

# The Framework for Scientific Investigations Based on Evolution in International Relations

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## Perspective

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## ABOUT THE STUDY

Interactions between sovereign states are referred to as International Relations (IR). International studies or international affairs, is the scientific study of these interactions. It encompasses all activities between states, including war, diplomacy, trade, and foreign policy, as well as relations with and among other international actors, including Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs), international legal bodies, and Multinational Corporations (MNCs). Within IR, there are several schools of thought, the most prominent of which are realism, liberalism, and constructivism. International relations, along with comparative politics and political theory are widely regarded as a major sub discipline of political science. However, frequently draw heavily from other disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, geography, law, philosophy, sociology, and history.

While international politics has been studied since antiquity, international relations did not become a distinct field until 1919, when Aberystwyth University in the United Kingdom offered it as an undergraduate major for the first time. Following WWII, international relations grew in importance and scholarship, particularly in North America and Western Europe, in response to Cold War geostrategic concerns. The fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent rise of globalization in the late twentieth century foreshadowed new theories and assessments of the rapidly changing international system.

### **International relations theory**

There are numerous theories in international relations that attempt to explain how states operate within the international system. These can be broadly classified into three major strands: realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

**Realism:** The realist framework of international relations is based on the fundamental assumption that the international state system is anarchic, with no overarching power limiting sovereign states' behavior. As a result, states are constantly engaged in a power struggle in which they seek to improve their own military capabilities, economic power, and diplomacy in comparison to other states in order to protect their political system, citizens, and vital interests. Furthermore, the realist framework assumes that states act as unitary, rational actors, with central decision makers in the state apparatus ultimately responsible for the majority of the state's foreign policy decisions. The realist framework has traditionally been associated with power-politics analysis, and has been used to examine conflicts between states in the early European state-system; the causes of the first and second world wars; and the behavior of the United States and the Soviet Union during the cold war. In situations like these, the realist framework provides valuable interpretative insights into how states' military and economic power struggles lead to larger armed conflicts.

**Liberalism:** Unlike realism, the liberal framework emphasizes that states, while sovereign, do not exist in a purely anarchical system. Liberal theory, on the other hand, assumes that states are institutionally constrained by the power of international organizations and mutually dependent on one another *via* economic and diplomatic ties. Institutions such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the international court of justice are thought to have gained power and influence over time to shape individual states' foreign policies. Furthermore, the existence of a globalized world economy renders perpetual military power struggle irrational, as states rely on participation in the global trade system to ensure their own survival. As a result, the liberal framework emphasizes state cooperation as a fundamental component of the international system. States are viewed as pluralistic arenas in which interest groups, non-governmental organizations, and economic actors shape the formulation of foreign policy. The liberal framework is associated with an examination of the post-World War II globalized world. Increased political cooperation through organizations such as the UN, as well as economic cooperation through institutions such as the world trade organization, the world bank, and the international monetary fund, was thought to have rendered the realist analysis of power and conflict insufficient in explaining how the international system works.

**Regime theory:** Regime theory is a branch of liberal theory that contends that international institutions or regimes influence the behavior of states. It assumes that cooperation is possible in the anarchic system of states, and regimes are, by definition, examples of international cooperation.

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While realism predicts that conflict will be the norm in international relations, regime theorists argue that cooperation exists in the face of anarchy. Among other things, they frequently mention trade cooperation, human rights, and collective security. These instances of cooperation are referred to as regimes. Regimes are defined as "principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area" by Stephen Krasner, who defines regimes as principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area.

However, not all approaches to regime theory are liberal or neoliberal; realist scholars such as Joseph Grieco have developed hybrid theories that take a realist-based approach to this fundamentally liberal theory.