestic and individual levels of analysis—underlying causes that realists largely ignore.

From this difference-feminist perspective, neoliberalism has gone backward from traditional liberalism, by accepting the realist assumption of separate unitary states as the important actors, and downplaying substate and transnational actors including women. Neoliberalism's conception of cooperation as rule-based interactions among autonomous actors also reflects masculinist assumptions.
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THINKING THEORETICALLY

Manhood and the Decision for War

Feminist theories provide explanations that often differ from both realist and liberal theories. In the case of response to aggression, such as in Kuwait and Bosnia in the 1990s, feminists might call attention to the importance of gender roles such as the need for state leaders to prove their manhood by standing up to the bad guys. This is connected with the male role as protector of the orderly domestic sphere (home, family, country) against the dangerous and anarchic outside world.

In the case of Kuwait, the first President Bush had long been criticized as being a “wimp” (an insult to his manhood), and his determination to respond to Iraq’s aggression became a personal battle with Saddam Hussein. A key moment in Bush’s decision process was said to be when Britain’s prime minister, Margaret Thatcher—a woman—urged him to act firmly, saying, “Don’t go all wobbly on us, George.” By the time of the Bosnia war, Thatcher was no longer the British prime minister, and Bush (after the Gulf War) perhaps no longer had to prove his manhood.

Gender in War and Peace

In addition to its emphasis on autonomy and anarchy, realism stresses military force as the key form of leverage in IR. Here, too, many difference feminists see in realism a hidden assumption of masculinity. They see war as not only a male occupation, but also the quintessentially male occupation. In this view, men are inherently the more warlike gender, and women the more peaceful. Thus, although realism may accurately portray the importance of war and military force in IR as we now know it, this merely reflects the male domination of the international sphere to date—not a necessary, eternal, or inescapable logic of relations among states.

Difference feminists find plenty of evidence to support the idea of war as a masculine pursuit. Anthropologists have found that in all known cultures, males are the primary (and usually the only) combatants in warfare, despite the enormous diversity of those cultures in so many other ways. (Of course, voting and political leadership were also male domains for most of history, yet feminists would hardly call those activities essentially masculine.)

One supposed link between war and masculinity is the male sex hormone testosterone (along with related hormones), which some biologists have connected with aggressive behavior in animals. However, testosterone does not cause aggression. Rather, social interactions “feed back” to affect testosterone levels (winners' testosterone levels rise while losers' levels fall). Thus testosterone is a link in a complex system of relationships between the organism and the social environment. Complex behaviors such as aggression and war cannot be said to be biologically driven or predetermined, because humanity’s most striking biological capability is flexibility.

Even some feminists who see gender differences as strictly cultural, and not biological at all, view war as a masculine construction. In one theory, for example, war may fill a void left for men by their inability to give birth; war provides a meaning to life and gives men an opportunity through heroism to transcend their individual isolation and

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overcome their fear of death—opportunities that women potentially get through childbirth. In addition, heroism on the battlefield, especially before modern mechanized war, promised men a form of immortality, as their deeds would live on in collective memory.24

By contrast, women are usually portrayed by difference feminists as more peaceful creatures than men—whether because of biology, culture, or (most likely) both. These feminists emphasize women’s unique abilities and contributions as peacemakers. They stress women’s roles as mothers and potential mothers. Because of such caregiving roles, women are presumed to be more likely than men to oppose war and more likely to find alternatives to violence in resolving conflicts.25

Both biologically and anthropologically, there is no firm evidence connecting women’s caregiving functions (pregnancy and nursing) with any particular kinds of behavior such as reconciliation or nonviolence—all though females have been studied less than males. The role of women varies considerably from one society to another. Although they rarely take part in combat, women sometimes provide logistical support to male warriors and sometimes help to drive the men into a war frenzy by dancing, shaming nonparticipating males, and other activities supportive of war. Yet in other cultures, women restrain the men from war or play special roles as mediators in bringing wars to an end.

The idea of women as peacemakers has a long history. In ancient Athens, the (male) playwright Aristophanes speculated about how women might end the unpopular Peloponnesian War with Sparta, then in progress. (His play, Lysistrata, was read in 1,000 locations in 56 countries on March 3, 2003, to protest the coming Iraq War.) In the play, a young woman named Lysistrata organizes the Athenian and Spartan women to withhold sex from the men until the latter stop the war (the women also make off with the war treasury). In short order, the men come to their senses and make peace.26

Women have formed their own organizations to work for peace on many occasions. In 1852, Sisterly Voices was published as a newsletter for women’s peace societies. Bertha von Suttner in 1892 persuaded Alfred Nobel to create the Nobel peace prize (which Suttner

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won in 1905). During World War I, in 1915, Jane Addams and other feminists convened an international women's peace conference at the Hague. They founded the Women's Peace Party (now called the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom).  

After World War I, the suffrage movement won the right for women to vote. Difference feminists thought that women would vote for peace and against war, changing the nature of foreign policy, but women generally voted as their husbands did. Similarly, decades later when women participated in liberation struggles against colonialism in the global South, some feminists thought such participation would change foreign policies in the newly independent countries, but in general such changes did not materialize (partly because women were often pushed aside from political power after the revolution).

Nonetheless, U.S. public opinion on foreign policy issues since the 1930s partially vindicates difference feminists. A gender gap in polls shows women to be about 10 percentage points lower than men on average in their support for military actions. This gender gap shrinks, however, when there is broad consensus on a military action, as when U.S. forces attacked terrorist supporters in Afghanistan in late 2001.

Meanwhile, feminists in recent decades have continued to organize women's peace organizations. In the 1980s, Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND) opposed the nuclear arms buildup, and women encamped for years at Britain's Greenham Common air base. In 1995, the UN-sponsored Beijing conference on women brought together women activists from around the world, and helped deepen feminists' engagement with global issues such as North-South inequality. In 2000, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 mandating greater inclusion of women and attention to gender in UN peacekeeping and reconstruction. In Bahrain, women won the right to vote and to run for office in 2002, but none were elected.

Through these various actions, difference feminists began developing a feminist practice of international relations that could provide an alternative to the masculine practice of realism. The motto of the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is, “Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the foundations for peace should be sought.” For difference feminists, war does indeed begin in the minds of men but the foundations for peace would better be sought in the minds of women.

Women in IR

Liberal feminists are skeptical of difference-feminist critiques of realism. They believe that when women are allowed to participate in IR, they play the game basically the same way men do, with similar results. They think that women can practice realism—based on autonomy, sovereignty, anarchy, territory, military force, and all the rest—just as well as men can. Liberal feminists therefore tend to reject the critique of realism as masculine. (In practice, many feminists draw on both difference and liberal feminists views in various proportions.)

Liberal feminism focuses on the integration of women into the overwhelmingly male preserves of foreign policy making and the military. In most states, these occupations are typically at least 90 percent male. For instance, in 1995 the world’s diplomatic delegations

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to the U N G eneral A ssembly were 80 percent male overall, and the heads of those delegations were 97 percent male. T he U . S . military, with one of the highest proportions of women anywhere in the world or in history, is still 85 percent male. 30

For liberal feminists, the main effect of this gender imbalance on the nature of IR — that is, apart from effects on the status of women — is to waste talent. Since liberal feminists think that women have the same capabilities as men, the inclusion of women in traditionally male occupations (from state leader to foot soldier) would bring additional capable individuals into those areas. Gender equality would thus increase national capabilities by giving the state a better overall pool of diplomats, generals, soldiers, and politicians.

In support of their argument that, on average, women handle power just as men do, liberal feminists point to the many examples of women who have served in such positions. No distinctly feminine feature of their behavior in office distinguishes these leaders from their male counterparts. Rather, they have been diverse in character and policy. Of course, women in traditionally male roles may have been selected (or self-selected) on the basis of their suitability to such roles: they may not act the way “average” women would act. Still, they do show that individuals cannot be judged accurately using group characteristics alone.

Female state leaders do not appear to be any more peaceful, or any less committed to state sovereignty and territorial integrity, than are male leaders. It has even been suggested that women in power tend to be more warlike to compensate for being females in traditionally male roles.

Only one female has led a great power in the past century — Britain’s M argaret T hatcher in the 1980s. She went to war in 1982 to recover the Falkland Islands from A rgentina (at issue were sovereignty and territorial integrity). Among middle powers, I ndira G andhi likewise led India in war against Pakistan in 1971, as did I srael’s G olda M eir against Egypt and Syria in 1973. B ut B ena ç r B hutto of Pakistan and C orazón A quino of the Philippines struggled to control their own military forces in the late 1980s. T urkey’s T ansu Ç iller led a harsh war to suppress Kurdish rebels in the mid-1990s. But V iolletta C hamorro of N icaragua kept the peace between factions that had fought a brutal civil war in the 1980s. T he president of S ri Lanka and her mother, the prime minister, tried to make

Consistent with liberal feminism’s premises, the first two female U . S . secretaries of state, M adeleine A lbright and C ondoleezza R ice, were at least as hard-line as their male colleagues. A lbright advocated the use of force in Bosnia and the expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe, and R ice supported the invasion of I raq in 2003. H ere, however, in 1997, A lbright told refugee girls from A fghanistan (where the T aliban faction harshly restricted women) that women worldwide “are all the same, and we have the same feelings” — a line more consistent with difference feminism.

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peace with separatist rebels, but returned to war when that initiative failed. Indonesia's president Megawati Sukarnoputri has tried to hold together a fractious Indonesia in recent years. Other states, such as Finland, Norway, and Iceland, have had female leaders when war and peace were not major political issues in those countries. Overall, women state leaders, like men, seem capable of leading in war or in peace as circumstances demand.31

Within the U.S. foreign policy establishment, the record of women leaders similarly does not show any particular soft or hard tendency relative to their male counterparts. Madeleine Albright, the first female secretary of state, was considered one of the tougher foreign policy makers in the Clinton administration, as were Condoleezza Rice (national security advisor and secretary of state for George W. Bush) and Jeane Kirkpatrick (UN ambassador in the Reagan administration). But Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum was a voice for compassion who led efforts to increase humanitarian aid to Africa in the 1990s.

In the U.S. Congress, it is hard to compare men's and women's voting records on foreign policy issues because there have been so few women. The U.S. Senate, which approves treaties and foreign policy appointments, was 98 to 99 percent male until 1992 (but had dropped to 86 percent male by 2005). Women have never chaired the key foreign policy committees (Armed Services and Foreign Relations) in the Senate or House—although Patricia Schroeder was the second-ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee in 1993–1994 and played a major (avowedly feminist) role in Congress on military policy.

Liberal feminists believe that women soldiers, like women politicians, have a range of skills and abilities comparable to men's. A gain the main effect of including more women would be to improve the overall quality of military forces.32 About 200,000 women soldiers serve in the U.S. military (15 percent of the total) and more than 1 million women are veterans. Women perform well in a variety of military roles from logistical and medical support to training and command. Women have had success in other countries that have allowed them into the military (or, in a few cases, drafted them).

Although women have served with distinction in military forces, they have been excluded from combat roles in almost all those forces. (It is a myth that women in the Israeli army serve in combat infantry roles.) In some countries, military women are limited to traditional female roles such as nurses and typists. Even where women may hold nontraditional positions such as mechanics and pilots (as in the United States), most women remain in the traditional roles. And certain jobs still remain off-limits; for instance, women cannot serve on U.S. submarines or in combat infantry. Thus there are relatively few cases to judge women's abilities in combat.

Those cases include historical examples of individual women who served in combat (sometimes disguised as men, sometimes not). In the fifteenth century, Joan of Arc rallied French soldiers to defeat England, turning the tide of the Hundred Years' War. (The English burned her at the stake as a witch after capturing her.) In recent years, U.S. women soldiers have found themselves in combat (present-day mobile tactics and fluid front lines make it


hard to separate combat from support roles). Women helicopter pilots flew in combat zones during the 1991 Gulf War (in which tens of thousands of U.S. women served, 13 were killed, and 2 were captured as POWs). In the late 1990s, women began serving on some U.S. combat ships and airplanes, but not in ground combat units. In the 2003 Iraq War, women flew all manner of airplanes and helicopters, and one woman was in the first group of U.S. POWs captured early in the war. Women have also repeatedly participated in combat in rebel forces fighting guerrilla wars in Vietnam, Nicaragua, and elsewhere, as well as in terrorist or paramilitary units in countries such as Peru, Germany, Italy, and Palestine. Women in Eritrea’s guerrilla forces became part of that country’s regular army after independence and then served in front-line combat units during the Eritrea-Ethiopia war in the late 1990s. All these cases suggest that (at least some) women are able to hold their own in combat.

Some argue that women are more vulnerable (that is, to rape) if taken as POWs. A gain liberal feminists disagree. All POWs are vulnerable, and both men and women POWs can be sexually abused. The main reason that military forces exclude women from combat is fear about what effect their presence might have on the male soldiers, whose discipline and loyalty have traditionally been thought to depend on male bonding and single-minded focus. Opponents of women in the military claimed vindication, ironically, from a series of high-profile cases of sex discrimination, harassment, adultery, and rape in the U.S. military in the mid-1990s. The presence of females in the ranks, they said, was breaking down discipline and morale. Liberal feminists reject such arguments and argue that group bonding in military units does not depend on gender segregation. (After all, similar rationales were once given for racial segregation in U.S. military forces.)

The effects of war on noncombatant women has also received growing attention. Attacks on women in Algeria, Rwanda, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Democratic Congo, and Sudan pointed to a possible new trend toward women as military targets. Systematic rape was used as a terror tactic in Bosnia and Rwanda, and the Japanese army in World War II operated an international network of sex slaves known as “comfort women.” Rape has long been treated as a normal if regrettable by-product of war, but recently certain instances of rape were declared war crimes (see p. 000) by the international tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

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In sum, liberal feminists reject the argument that women bring uniquely feminine assets or liabilities to foreign and military affairs. They do not critique realism as essentially masculine in nature but do criticize state practices that exclude women from participation in international politics and war.

Balancing the Feminist Arguments

The arguments of difference and liberal feminists may seem totally at odds. Difference feminists argue that realism reflects a masculine perception of social relations, whereas liberal feminists think that women can be just as realist as men. Liberal feminists believe that female participation in foreign policy and the military will enhance state capabilities, but difference feminists think women’s unique abilities can be put to better use in transforming (feminizing) the entire system of international relations rather than in trying to play men’s games.

The evidence in favor of both positions can be reconciled to some extent by bearing in mind that the character and ability of an individual are not the same as that of his or her group. Rather, the qualities of individuals follow a bell curve distribution, with many people clustered in the middle and fewer people very high or low on a given capability.

Gender differences posited by difference feminists mean that one bell curve is shifted from the other, even though the two may still overlap quite a bit (see Figure 3.1). To take a simple example, a few women are physically larger than almost all men, and a few men are smaller than almost all women. But on average men are somewhat larger than women.

On various dimensions of capability, the women’s curve is above or below the men’s on average, but there is still much overlap.

Liberal feminist arguments emphasize the overlap of the two bell curves. They say that individual women—most women on most relevant dimensions—are well within the male curve and thus can perform equally with the men. Indeed, women in nontraditional gender roles may well perform better than their male counterparts, because presumably women who self-select into such roles (such as joining the military) are near the high end of the female bell curve, whereas the men are closer to the middle of the male curve (because more of them join). Similarly, women who become state leaders are presumably more adept at
foreign policy making than most women (or men), because political processes tend to select women at the high end of the curve in terms of their affinity for realism.

Difference feminists are more interested in the shift in the two bell curves, not their overlap. On average, in this perspective, women tend to see international relations in a somewhat different way from that of men. So, although individuals selected to participate in foreign policy and the military may not differ from their male counterparts, women as a group differ. Women voters display different concerns regarding IR than men (as shown by the gender gap in opinion polls and voting patterns).

By this logic, then, profound differences in IR—and a shift away from the utility of realism in explaining state behavior—would occur only if many women participated in key foreign policy positions. That is, a few women politicians or women soldiers do not change the masculine foundations of IR. Women foreign policy makers today are surrounded by males (advisers, military officers, political leaders, and foreign state leaders). But a world in which most politicians or soldiers were female might be a different story. Then, instead of the selection of women for their ability to fit into men's games, the rules of the game might themselves change to reflect the fact that "average" women would be the main actors in the traditionally important IR roles. Of course, these theories of difference feminists have never been tested, because women have never attained predominance in foreign policy making in any country—much less in the international system as a whole.

Thus, the difference feminist critique of realism is intriguing but hard to demonstrate empirically. It may be, as this critique claims, that realism and neoliberalism alike put too much emphasis on the aspects of IR that fit a typical masculine view of the world—particularly autonomy, sovereignty, and anarchy. If so, realism and neoliberalism miss many important aspects that could help provide fuller explanations of why events occur the way they do in IR.

In addition to the liberal and difference strands of feminism, the third strand, postmodern feminism, is connected with the rise of postmodernism in the social sciences.

**Constructivism**

A n alternative approach to the study of IR, called **constructivism**, has grown immensely in popularity in the past 20 years. Constructivism is best described as an approach rather than a theory. Like feminism and postmodernism, its origins lie in other disciplines. When stripped to its core, it says nothing about IR per se, but when one takes its lessons about the nature of norms, identity, and social interaction seriously, it can have powerful insights into the world of IR.

Constructivism is interested in how actors define their national interests, threats to those interests, and their relationships to one another. Realists (and neoliberals) tend to simply take state interests as given. Thus, constructivism puts IR in the context of broader social relations.35

There are many strands of constructivist research. One prominent line examines how states' interests and identities are intertwined, as well as how those identities are shaped by interactions with other states.36 For example, why is the U.S. concerned


when North Korea builds nuclear weapons, but not when Great Britain does? Realists would quickly answer that North Korea poses a bigger threat, yet from a pure military power perspective, Great Britain is a far superior military force to North Korea. Yet, no one would argue that Great Britain is a threat to the U.S. no matter how many nuclear weapons it builds. Constructivist scholars would point out that there is a shared history, shared alliances, and shared norms that tell Americans and the British they are not a threat to one another although they are very powerful militarily. Identity of the potential adversary matters, not just its military capabilities and interests. This is a rejection of the realist assumption that states always want more rather than less power and wealth and of the assumption that state interests exist independently of a context of interactions among states.37

Constructivists hold that these state identities are complex, changing, and arise from interactions with other states—often through a process of socialization. Some constructivist scholars contend that over time, states can conceptualize one another in such a way that there is no danger of a security dilemma, arms races, or the other effects of anarchy. They point to Europe as an example—a continent that was the center of two military conflicts in the first half of the twentieth century that killed millions. By the end of that century, war had become unthinkable. European identities are now intertwined with the European Union, not with the violent nationalism that led to two World Wars. For constructivists, power politics, anarchy, and military force cannot explain this change. Institutions, regimes, norms, and changes in identity are better explanations.38

States may also come to value and covet something like status or reputation, which are social, not material concepts. Switzerland, for example, values its role as a neutral, non-aligned state (it belongs to neither the European Union nor NATO, and joined the UN only in 2002). This status as a neutral gives Switzerland prestige and power—not a material power like money or guns—but a normative power to intervene diplomatically in important international affairs. Similarly, Canada’s foreign policy contains its own identity-driven imperatives and limits.

Another field of constructivist research also relies heavily on international norms and their power to constrain state action. While realists (and neoliberals) contend states make decisions based on a logic of consequences (what will happen to me if I behave a certain way), constructivist scholars note there is a powerful logic of appropriateness (how should I behave in this situation).39 For example, some cases of humanitarian intervention—military intervention by a state or states to protect citizens or subjects of another—seem difficult to explain in realist or liberal terms. Why, for example, did the United States in 1992 send troops to Somalia—a country of minimal strategic and economic importance to the United States—as Somalia descended into political chaos and faced the possibility of mass starvation (see p. 46)? A constructivist explanation might point to changing norms about which kinds of people are worthy of protection. In the nineteenth century, European powers occasionally intervened to protect Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire from massacres, but generally ignored non-Christian victims. However, as decolonization enshrined the principle of self-determination and as human rights became

widely valued, the scope of humanitarian intervention expanded. Although the international community does not always respond effectively to humanitarian crises, it is no longer acceptable to view only Christians as deserving protection. The United States in this example tried to act in an appropriate fashion rather than according to the dictates of cost-benefit calculations.

Examples can be found in the developing world as well. Some constructivists have argued that countries in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East have adopted or changed policies in response to international norms—not because it provided large benefits, but rather because it was perceived as the appropriate course of action. For example, many developing states have raced to create science bureaucracies and/or begin technological modernization of their militaries. Constructivists point out that the reason developing states chose to spend their limited resources on such projects is their desire to be perceived as "modern" by the international system. "Modern" states have science bureaucracies and advanced militaries. Ironically, many states that build science bureaucracies have few scientists while many states who build advanced militaries have few enemies. Thus, constructivists emphasize that identities and norms must be used to explain this seemingly puzzling behavior.

How are these international norms spread around the world? In an age of global communication and relative ease of transportation, there are many possibilities. Constructivists emphasize different sets of actors who spread norms. Some contend that individuals, labeled norm entrepreneurs, through travel, writing, and meeting with elites change ideas and encourage certain types of norms. Some point to broad-based social movements and nongovernmental organizations, such as the anti-Apartheid movement encouraging the development of a global norm of racial equality. Others show how international organizations (such as the UN or NATO) can diffuse norms of what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior. In each case, however, it is new ideas and norms, rather than power and self-interest driving state behavior.

Constructivism is still a controversial approach to the study of IR, but cannot be ignored. Some suggest that a melding of realist-oriented and constructivist-oriented scholarship may develop, but others are less hopeful.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism, like feminism and constructivism, is a broad approach to scholarship that has left its mark on various academic disciplines, especially the study of literature. Because of their literary roots, postmodernists pay special attention to texts and to
discourses—how people talk and write about their subject (IR). Postmodern critiques of realism thus center on analyzing realists’ words and arguments.

Deconstructing Realism

A central idea of postmodernism is that there is no single, objective reality but a multiplicity of experiences and perspectives that defy easy categorization. For this reason, postmodernism itself is difficult to present in a simple or categorical way. This section will merely convey some important postmodern themes, necessarily oversimplified, and show how postmodernism can help illuminate some problems of realism.

From a postmodern perspective, realism cannot justify its claim that states are the central actors in IR and that states operate as unitary actors with coherent sets of objective interests (which they pursue through international power politics). Postmodern critics of realism see nothing objective about state interests, and certainly nothing universal (in that one set of values or interests applies to all states).

More fundamentally, postmodernism calls into question the whole notion of states as actors. States have no tangible reality; they are “fictions” that we (as scholars and citizens) construct to make sense of the actions of large numbers of individuals. For postmodernists, the stories told about the actions and policies of states are just that—stories. From this perspective, it is an arbitrary distinction that leads bookstores to put spy novels on the fiction shelf whereas biographies and histories go on the nonfiction shelf. None of these is an objective reality, and all are filtered through an interpretive process that distorts the actual experiences of those involved.

Contrary to realism’s claim that states are unitary actors, postmodernists see multiple realities and experiences lurking below the surface of the fictional entities that realists construct (states). The Soviet Union, for example, was treated by realists as a single actor with a single set of objective interests. Indeed, it was considered the second most important actor in the world. Realists were amazed when the Soviet Union split into 15 pieces, each containing its own fractious groups and elements. It became clear that the “unitary state” called the Soviet Union had masked (and let realists ignore) the divergent experiences of constituent republics, ethnic groups, and individuals.

Postmodernists seek to “deconstruct” such constructions as states, the international system, and the associated stories and arguments (texts and discourses) with which realists portray the nature of international relations. To deconstruct a text—a term borrowed from literary criticism—means to tease apart the words in order to reveal hidden meanings, looking for what might be omitted or included only implicitly. The hidden meanings not explicitly addressed in the text are often called the subtext.
What is subtext in the stories realists tell about IR? What does realism omit from its accounts of IR? We have just discussed one major omission—women and gender. Furthermore, in its emphasis on states, realism omits the roles of individuals, domestic politics, economic classes, MNCs, and other nonstate actors. In its focus on the great powers, realism omits the experiences of countries in the global South. In its attention to military forms of leverage, it omits the roles of various nonmilitary forms of leverage.

Realism focuses so narrowly because its aim is to reduce IR down to a simple, coherent model. The model is claimed to be objective, universal, and accurate. To postmodernists, the realist model is none of these things: it is a biased model that creates a narrow and one-sided story for the purpose of promoting the interests of powerful actors. Postmodernists seek to destroy this model along with any other model (including neoliberalism) that tries to represent IR in simple objective categories. Postmodernists instead want to celebrate the diversity of experiences that make up IR without needing to make sense of them by simplifying and categorizing.

Postmodern Feminism

One line of criticism directed at realism combines feminism and postmodernism. Postmodern feminism seeks to deconstruct realism with the specific aim of uncovering the pervasive hidden influences of gender in IR while showing how arbitrary the construction of gender roles is. Feminist postmodernists agree with difference feminists that realism carries hidden meanings about gender roles but deny that there is any fixed inherent meaning in either male or female genders. Rather, feminist postmodernists look at the interplay of gender and power in a more open-ended way. Postmodern feminists criticize liberal feminists for trying merely to integrate women into traditional structures of war and foreign policy. They criticize difference feminists as well, for glorifying traditional feminine virtues.

In studying war, postmodern feminists have challenged the archetypes of the (male) “just warrior” and the (female) “beautiful soul.” They argue that women are not just passive bystanders or victims in war, but active participants in a system of warfare tied to both genders. Women act not only as nurses and journalists at the “front” but as mothers, wives, and girlfriends on the “home front.” These scholars believe that stories of military forces should not omit the roles of prostitutes at military bases, nor should stories of diplomacy omit the roles of diplomats’ wives.

Postmodern feminists reject not only realism but also some of the alternative approaches that emphasize the protection of women and other noncombatants. Just war doctrine (see pp. 000–000) is considered too abstract—a set of concepts and rules that does...
not do justice to the richness of each historical context and the varied roles of individual men and women within it.²²

Postmodern feminists have tried to deconstruct the language of realism, especially where it reflects influences of gender and sex. For instance, the first atomic bombs had male gender (they were named “Fat Man” and “Little Boy”); the coded telegram informing Washington, DC, that the first hydrogen bomb had worked said simply, “It’s a boy” (presumably being born a girl would have indicated a failure). The plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima (the Enola Gay) had female gender; it was named after the pilot’s mother. Likewise the French atom-bomb test sites in the South Pacific were all given women’s names.²³ Similarly, pilots have pasted pinup photos of nude women onto conventional bombs before dropping them. In all these cases, postmodern feminists would note that the feminine gender of vehicles, targets, or decorations amplifies the masculinity of the weapon itself.

These efforts find sex and gender throughout the subtext of realism. For example, the terms power and potency refer to both state capability and male virility. Military force depends on phallic objects—weapons designed to shoot projectiles, penetrate targets, and explode. In basic training, men chant: “This is my rifle [holding up rifle], this is my gun [pointing to crotch]; one's for killing, the other's for fun.”²⁴ Nuclear weapons are also repeatedly spoken of in sexual terms, perhaps due to their great “potency.” Female models are hired to market tanks, helicopter missiles, and other “potent” weapons to male procurement officers at international military trade shows.²⁵ The phallic character of weapons has seemingly persisted even as technology has evolved from spears to guns to missiles.

Realism and liberalism ignore all the sexual aspects of weaponry, limiting themselves to such issues as a weapon’s explosive power, its range, and other technical information about its use as state leverage. But if sexual drives enter (perhaps unconsciously) into decisions about whether and when to use bombs or other military forces, then realism and liberalism cannot adequately explain those decisions.²⁶ Postmodernism thus reveals another reality—the sexual gratification of male politicians and soldiers—which competes with the realities of realism and neoliberalism, with their focus on maximizing national interests (narrowly or broadly construed). By radically shifting the focus and approach of IR scholarship, postmodernists hope to increase our understanding of IR in general and of the notion of rationality in particular.

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Peace Studies

A nother approach of growing importance that challenges some fundamental concepts behind both realism and liberalism is peace studies. Many colleges have created interdisciplinary peace studies programs through which scholars and students organize discussions and courses about peace. Typically, such programs include not only political scientists but also psychologists who have studied conflict, physicists who have studied nuclear weapons, religious scholars who have studied practical morality, and so forth. With these various disciplinary backgrounds, scholars of peace studies tend to be more eclectic than political scientists and much more broad-ranging in the topics they consider worthy of study in international security affairs. In particular, peace studies seeks to shift the focus of IR away from the interstate level of analysis and toward a broad conception of social relations at the individual, domestic, and global levels of analysis. Peace studies connects war and peace with individual responsibility, with economic inequality, with gender relations, with cross-cultural understanding, and with other aspects of social relationships. Peace studies seeks the potentials for peace not in the transactions of state leaders but in the transformation of entire societies (through social revolution) and in transnational communities (bypassing states and ignoring borders to connect people and groups globally).

Conflict Resolution

The development and implementation of peaceful strategies for settling conflicts—using alternatives to violent forms of leverage—are known by the general term conflict resolution. These methods are at work, competing with violent methods, in virtually all international conflicts. Recently the use of conflict resolution has been increasing, becoming more sophisticated, and succeeding more often.

Most conflict resolution uses a third party whose role is mediation between two conflicting parties. Most of today's international conflicts have one or more mediating parties working regularly to resolve the conflict short of violence. There is no hard-and-fast rule saying what kinds of third parties mediate what kinds of conflicts. Presently the UN is the most...
important mediator on the world scene. Some regional conflicts are mediated through regional organizations, single states, or even private individuals. For instance, the former president of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, won the 1987 Nobel peace prize for mediating a multilateral agreement among Central American presidents to end several brutal wars in the region.\footnote{Child, Jack. The Central American Peace Process, 1983–1991: Sheathing Swords, Building Confidence. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992.}

The involvement of the mediator can vary. Some mediation is strictly technical—a mediator may take an active but strictly neutral role in channeling communication between two states that lack other channels of communication.\footnote{Stein, Janice Gross, ed. Getting to the Table: The Processes of International Prenegotiation. Johns Hopkins, 1989.} For example, Pakistan secretly passed messages between China and the United States before the breakthrough in U.S.-Chinese relations in 1971. Such a role is sometimes referred to as offering the mediator’s good offices to a negotiating process. In facilitating communication, a mediator listens to each side’s ideas and presents them in a way the other side can hear. The mediator works to change each side’s view of difficult issues. In these roles, the mediator is like the translator between the two sides, or a therapist helping them work out psychological problems in their relationship.\footnote{Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela A. Taming Intractable Conflicts: Mediation in the Hardest Cases. Herndon, VA: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2004. Kremenyuk, V.A., ed. International Negotiation: Analysis, Approaches, Issues. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.}

If both sides agree in advance to abide by a solution devised by a mediator, the process is called arbitration. In that case, both sides present their arguments to the arbitrator, who decides on a “fair” solution. For example, when Serbian and Bosnian negotiators could not agree on who should get the city of Brcko, they turned the issue over to arbitration rather than hold up the entire 1995 Dayton Agreement. Arbitration often uses a panel of three people, one chosen by each side unilaterally and a third on whom both sides agree. In 2002, such a panel (with the UN choosing the third member) delineated the Ethiopian-Eritrean border following a costly war.

Why should a state settle nonviolently a conflict that might be settled by military means? It must see that doing so would be in its better interest. To get national leaders to come to this conclusion one must create conditions to bring into play mutual interests that already exist or create new mutual interests.
In many situations, two conflicting parties could benefit from a solution other than war but lack the trust and communication channels to find such a solution. Neutral mediation with various degrees of involvement can bring about awareness of the two parties' common interests. For example, Egypt and Israel had a common interest in making peace in the late 1970s, but they also had a high level of mistrust. U.S. President Jimmy Carter invited the two heads of state to a private and relaxed setting—his Camp David retreat—where they could go through the issues without the restrictions of formal negotiations.

When heads of state do not see their common interests, ordinary citizens might try to raise awareness of such mutual interests on both sides. Travel and discussion by private individuals and groups toward this end has been called citizen diplomacy, and it occurs fairly regularly (though not very visibly) when conflicting states are stuck in a cycle of hostility. Sometimes a private trip takes on historical significance, as when the U.S. wrestling team visited Iran in 1998.

Conflicting parties (and mediators) can also work to restructure the terms of bargaining—in effect extending the possible solutions for one or both sides so that their interests overlap. Often a mediator can come up with a win-win solution. A win-win solution often trades off two disputed items on which the states place different priorities. Each side can then prevail on the issue that it considers important while yielding on an issue that does not care about as much.

Another way to create mutual interests is to break a conflict into pieces (fractionation) and start with those pieces in which a common interest and workable solution can be found. These may be largely symbolic confidence-building measures at first but can gather momentum as the process proceeds. A gradual increase in trust reduces the risks of nonviolent settlements relative to their costs and creates an expectation that the issues at stake can be resolved nonviolently.

A mediator who is in a position to apply positive or negative leverage to the two parties can use that leverage to influence each side's calculation of interests (again opening up new mutual interests). For instance, the promise of future U.S. aid to both Israel and Egypt was an important sweetener in bringing them to a substantive agreement at Camp David. Likewise, the reluctance of states in the Middle East to incur U.S. displeasure played a role in bringing parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict into peace talks in 1991–2000.

**War and Militarism**

Peace studies resonates with Benjamin Franklin's observation that "there never was a good war or a bad peace." Peace studies scholars argue that war is not just a natural expression of power, but one closely tied to militarism in (some) cultures. Militarism is the glorification of war, military force, and violence through TV, films, books, political speeches, toys, games,
Militarism in a culture, or the lack thereof, can influence foreign policy. In societies at war, children's psychological trauma contributes to intergroup conflicts decades later. Generations of Palestinians have grown up in a society permeated by violent conflict with Israel. This boy holds a Palestinian gunman's assault rifle during fighting in Bethlehem, 2001.
semester). This makes any draft proposal especially unpopular in public opinion. Furthermore, Congress would decide whether to include women or limit a new draft to men as was the case in the past.

**SCENARIO** Now imagine that along with continued instability in Iraq and Afghanistan, a new crisis emerges. North Korea makes preparations for an attack across the DMZ, and daily reports of large-scale incursions into the DMZ flood into American intelligence channels. Clearly, a major land force would be necessary to repel any North Korean invasion, especially if force is required to retake lost territory.

**CHOOSE YOUR POLICY** As president of the United States, do you support a new draft, which would include college students and possibly women? Facing the prospect of an extended conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Korea, a draft would provide much-needed personnel.

If a draft is not an option, how do you choose to confront possible shortages of personnel? Do you ask your allies to contribute troops to the war effort? Can you trust they will do so in sufficient numbers?

How do you balance the domestic pressures of public opinion with a need for more troops to meet security concerns?

Positive Peace

Just as war is seen in peace studies as a pervasive aspect of society as a whole, so can peace be reconceptualized in a broader way. A according to peace studies scholars, peace should be defined as more than just the absence of war. The mere absence of war does not guarantee that war will not recur. As Kant pointed out, each peace treaty ending a European great-power war in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries merely set the stage for the next war. Nor can the absence of great-power war in the Cold War be considered true peace: proxy wars killed millions of people while a relentless arms race wasted vast resources. Because realism assumes the normalcy of military conflicts, it recognizes only a negative kind of peace—the temporary absence of war.

By contrast, positive peace refers to a peace that resolves the underlying reasons for war—peace that is not just a cease-fire but a transformation of relationships. Under positive peace, not only do state armies stop fighting each other, they stop arming, stop forming death squads against internal protest, and reverse the economic exploitation and political oppression that scholars in peace studies believe are responsible for social conflicts that lead to war.

Proponents of this approach see broad social and economic issues—assumed by realists to be relatively unimportant—as inextricably linked with positive peace. Some scholars define poverty, hunger, and oppression as forms of violence—which they call structural violence because it is caused by the structure of social relations rather than by direct actions such as shooting people. Structural violence in this definition kills and harms many more people each year than do war and other forms of direct political violence. Positive peace is usually defined to include the elimination of structural violence because it is considered a source of conflict and war.

Advocates of positive peace also criticize militaristic culture. The “social construction of war”—a complex system of rules and relations that ultimately supports the existence of war—touches our lives in many ways: from children’s war toys to patriotic rituals in schools; from teenagers’ gender roles to military training for young men; from the taxes we pay to the sports we play. The positive peace approach seeks to change the whole system, not just one piece of it.

Positive peace encompasses a variety of approaches to social change. These include alternative mechanisms for conflict resolution to take the place of war; popular pressure on governments through peace movements and political activism; strengthening of norms against the use of violence (including the philosophy of nonviolence); the development of international or global identity transcending national, ethnic, and religious divisions; and egalitarian relations within societies in the economic, social, and political realms (including changes in gender roles). All these topics—not considered legitimate subjects of study by realists—are put on the table for discussion by peace studies.

Many people think that positive peace would depend on overcoming ethnic conflict, racism, xenophobia, and other sources of tension between groups with different cultures, languages, and religions—tensions that may contribute to war and violence (see “Ethnic Conflict” on pp. 000–000). One approach explores travel, tourism, cultural exchanges (concerts, films), and citizen diplomacy as means of overcoming intergroup conflicts.

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Some decades ago, a world language called Esperanto was created in hopes of encouraging worldwide communication and global identity; the results have been disappointing overall.

A nother approach to intergroup conflict is reform in the educational system. For example, Western European countries revised textbooks after World War II to remove nationalistic excesses and promote respect for neighboring countries (see p. 000). Japan’s failure to fully include in textbooks its own World War II misdeeds fuels continuing tension with Korea and China.

Positive peace is usually defined to include political equality and human rights as well. When a small ruling group or dictator holds political power, fewer checks on government violence operate than when democratic institutions exist (see pp. 160–163). And when avenues of legitimate political participation are open, citizens are less likely to turn to violence.

More controversial within peace studies is the question of whether positive peace requires that states’ authority be subordinated to a world government. The creation of a world government has long been debated by scholars and pursued by activists; many plans have been drawn up, though none has yet succeeded. Some scholars believe progress is being made (through the UN) toward the eventual emergence of a world government. Others think the idea is impractical or even undesirable (merely adding another layer of centralized control, when peace demands decentralization and freedom).

**Peace Movements**

Scholars in peace studies also study how to achieve the conditions for positive peace. Most peace studies scholars share a skepticism that state leaders left to themselves would ever achieve positive peace. Rather, they believe the practice of IR will change only as a result of pressures from individuals and groups.

The most commonly studied method of exerting such pressure is through peace movements—people taking to the streets in protest against war and militarism. Such protests occur in many, though not all, states involved in wars. In peace studies it is believed that people all over the world want peace more than governments do. As U.S. President Eisenhower once said, “People want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of their way and let them have it.”

In addition to mass demonstrations, common tactics of peace movements include getting antiwar messages into the media, participating in civil disobedience (nonviolently breaking laws and inviting arrest to show one’s beliefs), and occasionally organizing consumer boycotts. Favorite targets of peace movements include the draft, government buildings, taxes, and nuclear test sites. Like other interest groups, peace movements also participate in elections and lobbying (see pp. 152–154). And peace movements try to educate the public by spreading information about a war or arms race that the government may be suppressing or downplaying.

Peace activists often disagree on goals. In the U.S. peace movement since World War I, an internationalist wing has seen international organizations (today, the UN) as the best hope for peace and has supported wars against aggression. A pacifist wing has opposed all wars, distrusted international organizations whose members are state

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governments, and favored more radical social change to achieve positive peace. In other countries, peace movements vary greatly in their goals and character. In Japan, peace movements are extremely broad-based (enjoying wide popular support) and are pacifist in orientation (as a result of reaction against militarism before and during World War II). These divergent tendencies in peace movements come together at peak times in opposition to particular wars or arms races, as happened worldwide before the 2003 Iraq War. But beyond this reactive mode of politics, peace movements often have had trouble defining a long-term direction and agenda. Scholars of peace studies are interested in studying the successes and failures of peace movements to understand how popular influence on foreign policy can affect state decisions. (The 2003 demonstrations seemed to have little effect on U.S. policy.)

Nonviolence

The philosophies of nonviolence and pacifism are based on a unilateral commitment to refrain from using any violent forms of leverage in bargaining. No state today follows such a strategy; indeed, it is widely believed that in today's world, a state that adopted a nonviolent philosophy would risk exploitation or conquest. Pacifism nonetheless figures prominently in debates concerning the peaceful solution of conflicts and the achievement of positive peace. Many states contain substantial numbers of citizens, often organized into popular movements, who believe that only pacifism—an ironclad commitment to renounce violence—can change the nature of IR so as to avoid future wars. Japan has a sizable pacifist movement, and pacifists have historically formed the hard core of the peace movement in the United States and Western Europe as well.

The term pacifism has fallen into disfavor because it has been taken to imply passivity in the face of aggression (a charge leveled at U.S. isolationists in the 1930s). The more popular term, nonviolence, reflects especially the philosophy and practice of Mahatma Gandhi, who led India's struggle for independence from the British empire before 1948. Gandhi emphasized that nonviolence must be active in seeking to prevent violence, to resolve conflicts without violence, and especially to stand up against injustice enforced violently. Gandhi organized Indians to resist the British colonial occupation without resorting to violence, even when British troops shot down unarmed Indian protesters.

Thinking Critically

Proponents of nonviolence emphasize the practical side of nonviolence in addition to its morality. As a tactic in bargaining, it uses moral norms as leverage. Furthermore, reassuring the other side that one will not employ violent leverage makes it easier for the other side to put such options aside as well (by eliminating the security dilemma). As a tool of the powerless standing up against injustices by the powerful, nonviolence is often the most cost-effective approach—because the costs of violent resistance would be prohibitive.

In the United States, the philosophy of nonviolence spread widely in the 1960s in the civil rights movement, especially through the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. The dilemma of nonviolence is how to respond to violence. Gandhi believed that there was always a third alternative to passivity or response in kind. Nonviolence does not always succeed when faced with violence, but then neither does violent response. However, political leaders may believe they have done their duty if they respond violently without success, but not if they respond nonviolently without success. Within peace studies, scholars emphasize different aspects of peace and how to achieve it. These differences are deepened by the multidisciplinary nature of peace studies (sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, etc.).

Peace studies tends to be inclusive and tolerant, hoping that different scholars (and activists) can find a core of agreement on the meaning of peace. This tolerance can mask incompatibilities within peace studies, however. With this chapter and the previous one as theoretical background, the next four chapters will cover the major topics in international security studies, broadly defined. These chapters move through all four levels of analysis, from foreign policy processes (individual and domestic levels) through conflict and military force (domestic and interstate levels), to international law and organization (interstate and global levels).

Beginning at the bottom levels of analysis means turning now to what happens inside the state. How do states decide on actions? What kinds of bargaining go on within a state that is engaged in international bargaining? How do individual and group psychology affect the decision process, pulling it away from rationality? These questions, the domain of foreign policy studies, are the subject of Chapter 4.

THINKING CRITICALLY

1. U.S.-Canadian relations seem better explained by liberalism than realism. What other (one or more) interstate relationships have this quality? Discuss the contrasting tenets of realism and liberalism, showing how each applies to the relationship(s).
2. Would IR operate differently if most leaders of states were women? What would the differences be? What evidence (beyond gender stereotypes) supports your answer?
3. In what ways do the explanations of IR events change if women are considered primary players rather than peripheral ones? Which women, in which roles, would you consider important?
4. Deconstruct this book by identifying implicit themes, subjects not covered, and hidden biases.


5. Peace studies claims that internal characteristics of states (at the domestic level of analysis) strongly affect the propensity for war or potential for lasting peace. For one society, show how internal characteristics—social, economic, and/or cultural—influence that society’s external behavior.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The central claims of realism—regarding anarchy, state actors, rationality, and the utility of military force—have been challenged on a variety of grounds.
- Liberals dispute the realist notion that narrow self-interest is more rational than mutually beneficial cooperation.
- Neoliberalism argues that even in an anarchic system of autonomous rational states, cooperation can emerge through the building of norms, regimes, and institutions.
- Collective goods are benefits received by all members of a group regardless of their individual contribution. Shared norms and rules are important in getting members to pay for collective goods.
- International regimes—convergent expectations of state leaders about the rules for issue areas in IR—help provide stability in the absence of a world government.
- Hegemonic stability theory suggests that the holding of predominant power by one state lends stability to international relations and helps create regimes.
- In a collective security arrangement, a group of states agrees to respond together to aggression by any participating state; the UN and other IGOS perform this function.
- Feminist scholars of IR agree that gender is important in understanding IR but diverge into several strands regarding their conception of the role of gender.
- Difference feminists argue that real (not arbitrary) differences between men and women exist. Men think about social relations more often in terms of autonomy (as do realists), but women think in terms of connection.
- Difference feminists argue that men are more warlike on average than women. They believe that although individual women participants (such as state leaders) may not reflect this difference, the participation of large numbers of women would change the character of the international system, making it more peaceful.
- Liberal feminists disagree that women have substantially different capabilities or tendencies as participants in IR. They argue that women are equivalent to men in virtually all IR roles. As evidence, liberal feminists point to historical and present-day women leaders and women soldiers.
- Constructivists reject realist assumptions about state interests, tracing those interests in part to social interactions and norms.
- Postmodern critics reject the entire framework and language of realism, with its unitary state actors. Postmodernists argue that no simple categories can capture the multiple realities experienced by participants in IR.
- Postmodern feminists seek to uncover gender-related subtexts implicit in realist discourse, including sexual themes connected with the concept of power.
- Peace studies programs are interdisciplinary and seek to broaden the study of international security to include social and economic factors ignored by realism.
- Peace studies acknowledges a normative bias—that peace is good and war is bad—and a willingness to put theory into practice by participating in politics.
- Mediation and other forms of conflict resolution are alternative means of exerting leverage on participants in bargaining. Increasingly, these means are succeeding in settling conflicts without (or with no further) use of violence.
For scholars in peace studies, militarism in many cultures contributes to states' propensity to resort to force in international bargaining.

Positive peace implies not just the absence of war but addressing conditions that scholars in peace studies connect with violence—especially injustice and poverty.

Peace movements try to influence state foreign policies regarding military force; such movements are of great interest in peace studies.

Nonviolence—the renunciation of force—can be an effective means of leverage, especially for poor or oppressed people with few other means available.

**KEY TERMS**

- neoliberalism 101
- tit for tat 102
- collective goods problem 103
- free riders 103
- international regime 104
- hegemonic stability theory 105
- collective security 106
- difference feminism 110
- liberal feminism 110
- postmodern feminism 110
- gender gap 114
- constructivism 119
- postmodernism 121
- subtext 122
- normative bias 125
- conflict resolution 125
- mediation 125
- militarism 127
- positive peace 130
- structural violence 130
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**ONLINE PRACTICE TEST**

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The Arab-Israeli Conflict: What Are the New Obstacles to Peace?

by Mir Zohair Husain

Overview

Jews and Palestinian Arabs have fought over the same small geographical area for 100 years because the land has immense religious significance for both nations. Since the creation of Israel in 1948, the Arab-Israeli conflict has intensified and received worldwide attention. The central problem is Israel’s loosely defined borders and Israeli-occupied territories—the predominantly Palestinian West Bank that belonged to Jordan, the predominantly Palestinian Gaza Strip that belonged to Egypt, and the Golan Heights that belonged to Syria. Since 1993, Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements advanced Palestinian autonomy in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in fits and starts until President Bill Clinton’s effort to craft a final settlement failed at the July 2000 Camp David II Summit. The two parties could not agree on the major issues: Jerusalem (how to divide and share the city that is steeped in historical and religious significance), Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (how many were going to be dismantled and over what time period), and the return of Palestinian refugees to the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and some parts of Israel.

After the failure of Camp David II, the visit of Israel’s Likud party leader Ariel Sharon to the al-Aqsa Mosque—one of the most venerated mosques in Islam—on September 28, 2000, triggered the second Palestinian intifadah (uprising), also known as the al-Aqsa intifadah. The cycle of violence between suicide bombers and the Israeli military that followed Sharon’s visit and his landslide election victory in February 2001 contributed to more than 3,000 Palestinian deaths and 1,000 Israeli deaths.

The latest peace proposal, President George W. Bush’s “Roadmap to Peace,” is a three-year peace plan with a scheduled series of steps for both sides, culminating in an independent Palestinian state by 2005. But the refusal of the Sharon and Bush administrations to negotiate with President Yasser Arafat of the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and Israel’s building of a security fence to stave off Palestinian suicide bombers greatly increased the cycle of violence. However, Arafat’s death on November 11, 2004; the election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as President of the PNA on January 9, 2005; Sharon’s commitment to dismantle the Jewish settlements in Gaza comprising more than 8,000 Jewish settlers (along with dismantling four Jewish settlements in the West Bank) by late July 2005; the marked decrease in the cycle of Palestinian-Israeli violence; and the Bush administration’s new vigor in mediating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in its second four-year term have resurrected the Palestinian peace process. The big question is: Can the “new” obstacles to peace be overcome?

Argument 1

Palestinian Perspective

Today’s intifadah is the result of Palestinian hopelessness, humiliation, and anger in the face of Israeli occupation and militarism. The second Palestinian intifadah began in October 2000, characterized by suicide bombings and Israeli military actions.

[Early in the second intifadah], Palestinians increasingly demanded an armed response to the continuous Israeli killing and it was during this period that . . . suicide bombings began . . . against civilians and others . . . against military targets . . .

Israel’s wall in the disputed West Bank is an obstacle to peace. Palestinians and the international community in a UN resolution have criticized Israel’s building of the wall intended to seal off Israel from the West Bank.

The fence will put 14.5 percent of West Bank land on the Israeli side, the [UN] report said, adding, “This land, some of the most fertile in the West Bank, is currently the home for more than 274,000 Palestinians.”

The [UN] made a rough estimate that an additional 400,000 Palestinians would be adversely affected. In some instances, the barrier is going up between Palestinian villages and nearby farmland. In many small Palestinian communities, employees and students must cross the barrier to reach larger cities and towns where they work or study. (Greg Myre. “UN Estimates Israeli Barrier Will Disrupt Lives of 600,000.” The New York Times, November 12, 2003.)

A bias must overcome Palestinian extremists. In addition to addressing external threats to Palestinian interests, President Abbas must also overcome Palestinian extremists (such as the revolutionary Islamists of Hamas and Islamic Jihad) that oppose any peace settlements that entail major concessions by Palestinians. Similar to extremist groups in Israel, these groups will continue to be a major impediment to making progress on a negotiated compromise where both sides must make concessions.

I do not believe that these militant messianists can actually win in Iraq, Israel or Palestine, but they can prevent the majorities in each country from forging any new pragmatic, tolerant power-sharing arrangements—and in the case of Israelis and Palestinians, new borders. (Thomas L. Friedman. “Remapping the Middle East, Maybe.” The New York Times, January 9, 2005.)

Argument 2 Israeli Perspective

Israeli military reprisals are necessary responses to the Palestinian intifadah and terrorism. Regardless of how the intifadah began, Israelis must use military force to defend themselves from Palestinian attacks and to make clear that terrorism will not be tolerated.

The need for Israel to act directly against the terrorists became clear after the suicide bombing on March 27 in a hotel in Netanya. That bombing ended a bloody month in which 130 Israelis died at the hands of terrorists, a proportion of the Israeli population twice as large as that of Americans killed on September 11. These killings occurred despite Israeli compliance with the efforts of Anthony Zinni, the United States emissary, to achieve a cease-fire and in the context of the Palestinian Authority’s use of terror as an alternative to negotiations….

There are no illusions that there can be a purely military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the recent operation has already had a very real effect in disrupting terrorist plans and degrading terrorist capabilities. In human terms, that will translate into many Israeli lives saved. (Nitsan Alon. “Why Israel’s Mission Must Continue.” The New York Times, April 12, 2002.)

The security fence along the West Bank is to protect Israelis. Three years of Palestinian intifadah have prompted Israel to build a security fence. This barrier, which includes an electronic fence, concrete walls, trenches, and other obstacles, is intended to block Palestinian attackers, and not act as a political border.

[In response to the U.N. report that Israelis security fence would disrupt the lives of 600,000 Palestinians, Israeli Defense Ministry Spokeswoman Rachel Niedak-Ashkenazi counters.] “We do have one number: the 6.5 million Israelis will be better protected when the fence is finished….[We are also] building gates and taking other steps to minimize disruptions.” “To say that we are not taking humanitarian issues into account is misleading.” (Greg Myre. “UN Estimates Israeli Barrier Will Disrupt Lives of 600,000.” The New York Times, November 12, 2003.)

Sharon must overcome Israeli extremists. Similar to his counterpart’s situation in the PNA, Sharon is challenged by Israeli extremists largely over the issue of withdrawing Israeli settlers from their settlements in Gaza and the West Bank. Once considered the architect and guardian of the Israeli settlement movements, Sharon faces stiff opposition in delivering on Israeli withdrawal from the settlements.

In Israel the theocratic-nationalist settler movement has already begun to make its move. Last Thursday, four battalion commanders and 30 other officers, all residents of West Bank Jewish settlements, published a statement in the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot, declaring that they would not obey any orders to evacuate Jewish enclaves in Gaza or the West Bank. This is an open rebuke of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s cabinet-approved plan to withdraw all Israeli forces and settlements from Gaza and a small part of the West Bank. (Thomas L. Friedman. “Remapping the Middle East, Maybe.” The New York Times, January 9, 2005.)

Questions
1. Besides the controversial, enduring, and difficult issues of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the return of Palestinian refugees, which of these recent issues—the intifadah (perceived as a legitimate uprising by Palestinians and terrorism by Israelis), the Israeli security fence, or extremists on both sides—poses the greatest obstacle to a peace settlement? Why?
2. What role should the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations play in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict? Will the “Roadmap to Peace” bring about a peace settlement? Why or why not?

Selected Readings