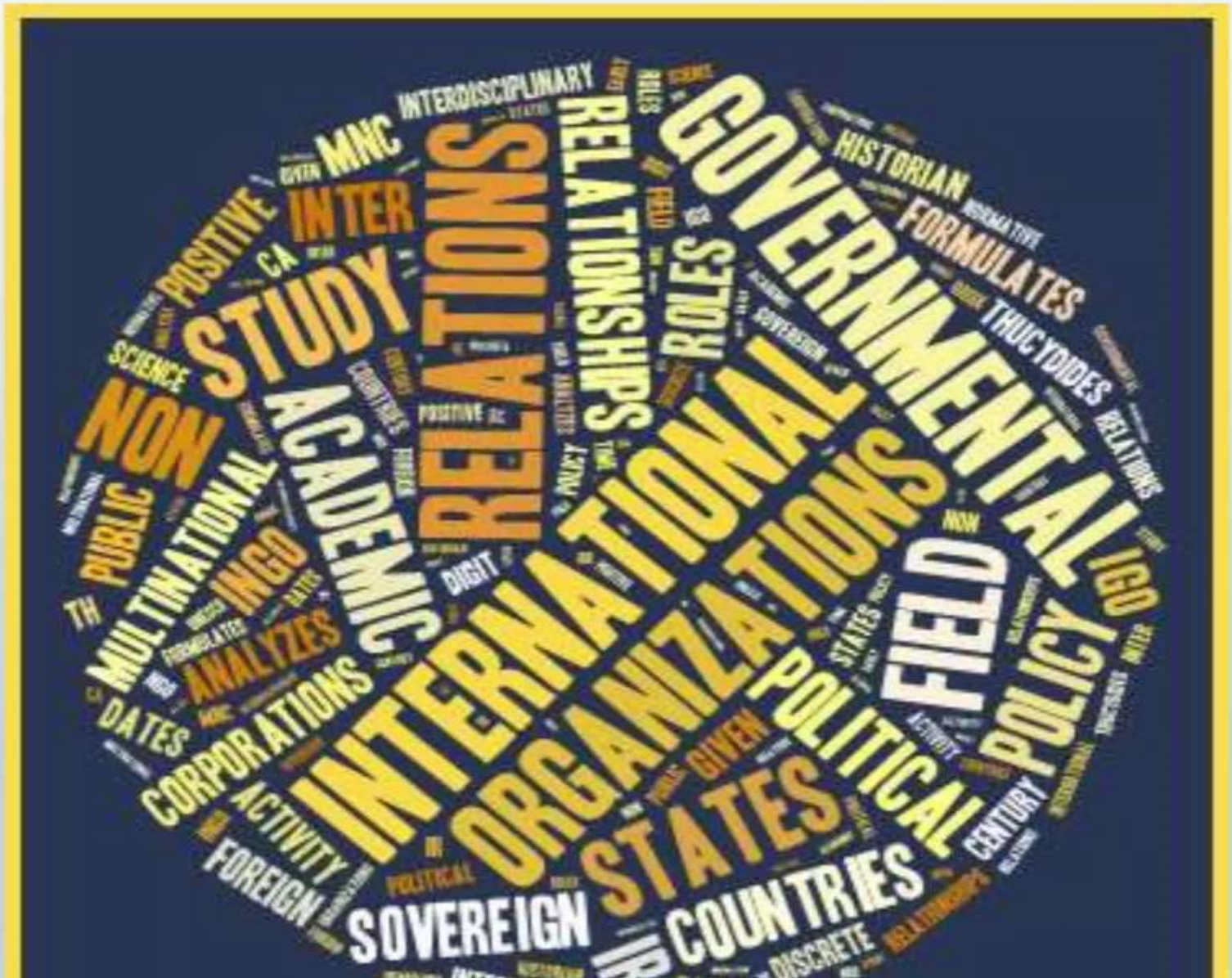
Introduction to international relations

What is international relations?



What can i become if i study International relations?

International Relations & Daily Life

Assumptions:

- The field of I.R concerns the relationships among the world's government
- I.R portrayed as a distant and abstract ritual conducted by a small group of people such as presidents, ministers, generals, diplomats

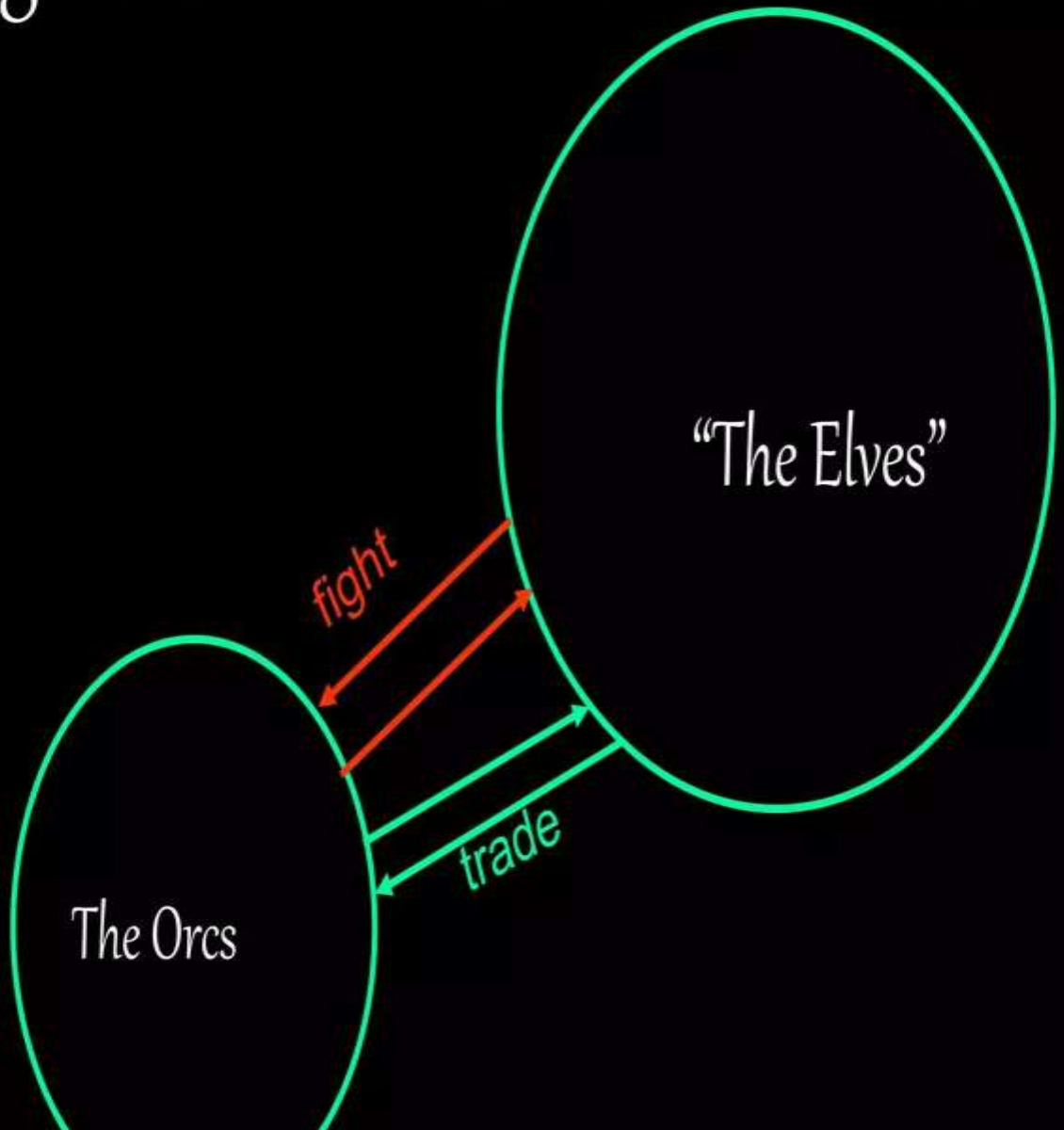
Questions:

Are the choices we make in our daily lives ultimately affect the world we live in?

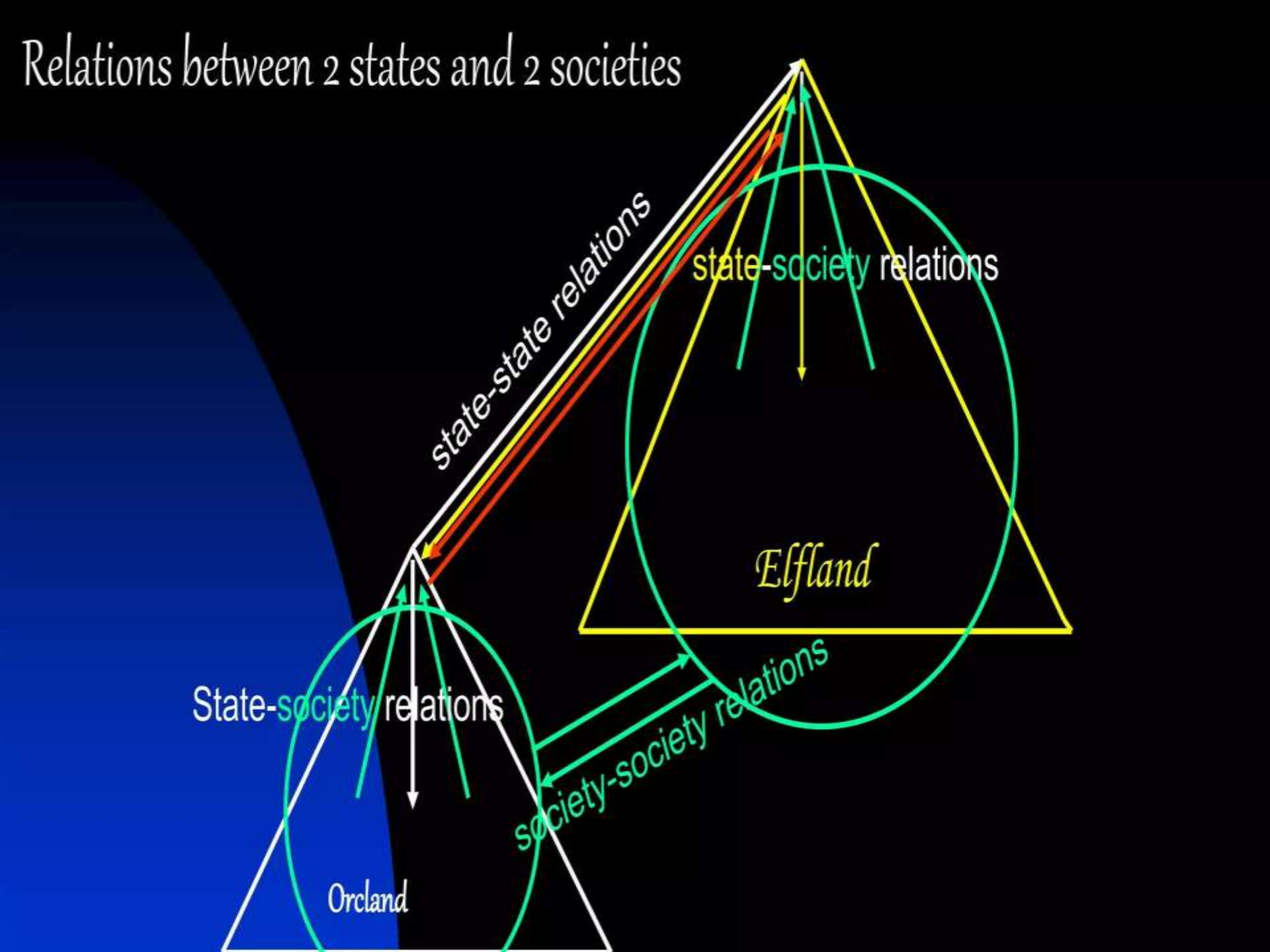
Studying International Relations

- What is the **subject matters**?
- Relations between **whom**?
- Relations concerning **what**?

Imagine relations between two tribes



Relations between 2 states and 2 societies



The sphere of I.R includes 4 sets of relations

1. Relations between states: war, alliances, treaties, diplomacy, etc.
2. **Relations between societies**: movement of people, goods, information, technology, money; ethnic, cultural (including religious), political ties
3. State-society relations within each countries: political systems and political processes as they affect the country's relations with others

Core principles of I.R (goldstein & Peevehouse)

- I.R revolves around one ***key problem***: How can a group –such as two or more countries- serve its ***collective*** interests when doing so requires its members to forgo their ***individual*** interests?
- **Collective goods problems: the problem of how to provide something that benefits all members of a group regardless of what each member contributes to it**
- **Collective goods problems -> collective action, free riding, burden sharing, tragedy of commons, prisoner dilemma**

Three basic principles

- **Dominance**
- **Reciprocity**
- **identity**

Dominance

- Solves the collective goods problem by establishing a power hierarchy in which those at the top control those below
  - Status hierarchy
    - Symbolic acts of submission and dominance reinforce the hierarchy.
    - Hegemon
- The advantage of the dominance solution
  - Forces members of a group to contribute to the common good
  - Minimizes open conflict within the group
- Disadvantage of the dominance solution
  - Stability comes at a cost of constant oppression of, and resentment by, the lower-ranking members of the status hierarchy.
  - Conflicts over position can sometimes harm the group's stability and well-being.

Reciprocity

- Solves the collective goods problem by rewarding behavior that contributes to the group and punishing behavior that pursues self-interest at the cost of the group
  - Easy to understand and can be "enforced" without any central authority
  - Positive and negative reciprocity
  - Disadvantage: It can lead to a downward spiral as each side punishes what it believes to be the negative acts of the other.
    - Generally people overestimate their own good intentions and underestimate those of opponents or rivals.

Identity

- Identity principle does not rely on self-interest.
- Members of an identity community care about the interests of others in the community enough to sacrifice their own interests to benefit others.
  - Family, extended family, kinship group roots, clan, nation, religious and ethnic groups
- In IR, identity communities play important roles in overcoming difficult collective goods problems; while at times identity construction can intensify the collective goods problem
  - Nonstate actors also rely on identity politics.

TABLE 1.1 Core Principles for Solving Collective Goods Problems

Principle	Advantages	Drawbacks
Dominance	Order, Stability, Predictability	Oppression, Resentment
Reciprocity	Incentives for mutual cooperation	Downward Spirals; Complex Accounting
Identity	Sacrifice for Group, Redefine Interests	Demonizing an out-group

Issues in International Relations

Growth of issues, concerns, and relations which transcend state borders

--Economic globalization

--The information revolution

--The ecological crisis

--The spread of liberal democracy

--Growing international migration

--Civilizational ties

--International security (nuclear proliferation, terrorism, organized crime)

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS