Chapter 3
Alternatives to Power Politics

Liberal Theories

If realism offers mostly dominance solutions to the collective-goods problems of IR, several alternative theoretical approaches discussed in this chapter draw mostly on the reciprocity and identity principles (see Figure 3.1). Among other common elements, these approaches generally are more optimistic than realism about the prospects for peace.

The Waning of War

Although realists see the laws of power politics as relatively timeless and unchanging, liberal theorists generally see the rules of IR as slowly, incrementally evolving through time and potentially becoming more and more peaceful. This evolution results primarily from the gradual buildup of international organization and mutual cooperation (reciprocity) and secondarily from changes in norms and public opinion (identity). The main theories discussed in this chapter all hold that we are not doomed to a world of recurring war but can achieve a more peaceful world.

In recent years, a strong trend toward fewer wars has become evident. To many Americans, the world seems more war prone and violent than ever, because the country is at war on a scale not seen since Vietnam. Yet for the world as a whole, the current period is one of the least warlike ever, with fewer and smaller wars than in the past.

First consider the long-term trend. In the first half of the 20th century, world wars killed tens of millions and left whole continents in ruin. In the second half of that century, during the Cold War, proxy wars killed millions, and the world feared a nuclear war that could have wiped out our species. Now, in the early 21st

THE BIG PICTURE

Is realism realistic? Contrary to its predictions, much more cooperation than conflict occurs in IR, and cooperation is increasing year by year and decade by decade. Notwithstanding brutal conflicts in Iraq and Sudan, the world overall has become more and more peaceful.

Liberal theories of IR, following the philosopher Kant, explain this in two major ways. First, based on the reciprocity principle, states learn to cooperate and build international institutions to achieve mutual gains. Second, based on the identity principle, certain kinds of society or government type will make societies decide not to go to war. In common with this second liberal approach, social theories and gender theories explain IR outcomes at the domestic and individual levels of analysis.

To hear the authors of this book discuss this issue with an example from recent history, download the IR Talk podcast for Chapter 3 from www.internationalrelations.com.

century, wars like those in Iraq and Sudan kill hundreds of thousands. We fear terrorist attacks that could destroy a city, but not life on the planet. Generation by generation, the world has moved forward, unevenly but inexorably, from tens of millions killed, to millions, to hundreds of thousands. This is still a large number and the impacts of war are still catastrophic. Perhaps most important, if we could understand and sustain this trend, major wars might fade away altogether, though minor wars and terror attacks may continue to kill thousands of people.

Events in the post–Cold War era continue this long-term trend toward smaller wars. The late 1990s and early 21st century saw the termination of lingering Cold War–era conflicts such as in Angola, Northern Ireland, Guatemala, and southern Sudan (following South Africa and Mozambique earlier in the 1990s). Most of the wars that flared up after the Cold War ended, such as in Bosnia, Kosovo, Algeria, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, have also come to an end. The waning of war continues in recent years. Liberia, Ivory Coast, and Democratic Congo all established power-sharing governments and brought in international peacekeepers—following in the path of Sierra Leone (which in 2003 held democratic elections). In 2005, the Irish Republican Army finished permanently dismantling its weaponry. India and Pakistan began their first cease-fire in a decade, as did Burma’s government and its largest rebel militia. In Sri Lanka and Ivory Coast, cease-fires continued despite some lapses, and negotiations inched forward.

Today’s most serious conflicts consist mainly of skirmishing rather than all-out battles. The last battle between heavily armed forces on both sides (with, for example, artillery, tanks, and airplanes) was the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a short and one-sided affair. Aside from Iraq, the last interstate war, between Ethiopia and Eritrea, ended in 2000. The last great-power war (with great powers fighting each other) ended more than fifty years ago.

In 2006, wars in Darfur (Sudan), Iraq, and Afghanistan all worsened, a brief Israeli-Lebanese war left lasting wounds, and Sri Lanka resumed a civil war while formally retaining a cease-fire agreement—all suggesting a less peaceful year. Still, less visibly, progress
continued elsewhere. In Democratic Congo, where several million people died in the recent civil war, a shaky UN-monitored cease-fire held up, and citizens voted peacefully for a new constitution, and then for a president. In Uganda, a peace deal ended a long-standing and brutal rebellion. Nepal's civil war also entered a relatively stable cease-fire, with rebels putting down arms to join the political process.

Ten years ago, this textbook’s list of wars in progress (which appears on p. 000) showed 20 wars and 8 more just ending, in transitional cease-fires. Today the list is down to 12, and in the past year alone 3 wars dropped off it—Democratic Congo, Uganda, and Nepal. Similarly, in the early 1990s around a million people died in wars every year, but that rate has fallen by more than 80 percent.

Kant and Peace

What accounts for this positive trend toward peace in a world still feeling insecure and still violence prone in many ways and places? Liberal theories of IR try to explain how peace and cooperation are possible.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant 200 years ago gave three answers. The first, based on the reciprocity principle, was that states could develop the organizations and rules to facilitate cooperation, specifically by forming a world federation resembling today's United Nations. This answer forms the foundation of present-day liberal institutionalism, discussed shortly.

Kant's second answer, operating at a lower level of analysis, was that peace depends on the internal character of governments—specifically that republics, with a legislative branch that can hold the monarch in check, will be more peaceful than autocracies. This answer, along with Kant's related point that citizens of any country deserve hospitality in any other country, relies more on the identity principle. Like the social theories discussed later in this chapter, it explains states' preferences based on the social interactions within the state. A variation on Kant's answer, namely that democracies do not fight each other, is the basis of present democratic peace theory, discussed later in this chapter. (Kant himself distrusted democracies as subjecting policy to mob rule rather than rationality, a view influenced by witnessing the French Revolution.)

Kant’s third answer, that trade promotes peace, relies on the presumption that trade increases wealth, cooperation, and global well-being—all while making conflict less likely in the long-term because 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. Critics of the trade-brings-peace theory note that World War I followed a period of high economic interdependence.

Liberal Institutionalism

Now let us return to Kant’s first answer to the question of how peace can evolve, namely the ability of states to develop and follow mutually advantageous rules, with international

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institutions to monitor and enforce them. Liberal theories treat rational actors as capable of forgoing short-term individual interests in order to further the long-term well-being of a community to which they belong—and hence indirectly their own well-being. The core principle of reciprocity lies at the heart of this approach, because international institutions operate by reciprocal contributions and concessions of formally equal members (peers). Notably, in the most important trade institution, the World Trade Organization, decisions require consensus among all members, making them all equal in governance, and bases its rules on reciprocity between trading partners.

Kant argued 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 in liberal theories war and violence appear as irrational deviations that result from defective reasoning and that harm the (collective, long-term) interests of warring states.

The neoliberal approach differs from earlier liberal approaches in that it concedes to realism several important assumptions—among them, that states are unitary actors 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.6

Despite the many sources of conflict in IR, states cooperate most of the time. Neoliberal scholars 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.

In particular, reciprocity in IR 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), in which 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 Tariffs and Trade (GATT), function on this principle—states that

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defect on their obligations by increasing tariffs must suffer punishment by allowing other states to place tariffs on their goods.

Neoliberals argue that reciprocity can be an effective strategy for achieving cooperation in a situation of conflicting interests. If one side expresses willingness to cooperate and promises to reciprocate the other's cooperative and conflictual actions, the other side has great incentive to work out a cooperative bargain. And because reciprocity is relatively easy to interpret, the vow of future reciprocity often need not be stated explicitly. For example, in 1969 China's relations with the United States had been on ice for 20 years. A total U.S. economic embargo against China was holding back the latter's economic development. China's support of North Vietnam was costing many American lives. The two states were not on speaking terms. President Nixon (and his advisor Henry Kissinger) decided to try a signal to China in hopes of improving relations. Nixon slightly relaxed the U.S. trade embargo against China. Three days later, with no explicit connection to the U.S. move, China released three U.S. citizens whose boat had earlier drifted into Chinese waters. China reciprocated other U.S. initiatives in the following months, and in 1972 Nixon visited China in a spirit of rapprochement.

But side by side with the potential for eliciting cooperation, reciprocity contains a danger of runaway hostility. When two sides both reciprocate but never manage to put relations on a cooperative footing, the result can be a drawn-out, nasty, tit-for-tat exchange of punishments. This characterizes Israeli relations with Palestinian militants over the years, for instance. Arms races also reflect this negative side of reciprocity (see p.000).

Building on the reciprocity principle, many norms 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 collective-goods problems 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 affect the possibilities for overcoming dilemmas and achieving 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.

**International Regimes**

Achieving good outcomes is not simple, though. Because of the contradictory interpretations that parties to a conflict usually have, it is difficult to resolve 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.

An 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

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Reciprocity and the Prisoner’s Dilemma

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. 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, in which states deal with each other in repeated interactions. In that case, 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.\(^a\)

The authors of this book—along with several other scholars over a decade and with a grant from the National Science Foundation—collected data on international interactions to test the proposition that reciprocity helps induce cooperation in international relationships. We turned years of wire-service news stories into quantitative data measuring one actor’s cooperative or conflictual actions toward another through time. We statistically verified the widespread presence of reciprocity in the international system by correlating the time-lagged movements of each country up and down the scale. But we found no evidence that the strength of reciprocity had any effect on the emergence of long-term cooperation in a relationship.\(^b\) We concluded that reciprocity itself does not promote cooperation because it has both cooperative and conflictual potentials. The tit-for-tat strategy depends on a cooperative first move.


the same as that referring to the domestic governments of states, especially governments considered illegitimate, as in regime change.)

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.

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 seen as autonomous units maximizing their own interests in an anarchic context. Regimes do not play a role in issues in which 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).

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 in which 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). For realists in particular, regimes do not negate the effects of power; more often they codify and normalize existing power relations in accordance with the dominance principle. For example, the nuclear nonproliferation regime protects the status quo in which only a few states have nuclear weapons.

Because 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). Yet, 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.10 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 seriously consider 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. The international economic regimes adjusted somewhat and survived.

In part, the survival of regimes rests on their embedding 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.11

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Alternatives to Power Politics

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. Liberal institutionalism also places high value on international law, which receives its own discussion in Chapter 7.

The culmination of liberal institutionalism to date is the European Union (EU), which receives in-depth discussion in Chapter 10. After centuries of devastating wars, European states now enjoy a stable peace among themselves with strong international institutions to bind them.

Collective Security

The concept of collective security, which grows out of liberal institutionalism, refers to the formation of a broad alliance of most major actors in an international system for the purpose of jointly opposing aggression by any actor. Kant laid out the rationale for this approach. Because 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.

After the horrors of World War I, the 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 (deterrenting aggression) as well as economic and cultural ones—the Organization of American States (OAS), the Arab League, and the African Union.

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. Suppressing a determined aggressor can be very costly.

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. 262–264). 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.

Collective security worked in 1990–1991 to reverse Iraq’s conquest of Kuwait because the aggression 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 terri-

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12 Kant, Perpetual Peace (see footnote 3 in this chapter).
torial integrity that the Security Council had little trouble labeling it aggression and authorizing the use of force by a multinational coalition. The threat Iraq posed to the world’s oil supplies provided incentive for coalition members to contribute money or troops to solve the problem.

In 2002–2003, by contrast, 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 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.

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. 37). However, the U.S. forces found no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and ran into such trouble that U.S. voters in 2006 swept Republicans from Congress and demanded a change in U.S. war strategy. Public opinion around the world, especially in predominantly Muslim countries, unified against the war.

The concept of collective security has broadened in recent years. For example, failed states have very weak control of their territory, making them potential havens for drug trafficking, money laundering, and terrorist bases. Essentially, domestic politics look rather like international anarchy. In these cases, the international community has a duty to intervene in such states in order to restore law and order and thus provide collective security for the international system.14

The Democratic Peace

Kant argued that lasting peace would depend on states’ becoming republics, with legislatures to check the power of monarchs (or presidents) to make war. He thought that checks and balances in government would act as a brake on the use of military force—as compared to autocratic governments in which a single individual (or small ruling group) could make war without regard for the effect on the population.

Somewhat similarly, IR scholars have linked democracy with a kind of foreign policy fundamentally different from that of authoritarianism.15 One theory they considered was that democracies are generally more peaceful than authoritarian governments (fighting fewer, or smaller, wars). This turned out to be false. Democracies fight as many wars as do authoritarian states. Indeed, the three most war-prone states of the past two centuries (according to political scientists who count wars) were France, Russia, and Britain. Britain was a democracy throughout, France for part of the period, and Russia not at all.

What is true about democracies is that although they fight wars against authoritarian states, democracies almost never fight each other. No major historical cases contradict this generalization, which is known as the democratic peace. Why this is so is not entirely clear. As there have not been many democracies for very long, the generalization could be just a coincidence, though this seems unlikely. It may be that democracies do not tend to have severe conflicts with each other, as they tend to be capitalist states whose trade relations create strong interdependence (war would be costly because it would disrupt trade). Or, citizens of democratic societies (whose support is necessary for wars to be waged) may simply not see the citizens of other democracies as enemies. By contrast, authoritarian governments of other states can be seen as enemies.

Note that the peace among democracies gives empirical support to a long-standing liberal claim that, because it is rooted in the domestic level of analysis, contradicts realism’s claim that the most important explanations are at the interstate level.

Over the past two centuries, democracy has become more widespread as a form of government, and this trend is changing the nature of the foreign policy process worldwide. Many states do not yet have democratic governments (the most important of these is China). And existing democracies are imperfect in various ways—from political apathy in the United States and corruption in Japan to autocratic traditions in Russia. Nonetheless, the trend is toward democratization in most of the world’s regions.

In the past two decades the trend has accelerated in several ways. New democracies emerged in several (though not all) states of the old Soviet bloc. Military governments were replaced with democratically elected civilian ones throughout most of Latin America as well as in several African and Asian countries. South Africa, the last white-ruled African country, adopted majority rule in 1994. In several of these cases (for instance, in the Philippines in 1986), nonviolent popular movements ended long-standing dictatorships. Elsewhere (for instance, in Nicaragua) civil wars ended with internationally supervised democratic elections. In the late 1990s, long-standing dictatorships and military governments gave up power peacefully to democratic governments in Indonesia and Nigeria, both regional giants. In late 2004 and early 2005, pro-democracy forces won a string of victories in Ukraine, Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kyrgyzstan. In 2006 in Nepal, massive popular protests forced the king to reverse his seizure of absolute power and reinstate the parliament, leading Maoist rebels to join the political process as a party. However, movement in the other direction still occurs. Military governments took over Pakistan and Ivory Coast in 1999, an extraconstitutional seizure of power took place in Togo in 2005, and Russia’s government has constrained democracy in recent years while China’s communist party has maintained its iron grip on politics.

ELECTORAL UPSET

Upsurges of democratic movements throughout the world in recent years testify to the power of the idea of democracy. Because democracies rarely fight each other, worldwide democratization might lead to lasting peace. But democratization also brings surprises. In free elections in 2006, Palestinians fed up with a corrupt administration elected the militant and violent Islamic party Hamas, whose candidates here campaign with green crescents, a symbol of Islam.

We do not know where these trends toward democracy will lead, but because it is now conceivable that someday all or most of the world’s states will be democratically governed, wars may become less frequent. As Kant envisaged, an international community based on peaceful relations may emerge. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice seemed to come around to that way of thinking—in 2000 she rejected “the promotion of democracy,” yet by 2006 she called for “transformational diplomacy” that would spread democracy.

However, although mature democracies almost never fight each other, a period of transition to democracy may be more prone to war than either a stable democracy or a stable authoritarian government. Therefore the process of democratization does not necessarily bode well for peace in the short term. This theory gained support in early 2006 when Iraqi elections were followed by a rise in sectarian violence, and then Palestinian elections brought to power the militant faction Hamas, which rejects Israel’s right to exist.

A further caution is in order. The generalization about democracies almost never fighting each other is historically valid but not necessarily applicable in the future. By way of analogy, a generalization during the Cold War stated that communist governments never yield power peacefully. That generalization held up beautifully until suddenly a series of communist governments did just that around 1990. As the world has more democracies for a longer time, the generalization about their almost never fighting each other might not hold up.

The remainder of this chapter considers other theoretical approaches that contrast with realism. These approaches all broadly rely on the identity principle and broadly reject the terms of reference—issues, assumptions, and language—that realists use to discuss IR. They also all operate at the domestic and individual levels of analysis, similarly to democratic peace theory but in contrast to realism and liberal institutionalism.

Social Theories

Several distinct approaches in IR theory may be grouped together as social theories, meaning that they rely on social interaction to explain individuals’ and states’ preferences. These theories contrast with realism’s assumption of fixed, timeless preferences (states want more power).

Constructivism

Constructivism, a recently popular approach in IR, is best described as an approach rather than a theory. When stripped to its core, it says nothing about IR per se, but its lessons about the nature of norms, identity, and social interaction can provide 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. Constructivist research has many strands. One prominent line examines how states’ interests and identities are intertwined, as well as how those identities are

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shaped by interactions with other states. For example, why is the United States 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 United States no matter how many nuclear weapons it builds and no matter how deep disagreements about foreign policy become. Constructivist scholars would point out the 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. The 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 as well as the assumption that state interests exist independently of a context of interactions among states.20 Constructivists hold that these state identities are complex and 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.21 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, nonaligned 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 usually revolving around peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

Another field of constructivist research also relies heavily on international norms and their power to constrain state action. Although realists (and neoliberals) contend that states make decisions based on a logic of consequences ("What will happen to me if I behave a certain way?"), constructivist scholars note that there is a powerful logic of appropriateness ("How should I behave in this situation?").22 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 19th 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 interna-
tional community does not always respond effectively to humanitarian crises, it is no
longer acceptable to view only Christians as deserving protection.23 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 ar-
gued 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 ben-
efits, 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 technolog-
ical modernization of their militaries. Constructivists point out that the reason developing
states choose to spend their limited resources on such projects is their desire to be per-
ceived as “modern” by the international system. “Modern” states have science bureaucra-
cies and advanced militaries. Ironically, many states that build science bureaucracies have
few scientists while many states that build advanced militaries have few enemies.24 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 com-
munication and relative ease of transportation, many possibilities exist. Constructivists em-
phasize 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 non-
governmental organizations, such as the anti-apartheid movement encouraging the de-
velopment of a global norm of racial equality. Others show how international organizations
(such as the UN and NATO) can diffuse norms of what is appropriate and inappropriate
behavior. In each case, however, new ideas and norms, rather than power and self-interest,
drive state behavior.25 Research in the constructivist tradition has expanded rapidly in re-
cent years. Scholars have examined the role of the European Union in socializing elites in
new member states.26 Others have investigated how international organizations gain
authority through their expertise (e.g., the IMF on international financial issues) to make
decisions that run counter to what their member states desire.27 Finally, constructivist
scholars have begun to investigate how notions of identity and symbolism are important for
understanding terrorist movements and counterterrorism policy.28

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28 Leheny, David. Symbols, Strategies, and Choices for International Relations Scholarship after September
Postmodernism

Postmodernism 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).29 Postmodern critiques of realism thus center on analyzing realists’ words and arguments.30 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.

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, an arbitrary distinction 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.31 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.32

Omissions are an aspect of subtext, as when realist theories of IR omit women and gender, for example. 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 poor countries. 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 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.33

Marxism

Finally, and historically most important among social theories, Marxist approaches to IR hold that both IR and domestic politics arise from unequal relationships between economic classes. This emphasis on classes—implying that the domestic and economic attributes of societies shape the society’s external relations with other states—contrasts with the realist approach to IR with its separation of domestic and international politics. We will discuss Marxist theories of IR in Chapter 12 as they primarily concern the global divisions of North and South arising from the history of imperialism. Here we will show, briefly, how Marxist theories as social theories contrast with the realist paradigm.

Marxism is a branch of socialism, a theory that holds that the more powerful classes oppress and exploit the less powerful by denying them their fair share of the surplus they create. The oppressed classes try to gain power in order to seize more of the wealth for themselves. This process, called class struggle, is one way of looking at the political relationships between richer and poorer people, and ultimately between richer and poorer world regions.

Marxism includes both communism and other approaches. In the mid-19th century, Karl Marx emphasized labor as the source of economic surplus. At that time, the Industrial Revolution was accompanied by particular hardship among industrial workers (including

Chapter 3  Alternatives to Power Politics

children) in Europe. Marxists still believe that the surplus created by labor should be recaptured by workers through political struggle. Today, Marxism is most influential in countries of the global South, where capital is scarce and labor conditions are wretched.

One important class in revolutions during the past century (contrary to Marx's expectations) has been peasants. Marxists traditionally consider peasants backward, ignorant, individualistic, and politically passive as compared to the better-educated and class-conscious proletariat. But in practice, the successful third world revolutions have been peasant rebellions (often led by Marxists talking about the proletariat). The largest was the Chinese revolution in the 1930s and 1940s.

Marx's theories of class struggle were oriented toward domestic society in the industrializing countries of his time, not toward poor countries or international relations. Traditional Marxists looked to the advanced industrialized countries for revolution and socialism, which would grow out of capitalism. In their view, the third world would have to develop through its own stages of accumulation from feudalism to capitalism before taking the revolutionary step to socialism. What actually happened was the opposite. Proletarian workers in industrialized countries enjoyed rising standards of living and did not make revolutions. Meanwhile, in the backward third world countries, oppressed workers and peasants staged a series of revolutions, successful and failed.

Why did revolutions occur in backward rather than advanced countries? The answer largely shapes how one sees North-South relations today. Marxists have mostly (but not exclusively) followed a line of argument developed by V. I. Lenin, founder of the Soviet Union, before the Russian Revolution of 1917. Russia was then a relatively backward state, as the global South is today, and most Marxists considered a revolution there unlikely (looking instead to Germany).

Lenin's theory of imperialism argued that European capitalists were investing in colonies where they could earn big profits and then using part of these to buy off the working class at home. But Lenin saw that after the scramble for colonies in the 1890s, few areas of the world remained to be colonized. Imperialist expansion could occur only at the expense of other imperialist states, leading to inter-imperialist competition and wars such as World War I. Seizing on Russia's weakness during that war, Lenin led the first successful communist revolution there in 1917.

Lenin's general idea still shapes a major approach to North-South relations—the idea that industrialized states exploit poor countries (through both formal and informal colonization) and buy off their own working classes with the profits. Through this globalization of class relations, world accumulation concentrates surplus toward the rich parts of the world and away from the poor ones. Revolutions, then, would be expected in poor regions.

Many third world revolutionaries sought to break loose from exploitation by the European colonizers. After European colonization ended, the United States as the world's richest country (with large investments in the global South and a global military presence) became the target of revolutionaries agitating against exploitation in poor countries. In a number of countries, imperialists were thrown out (often violently, sometimes not) and revolutionary nationalists took power.

One of the most important such revolutions was in China, where Mao Zedong's communists took power in 1949 on a Leninist platform adapted to the largely peasant-based

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36 Lenin, V. I. Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism. 1916.
movement they led. Mao declared that “China has stood up”—on its own feet, throwing off foreign domination and foreign exploitation. In India at the same time, the movement led by Gandhi used a different means (nonviolence) to achieve similar ends—national independence from colonialism. Indonesia threw out the Dutch. Lebanon threw out the French. Cuba threw out the Americans. This pattern was repeated, with variations, in dozens of countries.

According to the revolutionaries in these countries, exploitation of third world countries by rich countries takes away the economic surplus of the global South and concentrates the accumulation of wealth toward the rich parts of the world. By breaking free of such exploitation, third world states can then retain their own surplus and begin to accumulate their own wealth. Eventually they can generate their own self-sustaining cycles of accumulation and lift themselves out of poverty.37 Such an approach has not worked well. A policy of self-reliance does not foster growth (see p. 313). And within a single poor country, trade-offs arise between concentrating or distributing wealth. For former colonies, the realities of economic development after independence have been complex. These realities are discussed in Chapter 12.

Not all Marxist approaches favor a policy of self-reliance after revolution. Leon Trotsky, a Russian revolutionary, believed that after the 1917 revolution Russia would never be able to build socialism alone and should make its top priority the spreading of revolution to other countries to build a worldwide alliance. Trotsky’s archrival Stalin wanted to build “socialism in one country,” and he prevailed (and had Trotsky killed).38 Most third world revolutions since then, including China’s, have had a strongly nationalist flavor.

Marxist theories in IR entered a low-visibility phase after the collapse of the Soviet Union and China’s turn toward capitalism—events that seemed to discredit Marxist theories. However, in the past few years Marxists and former Marxists have taken power in a number of Latin American countries. Venezuela and Bolivia, as a result, have become active allies of Cuba, forming an anti-American coalition. In Nicaragua, the former communist leader whom U.S.-organized rebels fought in the 1980s won election as president in 2006. These events, along with China’s continuing formal adherence to Marxism, suggest that Marxist theories of IR have ongoing importance in the post–Cold War era.

Peace Studies

Peace studies, like other identity-based approaches to IR, challenges fundamental concepts behind both realism and neoliberalism.39 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, economic inequality, gender relations, cross-cultural understanding, and 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).40 Another way in which peace studies seeks to broaden the focus of inquiry is to reject the supposed objectivity of traditional (realist and liberal) approaches. Most scholars of peace studies think that a good way to gain knowledge is to participate in action—not just to observe objectively. This lack of objectivity has been criticized as normative bias because scholars impose their personal norms and values on the subject. Scholars in peace studies respond, however, that realism itself has normative biases and makes policy prescriptions.

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.41 Most conflict resolution uses a third party whose role is mediation between two conflicting parties.42 Most of today’s international conflicts have one or more mediating parties working regularly to resolve the conflict short of violence. No hard-and-fast rule states what kinds of third parties mediate what kinds of conflicts. 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.43


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. 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. Travel and discussion by private individuals and groups can serve as citizen diplomacy, to ease tensions as well.

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.

Conflicting parties (and mediators) can also use confidence-building measures to gradually increase trust. By contrast, linkage lumps together diverse issues so that compromises on one can be traded off against another in a grand deal. This was the case, for instance, in the Yalta negotiations of 1945 among the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union. On the table simultaneously were such matters as the terms of occupation of Germany, the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe, the strategy for defeating Japan, and the creation of the United Nations.

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, sports, and other such avenues. Militarism also refers to the structuring of society around war—for example, the dominant role of a military-industrial complex in a national economy, or the dominance of national security issues in domestic politics. Militarism may underlie the propensity of political leaders to use military force. Historically, militarism has had a profound influence on the evolution of societies. War has often been glorified as a “manly” enterprise that ennobles the human spirit (especially before World War I, which changed that perspective). Not only evil acts but also exemplary acts of humanity are brought forth by war—sacrifice, honor, courage, altruism on behalf of loved ones, and bonding with a community larger than oneself.

Examples of less militarized cultures show that realism’s emphasis on military force is not universal or necessary. Costa Rica has had no army for 50 years (just lightly armed forces), even during the 1980s when wars occurred in neighboring Nicaragua and Panama. Japanese culture since World War II has developed strong norms against war and violence.

Anthropologists have tried to connect the domestic characteristics of hunter-gatherer societies with their external propensity to engage in warfare. Some evidence shows that war occurs more frequently in societies with internal (especially gender) inequalities, with harsh child-rearing practices, and with fathers who are absent from child rearing. By contrast, relatively peaceful societies are more likely to have open decision-making processes, relative gender equality, and permissive and affectionate child rearing.\textsuperscript{48} But all these societal attributes could as well be effects of war as causes. And because all kinds of society seem to have the potential for warfare under some conditions (see Chapter 5), distinctions such as “warlike” are only relative.

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.\textsuperscript{49} Because realism assumes the normalcy of military conflicts, it recognizes only a negative kind of peace—the temporary absence of war. By contrast, \textit{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 \textit{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.


POLICY PERSPECTIVES

President of the United States, George W. Bush

PROBLEM  How do you balance security needs against domestic political concerns?

BACKGROUND  Imagine that you are the president of the United States. The fight in the war on terror has taken a toll on U.S. armed forces. In 2006, more than 140,000 troops were deployed in Iraq, with thousands more placed in Afghanistan. More than 25 percent of reservists were already deployed, and upward of 25 percent of all military personnel deployed have done two tours of duty. Military recruitment had slowed dramatically despite increased financial incentives, and the army has turned to recruiting high school dropouts to meet recruitment goals. These factors combined to stretch U.S. military forces thin.

A continued threat to the United States is North Korea, which maintains an army of an estimated 700,000 troops within 90 miles of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea and in 2006 conducted a nuclear weapons test. North Korean reserve forces number more than 7 million troops. The nearly 100,000 U.S. troops presently in the East Asia/Pacific region could offer staunch resistance to an initial North Korean attack, but more troops would be needed in an extended war.

DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS  Since the 2004 presidential election campaign, the issue of the draft has received attention. Many military advisors suggest that a draft is not a solution to a short-term problem, because it would take six months from a draft order until the first draftees reported to training. Moreover, career military officers prefer the current all-volunteer force, in which all personnel choose to enter. Still, in the words of one army colonel, “If the president decided we needed to go somewhere other than Iraq, it doesn’t take a mental giant to figure out we don’t have the people to do that.”

Military conscription (the draft) ended in the United States in 1973, as the Vietnam War wound down. Congress then reformed the draft’s deferment system to eliminate the “higher education shelter,” meaning a new draft would include college students (who could finish their current 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 prepares 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 that 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 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).

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.

The creation of a world government has long been debated by scholars and pursued by activists. 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).

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. As U.S. president Dwight 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.”

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 governments, and

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favored more radical social change to achieve positive peace. 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.

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. 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.

Proponents of nonviolence emphasize the practical side of nonviolence in addition to its morality. 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.).

**Gender Theories**

Scholarship on gender 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 gendered arguments.

**Why Gender Matters**

Gender 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

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war and international security. Feminist scholarship in various disciplines seeks to uncover hidden assumptions about gender in how we study a subject. What scholars traditionally claim to be universal often turns out to be true only of males. Some feminist IR scholars argue 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 critique is somewhat complex. Because the vast majority of heads of state, diplomats, and 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. Some feel that women scholars tend to be more interested in these roles and effects than are their male colleagues. Yet when a survey in 2005 listed the 25 most influential IR scholars, all 25 were male. In a 2007 update, two women made the list, near the bottom.\textsuperscript{58}

Beyond revealing the hidden assumptions about gender in a field of scholarship, feminist scholars 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.

Like realists (see p. 56), gender theorists follow a long line of tradition.\textsuperscript{59} Not long before Thucydides, the ancient Greek woman poet Sappho wrote love poems to women on the island of Lesbos. Just before Machiavelli, the Italian-born writer Christine de Pisan praised women’s abilities to make peace. A century after Hobbes, Mary Wollstonecraft in Britain argued for equal rights for women. And a century before Morgenthau founded American realism, the American Susan B. Anthony worked tirelessly for pacifism, abolitionism, and suffragism.


\textsuperscript{59} Thanks to Francine D’Amico for these comparisons.
Beyond a basic agreement that gender is important, there is no such thing as “the 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 most 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.60 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 important and fixed, and liberal feminists consider those differences trivial, postmodern feminists find them important but arbitrary and flexible.

**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. 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.61 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.

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In moral reasoning, according to this theory, boys tend to apply abstract rules and stress individual rights, 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 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. (The empirical evidence in psychological research for these theorized gender differences is mixed at best.)

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 feminist scholars 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 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.62

Feminist scholars emphasize the importance of gender roles in IR, especially the traditional distinction between males in the political-military roles and females in the domestic-family roles. Here, a UN soldier in Sarajevo provides cover as a Bosnian citizen runs along “sniper’s alley,” 1994.

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Neoliberalism’s conception of cooperation as rule-based interactions among autonomous actors also reflects masculinist assumptions.

**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 feminist scholars 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 feminist scholars 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.

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and 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.65

Both biologically and anthropologically, no firm evidence connects women’s caregiving functions (pregnancy and nursing) with any particular kinds of behavior such as reconciliation or nonviolence—although 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 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.66 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 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).67 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 that women are about 10 percentage points lower than men on average in their support for military actions. This gender gap shrinks, however, when broad consensus on a military action exists, 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.68 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

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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 feminist scholars draw on both difference feminists’ 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 to the UN General Assembly were 80 percent male overall, and the heads of those delegations were 97 percent male. The U.S. military, with one of the highest proportions of women anywhere in the world or in history, is still 85 percent male. 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. Liberal feminists think that women have the same capabilities as men, so the inclusion of women in tra-

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Additional 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 for 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 (see Table 3.1). Some have even suggested that women in power tend to be more warlike to compensate for being females in traditionally male roles. Overall, women state leaders, like men, seem capable of leading in war or in peace as circumstances demand.71 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 (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.

TABLE 3.1
Notable Women State Leaders of Recent Decades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Record in Office</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela Merkel</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Only current woman leader of a great power; put limits on German troops with NATO forces in Afghanistan</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Thatcher</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>First woman to lead a great power in a century; went to war to recover Falkland Island from Argentina</td>
<td>1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indira Gandhi</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Led war against Pakistan</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golda Meir</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Led war against Egypt and Syria</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benazir Bhutto</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Struggled to control own military</td>
<td>late 1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corazon Aquino</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Struggled to control own military</td>
<td>late 1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tansu Çiller</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Led a harsh war to suppress Kurdish rebels</td>
<td>mid-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violetta Chamorro</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Kept the peace between factions after civil war</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandrika Kumaratunga</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>With her mother the prime minister, tried to make peace with separatists, then returned to war after one term</td>
<td>1990s and since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megawati Sukarnoputri</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Struggled to keep country calm; lost re-election</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Other states, such as Finland, Norway, and Iceland, have had women leaders when war and peace were not major political issues in those countries.

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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 98–99 percent male until 1992 (but dropped to 84 percent male in 2007). Women have never chaired the key foreign policy committees (Armed Services and Foreign Relations/International Relations) in the Senate or House—although Rep. Nancy Pelosi became the first woman Speaker of the House, third in line to the presidency, in 2007.

Liberal feminists also believe that women soldiers, like women politicians, have a range of skills and abilities comparable to men’s. Again, the main effect of including more women would be to improve the overall quality of military forces.72 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, including logistical and medical support, 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 when 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 relatively few cases exist 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 15th 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.) Women have often 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 Eritrea and Ethiopia’s trench warfare in the late 1990s.

In recent years, U.S. women soldiers have found themselves in combat (today’s mobile tactics and fluid front lines make it hard to separate combat from support roles). During the 1991 Gulf War, tens of thousands of U.S. women served, 13 were killed, and 2 were captured as prisoners of war. 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 types of airplanes and helicopters, and one woman was in the first group of U.S. POWs captured early in the war. During the subsequent years of war in Iraq, U.S. women military police have acquitted themselves well in numerous firefight. All these cases suggest that (at least some) women are able to hold their own in combat.

The main reason that military forces exclude women from combat seems to be 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. 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 effect 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. 284).

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.

**Difference Feminism versus Liberal Feminism?**

The arguments of difference feminists 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.

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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 3.2). 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 (advisors, 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 dif-

![Overlapping Bell Curves](image-url)
Women 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.

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.

**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. 286–287) 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.

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78 Elshtain, Women and War (see footnote 77 in this chapter).
Postmodern feminists have tried to deconstruct the language of realism, especially when 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, D.C., 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.79 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.”80 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.81 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.82 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.

All three strands of feminist theories provide explanations that often differ from both realist and liberal theories. In the case of response to aggression, 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. Before the 1991 Gulf War, President George H. W. 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.”

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.

CHAPTER REVIEW

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.
- Reciprocity can be an effective strategy for reaching cooperation in ongoing relationships but carries a danger of turning into runaway hostility or arms races.
- 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.
- Democracies have historically fought as many wars as authoritarian states, but democracies have almost never fought wars against other democracies. This is called the democratic peace.
- 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.
- Marxists view international relations, including global North-South relations, in terms of a struggle between economic classes (especially workers and owners) that have different roles in society and different access to power.
- Peace studies programs are interdisciplinary and seek to broaden the study of international security to include social and economic factors ignored by realism.
- For scholars in peace studies, militarism in many cultures contributes to states’ propensity to resort to force in international bargaining.
- Peace movements try to influence state foreign policies regarding military force; such movements are of great interest in peace studies.
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 make the international system 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.

Postmodern feminists seek to uncover gender-related subtexts implicit in realist discourse, including sexual themes connected with the concept of power.

**KEY TERMS**

- neoliberal
- international regime
- collective security
- democratic peace
- constructivism
- postmodernism
- subtext
- economic classes
- Lenin’s theory of
- imperialism
- normative bias
- conflict resolution
- mediation
- militarism
- positive peace
- structural violence
- world government
- peace movements
- nonviolence/pacifism
- difference feminism
- liberal feminism
- postmodern feminism
- gender gap

**CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. U.S.-Canadian relations seem better explained by liberal institutionalism than by realism. What other (one or more) interstate relationships have this quality? Show how the contrasting tenets of realism and liberal institutionalism each applies to the relationship(s).
2. Deconstruct this book by identifying implicit themes, subjects not covered, and hidden biases.

3. 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.

4. Would IR operate differently if most leaders of states were women? What would the differences be? What evidence (beyond gender stereotypes) supports your answer?

5. 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?

**BACK TO THE BIG PICTURE**

To hear a discussion of the “big picture” for this chapter, raised on p. xx, along with an example from recent history, consult the “IR Talk” podcast for Chapter 3 at www.internationalrelations.com

**LET’S DEBATE THE ISSUE**

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

**Overview** Can the new obstacles to peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict be overcome? 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. Since 1993, Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements advanced Palestinian autonomy in parts of the West Bank and the 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, which is steeped in historical and religious significance), Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (how many were going to be dismantled and over what time period), and the return of Palestinian refugees to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and some parts of Israel.

Since the failure of those negotiations, violence has continued in Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. The election of the Islamic party Hamas, continued attacks on civilians in all areas, and the construction of a fence separating Israeli- and Palestinian-controlled lands have all continued the cycle of violence. Yet some positive moves have coincided with this violence: the withdrawal of Israeli settlements from Gaza and attempts by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas to control Hamas. What obstacles remain to be overcome?
Argument 1  Palestinian Perspective

Today’s intifada is the result of Palestinian hopelessness, humiliation, and anger in the face of Israeli occupation and militarism. Far more casualties continue to befall Palestinians, who feel helpless to struggle for their rights under a stronger military force of Israel.

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.

Abbas must overcome Palestinian extremists. In addition to addressing external threats to Palestinian interests, President Abbas must also overcome Palestinian extremists (such as the militant groups 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 in which both sides must make concessions.

Argument 2  Israeli Perspective

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

The security fence along the West Bank is to protect Israelis. Three years of Palestinian intifada 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.

Olmert must overcome Israeli extremists. Similar to his counterpart’s situation in the PNA, Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert is challenged by Israeli extremists largely over the issue of withdrawing Israeli settlers from their settlements in the West Bank.

Questions

- Besides the controversial, enduring, and difficult issues of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the return of Palestinian refugees, which of the following recent issues—the intifada (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?

- What role should the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations play in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict? Will peace require external support? Why or why not?

With contributions from Mir Zohair Husain.