An Introduction to
International
Relations
Australian Perspectives

EDITED BY

Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke
and Jim George

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An Introduction to International Relations

Australian Perspectives

An Introduction to International Relations: Australian Perspectives provides comprehensive coverage of its subject while capturing distinctively Australian perspectives and concerns. Designed specifically for Australian undergraduate students, this textbook brings together leading Australian scholars to present lively introductory analyses of the theories, actors, issues, institutions and processes that animate international relations today.

An Introduction to International Relations: Australian Perspectives introduces students to the main theoretical perspectives before covering an extensive range of topics with historical, practical and normative dimensions.

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An Introduction to International Relations

Australian Perspectives

Edited by
Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke and Jim George

For Chiara

For Jenny, Nikos, Sophia

For Sara, Joanna and Pablo . . . with love

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This textbook grew out of a sense that Australian students studying Introduction to International Relations courses were not particularly well served by the textbook offerings available. Scores of textbooks exist, many of them excellent in their own ways, but none is specifically tailored to the concerns of Australian students and the broad menu of topics covered in their undergraduate courses. Conversations with colleagues teaching introductory courses around the country led us to the view that a large textbook written specifically for Australian students, by Australian scholars and teachers, would be welcome. Additionally, it would serve as another means of building the Australian discipline of International Relations. The Australian discipline has always produced important and internationally recognised scholarship, but it has generally remained fragmented, lacking a sense of common spirit. In recent years just such a spirit has grown up in the discipline and *An Introduction to International Relations: Australian Perspectives* is both a reflection of and a contribution to this development. Indeed, some of the original conversations on the potential of a textbook like this took place at the first Oceanic Conference on International Studies (OCIS), hosted by the ANU in July 2004. We hope that future OCIS delegates will be able to say that this textbook helped provide a foundation on which they further developed their knowledge of and passion for what must be one of the most perennially exciting disciplines in the social and human sciences – International Relations.

There are a number of people we need to thank. A handful of people were directly and actively instrumental to the production of this textbook. First, we must thank Kim Armitage at Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, who enthusiastically supported the textbook from its inception. She also diligently helped in conceiving the textbook's format and ensuring it would meet students' needs most effectively. We thank her for seeing the potential and importance of such a textbook for Australian students and in providing the essential support and encouragement. Susan Hanley assumed responsibility for the textbook at CUP when Kim took maternity leave. We thank her and Kate Indigo for their patience and professionalism in steering this unwieldy manuscript through the latter stages of its production. We are also very grateful to Anna Crago for her excellent copyediting work in polishing the final manuscript. She was meticulous in spotting errors and inconsistencies and extremely helpful in making stylistic improvements to the text. Thank you also to Tony Fankhauser for his excellent maps.

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and excellent proofreading skills. Anthony and Jim would like to thank Richard, whose work in conceiving, guiding and finalising this book was so important.

There is a collection of other people we would like to thank also. They may not have had a direct hand in the textbook, but indirectly they have contributed to it. First of all, our teachers, without whom we would not ourselves be teaching, let alone editing textbooks for the next generations of Australian students. Richard would like to acknowledge his debt of gratitude to Andrew Linklater, Peter Lawler, and Hidemi Suganami. They will, he hopes, see the mark their inspirational examples have left on him in the chapters he has written for this textbook. Anthony thanks Caroline Graham, Jim George, Mike McKinley, Jindy Pettman, Lorraine Elliott, Graeme Cheeseman, Greg Austin, Bill Tow, Greg McCarthy, Pal Ahluwalia, Paul Nursey-Bray, Carol Johnson and Christine Beasley, who taught him to understand and care about global politics, and who helped him immeasurably as he first began to teach it. Jim remembers with gratitude the inspiration offered both directly and indirectly by Ian Clark, Richard Higgott, Andrew Linklater and Jim Richardson. We would also like to extend thanks to someone who has worked tirelessly and energetically to build the discipline's Australian identity, Chris Reus-Smit. Chris has been a constant source of moral and intellectual encouragement and, more importantly, leadership, for which we thank him.

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We would also like to thank the contributors who gave their time and effort to this textbook. In a time of the government's Research Quality Framework, it is gratifying that colleagues still see the importance of providing quality textbooks for students. Richard would like to mention his gratitude to Robyn Eckersley and Marianne Hanson who provided encouragement and useful feedback on early ideas, and to several other colleagues teaching Introduction to International Relations courses who kindly shared their course guides with him with a view to organising the book's contents and structure. He would also like to thank his co-editors, Anthony and Jim, for their readiness to take on this ambitious project and to make it work so well.

Finally, we would like to thank friends and family who have had to suffer our distraction over the past couple of years. Richard would like to register the unpayable debt he owes to his wife Naomi and daughter Chiara for their loving encouragement and tolerance, especially in the final stages of the manuscript's preparation. Anthony thanks his wife Jenny, who was ever supportive even as she chided him gently for taking too much on, and dedicates the book to her and his young twins, Nikos and Sophia, who hopefully will grow into a better world than they were born into. Jim wants to thank Joanna, in particular, for her love and support when it was needed most.

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An Introduction to International Relations: The Origins and Changing Agendas of a Discipline

Richard Devetak

This Introduction begins by first outlining what is meant by international relations. Second, it tells the story of how and why the study of international relations emerged when it did in the early twentieth century. Knowing something about the **discipline**'s origins does not tell us everything we need to know about international relations today, but it will help us to understand the legacy left by the discipline's original purpose and by older traditions of thought. Third, it sketches the contours of the changing agenda of international relations, a shift that some scholars describe as a transition from international relations to world politics or from the 'traditional' to the 'new' agenda. Although there can be little doubt that as political reality has changed, new theoretical and conceptual tools have become necessary, we should not assume that a complete break with the past has rendered the 'traditional' agenda and its theories obsolete. Far from it; the 'new' agenda, as we shall see, supplements but does not supplant the 'traditional' agenda. It is now more important than ever to think about the relationship between 'traditional' and 'new' theories and issues.

What is International Relations?

Every day the global news media carry stories of events involving foreign governments and their populations. Usually featured under the heading of 'international affairs' or 'world news', these stories all too frequently tell of political violence, lives and livelihoods lost, **human rights** violated, infrastructure damaged, and hopes for the restoration of **peace** and prosperity dashed. **War** rather than peace makes the news headlines, and understandably so, because the violent conflict of war so visibly ravages human societies. 'If it bleeds, it leads', as the cynical media adage goes.

For over 2000 years of recorded history humans have been fascinated and frustrated by war and its consequences, so we should not be surprised by its continuing preeminence. But human societies are ravaged by so much more than war. Chronic underdevelopment, poverty, human rights violations and environmental degradation are equally devastating, if less visibly so. Occasionally, however, the plight of the world's impoverished populations becomes headline news when famine or natural disasters, such as droughts, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis or avalanches, strike, compounding already fragile or impoverished political

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Box 0.1:   Terminology

What are the differences between International Relations and international relations, and international politics and world politics?

It is conventional to differentiate the discipline of 'International Relations' from the subject matter of 'international relations' by the use of upper and lower case respectively. As Chris Brown (1997: 3) puts it, '"International Relations" (upper case) is the study of "international relations" (lower case)'.

International politics is used here as a synonym of international relations. It does, however, have the advantage of highlighting the political dimension of relations that are international.

World or global politics: Insofar as new actors, issues, structures and processes are thought to have emerged in recent decades as a result of **globalisation**, rendering the traditional agenda, which is focused on interstate relations, incomplete, some scholars prefer 'world' or 'global politics' to 'international relations'.

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societies. Sympathies will be aroused in faraway places, and celebrities, humanitarian organisations, the **United Nations (UN)** and canny politicians will talk the talk of collective grief, human community and global responsibility. Excitement will die down after a flurry of activity and the poor souls will inevitably be cast back to the margins of international attention as developed countries return to more pressing domestic matters – tax cuts, elections and so on. And so the daily round of international relations goes on – war and peace, poverty and underdevelopment, global attention and global neglect.

This common-sense understanding of international relations only scratches the surface of all that the discipline of International Relations covers (see Box 0.1). So what precisely do we mean by 'international relations'? To answer this question, let us first say a few things about what it is not, before turning to an account of what it is.

First, the study of international relations is not to be equated with 'current affairs'. It is important not to reduce international relations to the lead stories of the global news media. News, by its nature, is ephemeral. Each day brings a new story to tell, and news reports are also independent of each other – that is to say, news agencies do not necessarily concern themselves with explaining how different stories 'hang together' or relate to each other, and they are usually content solely with reportage. International Relations, by contrast, seeks to go beyond the ephemeral and common-sense to reflect more deeply on events, structures, processes and actors to offer explanations, interpretations and **normative** analyses. Second, the study of international relations is not reducible to what happens in other countries, even though it may include it. Political machinations in other countries, especially powerful ones, always hold particular interest; Washington politics is never far from the headlines. But in International Relations, any interest in the politics of other countries will be determined by how it impacts on or plays out in the international sphere or how it is shaped by international forces. Third, International Relations is not reducible to foreign policy analysis, though once again, it includes it within its scope (see Waltz 1979: 121–2 for one explanation).

Turning to a more positive definition of international relations we can start by saying that it refers to *external relations among nations*, **states** *and peoples*, though as we explain below, this statement will need to be considerably qualified. The adjective 'international' was coined

Table 0.1: The 'Great Divide'

Domestic	International
Inside	Outside
Hierarchy	Anarchy
Monopoly over instruments of violence	Decentralised instruments of violence
Lawful authority	Self-help
Security	Insecurity/Security dilemma
Justice	Power
Community	Friends and enemies
Peace and order	War

by the English political philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, in 1780. The neologism's purpose was to capture in a single word *relations among nations* (Suganami 1978). Although 'international' literally means relations among nations, it has for most of its existence referred to relations among ***sovereign states***. In Bentham's time **nation** and state were often used interchangeably, so his meaning was closer to what we would today call 'interstate' relations. In any case, *international* relations have been distinguished first and foremost from *domestic* politics (see Table 0.1). Ian Clark (1999) calls this the 'Great Divide'.

Leading scholars have for decades defined international relations by opposing the international and domestic realms as if they represented a 'Great Divide'. On what constitutes this 'Great Divide', the most influential realist scholar of international relations in the late twentieth century, Kenneth Waltz (1979: 103), remarks that '[t]he difference between national and international politics lies not in the use of force but in the different modes of organization for doing something about it'. What, then, are the possible modes of organisation? Waltz offers two, and only two, organising principles: **hierarchy** and **anarchy**. Relations between units (or actors) are either *hierarchical*, involving clear lines of authority and obedience, or they are *anarchical*, involving no such lines of authority and obedience (Waltz 1979: 88). There would appear to be no other possibilities. The key, according to Waltz, is governance; is there a supreme authority with the right to lay down and enforce the law? If the answer is 'yes', then we are in the hierarchical realm of domestic politics – politics *within* the state. If the answer is 'no', then we are in the anarchical realm of international relations – politics *between* states. In any case, the presumed differences between domestic and international politics seem to vindicate Martin Wight's (1966b: 21) observation that, 'It has become natural to think of international politics as the untidy fringe of domestic politics'. I shall suggest below that while it has indeed become natural to think in these terms, there may be good reasons for casting doubt over the 'Great Divide'.

According to the 'Great Divide', domestic politics is what takes place on the *inside* of states whereas international relations is what takes place on the *outside*, as if they were two mutually exclusive realms. Domestic politics is premised on the presence of a central authority or government that has monopoly control over the instruments of violence, that can lay down and enforce the law, that establishes and maintains **order** and **security**, and that permits justice and peace to be delivered to the community of citizens. International relations is the negative image of domestic politics. By contrast with the domestic realm, the international is premised on the absence of an overarching authority or government that can lay down and enforce the law because the instruments of violence are dispersed and decentralised. This

establishes ripe conditions for insecurity, where injustice and war are permanent potentials and regular actualities for states. It is a world of friends and enemies where **power** rather than justice will determine international outcomes, and where states cannot afford to put their trust or security in others. States are trapped in a **'security dilemma'** where measures taken to enhance their security lead others to take similar counter-measures and in the process generate further mistrust and insecurity.

Perhaps the term that distinguishes international relations more than any other is *anarchy*. Anarchy – meaning the absence of rule, not necessarily disorder and chaos – has been the core concept and constitutive principle throughout the evolution of the discipline (Schmidt 1998). Richard Ashley (1989) has called International Relations the 'anarchy problematique', that is to say, a field of knowledge revolving around the organising principle of anarchy.

International Relations as a discipline: traditions, origins and evolution

Universities, as centres of research and learning, have long divided knowledge into different disciplines. This division is heuristic, that is to say, it is meant to help facilitate learning. A discipline comprises a distinctive focus, a set of institutions, and traditions of thought. All three are crucial to the development and growth of a field or body of knowledge. But it is worth noting that discipline has another, not altogether unrelated meaning: to bring under control, train to obedience, maintain order. Disciplines then help to maintain intellectual order by keeping a focus and keeping clear of distractions.

First, a discipline carves out a branch of learning focused on a relatively distinct subject matter. I say 'relatively' because attempts to cordon off one subject from all others are bound to fail or to appear arbitrary. For example, where do we draw the boundaries between international politics, international morality, **international law** and international economics? Politics, morality, law and economics intersect and overlap in so many ways that efforts to draw final boundaries around them would be futile and possibly unhelpful, since understanding the politics of international relations cannot be separated from the moral, legal and economic dimensions of these relations.

Nevertheless, if a discipline implies a subject matter relatively distinguishable from others, it must have questions and topics it calls its own. Though agreement will never be total, the questions and topics to be addressed should meet with broad agreement. Some disagreement about the scope of a discipline is to be expected, but there will always be dominant tendencies – questions and topics that occupy the thought and research of most students and scholars (see Box 0.2). These will define the discipline at any given moment, but there will always be other questions and topics that are neglected or ignored by the mainstream. I return to the question of subject matter in the final part of this Introduction where I sketch contending agendas ('traditional' and 'new').

Second, disciplines grow within and grow their own institutions. Universities are the most obvious sites for the institutionalisation of the research and teaching of particular subjects, but they are not alone. Departments, schools or centres have been established in universities around the world to study international relations. The very first was established in 1919 at the University of Wales in the seaside town of Aberystwyth when Welsh industrialist and philanthropist, David Davies, established the Woodrow Wilson Chair of International

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Box 0.2:   Discussion points

A divided discipline?

In the late 1980s International Relations undertook a self-examination. Eminent scholar, K. J. Holsti (1985: 1) lamented that 'International theory is in a state of disarray'. The 'intellectual consensus' that guided research and learning for over three centuries had, in Holsti's opinion, 'broken down'. No longer was there 'a consensus on the subjects of inquiry and theorizing. The view that international **theory** should be organized around the structures and processes of the states system, the activities of the great powers and their decision makers, particularly as they relate to war and peace, is no longer accepted by a significant number of scholars' (Holsti 1985: 2). Holsti's concern was not so much that the dominant view of the discipline's focus and purpose had been abandoned – this was reasonable given the fundamental changes that had occurred in the twentieth century – but that the 'theoretical profusion' had made coherent dialogue and debate very difficult. His fear, in short, was that the discipline might never regain its focus and sense of purpose. Holsti was not alone. Mark Hoffman (1987) accepted Holsti's assessment of a discipline divided over purpose, focus or appropriate **methodology**, but advocated a 'next stage' in which **Critical Theory** (see chapter 8) would reconstruct and reorient the discipline. Others, such as Yosef Lapid (1989a: 83) questioned whether establishing a 'new hegemonic orthodoxy' would be 'possible' or 'desirable', preferring to celebrate theoretical diversity (see also George and Campbell 1990).

Politics. The London School of Economics and the University of Oxford followed shortly after with the establishment of Chairs in 1923 and 1930 respectively.

The institutionalisation of academic areas of study is vital because it provides housing for teaching and research. Both teaching and research, the two preeminent tasks of university departments, are crucial to the accumulation, expansion and transmission of bodies of knowledge. Teaching passes on knowledge and modes of analysis from one generation to the next in the classroom. Research, of course, needs to be published, so that findings and analyses can be disseminated widely, not only from one generation to the next, but to contemporary teachers and students as well. Journals, periodicals, books, conferences and workshops are sites for debate, the exchange of ideas, and sharpening of arguments all of which reproduce and revise a discipline's body of knowledge.

Disciplines also grow their own institutions such as academic journals and professional associations. Journals such as the *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (AJIA), the British *Review of International Studies* (RIS), and the American *International Studies Quarterly* (ISQ) are among the vehicles in which scholars publish their research. Added to this are professional bodies such as the British International Studies Association (BISA) and the American International Studies Association (ISA), which not only organise conferences but publish journals: RIS and ISQ respectively. In Australasia, the AJIA has been publishing since 1946 (originally under the title *Outlook*), but a dedicated professional body has only recently emerged in the form of a biennial Oceanic Conference in International Studies. Think tanks have also become part of the disciplinary landscape. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was established in 1910, and the Royal Institute of International Affairs was established in 1920. In Australia, the Lowy Institute for International Policy was established in 2003.

Third, a discipline draws upon traditions of thought that have developed and evolved around the subject matter. Although the first university department was not established until 1919 it would be a mistake to believe that the study of international relations began then. When departments were being established, scholars and students were not inventing a discipline out of thin air; they had over two millennia of words, thoughts and actions to draw upon. Cognate departments such as politics, law and history also provided useful resources (Schmidt 1998). But so too did thinkers subsequently drafted into the International Relations canon.

Thucydides, **Machiavelli** and Grotius, for example, may not have taught in universities, but they wrote about the actors and events that shaped the 'international relations', as we now call it, of their day. Care must be taken here because the actors and events they described and analysed are vastly different to the ones that now animate international relations. Moreover, none of these great thinkers limited himself to the external relations of actors, whether city-states, empires or sovereign states. Indeed, it is closer to the truth to say that they discussed what we would call international relations either indirectly or only in occasional passages of their classic texts. So we need to be careful when discussing the past that we do not commit the sin of *anachronism* – discussing one historical epoch in terms of language, concepts and understandings borrowed from another. In other words, we risk anachronism when we speak of these great thinkers writing about 'international relations' because, in fact, they did not neatly distinguish international relations from domestic politics or international law or international morality in the way the discipline of International Relations has done since its inception. Neither the 'Great Divide' nor the 'anarchy problematique' underpinned their thinking.

Traditions of thought

What are the traditions of thought that have influenced the study of international relations? How one answers this question depends on which classificatory scheme one uses, and, to be sure, there are several such schemes. During the discipline's early years, the classificatory scheme of **idealism** or **liberalism** on the one hand and **realism** on the other dominated; this was how E. H. Carr (1946) presented the field of study. Arguably this scheme still dominates the discipline today in the USA – albeit in revised form as a debate between **neoliberalism** and **neorealism** (see Baldwin 1993).

Realists argue that states exist in a condition of anarchy that compels them to seek and to balance power to ensure their survival and security (see chapter 4). They paint international relations as a tragic realm of '**power politics**' where '**national interests**' clash and moral claims hold little sway. For realists, the character of international relations remains unchanged through history. Marked by what Kenneth Waltz (1979: 66) calls 'a dismaying persistence' of war, international relations is, in Wight's (1966b: 26) words, 'the realm of recurrence and repetition'. The great historian of *The Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides, brilliant Florentine diplomat and writer, Niccolò Machiavelli, and towering English political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (intellectually and physically towering – he was well over six foot tall) are canonical names in realism's hall of fame. They provided insights not only into their own times, but offered wisdom and insight that transcends time. For a realist, if Thucydides or Hobbes were transported to our own time they would observe nothing different other than the names of the actors (Waltz 1979: 66; Wight 1966b: 26).

Liberals take a less cynical, more optimistic view. If realists see history as static or cyclical, liberals see it as progressive. They tend to emphasise humanity's capacity to improve: they are committed to ideals of technological and economic as well as moral and political progress (see chapter 3). That the world is anarchical and war-prone is as true for liberals as it is for realists, but the former believe it is possible and necessary for humankind to escape the **Hobbesian** 'state of war' – a condition in which states are insecure and constantly preparing for war. Strategies of 'peace through law' and 'peace through commerce' are the dominant liberal approaches. In international relations they see the gradual development and strengthening of international trade, international law and international organisations as the key to world order (Suganami 1989). Names in the liberal pantheon include great English political philosophers John Locke and John Stuart Mill, and the superlative philosopher of Königsberg (now called Kaliningrad), Prussian Immanuel **Kant**.

Others have posited a tripartite scheme. One of the most common is the tripartite scheme of realism, liberalism and **Marxism**, or variations thereof (Doyle 1997; Holsti 1985. This extends and complicates the realism/liberalism debate by adding a Marxist tradition of thought (see chapter 5). This tradition shifted emphasis away from states to the historical development of the capitalist system and the class conflict it generated (see Kubālkovā and Cruickshank 1985; Linklater 1990a; Pettman 1979). It redirected the focus to an examination of how the twin logics of capitalist development and geopolitical rivalry interacted. It is worth noting here that Marxism played a vital role in stimulating the Critical Theory pioneered by Robert Cox (1981) and Andrew Linklater (1990a), because Marx critically analysed the tensions between hopes of universal freedom and concrete realities of inequality and injustice (see chapter 8).

In his famous lectures at the London School of Economics (LSE) in the 1950s, Martin Wight (1991) also distinguished three traditions of thought, but rather eccentrically called them realism, rationalism and revolutionism (also see Bull 1976). If realism was the tradition associated with power politics and 'the blood and iron and immorality men', as Wight called them, revolutionism was associated with the perpetual peace of liberal internationalism *and* the radical **revolution** of Marxist internationalism – 'the subversion and liberation and missionary men'. Rationalism was a 'middle way' that sought to avoid the extremes of realism and revolutionism. It is a tradition of thought most closely associated with seventeenth-century Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (who, by contrast with Hobbes, was barely five feet tall!), and eighteenth-century Swiss lawyer Emmerich de Vattel – 'the law and order and keep your word men', to use Wight's description. Rationalists accept the realist premise that states exist in a condition of anarchy (where no state has the authority to lay down and enforce the law), but they deny that this condition is completely bereft of rules and **norms**. Rather, they argue that, to use the felicitous phrase of Wight's foremost protégé, Australian scholar, Hedley Bull (1977), states exist in an 'anarchical society'. States tend to form international societies where order is maintained through mechanisms such as international law, diplomacy, balances of power, great power management and occasionally war (Bull 1977; see also chapter 17). This 'middle way' continues today under the name of the **English School** (see Dunne 1998; Linklater and Suganami 2006).

In Wight's hands, the three traditions (the 'three Rs') were not meant to be water-tight containers, but more like 'streams, with eddies and cross-currents, sometimes interlacing' (Wight 1991: 260). To continue the metaphor, in practice, canonical thinkers tend to cross

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Box 0.3: Discussion points

Was Thucydides a realist?

As an illustration of how traditions depend on interpretation, consider the tendency of realists and others to assign Thucydides uncritically to the realist tradition. Behind this assignation lies the supposition that the realist tradition is centred around the concept of material or military power and that Thucydides is a realist *par excellence*. The one episode in his account of *The Peloponnesian War* that is always invoked is 'The Melian Dialogue'. According to Thucydides' (1972: 402) narrative, the Athenian envoy says to his Melian counterpart, 'the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept'. Captured in this remark is one of the most powerful expressions of realism's emphasis on material power determining international outcomes – which is why it is realism's favourite hymn, and why Thucydides is viewed as the first great realist. It would be a mistake however to suppose that Thucydides subscribes to this realist view, since he is simply retelling the story. In fact, much else in his narrative suggests that Thucydides would be out of place in the realist tradition, not least because he places a good deal of emphasis on normative standards for assessing conduct and moral responsibility. Furthermore, the Athenian empire's reliance on military force and war proves insufficient to prevent eventual collapse. We can conclude, therefore, that how traditions are understood and who is included in them is indeed a matter of selection and interpretation.

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and sometimes straddle streams rather than soak their feet permanently in the one. Wight's purpose was merely to present the traditions as historically embodied styles of thought handed down by scholars and practitioners alike.

Needless to say, there are various classificatory schemes, each as arbitrary as the next. What matters is not so much the historical veracity of the scheme as the analytical tools it serves up. Traditions of thought, whichever scheme we choose to employ, provide us with the premises, tenets and concepts without which we could not intelligibly discuss and analyse international relations. Traditions are the source of our lexicon, the common vocabulary we use to study our subject, even if, as young Australian scholar Renée Jeffery (2005) contends, the very idea of a 'tradition of thought' is questionable.

We have to depart from somewhere (there is actually no point outside all tradition), so we start with what the competing traditions leave to us. But traditions are not given and homogeneous. They are 'invented', which is not to say that traditions are false or arbitrarily fabricated, only that the inheritance must be selected and interpreted before it can be received. Traditions are also heterogeneous, comprising multiple strands and legacies. What we believe they leave to us depends on how we sift through, select and interpret the tradition's inheritance (see Box 0.3). As Australian theorist Jim George (1994: 196) rightly points out, 'the "great texts" of International Relations can be read in ways entirely contrary to their ritualized disciplinary treatment'.

As Wight has suggested, and as R. B. J. Walker (1993: chapter 2) and George (1994: 192–7) have amply demonstrated, traditions of thought are never as internally coherent or self-enclosed as they appear. Common though it may be to bundle Machiavelli and Hobbes together in the Realist tradition, they actually differ considerably on many key points, especially how they view time and change in politics, with the Florentine seeing politics as

permanently in flux and the Englishman holding to a more static and spatial conception that is perhaps more consistent with the 'Great Divide'.

Origins and evolution of the discipline

The origins of the discipline are to be found in one crucial historical moment: World War I (1914–18) as we know it now, but the 'Great War' as it was known before World War II. It was the most intense and mechanised war yet experienced, with new technologies, including the advent of air power, allowing for new heights of destruction to be reached. The unprecedented destructiveness prompted calls for the eradication of war; it was indeed often referred to as the 'War to End All Wars'. The traumatic experience of the Great War for Europeans was perhaps compounded by the fact that the years preceding it were relatively peaceful and stable, witnessing marked increases in 'the number of multilateral conferences, institutions, and organizations' (Reus-Smit 1999: 133). In particular, significant strides were taken regarding the laws of war with the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 which seemed to vindicate liberal optimism for international reform.

After the war, an understandable growing tide of anti-war sentiment surged through Europe – the continent that had witnessed so many terrible wars over the centuries. It was not just war's destructiveness that fuelled anti-war sentiment, it was its apparent futility. As an instrument of foreign policy, war appeared to many to be ineffective and counterproductive.

We might think such sentiments to be a natural reaction to war. But until the eighteenth century, while war had always been lamented, it was rarely viewed as eradicable. This is why English jurist Sir Henry Maine (cited in Howard 2001: 1) observed in the middle of the nineteenth century, 'War appears to be as old as mankind, but peace is a modern invention'. In any case, it is only with the initiation of 'plans for perpetual peace' in the eighteenth century, drafted most famously by the Abbé Saint Pierre and Immanuel Kant, that thinkers and scholars put their minds to determining how peace might permanently prevail over war in a system of states. But only after the Great War did a widespread 'peace movement' arise with the intention of eliminating war for all time.

To this sentiment were added practical, institutional measures, including the establishment of the League of Nations at Geneva in 1920 and, in accordance with the League's Covenant, the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague in 1922 (originally the Permanent Court of Arbitration as established under the 1899 Hague Conference). According to Chris Reus-Smit (1999), a new *legislative* principle of procedural justice emerged at this time which found concrete expression in these new institutions. Two precepts informed this new legislative justice: 'first, that only those subject to the rules have the right to define them and, second, that the rules of society must apply equally to all' (Reus-Smit 1999: 129). Reus-Smit (1999: chapter 6) traces the origins of these ideas back to the eighteenth century – to the **Enlightenment** and to the American and French revolutions; but it is arguable that it was only in the aftermath of the Great War that a new diplomatic and legal order took shape based on contractual international law and **multilateralism**. The war not only marked a break with the previous peace, it brought about a different kind of peace, one where permanent international institutions were designed 'to promote international co-operation and to achieve peace and security' (Covenant of League of Nations, in Claude 1964: 409).

This is the general context in which the discipline of International Relations was established. It was a period of progressive institutionalisation of liberal–constitutional principles as a reaction to war. This 'desire . . . to prevent future wars', says William Olson (1972: 12), 'must never be forgotten' when assessing the discipline's origins. More than just the study of the causes and conditions of war and peace, the study of international relations was, from the outset, guided by a purpose: to develop theories aimed at preventing or eliminating war. It would do so by focusing on states and their interactions in the states-system, but also by bringing liberal tenets to bear on the prevailing bellicose system. Liberals such as Sir Norman Angell and US President Woodrow Wilson believed that a lasting peace could only be achieved by overcoming the **balance of power** and secret diplomacy; they argued for developing a new diplomatic and legal order around international organisations based on practices of **collective security** and open diplomacy (see Ashworth 1999; Wilson 1918). 'The distinctive characteristic of these writers', says Hedley Bull (1972: 34), was their belief in progress: 'the belief, in particular', he continues,

> that the system of international relations that had given rise to the First World War was capable of being transformed into a fundamentally more peaceful and just world order; that under the impact of the awakening of democracy, the growth of 'the international mind', the development of the League of Nations, the good works of men of peace or the enlightenment spread by their own teachings, it was in fact being transformed.

Liberal–constitutional values and ideals thus set the agenda for the discipline in the inter-war years against which E. H. Carr aimed his withering criticism. First published in 1939, Carr's *The twenty years' crisis, 1919–1939* (1946) has had a massive influence on the discipline of International Relations. Carr's book is a brilliant polemical attack on liberal thinking associated with Angell, Wilson, Alfred Zimmern and others, which he characterised as a hollow sham (Carr 1946: 89). Carr believed utopianism (for which you can substitute liberalism) utterly failed to take account of power in its analysis of international relations; it ignored Machiavelli's injunction to deal with *what is* the case, rather than what *ought to be* the case (Carr 1946: 63). The structure of Carr's masterpiece revolves around the dichotomy between realism and liberalism. In fact, he helped create the impression that the newly established discipline was dominated by a debate between realism and liberalism. This subsequently became known as the 'first great debate', though as Peter Wilson (1998) and Lucian Ashworth (1999) have shown, no debate actually occurred if by that we mean that a series of exchanges took place between realists and liberals. Indeed, recent work suggests that the very idea of narrating the discipline's history as a series of 'great debates' is questionable. Even so, it is important for students to learn how the discipline has told stories about itself, which is why I persist with the narrative.

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s when scholars began to reflect more on the origins and evolution of the discipline, it has become conventional to narrate the discipline's history through a recounting of 'great debates'. The 'second great debate' is said to have been a methodological quarrel in the 1960s and 1970s between 'behaviouralism' and 'traditionalism' – at stake was the question, 'what is the most appropriate way of pursuing and acquiring knowledge in international relations?' Bull (1966) frames the debate in terms of 'scientific versus classical' methods. He identifies two broad criticisms of the scientific approach, which wants to emulate the methods of the natural sciences in its attempts to explain international

politics. First, that it cannot live up to its aspirations and must fall back on non-scientific (read 'classical') methods. Second, that it is an inappropriate method for studying many of the central issues in international relations, because even empirical questions are not susceptible to pure observation, but depend upon 'intuition or judgment' (Bull 1966: 367), and because many questions are in part normative. Essentially, Bull thinks the 'scientific' approach removes students and scholars too far from the stuff of international relations – 'as remote from the substance of international politics as the inmates of a Victorian nunnery were from the study of sex' (Bull 1966: 366). Bull defends the 'classical' approach which, he contends, is interpretive, more historical and better attuned to normative judgments.

Chris Brown (1997: 36–7) is probably right to describe the second debate as a 'minor skirmish' rather than 'great debate', since it was in fact 'something of a non-event' at the time. Having said that, this was the first time the study of international relations opened itself up to theoretical self-reflection. Though little was resolved by the debate, it highlighted the importance of reflecting on inescapable questions related to how we acquire knowledge. Knowledge does not fall from the heavens fully formed, so clarifying how to pursue or acquire knowledge is essential – it helps us discriminate between competing descriptions or analyses of international relations. Indeed, this unresolved question feeds into the 'third great debate', which, according to Yosef Lapid (1989b), pits **positivism** against post-positivism. In this debate, the mainstream approaches of neorealism and neoliberalism defend themselves against a variety of 'critical' theories. Steve Smith (1996: 11, 13), in a most valuable account of what is at stake in the 'third debate', accuses positivism of restricting our understanding of 'what kinds of things [exist] in international relations' and of narrowly limiting ethical and practical possibilities. The theoretical profusion associated with the 'third debate' can be usefully linked to the changing agenda of international relations. I turn now to the final part of this Introduction to sketch the changing agendas of both theory and practice in international relations.

Changing agendas: theory and practice

Since its inception International Relations has continued to evolve, largely in reflection of changing political circumstances. In this final section I want to outline some of the ways that the study of international relations has changed over time. First, I set recent developments in international relations theory in the context of what has been referred to as the 'third debate'. My purpose is not to provide a comprehensive account of the theoretical scene (that is provided in chapter 2), but merely to indicate how the theory chapters in Part 1 relate to the 'traditional' and 'new' agendas comprising Parts 2 and 3 respectively. Second, I sketch the 'traditional' and 'new' agendas of international relations. My argument is not that the 'new' agenda displaces or renders obsolete the 'traditional'; rather, the two agendas coexist alongside one another, intersecting in complex ways that require further study.

The 'critical turn' against the 'Great Divide'
The mainstream approaches of realism and liberalism have been instrumental in shaping the 'traditional' agenda (see chapters 3 and 4). This should come as no surprise given the discipline's liberal origins and realism's rise to prominence during the **Cold War**.

The first point to note is that both realism and liberalism tend to accept the terms of the 'Great Divide', and to naturalise the 'anarchy problematique'. They view the domestic and international realms as distinct and mutually exclusive. Both also tend to take the state for granted as a form of political community, even if liberals are more likely to acknowledge the threat states pose to their own citizens. Liberalism, after all, emerged as a critical intervention against the disturbing concentration of state power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Liberalism and realism diverge, however, over questions of war and law. Realists and liberals deplore war as a tragic and destructive phenomenon, but how they explain war varies. Realists see war as an inevitable and ineradicable part of international relations insofar as the condition of anarchy prevails (Waltz 1959). Liberals accept this description, but believe that change is possible. They argue that institutional change at the level of the state and the **international system** will release potentials for eradicating, or, at the very least, considerably limiting war. In essence liberals argue that the key to achieving perpetual peace is to transform the international realm so that it comes to resemble the domestic realm. Realists reject this 'domestic analogy' (see Suganami 1989), sceptical that international anarchy can be transformed into an international hierarchy where some kind of global sovereign exercises power *and* authority. Liberals, on the other hand, believe the spread of liberal **democracy** will result in the strengthening of international organisations and the rule of international law which will mitigate the worst aspects of anarchy and contribute to the 'domestication' of the global system.

The 'critical turn' in international relations posed a challenge to both realism and liberalism for taking the world more or less as it is, 'with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised, as the given frame of action' (Cox 1981: 128). One of the pioneering scholars of Critical Theory, Robert Cox, identified liberalism and realism (especially in their 'neo' versions) with 'problem-solving' theory. Problem-solving theories work within the present limits of the system to smooth over instabilities or problems in the system (Cox 1981: 129); they tend to work in favour of stabilising prevailing structures of world order and their accompanying inequalities of wealth and power. Cox's main point is that problem-solving theories like realism and liberalism fail to reflect on the prior framework within which they theorise. The upshot is that they tend to be conservative, notwithstanding their claims to objective or value-free analysis.

By contrast, critical theories (including for the moment Marxism, **feminism**, Critical Theory and sometimes **constructivism**; see chapters 5–8) start from the premise that 'theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose' (Cox 1981: 128). All knowledge, according to critical theorists, is coloured by social, cultural and ideological influence, and it is vital to reveal the effect of this conditioning. Critical theories of international relations, then, seek to bring to consciousness latent assumptions, interests or purposes that give rise to and orient thinking about international relations. Refusing to take the present system as normal or natural, they explore the possibilities of **emancipation** (see Linklater 1990a: chapter 1). To put the point slightly differently, critical theories are constructivist (see chapter 8) – that is, they believe the prevailing structures of world order are human creations sustained through repetitive social practices. If they are constructed, then they can be transformed into less violent, less unjust, freer structures of world order. Critical theories, with the possible exception of constructivism (see Shapcott 2000: 154), place emancipation at the centre of their approach. They are all, to that extent, children of the Enlightenment, as are theorists of global justice

(see chapter 9). The knowledge they seek makes no claims to being objective or value-free. Instead, they offer a politically and ethically charged account of international relations, one aimed at expanding human freedom and global justice by radically transforming the prevailing structures of world order.

In questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, critical theories compel us to reflect on the 'Great Divide'. There is broad agreement among Marxism, feminism, Critical Theory, constructivism and global justice theories that the distinction between inside and outside, hierarchy and anarchy is by no means natural or necessary. It is rather a socially and historically constructed device for organising political life in a particular way; one that in empowering sovereign states to pursue self-interest through power politics, disempowers and renders invisible social classes, women and the excluded in general. The 'Great Divide' also functions to reproduce the logics of self-help and power politics in international relations. As Alexander Wendt (1992) has persuasively argued, however, 'anarchy is what states make of it'. His point is that anarchy (the absence of an overarching authority) does not occur naturally or independently of states and their practices. If anarchy resembles a self-help, power political system it is because states choose policies that make it so.

From states, war and law to globalisation and global governance

The 'Great Divide' sets up the study of international relations in a particular way – it points us towards certain issues and assumptions, and away from others. In particular, it points us towards the 'traditional' agenda of 'high politics' where diplomatic and strategic issues take centre stage. States become the principal actors and focus is concentrated on issues pertaining to their external relations: issues of **nationalism**, security, **arms control**, war, colonisation, **decolonisation** and **superpower** rivalry among them (see chapters 10–14 and 17–19). But law has also always been an important part of the traditional agenda too. Realists and liberals have long studied the relationship of states to international law (see chapter 16), with liberals tending to put their faith in law as a force for peace, and realists tending to be sceptical of the idea that a law not backed by force can make any difference. For realists, international law may lack coercive force, but it is important nonetheless because, as the great French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1917: 125) noted, 'on every side the strong [are] armed with the terrible powers of the Law against the weak'. In other words, law (domestic or international) serves political functions and can be manipulated in precisely this manner by powerful actors. The branch of international law concerned with war has also been a constant feature of the traditional agenda (see chapter 15), and is even more important in the current context of the global 'war on terror'.

We should not conclude, therefore, that the subject matter of the 'traditional' agenda is in any way obsolete. It will only become obsolete when sovereign states disappear and when war is eradicated. So long as these conditions are not in prospect, we would do well to reflect on the continuing relevance of states, war and law. The key question, as prompted by the 'critical turn', is whether the traditional agenda contains all the necessary intellectual resources to make sense of the contemporary politics of states, war and law in international relations. Does the traditional agenda pose all the right questions, or is it necessary to rethink and re-pose some of these questions, perhaps by drawing on intellectual resources afforded by the 'critical turn'?

In any case, what is excluded from the traditional agenda is everything associated with 'domestic' or 'low politics', everything that does not fit neatly into the agenda of states, war and law. Issues relegated to the margins include economics and the environment, morality and religion, and **non-state actors**. Incorporating such issues into the traditional agenda would effectively collapse the 'Great Divide'; it would dissolve international relations into world politics. Critical theorists of international relations argue for just this move; they tend to reject the 'Great Divide'. From their perspective the task is not to maintain disciplinary insularity, but to reflect on whether it is tenable any longer to suppose a 'Great Divide'. Especially in the context of globalisation, it has become more urgent to ask if it is still adequate to conceive of international relations as a completely separate realm of politics from domestic politics (Clark 1999).

Part 3, The New Agenda: Globalisation and Global Governance, covers topics that do not sit comfortably with the 'Great Divide'. These topics can be generally included under the heading 'globalisation and global governance'. Both these topics have spawned large industries of scholarly research, especially globalisation. An essentially contested term, globalisation has been defined as the 'widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness' made possible by new information, communication, and transportation technologies (Held et al 1999: 15). A multidimensional phenomenon, globalisation holds different, sometimes contradictory, implications for international relations (Devetak 2008). At the same time as it promises global interconnectedness and cosmopolitan community, it results in the fracturing of states and the rise of virulent forms of ethno-nationalism and religious **fundamentalism** (see chapter 26). At the same time as it enables prosperous individuals to travel across the globe, it casts asylum seekers into a precarious 'frontierland' (Bauman 1998), sometimes even beyond the safety of international law (see chapter 30). At the same time as it promises prosperity and peace, it also enables transnational terrorists to deploy violence to their own ends (see chapter 27).

Globalisation has also given rise to actors and institutions concerned to regulate world politics through a combination of 'public' and 'private' organisations. Global governance is not the same as global government; it refers, as James Rosenau (1992: 4) says, to a global system of rule that rests on a blend of formal and informal authorities, officially sanctioned laws and tacit norms. On the formal side we have international organisations like the United Nations (UN) (see chapter 32) and the World Trade Organization. On the informal side we have 'private' authorities (such as credit-rating agencies), which operate at the global level to monitor and regulate financial activities of states (see chapter 22), and international **non-governmental organisations** (INGOs), which also operate at the global level in assisting states and international organisations in the provision of 'global public goods' (see chapter 23).

Crucial elements in the contemporary architecture of global governance are multilateral economic institutions (MEIs) like the **World Bank**, **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and World Trade Organization which generally lie outside the traditional parameters of realist theories of international relations because they are thought to be marginal to the 'high politics' issues of strategy and diplomacy. Yet MEIs continue to exercise, controversially, a great deal of influence over countries of the global South (see chapters 20 and 24). Debate continues about the power of these institutions to regulate the global economy and in whose interests they do so. These debates feed into more general discontent with globalisation (chapter 25).

If the traditional agenda focuses on the system of states, the new agenda recognises the powerful influence of global or transnational actors, structures and processes. If the traditional

agenda downplays normative issues by converting them to matters of law or utilitarian consideration, the new agenda frequently plays up the normative dimensions of issues. This is clear in the rising prominence of human rights, **refugees** and the environment on the global governance agenda (see chapters 29–31); all are issues of global scope (transnational issues that cross state borders) that compel moral consideration (what are our obligations?). It is on this basis that humanitarianism has flourished in recent decades. Organisations such as Oxfam, Amnesty International, Doctors without Borders (Médicins sans Frontières) and the International Committee of the Red Cross make it their business to assist humans in need around the globe. Since the 1990s arguments have even been made that humanitarianism must be prepared to use force if suffering strangers are to be saved (see chapter 28).

It is arguable that the 'critical turn' and the rise of a 'new' agenda have turned the world of international relations into a different place. It is not only that the 'furniture' of the world is different (state as well as a variety of non-state actors, the states-system as well as transnational networks populate this world), our understanding of these actors, networks, structures and processes also changes. They are no longer seen as clearly defined or fixed objects in an external world of material power relations; rather, they are seen as contested objects constructed by a range of material and non-material ('ideational') social, political, legal and economic practices. The things of this world are imbued with meaning and value by humans and their social relations, and insofar as they are socially constructed, they are susceptible to change.

Indeed change itself has become a more prominent feature on the new agenda. It is not just that change emanates from the new agenda though; traditional agenda issues such as war are equally disposed to change as actors (other than states' armed forces) engage in organised violence, adopting **guerrilla** and terrorist tactics, and applying new technologies that can transform war. In the context of some **civil wars** in the 1990s scholars such as Mary Kaldor (1999) argued that 'new wars' had arisen in places like the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone which did not fit the usual understanding. In the context of the global 'war on terror' the US has argued for changes to international law and the laws of war in order to fight **terrorism** more effectively.

These examples suggest that the 'Great Divide' is not nearly as clear cut as formerly imagined. Domestic hierarchy and the state's monopoly over the instruments of violence have been undone, leaving citizens insecure and uncertain of whom their friends are when wars of ethno-nationalism break out. In some respects, the domestic comes to acquire traits of the international realm. At the same time, the gradual development and consolidation of global governance suggests that international relations may be approximating the domestic realm in some important respects. In the final analysis, the rise of the new agenda and the critical turn suggest that the 'Great Divide' should not be taken for granted.

Conclusion

This Introduction has tried to show the fascinating history and the complex dynamics that continue to shape international relations, making it such an exciting subject to study. Continuity and change, traditional and new agendas define International Relations today. It is important to note, however, that the 'new' agenda does not replace or supplant the 'traditional' agenda, it *supplements* it. The traditional agenda is necessary, if insufficient, to

understanding or explaining international relations *or* world politics today. True, the prevention or elimination of war remains as urgent today as it was in 1919, but the character of war has changed dramatically since then and we must study these differences as well as the things that remain the same.

The two agendas (traditional and new) exist alongside each other; though not without tension. The task for students of International Relations today is to come to a better understanding of how these agendas interact. This textbook is designed to introduce you to both agendas and to show you the continuing vitality of some dimensions of the traditional agenda and the emergence of novel features of the new agenda that demand different theoretical approaches. Coming to terms with the main features of both traditional and new agendas should enable you to attain a deeper understanding of the issues covered in the global news media. It should also alert you to the tremendous range of intellectually exciting and politically urgent questions that define the study of International Relations today.

Questions

1. What should be studied under the heading 'international relations'?
2. Should the discipline's founding premises and purposes still govern the study of international relations? What, if anything, should be the purpose of studying international relations?
3. Does what Ian Clark calls the 'Great Divide' still hold today?
4. Does the 'new' agenda adequately capture the changes in recent international relations?
5. Which theory or theories can provide most insight into past and present international relations?

Further reading

George, Jim 1994, *Discourses of global politics: a critical (re)introduction to international relations*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. The most important book published in the context of the 'third great debate'; captures the complexity of the discipline.
Griffiths, Martin (ed.) 2005, *Encyclopedia of international relations and global politics*, London: Routledge. Indispensable resource with entries on all major and minor topics.
Griffiths, Martin, and O'Callaghan, Terry 2002, *International relations: the key concepts*, London: Routledge. Useful resource that defines key terms.
Smith, Steve, Booth, Ken and Zalewski, Marysia (eds) 1996, *International theory: positivism and beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Valuable overview of the discipline on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Department of Politics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.
There are also a number of academic journals you should acquaint yourself with. I mention only a few of the most important ones here. *International Organization*, *International Studies Quarterly* and *World Politics* from the US; *Review of International Studies*, *International Affairs* and *Survival* from the UK; *Australian Journal of International Affairs* and *Global Change, Peace and Security* from Australia. There are also several important journals that reflect the 'critical turn', *Millennium* (UK), *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* (Canada/India) and *Borderlands* (Australia).

Theory and Practice in Australian International Relations: The Search for Identity and Security

Jim George

Introduction

This chapter concentrates on Australia's ongoing search for **security** and identity since the early years of the twentieth century – the traditional context within which Australian international relations theory and practice have been articulated and evaluated. It suggests that significant patterns of continuity and change have characterised Australian engagement with questions integral to the security/identity thematic – questions of who we are, what we stand for and what we take to be in our national and moral interest to defend.

Initially, it explores the traditional international relations agenda, centred on perceptions of Australia's strategic vulnerability; of enduring threat; the need for 'great and powerful friends'; and an 'insurance policy' logic and forward defence strategy designed to bind a great **power** protector to us and to our region. In particular, in this context, it touches on Australia's responses to the two world wars and the Vietnam War.

It then turns to the period since the Vietnam War and the important reassessments of traditional theory and practice which have become evident in this era. It proposes, more specifically, that the 'Guam Doctrine' (1969), which saw President Nixon announcing the strategic withdrawal of the US from Southeast Asia, effectively forced Australian analysts and policy-makers into a more innovative, independently inclined foreign policy agenda infused with cooperative and culturally inclusivist attitudes rarely in evidence down the years. This 'change' agenda is primarily associated with the regionalist initiatives of ALP governments under Gough Whitlam (1972–75), Bob Hawke (1982–92) and Paul Keating (1992–96).

This post-Guam agenda has rekindled the larger debate about our identity in the world; about how we should respond to regional and global events; about the securing of our borders; about the walking of fine political and ethical lines – about being Australians in the early twenty-first century. These questions remain integral to the international relations debate in the John Howard era (1996–). This debate has seen the Liberal Government accused of a myopic 'back to the future' mind-set, intent on overturning the post-Guam agenda and returning Australia to an (illusory) golden age, ensconced beneath the US security blanket and with economic prosperity underwritten by privileged access to the global marketplace.

This, I suggest, is to largely misrepresent the Howard government's international relations perspective, which has seen it carry forward the post-Guam 'change' program with

remarkable success whilst retaining broad thematic continuity with traditional policy principles. Indeed, relations with Indonesia, with ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in general, with the economically powerful **states** of East Asia and with the North Asian **superpowers** Japan and China are unprecedentedly close, as is the more traditional **alliance** with the US.

This state of affairs may not last very long. There are a range of contemporary factors which help explain it (e.g. shared concerns about global **terrorism**; Australia's commodity boom and growing export-based relationship with China). And there are some larger questions looming for Australian analysts and policy-makers which must be answered with precision if we are to successfully negotiate a future policy path between continuity and change, between old political allies and new economic partners. In particular, questions concerning the possible diminution of Western and US power and influence as the twenty-first century unfolds (Gray 2006; Dibb 2006) are likely to be pertinent.

The final section of the chapter touches on this issue and on some of the broader dangers and opportunities of the current era. The section to follow explores more familiar terrain, in touching on the traditional frame of analytical and policy reference by which Australians have identified themselves and have sought to make themselves secure.

Constructing the traditional agenda: threat, protector and 'insurance policy' logic before World War I

Australia became a **nation** with Federation in 1901, but at the beginning of the twentieth century, and for decades to follow, Australians clung tightly to a British imperial worldview. Australian colonial governments thus concluded that Australian security was ultimately dependent upon the balance of forces in Europe. More precisely, it was felt that it was entirely in Australia's interests to help defend British imperial interests against those of its European competitors, particularly in the Asia-Pacific. It was in this context that Australian forces were despatched overseas to help the British suppress indigenous peoples seeking independence from British imperial domination (Clark 1987; Dupont 1991; Evans and Grant 1991; Millar 1978).

Prior to World War I, then, much of the traditional frame of reference for international relations had been put in place in Australia's thinking about its social, regional and global identity. It was by now a society characterised, paradoxically, by both a strong, resilient and independent character and an abiding sense that it could not defend itself without the protection of Britain, its first and closest 'great and powerful friend' (Grant 1972, 1983; Renouf 1979).

This threat–protector thematic resulted in an 'insurance policy' logic being applied to Australian attempts to secure itself, regionally and globally. This logic proposed that if Australia paid its dues to its British protector – by placing Australian troops at its imperial disposal – Australia would reap the dividends of this strategy in the event of an attack on the Australian continent.

The threat from Asia, principally from Japan, was by 1914 regarded as most imminent in this regard. But it was in France and Belgium and in Turkey, at Gallipoli, in the penultimate

violent spasm of post-1648 European tribal warfare, that Australia was to make its greatest sacrifice in insurance policy terms.

The ANZAC identity as foreign policy

The exploits of the first Australian Imperial Force during the period 1914 to 1918 are the stuff of legend, and this is no place to engage this legend in any detail. Two things, nevertheless, might usefully be said about the issue here. The first is that the extraordinary courage and heroism of the original diggers is an untarnishable dimension of our modern history, deserving of our enduring respect and gratitude.

The second is that the ANZAC legend has not been universally exalted by those seeking to evaluate its nature and implications for Australian foreign policy. Many did question it, and many Australians were far from convinced that a willingness to fight and die in great numbers in far off lands was a marker of mature nationhood. Of most concern here is that the ANZAC identity, woven around the deeds and sacrifices of the Australians caught up in the insane destruction of human life at Gallipoli, the Somme and Bullecourt, was, from its beginnings, a narrative designed to serve a particular cultural and political perspective on Australia and its role in the world. And in the years that followed, as Anthony Burke (2001a: 37) has put it, 'controversy was bled from the memory' of generations of Australians inculcated in this ANZAC legend, who were then disinclined to question it or the unified national identity forged around it.

The great majority of Australians continued, nevertheless, to rally around the (British) flag, or at least around those who had survived Australia's latest and most costly defence of it (Clark 1987: chapter 1).[1] In the wake of World War I, accordingly, the Australian foreign policy tradition became more coherent, its parameters and principles more precise. It continued to represent itself as a society under threat, primarily and increasingly from Japan, therefore requiring British protection. After the sacrifices of the first Australian Imperial Force, however, Australian governments were less inclined to merely follow the British imperial line.

By the 1920s, consequently, there was already a sense of the 'independence within alliance' which was to become the policy motif of the Australian governments some fifty years later. In domestic terms this led to policy strategies designed to tweak the umbilical cord to Britain in less traditional ways, to generate the 'men, money and markets' required to develop a modern capitalist economy populated by millions of white immigrants who would (literally and figuratively) bind together a large and vulnerable continent (Clark 1987: chapter 7).

This did not denote any seismic shift in the traditional international relations agenda. A broad realist mind-set continued to dominate. Economics was perceived as, at best, a supplementary dimension to a world of endemically warring states, provoked into violence and predatory behaviour by a constant **security dilemma** in an effectively anarchical system. The Australian articulation of this realist scenario was particularly stark, centring on the vulnerability of an isolated continent surrounded by alien, threatening forces in an unremittingly dangerous world.

By the early 1930s at least two major historical factors were acting to strengthen this realist worldview and weaken its liberal alternative. The first was the Great Depression and

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[1] The cost was indeed great: 60,000 dead and 90,000 wounded from a volunteer army of around 400,000, drawn from a total population of four million.

the worldwide economic crisis associated with it. The second was the (related) upsurge in Japanese expansionism which was eventually to transform the enduring Australian security nightmare into reality. This reality was infused, initially, with traditional ritual and rhetoric as Australia declared **war** on Germany and its allies, simultaneously with Britain, in September 1939, and declared war on Japan in 1941.

World War II: reassessing the insurance policy

Events in Europe quickly took precedence in the Australian political agenda in the early years of World War II. The defeat of France in June 1940 was a massive body blow to Britain, now effectively isolated and vulnerable to fascist invasion. More pertinently, British-controlled Singapore and French-controlled Indochina were now also extremely vulnerable, and any Australian sense of a European imperialist buffer between it and Japan quickly dissipated. The fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 only accelerated the sense of peril in Australia.

By now, however, Prime Minister John Curtin had acted in the manner which ensured his place in Australian political folklore, in turning to a new 'great and powerful friend' to protect the Australian continent against a possible Japanese invasion. A year earlier the US President, F. D. Roosevelt, had informed Australia that it would not receive US assistance if attacked by Japan (Millar 1978: 141). By the end of 1941, however, things had changed. The US itself had been attacked at Pearl Harbor and had been forced out of the Philippines. It therefore required a strategically suitable site in the Pacific to strike back at the Japanese. Consequently, as T. B. Millar (1978: 161) suggests, 'The United States did not come to the aid of Australia, it came to use Australia, and in using her, kept her safe'.

Australia in 1942 was 'used' in a mutually beneficial manner by its new protector, with mainly American forces defeating the Japanese navy in two crucial Pacific battles – in the Coral Sea and off Midway Island – effectively ensuring there would be no invasion of Australia and forcing the Japanese into land-based assaults (in Papua and New Guinea) and sporadic attacks on Australian cities. Australia's counter-attacks in the Kokoda campaign of 1942 subsequently became the focal point of a renewed sense of wartime unity and identity and the starting point of the post-war tradition of Australian strategic analysis, as a **Cold War** frame of reference began to dominate international relations.[2]

The Cold War, the American alliance and ANZUS

Initially, the Cold War posed a significant dilemma for an Australia still concerned about Japan, and preoccupied with traditional threat scenarios in the Pacific region. The problem was that the US was now concerned with the 'central balance' struggle against the Soviets in Europe, and preoccupied with reconstructing Japan as a political and economic bulwark against the USSR and **communism** in North Asia.

Nevertheless, by judiciously refocusing its insurance policy strategy in the context of the Cold War, Australia was able to get what it wanted from its post-World War II protector – a treaty intimating, if not ensuring, protection from present and future threats. This it achieved following its enthusiastic commitment to the US in the Korean conflict (1950–53) and the signing of the **ANZUS** Treaty (binding Australia, New Zealand and the US in a security alliance) in September 1951.

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[2] Again the cost of Australian involvement in this conflict was high: 34,376 dead (Millar 1978: 159).

> **Box 1.1:   Discussion points**
>
> **Traditional Australian foreign policy**
>
> Themes:
> • threat–protector-alliance
>
> Concepts:
> • power politics
> • strategic realism
> • 'great and powerful friends'
>
> Strategies:
> • 'insurance policy'
> • American alliance
> • 'forward defence'

Australian governments have continued to argue the merits of ANZUS since this time, even though New Zealand has long since discarded it and its critics have sought to invalidate its strategic significance. Above all, it was Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War which prompted widespread criticism of the ANZUS relationship and which raised major doubts about its political judgment, independence and post-World War II identity.

Vietnam and the Guam Doctrine: thinking beyond the traditional agenda
The Menzies Liberal government saw the Vietnam War as the opportunity it had been waiting for – to finally consolidate an American military presence in Southeast Asia. It was, moreover, the perfect opportunity to illustrate the validity of the forward defence strategy to the government's critics (Pemberton 1987; Phillips 1988; Sexton 1981).

In April 1965, Australia committed an infantry battalion to Vietnam. Between 1965 and 1972 some 50,000 Australians would serve there; 508 would die and thousands more would be physically and mentally scarred by the experience. Around three million Vietnamese were to die in the horrific war, along with 58,000 Americans. At its end Australia's traditional foreign and defence policies were in tatters, and some particularly nasty communist-influenced regimes had been swept to power in the region during the chaos of the war (for example in Cambodia and Laos).

Some Australians warned of this outcome and urged a more independent response in the Australian **national interest** (Kiernan 1978: chapter 11).[3] This was a more widespread concern by 1969 as the nature of the war became clearer and Australia's reasons for fighting it became more obscure. In the US Richard Nixon had come to power vowing to end the war and remove American forces from Vietnam. Nixon outlined his strategy for this process in the 'Guam Doctrine' of July 1969 (see Box 1.2). The full implications of this statement were not felt immediately, but as the US began to withdraw its troops and develop its '**détente**' initiatives with the USSR and China, more serious questioning began about Australian involvement in Vietnam and about the broader traditional international relations agenda.

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[3] The ALP leader Arthur Calwell took this position and a few intellectuals also confronted the realist Australian mainstream on this issue. See for example Burton 1954 and Girling 1969.

Box 1.2: Terminology

The Guam Doctrine (1969)

The 'Guam Doctrine' was part of the Nixon/Kissinger plan to extricate the US from Vietnam and Southeast Asia. 'US allies will now have to think and plan more independently – the US is leaving the region as military force.'

The ALP, now under Gough Whitlam, caught the mood for fundamental change in Australia and was sufficiently buoyed by this to win the 1972 election. And Whitlam also promised a complete withdrawal from Vietnam as part of a radical overhaul of Australian foreign policy and its broader social identity.

Australia and the post-Guam 'change' agenda

The Whitlam whirlwind (1972–75): winds of fundamental change?

Domestically, Whitlam moved quickly to establish a social and legislative framework for radical policy transformation (Kelly 1976; Patience and Head 1979). His foreign policy initiatives were also radically inclined. Consequently, after withdrawing Australian troops from Vietnam, Australia granted official recognition to the communist government of China, granted independence to PNG, took an antagonistic position on the apartheid regime in South Africa, and supported many of the attitudes and aims of Third World countries in the **UN** and elsewhere (Evans and Grant 1991: chapter 2).

Above all Whitlam reached out to Asia, and to Indonesia in particular. The destinies of Australia and Indonesia were 'inseparable', he argued, and Indonesia was to be the new cornerstone of Australia's foreign and defence policies, now to be focused on our immediate region and on the economic and political opportunities to be found there, rather than on traditional threat scenarios. The forward defence strategy was finished, he insisted, and so was any need to pay insurance policy dues for traditional forms of protection (Millar 1978: 410). Indonesia, under President Soeharto, was particularly crucial, argued Whitlam, now that it was intent on restoring 'principles of harmony and justice, democracy and freedom' throughout the Archipelago (Burke 2001a: 141).

This was never an accurate assessment of the Soeharto regime's intent, and in the present context it signifies something important about Whitlam's radicalism and Australia's new 'change agenda' after Vietnam and Guam – that perhaps it was not that new or radical after all. It signifies, more precisely, that a lingering and powerful traditionalism remained within ALP foreign policy thinking after 1972. Certainly, it exposed a major disjuncture in Whitlam's thinking – between a commitment to global justice and **human rights** on the one hand – and a commitment to a brutal New Order regime on the other.

Consequently, the Soeharto regime was to be supported, as imperialist Britain had been supported, and as the military adventurism of the US had been supported – for reasons of *realpolitik* – because it could maintain **order** in the largest and most powerful state in our region and therefore serve our perceived national and regional interests. A traditional blind

eye was thus to be turned to its substantial dark side as it became a regional 'great and powerful friend' – a northern bulwark against potential threats and regional instability. There was, in short, a powerful element of traditional (realist) continuity amid the frenetic (liberal) policy practice of the Whitlam era.

This became crystal clear in 1975 when the Portuguese left East Timor and Indonesia prepared to invade the island. Australia now needed to make a choice between its new identity, as a champion of post-**colonialism** and self-determination, and its old fears about endemic threats emanating from an alien region. Whitlam emphasised the latter scenario, and gave his tacit (and crucial) support for the invasion, at great cost to the East Timorese and the principles of human rights in the post-Vietnam era (Burke 2001a: chapter 4; Dunn 1983, 1996). However, by the time Indonesia invaded (in December 1975), Whitlam had been brought down in the infamous Dismissal affair (11 November 1975) and succeeded by the conservative Malcolm Fraser.

The Fraser years: continuity, change and the return of the Soviet threat (1975–83)

Fraser reinvoked a notion of 'enlightened **realism**' as a counterpoint to the perceived radicalism of the Whitlam years. And Fraser re-introduced the Soviet threat scenario as the primary concern of Australia's global perspective while maintaining positive rather than enthusiastic support for our outreach initiatives in the Asia-Pacific. Above all Fraser restated the need for the American **alliance** and ANZUS, and re-emphasised the possibility of threats to Australian identity and security in an increasingly volatile international environment (Dupont 1991: 78–80).

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 only enhanced the alarm within the Fraser government. This, following Vietnam's invasion of Pol Pot's Cambodia (1978); the overthrow of the US-backed Shah of Iran by Islamic militants (1979); China's attack on Vietnam (1979) and the increasing numbers of Vietnamese boat people arriving in northern Australia, saw Fraser ramping up the old threat–protector rhetoric in a manner that put paid to any sense that the Whitlam era marked the end of the traditional foreign policy agenda.

Fraser nevertheless maintained key elements of the Whitlam approach. In 1976 he visited communist China, with enhanced trade relations in mind, and he continued to express Australia's antipathy towards apartheid in South Africa (Evans and Grant 1991: 28–9; Millar 1978: 426–7). The most obvious foreign policy continuity, however, concerned relations with Indonesia, where Fraser's fear of a Soviet-Vietnamese axis in the region led him to maintain Australia's aid and support for the Soeharto regime and its occupation of East Timor.

This produced some odd moments of foreign policy logic – which saw Fraser berating the Soviets for aggressive interventionism in Afghanistan, while endorsing this activity elsewhere (e.g. the US in Central America and Indonesia in East Timor); and which saw Australia effectively supporting Pol Pot's genocidal regime at the UN as part of an ongoing American strategy to 'punish' Vietnam. Conversely, at the same time Fraser was opening up Australia to thousands of Vietnamese **refugees**. This move significantly accelerated Australia's post-World War II transformation from the 'White Australia' project to a country based on multiculturalism and integration in the Asia-Pacific region (Kelly 1992: 4).

Overall, Australian foreign policy in the early 1980s was in a kind of schizophrenic state, driven both by deeply held traditional principles and an emerging recognition of ourselves

and our global environment at odds with the traditional agenda. The Hawke and Keating Labor governments which were to dominate Australian politics for the next thirteen years (1983–96) understood these tensions and confronted them, both in pushing forward a global free trade doctrine and in an increased focus on cooperative regionalism while attending to traditional sensitivities within the Australian community. This enterprise was managed more successfully by the Hawke government than by its successor.

Hawke and Keating: towards regional integration and global neoliberalism

Domestically, Hawke drew upon his great popularity and pedigree as a former trade union leader to transform the Australian economy and the traditional protectionist culture of the labour movement as his government accelerated Australia's integration into the neoliberal global economy. In foreign policy Hawke made clear his unwavering commitment to the American alliance and ANZUS.

This created friction within ALP ranks alarmed by the Reagan administration's 'second Cold War' rhetoric and its aggressive interventionism in Central America and elsewhere. Consequently, the Hawke government sought to distance itself from some elements of US policy, and the Dibb Report (1986), commissioned by the government, re-emphasised the 'independence in alliance' theme, proposing that Australia faced no traditional threats and that its security priorities should, henceforth, be focused on continental rather than 'forward' defence.[4]

Nevertheless, a deep attachment to traditionalism remained. In particular, the relationship with Soeharto's Indonesia was strengthened under the Hawke government. The official line was that good relations with Soeharto and the Indonesian military allowed Australia the opportunity to voice its reservations and (indirectly) assist the beleaguered East Timorese. A more cynical reading of events posits continuing geostrategic anxieties and negotiations over the oil reserves in the Timor Gap as intrinsic to Australia's ongoing support for the Indonesian occupation (Burke 2001a; Dunn 1983, 1996). Whatever the case, a blind eye continued to be turned to the Soeharto regime even when Gareth Evans succeeded Bill Hayden as foreign minister in 1988, and proclaimed a new age of Australian thinking on questions of Australian security and identity.

Evans became foreign minister at a moment when the Cold War was over to all intents and purposes. Evans, like Fukuyama (1989), proclaimed this the moment when the power of liberal ideas and the global marketplace had finally come of age in international relations. In this context, argued Evans, the 'middle power' diplomacy of Australia could act as a catalyst for a global transition towards a more just, more peaceful twenty-first century (Evans 1993; Evans and Grant 1991).

This was not quite the **idealism** it sometimes appeared. The Australian commitment to neoliberal **globalisation** was always predicated upon its support for American power and American-dominated multilateral institutions (the **International Monetary Fund**, the **World Bank**, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the World Trade Organization) as the primary agencies of global cooperation and change. In 1989, accordingly, Bob Hawke was prominent in the establishment of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (**APEC**), an organisation designed to further embed Australia in a vibrant economic region whilst reconfirming

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[4] The White Paper on *The defence of Australia* (1986) was authored by Paul Dibb.

our allegiances to the US and its global hegemonic strategy. A year later this traditional allegiance was reiterated, in unequivocal terms, when Hawke acceded to the request of George Bush senior that Australia provide a troop commitment to the multinational force in the 1991 Gulf War. Hawke made this decision without consulting his Cabinet, the Parliament or the Australian people. The decision reignited the debate over whether Australia had indeed gone beyond its traditional mind-set or whether it remained bound by old fears, old logics and old dependencies.

Keating and the acceleration of a new Australian identity

When Paul Keating succeeded Hawke in 1991 he sought to answer this question by posing another: 'where are Australia's primary foreign policy interests at the end of the twentieth century?' The answer, he insisted, was simple enough: our future is in Asia and among the bustling, high-performance economies of the Asia-Pacific (Darwell 2005). This did not mean that traditional relationships were to be dismissed or ignored, and Keating continued a supportive posture in regard to the American alliance. But the Keating era did see a dramatic acceleration of regional integration and cooperative security themes intrinsic to post-Guam foreign policy, themes which had been made coherent under Whitlam, were tentatively retained under Fraser and then prioritised under Hawke.

Keating significantly stepped up the pace of political and economic reform in regard to these themes, urging Australia to seize the (neoliberal) moment and transform itself in ways that would enhance its security and competitiveness in a rapidly changing world. Australia, he insisted, must move beyond any vestige of British colonial cringe and establish itself as a modern republic; confront the need for reconciliation between black and white Australians; and represent itself proudly and confidently as a multicultural society (Watson 2002). And in our region Australia must draw even closer to Indonesia, an Asian, Islamic neighbour crucial to our cultural development and future independent identity, as well as our political and economic destiny.

Keating's personal relationship with Soeharto, and his eagerness to embrace Indonesia's New Order regime and its military forces, underlined his passionate commitment to this new Australian identity. It also highlighted his lack of political and ethical judgment and his lack of appreciation of the unwillingness of many Australians to 'seize the historical moment' with quite the same relish that he did.

The result was that in 1996 the ALP tumbled out of power amid a resurgence of 'traditional' attitudes regarding Australian identity and our relations with Asia (via 'Hansonism') and with recriminations aimed at the Labor Party about its willingness to expose Australian workers to the vicissitudes of the free market and globalisation.

The Howard years: back to the future?

The primary beneficiary of all this was John Howard who came to power in 1996 with a mandate, of sorts, to slow down if not halt the Keating momentum towards a new Australian identity in the era of neoliberal globalisation. The result, Howard's critics argue, has been a 'back to the future' scenario for Australia in which the traditional agenda has been reconvened, the threat–protector theme reinvoked and a conservative nostalgia re-established for crimson ties of kinship with white, Western allies on the other side of the world.

Box 1.3:   Discussion points

Post-Guam (1970s–)

Themes:
• regional integration
• special relationship with Indonesia
• economic realism

Concepts:
• neoliberalism
• free market globalism
• Asia-Pacific security regimes

Strategies:
• cooperative regionalism
• multilateralism
• middle-power diplomacy
• closer ties to ASEAN and China

Howard is undoubtedly a conservative and his cultural instincts are undoubtedly traditional, but this 'back to the future' charge is probably no more accurate a characterisation of the Howard era than is the condemnation of Keating for having ditched the US alliance in Australia's headlong rush into Asia. In both cases a post-Guam thematic continuity is evident in the practices, if not the rhetoric, of Australian governments seeking to walk fine lines between old and new partners in the pursuit of our foreign policy and security goals.

Howard has unequivocally supported the American alliance as the 'most important' relationship on Australia's global agenda. And since the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US he has reiterated and strengthened his support for the Bush Doctrine and for US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2003. In the latter case (following Bob Hawke's lead) he committed Australian forces to another Gulf war amid deep reservations in the Australian community and widespread disquiet globally.

But Howard's rekindling of the American alliance is not quite the 'back to the future' project it seems. Rather, he has assiduously, if less passionately, sought to maintain the Hawke–Keating integrationist project with the Asia-Pacific region and, if anything, has enhanced our political relations with ASEAN and with our two greatest erstwhile threats in Asia – Japan and China. In this regard he has astutely taken advantage of some good political fortune arising from some otherwise very unfortunate circumstances in our region.

The Asian financial crisis, for example, enabled him to stress the wisdom and necessity of a more balanced approach to Australia's political and economic relations. The consequent fall of Soeharto in 1998 allowed, in turn, the conservative Howard to do what the left of the ALP had been urging since 1975 and 'liberate' East Timor from New Order rule.

Since this time the atrocities of September 11 and the Bali bombings have drawn Australia, Indonesia and the ASEAN countries closer. Under Howard, too, Australia has become integrated with the powerful economies of East Asia in a manner that Whitlam, Fraser, Hawke and Keating could only have imagined in earlier decades. All this, plus the agreement on oil resources in the Timor Gap, has seen Howard's regionalist policy achieving much more than one might expect from any mere addendum to a 'back to the future' policy.

Box 1.4:   Discussion points

The Howard years (1996–)

Prime Minister John Howard's government has been characterised by:
- tension between 'traditional' and post-Guam inclinations
- ideological support for American alliance
- continuation of regionalist agenda
- post-September 11 invocation of traditionalist principles, but
- close relations with ASEAN and China.

Howard's judgment in all of this is open for critical assessment, nevertheless. In the aftermath of East Timorese independence his triumphalism and momentary endorsement of Australia's 'deputy sheriff' status were inappropriate and politically unwise. Most importantly, major reservations remain concerning Howard's support for the Bush administration and the war in Iraq, with increasing numbers of Australians sceptical of his 'traditional' judgment on this matter.

Conclusion

Beyond the immediate issue of Iraq a larger question needs to be answered regarding Australia's traditional commitments – not just by Howard but by any subsequent Labor government. It concerns a question not seriously asked by either major party in the post-World War II era – that of the possible dangers of our long-term reliance upon Western (primarily American) cultural and political identity and economic and strategic security.

The English conservative scholar John Gray and the Australian strategic analyst Paul Dibb have recently highlighted these dangers, in proposing that the era of Western global primacy might come to an end as the twenty-first century unfolds, and that the US might well be accelerating its own demise as global hegemon in this context (Dibb 2006; Gray 2006).

The demise of the US has been prophesised before, of course, but rarely by commentators with such impeccable realist credentials. The proposition is not that the US is about to suddenly lose its power and influence, but that in the larger historical context US **hegemony** has perhaps already passed its zenith. More specifically, that its lack of strategic prudence in the post-Cold War era is already creating military overstretch and exposing its global limitations at a moment when serious systemic antagonism is growing towards US hegemonic ambition. Crucially too, it is argued, the massive and increasing US national debt is a fiscal disaster waiting to happen.

This all has obvious resonance for Australia in a future global scenario in which China and India will have a far greater presence; where Asia in general will have much greater cultural and political significance; and where old adversaries might again seek major global status – a fiercely nationalist Russia perhaps. The most immediate danger is that China might seek to supplement its economic rise to global power by constructing a regional and global politico-strategic coalition against the US and its closest allies.

If it does Australia will be forced to confront issues of its identity and security more keenly than ever before. The results, of course, do not have to be negative. In the post-Guam period Australia has indicated a capacity to think beyond the confines of traditional agendas and pragmatically adjust to changing circumstances. There will, however, be very little margin for error in the future concerning the questions of Australia's identity and security – questions of who we are, what we stand for, and what we take to be in our national and moral interest to defend.

Questions

1. If the major themes of a traditional Australian foreign policy approach are 'threat', 'protector' and alliance, why is this?
2. Why is there concern in some quarters about the ANZAC legend as the foundation of Australian identity?
3. The Hawke and Keating governments, in particular, sought to transform Australian foreign policy and Australian identity. What prompted their sense of urgency in the 1980s and 1990s?
4. Why were successive Australian governments (both Labor and Liberal) so enamoured of the Soeharto New Order regime in Indonesia?
5. The Howard government is sometimes accused of a 'back to the future' mentality. What does this mean? How would one argue for or against this claim?
6. Is Australia a more secure country in the twenty-first century?

Further reading

Burke, Anthony 2001a, *In fear of security: Australia's invasion anxiety*, Sydney: Pluto Press. Superb account of the theories and practices that have shaped Australia's foreign and defence policies since Federation.

Cotton, James, and Ravenhill, John 2007, *Trading on alliance security: Australia in world affairs, 2001–2005*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Tenth and latest volume in the 'Australia in world affairs' series which provides a very useful resource that traces Australian defence, foreign and trade policies.

Evans, Gareth, and Grant, Bruce 1991 *Australia's foreign relations in the world of the 1990s*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. Important statement of Australia's place in the world by one of the country's most thoughtful and eminent foreign ministers.

Part 1
Theories of International Relations

International Relations Theory in an Era of Critical Diversity

Jim George

Introduction

This chapter introduces the range of theoretical perspectives and issues that have animated the study of international relations in Australia and abroad. First, it explains why theoretical reflection is indispensable to explaining and understanding international relations. Second, it addresses unavoidable ontological and epistemological issues in the quest for theoretical understanding. Third, it traces the growth of mainstream international relations **theory**. Fourth, it analyses the rise of diverse critical approaches to the study of international relations. Finally, it maps the developments of international relations theory in Australia.

The necessity of theory

Students in International Relations are often wary of 'doing' theory. Sometimes they are frightened of it, sometimes hostile to it. The reasons for these attitudes vary. Theory, it is often proclaimed, is too difficult, too abstract or irrelevant to the real world. Thankfully, these attitudes are changing as International Relations students become more aware of sophisticated debates about the nature and role of theory in understanding and explaining the real world they speak of and live in. These debates illustrate that theorising is not something one can choose to avoid; that in the process of giving meaning to the things, peoples, events and controversies in the world, we are engaged in a theoretical process, explicitly or otherwise.

In particular, we cannot simply observe the everyday world of international relations without giving theoretical meaning to what we are seeing. And in this process of observation, of course, we might well bestow different meanings on the same event, as we theorise these 'real world' things in different ways. For example, when we see Prime Minister Howard enthusiastically supporting the Bush administration's Iraq War policy, what meaning are we to accord this action? Is it a prudent, justifiable action designed to serve Australia's national **security** interests? Or is it an action designed to further bind us to US foreign policy, a commitment likely to make us more vulnerable in security terms?

Rarely are the questions of contemporary international relations as clear cut as this. More often than not we are concerned with multiple shades of grey when making judgments

on complex foreign policy issues. But the point is clear enough: when one seeks to explain something in the real world of international relations, it is never enough to just 'look at the facts', because the facts – in this case John Howard's policy decision on Iraq – can be accorded a range of different meanings and interpretations depending on which facts are selected and how they are understood, processed and prioritised; depending, more precisely, on the theoretical frame of reference one brings to them.

We still, nevertheless, have to make judgments on such issues. Indeed, as Australian citizens it is imperative that we do so. But we have to be aware that our judgments do not rest on some infallible foundation of absolute correctness, but on a process of theoretically framing the world which provides 'correct' cognitive and political meaning for us. This need not lead to either philosophical or political relativism. It is not good enough to conclude that because there might be no single, irreducible way of understanding the political world we need not bother thinking seriously about where we stand on important contemporary issues. On the contrary, because our thinking, social behaviour and political judgment are not determined by absolute categories of truth or reality, we must think ever more seriously about the theorised truths and reality which give us the political and ethical foundations on which we live our lives.

Our task as students of International Relations is to become increasingly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the theorised positions we take, to acknowledge that these positions are, by definition, never beyond question. This chapter seeks to help in developing this awareness. It seeks to illustrate that international relations theory is an exciting and stimulating area of study which engages a range of difficult but crucial questions about human knowledge, political **power** and possible global futures. International Relations traditionally asks questions about 'man, the **state** and **war**' (Waltz 1959), but since the 1980s has been re-articulated and refocused to include questions of identity, religion, global poverty, **terrorism**, gender, ecology and ethics in a complex contemporary world. And, in an Australian context, it asks questions of who we are, what we stand for and how we should live and engage with others in the twenty-first century (see chapter 1).

To begin to adequately address questions such as these one needs to go beyond a simple 'current affairs' approach to international relations. In fact, it is necessary to understand the development of theory in this area since the institutionalisation of the **discipline** in 1919 (see Introduction). It is also necessary to understand those areas of intellectual and political contention that have helped accelerate the current era of critical diversity in international relations theory – particularly the contention concerning questions of the science of international relations.

Ontology, epistemology and the science question in international relations theory

Since the early days of the discipline, questions of ontology, epistemology and the quest for a science of international relations have been issues integral to its major debates.

Ontology is concerned with what one considers to be the fundamental elements of the world. Epistemology is concerned with the question of how we come to know what we know

about these fundamental elements. From this position one can make decisions about one's **methodological** preferences: *how* we illustrate that our ontological premise is correct.

Kant's ontological position, for example, is that self-creating individuals are the fundamental elements of the social world. He 'knows' this, and seeks to illustrate it by reference to developmental history in which individuals' rational and moral capacities gradually realise universal freedom and justice. Realists 'see' the world differently because their ontological and epistemological positions direct their image of reality in a different way. Their ontological position has, arguably, the same focus – individuals – but not of the Kantian variety. The realist individual instead is driven by a lust for power and the relentless pursuit of security. Realists 'know' this also by reference to history – this time the anarchical history of the states-system. Epistemologically, realists concentrate on states and a history of 'recurrence and repetition' rather than developmental change.

It is via this 'meta-theoretical' (i.e. theory about theory) process that Kantian liberals and realists make their theoretical claims for real knowledge. Both have coherent and cogent ways of illustrating their case. Both point to 'history' as the vehicle for their knowledge of reality and yet they are substantially different, holding different implications for understanding international relations and making foreign policy decisions. What then is the truth of the matter? And how is judgment to be made?

These were the kinds of questions which led to the search for a science of international relations. The issue now concerns the question of whether different knowledge claims can be transformed into a single scientifically established knowledge form – a body of objectively gleaned knowledge – generated via methods of the natural sciences. This issue was integral to the early realist–idealist debate in the 1920s and 1930s (the so-called 'first great debate'), and in the 1950s and 1960s it was an issue of stark contention between the mainly American behaviouralists and their traditionalist critics (the so-called 'second great debate'). It remains an ongoing issue of contention in the twenty-first century, particularly with regard to the US core of the discipline where a positivist form of scientific inquiry has held sway since the 1950s (see Box 2.1 and Vasquez 1998).

A broad section of the international relations community has become increasingly opposed to this positivist approach to international relations. This was never an attack on science per se but, ironically, on the anti-scientific tendencies of **positivism** which, its critics argue, has misrepresented and/or ignored some of the most sophisticated dimensions of scientific thinking since the 1920s – in the field of quantum physics in particular.

The point here is that with the shift from seventeenth-century Newtonian physics to twentieth-century quantum physics came the shift from a science based on observable things to a science based on unobservable things – a science of sub-atomic particles as the new building blocks of existence – the new ontological foundations of 'being'. Because they are not directly available to the 'senses' these building blocks of existence cannot be 'observed' in any direct or objective manner – they defy the empiricist epistemology of positivism (see Box 2.1).

The significance of all this for contemporary international relations is that it severely problematises positivist approaches to science, while maintaining a healthy respect for a scientific enterprise which proposes that there are fact and truth and reality in the world, but that it is always contingent fact, and that the truth and reality it speaks of are always infused with theoretical and interpretive dimensions. There is no room for intellectual closure in this scientific enterprise, no room for dogmatic insistence about single, universal truth and/or

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Box 2.1: Terminology

Positivism and science

Positivism utilises empiricist epistemology. Empiricism maintains that only observable facts should form the basis of 'real' knowledge; facts that can be scientifically validated to create a knowledge-base for international relations analogous to natural sciences.
    Werner Heisenberg (1961: 20): 'In atomic physics observations can no longer be objectified . . . The science of nature does not deal with nature itself but in fact with the science of nature as man thinks it and describes it'.

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unchangeable and unchallengeable reality. Equally, there is no room for the notion that theory is divorced from or irrelevant to the 'real world'.

This kind of scientific insight has been rare in international relations circles. For the most part the debate over science and international relations has been carried out as a debate between positivism and its critics. This debate continues into the present with tensions within constructivist theory a particularly evident example of it. But the insights evident at the apex of scientific scholarship have had significant influence within a range of critical international relations theories and we will touch on this influence shortly.

Mainstream international relations theory

For now suffice it to say that the debate over scientific knowledge underlay the more immediate concerns of early international relations scholars at the discipline's foundation in 1919 as they sought to explain the reasons for the carnage of World War I and find ways of avoiding such mayhem in the future. A liberal perspective dominated in the early years of the International Relations discipline and was exemplified in the neo-Kantianism of US President Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924). Wilson urged a new world **order** based on individual liberty and the rule of law, capitalist **free trade**, scientific progress and the establishment of liberal institutions of crisis management such as the League of Nations and the International Court of Justice.

But as the mood again darkened during the years of the Depression and rising ideological extremism, realists attacked **liberalism** as dangerously utopian in the face of extreme danger. E. H. Carr's *The twenty years' crisis, 1919–1939* (1946) is the literary exemplar in this regard. Carr is scathing about liberal idealism at a time of looming catastrophe and about liberal theory more generally in an international environment still characterised, he argues, by the logics and strategies of traditional **power politics**.

A major problem of the inter-war years, Carr proposes, is that under liberal tutelage international relations is in a 'pre-scientific' phase of its development, whereas under **realism** it can become scientifically advanced – dealing with reality as it 'is', rather than how idealists assume it 'ought' to be. This is not quite the simple positivism it might appear. Carr understood that crude dichotomies of 'is–ought' and 'realism–idealism' are unsophisticated and inadequate explanatory devices. But for a variety of reasons concerning the ambiguity of some of his arguments and the pragmatic way in which his work was later read and appropriated by Cold War realists, this dichotomised frame of reference arguably became Carr's major

legacy to realist scholarship. A more appropriate legacy is one which acknowledges *The twenty years' crisis* as an extraordinarily insightful commentary on inter-war international relations as fascism threatened, and as an early attempt to deal with some complex theoretical issues that were not seriously revisited by the International Relations discipline until fifty years later.

After World War II, Carr's arguments were at the forefront of a tough minded realism which came to dominate the international relations agenda. The fascists had been defeated but now the USSR emerged as the major threat on the Western international relations agenda. Consequently, the intellectual and strategic focus of the discipline became the Cold War, with international relations theory increasingly focused on American Cold War perspectives. Hans Morgenthau (1904–80) became the emblematic American realist, with his *Politics among nations* (first published in 1948) largely framing the agenda for generations of students and policy-makers during the Cold War.

Informed principally by Max Weber and Carl Schmitt, Morgenthau's ideas infused realism with a deep intellectual tension derived from the pessimism of much nineteenth-century European thought about 'human nature', and a commitment to the notion that a science of modern political life is possible and necessary. This had a number of implications for Morgenthau's conclusions about international relations in the early years of the Cold War. In particular, it impacted on his conclusion that the struggle for power is the fundamental political fact which determines the foreign policy behaviour of all states (as they pursue their '**national interest** defined as power') in an anarchical system. This leads to a second major proposition: that the pursuit of power by all states in the system is an 'objective law' of international relations. The superiority of realist theory, consequently, is that it is 'governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature' (Morgenthau 1973: 4).

Elsewhere, Morgenthau makes clear the need for realist policy-makers to take into account specific historical and political factors in making judgments on the workings of these 'objective laws'. Like Carr before him, however, the ambiguity and inconsistency of Morgenthau's attempts to answer the 'big' questions of international relations at a time of political crisis resulted in a number of possible interpretations of his positions which were variously seized upon by the international relations community, particularly in the US.

Indeed, Morgenthau articulated both classical and scientific realist influences, and both strains of realism have claimed him as their own. The latter influence helped accelerate the movement towards the 'scientific turn' and positivism in American realism in particular. It was also to be the catalyst for major critiques within realism, and beyond it, by those concerned about the nature of the positivist quest per se.

One internal critique is of special significance: Hedley Bull's 1966 attack on scientific method in international relations, in an article titled 'International theory: the case for the classical approach'. Bull's intervention is important both because he was an Australian, and because his work increased the profile of the so-called 'English School' of international relations, an approach which remains significant in Australia to the present day (Dunne 1998, 2007).

Since the 1970s the critiques of realism and of liberalism have gone well beyond **English School** perspectives. The Vietnam War (1964–73) was the catalyst for much of this wider critique as US foreign policy and its way of thinking about international relations came under increasing scrutiny. The breakdown of the **Bretton Woods** system of international monetary management and the development of an unregulated global marketplace only enhanced the sense that neither realism nor liberalism had the capacity to deal with the changing nature of

an international agenda where questions of poverty, justice and **human rights** were increasingly perceived as first-order issues.

A second critical dimension became more evident at this time, which saw attention paid to the similarities between realism and liberalism – as effectively two sides of the same historical and cultural coin. So many peoples, cultures and interests, it was argued, are left out of the orthodox narratives. The traditional frame of reference, critics contended, was inadequate for understanding a world where ontological commitments to the **sovereign state**, or the sovereign individual, simply do not encompass the experiences of a multifaceted, multi-ethnic, multi-religious world – a world where Western theory and practice might not be dominant in the future.

This critical pace increased in the 1980s and 1990s as a response to the emergence of **neorealism** and **neoliberalism** as the mainstream answers to post-Vietnam, post-Bretton Woods critiques; answers which, on the one hand, reasserted realist notions about structural imperatives and unchangeable principles of **anarchy**, security and fear at the core of modern international relations (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2007) and, on the other, those which reasserted the individualistic free trade mantras of liberalism as the universalistic basis for prosperity and **peace** in a new age of economic globalisation (Friedman 1999).

In both cases the self-interested, power-hungry individual-cum-state is the primary ontological assumption; in both cases universalist and scientifically inclined epistemologies are retained; in both cases systemic order and efficient market performance are considered dependent upon US global hegemony. There are differences between the 'neos' (Lamy 2005), but it has been these *similarities* which have most concerned their critics, and it has been the resulting narrowness of the mainstream agenda that has been a catalyst for much of the critical diversity in international relations theory since the 1990s.

The era of critical diversity

Among radical liberals, for example, there are those who fear the static and militaristic orientations of neorealism and simultaneously reject neoliberal perspectives on globalisation and free market progress. Neoliberalism, it is proposed, is actually designed to enhance the power and prosperity of the global North, whatever its rhetoric about liberalisation and democratisation. In this context it is producing a 'global apartheid' as privilege and poverty increase in the world (Falk 1999). Simultaneously it, and the neorealism underpinning it, is provoking global dissent and 'blowback' terrorism aimed at the major Western states (Johnson 2000). Much of the empirical analysis in this liberal critique centres on the question of global governance and how major economic and political institutions might be restructured to assist the world's 'have nots' (George 2004).

Marxists, of course, have been concentrating on the relationship between the global rich and poor for many years. And while **Marxism** was effectively silenced in mainstream international relations during the Cold War, there is now a renewed interest in what Marx had to say about advanced capitalist societies, globalisation and the limitations of liberalism in international relations (Colas and Saull 2006). Critical challenges have come also from neo-Marxist perspectives, with the works of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), particularly important in prompting a range of contemporary counter-hegemonic challenges to the mainstream in recent years. Central to this project, accordingly, are a range of works

on critical social movements around the world seeking, in their different ways, to overcome the impact upon them of hegemonic power (Gill 1993).

Another dimension of this project has seen scholars such as Robert Cox critically engaging the process by which certain ideas and attitudes become hegemonic in international relations. Cox indicates this via his oft-quoted proposition that theory 'is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose' (Cox 1981: 128). His own purpose here is to reiterate that there are no neutral vantage points in international relations theory, and to illustrate how neorealism seeks to present itself as an objective analysis of the world 'as it really is'. It is, Cox argues, a problem-solving theory which accepts the **status quo**, seeking only to make the present system work more efficiently.

Critical theory, by contrast, locates current problems in a broader historical and intellectual context. This helps it question how the system came to be the way it 'is', how various social forces impacted upon its historical development, and how further change might be possible (Cox 1987; Linklater 1996). These themes have been central to other works influenced by Gramsci and **Kant**. Those of Andrew Linklater, for example, whose work resonates with critical concerns about new forms of identity in the age of globalisation, about the possibilities for an ethics of human community, and about the relationship between knowledge and power in international relations (Linklater 1990a, 1998).

Postmodernism gleans its primary understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power from Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) who proposed that all knowledge claims, particularly those invoking universalist stances on behalf of the truth, or the reality of human life, are actually driven by a 'will to power' on the part of the claimant. In the 1980s and 1990s postmodern scholars sought to engage the dominant 'neos' in international relations as foundationalist discourses. Foundationalism in this sense represents a claim to knowledge which is beyond challenge, beyond change, beyond social reassessment and adaptation (see chapter 7).

In this regard an important political aim associated with exposing the theoretical limitations of the 'neos' is to create 'thinking space' for policy options previously excluded from the 'art of the possible' in traditional international relations. This was a theme central to David Campbell's critical inquiry into the Bosnian War (1998) and it is central, more generally, to the second wave of postmodern international relations literature which has moved beyond the conflict over theoretical first principles to confront a broad spectrum of issues concerning everyday international relations policy practice (see Campbell 2007).

Constant within postmodernist writings is concern for those excluded from the dominant discourses of power politics and free market individualism. In this sense postmodernism shares an ethical position with critical theorists like Linklater, and with much feminist scholarship. Indeed, at the core of early feminist literature was the claim that women had been systematically excluded from the agenda (see chapter 6). It was argued that international relations theory has never been gender neutral; on the contrary, its orthodox frame of reference – centred on notions of 'fallen man', endemic anarchy and/or autonomous, aggressive, market-oriented individualism – rests on a deeply gendered caricature of humankind (Grant and Newland 1991; Tickner 1992). Since the 1990s a second wave of feminist literature has continued its theoretical assault on gendered international relations (Tickner and Sjoberg 2007; see also chapter 6).

This flourishing feminist literature is very much an indication of the 'age of diversity' in international relations. Even more so perhaps in regard to post-colonial theory which is

in the first phase of its challenge to the disciplinary orthodoxy. Above all, it insists that its voice now be heard on the international relations agenda. The concern of the diverse peoples of Africa, Asia, the Arab world and elsewhere to speak in one's own voice has particular resonance for post-colonial scholarship because of its central argument – that the voices, cultures and histories of colonised peoples were effectively erased with the domination of the world by Western peoples in the modern era (Darby 1997; Todorov 1984). More specifically still, Edward Said (1935–2003) was right about the process of 'orientalism' (1979) which transformed the identities, cultures and religions of colonised peoples into simple caricatures of imperialist imagination, most often in terms which rendered them inferior to their colonial rulers and susceptible therefore to Western discipline and punishment. They reject not only the culturally specific and imperialistic image of human society, but also liberal and radical alternatives which remain ignorant of cultural otherness, or are patronising when it comes to the 'poor world' (see Chowdrey and Nair 2002; Spivak 1987). In all of these contexts it argues for global inclusiveness and a toleration of difference as another kind of universalism.

All these critical perspectives are currently making their contributions to a vibrant international relations theory agenda in the twenty-first century, as is **constructivism** which is, arguably, the most influential of the critically inclined perspectives on the current theory agenda. This is primarily because it has been accepted and in many ways appropriated by the international relations mainstream in the US. It has used this opportunity to produce a body of theoretical and empirical work which has added insightful dimensions to the 'critical turn' in international relations theory. Importantly, this has allowed constructivists to refashion the lexicon of real meaning in American international relations circles, in particular, on issues of power, identity and rationality and most famously on anarchy, which as Wendt has put it 'is what states make of it' (Wendt 1992).

This is not simply to wish anarchy away in idealist fashion, but to underline the point that nothing in international relations exists independently of the meanings and practices of social actors. This has significant implications for the way in which the behaviour of states, global organisations and individual actors might be understood, and constructivist writings have explored these possibilities in works on the ideas, **norms**, rules and meanings which constitute everyday theory and practice in international relations (Kratochwil 1989; Reus-Smit 2004).

A good deal of this constructivism continues to utilise traditional positivist methodology; hence its popularity in the US. Some constructivism, however, has a more radical edge and pursues the 'social construction of reality' theme on issues of global peace and systemic transformation. This dimension of constructivism has, like the other critical approaches noted above, become part of Australian international relations theory since the 1980s where it has, to some extent, overlapped with elements of the English School (see chapter 17).

International relations theory in Australia

One cannot really speak of an International Relations discipline in Australia until the early 1960s when a number of Australian scholars returned from the UK to take up residence in the first designated centre of International Relations excellence at the Australian National

University (ANU) in Canberra. They brought with them an English School realism, a Cold War mind-set and a general disinterest in matters theoretical. Their worldview was one which 'proceeded from realist assumptions about the interstate nature of international relations' and which concentrated on issues of Australian and US foreign policy, the causes of war, **balance of power** processes among the major states and Cold War crisis management (Indyk 1985: 286).

The English School training of the first generation of Australian international relations scholars ensured that the harder-edged realism of much US Cold War thinking was avoided in Australia. Hedley Bull's presence as Professor of International Relations at the ANU from 1967–77 also militated against this approach. Bull (1966) was interested in theoretical issues too, at least to the extent of his scathing dismissal of American behaviouralism, on behalf of classical realism. But for the most part there was silence on the major theoretical debates and controversies of the age. Consequently, the US role in Vietnam was supported by most Australian realists in predictable terms: as intrinsic to Australia's security and defence policy; as crucial in preventing the spread of **communism** and halting Chinese expansionism (Harries 1967; Millar 1978; Miller 1967).

Liberal scholars argued that the war was part of a larger historical development of **decolonisation**; that it was a far more nuanced issue than any simple 'domino theory' perspective allowed for; and that China had little to do with the motivations driving the North Vietnamese (Clark 1967; Girling 1967, 1969; Osborne 1970). In general these works suggested that the Australian international relations mainstream really did not comprehend the situation in Vietnam well enough, nor indeed did it understand the changing reality of international relations in the 1960s and 1970s. This, more damagingly, was the conclusion of one of Australia's most illustrious students of the first generation, Martin Indyk – later to become Assistant Secretary of State and US Ambassador to Israel during the Clinton administration – who reflected upon the mediated realism of his ANU years in less than flattering terms. Indeed, as Indyk (1985) proposed, the generally unsophisticated approach to international relations within realist circles raised serious doubts about its adequacy either as an explanation of the **international system** or of Australia's role in it.

There were some outstanding individual scholars produced during this initial realist era (among them Martin Indyk, Ian Clark, Michael McKinley, Des Ball, Ron Huiskins, Peter King, Bob Howard and John Fitzpatrick), and some early realist works retain their insightfulness and prescience (Millar 1978). In the wake of Vietnam, however, the traditional international relations agenda in Australia came under more serious scrutiny and the developing discipline began to adopt a more critical agenda.

Works now appeared which located Australian foreign policy as part of a capitalist world-system underpinned and protected by American hegemonic power (Camilleri 1973). Innovative radical liberal perspectives were beginning to become evident in works on the sociology of international relations (Pettman 1979). A pathbreaking book appeared on Marxism and international relations which appealed for a sophisticated appreciation of its significance (Kubálková and Cruickshank 1980), and works on the Third World were written from 'alternative' perspectives (Girling 1980).

By the 1980s neorealism had become dominant in the US and there was talk of a 'second Cold War' under the Reagan administration. In Australia, Australian Labor Party (ALP) governments came to power and the discipline continued to develop, institutionally

and intellectually. An English School perspective was still very evident but now one saw the acceleration of a discernible 'critical turn' in Australia similar to that occurring elsewhere.

In the broadest sense this was discernible in a government report in the mid-1980s which questioned the threat perception and 'forward defence' strategy at the core of Australian foreign policy (Dibb 1986). Scholars such as Desmond Ball (1988) critically engaged silenced issues of the American alliance concerning, in particular, the US intelligence gathering installations at Pine Gap near Alice Springs; Joseph Camilleri (1987) continued to probe mainstream thinking in a critical work on ANZUS, the Australia, New Zealand and US military alliance; works appeared which questioned orthodox modernisation theory in Western approaches to global economic development (Higgott 1983); and peace research literature flourished, albeit briefly (Mack 1991).

An edited collection of essays published at the ANU in 1988 indicated that more profound changes were now taking place in Australian international relations (Higgott 1988). For the first time it was proposed that questions of epistemology and ontology were intrinsic to the study of international relations. In particular, it was argued, Australian realists could no longer represent the reality of international relations as existing somehow beyond the interpretive and theoretical purview of the observer. Accordingly, Australian realists could no longer simply represent their views as describing the way the world 'is' – but at the very least must be prepared to explain theoretically the nature of their so-called 'real worldism' (Campbell 1988; George 1992). For the most part they did not take up this challenge, but the critical momentum continued with scholars continuing to engage the international relations orthodoxy on a range of previously taken-for-granted premises (Campbell 1990; George 1989, 1992; George and Campbell 1990).

Two works by Andrew Linklater were particularly important in this context. The first, *Men and citizens in the theory of international relations*, first published in 1982 (1990b) offered a philosophical critique of state **sovereignty** and a defence of global ethical obligations. The second, *Beyond realism and Marxism: critical theory and international relations* (1990a), sought to build upon realist insights into power and anarchy and upon Marxist concerns for 'universal **emancipation**' beyond state boundaries (1990a: 4). This was a daunting analytical ambition to be sure, but one which Linklater confronted in sophisticated fashion and which established some qualitative benchmarks for critical scholarship in Australia.

The failure of the realist mainstream to either predict or adequately explain the end of the Cold War only increased the critical surge in international relations theory in the 1990s. Australian critical scholars were by now prominent internationally, producing a range of books and articles which had widespread influence (Campbell 1992, 1998; George 1994; Linklater 1998). Some of this literature cast doubt on the 'liberalised' realism of the Hawke–Keating era and on the ALP's shift towards a neoliberal global strategy (Cheeseman and Bruce 1996; Leaver and Cox 1997). Some of it revisited the 1991 Gulf War, asking questions of that conflict which were to be asked again in 2003 when the 'coalition of the willing' invaded Iraq, about the implications of the conflict on regional and international order and about its implications for Australia's future foreign policy (McKinley 1994).

The 1990s also saw feminist scholars beginning to make their mark on the international relations agenda with Jindy Pettman's *Living on the margins* (1992) and *Worlding women* (1996) important additions to the literature (see also True 2005). Important too was a radical work exploring political economy issues in Asia which questioned the conventional linkage

between economic growth and democratic politics (Robison and Goodman 1996; see also George and McGibbon 1998). And traditional scholars were still making thoughtful and probing contributions to the debate, in the best traditions of the English School (Richardson 1994, 2001).

By the late 1990s a second wave of critical international relations scholarship had become evident. Building upon earlier 'breakthrough' works, and no longer burdened by the need to argue at the level of first principles, it used the clear analytical space to more directly engage some of the crucial international relations issues of the day. Roland Bleiker's Nietzschean-inspired exploration of human agency in a world of structural constraint (2000b) was a significant contribution to this second wave, as indeed was his study of the political complexities on the Korean Peninsula (2005). Important too was Anne Orford's postmodern engagement with **humanitarian interventionism** (1999) and the late Albert Paolini's post-colonial reflections on international relations (1999). Richard Shapcott's *Justice, community, and dialogue in international relations* (2001), with its intellectual roots in the **hermeneutics** of Hans-Georg Gadamer, added a critical-ethical voice to the broadening debate, and Anthony Burke's *In fear of security* (2001a) challenged many traditional premises of Australian security policy by invoking Foucauldian themes.

Challenging conventional theory and practice also were a number of books and articles representing a critical constructivist approach to international relations, Christian Reus-Smit's reworking of the notion of power politics in relation to US foreign policy (2004) being particularly important in this regard. In the past few years comprehensive explanatory chapters and books have also become available to assist Australian students with the complexities of the age of critical diversity in international relations theory (Burchill et al 2005; Devetak 2005a, 2005b; Reus-Smit 2003).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an account of how one might understand not only the evolution of international relations theory since its inception, but also how we might begin to think about the relationship between the diverse theoretical approaches. It has advanced two important propositions: first, that international relations cannot be understood independently of the theoretical frameworks which give meaning to the world. And second, that the development of International Relations as a discipline has seen the progressive enlargement of the theoretical imagination as a diverse range of critical theories have challenged mainstream approaches, internationally and in Australia.

None of this is to suggest that the realist and liberal mainstreams have been swept away on this tide of critical theory. In policy communities and in many areas of the Australian academy the traditional agenda, vocabulary and lexicon of meaning still dominate. Indeed, in the post-September 11 era classical realism has undergone something of a renaissance as attention has shifted back to traditional issues of power, war and international order. But as a number of critical theorists have suggested, realism no longer has an analytical mortgage on the meaning of power in international relations, or on realistic understandings of its implications. Additionally, liberalism faces many challenges as it seeks to articulate a universal voice

beyond the suspicion and cynicism widely held around the world as to its real meaning and intent in an age of globalisation and global governance.

As for the critical approaches touched on here – all of them have strengths and weaknesses. All of them deserve respectful attention, but none of them should be accepted or advocated without rigorous, scholarly inspection and contemplation. This chapter has sought to give you a frame of reference by which this process might usefully begin. You are invited now to continue this process in regard to the more comprehensive treatments of the traditional and critical theory agendas.

Questions

1. Why are questions of ontology and epistemology integral to the international relations theory debate?
2. Why does the issue of 'scientific' international relations theory continue to evoke major disagreement within the international relations theory community?
3. Carr's *The twenty years' crisis*, Morgenthau's *Politics among nations* and Waltz's *Theory of international politics* are arguably the three major realist texts in international relations theory. What does this tell us about the development of the discipline?
4. Are neorealism and neoliberalism 'two sides of the same coin'?
5. What, if anything, are the political and analytical themes which bind together Marxism, critical theory, postmodernism, feminism, post-colonialism and constructivism?
6. What have been the implications of the 'critical turn' in Australian international relations?

Further reading

Burchill, Scott et al 2005, *Theories of international relations*, third edition, London: Palgrave. Comprehensive exposition of the major international relations theories, many of whose contributors are Australian or have studied or taught in Australia.

George, Jim 1994, *Discourses of global politics: a critical (re)introduction to international relations*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. One of the few single-authored texts to provide an overview of contemporary theories of international relations.

Steans, Jill and Pettiford, Lloyd with Diez, Thomas 2005, *Introduction to international relations: themes and perspectives*, second edition, Harlow: Pearson Longman. Excellent introduction to the different theoretical perspectives in international relations.

Liberalism

James L. Richardson

Introduction

This chapter introduces students to a political theory that has held enormous influence in the study of international relations since the discipline's inception. Understanding **liberalism** requires acquaintance with the historical context in which the political arguments for freedom and toleration were first enunciated. After providing a brief survey of some key liberal tenets and the manifestation of these tenets in international institutions and foreign and trade policies, the chapter considers the way that contemporary liberal theories of international relations have developed along **empirical** and normative trajectories.

The historical–political context

Liberalism is often seen as the characteristic political philosophy of the modern West. Its central principles – freedom, (human) rights, reason, progress, toleration – and the **norms** of constitutionalism and **democracy**, are deeply embedded in Western political culture. Nonetheless, liberal theories of international relations were until recently disdained as utopian by international relations scholars no less than by diplomats. The two world wars and the **Cold War** seemed to bear out the realist thesis that the international milieu was inevitably subject to the harsh imperatives of **power politics**.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, the world looks quite different. There is no hostile power threatening the liberal democracies; indeed, major **war** has come to seem unthinkable, and the international economy is organised in accordance with the norms of the liberal market. Liberal internationalism has gained a new relevance. The predominant school of liberal international relations **theory**, most strongly represented in the US, focuses on the forces of change that are regarded as having brought about this transformation: democratisation, economic **interdependence** and institutionalisation. Liberal thinkers outside that school, dispersed internationally and across academic **disciplines**, are concerned with more troubling questions. Can liberalism, grounded in Western historical experience, sustain its universal claims in a world of many cultures? Can liberal ideals really be translated into practice in a world marked by today's extreme inequalities, and if so, how? These theorists are aware of the

need to address tensions among the traditional liberal concepts that have become more acute in today's global setting, and perhaps even to rethink liberalism's fundamental principles.

The term 'liberalism' dates only from the nineteenth century, but the distinctive liberal pattern of ideas crystallised much earlier, in the political struggles of seventeenth-century England, and were formulated as a coherent political doctrine by the English philosopher, John Locke, whose *Two treatises of government* (1988) ranks as the first great liberal text. For Locke the rights and freedoms of the individual were paramount; government should rest on consent, not monarchical or religious authority; its powers should be strictly limited, and it should practise religious toleration.

Liberalism developed as a fully fledged ideology in the ideas of the French **Enlightenment** philosophers and the American founding fathers. History, viewed as the advance of civilisation, had reached a stage where the oppressive absolutist regimes of the day lacked all rational justification. It was time to establish government anew, based on universal principles derived from reason. Liberal rights and freedoms were proclaimed in manifestos such as the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789). Liberal thought on political economy developed along similar lines. Adam Smith's *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* (1975) with its themes of the division of labour, **free trade** and the beneficent 'hidden hand' of the market, remains the Bible of liberal economists, much revered but little read.

Liberal ideas on international relations also took shape in the later eighteenth century. Viewing war as irrational violence, and attributing it to the unrestrained power, vanity and ambition of monarchs, liberals looked to the same remedy as for internal oppression: the removal of the old regime. The republics which were to replace it would have no reason to make war, but would be free to enjoy the benefits of peaceful commerce. There is no major theoretical statement of these ideas, but they were drawn together by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, in a brief essay, 'Perpetual peace' (1970).

Early liberal thought was not democratic. In line with Locke's special emphasis on property rights, 'consent' meant election by property-holders, a small minority. Kant's republics were not democracies. The violence of the French **Revolution** confirmed liberal fears of the 'tyranny of the majority' – or, more simply, 'mob rule'. Liberal democracy dates only from the nineteenth century – relatively early in the US, much later in Europe, initially for men only. Women had to wait until the twentieth century.

Liberalism has always been a broad creed, permitting many variations. Liberal principles have been grounded in different philosophical systems; there are remarkable contrasts in intellectual styles; and there are even major differences over the content of liberal principles. Space permits no more than a mention of philosophical differences: utilitarianism, popularised by Jeremy Bentham ('the greatest happiness of the greatest number') flatly contradicted the natural rights philosophy of most earlier liberals, and the German **idealism** which inspired later nineteenth-century liberals qualified the traditional individualism by introducing a concern for the community.

The intellectual style of the Enlightenment was notable for its self-confidence: liberals appealed to reason for unambiguous answers to all questions, and came under criticism for making light of serious problems, for assuming that there were simple solutions, evident to right reason, and for assuming that 'all good things go together' – that no truly difficult choices need to be made. A quite different style of theorising – reflective and critical, struggling with

> ### Box 3.1:   Discussion points
>
> #### John Stuart Mill, from *On liberty* ([1859] 1983)
>
> > 'The aim, therefore, of patriots was to set limits to the power which the ruler should be suffered to exercise over the community; and this limitation was what they meant by liberty. It was attempted in two ways. First, by obtaining a recognition of certain immunities, called political liberties or rights, which it was to be regarded as a breach of duty in the ruler to infringe, and which if he did infringe, specific resistance or general rebellion was held to be justifiable. A second, and generally a later, expedient was the establishment of constitutional checks by which the consent of the community, or of a body of some sort, supposed to represent its interests, was made a necessary condition to some of the more important acts of the governing power' (60).
> >
> > '. . . the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection . . . the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others' (68).
> >
> > 'The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs or impede their efforts to obtain it' (72).

ethical dilemmas – may be dated from the time of John Stuart Mill ([1859] 1983) (see Box 3.1). This became more characteristic in Europe, especially in the twentieth century, while American liberals remain closer to the Enlightenment tradition.

The most significant difference over the content of liberal principles opened up in the later nineteenth century. While 'classical' liberals retained their faith in the wholly free market ('*laissez-faire*') and in limiting the powers of government to the minimum, a new school of thought was more responsive to the socialist critique of the inequities of the early industrial era. 'Social' liberals saw a positive role for the **state** – in preventing the abuse of economic power and in promoting basic services, for example in public health and education. For classical liberals, freedom meant freedom from control by the state ('negative freedom'); for social liberals it meant, in addition, the opportunity for all members of society to develop their individual capacities ('positive freedom'). This division has proved extraordinarily persistent, re-emerging in the cleavage between today's economic **neoliberalism** and the social or 'inclusive' liberalism of those who seek a more equitable ordering of the economy, at both the national and international levels.

The critique of **imperialism**, challenging the traditional liberal confidence in the virtues of the economic **order**, opened up a further division within liberalism. J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism: a study* (1968) mounted an uncompromising critique of certain tendencies inherent in the liberal society of the day. His wide-ranging analysis of the economic and political sources of imperialism, which he saw as a deformation of liberal **capitalism**, had much in common with the Marxist critique. But whereas Marxists saw no remedy short of war or revolution, Hobson looked to democratic political processes to overcome the vested interests and prejudices which lay behind the phenomenon.

With respect to international relations more generally, nineteenth-century liberalism remained in opposition to the realist assumptions of great-power diplomacy, maintaining the traditional Enlightenment critique but also bringing in realist arguments of the **national interest** to support liberal policies such as free trade, arms reductions, adherence to **international law** and support for liberal movements elsewhere. It became evident that liberal principles could lead to opposing policy choices; for example, with respect to intervention, support for **nationalism** or even involvement in war.

The creation of the League of Nations in 1919 briefly raised hopes for a new liberal international order, hopes that were dampened by the US refusal to join the League and extinguished by the aggression of the Axis powers in the 1930s. Nevertheless, the liberal vision of Woodrow Wilson, the chief sponsor of the League, and in particular his confidence in America leading the way to a universal liberal future, has remained an unquestioned premise of American foreign policy.

The mood associated with the founding of the United Nations in 1945 was more sober, and 'Cold War liberals' soon became reconciled to a protracted struggle against the Soviet Union. The preoccupation with the Cold War diverted attention from the principal postwar liberal achievement: the construction, under American auspices, of a dynamic liberal economic order in the Western world. The unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union opened the way to the worldwide extension of this system (**'globalisation'**), generating in some circles a mood of liberal triumphalism: there was now no alternative, it was proclaimed, to the market economy and liberal democracy (Fukuyama 1989).

In Australia, in view of the timing of white settlement, most of the taken-for-granted assumptions forming the political culture were drawn from the liberal tradition. But attitudes to international relations were an exception. The dominant concern was the perceived threat from the unfamiliar, culturally alien and densely populated Asian continent, and the consequent need for a powerful ally/protector. The predominant foreign policy tradition was realist, with a leavening of liberal rhetoric. The main exceptions were ALP External Affairs Minister H. V. Evatt, at the time of the founding of the United Nations in 1945, and Foreign Minister Gareth Evans at a time of renewed **UN** prominence in the 1990s, both of whom combined realist and liberal themes in their policy thinking. In the economic domain, where Australia traditionally sought to protect its special interests in a predominantly liberal international order, its recent policy reorientation, as we shall see, is based on neoliberal economic theory.

Contemporary liberal international relations theory

The contemporary social sciences draw a basic distinction between empirical and **normative** theory. The former is concerned with the factual: what is the case, what patterns of behaviour can be observed and explained? The latter examines what is desirable or obligatory: what goals should be pursued, what norms should be accepted as binding? The distinction is not as straightforward as is assumed, and indeed raises difficult philosophical issues. Moreover, most significant political questions raise both kinds of issue; the normative and the empirical are not separate worlds. However, since the two types of theory have been developed separately, it is convenient to consider them under these headings.

Box 3.2:   Discussion points

Liberal legacies?

Michael Doyle made a powerful and provocative argument in the mid-1980s that modern liberalism bore two main legacies. First, 'the pacification of foreign relations among liberal states'; and second, 'international "imprudence"' (Doyle 1986: 1156–7). The first legacy is based on the claim that stable liberal democratic **sovereign states** (comprising market economies, the rule of law and democratic representation) historically have never waged war against each other. By exercising restraint, liberal democracies have created a separate 'zone of peace'. The second legacy is that liberal democracies exercise this restraint, and form a separate zone of peace, only among themselves. Liberal democracies have fought, and continue to fight, wars against 'non-liberal' and 'non-democratic' states. Iraq is only the most recent example.

Empirical theory: an emerging liberal order?

As noted earlier, the three most prominent liberal empirical theories are concerned with democracy, international institutions and interdependence. In the forefront of the liberal challenge to **realism** is the thesis of the democratic **peace**. This holds that, contrary to the realist claim that peace depends on the **balance of power**, not on forms of government, the crucial factor is whether or not the governments of the major powers are democracies. In effect, so long as the balance of power favours the democracies, it ceases to be relevant. From this standpoint it is not of fundamental importance whether the present world is 'unipolar' – a quasi-American empire – or multipolar – a coalition of liberal democracies forming a **security community**. In either case there is no danger of major war.

The basis for this confidence is the convincing body of evidence that has been assembled in support of the liberal claim that democracies do not go to war against one another (Russett 1993). Theorists offer two principal explanations for this 'democratic peace'. First, democracies are committed to the principle of resolving political differences non-violently, and they adhere to this in their relations with other democracies no less than in internal politics. Second, the public, who would bear the cost, is unwilling to support war against another democracy. These explanations are plausible, but not conclusive. A realist can argue that the reason for the democratic peace in the twentieth century was that the democracies were allies against a common enemy, and that at present nuclear weapons are a more secure guarantor of peace than the ascendancy of democracy. A Marxist can argue that peace is to be expected so long as the international system is controlled by a transnational ruling business class with an interest in preserving an economic order highly advantageous to it.

Nevertheless, the thesis of the democratic peace has influenced policy thinking in the US far more than other developments in international relations theory. This is not always for the best: scholars of the democratic peace, who never envisaged war as the means of promoting democracy, have been dismayed by the way in which their theories are put into practice (Russett 2005). Australian thinking on international relations, on the other hand, has not been much influenced by the theory. While Australia generally supports the establishment of democratic institutions, it does not share the American zeal for the promotion of democracy.

A second school of liberal theory, institutionalism, finds greater resonance in Australian policy circles. This school, impressed by the increasing prominence of international institutions, is concerned with questions such as: what are their principal functions, what determines their effectiveness, and how much do they 'matter' (that is, are they more than just convenient vehicles for the exercise of power by their strongest members?). This last question shows that institutional theorists take realism very seriously. They do not, like earlier liberals, reject it outright, but argue that it needs to be supplemented. Although institutional theory no longer focuses directly on the goal of promoting peace, there is an assumption that institutions contribute indirectly to this goal by fostering habits of cooperation and a sense of shared interests. Thus, according to the institutionalists, international cooperation is far more extensive than realist theory would lead one to expect. But it is not automatic: a shared interest in peace, for example, or in a clean environment, does not ensure cooperation to achieve it. Institutions can devise means of implementation, the apportioning of costs and assurances against cheating. Through showing how cooperation can be achieved in practice, institutions influence the perception of national interests and shape expectations. At the most general level of abstraction, institutional theorists focus on information, norms and conventions as fundamental aspects of international relations.

Institutions are understood in a broad sense to include much more than formal organisations. The useful concept of an international regime has been introduced to include organisations as well as informal agreements and understandings, and also norms and practices that can decisively influence the effectiveness of organisations. To take an example: the nuclear non-proliferation regime, centred on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the organisation responsible for monitoring it, the International Atomic Energy Agency, includes informal agreements not to export sensitive technology and equipment, **security** assurances to many non-nuclear states, and more generally the concerting of incentives and disincentives to increase the cost of acquiring nuclear weapons; and all this rests on a broad consensus on the dangers of an unrestricted nuclear proliferation. This regime is now under stress, not for the first time; but thus far it has succeeded in keeping the number of nuclear-armed states far below the number technically capable of acquiring the weapons, and once widely expected to do so.

Australian policy thinking for the most part endorses liberal institutionalism – both the general claim that the increasing recourse to international institutions makes for a more predictable, cooperative and thus peaceful environment, and also the specific thesis that it benefits a country like Australia that important sectors of international activity are regulated through generally accepted rules rather than through ad hoc bargaining among the strongest actors. Australian involvement in the World Trade Organization, **arms control** regimes, UN **peacekeeping** and regional economic cooperation can be seen in these terms. And the continuing relevance of an earlier form of liberal institutionalism can be seen in the contrast between the national consensus supporting the UN-sanctioned Gulf War (1991) as against the divisiveness of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which lacked the endorsement of the United Nations. It remains to be seen whether the Howard government's turn to **bilateral** agreements and its endorsement of the Bush administration's '**unilateralism**' foreshadows a trend away from institutionalism, or is merely an interruption of a well-established pattern.

The third theoretical school, commercial liberalism, has seen little innovation, but rather a refinement of the traditional liberal claim that commerce promotes peace. In the years before 1914 liberals were over-optimistic on this score, some going so far as to assert

that the unprecedented interdependence of that era rendered major war impossible. World War I totally discredited this idea, but commercial liberals now advance the plausible but unremarkable thesis that extensive economic links reduce the likelihood of war among those involved. Thus, according to this view, increasing trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region strengthens the incentive on all sides to avoid actions that could lead to major war. The underlying assumption is that commerce enhances prosperity and welfare. Since the early nineteenth century free trade has amounted to an article of faith for liberal economists. International relations scholars, though uneasy over the universality of the economists' claims, tend to defer to them, such that the political economy of trade remains underdeveloped. Studies of free trade and protection, for example, tend to see the issues through the lenses of orthodox economic theory.

An interesting exception is the concept of 'embedded liberalism', introduced in John Ruggie's analysis of the post-1945 international economic order (Ruggie 1982). What was notable about the reconstruction of the liberal system, in Ruggie's view, was that it did not give total priority to liberalising trade, but sought a balance with other goals such as full employment, social equity and political stability. He suggests that the success of the liberal reconstruction was due to this balanced approach. Since the 1980s, however, international economic relations have been reordered in accordance with the neoliberal doctrine which subordinates such political goals to achieving the maximum of liberalisation, not only in trade but in all aspects of economic life – notably deregulation, privatisation and the free movement of capital. The Australian policy community has wholeheartedly endorsed this extended version of commercial liberalism. Australia was among the initiators of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (**APEC**) and is an active player in the World Trade Organization; it has dismantled all tariff barriers and undertaken a major restructuring of the Australian economy in accordance with neoliberal doctrine (see Box 3.3).

Some recent events, however, including the '*Tampa* crisis' (see chapter 30) and the David Hicks case (where an Australian citizen was held in Guantanamo Bay without charge for over five years), raise some questions about the depth of the government's commitment to liberal values and institutions.

In Australia the political struggle over this restructuring may be over, but in most of the world it remains contested; indeed, many see the thoroughgoing subordination of society and politics to the rule of the market as unviable in the longer run. The issues raised by the neoliberal version of globalisation are debated from many theoretical standpoints, but liberal international relations theory is conspicuously absent. There has been no major updating of commercial liberalism, and no theorising of a social liberal alternative to neoliberalism, although some international relations scholars such as Falk (1999) offer valuable critical studies of its consequences.

To conclude this part of the discussion, it may be said that empirical liberal theory and research have shown that in important respects the liberal understanding of current world politics is more illuminating than the realist. It cannot yet be said whether this represents a historical turning point or just another 'false dawn' for liberalism. And a number of questions and reservations suggest themselves. First, while international relations theory in the US tends, like the American foreign policy debate, to oscillate between realism and liberalism, these do not, as the following chapters show, exhaust the theoretical universe. Second, is this liberal theory too close to the American political discourse, mirroring its emphases

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Box 3.3:   Discussion points

Liberalism in Australian foreign and trade policy

The Howard government's second white paper on foreign and trade policy, *Advancing the national interest* (2003), begins by identifying Australian values with liberalism:

> Australia is a liberal democracy with a proud commitment to the core values of political and economic freedom which underpin our society and our philosophy of liberalism. The political and economic values that have shaped our institutions and outlook guide our approach to international affairs (7).

The white paper continues:

> We believe that economic freedom will empower individuals to lead their own lives by removing impediments and providing opportunities. Economic freedom is the freedom to pursue one's own development, but it is also the freedom from basic wants of food, clothing and shelter (7).

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and silences? The tone of the theorising is always positive and occasionally celebratory, as when the President of the International Studies Association hailed the indications that the liberal vision of Woodrow Wilson was at last coming to fruition (Kegley 1993). In many ways empirical liberal theory offers the perspective of those comfortably located at the top of the global **hierarchy** (Falk's 'globalisation from above'), excluding the dark side of globalisation and the many ways in which the partially liberal order falls short of a more critical liberal vision. Some of these issues are taken up by normative liberal theorists.

Normative theory: dilemmas and aspirations

Liberal normative issues form part of the everyday Australian foreign policy debate. For example: what place should support for human rights have in Australian priorities? At what cost, in terms of important relationships such as those with China or Indonesia, should it press the claims of human rights? Under what circumstances is humanitarian intervention justified? Must it be approved by the United Nations? What, if any, are Australia's obligations to the globally disadvantaged, many of them at the margins of subsistence? Some of these debates remain inconclusive, others arrive at a practical compromise, but the reasoning behind differing ethical claims is never pressed very far. The task of normative theory is to pursue this reasoning in order to establish consistent ethical principles grounded in a coherent philosophy. Since philosophies differ over fundamentals, this cannot lead to a consensus; but the search for a philosophical grounding enhances the awareness of the complexity of ethical issues and the import of contending philosophical traditions.

Liberals are divided among several traditions, including the utilitarian, the pragmatist, the Kantian, and more recently followers of American theorist John Rawls, who shares much with the Kantians. Normative theory may seem remote from the everyday debate, but on reflection it is not difficult to see that familiar policy standpoints are associated with one or other liberal tradition: for example, support for human rights with 'classical' Lockean liberalism, **foreign aid** with social liberalism, and the UN with liberal internationalism. Within each philosophical school it is possible to distinguish 'ideal theory' (Rawls's term) from the

non-ideal, which focuses on what is practicable, and also on ethical dilemmas, when principles accepted as valid come into conflict. Students of International Relations tend to be drawn to the practicable, and even to disparage ideal theory as utopian. But it is ideal theory that seeks to establish the values, principles and standards that theorists of the practicable seek to realise – so far as circumstances permit. Just as applied science presupposes pure science, practical ethics presupposes ideal theory of one kind or another.

It is not possible in this short survey to do justice to the range of different approaches taken by liberal normative theorists and the range of issues they address. Two of the most prominent issues, human rights and humanitarian intervention, are the subject matter of later chapters. A discussion of one major issue-area, however, may serve to illustrate the range of different liberal approaches and viewpoints, and the reasons for the differences. The issue selected, global distributive justice, is also discussed at greater length in a later chapter.

Western development assistance dates from the 1950s, but the issue termed global distributive justice stemmed from Third World demands for a new international economic order in the 1970s, in the context of increasing awareness of international interdependence. The policy issues and the problems of effective implementation are highly complex, but for purposes of normative theory the relevant question is whether, as a matter of justice, not self-interest, or a sense of generosity or even of a common humanity, wealthy countries should make substantial resources available for the purpose of improving the conditions of the less well off – many of them living in conditions unimaginable in the Western world.

At one pole of the debate are classical liberals such as Friedrich Hayek, for whom justice can refer only to the conduct of individuals, not the ordering of society. For Hayek, social justice is a meaningless concept: there can be no obligation to assist the disadvantaged. At the other extreme, the utilitarian principle of the greatest good for the greatest number can be interpreted to justify a transfer of resources on a massive scale, since additional resources available to the poor will tend to increase their welfare by a greater amount than the loss of those resources will diminish the welfare of the well off.

The debate between Rawls and his followers shows that a common philosophical starting point can lead to quite different conclusions, depending on what further considerations are taken to be relevant. Rawlsian theorists start from the ethical principle that social inequalities can be justified only if their overall effect is to benefit the least well off. This is usually taken to require measures to enhance the well-being and opportunities of those socially disadvantaged. For Rawls himself, however, the principle is not relevant in international relations, since the world as a whole is not a political community as he understands it, but (still) a world of independent communities. Some Rawlsian theorists, on the other hand, hold that when interdependence is taken into account, and in particular the extent to which the economic life in the poorer countries is subject to regulation by international institutions controlled by the Western states, the principle is indeed relevant, and thus there is an obligation to provide assistance – on a substantial scale (see chapters 9 and 24).

The separation between empirical and normative theory is disadvantageous to the study of international relations. The normative theorists are keenly aware of deficiencies in today's partially liberal order that empirical theory does not address. A closer engagement with normative theory would bring a critical dimension to empirical theory and could prompt research into ways in which that order falls short of liberal ideals, and how improvements might be brought about.

Conclusion

Liberalism developed in opposition to realism, a theory of constraint which sees the world of states as subject to the imperatives of **geopolitics**, with major war the final arbiter. Liberalism is a theory of choice: social and political evils are not just a given of the human condition, but can be remedied – if only after protracted struggles. One of the strengths of contemporary liberal theory is that it takes the realist constraints seriously, while denying that they are final imperatives. If traditional liberal thought underestimated the importance of power in international relations, recent theory incorporates realist understandings of power while insisting that they do not tell the whole story.

A further strength of liberal theory is its orientation to new trends in world politics. Most of the new agenda issues discussed in Part 3 of this book can be related to one or other area of liberal theory. This does not mean that liberalism seeks to incorporate every new issue. To take the case of global **terrorism**, a liberal might well regard the issue as vastly over-sold as a 'war on terror' heralding a new era in world politics, whereas the effective countering of terrorism requires painstaking 'internal security' measures and effective ways of addressing underlying political causes.

One criticism of liberalism which remains valid is that it tends to underestimate the strength of ethnicity, **nationalism** and religion in both internal and international politics. A typical liberal response is that while this may be true in the short run, the appeal of liberal values is such that they are bound to prevail in the longer run. As Francis Fukuyama expresses it, only liberal democracy can satisfy the material needs and the aspirations that are common to all mankind (Fukuyama 1989). But it is precisely this universalism which is increasingly under challenge. It would not be surprising if non-Western cultures such as the Chinese and the Islamic should remain resistant to the liberal model. But many liberals, lacking respect for non-liberal values, are ill-prepared for coexistence with such cultures.

Overall, liberalism is weak in self-criticism. Thus there is little liberal theorising on the dangers posed by the liberalism of the powerful – whether the militant liberalism of the Bush administration ('Wilsonianism with boots', as it has been termed), or neoliberal ideology's enhancing of the power of the economically strong at the expense of the weak. Nor have liberal theorists devoted much time to the hollowing out of liberalism at home through misuse of executive power in the 'war on terror' – and not only in the US. At a time when the most familiar liberal theories can make for a certain complacency, it is important to become as aware as possible of liberalism's typical biases and blind spots.

Questions

1. What are the major historical and intellectual factors that shaped liberalism?
2. There are a number of distinct 'liberalisms' – which of these has most influenced the international relations agenda?
3. What did the neo-Kantian liberalism of Woodrow Wilson stand for in the years between the two World Wars? Is Wilsonian liberalism still significant in the contemporary era?
4. What are the main characteristics of 'commercial' liberalism? Are these characteristics discernible in the neoliberal globalisation project?

5. What is Democratic Peace Theory?
6. What kind of liberal society is Australia? How has Australia's liberal identity been represented in its foreign policy over the years?

Further reading

Gray, John 1995 *Liberalism*, second edition, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. A concise historical outline of liberal political thought.

Kegley, Charles W. Jr. (ed.) 1995, *Controversies in international relations theory; realism and the neoliberal challenge*, New York: St Martin's Press. Contains a number of very useful chapters on contemporary liberalism.

Keohane, Robert O. 1989, *International institutions and state power; essays in international relations theory,* Boulder: Westview. A collection of chapters by one of the leading neoliberal theorists of international relations.

Richardson, James L. 2001, *Contending liberalisms in world politics: ideology and power*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. An extended set of reflections on the theory and practice of liberalism in international relations.

Russett, Bruce 1993, *Grasping the democratic peace: principles for a post-Cold War world*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Presents an incomparable overview of liberal institutional theory on the democratic peace.

4
Realism

Martin Griffiths and Terry O'Callaghan

Introduction

In this chapter we explore three questions. First, what do those who call themselves realists in the study of international relations have in common? In answering this question it is important to consider both what unites realists as a group as well as the divisions between them. We distinguish between classical **realism** and **neorealism**, and draw attention to the contemporary debate between offensive neorealists and defensive neorealists over the degree to which the absence of international government constrains opportunities for cooperation among **states**. Second, what is the status of this particular 'approach' to the study of international relations? Is it a paradigm, or is it better understood more simply as a profoundly sceptical perspective towards any kind of purposive approach to world **order**? Third, what is the future of realism? If, as we argue, it no longer dominates the theoretical study of international relations as it did for most of the **Cold War** period, is it destined to pass away in the face of changes that appear to falsify realist premises and assumptions? Our argument, briefly stated, is that realism will endure. Indeed, in the wake of the United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003, contemporary realists are playing a key role in the debate over the future of American foreign policy in global politics, just as their predecessors did at the end of World War II.

The world according to realism

Realism is a general approach to international politics, not a single **theory**. It is often portrayed as a tradition of thought that dates back as far as Thucydides, the chronicler of the ancient Peloponnesian Wars, who wrote, 'The strong do what they have the power to do, the weak accept what they have to accept' (Thucydides 1972: 402). Today, realism remains one of the dominant approaches to the study of international relations, although revised versions and competing approaches have emerged which attempt to provide better explanations for a complex and rapidly changing world. The principal reason why realism continues to be popular among scholars and students of global politics is the persistent existence of and allegiance to the political unit that realists argue has been and will remain the principal actor in global

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Box 4.1:   Discussion points

Is realism ahistorical?

Critics sometimes accuse realism of being an ahistorical theory, committed to the notion of the state as a territorially bounded entity. Yet Gilpin's point that 'conflict groups' are the basic units of political life suggests a more historically nuanced view than this. For Gilpin, it is clear that the decisive political unit changes over time, both in the way scholars understand it and in its composition and structure. The ancient Greek city-state is very different to the modern nation-state. E. H. Carr (1945) made a similar argument in relation to the emergence of nationalism in the early part of the twentieth century. According to him, this represented a historical form of political community that had evolved over time and would continue to evolve into the future.

Box 4.2:   Terminology

Balance of power: a contested concept

Broadly speaking, realists regard the balance of power as the most effective way to maintain peace in the international system. In particular, military power should be disaggregated in such a way that no single state or group of states is able to dominate the system. While the balance of power is central to realism, it is a contested concept. Claude has called it an 'ambiguous concept' that has numerous meanings. (Claude 1962: 11–39). He distinguished between (a) balance of power as a situation, (b) balance of power as a policy, and (c) balance of power as a system.

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politics: the territorial state which pursues its **national interest** in terms of **power**. As Robert Gilpin bluntly puts it:

> . . . the essence of all social reality is the group. The building blocks and ultimate units of social and political life are not the individuals of liberal thought nor the classes of Marxism . . . realism, as I interpret it, holds that the foundation of political life [is] conflict groups (Gilpin 1986: 304–5). (See Box 4.1.)

In addition, all realists focus on geostrategic and military issues, or issues of high politics, which often seem to dominate global politics, especially in situations of international tension. Finally, realists believe that **peace** in the world can be maintained only by a **balance of power** between the most powerful states in the **international system**. However there is no consensus among them regarding the costs and benefits of particular configurations of that balance in the twenty-first century (usually debated in terms of **multipolarity**, **bipolarity**, or the perpetuation of American **unipolarity**); see Box 4.2.

The realist focus on high politics and military power derives from the anarchical condition of international relations. There is no overarching power or state capable of controlling all the units (**sovereign states**) in the international system. **Anarchy** accounts for the inherent insecurity of states. There is no higher authority than the sovereign state to which it can appeal in order to protect itself from a potentially aggressive neighbour. As a consequence,

the domain of international relations is a self-help environment in which states must provide for their own **security**, either by themselves or in **alliance** with other states.

Given these basic premises, it is not surprising that realism is popular during times when the world faces high levels of tension or actual warfare between states pursuing competing military and geostrategic goals. Two such related periods in the twentieth century include the decade preceding the outbreak of World War II and the first two decades of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union.

Classical realism

Classical realism emerged for two reasons in the 1930s. It constituted a reaction by academics to Western diplomacy after World War I, which realists derided as a prolonged exercise in Wilsonian **idealism**, and it also reflected a practical reaction to the emergence of aggressive, nationalistic states, particularly Nazi Germany. In order to understand why the realists considered idealism an impracticable explanation and analysis of global politics, it is important to understand their portrayal of its basic features and weaknesses, even though this portrayal has been criticised as a simplistic and misleading caricature.

In 1918, President Wilson, in response to the devastation and horrors of World War I, delivered to Congress a program designed to prevent another global conflict from occurring. The program proposed such measures as the creation of a League of Nations, respect for **international law**, and the abolition of secret diplomacy and **bilateral** treaties. It served as a model for a theoretical approach to global politics that the classical realists labelled 'idealism'. Idealism, in its simplest form, promoted international organisations such as the League of Nations and international law as the basic means to preserve peace in the world. International organisations would circumvent secret negotiations between states and alliances and serve as forums to debate issues in public, as well as solve international crises before they erupted into conflict. States were expected to abide by international legal **norms** because of world public opinion directed against any transgressors as well as the value of reciprocity. Reciprocity stipulated that states would have an inherent interest in upholding international laws because they expected others to do the same. According to E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau (see Box 4.3), Wilson and his fellow idealists assumed that citizens of the world and its institutions shared a 'harmony of interests' that induced them to seek cooperation and mutual understanding.

Classical realists accused the idealists of seeing and interpreting the world through their own subjective lenses and values, describing the world as it ought to be rather than as it was. They disputed the notion that states would abide by international law or that international organisations without enforcement power could curb the aggressive tendencies of states. The events of the 1930s gave an impetus to the realist view that means other than international law and organisations had to be devised to meet the challenges of revisionist states such as Germany and Japan. The unfolding and conclusion of World War II intensified the need to search for practical means by which aggressive behaviour in global politics could be controlled or deterred. Classical realists believed firmly in the state as the principal actor in world politics, whose interest had to be taken into account, and on which world peace relied. According to realists, states pursue their own interests in an international system that is anarchic.

> **Box 4.3: Discussion points**
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> **Hans J. Morgenthau's six principles of political realism**
>
> 1. Realism is governed by 'objective laws', which have their roots in human nature.
> 2. The concept of national interest, defined in terms of power, is the most important foreign policy goal.
> 3. While 'interests defined in terms of power' are not subject to historical change, the exercise of power is fluid.
> 4. Universal morality cannot be used to judge the actions of states.
> 5. Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.
> 6. The political sphere is distinct from economics and law, and international and domestic politics operate according to different principles (Morgenthau, 1973).

The national interests as perceived by leaders of different states were inevitably at odds with each other and could easily lead to conflict. Instead of depending on international organisations and law, the realists postulated a balance of power system as the primary means by which peace among nation-states could be preserved, and were deeply concerned with the emergence of nuclear weapons in a world dominated by two hostile **superpowers**.

Neorealism

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the realist preoccupation with anarchy and the alleged ubiquity of human aggressiveness generated widespread dissatisfaction with the classical realist approach to international relations. Critics were quick to point out that the approach overlooked growing **interdependence** in the international system, and the gradual development of international legal norms to govern and regulate interstate relations, and additionally had little to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between states and markets at a global level.

In the face of growing criticisms, some realists made attempts to save the theory from its alleged obsolescence, and in so doing defended the **bipolar** balance of power, in contrast to their classical predecessors. Kenneth N. Waltz's *Theory of international politics* (1979) was the first serious attempt to modify the classical realist theory, and to set it on a firmer scientific basis. Waltz's 'neorealism' is based on three key assumptions.

1. Anarchy (the absence of any common sovereign) is the distinguishing feature of a 'self-help' international system, in which states must rely upon their own means to protect their interests. In this system, security is the highest goal of states. It is therefore not necessary to use vague philosophical arguments about 'human nature' to see why the distribution of power is central in explaining the stability of the system.
2. States are the most important actors in the international system. While **non-state actors**, such as corporations and multinational organisations, play an important role, the state is paramount. Neorealists are often criticised for overlooking the importance of other actors. Waltz conceded that:

. . . states are not and never have been the only international actors. But then structures are defined not by all of the actors that flourish within them, but by the major ones' (Waltz 1986: 88).

3. States are rational actors. As Robert Keohane explains, 'they have consistent, ordered preferences, and that they calculate the costs and benefits of all alternative policies in order to maximize their utility in light both of those preferences and of their perceptions of the nature of reality' (Keohane 1986: 11). However, although states are rational, they may miscalculate from time to time because they operate in a world of imperfect information (Mearsheimer 2001).

Kenneth Waltz no doubt rescued realism from the threat of obsolescence by shifting attention to competitive systemic pressures that define the basic parameters of security for states. Nonetheless, there were still sharp intellectual reactions to this 'rescue attempt' and Waltz was criticised on a number of fronts. Some scholars accused Waltz of being immune to change in the international system, others argued that he failed to demonstrate the autonomy of structure over agency (Griffiths 1992), whilst more radical observers accused him of defending the Cold War and perpetuating a dangerous discourse of **power politics** in defending **bipolarity** (George 1994). The criticisms have encouraged other realist scholars to further improve and build on Waltz's theory of structural realism. Stephen Walt (2002: 204–10) divides the new generation of realists into two broad camps – offensive neorealists and defensive neorealists.

Offensive neorealists (Copeland 2001; Mearsheimer 2001; Zakaria 1998) stress the limited capacity of states to accurately determine the real intentions of other states that might use force against them in the future. This encourages states to increase their power to meet any future challenges. In particular, major powers are engaged in a constant effort to improve their relative power position. Security is scarce, making international competition intense, and **war** likely. Mearsheimer is the clearest proponent of offensive neorealism. He argues that alliances are only temporary marriages of convenience. Furthermore, offensive neorealists make no distinction between **status quo** and revisionist states, the former content to maintain their existing level of power and the latter seeking to enhance their international status. According to Mearsheimer, international cooperation is inhibited by two main factors: relative gains considerations, and concern about cheating, both of which stem from the logic of anarchy (see also Grieco 1988). When a state contemplates cooperation it can think about it in terms of absolute gains, which means the state cares only about what it gains from the cooperation. Or it can think about it in terms of relative gains, which means the state considers how well it does compared to other states. According to offensive neorealists, states are primarily concerned with the distribution of gains from cooperation, which will rarely be equitable in a hierarchical and competitive world. The second factor inhibiting cooperation, according to offensive neorealists, is concern over cheating. States are reluctant to enter into cooperative agreements for fear that the other side will cheat on the agreement and gain a relative advantage. In a world where there is no ultimate arbiter, this will always be a possibility. International institutions, in this context, can do little to moderate the **security dilemma** among states. States may choose to operate through institutions, but those institutions do not shape them. Institutions do not have an independent quality; they only mirror the distribution of power in the international system.

Defensive neorealists (Glaser 1994–95; Lynn-Jones 1995; Snyder 1991; Walt 1987) accept that anarchy remains at the heart of insecurity for states and that states survive by forming balances of power, but they acknowledge the role of other factors that can mitigate competition for security in the international system. The three most often discussed among defensive neorealists are the balance between offensive and defensive military technologies, the degree to which states consider other powerful states as 'threats', and the role of institutions in deterring potential revisionist powers from the use of force to improve their relative power in the international system. The concept of the 'offense-defense' balance shapes the ease or difficulty of conquest. According to defensive neorealists, defensive military postures help states to promote their own security while posing no threat to the security of other states, and existential nuclear **deterrence** among the most powerful states ensures that territorial expansion is both difficult and unprofitable. Rather than focusing upon the state's search to enhance their power, defensive realists emphasise the search for security. In this context, the prospects for cooperation are high when two status quo powers face each other in a security dilemma, but not where a status quo power faces a revisionist power. In the former situation, security will be made more likely where there is increased transparency; where the gains from cheating and the costs from being cheated on are low; where mutual cooperation is more beneficial than defection; and where each side employs strategies of reciprocity. Thus defensive neorealists seek to overturn the 'competition bias' of offensive neorealism by illustrating the range of cooperative options available to states.

In this context, institutions can play an important role in international relations, particularly in the security arena. Defensive neorealists believe that countries primarily 'balance' against others that appear especially threatening to them; they do not balance against power per se. Thus Walt (1987) argues that balance of threat is a much better predictor of alliance formation than the crude balance of power. For example, in accounting for the Cold War, he argues that the geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union promoted balancing behaviour by regional powers in Europe and Asia in the form of alliances with the US. 'Balance of threat' theory helps to explain why, despite concerns about American foreign policy in the wake of 11 September 2001, it is unlikely that other states will attempt to balance the US, alone or with others.

The contested status of realism in the study of international relations

In the previous section we identified the common beliefs shared by realists and the key differences between scholars within the realist approach. In this section we explore the status of realism as an 'approach' to the study of international relations. Although we have presented realism as a coherent tradition of thought, with a clearly identifiable set of core principles, it remains an ideal-type, and it is important to recognise the limitations of trying to 'fix' the status of realism within a **discipline** whose very identity as a social science is constantly debated. An ideal-type is an abstract construct that extracts and reproduces the main elements in a diverse body of literature. As such, it is not a mirror image of that literature, and it is not obvious how best to engage in the process of extraction and reproduction. It depends on the kinds of problems being investigated, the research interests of those who engage in the process and

the context within which realism is contrasted to other competing approaches to the study of international relations. That context is not itself static, nor is it uncontested.

To illustrate the problem, consider how realism manifests itself within three such contexts that have shaped 'great debates' in the study of international relations. The first (popular in the inter-war period) frames the study of international politics in terms of a debate between realists and idealists. Not only did the realists themselves construct this debate in order to defeat their opponents, their use of the label 'idealism' as a black box concealed and marginalised important distinctions between scholars whose contribution to the study of international relations has only been recovered years after the decline of 'realism/idealism' as a particular framing context in the study of international relations.

An equally problematic way to frame realism is to describe it as a 'paradigm', a term popular during the so-called 'third debate' in the study of international relations in the 1970s and 1980s. The term 'paradigm' came to prominence in the philosophy of science in the 1970s, mainly through the work of Thomas Kuhn (1970). Briefly, he argued that a paradigm consists of a set of fundamental assumptions about the subject matter of a science. A paradigm is both enabling and constraining. On the one hand, it helps to define what is important to study and so a paradigm is indispensable in simplifying reality by isolating certain factors and forces from a multitude of innumerable possibilities. On the other hand, a paradigm is constraining since it limits our perceptual field (what we 'see' as the most important actors and relationships in a particular field of study). In examining the history of science Kuhn argued that what he called *normal* science proceeded on the basis of particular paradigms, the truth of whose assumptions were taken for granted. A paradigm is therefore a mode of thinking within a field of inquiry that regulates scientific activity and sets the standards for research. A paradigm generates consensus, coherence and unity among scholars. However, periods of normal science are punctuated by periods of *revolutionary* science as scientists confront problems (or *anomalies*) that cannot be solved within the terms of the dominant paradigm. A new period of normal science can only resume on the basis of a 'paradigm-shift' and the establishment of a new set of assumptions to account for anomalies that could not be accommodated within the assumptions of the old paradigm.

There are a number of problems in treating realism as a Kuhnian paradigm. The term implies a greater homogeneity of thought within realism than is justified by a close reading of realist texts and authors. Moreover, the growth of knowledge in the study of international relations has never followed the path that Kuhn elaborated in his historical reconstruction of the natural sciences. The term 'paradigm' is useful as a metaphor, but one should not exaggerate the degree to which paradigms in the study of international relations develop in isolation from rival approaches to international relations. Finally, as with other social sciences, theories of international relations do not stand in relation to practice as mere instruments to understand a given and unproblematic 'reality', whose anomalies can threaten to undermine theories and set us off in completely novel avenues of inquiry. In this field, the relationship between theory and practice is not contingent and instrumental. Instead, it is conceptual and constitutive relation between belief and action. To put it bluntly, realism is true to the extent that it is believed to be true, particularly by policy-makers. Despite Waltz's protestation that 'the problem is not to say how to manage the world, including its great powers, but to say how the possibility that great powers will constructively manage international affairs varies as systems change' (Waltz 1979: 210), few realists have ever hidden their desire to influence the conduct of political leaders.

Box 4.4:   Discussion points

Realism and Australian foreign policy

Australian foreign policy has historically been guided largely by realist tenets, regardless of political party. The coalition government of John Howard (1996–) has made a special point of asserting that its foreign and defence policies are pragmatic, realistic responses to contemporary global challenges. In its two white papers, *In the national interest* (1997) and *Advancing the national interest* (2003), the Howard government generally interprets international relations through a realist lens. The 'national interest' is an unquestioned assumption and security is the primary concern in an environment of proliferating threats. Also consistent with realism is the Howard government's suspicion towards **multilateralism**. Australia will act through the **UN** and other international organisations when it suits the national interest, but will refrain from being constrained by them when it does not. Decisions about whether to act multilaterally or unilaterally will be determined on a 'case-by-case basis'. Whether or not Howard's decision to join the US and UK in the invasion of Iraq was consistent with the national interest is, however, highly questionable. Leading realist scholars in the US and elsewhere have strongly criticised the war as 'unnecessary' and possibly counterproductive (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003).

Conclusion: realism in the twenty-first century

Perhaps the most appropriate context in which to frame evaluations of realism is to identify its core beliefs not in terms of empirical assumptions about anarchy and competition, but in terms of political theory. Fundamentally, realism is 'a conservative approach to international relations . . . that places a primacy on the maintenance of order and the preservation of tradition, and is sceptical about universal claims or the possibilities for progress in the international system' (Welsh 2003: 174). In this context, realism is not to be understood (and thereby rendered potentially obsolescent) solely on its ability to generate testable empirical theories of international relations, but as a manifestation of a venerable tradition of conservative thought (Haslam 2002; Lebow 2003). This way of framing realism has re-emerged in recent years as the disciplinary borders (built in part by realists, one might add) between political theory and the study of international relations have begun to collapse. If realism is understood in minimal terms as an approach that reminds us of the enduring tragedies of power politics arising out of a historically contingent connection between **sovereignty**, territory and statehood in differentiating humanity politically, it can be argued that despite its deficiencies as a basis for testable theory, it is difficult to dismiss. As Frost (2003: 487) explains:

> . . . tragedy reveals how each of the practices within which we are constituted as actors of a certain kind imposes on us a set of ethical imperatives. It shows how it often happens that these come to clash with one another. It shows how we as actors can be torn apart by this kind of ethical clash within, as it were, our own plural, contradictory, and conflictual ethical universe.

The institutional form of the sovereign nation-state is a key contributory factor to our tragic condition. The world of humanity – climbing inexorably to over ten billion people in the next fifty years or so – is politically divided among sovereign states. War is an

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Box 4.5:   Discussion points

Some recent criticisms of realism

- Key terms such as 'national interest' and 'balance of power' lack precision.
- Human beings are not as flawed and wicked as classical realists assume.
- The outcome of the application of realist theory in a policy context is likely to be war.
- Realism as a 'state-as-actor' theory does not take adequate account of the significance of international institutions, non-governmental agencies, and multinational corporations.
- Realism is supposed to have predictive capability, but was unable to predict the end of the Cold War.
- The balance of power is an unreliable mechanism for maintaining peace.
- Military power is an asset of declining utility in an interdependent world.
- Realism excludes women. Statecraft is mancraft.
- Realism is not oriented towards the betterment of humanity. It has no emancipatory dimension.
- Realism is a conservative and amoral theory.

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ever-present background possibility among states that coexist in a condition of anarchy (even if, as constructivists believe, that condition is a variable, not a constant). There is no world government, although elements of 'governance' in the form of international organisations and sustained patterns of cooperation no doubt moderate the extreme image of international relations as a jungle. In this environment, political authority is dispersed along territorial lines whose paths no global rational actor would design or endorse. It is therefore difficult to coordinate global action to deal with global problems that do not respect territorial borders. As human beings, we may be upset by images of starvation, barbaric cruelty and injustice that bombard us nightly on our television screens. It may strike 'us' as arbitrary that we enjoy the privileges of peace and prosperity while other human beings suffer simply because they happen to have been born in Somalia or Iraq rather than Australia or Canada or the US. Modernity, among other things, is an ethos of reason and a belief in the growth of reason to control our environment so that it fulfils human purposes and contributes to the sum of our collective well-being. Suffering, of course, does not correlate with territorial boundaries, but the political capacity to respond to it usually does. Our cosmopolitan moral sentiments are constantly frustrated by our particularistic political identity as citizens and as nationalists. We enjoy the fruits of political community as rights-bearing citizens within the state. In contrast, our obligations to humanity are thin, a pale reflection of natural law. Within the form of the state, historical progress is conceived along a temporal dimension, whereas the arbitrary spatial division of international relations guarantees some degree of power politics among states. Within the state, the universal rights of citizenship are, in principle, available to 'all', yet that same universality depends crucially on the ability of the state to exclude outsiders. And so it goes, on and on. For realists this situation is our existential and historical condition, and the fate of the territorial state is central to that condition.

   Building on these insights, and in light of the disastrous US-led (and UK- and Australian-supported) invasion of Iraq in 2003, realists in the US are at the forefront of contemporary debates about the future of American foreign policy. Just as Morgenthau and other realists opposed the Vietnam War in the 1960s, his successors have argued that the invasion

of Iraq was a totally unnecessary abandonment of '**containment**', and that a new American foreign policy must be based on the ethics of realist statecraft (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003). These include 'prudence, patriotism, responsibility, study, humility, and a decent respect for the views and interests of other nations' (Lieven and Hulsman 2006: 53). Two aspects of the renewal of classical realism are worth noting. First, it is a political project rather than a dry academic theory. Contemporary realists are well aware that the national interest is not simply 'given', and it is not a goal that policy-makers will automatically promote. It is particularly interesting that two leading US realists (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006) have launched a scathing attack on the role of the 'Jewish lobby' in distorting US policy in the Middle East. The second noteworthy aspect of contemporary realism is its recognition of a close nexus between political and economic stability at a global level. One of the persistent themes in the study of international relations over the past decade has been the increasing 'disaggregation' of power. The US is a military giant, but its economic clout lags far behind, and its role as an economic and political model for other states to emulate is weakened by the rise of anti-American sentiment around the world. For realists, if the US is to retain its position as the most powerful state in the world, it must abandon its foreign policy of the past six years and recognise the close nexus between power, authority and legitimacy.

In some ways, the resurgence of realism in the twenty-first century has returned this particular approach to its classical roots in political theory rather than political science, narrowly conceived. In our view, this is no bad thing. As this century unfolds, it may be that realism's deficiencies as a theory of international relations are more than compensated by its strengths as a constant reminder of tragedy and the danger of unintended consequences that can arise from even the best intentions.

Questions

1. What are the main differences between classical realists and neorealists?
2. What are the main obstacles in making any generalisations about realism as a school of thought?
3. Why do realists see war as inevitable?
4. Is realism out of date in the twenty-first century?
5. Why did most realists tend to criticise the US invasion of Iraq in 2003?

Further reading

Donnelly, Jack 2000, *Realism and international relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Excellent overview of realist scholarship from Thucydides onwards.
Lieven, Anatol and Hulsman, John 2006, *Ethical realism*, New York: Pantheon Books. Fierce critique of the Bush administration from a realist perspective.
Waltz, Kenneth 1959, *Man, the state and war*, New York: Columbia University Press. Erudite statement of how classical realism addresses the causes of war.
Waltz, Kenneth 1979, *Theory of international politics*, New York: Random House. Landmark book announcing and outlining the key tenets of neorealism.

5
Marxism

Scott Burchill

Introduction

This chapter reflects on **Marxism**'s contemporary relevance to international relations. First, it reflects on Marxism's exclusion from the traditional study of international relations. Second, it notes Marx's prescience in identifying the globalising tendencies of **capitalism**. Third, it outlines how Marx and Marxists view the **state**. Marxism essentially presents an endogenous account of international relations which focuses on the internal economic requirements of capitalist states. This leads, fourth, to an underestimation of **nationalism** and **war** in reproducing the state and states-system, and, fifth, to great scepticism towards notions of the '**national interest**' and '**free trade**'. Finally, the chapter considers the Marxist critique of **imperialism**.

Marxism's exclusion from International Relations

Karl Marx and his analysis of capitalism have been largely absent from the curricula of mainstream International Relations courses in the West, especially before the 1970s (Linklater 1990a). There are three broad reasons for this.

First, in the Western world Marxism was closely associated with communist states such as the USSR, China and Vietnam. It was the self-proclaimed philosophical foundation of the communist world which, by its very political outlook, constituted a threat to Western capitalist states. During the **Cold War**, Marxism was widely portrayed in Western political capitals as expansionist and messianic because it was routinely equated with the foreign policy of communist states, which were thought to represent a strategic challenge to the West (Kubálková and Cruickshank 1989: part II). Marxist thought and doctrine were rarely separated from the repression and crimes committed in its name by states which were cast in the West as an ideological, economic and security danger (see Halliday 1994: 47–50).

In this atmosphere, which lasted from the Bolshevik **Revolution** in 1917 until the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s, Marxism was tainted by its connection with a number of totalitarian states. This effectively limited the chances that Marx's views would be seriously examined in the West for their insights into the study of international politics, although it must be acknowledged that this was not true for some sectors of the Western left (Kubálková and Cruickshank 1985). However, although communist political movements and states have

been discredited, this was not entirely a fate shared with Marxism as a body of ideas. With the collapse of the Soviet threat and the demise of the communist world generally, Marx's work began to be reconsidered in a fresh light, particularly his views on **globalisation** or what, in the nineteenth century, he described as the spread of capitalism.

The second reason for Marx's absence from the International Relations curriculum was a belief that Marx had virtually nothing to say about the central concerns of the **discipline**. The **normative** basis of the discipline's foundation after World War I was an examination and understanding of the causes of wars so that lessons could be learnt which would prevent a recurrence of violence on such a horrific scale. Despite the failure of this project, the initial central focus of the discipline was the incidence of wars between states. This discussion inevitably involved an examination of the states-system, the foreign policy behaviour of states and the role of nationalism, among other considerations. On these central subjects, Marx had very little to say. The persistence of the states-system has thwarted the pattern of historical development anticipated by Marx, who regarded class divisions as the primary cleavages in human society. Nationalism and nation-states were, for Marx, a passing stage in world history. Unsurprisingly, many scholars in the field regarded Marx's work as being an appropriate omission from the discipline's key texts.

Third, according to some Marxists, certain facts and approaches to understanding the causes of World War I were axiomatically excluded as not belonging to the inquiry at all. Tensions within society, such as class struggles and economic competition between colonial powers – during the 1920s a popular Marxist explanation for the origins of war – were not considered seriously within the discipline in its formative years. One commentator has suggested that the **theory** of imperialism was deliberately excluded from early International Relations curricula because, since it located the causes of war within the nature of the capitalist system, it posed a direct threat to the social **order** of capitalist states: ' . . . this false doctrine had to be refuted in the interest of stabilising bourgeois society . . . the [historians and international relations analysts] acted and reflected within the social context of the bourgeois university, which structurally obstructed such revolutionary insights' (Krippendorff 1982: 27). In retrospect this view sounds conspiratorial, although it might explain why the discipline was tightly circumscribed within realist and liberal parameters, to exclude non-conformist and radical theories of international politics from the 'mainstream'.

Within the **Enlightenment** tradition, Marxism has always been at the radical fringes of political respectability and legitimacy. It has never occupied a secure position in studies of international relations. It has also been attacked at a **methodological** and theoretical level from the left (Kolko 2006: chapter 2).

As a body of thought, however, its most important contribution has been as an insightful account of the spread of capitalism, or what today would be called globalisation. This is the starting point for any assessment of Marxism's contemporary relevance to international relations.

Marx and globalisation

Marx believed that the expansion of capitalism, or what today would be called globalisation, was transforming human society from a collection of separate states to a world capitalist

society where the principal form of conflict would be between classes rather than nations or states. According to Marx, the conflictual properties of capitalism would eventually prove unsustainable: a political revolution led by the working classes would overthrow the capitalist order and usher in a worldwide socialist society free from the alienation, exploitation and estrangement produced by capitalist structures. According to Linklater, 'the structure of world capitalism guaranteed the emergence of the first authentically universal class which would liberate the species from the consequences of estrangement between states and nations' (Linklater 1986: 304).

It is worth mentioning again that the trajectory of historical change anticipated by Marx 150 years ago has been undermined by the persistence of the states-system, its propensity for violence, and the grip that nationalism maintains upon the political identities of people across the world. It is tempting, then, to assume that Marx's analysis of capitalism has little of value to say about the contours of international relations today. I argue that the relevance of Marxism for the current period has significantly increased in the wake of the Cold War and most importantly, with the heightened impact of globalisation upon every advanced industrial society (see Bromley 1999; Renton 2001).

Marx was the first theorist to identify capitalism as the principal driving force behind increasing levels of international **interdependence**, a process that he believed was both transforming human society and uniting the species. Marx was interested in how the processes of industrialisation shaped the modern world and the way in which capitalism generated specific social formations as it spread across the globe. According to Marx, the interconnections created by the spread of capitalist relations of production would come to both bind the species together and weaken the hold that nationalism had on people's political identities.

With remarkable prescience, Marx argued that the very essence of capitalism is to 'strive to tear down every barrier to intercourse', to 'conquer the whole earth for its market' and to overcome the tyranny of distance by reducing 'to a minimum the time spent in motion from one place to another' (Marx 1973: 539).

Resistance to the spread of capitalism, according to Marx, was futile. National economic planning would become an anachronism as barriers to trade and investment collapsed. In a famous extract from *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels describe how globalisation prises open national economies and homogenises economic development across the globe (see Box 5.1).

Contrary to the way his views have sometimes been portrayed, Marx saw substantial benefits flowing from economic globalisation. The universalising processes inherent in capitalism promised to bring not only unprecedented levels of human freedom, but also an end to insularity and **xenophobia**. According to Marx and Engels, under globalisation:

> national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible . . . The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations, into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; . . . In one word, it creates a world after its own image (Marx and Engels 1967: 84).

> **Box 5.1: Discussion points**
>
> **The effects of capitalism**
>
> The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country . . . All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations. . . . In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations (Marx and Engels 1967: 83–4).

Unlike economic liberals who regard the collapse of national economic **sovereignty** as an intrinsically positive development, Marx highlighted the dark side of interdependency, in particular the social and cultural effects of exposure to the rigours of market forces. As early as the 1840s, Marx had noted the social impact of globalisation. People had:

> . . . become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them (a pressure which they have conceived of as a dirty trick on the part of the so-called universal spirit, etc.), a power which has become more and more enormous and, in the last instance, turns out to be the world market (Marx and Engels 1964: 48–9).

According to Marx, the **emancipation** of human beings from material scarcity and surplus social constraint will take place via the self-liberation of the working class. He is therefore concerned with the estrangement of classes rather than other human groups and identities, such as religions, ethnicities, **nations** or states. The effect of capitalism in producing specific social formations in the wake of its expansion has important implications for the ways in which individuals come to regard their interests, especially in a global context.

Marx, the state and war in political economy

For Marx, the state functions primarily to maintain and defend class domination and exploitation. It defends the interests of property by sustaining a social order in which the bourgeoisie are the principal beneficiaries. The state has become:

> . . . a separate entity, beside and outside civil society; but it is nothing more than the form of organisation which the bourgeoisie necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests (Marx and Engels 1964: 78).

However, because Marx regarded the state as merely an instrument of class rule – 'the executive of the modern State [is] but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie' – he effectively denied that the state could act autonomously of class forces even in the course of pacifying domestic society, resisting external **security** threats or participating in wars (Marx and Engels 1967: 82). This was a major theoretical shortcoming of his analysis.

In the province of political economy, Marx's crude economic reductionism has been acknowledged and, in most cases, modified by those who nevertheless locate themselves in the Marxist tradition. Many self-described neo-Marxists now accept that the state enjoys some degree of autonomy from capital, particularly when it faces national crises such as war and economic depression. The development of the welfare state in most industrialised societies after World War II, for example, is widely acknowledged as a significant concession to socialism. The behaviour of the state cannot simply be reduced to an expression of dominant class interests. In broad economic policy the modern state is often forced to make invidious choices between 'fractions' of capital when the interests of the business sector are not homogeneous. For example, debates over free trade versus protectionism can often be characterised as a struggle between nationally based capital on the one hand, and international capital interests on the other.

According to Poulantzas (1972), for example, the degree of 'relative autonomy' enjoyed by the state at any particular point in time will depend on the state of relations between classes, class fractions and the intensity of inter-class conflict. Although the state is rarely confronted with a completely unified business community, it will tend to promote and protect the interests of businesses which are seen as being both employment-intensive and significant promoters of capital accumulation. Neo-Marxists generally concede that citizens in capitalist states have a common interest in a sustained level of economic activity as the basis of their material standard of living. The modern capitalist state has a vested interest in facilitating capital accumulation. Though it is largely 'excluded' from directly controlling private decisions of production and investment, the state must make policy decisions which are broadly compatible with business interests, sustaining a climate of confidence while promoting conditions for accumulation and profitability. Although the state is both excluded from and dependent upon the accumulation process, its intervention is crucial to the maintenance of the process.

The state must therefore represent a broader range of political interests and perspectives than Marx implied: it cannot be dismissed as simply a locus of class **power**. It must, on the one hand, sustain the process of capital accumulation and the private appropriation of resources without infringing on managerial prerogatives, because it is dependent on that capital to provide the revenue necessary to satisfy society's increasing demand for government services. On the other hand, it must also preserve society's belief in it as the impartial arbiter of class interests, thereby legitimating its power while fostering broad social acceptance of the whole system.

Marx, the state and war in international relations

In the province of international relations, Marx's view that the state was merely an instrument of class rule has not been revised by neo-Marxists in the same way as it has been rethought in the field of political economy. The longevity of the states-system and its apparent autonomy, the states-system's propensity for violence, and the grip that nationalism maintains upon political identities, have all defied the pattern of historical development outlined by Marx.

Marx believed that the spread of capitalism guaranteed 'the emergence of a universal class which would liberate the entire species from the consequences of estrangement between states and nations' (Linklater 1986: 306). Or as the historian Charles Beard put it,

> . . . class interest cloaking itself in patriotism and national interest must be opposed, the fatherland taken over by the working classes, upper-class interest destroyed, and the way prepared for a reconciliation of nations (Beard 1934: 168).

The high level of order in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, however, appears to have deceived Marx into believing that the old world of statecraft and diplomacy was being superseded by the newly globalising forces of capitalism. In the 1840s the problem of war was not a preoccupation for social theorists; it was an 'age of military quiescence' (Gallie 1978: 69). Marx's class analysis therefore almost entirely neglected the impact of diplomatic and strategic interaction upon both the process of state formation and the development of capitalism itself (Linklater 1986: 302). Marx not only failed to anticipate the increasingly autonomous character of the modern state, he also ignored the crucial relationship between the citizen's concern for territorial security and the state's claim to represent the 'national interest' in its conduct of foreign policy (Linklater 1990a: 153).

According to Gallie (1978: 99), 'from its first beginnings Marxist overall social theory was defective, through its failure to place and explain the different possible roles of war in human history'. Insufficient emphasis was given to the impact of war and state-formation upon the internationalisation of capitalism. Similarly, Marx did not foresee that the spread of capitalism would become a major reason for the reproduction of the modern states-system. Instead, he held to the view that 'as the antagonism between classes within the **nation** vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end' (Marx and Engels 1967: 102).

Marxism not only underestimated the importance of the state's monopoly control of the instruments of violence and the autonomous nature of strategic and diplomatic life. It also ignored the crucial role that war played in establishing, shaping and reinforcing bounded political communities. This is because Marx believed that the transformation of the capitalist mode of production alone was the key to eradicating intersocietal estrangement (Linklater 1998: 116). Proletarian internationalism would liberate human loyalties and obligations from the confines of parochial nation-states which would 'wither away', to be replaced by a united community of free association. Marxism had little to say about how bounded communities interacted, why and how exclusionary boundaries were developed and maintained, or the obstacles which prevented new forms of political community arising.

Marx's account of international relations can be fairly described as an *endogenous* approach, where 'the internal structure of states determines not only the form and use of military force but external behaviour generally' (Waltz 1959: 125). As Waltz suggests, for Marx war is the external manifestation of the internal class struggle, which makes the problem of war coeval with the existence of capitalist states. If, as Marx suggests, it is capitalist states which cause wars, by abolishing capitalism states will be abolished and therefore international conflict itself will cease (Waltz 1959: 126–7).

However as Michael Howard has suggested, 'the fact remains that most of the serious political movements of our time, however radical, are concerned with remodelling nation-states, if necessary creating new ones, rather than with abolishing them' (Howard 1983: 32–3). The experience of self-proclaimed revolutionary states such as the Soviet Union, and the Sino-Soviet split in the mid-1950s, would suggest that Marx had significantly underestimated both the systemic constraints on new forms of political community and the structural conditioning of the **international system** upon state behaviour. As Linklater argues,

'Soviet Marxism quickly succumbed to the classical method of **power politics**, postponing if not altogether abandoning its ideal of a world community in which nationalism and sovereignty would be superseded, and generating in its own bloc the very forms of nationalism and defence of state sovereignty which it intended to abolish' (Linklater 1986: 304). In Waltz's words, 'the socialisation of non-conformist states' by the diplomatic system has proved irresistible – even for self-proclaimed revolutionary regimes (Waltz 1979: 128). **Neorealism**'s claim that the anarchical condition of the international system homogenises foreign policy behaviour (see chapter 4) – an exogenous approach to international relations – is a major challenge to Marx's belief that the internal conflictual properties of capitalist states will extend the boundaries of political community.

Marx on 'national interests' and 'free trade'

Marx and Engels believed that market relations and free trade destroyed the fabric of social harmony by crushing the notion of general interest. 'When have you done anything out of pure humanity, from consciousness of the futility of the opposition between general and the individual interest?', Engels berated liberal economists in the 1840s (cited in Renton 2001: 42–3).

Marx and Engels were at pains to demonstrate the effects of unfettered capitalism and unrestricted trade on the most vulnerable and exploited class of people. According to Marx, 'if there is anything clearly exposed in political economy, it is the fate attending the working classes under the reign of Free Trade'. Following the rules established by Ricardo, the normal price of labour for a working man is when '"wages [are] reduced to their minimum – their lowest level". Labour is a commodity as well as any other commodity', just like 'pepper and salt' (cited in Renton 2001: 46–7). The laws of political economy are ideally suited to the interests of the property-owning class but for workers, it is a very different story in the short term, if not the long term.

> Thus you have to choose: either you must disavow the whole of political economy as it exists at present, or you must allow that under freedom of trade the whole severity of the laws of political economy will be applied to the working classes. Is that to say that we are against Free Trade? No, we are for Free Trade, because by Free Trade all economical laws, with their most astounding contradictions, will act upon a larger scale, upon a greater extent of territory, upon the territory of the whole earth; and because from the uniting of all these contradictions into a single group, where they stand face to face, will result the struggle which will itself eventuate in the emancipation of the proletarians (cited in Renton 2001: 47–8).

According to Marx, there is no such thing as the national interest per se. There are, instead, class interests masquerading as the general interest of the community, situations which will only end with the demise of capitalism. As the historian Howard Zinn suggests:

> our Machiavellis, our presidential advisers, our assistants for national security, and our secretaries of state insist they serve the 'national interest', 'national security', and 'national defense'. These phrases put everyone in the country under one enormous blanket, camouflaging the differences between the interest of those who run the government and the interest of the average citizen (Zinn 1997: 339–40).

The overriding importance of the development of class consciousness meant that for Marx, people perceived their individual interests in class terms. It is their location in the production process – workers or capitalists, bourgeoisie or proletariat – which determines their interests. Thus 'interests' for Marx have an objective material reality. The degree of class consciousness an individual has, however, depends upon a subjective awareness of this situation (Bottomore 1991: 89). Class membership exists even if it is not always recognised.

As capitalist relations of production spread with globalisation, so too did the breadth and scope of class interests and identity. At the root of class consciousness is the ability to recognise the collective interests of a class and the need to maintain solidarity with those interests. Sometimes **alliances** will be formed between the same classes in different states (for example, the solidarity of the World Economic Forum in the face of anti-capitalist protests). At other times there would be competition between the same classes in rival countries (for example, market competition between the Russian, French and US business classes for Iraqi oil; labour market competition between workers in East Asia for foreign investment). Ultimately, however, conflict between classes on a global scale would be the locomotive of change which would destroy nationalism and the nation-states system in its path (for example, capital versus labour, strikes).

Because Marx is almost exclusively concerned with the estrangement of classes, he makes little or no allowance for the residual influences of other modalities of human bonding – sometimes dismissed as 'false consciousness' – which might also determine the manner in which individuals perceive their interests. Membership of other social groups is not denied, but nor is it raised to the level of importance at which class operates to animate human behaviour.

E. H. Carr reminds us that Marx declared:

> that all thought was conditioned by the economic interest and social status of the thinker. This view was unduly restrictive. In particular Marx, who denied the existence of 'national interests' underestimated the potency of nationalism as a force conditioning the thought of the individual (Carr [1939] 1946: 66).

He could also have said that Marx failed to see nationalism as a powerful determinant of the social bond which simultaneously unites and divides people. Nationalism's capacity to transcend social divisions and blunt class consciousness was not seriously addressed in his writings. Instead, Marx thought that 'national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto' (Marx and Engels 1967: 102).

Marx appeared to believe that the idea of 'national interests' was a hoax because 'while the bourgeoisie of each nation still retained separate national interests, big industry created a class, which in all nations has the same interest and with which nationality is already dead' (Marx and Engels 1964: 76) (see Box 5.2).

Only the bourgeoisie, therefore, thought nationally and sought to pass off its interests as the interests of the whole community. This was particularly, though not exclusively, the case with respect to economic interests, especially in matters of finance and trade.

As mentioned earlier, Marx's reluctance to seriously consider the grip that nationalism holds on an individual's political identity may be explained by the circumstances of his time.

Box 5.2: Discussion points

Proletarian revolution

> The Communists are . . . reproached with desiring to abolish countries and national-
> ities. The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have
> not got . . . National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more
> and more vanishing . . . The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish
> still faster (Marx and Engels 1967: 101–3).

The long **peace** in Europe from the middle to the end of the nineteenth century seems to have
encouraged Marx to believe that class-based exclusion was the only motor of history and to
dismiss the ongoing dynamics of strategic interaction, geopolitical rivalry and interstate war.
He mistakenly regarded the nation-state as a temporary and transitional form of political
community which had been maintained to further the interests of the dominant bourgeoisie:
nationalism, regarded as a form of false consciousness, was their ruling ideology. Neither the
tenacity of nation-states nor the idea of national interests has been taken seriously by Marxist
students of international relations.

Marx and imperialism

Marx's account of the spread of capitalism – or what today is called globalisation – highlighted
the futility of resistance and its power to force states to adopt the capitalist economic model:
markets, resources and investment.

Since Marx's time, scholars in the Marxist tradition have tried to explain the nature of
the spread of capitalism and, in particular, the relationship between dominant and subordi-
nate states (Brewer 1990; Hardt and Negri 2000; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001; Wood 2003).
They have been concerned with the role of the hegemonic or imperialist state, and questions
such as: to what extent is capitalism a cause of war and inequality?

Marxist theories of imperialism, like Marxism itself, are also *endogenous* accounts of
international politics. They locate the motives of state behaviour – foreign policy – in the
internal economic needs of the leading capitalist states.

There is no one Marxist theory of imperialism, however the outlines of a generic
approach would normally incorporate the following claims:
1. The *internal* economic needs of capitalist states require them, at times, to behave aggres-
   sively in international affairs. This is a structural economic need to avoid domestic eco-
   nomic problems such as overproduction, under-investment, access to resources, etc.
2. These external challenges include new sites for investment of surplus capital where profits
   can be repatriated, new export markets for goods and commodities, and access to key raw
   materials (e.g. cotton, oil, coal, gold, etc).
3. States or territories which do not *complement* the economic interests of the dominant impe-
   rial state are regarded with extreme hostility. They may be invaded and occupied, claimed
   as colonies, exploited or have local agents of the imperial power appointed to their admin-
   istration.

4. There is intense competition between imperial powers for control of these territories, sometimes leading to conflicts (wars between European powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and anti-colonial struggles.

5. States which prefer *economic nationalism* – which want to administer their own affairs with local priorities – and do not wish to join the global economy dominated by a few powerful players, will be targeted. During the Cold War the USSR and Vietnam posed a threat to the US, for example, not so much because they imposed a strategic challenge (only the USSR did this), but because they exempted themselves from the economic reach of the imperial powers.

   These states were not open to foreign investment or trade, nor did they make their natural resources available for extraction by the corporations of the imperial powers. They were a threat to the prosperity of the imperial powers and worse – a possible threat of a good example. Examples of US intervention against states of this kind include Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, and Iraq in 2003.

6. Since the end of World War II the US has had to ensure that no viable alternative mode of economic organisation (for example, the Soviet model of centrally planned economics) would take root internationally. Alternatives had to be destroyed and their planners punished (for example, Indochina). The world had to be made safe for American business.

   It is instructive to compare US attitudes to China and the USSR during the final years of the Cold War. Once China began to adopt a market economic model, its communist political system was no longer regarded as a threat to the West whereas hostility to the USSR remained because it refused to convert its economy.

   Marxist theories of imperialism do not regard free trade as a benign policy which benefits all. Rather they see free trade as a weapon used by dominant states as a rationalisation to force other states to complement their economic interests – hence the term 'free trade imperialism'. According to Marxists, free trade creates winners and losers and the losers are never compensated for their losses. Furthermore, the dominant states do not abide by the rules of free trade that they are imposing on others. Poor states are prevented from gaining access to lucrative markets in the West by protectionism – tariffs, quotas, nontariff barriers, subsidies, etc. Cotton farmers in Botswana are locked out of the US market by US government subsidies paid to inefficient US cotton farmers.

   Marxists also highlight the structural unfairness of the world economy and point to the fact that poor, underdeveloped states are often locked into poverty by their relationships with the rich world. Through conditional loans from the **IMF** and **World Bank**, their debt burden determines the profile of their economy, distorting local needs and priorities (for example, the structural adjustment programs), effectively trapping them in.

Conclusion

Marxism has too little to say about many key issues in global politics, including nationalism, war between states and the persistence of the states-system. Marx overestimated the importance of class divisions and underestimated other important social cleavages, as well as the extent to which capitalism could adapt to overcome its internal contradictions and the challenges of socialism. There is no Marxist theory of international relations.

The value of Marx today is his account of globalisation, its impact on culture and economic nationalism, and the futility of resistance to the spread of capitalism. Almost every commentator on globalisation owes Marx an intellectual debt of some kind. Those in the Marxist tradition have also made a significant contribution to our understanding of international politics by explaining the uneven effects of free trade and the complex relationships which exist between dominant economic and poor subordinate states in the world.

Questions

1. What are the essential characteristics of Marxism?
2. Why was Marx so critical of capitalism?
3. How does Marx view the relationship between capitalism and the state?
4. Does Marxism have insights into contemporary globalisation that other international relations theories lack? If so, what are they?
5. Is the Marxist theory of imperialism still relevant in the twenty-first century?

Further reading

Hardt, M. and Negri, A. 2000, *Empire*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Popular and contentious reworking of some Marxist themes in the context of globalisation.

Kubālkovā, V. and Cruickshank, A. A. [1985] 1989, *Marxism and international relations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. Useful account of Marxism's continuing value.

Linklater, A. 1990a, *Beyond realism and Marxism: critical theory and international relations*, London: Palgrave Macmillan. Contains an excellent exposition of Marxism's strengths and weaknesses as an approach to international relations.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. 1967, *The communist manifesto*, Harmondsworth: Penguin. One of the most powerful, insightful, prescient and widely read political tracts ever written.

Feminism

Katrina Lee-Koo

Introduction

This chapter examines the different feminist approaches to the study and practice of international relations. It highlights the similarities between approaches, but also the differences. It does this first by tracing the interventions made by feminists into international relations and the creation of a distinctly feminist agenda. Second, it uses the 'gender lens' to demonstrate how experiences and understandings in international relations can be gendered and analyses the consequences of this gendering. Finally it explains and critiques the different feminist approaches to international relations.

International relations meets feminism

Like international relations generally, feminist international relations is a broad and diverse field of study. It is a field that is rich with debate, controversy, cutting-edge research, and challenging new **methodological** approaches. Feminist international relations scholars are often necessarily interdisciplinary, synthesising international relations with gender, cultural, post-colonial and even environmental studies while also drawing heavily from more traditional **disciplines**. Feminist scholars have made important contributions to international relations **theory**, security studies, international political economy, development studies, international law, and questions of global governance, among other fields.

     While feminist international relations encompasses numerous **feminisms** which are based on distinct theoretical approaches, feminist international relations scholars have a common commitment to highlighting and addressing the disadvantage that many women suffer in international politics. This disadvantage covers, first, the lack of access that women have to political and decision-making **power** and to economic resources. Second, feminist international relations scholars are concerned with the ways in which the study and practice of international politics discriminates against women. It is these issues of disadvantage and discrimination that set the agenda for feminists working in international relations.

Box 6.1: Discussion points

The feminist international relations agenda

Feminists contribute to a broader international relations analysis in two ways:
1 By offering a broader set of issues to consider
2 By offering new insights into existing international relations concerns

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The feminist international relations agenda

Feminist international relations includes a vast range of issues covering women from different social, political and economic backgrounds. It examines their experiences of **war**, **peace**, **democracy**, governance, economics, development, justice, **security**, and health. A focus upon these topics, with gender in mind, promotes a rich agenda of important issues that are often neglected by more mainstream approaches to international relations. This agenda involves examining two kinds of gendered issues. The first are issues that affect mainly women, like limited access to political power, trafficking for sexual slavery, military prostitution, labour exploitation in certain industries, and sexual violence against civilians during war. For Australian international relations feminists there are a number of these issues which are of concern in our own region (see Lee-Koo 2007). For instance, the level of representation of women in the Australian Parliament is still below half; it currently sits at 35.5 per cent. After the removal of Senator Amanda Vanstone from Cabinet in January 2007, there are only two women members of a Federal Cabinet of eighteen. In addition, in 2007 ACT Senator Gary Humphries suggested that there may be as many as 1000 female sexual slaves currently in Australia. This accounts for some of the 225,000 women and children who were trafficked out of the Southeast Asian region in the first two years of this century. Throughout the Asia-Pacific region feminist international relations scholars research and assist women who seek greater political representation, who suffer labour exploitation, who have limited access to health care and education, and who face unique problems rebuilding their societies after conflict or political upheaval.

The second type of gendered concern is issues where women and men have different experiences within the same context. For instance, feminist international relations scholarship investigates how and why women in the Australian Defence Force are more likely to be the victims of sexual harassment than men. Similarly, it considers how the experiences and working conditions of women in the same industries are different from men. It is also interested in the gendered experiences of other international phenomena like disease. For instance, in 2005 Oxfam New Zealand reported that Papua New Guinea had the highest prevalence of HIV/Aids outside of Africa. While HIV/Aids affects both men and women, women are at least four times more vulnerable to infection than men. This is because they have little social, cultural and political power to negotiate safe sex and to access redress for rape and sexual abuse. In another example, while the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami devastated men and women throughout the region, it did affect them differently. Reconstruction programs often favoured men's economic needs without properly supporting women, particularly widows, who had difficulty accessing relief (UNFPA 2005).

> **Box 6.2: Discussion points**
>
> **The goals of feminist international relations theory**
>
> 1 To highlight and challenge the way international relations privileges certain masculine identities and ways of knowing.
> 2 To examine the roles and experiences of women in international politics.
> 3 To analyse how gender is constructed and the consequences this has for men and women in international politics.
> 4 To examine the relationships within and between masculinity, femininity, men and women.

Tracing feminist international relations: challenging the masculine bias

In the early 1990s feminists began to make their mark in international relations. One of the first goals of these scholars was to highlight what they saw as the masculine bias of the core assumptions and concepts of the discipline. Important contributions like Jan Jindy Pettman's *Worlding women* (1996) and J. Ann Tickner's *Gender in international relations* (1992) demonstrated how the theories and practices of international relations reflect and respect the experiences of certain men and certain masculine qualities. For example, one of the first achievements of feminist engagement in international relations was its questioning of **realism**'s 'rational man' as the basis of international life. It argued that the 'rational man' model of human nature (which is self-serving, aggressive, competitive and warlike) does not speak for many women or indeed many men (Tickner 1992: chapter 2). Similarly, these feminists argue that the 'important concerns' of international politics such as **states**, **sovereignty**, **anarchy** and military power all reflect, to the neglect of alternatives, masculine ways of knowing and masculine traits. Moreover, they reflect a particular kind of masculinity, a hegemonic masculinity, that prefers aggressive and liberal/realist ways of thinking about the world. Feminist international relations scholars argue that this is why the mainstream 'telling' of international relations features elite men and their experiences in war, statecraft and diplomacy.

For feminist international relations scholars, however, this only accounts for part of the story of international relations. After all, there are far more examples of states peacefully negotiating potential disputes than there are of war. A key goal of feminist theorising, therefore, is to demonstrate first how this masculine bias operates in such a way that often privileges and promotes aggression and, second, to reject the claim that these are universal experiences. Consequently, much feminist international relations scholarship is directed towards uncovering the experiences of people who are hidden by this masculine bias.

Where are the women?

A key goal of feminist research is to correct the male-centric bias in international relations by asking 'where are the women?' and then redressing this imbalance by incorporating women's experiences into any analysis of international relations. Groundbreaking works like Cynthia

Enloe's *Bananas, beaches and bases* (1990) reveals that women play important roles in international relations. In addition to the popularly known stories of Western women as nurses and factory workers during wartime, feminists point out that women, in their everyday lives, are also agents and activists in war, in the international political economy, and in the search for peace, security and reconciliation. Enloe argues that the lives of ordinary women can provide useful insights into how international relations operates. For instance, a young woman working in a sweatshop in Southeast Asia may not appear to be a major actor in international relations. However, an analysis of her life can tell us a great deal about the workings of the international political economy, the addressing of her state's debt, and the politics of labour and gender relations in developing countries. In this sense she is an important agent, while simultaneously being a victim, of international politics.

Consequently, asking 'where are the women?' offers a fountain of empirical knowledge which can be used to analyse and understand international relations. In compiling this catalogue of women's experiences, however, feminists have had to employ new kinds of methodologies. First, in order to uncover many of these experiences it has been necessary to move away from some of the more established ways of knowing used in mainstream international relations. Feminist international relations scholars therefore sometimes rely upon sources of knowledge that are unashamedly subjective, including personal interviews, diaries, letters and memoirs. Furthermore, they use as sources of knowledge people who do not claim to be prominent decision-makers in international relations, but who nonetheless significantly contribute to the practice of international relations and whose lives international relations can profoundly affect. Second, therefore, feminists often employ a bottom-up, rather than top-down, approach to studying international relations. Rather than describing international relations through a grand narrative that analyses the actions and behaviours of whole nation-states in a geopolitical context, these feminists prefer to offer micro-narratives by explaining how individual people, because of their gender, affect, or are affected by, the behaviours and actions of nation-states in different ways.

Reconstructing international relations: examining the differences between sex and gender

For feminists working in international relations, the question then becomes 'how can we reconstruct the ways in which we study and practise international relations so that the experiences of all people are accounted for and there is no gendered discrimination?' It is perhaps this project that causes much of the controversy between feminist scholars. For some feminists it is simply a case of adding women to areas where they are absent, such as parliaments, as significant wealth creators, and in other positions of power. For other feminists however, this cannot be done without first addressing the patriarchal culture that exists in international relations. This controversy surrounds the politics of moving from 'adding sex empirically' to 'analysing gender critically'.

Feminist theories rely upon an understanding of the differences between biological sex and socially constructed gender. These terms are politically loaded and remain contested. The term 'sex' is usually used by social scientists to refer to the biological characteristics which

define a person as being male or female. It is 'gender', however, that interests most feminists. Gender, most feminists argue, is an identity which is not biologically determined but is instead socially constructed. It is a construction that dichotomises identities, behaviours, responsibilities and expectations in society as being not male or female but, rather, masculine or feminine.

For example, some may argue that Australian society is gendered. This implies that men and women are socially expected to adopt the gendered roles of masculine and feminine respectively and behave in ways that are supposedly appropriate to those roles. This might mean that men are the members of parliament while women are their supportive wives. In this sense, gender is not a biological imperative but a social expectation. Consequently, when a man or woman steps out of their traditionally defined gendered identities they appear peculiar or 'not normal'. For instance, the current Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party, Julia Gillard, is often questioned about the fact that she does not have a husband and is not a mother (the traditionally defined social expectations of her gender). In the weeks after the announcement of her new role as Deputy Leader there was extensive public and media comment about her choice of clothing, her fashion sense, and her hairstyle. These comments were dwelled upon in a way that is not usually the case for male politicians. The gendered expectation that 'women should dress nicely' was summed up by one commentator who told Gillard 'If you can't put an outfit together, how can we trust you to put the Labor Party back together?' (Quigley 2006).

Feminist scholars use examples like this to demonstrate that politics still operates on powerfully gendered ideas and social expectations of behaviour. Yet for feminists it is not simply the case that there is a difference between the social construction of masculinity and femininity. They argue that there is an unequal relationship between masculinity (and its associated characteristics of being strong, decisive, aggressive and dominating the public realm) and feminine characteristics (which are seen as weak, irrational, peaceable, conciliatory and restricted to the private realm). This unequal relationship sees femininity as politically, economically and socially devalued while masculinity is valorised. It is perhaps worth asking whether popular nicknames for women politicians, such as 'Attila the Hen' for Margaret Thatcher and 'Verandah Sandstone' for Amanda Vanstone would be tolerated for men!

The relationship between the masculine and feminine: it's not just about women!

Feminist international relations can never be about *only* women. While the focus may be on the discrimination and disadvantage of women in international politics, it can only be understood within the context of the relationship between men and women and the relationship between the masculine and the feminine. For instance, feminists are interested in how some men can be 'feminised' while some women are 'masculinised'. Western militaries, for example, are sites where gay men are often feminised and women are expected to be masculine. Consequently, gay men (and lesbians) are still prohibited from serving openly in the US military (Belkin and Bateman 2003) while films like *GI Jane* (1997) portray successful women in the military as being necessarily masculine and aggressive. It is also suggested that

the expectations of an aggressive masculinity in the military may contribute to the elevated levels of sexual harassment and assault within militarised cultures (Enloe 2000). Useful discussions of the relationships between gendered roles and men and women can be found in Zalewski and Parpart's *The 'man question' in international relations* (1998) and Kathy Ferguson's *The man question* (1993) as well as contributions by male scholars like Terrell Carver (2003, 2004), Joshua Goldstein (2001), Fred Halliday (1988) and Steve Smith (2005).

However, while feminists generally agree on the importance of understanding and addressing the discrimination and disadvantage facing women that are caused by the above issues, they can (and do) disagree in a number of important areas. It is from this point that different feminist international relations theories (and practices) arise.

Feminist theories of international relations

Like all political theories, feminist international relations has many strands, some of which contradict each other. While two people may each call themselves 'a feminist' they can still find themselves disagreeing on basic ideas about women, men and the **international system**. Feminisms such as liberal, radical, Marxist, cultural, post-colonial, constructivist, critical and postmodern all reflect the different ways in which feminists interpret the information before them. In this context, the various feminisms look in different ways at the nature of international relations and how we should study it; the nature(s) of men and women; the power relationships that men and women (and masculinity and femininity) have both with each other and the international system; the idea of what constitutes the good life; and strategies of how to attain it. While this means that the strands of feminism can be quite distinct, they can be broadly divided into positivist and post-positivist approaches (Tickner 2005). Examples of a positivist approach are liberal, radical, Marxist, cultural and some constructivist feminisms, while post-positivist approaches include critical, postmodern and most post-colonial feminisms.

Liberal feminism

Liberal feminism is centrally concerned with equal rights between men and women (Steans 2006: chapter 2). As its name suggests, it is derived from the political theory of **liberalism** more broadly. It is important to remember though that it is *not* derived from, or necessarily associated with, the Liberal Party of Australia. In Australia, liberal feminists are active across the political party spectrum. Liberal feminists, like 'small-l' liberals, support the rights of individuals to seek fulfilment, to pursue their own interests, and to be equal before the law. Liberal feminism has a long political tradition. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the rights of woman* in 1792 was perhaps the first attempt to make the liberal case for women's rights. She argued that discriminatory practices, such as denying women education and full citizenship, did not give women the opportunity to fulfil their potential as human beings. Today, liberal feminists continue to argue that discrimination based on a person's biological sex deprives women of equal rights to pursue their political, economic and social self-interest. They argue that this can be eliminated by the removal of legal and other obstacles that have denied them the same

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Box 6.3: Terminology

Feminist theories of international relations

Below are some of the theories developed by feminist scholars:
- *Liberal feminism* is based on liberal ideas of equality between men and women.
- *Marxist feminism* argues that the liberation of women can be achieved through the dismantling of **capitalism** and oppressive class relations.
- *Black feminism* examines the relationship between gender and race-based discrimination.
- *Cultural and maternal feminism* argues that women's peaceful natures can contribute to a politics of global peace.
- *Post-colonial feminism* seeks to examine the different forms of oppression facing women in colonial and post-colonial societies that are often neglected by Western-based feminisms.
- *Critical and postmodern feminisms* seek to ask fundamental questions about women's and men's identities, the gendered nature of the international system and possibilities of **emancipation** for women.

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rights and opportunities as men. Consequently, most liberal feminists agree that the state is the proper authority for lobbying for, and enforcing, women's rights. It is believed that even though the state may itself engage in discriminatory practices, it is nonetheless capable of becoming the neutral and objective arbiter of women's equality.

In Western nations, liberal feminism remains powerful in policy-making circles and political lobbying. Many prominent women's organisations like NOW (the National Organisation of Women) and Feminist Majority in the US and government lobby groups in Australia argue their cases from a liberal feminist perspective. These campaigns are often rights-based, making reference to equal rights and the rule of law. In Australia, the Australian Women's Suffrage Society, founded in 1889, used liberal principles to lobby for the rights of (white) Australian women to vote. More recently, debates in Australia in 2006 over women's access to RU486, the so-called abortion pill, saw liberal feminists campaign on a platform not just for women's 'right to choose' and to have access to safe health care, but also as an equality issue between women. One commentator noted that '[f]or rural women and for women of some ethnic groups . . . the option of medical [as opposed to surgical] abortion is critical if they are to be treated equally with other Australian women' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2006). Similarly, the liberal feminist 'right to fight' campaign for Australian women in the military is based upon an equal opportunities argument that suggests denying women the right to participate in frontline combat is a case of workplace discrimination that will hamper women's access to promotion, reward and respect.

The success of liberal feminism can be attributed to its reliance upon a positivist form of understanding knowledge that is familiar to international relations as a discipline (Tickner 2001: 12–13). Liberal feminists are concerned only with women's exclusion from, and inequality in, areas of public life. They are *not*, however, concerned with the nature of that public life (be it in the military, the state, the workplace or the economy). It is on this point that a number of feminists have critiqued liberal feminism.

Critiques of liberal feminism

Critiques of liberal feminism parallel many of the critiques of liberalism generally. First, liberal feminism's claim to universality is problematised. Just as liberalism speaks of the rights of 'man', so too does liberal feminism speak of the rights of 'woman'. It is accused, particularly, of representing the interests of white women in Western societies as if they were the interests of all women. In this sense it is often charged with claiming objective knowledge for all women and being ignorant of subjective concerns and issues based on other identities such as race, ethnicity, religion or socio-economic background.

It is from this particular criticism that we see the rise of specific issue/identity-based feminists such as black, Third World and post-colonial feminists. This array of feminisms points out that liberal feminism's agenda may not always be relevant to non-white women and that, in some cases, liberal feminist discourse excludes them and their needs. For instance, in Australia, indigenous women have argued that, unlike white women, their primary source of oppression does not come from a patriarchal home or community life but rather from racism (Pettman 1992: 26). This is an issue that is rarely dealt with by liberal feminists. In fact, some liberal feminists may actively support the subordination of non-white women, as is often the case in colonial encounters (Pettman 1992: chapter 2). In many cases, women are negotiating complex webs of oppression that may include not just sexism, but also racism, poverty, and discrimination, according to class and religion. This did not mean that these women do not consider themselves feminists, but rather that their goals and ambitions as feminists are different and not necessarily based on a liberal model (hooks 1981).

This leads to the second major criticism of liberal feminism: its claim to objectively know 'the real world'. Liberal feminists by and large accept current mainstream articulations of the world 'as the way it is'. It accepts the idea that the world is necessarily a conflictual place made of states vying for power in an international anarchical realm. It doesn't seek to *change* the nature of the world but only to change women's roles and opportunities in it. In this sense, a woman like US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is an important role model. Rice is proof that a woman (indeed, a black woman) is as capable as a man of running the State Department and coordinating the war in Iraq. It does not, however, question the prominence and resources given to the State Department, or the necessity of war. Similarly, the liberal feminist 'right to fight' campaign in Australia does not overly problematise the aggressively masculine culture that continues to exist within the Australian Defence Force. Rather, it simply suggests that women have the capability to assimilate into it.

Maternal and cultural feminism

While liberal feminists reject the idea that women are more nurturing and peaceable, maternal and cultural feminists, on the other hand, argue that there *is* a connection between women and peace and that this connection should be exploited and emphasised to create a better world. This kind of feminism includes, first, those who believe that women are biologically more peaceful than men, and second, those who argue that women are socialised into being more peaceful than men. These feminists argue that women's roles in the private sphere as mothers, carers, moral guardians and nurturers link them to peace. Such arguments have been put forward most assertively by Sara Ruddick (1989) and Jean Bethke Elshtain (1982) and have been a powerful organising tool in women's peace activism. For instance, the 'Save Our

Sons' movement in Australia, which protested against conscription during the Vietnam War, consisted mostly of middle and working class women, who organised around their identity as wives and mothers who did not want to see their sons fight in the Vietnam War. More recently, American Cindy Sheehan founded the organisation Gold Star Families for Peace, after her son was killed serving in Iraq. She too draws upon her identity as a mother and what she calls 'matriotism' (a maternal patriotism), claiming that mothers (and those who have been mothered) have unique insights into peace (Sheehan 2006). Public debates in Australia simply tend to rely upon socially constructed notions that peace is a woman's business and war is a man's. One of the arguments often put forward for banning women soldiers from frontline service is the anticipated public unease associated with the possibilities of women soldiers returning from war in 'body bags'. While these ideas are often seen in public debates in Australia, they have lost much of their appeal for feminist theorists.

Critical and postmodern feminisms

For critical and postmodern feminists, essentialist and universal claims about women's and men's natures and needs are troubling. Consequently, critical and postmodern feminists are distinct from liberal, maternal and cultural feminists in a number of ways. The first key distinction is that the former problematise and investigate the category of 'woman'. They reject the idea that 'woman' is a universal category and that women have a specific, shared way of knowing and being. Instead, they not only acknowledge the differences between women, they also embrace it. Critical and postmodern feminists argue that, like all identities, being 'a woman' is a subjective experience. They suggest that different women may suffer different forms of oppression and have different needs or ways of addressing these issues. Therefore, individual feminists should not assume that their needs are the same as every other woman's and expect the possibility that different feminists may think differently about important issues. Feminists, for example, may disagree about whether Islamic headscarves for girls are a source of oppression or a source of personal empowerment. Critical and postmodern feminists argue that knowledge about this is subjective, therefore it is up to individual women to make the decision for themselves, rather than rely upon a universal decision imposed on all women.

The second key feature of critical and postmodern feminism is its claim that gendered constructions pervade not just individuals but also institutions, knowledge and political discourse. Consequently, it attempts to challenge women's disadvantage and discrimination through an investigation and critique of the gendered nature of broader political structures and institutions. Critical and postmodern feminists do not accept any institution or claim to knowledge in international relations as unproblematic and neutral, or free of gendered construction. They argue that institutions like the state, the economy and the military are all gendered in specific ways that promote masculine values and subordinate feminine ones (Pettman 1996).

For example, women politicians in Australia argue that politics and parliament are not 'women friendly'. While women are not excluded from entering politics, some women find they do not have the social support structures in place to cater for their needs. In many cases child care still falls to the mother, and, additionally, women politicians negotiate a lingering expectation that women fulfil their traditional roles while also forging new opportunities

for women in government. Federal MP and former Western Australian Premier Carmen Lawrence stated in early 2007 that:

> . . . to succeed in our society, women have an additional set of challenges to confront if they have children. They need greater support and it has to be said for the most part that's lacking (Murray and Coorey 2007).

In 2003 a Victorian MP was ejected from State Parliament after breastfeeding her baby during Question Time. It created a great deal of controversy and highlighted the need for institutions and institutional cultures to adapt in line with changing social and legal values, which accept women in the workplace. Encouraging this acceptance often requires addressing the cultural expectations that women are the primary caregivers for children and the elderly, and that their responsibilities should remain in the private sphere.

Consequently, critical and postmodern feminists argue that knowledge about what should constitute the study of international relations is gendered to promote masculine characteristics. Particularly, they argue that realist international relations is not objective but, rather, privileges masculine values (Tickner 1992). Because it values states, anarchy, power, aggression and rationality and devalues notions of cooperation, conciliation, self-sacrifice, peace, physical weakness and emotion, it is considered a masculine practice that largely privileges elite, white men. As a result, it is these men who have dominated international relations. Even though women such as Condoleezza Rice, Madeline Albright (the first woman Secretary of State in the US) and Margaret Thatcher (Britain's first woman Prime Minister) have all been successful Western state leaders, critical and postmodern feminists argue that their success can perhaps be accounted for because they conformed to the masculine culture which dominates international relations. In the 2003 conflict in Iraq, the war in the former Yugoslavia, and the Falklands War, all three women were able to demonstrate masculine qualities that earned respect.

This concerns critical and postmodern feminists for two reasons. First, it encourages those in positions of power to behave aggressively and discourages 'feminine values' like peace and negotiation. Second, it continues to marginalise other agendas in international relations that do not pertain directly to the masculine business of state power and its strategies. In focusing on soldiers, leaders and state power during war, for example, international relations neglects and de-prioritises the experiences of others, particularly women, while failing to address the distinct ways in which international crises affect people differently.

Finally, critical and postmodern feminists argue that because they can demonstrate the ways in which gendered relations are constructed in international life, then international life is not immutable. This means that international relations, and the ways in which we think about and study it, can be constructed differently, perhaps towards ways that are more emancipatory for women and men (Lee-Koo 2007). For critical and postmodern feminists then, international politics does not need to be predicated on war, power or violence but can (and perhaps should) be understood and valued in terms of its potential for peace, emancipation and cooperation. Tickner (2001: 47) argues that a critical feminism should work towards an emancipatory politics of international life that is inclusive of all identities and committed to 'improving the lives of the whole of humankind'.

Conclusion: what does feminism add to our study of international relations?

For many feminists the role of gender in international relations is not a subset of the discipline, but, rather something that is intrinsic to every aspect of it. Feminist international relations implies that there are other legitimate ways of seeing, knowing, and being in the world. This gender-sensitive lens offers international relations scholars a broader series of issues which should be studied as part of the discipline, and a guide to how to address areas of gender-based discrimination. Its bottom-up approach brings the lives of ordinary people into focus and works towards understanding international relations not as an abstract practice, but as something that affects, and is affected by, the lives of people.

Questions

1. In what ways are the experiences of war gendered?
2. Why do most countries have more men than women in political leadership roles?
3. Why was international relations resistant to feminist theories for so long?
4. Feminists often investigate the ways in which women's experiences in the international labour market, development projects, diplomacy, and post-conflict societies are different from those of men. What might some of these differences be?
5. What does a study of the experiences of women and men add to our understanding of international relations?

Further reading

Enloe, Cythia 1990, *Bananas, beaches and bases: making feminist sense of international politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press. Modern classic that answers the question, 'where are the women in international relations?'

Pettman, Jan Jindy 1996, *Worlding women: a feminist international politics*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin. Important feminist analysis written by an Australian scholar.

Steans, Jill 2006, *Gender and international relations: issues, debates and future directions*, second edition, Cambridge: Polity Press. Excellent introductory study of the various dimensions of gender in international relations.

7
Postmodernism

Roland Bleiker

Introduction

Defining **postmodernism** is no easy task, for postmodern scholarship is characterised more by diversity than by a common set of beliefs. Add to this that the postmodern has become a very contentious label which is used less by its advocates and more by polemical critics who fear that embracing postmodern values would throw us into a dangerous nihilist void. But while the contours of the postmodern will always remain elusive and contested, the substantial issues that the respective debates have brought to the fore are important enough to warrant attention.

To understand the significance of these debates I begin this chapter by drawing a distinction between two broad approaches to the postmodern: one that outlines the contours of a new historical period (postmodernity) and another that places emphasis on finding new ways of understanding modern practices of knowledge and politics (postmodernism). The second part of the chapter examines how postmodern ideas entered international relations scholarship, focusing in particular on the contribution made by Australian scholars. I highlight both the key features of these contributions and the often polemical nature of the ensuing debates. Given the complexity of these debates and the limited space available here, my engagement in no way claims to be comprehensive. My objective is limited to identifying some of the key authors and issues, so that interested readers can then explore the issues at stake if they wish to do so. I conclude by outlining the main implications that these postmodern approaches have engendered for our understanding of international relations.

Postmodernity as a new historical period

The postmodern has become a stretched, widely used and highly controversial term. It first achieved prominence in literary criticism and architecture, but eventually spread into virtually all realms, including international relations. What the postmodern actually means is highly disputed. The increasing sense of confusion in the proliferation of the postmodern led Gianni Vattimo (1992: 1) to note that this term is so omnipresent and faddish that it has become almost obligatory to distance oneself from it. But Vattimo, and many others,

nevertheless held on. He, alongside such diverse authors as Jean-François Lyotard (1979), Jean Baudrillard (1983), David Harvey (1989), and Fredric Jameson (1984), viewed the postmodern as both a changing attitude and a fundamentally novel historical condition. They focused on cultural transformations that have taken place in the Western world and assumed, as Andreas Huyssen (1984: 8) summarises, that we are witnessing 'a noticeable shift in sensibility, practices and discourse formations which distinguishes a postmodern set of assumptions, experiences and propositions from that of a preceding period'. Such shifts are recognised in various globalising tendencies, such as the rapid evolution and global reach of mass media and other information and communication tools.

There are two broad ways of conceptualising inquiries into the postmodern. The first one revolves around attempts to demonstrate that we have entered a fundamentally new historical époque. Some scholars believe that the all-encompassing historical period called modernity has given way to something else, a postmodernity (Vattimo 1988). To understand postmodern approaches one must thus first investigate the modern elements from which they try to distinguish themselves. No easy task, for modernity is a highly ambiguous concept, an elusive set of complexities that defy single meanings.

Modernity is generally understood to be the historical period that followed the Middle Ages. It emerged with the onset of the Renaissance in fifteenth-century Italy and spanned across the centuries that followed. The last 500 years have brought about changes that are more radical and far-reaching than virtually anything that had happened in human history before. Countless dynamics started to unfold during the modern period. They are linked to such features as industrialisation, advances in science and technology or the spread of **weapons of mass destruction**. The nation-state, with all its disciplinary practices, emerged as the dominant political actor.

Postmodern approaches assume that changes over the last few decades have been significant enough to suggest that we have entered a period that is fundamentally different from the preceding modern one. The key features of this new postmodernity are associated with processes of **globalisation**, such as the rapid evolution and spread of mass media, computers and other communicative features. These processes, it is said, have led to a 'transparent society' (Vattimo 1992); to an 'ecstasy of communication' (Baudrillard 1985); to a post-industrial phase whose main feature is knowledge production (Lyotard 1984); or to the advance of new technologies and a consumer **democracy** which provides **capitalism** with an inherently new cultural logic (Jameson 1984). Paul Virilio believes that these developments have fundamentally altered the relationship between time and space. The centrality of the latter, he stresses, has decreased and time has taken over as the criterion around which many global dynamics revolve. The instantaneous character of communication and mass media has reduced the importance of duration and locality. The 'now' of the emission is privileged to the detriment of the 'here', the space where things take place (Virilio 1986; see also Harvey 1989).

Some commentators portray this new postmodern period in rather gloomy terms, stressing that our ability to influence political affairs is becoming increasingly elusive in a world that is too complex and interdependent to be shaped by the will of people. We hear of a nation-state that is no longer able to uphold its **sovereignty** and the spheres of justice and civility that the corresponding boundaries were supposed to protect. Disempowerment and disentitlement have become key features of globalisation. We hear of a neoliberal world **order** that is increasingly run by a few powerful multilateral institutions and **multinational corporations**.

Jean Baudrillard even believes that we have lost the ability to distinguish between reality and virtuality. Our media culture, he says, has conditioned our mind such that we have lost the ability to penetrate beneath the manifest levels of surface (Baudrillard 1983). Others view the postmodern period more optimistically. They point out that increased trade opportunities have brought prosperity to many parts of the world. Or they stress that new communicative tools open up a range of positive opportunities, from better cross-cultural communication to the possibilities of articulating cosmopolitan notions of democracy (see Connolly 2002: 178).

Postmodernism as a critical way of understanding modernity

A second postmodern approach does not seek to identify the contours of a new historical époque. Instead, it searches for ways through which we can understand and live modernity in more inclusive and dialogical ways. David Campbell (1998: 212–13) and Jean-François Lyotard (1991: 24–35) are examples of presumably postmodern authors who remind us that as modernity is already such an elusive phenomenon, the concept of postmodernity becomes nothing but a parody of the phantom it seeks to distance itself from. Instead of looking at modernity as a historical period or a set of institutions, these authors follow Michel Foucault's (1984: 39) advice and treat it primarily as an attitude, 'a way of thinking and feeling', 'a mode of relating to contemporary reality'. Modernity, then, is the broad common theme that runs through a set of diverse practices which, superseding and intersecting with each other, have come to constitute our contemporary consciousness. Here too, the key task is to distinguish a modern set of assumptions about the world from a superseding, postmodern way of conceptualising socio-political issues.

> O my brothers, is not everything in flux *now*? Have not all railings and bridges fallen into the water? Who could still cling to 'good' and 'evil'? 'Woe to us! Hail to us! The thawing wind blows!'
> – thus preach in every street, my brothers.' (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1954a: 313).

One could say that our contemporary political consciousness has issued to a considerable extent from the tension between Romanticism and the **Enlightenment**. What has been retained from the romantic ideal is the autonomy of the self, the quest for independence and self-determination, the belief that people can shape history. This form of modern **idealism** was then supplemented with the scientific heritage of the Enlightenment, with the desire to systematise, to search for rational foundations and certainty in a world of turmoil and constant flux.

The romantic element of our contemporary consciousness is epitomised in Hegel. What makes modernity different in Hegel's view is its attempt at self-understanding, the desire to establish **norms** and values on their own terms, rather than by way of borrowing from or rejecting the ideas of a surpassed epoch. The keystone of this process of self-grounding is the principle of subjectivity, which, at least in Habermas's reading of Hegel, is linked to a perception of freedom that recognises an individual's autonomy and responsibility in the realms of action and reflection (Habermas 1985: 13–58). The legacy of the Enlightenment then provides this subjectivity-oriented approach with stable and scientific foundations. Charles Baudelaire (1961: 1163), in a much-cited passage, draws attention to the recurring quest for certainty in a world of turbulence and chaos. While describing modernity as 'the transient, the

fleeting, the contingent', Baudelaire points towards the constant attempts to discover underlying patterns behind these ephemeral features. He describes the recurring quest for essences as a desire to 'extract the eternal out of the transient'.

Within such modern attempts to fuse subjectivity and science there is ample room for discussion and diversity, more than in any preceding period. Indeed, Hegel considers the right to criticism precisely as one of modernity's key characteristics (Habermas 1985: 27). The breathing space necessary for criticism was provided by the emergence of a public sphere in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. Passionate debates were waged about all aspects of modern life. Virtually every opinion, every thought, every **theory** was attacked, refuted or at least submitted to intense and sustained scrutiny.

While the waging of fierce intellectual debates emerged as a key feature of modernity, the range of these debates was not as boundless as it appears at first sight. William Connolly (1993) emphasises that modern debates all have a distinctive character. They are all well framed. The contours of the modern framing process have to a large extent been drawn by the recurring unwillingness to deal with what Nietzsche called the death of God: the disappearance, at the end of the medieval period, of a generally accepted worldview that provided a stable ground from which it was possible to assess nature, knowledge, common values, truth, politics, in short, life itself. When the old theocentric world crumbled, when the one and only commonly accepted point of reference vanished, the death of God became the key dilemma around which modern debates were waged. Yet, instead of accepting the absence of stable foundations and dealing with the ensuing responsibilities, many prominent modern approaches embarked on attempts to find replacements for the fallen God. They desperately searched for stable foundations that could offer the type of order and certainty that was once provided by the Catholic Church. This quest has taken different shapes in various stages of the modern project. For Renaissance humanists it centred around a sceptical and rhetorical belief in human agency and the virtue of 'men'. During the Enlightenment it was trust in science and universal reason. For romantics it was the belief in aesthetics and a deified self. For Marxists it consisted of faith in history's teleological dimension.

The well-bounded nature of modern debates is perfectly epitomised in international relations scholarship. Here too, everything has been debated fiercely. Seemingly nothing was spared criticism. And yet, these debates have all been well framed. They have been framed by the urge to impose order upon a complex and elusive modern world. Steve Smith has drawn attention to this framing process. For him, **positivism** is the common theme that runs through a diverse set of traditional approaches to international relations. At its most elementary level, positivism is based on an attempt to separate subject and object. It implies that the social scientist, as detached observer, can produce value-free knowledge, that our comprehension of facts can be separated from our relationship with them (Smith 1996: 11–44; see also 2004: 499–515).

> All things that live long are gradually so saturated with reason that their origin in unreason thereby becomes improbable (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1982: 9).

For a postmodern scholar the key task is thus to accept the death of God: to recognise that there are no underlying foundations that can absolve us of taking responsibility for political decisions. Thinking and acting inevitably express a will to truth, a desire to control and impose order upon random and idiosyncratic events. 'To think', Adorno (1992: 17) says, 'is to

identify'. When we think we identify choices, privilege one interpretation over others, and, often without knowing it, exclude what does not fit into the way we want to see things. There is no escape from this process, no possibility of extracting pure facts from observation. To disrespect these limits to cognition is to endow one particular and necessarily subjective form of knowledge with the **power** to determine the nature of factual evidence. It is from such a theoretical vantage point that scholars like Jim George (1994) or Richard Ashley (1984) have tried to show how positivist approaches have transformed one specific interpretation of world political realities, the dominant realist one, into reality per se. As a result, realist perceptions of the international have gradually become accepted as common sense, to the point that any critique against them has to be evaluated in terms of an already existing and largely naturalised (realist) worldview. Smith detects powerful mechanisms of control precisely in this ability to determine meaning and rationality, to decide which issues are or are not legitimate concerns for international theorists. 'Defining common sense', he argues, 'is the ultimate act of political power' (Smith 1996: 13). It separates the possible from the impossible and directs the theory and practice of world politics on a particular path.

The emergence of the third debate in International Relations scholarship

Postmodern approaches entered international relations scholarship during the mid- to late-1980s in the context of what is usually called the 'third debate'. The first great debate is said to have taken place during the inter-war period, when **liberalism** and **realism** disagreed fundamentally about how to oppose the spectre of Nazi Germany. The second great debate was followed by post-war **methodological** disputes between behaviouralism and traditionalism. Various versions of these debates have emerged since, and so have disputes about the adequacy of representing international relations scholarship as a series of great debates (see Introduction).

> Slack and sleeping senses must be addressed with thunder and heavenly fireworks (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1954a: 205).

The third debate was waged around so-called epistemological questions, that is, questions about how we can know the realities of world politics. An increasing number of scholars identified themselves as 'dissidents'. They expressed a growing dissatisfaction with prevailing realist, positivist, **state-centric** and masculine approaches to the study of international relations (Ashley and Walker 1990: 263). Common to these dissident approaches was a strong opposition to what Lyotard (1979: 7–9) famously described as a long modern tendency to ground and legitimise knowledge in reference to a grand narrative, that is, a universalising framework which seeks to emancipate the individual by mastering the conditions of life. Postmodern approaches, by contrast, try to understand processes of exclusion and inclusion that are inevitably entailed in the articulation of knowledge and political positions. They seek to challenge and uproot entrenched thinking patterns, such that we can see the world from more than one perspective, such that marginalised voices can be brought into the realm of dialogue.

Important early contributions to postmodern international relations scholarship can be found in the work of such authors as Richard Ashley, James Der Derian, William Connolly,

Michael Shapiro, R. B. J. Walker and Cynthia Weber (see Ashley and Walker 1990; Der Derian and Shapiro 1989; Walker 1993; Weber 1995). Two Australian authors, David Campbell and Jim George, played a key role in these debates. Their co-authored and single-authored contributions became influential (George and Campbell 1990). George (1994) is recognised as having provided one of the most extensive critiques of positivism and realism in international relations while Campbell (1992; 1998) has been instrumental in, among other contributions, bringing questions of identity to the attention of international relations scholars. Important as well is the work of Richard Devetak (2005b), who has provided the most accessible and authoritative summary of postmodern approaches to date. He did so by identifying four common features: 1) a key concern with the relationship between power and knowledge; 2) the employment of post-positivist methodologies, such as deconstruction and genealogy; 3) a critical engagement with the role of the **state** and related questions of boundaries, violence and identity; and 4) the resulting need to fundamentally rethink the relationship between politics and ethics.

Various methods of scholarly inquiry have emerged from such postmodern engagements with contemporary international politics. Among the most prominent ones are, as Devetak pointed out, genealogy and deconstruction. The former is associated with Nietzsche and the French philosopher Michel Foucault. The latter is linked to Jacques Derrida and the notion of poststructuralism. Both genealogy and deconstruction recognise that we cannot represent the world as it is. Our understanding of political and social phenomena is intrinsically linked to the cultural environment we are embedded in, the values we hold and the language we use to express them. The term discourse is often used to express how this intertwinement of political practices, cultural values and linguistic representations makes up the world as we know it.

> What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1954b: 46–7).

The key objective for postmodern scholars is thus not to arrive at some objective truth about political events or phenomena. Such an endeavour would be as problematic as it is futile. The point, rather, is to increase understanding of how power and knowledge are intertwined in all representations of politics. Genealogy is an alternative form of history: an effort to illuminate how particular historical evolutions created the type of world we live in today. Deconstruction, by contrast, is a scholarly method designed to expose values and power relations that are entailed – either explicitly or implicitly – in particular texts, ranging anywhere from political speeches to legal documents and popular magazines. Both of these methods are an integral part of postmodern inquiries into the modern practices that make up our contemporary world.

The polemical nature of debates about postmodernism

Postmodern contributions to international relations soon became highly controversial. They triggered a number of heated debates and often very polemical attacks. Defenders

of the postmodern presented it as a necessary critique of modern thought-forms and their problematic impact on political practices. Opponents justified the modern project at all cost, for they feared that postmodern alternatives would induce an endless fall into a relativist abyss. Many established scholars believed that a postmodern celebration of difference would undermine the search for coherent visions of world politics. And such visions, the argument went, were badly needed at a time when violent conflicts and economic insecurities haunted the post-**Cold War** system. Some went as far as fearing that heeding postmodern approaches would open up the floodgates to relativistic ravings according to which 'anything goes' and 'any narrative is as valid as another' (Østerud 1996: 386).

The polemical nature of the debate about the potentials and problems of postmodernism is well epitomised by the contribution of an Australian writer, Darryl Jarvis. He edited one of the few collections that explicitly engage postmodern approaches to international relations (Jarvis 2002). The volume contains summaries of postmodern approaches followed by critical engagements with them. In both categories we find several Australian contributions. In the former there are chapters by George and the present author. In the latter category we find texts by Terry O'Callaghan, Roger Spegele, George Crowder and Martin Griffiths, who all seek to demonstrate, in one way or another, that realism and other conventional approaches are far more diverse, complex and useful than most postmodern critics portray them to be. Jarvis is particularly sceptical of postmodernism. Taking on scholars such as Richard Ashley, Cynthia Enloe, James Der Derian and Christine Sylvester, Jarvis (2000: xi) believes that postmodern approaches are 'taking the discipline down an ideologically destructive road'. He writes of postmodernism's 'radical rejectionism' and of 'a compendium of the visual arts, science fiction, identities, personal stories, and research whims whose intellectual agendas are so disparate as to be meaningless'. Without clear disciplinary boundaries, Jarvis believes, we 'lose sight of the subject we once used to study' and thus end up in a 'vacuous activity, facile and devoid of meaning' (Jarvis 2000: xi; 5; 7).

At stake is nothing more than the practical relevance of international relations scholarship. Postmodernism is seen by its critics as a mere meta-theory: a scholarly endeavour that is concerned only with theory, thus lacking any meaning in the real world (Jarvis 2000: 21; 170; 197). This is not the point to engage and evaluate the debates between proponents and opponents of postmodernism. Nor is it the place to summarise, in detail, all postmodern contributions to international relations scholarship by Australian or Australia-based scholars. Doing so would entail carefully analysing the work of numerous innovative scholars, such as Anthony Burke (2001a; 2007a) and Devetak (2005b; 2005c), who have most recently employed postmodern reading strategies to convincingly problematise the use of violence in the so-called global **war** against terror. But these and various other writers are reluctant to actually use the term postmodern, given the polemical and often derogative dimensions it has acquired over the years. This is even more the case with numerous innovative scholars who would be sympathetic towards at least some of the postmodern insights mentioned above. Australian examples here include, in alphabetical order, Alex Bellamy, Phillip Darby, Robyn Eckersley, Paul James, Paul Keal, Anthony Langlois, Andrew Linklater, Matt McDonald, Katrina Lee-Koo, Sam Makinda, Jan Pettman, Ralph Pettman, Chris Reus-Smit, Richard Shapcott, Manfred Steger, Heloise Weber and Martin Weber. Although they have taken on board aspects of postmodern theory, most of these diverse writers would rather classify themselves in less polemical terms, using concepts such as **critical theory**, **feminism**, post-**colonialism**,

constructivism, **cosmopolitanism** or globalism. Quite a few of them, including the present author, would refuse labelling practices altogether. Indeed, labelling and surveying, a postmodernist would say, is a typically modern attempt to bring order and certainty into a world of chaos and flux. It is a desire to squeeze freely floating and thus somewhat worrisome ideas into surveyable categories, to cut off and smooth the various overlapping edges so that each piece neatly fits into its assigned place. This is why the positive potential of postmodern approaches can be appreciated and realised in practice only once we move beyond the current polemic that surrounds the term postmodernism.

Conclusion

By challenging the modern assumptions of dominant approaches to international relations, postmodernists have tried to open up various possibilities for rethinking not only the relationship between theory and evidence, fact and value, but also the very nature of the dilemmas that have haunted world politics for decades.

Summarising the nature of postmodern approaches is not easy, for if they have a unifying point, then it is precisely the acceptance of difference, the refusal to uphold one position as the correct and desirable one. 'The postmodern begins', Wolfgang Welsch (1988: 29–30) says, 'where totality ends'. Its vision is the vision of plurality, a positive attempt to secure and explore multiple dimensions of the processes that legitimise and ground social and political practices. Once the end of totalising thought is accepted, it becomes, of course, very difficult to talk about the postmodern without descending into clichés or doing grave injustice to individual authors who explore various terrains of difference. Jane Flax (1990: 188) recognised this difficulty and admits that by speaking about postmodernism one already runs 'the risk of violating some of its central values – heterogeneity, multiplicity, and difference'.

This diversity is evident when we look at the postmodern approaches to international relations. Related authors have embarked on a great variety of projects. They have exposed numerous problematic features, including the state-centrism of realist and liberal approaches to international relations, as well as their narrow perceptions of what the international is and where its relations take place. They have challenged the masculine and Eurocentric values of existing approaches or re-examined such notions as **security**, identity, agency, sovereignty, diplomacy, **geopolitics** and ethics. And they have used a multitude of post-positivist methodologies to do so: genealogies and deconstruction, for instance.

Postmodern scholars express a deep scepticism towards totalising and universalising forms of knowledge. Although this form of scepticism is characterised more by the search for tolerance and diversity than a common political agenda, one can still identify several broad postmodern features that are of direct practical relevance to both the theory and practice of world politics. Of particularly political importance are the following three interrelated features.

First, postmodern approaches stress that order, security, **peace** and justice cannot be imposed by a preconceived universal model, be it of a communist, neoliberal or any other nature. There is no inherent model for peace, no grand plan that could free us of violence and deliver perpetual peace. Every political model, no matter how sensitive, is based on a system

of exclusion. Such exclusion is as desirable as it is necessary. But in order to stay valid and fair, political foundations need to be submitted to periodic scrutiny. Extending William Connolly's approach, the search for peace should thus be linked to a certain attitude, an 'ethos', which is based not on a set of fundamental principles, but on the very need to periodically disturb such principles (Connolly 1995).

Second, the search for peace, security and justice must pay key attention to questions of inclusion and exclusion, which lie at the heart of violence. No order can be just and promote peace unless it is sensitive to the power relations it upholds. Maintaining sensitivity of this process entails, similar to the first factor outlined above, an ongoing self-critical engagement with the type of political project that is being advanced in the name of peace. Expressed in other words, the task is to expose the power–knowledge nexus entailed in all political projects, thereby opening up opportunities for marginalised voices to be heard and brought into the realm of dialogue.

Third, peace, security and justice can only be established and maintained through an empathetic engagement with and respect for difference, be it related to sexual, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, political or any other form of identity. The challenge then consists of not letting difference deteriorate into violence, but making it part of a worldview that is tolerant of multiple political and moral sources.

Questions

1. Postmodern approaches to knowledge are said to be different from modern ones. How exactly are they different? What are the key components of each tradition of thought? And what are the concrete political consequences of these different ways of knowing world politics?
2. Postmodern approaches are said to display an inherent scepticism towards so-called grand narratives: forms of knowledge that proclaim 'true' insight into the world and then universalise the ensuing political positions. What are the reasons for this scepticism? Is it justified?
3. Postmodern approaches are often associated with pessimism and relativism, with positions that can no longer separate right from wrong, good from evil. Do you believe that this accusation is warranted? Defend your conclusion by juxtaposing arguments advanced by proponents and opponents of postmodernism.

Further reading

Der Derian, James and Shapiro, Michael J. (eds) 1989, *International/intertextual relations: postmodern readings of world politics*, Lexington: Lexington Books. One of the first comprehensive collections to deal with postmodern contributions to international relations scholarship.
Devetak, Richard 2005b, 'Postmodernism', in Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donnelly, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smith and Jacqui True (eds), *Theories of international relations*, third edition, London: Macmillan. The most concise – and

compelling – analysis of postmodern contributions to international relations. Written by an Australian scholar.

George, Jim 1994, *Discourses of global politics: a critical (re)introduction to international relations*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. An early contribution to postmodern debates, written by an Australian scholar, but still one of the most interesting single-authored treatments of postmodernism.

Lyotard, Jean-François 1984, *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Perhaps the most influential and authoritative statement on postmodernism.

8
Constructivism and Critical Theory

Martin Weber

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of two strands of thought which have, over the past two decades or so, gained increasing profile in international relations. It begins by outlining what both theoretical strands have in common vis-à-vis the mainstream international relations theories they challenge; it then focuses on **constructivism**'s key arguments, background, and scope. This exposition is followed by an outline of **Critical Theory**'s key motifs.

Among the things constructivism and Critical Theory share is that neither is actually *a* **theory** in the narrow sense, and that both register significant disagreements with neoliberal and neorealist theories, which are, according to some, still dominant in the **discipline**. **Neoliberalism** and **neorealism** share virtually all *meta-theoretical premises*: ontologically, both treat **states** as unitary rational and self-interested actors, consider the **international system** to be anarchic, and argue that 'domestic' factors have no significant impact for the dynamics of international interaction. Epistemologically, both are oriented towards testing their theoretical positions by observing the behaviour of the state actors in question. **Methodologically**, both are committed to similar ways of identifying and collecting empirical data, and submitting such data to comparable analytical processes in order to prove or disprove their respective hypothesis.

Critical Theory and constructivism disagree with neoliberalism and neorealism at the level of meta-theory. Ontologically, critical theorists and constructivists will hold that actors other than states matter in world politics, and that what actors do is significantly influenced by who they are, and how they perceive themselves and others. Both disagree (though to different degrees) with the assumption shared by neorealists and neoliberals that the world *out there* is one of unambiguous facts, which can be neutrally observed, and computed for the purpose of devising strategies or acquiring knowledge about strategic choices. Instead, they emphasise that human conceptions of the world *out there* change and are subject to the conversations and convictions humans hold.

Before we look at the two schools of thought in more detail, there is one important qualification to make. When looking at Critical Theory, I will focus on what can be broadly seen as theoretical work belonging in the wider sense to the tradition inaugurated by Marx's critical social theory. To this cluster belong, in international relations, the contributions of

neo-**Gramscian** scholars, and those influenced by the **Frankfurt School**. This can be the source of some confusion because debates in international relations and particularly the ones surrounding the merits and problems of constructivism very often make reference to critical theory in much more inclusive terms, using the term to cover postmodern and feminist theories, as well as various neo-Marxist versions. We follow a convention to use 'Critical Theory' with capitals to mark out work inspired by Gramscian thought and the Frankfurt School. This is not to suggest that there are not important affinities, cross-purposes and parallels between Critical Theory and critical theories less clearly influenced by the Marxist heritage.

What is constructivism?

Since the 1990s, the theoretical landscape of international relations has undergone significant changes, the most important of which are generally seen to be linked to the emergence and consolidation of constructivist research projects.

Constructivism in international relations should be understood as influenced by – though different from – broader discourses in the philosophy of science and social science. The latter foreground questions related to the insight that all human knowledge is concept-bound, and that, therefore, in important ways we 'make' our world as we study it ('facts' do not speak for themselves, but answer to questions *we* pose).

International relations constructivists share the basic premise that human beings actively 'make' the world they live in, though they also agree that this does not imply that one can 'make' the world just as one wishes. Rather, when acting in world politics, the relevant actors face historically evolved conditions and institutions, which, on the one hand, enable certain kinds of action, and, on the other hand, impose certain constraints on what courses of action may be available, permissible, or plausible. International relations constructivists share this insight, which is not too different from what Marx implied when he wrote in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* – 'Brumaire' is the second month of the traditional French calendar, on the eighteenth day of which Napoleon Bonaparte staged a *coup d'état* (9 November 1799), and overthrew the revolutionary government:

> Humans make their own history, but they do not make it just on their own accord; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past (Marx 1959: 360).

Box 8.1: Terminology

'The facts'

It is always worthwhile to inquire into etymology, the history of a word's *meaning*. The case of the word 'fact' is very revealing in this context. It stems from the Latin verb *facere* which means 'to make', which, of course, implies virtually the opposite of what people mean when they say, for instance: 'Let the facts speak for themselves'. The idea that facts are 'made', that is, produced by humans in discourse and practice, is very much at the heart of constructivist thinking.

Some basic implications of this analytical point of departure are well captured by the phrase, which Alexander Wendt (1992) used as the title for an article that did much to launch constructivist research in international relations: 'Anarchy is what states make of it'.

It is important to note that constructivism in international relations is not a *theory*, but should rather be understood as a framework according to which some general assumptions about the discipline are reconfigured. This distinguishes constructivist research from *theories* of international relations, such as **realism**'s **balance of power** theory, or **Marxism**'s theory of social and historical change as driven by antagonistic class relations. In the broadest sense, constructivism simply widens the scope of inquiry in international relations by including actors and factors generally not considered in the discipline's dominant theoretical strands of realism (and neorealism), or **liberalism** (and neoliberalism). With regard to actors, for instance, constructivists see no prima facie reason why change in international relations should not issue from and through actors other than states, though states may remain important. Their openness to considering, for instance, social movements, corporate actors, think tanks, specific government agencies, or international organisations as actors who, under certain conditions and constraints, can alter international relations, pitches constructivists against the restrictive view of states as unitary and exclusive actors purported by (most) liberal and realist international relations theory. Considering 'factors', constructivists, while not denying the role that material **power** (for instance, military capability) plays in international relations, emphasise that ideas and **norms** are important in shaping the ways in which different actors deal with each other in world politics. For constructivists, international **anarchy** is not a discretely operating mechanism that compels actors to behave in certain ways, but rather a form of interaction involving rules (for instance with regard to the practices through which **international law** is established), mutually shared expectations (for instance, about what diplomacy ought to involve, and what it may do), and expectations through which the different actors (state or **non-state actors**), interpret their own behaviour, as well as that of others, in order to 'act'. A shorthand way of putting this would be to say that constructivists argue that the 'social fabric' matters, and crucially influences world politics.

From the preceding paragraph, you can already surmise that constructivism in international relations itself is not 'unified'. A problem you will encounter as you read deeper into the debates and contentions surrounding the rise of constructivist research in international relations has to do with what counts as 'constructivism'. You are likely to find a lot of references to a general distinction between what one proponent has referred to as 'conventional' constructivism on the one hand, and 'critical' constructivism on the other (see Hopf 1998; and also Price and Reus-Smit 1998). The confusion, which can arise for any student of international relations theory from such coexistence of incompatible projects under the one header of 'constructivism', can be lessened somewhat by focusing on how the different strands developed. 'Conventional' constructivism emerges within the discipline of International Relations as a result of a new emphasis on the *social* nature of international affairs. Where neorealists and neoliberals had stressed that it was sufficient to know individual (state-) actors' capabilities and interests in order to analyse how international **order** (or disorder) played out under conditions of anarchy, the more sociologically informed constructivists claimed that actors' identity matters as well, or perhaps even more than capabilities and strategic individual interests.

In contrast, 'critical' constructivism stems from research programs not originally central to international relations, but brought in to deal with the many gaps and problems in dominant international relations theorising. The emergence of critical constructivism from

> **Box 8.2:   Discussion points**
>
> **Constructivist premises**
>
> Adler (2005: 11–12) has the following to say about constructivism:
>
> > 'Constructivism sees the world as a project under construction, as *becoming*, rather than *being*.'
> >   'All strands of constructivism converge in an *ontology* that depicts the social world as intersubjectively and collectively meaningful structures and processes.'
> >   'Constructivists share . . . an *epistemology* in which interpretation is an intrinsic part of the social sciences and emphasizes contingent generalizations.'
> >   'Constructivists eschew the "methodological individualism" on which most other approaches to politics are based – for example rational choice, bureaucratic politics, social-psychological decision making models . . . – which reduces political analysis to its micro-foundations, i.e. individuals and their relationships.'

the early 1980s onwards takes its cues either from a Nietzschean radical scepticism, or from the various strands of reformed Marxist thought. Work in international relations theory along such lines takes inspiration from the poststructuralism of, for instance, Michel Foucault or Jacques Derrida (see chapter 7), from the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, or Gramsci's writing on social conflict and transformation. This difference between 'conventional' and 'critical' constructivism has interesting consequences for the ways in which world political change and continuity are understood, studied, and evaluated, and we shall explore this further below.

The arrival of constructivism in International Relations

Constructivism evolved as an alternative framework for thinking and theorising about international relations in world politics in response to the shortcomings of the dominant theoretical strands of the 1970s and 1980s, namely neorealism (see chapter 4) and neoliberalism (see chapter 3). Most commentators and textbooks mapping theoretical trends and developments in the discipline will cite the debt constructivism owes to critical theorists working in the 1980s and into the 1990s, who very successfully unpicked, analysed and problematised the assumed explanatory strengths of the rationalist research project represented by the neo-neo synthesis. By demonstrating that none of the cornerstone assumptions of 'neo-neo', namely methodological individualism, the expectation of gains-rational strategic behaviour (interest materialism), or the presupposition of 'anarchy' as a condition compelling such behaviour at the pain of death, was, in fact, safe to make, critical theorists opened up new spaces in international relations. To make it easier to grasp what was at stake in these debates, it is instructive to think about what was usually considered the 'stuff' of interest in international relations: 'Why do states do what they do?' The answer given by 'neo-neo' rationalists was quite simply: 'Because they have to'. Australia's foreign policy is nothing but the pursuit of Australia's **national interest** (**security** interests and/or economic interest) under conditions of anarchy. This means treating other international actors (like neighbouring **sovereign states**) strategically: 'We cooperate when it is in our interest, we do not when it isn't. Adopting any

other stance will, in the medium or long term, lead to a deterioration in material capabilities of the Australian state' (measured either in terms of the security infrastructure if you are a neorealist, or in terms of economic resources and their reproduction, if you are a neoliberal). Ultimately, the state of Australia would 'fail'.

Notice that this example, while expressing key concerns of neo-neo theorising, gives rise to many questions, which cannot be tackled neatly within the conceptual confines these theories impose. What about non-state actors and security interests (for instance, transnational **terrorism**)? How about problems of the 'global commons' (for example, climate, the seas, or biodiversity), which may impose coordination-problems of a completely different dynamic than those presumed under anarchy's 'compulsion to compete'? And, beyond that, there are some straightforward empirical worries, cases which seem to belie the foundational assumptions of neo-neo rationalism about the ways in which state-behaviour is conditioned by the 'system', and its constitutive units: Why does the 'international community' generally work quite hard to 'save' states from 'failure'? How come some states accept highly prescriptive rules governing their strategic interactions (from long-term **alliances** to something like the EU)? Can the end of the **Cold War** really be explained using the terms of reference and assumptions underpinning neo-neo rationalism?

Any explorations of these and many other similar questions are, to significant degrees, *inhibited* under the restrictive assumptions which underpin rationalist research. The critics of rationalism were highly successful in establishing this general point, as well as demonstrating the problematic implications it had for detailed studies and analyses. Thus, for instance, John Gerard Ruggie (1998: Introduction) challenged what he called the 'utilitarian' assumptions underpinning rationalism, and demonstrated that many of the events in international politics and diplomacy could not be explained through such assumptions. Richard Ashley's (1986) seminal study on the problems of neorealist theory went much further, establishing among other incisive criticisms that 'behaviour' could not be separated from the meaning it had for agents in question. His argument flagged up early what have become central concerns for the emerging constructivist research framework, namely questions of 'identity', and those of 'norms and values'. Both sets of concerns had been discounted as irrelevant for explanatory approaches in rationalist international relations theory. All this was set to change. Constructivists established that it mattered *what* kind of states interacted in international affairs, and *how* states conceived of issues like security challenges or economic objectives. Much constructivist scholarship has been dedicated to demonstrating just how important shared beliefs and commitments among representatives of different countries are, and how significant international negotiations, treaty-making, and institution-building can be to securing dynamic developments which point beyond the confines of purely self-interested instrumental rational behaviour.

From this brief outline, you may already be able to infer why, for instance, 'norms', 'rules', 'shared expectations' and 'social learning' are key concepts in many constructivist studies. Because all human action is, according to constructivism, shot through with meaning and shared interpretations, it is important, they argue, to pay much more attention to the role of ideas than research in conventional international relations has generally done. Institutions, such as those around what we refer to as 'diplomacy' (**sovereignty**, representation, recognition, and the forms of dialogic interaction customary in diplomatic relations), are expressions of expectations shared among all states involved in 'inter-national' relations.

These expectations themselves are alterable, and constructivists have been keen to explore changes, which ensue as a result of such alterations. For instance, Audie Klotz (1995) has traced the ways in which apartheid as a state policy has gradually become unacceptable, making it more and more difficult for states intent on overtly continuing the practice of race-based institutional inequality to interact effectively with others in the international arena. Even when it comes to more traditional security concerns, constructivists have been successful in stressing the role of ideas and norms as constitutive of and constraining state action, often using unconventional methods. Richard Price (1998) used Foucault's genealogical approach in order to study the changing attitudes to the production and deployment of landmines, and the discourses which have made their use increasingly difficult. Likewise, Peter Katzenstein (1996) brought together constructivist scholars for an edited volume explicitly aimed at exploring the significance of culture and cultural learning for the formation and sustenance of security practices.

Constructivism: critical versus conventional?

We now have to address the somewhat tricky issue of the relationship between critical theory and constructivism. Having just established that constructivism took its cues from critical theorists' interventions against the shortcomings of rationalism, it is important to at least point out some reasons why 'constructivism' and 'critical theory' remain, to this date, distinctively different projects. In doing so, I want to avoid some of the more stereotypical explanations you might encounter in the literature, and offer what I think are more convincing alternatives.

International Relations involves continuous debates about what the discipline is, what it does, and where it ends. More often than not, the impulses that move the debate along *within* International Relations come from other disciplines. Ashley (1986) used continental European social and political theory for his early attack on rationalism, tapping into the works of Frankfurt School Critical Theory as well as French **postmodernism** (see chapter 7), before he turned to exploring the latter further in his later works. Ruggie, Friedrich Kratochwil and Nicholas Onuf borrowed from legal theory (both US and European), as well as sociology, and, in the case of Kratochwil and Onuf, analytical political philosophy. The results were highly demanding, well-crafted challenges to core tenets of rationalism, but, because they were written with state-of-the-art research from other fields in mind, they posed significant challenges to those in the discipline of International Relations who had rarely read outside its boundaries. What we encounter here are two different mind-sets, one framed by a commitment to a 'trans-disciplinary' approach, the other firmly preoccupied with maintaining disciplinary boundaries, and allowing only 'interdisciplinary' cross-fertilisation.

Another way of looking at this, and one which complements the account of 'transdisciplinary' versus 'interdisciplinary' mind-sets, is to approach the differences between the two theoretical tempers from the perspective of 'constructivism' itself. Here, it can be noted that all strands of critical theory are constructivist, but not all strands of constructivism in International Relations are 'critical'. This sounds potentially confusing, but there are a few indicators which help to tell the difference. Conventional (as opposed to 'critical') constructivists tend to be methodologically and epistemologically conservative. They borrow from critical theory the insight that the world of global social and political relations is *ontologically* more complex

than admitted to by rationalist international relations theory; hence their analyses include norms, ideas, shared beliefs, routine patterns of social interaction, and actors and interests other than those of 'states'. Beyond this adjustment, however, conventional constructivists are happy to employ the same methods in their research, and adhere to the same standards of evidence-based inquiry as rationalists. You will find, for instance, that conventional constructivists have few problems in treating norms as 'causes' for actors' behaviours, and would therefore not in principle shy away from 'scoring' the efficacy of any particular norm in terms of its observable outcomes.

As you would have already seen in the chapter on postmodernism, critical theorists of any persuasion disagree at a *methodological* level with the possibility of the kind of observational neutrality implied by such an outlook. Such neutrality or objectivity invokes the idea that what is to be researched – the object of one's interest itself – 'speaks' to the researcher in the language of unambiguous truth (something like the idea of 'pure' observation). Critical theorists have consistently argued that this is impossible; the 'observer' is always in interesting and important ways also a *participant* in the world they describe and analyse.

What is Critical Theory?

One of the emotions you are likely to experience as a student of International Relations coming across a piece of writing under the label of 'critical theory' is mild despair, probably followed by a not inconsiderable bout of anger: 'What is this person on about, why is everything expressed in such convoluted language, and what does this have to do with the "real world" of international relations?' A not unlikely result of such a first encounter with the themes, concepts and analyses advanced by critical theorists could be that you decide not to bother, and focus your attentions on more straightforward theories.

Critical Theory is very complex, in many ways too complex to be dealt with appropriately for the purpose of an introduction in one book-chapter. This has to do with its *transdisciplinary* nature. The works belonging to the Frankfurt School tradition routinely straddle debates and motifs from psychology, anthropology, sociology, social theory, political science, political philosophy, and the philosophy of science, and, when reading them, you will quickly become aware that at least some cursory knowledge about these fields is necessary in order to understand not just the finer points, but often also the core of what is being argued (Weber 2005). For instance, the problem we ended up with in the previous section on 'critical and conventional constructivism', namely the issue of the impossibility of 'pure' observation, or 'facts' speaking to us somehow directly, is the subject of an influential book by one famous Frankfurt School critical theorist, Jürgen Habermas. The book is called *Knowledge and human interest*, and in it Habermas develops an account of what he terms *knowledge constitutive interests*. It is only in accordance with such preestablished interests that we as human beings can ask questions or pose problems for ourselves, and it is with reference to these interests that we also pursue the solutions. Habermas differentiates between three different kinds of knowledge constitutive interests, which we can summarise as follows: *instrumental* (referring to knowledge regarding human relations with nature), *strategic* (referring to knowledge aimed at coordinating human action for particular social or political purposes), and *emancipatory*

Box 8.3:   Discussion points

Lying and telling the truth

Think of the famous motto: 'Diplomacy is lying for one's country'. Many will find this statement intuitively appealing, contending that it accurately describes the maxims of diplomatic engagement: a diplomat will not give a straight answer if it is not in the interest of her country. So far so good, and probably in line with much historical experience.

However, once we think about this some more, it becomes clear that lying can only be a successful strategy when those I lie to think I am telling the truth. 'All diplomats are liars, always', if taken seriously, would immediately end the practice of diplomacy, which depends, on the very least, on the notion that sometimes diplomats tell the truth (or, even less ambitious, that truthfulness operates 'behind' the lies).

Logically, this thought experiment points to an asymmetry between the practices of truth-telling and lying. The latter, as a strategic response (whereby I wish to manipulate you by giving you false information), is, in fact, *parasitic* on the former. You can only lie successfully, where your counterparts take truth-telling to be paramount.

If this did not convince you, try thinking through the following as somebody's statement: 'I always lie'. Does that mean they do, or they don't?

(referring to knowledge directed at overcoming coercive or oppressive social and political relations). The emancipatory 'knowledge constitutive interest', the one in **emancipation**, has had a significant formative influence on international relations theory, and specifically in the area of developing cosmopolitan **normative** theory. Two contributions stand out in this respect: Andrew Linklater's work, explicitly informed by Habermas's writings, and Richard Shapcott's attempt at theorising global change in terms of the ethics of dialogue. Both build on work in Critical Theory in which communication and dialogue are identified as both constitutive of the possibility of human relations, and irreducibly invested with moral content. This sounds potentially awfully 'idealist', and, in fact, this is a charge often levelled against Critical Theory in International Relations, particularly where it is concerned with normative issues – as in the case of exploring the possibility of 'emancipation'. Many of those critical of Critical Theory think such analysis means that one has to assume that human beings are somehow fundamentally *ethical*, and they respond that the evidence out there in the *real* world flatly contradicts such assumptions. Such criticisms, however, profoundly misunderstand both the scope and the quality of the argument presented by Critical Theorists. Rather than claiming that human beings *are* ethical (or have to become so, in order for emancipatory struggle to succeed), Critical Theorists make a strong case that one cannot *act* other than within the horizon of ethical understandings, and that even ostensibly 'unethical' practices (for instance, strategic lying) depend on ethical pre-understandings (see Box 8.3).

The example of lying simply highlights the beginning of more serious investigations into what goes on between people (and ultimately, states and other 'collective' actors), and how relations between people are constituted in terms of what might be called *moral grammar*. Such a moral grammar maps the expectations people bring towards mutual engagement, but also helps mark those practices and occasions where such expectations remain unfulfilled. For instance, your expectation to be treated with respect, and have your opinions and thoughts considered seriously in the context of an International Relations tutorial, may be scuppered by

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Box 8.4:   Terminology

Recognition theory

Recognition theory has steadily advanced over the past decade as a major new contri-
bution of Critical Theory to contemporary social, political and philosophical thought. It is
mainly advanced through the work of Axel Honneth, who is currently the director of the
Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt (the original 'home' of Critical Theory). Recogni-
tion theory offers a new and original take on the moral dimensions of social life, and their
relation to Critical Theories as well as critical practices under conditions of 'globalizing
modernity'. In international relations, this work is only just beginning to make an impact
(see Haacke 2005).

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my bad practice in teaching. This, in turn, will lead to 'resistance' on your part (for example,
you might complain to the Head of School or a student representative), because of a perceived
failure on my part to uphold my duties properly.

There are, of course, many more facets to this, and this is one area in which Criti-
cal Theory's commitment to transdisciplinary investigations becomes highly relevant (Fraser
and Honneth 2003). Viewed from the perspective of normative theory, one upshot of Crit-
ical Theory's understanding of the moral dimensions of social life is that relations based on
coercion or deception can succeed only contingently, and remain more precarious than rela-
tions based on genuine mutual understanding and dialogue. Again, it is important to stress
that critical theorists *do* see human relations as conflict-fraught, and shot through with rela-
tions of inequality, coercion and domination. However, in keeping with the *dialectical* mode
of inquiry (and following – if never uncritically – Hegel and Marx), Critical Theorists see
the contradictory pressures in such relations as pushing beyond the **status quo**. The contin-
uous denigration of a group of people's rights and basic human dignities will lead to struggle
through which the group will seek to have both recognised (see Box 8.4).

Here, we face one crucial difference between Critical Theory and constructivism.
Whereas for constructivists norms are valid when they are 'generally held to be valid', critical
theorists are keen to interrogate the *quality* of norms irrespective of their 'general acceptance'.
For example, the fact that 'slavery' was for a long time a practice accepted and condoned by
the dominant powers in world politics does not make the norms sustaining it *good* ones.

I have so far foregrounded concerns with 'what ought to be', or 'normative' issues, for
the simple reason that this is one area in which the constructivist project and Critical Theory
differ significantly. This should neither suggest that Critical Theory deals only with questions
of moral or normative scope, nor that this is the only point of difference with constructivism.
Critical Theorists have always been interested in human suffering, because suffering 'registers'
the need for transformations, and ultimately for transformations in social and political affairs.
But beyond common themes, such as the concern with suffering, the critique of modern social
relations, the acute attention to culture, discourse, and interaction, and the inquiry into the
value or problems of central social and political institutions, individual contributors have
focused their attention in different ways, and often also in constructive criticism of each
other's work.

Two strands and a cluster of Critical Theory

Within the disciplinary field of International Relations, Critical Theory has developed two influential strands, alongside a growing cluster of writing, which comprises attempts to make further theoretical motifs fertile for the study of world politics. Let's focus on the former first. The first strand involves work directly inspired by Frankfurt School Critical Theory. The late 1920s saw the inauguration of the 'Institute of Social Research' in Frankfurt, which later became known as the Frankfurt School. The members of the Institute were concerned with revisiting the problems and failures of Marxism, not with the intention of abandoning Marx's analysis of the contradictory forces working through modern societies, but in order to sharpen its analytical sting, and to jettison some of its more problematic premises and theorems. For instance, many Marxists had assumed that the contradictions of **capitalism** would inevitably cause the working classes to unite and overcome the social order sustaining them. This thinking came into a profound state of crisis with World War I, which saw the proletariats of the world not unite, but fracture along nationalist lines, and fight each other in the trenches across the European battlefield. This, and other challenges, led the members of the Institute to broaden the scope of their inquiries to pursue a wholesale critical review of the 'project of modernity', and the role science, culture, struggle and antagonism played in it. Crucial to the way in which they conceived of their research was the insight they all shared that the contemporary socio-political situation was deficient with regard to the main goal proclaimed in the **Enlightenment**, namely the realisation of human freedom, and the demise of relations of domination. Since these early days, the Frankfurt School project has been a work-in-progress, undergoing many changes, but without departing from these basic concerns. Since the late 1980s, this body of work has become influential in international relations. I have already mentioned Linklater and Shapcott's works. Both use resources from Critical Theory (mainly from the work of Habermas, though in Shapcott's case this is tempered by a more hermeneutically oriented approach). To this we should add research inspired by epistemological insights from Critical Theory, and its critique of **positivism** (Ashley 1981, 1986; Hoffmann 1987; Neufeld 1995), work incorporating cues from Critical Theory in the field of feminist theory (Steans 1998), and projects which incorporate some Critical Theory within larger, critical accounts of the discipline's formations and limitations (George 1994). In most of these works, the thought of Habermas, the most prominent exponent of the second generation of the Frankfurt School, figures centrally.

The second strand of Critical Theory in international relations developed in the field of international political economy, and was inaugurated by Robert W. Cox, a scholar and one-time official of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Cox's autobiographical account (Cox and Sinclair 1995: 19–35) of how his work at the ILO in the context of the Cold War brought him to explore contradictory pressures in world order is a wonderful example of the 'schooling' of a critical mind through the interrogation of the world he found himself in. His theoretical explorations led him to a critical reception of Marx's thought, from whom he took on board the importance of history for any attempt to understand one's present situation. One thinker who, in keeping with Cox's own focus on issues of labour, production and inequality, put historical formations at the core of his inquiry was the Italian activist and writer Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). From Gramsci, Cox took the idea that particular world orders attained their relative stability rarely only through coercion and exploitation, but

mainly through their capacity to produce commonly accepted ideas and frames of reference. The battle for a transformation of unjust social relations is therefore as much a 'cultural' one, that is, one about meanings and interpretations, as it is about the distribution of the material corollaries of power or wealth. When turned on to the realm of international relations, this way of thinking leads to a perspective that is very different from the one current in the mainstream theories of the discipline; not relations between states, but historical social and political formations which give rise to, among other things, 'state-interaction', but which are subject to change due to internal contradictions.

Cox's work has been very influential, not least his famous distinction between 'problem-solving' (conventional) theories, and critical theory (which is historicist and dialectical). There is some overlap between what Cox argues, and what we have encountered with regard to the Frankfurt School, not least in that distinction, but, by and large, 'neo-Gramscian' international relations/international political economy developed without taking much note of Frankfurt School work, and vice versa. This points to differences between the two theoretical strands as they currently operate in international relations. Frankfurt School-influenced work has focused on normative issues, rapprochement between international relations and political philosophy, and the cultural-political critique of liberal modernity on behalf of a more substantive conception of democratic political participation. While the Frankfurt School in its early years still had people working on economic issues (Pollock), the second generation (Habermas) did not produce much work in this field, and has not had an influence in international political economy. Conversely, neo-Gramscians have foregrounded the 'social relations of production' and economic exploitation on which they have sought to build a historical materialist analysis of change in world order(s). In distinction to exponents of the Frankfurt School, though, they have only developed limited accounts of emancipatory politics, and they also inherit some of the problems of 'unreconstructed' Marxism with which the Frankfurt School has dealt much more successfully (see, in this context, for instance, the problem of 'productionism' – if the 'source' of social struggle lies in the relations between *labour* and capital, the 'non-labouring', unemployed, and excluded have no relevant socio-political agency). Both the overlapping interests and the differences between the two strands should make for interesting encounters, refinements, and mutual correctives in the coming years.

I want to conclude by pointing towards what I have called rather loosely a 'cluster' of work, which seeks to explore and commend theoretical insights from Critical Theory in the wider context of *critical theories*, with the purpose of widening or deepening the scope of theoretical sensitivities in international relations. Much of this work may often seem to be marginal, in that it doesn't seem to speak to 'central' themes of the discipline, such as questions of **war**, strategy, **peace**, or international institutions. Instead, you may find yourself looking at work which deals with music and aesthetics (Bleiker 2006), questions of representation (George 1994), questions of modern and/or postmodern subjectivity (Jabri 1998) or explorations of suffering (Linklater 2005). There are good reasons, though, to take such work very seriously indeed. The first is that very often, such texts bring together strands of thinking which open up genuinely new and interesting perspectives on how to study and understand world politics. As a 'meeting place' of theoretical investigations, they tend to move debate along, and provide analytical insights otherwise foreclosed. The second reason is that this kind of writing, most of which you will encounter in the form of journal articles, contains the most far-reaching and thorough attempts at transdisciplinary inquiry, and that, at their best,

they can provide you with exemplary access to difficult, challenging, but rewarding schemes of thought.

In such contexts, you will see Critical Theory in 'dialogue', being itself reflected upon critically, and sometimes challenged in very robust terms. One of the key merits of Critical Theory is that it is thoroughly and intrinsically committed to such reflective dialogue, and to its own, *self-critical* transformation.

Conclusion

Both constructivism and Critical Theory are works in progress. Debates between the two are often characterised by rather large misunderstandings, or outright mischaracterisations – this is true particularly of constructivist characterisations of Critical Theory. For the immediate future of the discipline, much will depend on how the two will be related, and how both, in turn, relate to postmodernism. The reason why this is important relates to the dynamics of global political change: as the social and political world is subjected to globalising trans-formations, patterns of exclusion, marginalisation, and denigration continue. These patterns establish visible historical legacies (in post-colonial contexts for instance), and reveal the limits of both realism's state-centrism and liberalism's economism (in the global environment for instance). The value of the 'social turn' inaugurated in international relations theory by con-structivists and critical theorists will have to be proven with reference to these and similar problems.

Questions

1. How do constructivists make the case that ideas and norms matter?
2. In what ways do constructivist accounts of the prospects for international cooperation differ from those offered in neoliberal and neorealist approaches?
3. In what ways are the accounts critical theorists and constructivists give of norms, order and social integration different? Which approach do you think is more convincing, and why?
4. What are the key points of Linklater's account of the 'transformation of political community'? In what ways is his argument 'critical'?
5. What do critical theorists mean by 'emancipation', and how do they work with this concept in the study of social and political struggle?

Further reading

Adler, Emanuel 2005, *Communitarian international relations*, London: Routledge. Contains a number of essays designed to clarify the constructivist project in international relations.
Cox, Robert W., and Sinclair, Timothy 1995, *Approaches to world order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Extremely readable and useful volume; contains a helpful introduction on the neo-Gramscian project.

Devetak, Richard 2005a, 'Critical Theory' in Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donnelly, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smith and Jacqui True (eds), *Theories of international relations*, third edition, London: Macmillan. One of the best resources for getting a good, all-round grasp on what is at stake.

George, Jim 1994, *Discourses of global politics: a critical (re)introduction to international relations*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Excellent summary and critical review of what's at stake between Critical Theory and 'critical theories'.

Held, David 1980, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, Berkeley: University of California Press. Good book-length introduction to Frankfurt School Critical Theory.

Honneth, Axel 2005, 'A social pathology of reason: on the intellectual legacy of critical theory' in Fred Rush (ed.), *The Cambridge companion to critical theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Great summary of core motifs and contemporary challenges faced by critical theory.

Reus-Smit, Christian 1999, *The moral purpose of the state: culture, social identity, and institutional rationality in international relations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Very readable and informative constructivist account of historical changes in international society by an Australian scholar.

Wendt, Alexander 1999, *Social theory of international politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Most important statement yet of constructivist international relations theory.

Global Justice and Cosmopolitan Democracy

Richard Shapcott

Introduction

This chapter discusses the cosmopolitan approach to international relations which has, as its principal focus, the twin objectives of global justice and cosmopolitan **democracy**. It begins with a discussion of the nature of justice as it is understood in the political context. It first addresses the cosmopolitan argument that principles of justice ought to apply to the world as a whole and not just within or between individual **states**. It then discusses the secondary argument that this requires significant reform of the relations between states and the democratising of the international realm. And finally it also examines the principal accounts of global justice including liberal Rawlsianism and cosmopolitan democracy.

Unlike other theories of international relations, cosmopolitan approaches are first and foremost **normative** theories. They seek to discuss and identify the proper rules for ordering society and the relationships between its constituent parts. In particular they assess the values which ought to guide social and political life and how they are embodied in institutions and practices. In the language of political **theory** they discuss 'the right and the good'. They are not designed to merely explain or understand politics but to assess it normatively. The core concerns of these types of theories are the meaning of justice, equality, freedom and rights, as well as the nature of **power**, violence and interests. Until relatively recently theories of this type have been rare in the **discipline**. Normative thought in international relations has mostly been concerned with the meaning of **sovereignty** and the norm of non-intervention rather than with justice. Cosmopolitan theorists argue that the vocabulary of justice and democracy does apply to the relations between states and that further there is a moral imperative to transform the international realm into one that better conforms to these values.

Justice and international relations

Justice is a term that has many meanings and can be used in many ways. Hedley Bull, in his much discussed Hagey lectures on justice in international relations, used it to refer to what is more commonly known as international ethics (Bull 1983). Lawyers use the term to denote conformity with legal rulings and process, in the sense that justice has been done when the

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Box 9.1:   Discussion points

John Rawls on justice

'Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. . . . [L]aws and institutions no matter how efficient and well arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust' (1971: 3).

'[T]he justice of a social scheme depends essentially on how fundamental rights and duties are assigned and on the economic opportunities and social conditions in the various sectors of society' (1971: 7).

'[S]ociety is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage' (1971: 4).

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law has been followed and upheld. However, for political philosophers, justice is associated with the values of fairness and equality. Justice as a general concept means to treat like cases alike and to treat people according to fair rules. Fairness of this sort is embodied in the value of equality because to treat people equally means to treat them in a like fashion. Therefore, for political philosophers, justice is usually related to the value of equality of all human beings. Justice occurs when people are treated equally by political, economic and social institutions and laws. Much of political philosophy has been concerned with discussing how people are equal and how this equality should be recognised in law and society.

Justice can also be discussed in terms of substantive and procedural justice. Substantive justice refers to the equality of outcomes and the distribution of wealth or power; that is, distributive justice. Procedural justice refers to a fair procedure for deciding who should get what. For example, a world in which there was no poverty might be considered substantively just, but if that situation was arrived at by discriminating against certain categories of people then we might think it was unjust in a procedural sense. Democracy is considered just because it treats all people as equal by giving them the vote, but it is unjust when, for instance, ethnic minorities or women are denied the vote. Even if all women were wealthy it would still be considered procedurally unjust if they could not vote.

By far the most important recent political formulation of justice has come from the liberal philosopher John Rawls (1971). Rawls argued that justice begins with the 'basic structure' of society, by which he meant, 'the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation' (Rawls 1971: 7). In other words, to be just, society must examine its basic assumptions about who has rights, or equal moral standing, and duties, and who benefits materially from the production of goods and services. Rawls's theory of justice is both a procedural account of justice and a substantive one, concerned with distribution of wealth and advantage.

While Rawls's particular conclusion as to the content of justice is often contested (see Box 9.1 above), his general understanding of the focus of justice is accepted implicitly or explicitly by most cosmopolitan writers. Cosmopolitans concerned with global justice are predominantly, but not exclusively, concerned with the basic structure of global society, that is, with the ways in which the rules of global **order** distribute rights, duties and the benefits of social cooperation (that is, economic activity). Many cosmopolitans directly apply Rawls's theory to the international realm (a move which he resisted). These writers are often primarily concerned with distributive and substantive justice and in particular the problems of global

inequality and poverty (see chapter 24). However others place more emphasis on developing procedural accounts of global justice, and it is these arguments which are mostly associated with the idea of global democracy. For procedural accounts, justice requires not only an end to world poverty, but a legitimate and democratic means for negotiating different interests and identities. However both accounts are loosely concerned with making the basic global structure of society just or equal.

Why justice is global

The question of global justice is an extension of a broader, more general issue: the nature of any duties we may have to humanity. Western ethical thought has been torn by a tension between the duties we have to each other as citizens of the same state or community, and the duties we have to each other simply by virtue of our humanity – the duties we have not just to fellow nationals but to everyone else (Linklater 1990b, Nussbaum 1996). Therefore, before any cosmopolitan principles of justice can be delivered, the case has to be made for why justice and morality in general should be global, rather than merely national.

In contemporary times the major alternative to **cosmopolitanism** is characterised as **nationalism** (in academic debates this is sometimes conflated with **communitarianism**). Nationalists perceive an ethical demarcation between fellow nationals and the rest of humanity. While in the past this position has often presented a very stark choice involving indifference to the suffering of outsiders, most contemporary arguments of this type are less severe.

Contemporary critics of the idea of global distributive justice such as Michael Walzer and David Miller do not argue that we should be morally indifferent to foreigners, but only that the conditions for extending substantial moral obligations beyond the state do not exist. For these critics, justice requires a state and/or a shared culture which provide the basic values from which principles of justice are determined. Thus for instance, Rawls's theory of justice relies on a presupposition of the existence of a basic core of liberal society. For the critics of global justice these conditions simply do not apply globally. Indeed they are exacerbated by the sheer diversity of different conceptions of the 'good' present in the world.

Against this position cosmopolitans argue that either sufficient conditions do exist or, even if they do not, we are not relieved of global obligations. If we think that all humans are equal then there are no good reasons for limiting our conception of morality to our own community; we must instead treat everybody according to the same principles. Many people think and act out their lives assuming that the national community, and the people they see on a daily basis, like family, are their primary moral realm of concern. This means that they do not consider themselves obliged to help people in distant countries, nor do they believe it is morally wrong to think this way. Cosmopolitans however argue that distance, difference and belonging should not change our moral responsibilities. We should not let our sense of personal connection to some people prevent us from having a sense of obligation and duty to all people. For most cosmopolitans this means not merely that we should consider outsiders as equals, but that it is immoral not to.

As Martha Nussbaum argues,

> If we really do believe that all human beings are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights, we are morally required to think about what that conception requires us to do with and for the rest of the world (1996: 13).

The burden of argument thus falls to those who seek to defend exclusionary moral communities and practices, not the other way round.

Equality and the categorical imperative

While not all cosmopolitan approaches are strictly **Kantian**, most are nonetheless consistent with his central premise of moral universality. This is expressed in the principle of the categorical imperative which states: 'Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it shall become a universal law' (quoted in Linklater 1990b: 100). We must always ask first whether we are conforming, not with a national or particularistic law, but a universal, or universalisable, law. This means that 'if a person acts on a principle, which he could not wish another person to employ in his action towards him, that principle is not a moral one' (Linklater 1990b: 100).

For Kant the most important expression of this imperative was the idea that humans should 'act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end' (quoted in Linklater 1990b: 101).

Acceptance of the categorical imperative means a number of things, but most importantly it leads to a critique of state sovereignty and nationalism, not only as practical obstacles, but as immoral institutions. The states-system is immoral because it is impossible to treat others as ends in themselves in a system that is ruled, not by law and collective will, but by necessity and force. As a result of this critique the major tasks of cosmopolitan theory are to defend moral universalism, to develop an account of an alternative political order based on it, and to explore what it might mean to follow Kant's imperative in a world divided into separate communities.

The requirements of justice

The first of these tasks has been developed in at least two different ways by liberals like Charles Beitz, Darrel Moellendorf and Thomas Pogge, and by critical theorists like Andrew Linklater. This section begins with the more dominant, but not necessarily more persuasive, account of the liberals.

Following Pogge (1994: 89) we can characterise liberal cosmopolitanism as individualistic, impartial and universalistic:

> First, individualism: ultimate units are human beings, or person . . . Second, universality: the status of ultimate unit of concern attaches to every living human being equally, not merely to some subset . . . Third, generality (impartiality): persons are the ultimate unit of concern for everyone – not only for their compatriots, fellow religionists, or such like.

For Beitz (1994: 124), 'two essential elements define a point of view as cosmopolitan: it is inclusive and non-perspectival'. In other words, because there are no morally significant differences between people as people, the scope of morality is universal. In addition, equality requires impartiality between competing interests. If we are to treat everyone as equal then we need ' . . . impartial . . . consideration of the claims of each person who would be affected by our

> ### Box 9.2:   Discussion points
>
> #### Impartiality
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> By 'inclusive' I mean that a cosmopolitan view encompasses all local points of view. It seeks to see the whole of which there are the parts. By 'non-perspectival' I mean that a cosmopolitan view seeks to see each part of the whole in its true relative size . . . the proportions of things are accurately presented so that they can be faithfully compared. If local viewpoints can be said to be partial, then a cosmopolitan viewpoint is impartial (Beitz 1991: 124).

choices' (Beitz 1994: 125). The only way to do this is to adopt a position which stands above all differences of culture, interest, class and most importantly nationality: to be impartial towards all particular affiliations, associations, and contexts is to take account of the good of the whole (Beitz 1991). From an impartial perspective, national boundaries are morally irrelevant, or at best of secondary significance. These arguments all amount to the necessity of thinking globally, rather than nationally, when it comes to questions of justice.

The commitment to impartiality is also shared by utilitarian cosmopolitans like Peter Singer. Singer argues that in the face of persistent global hunger and dire poverty, which leads to the avoidable death of millions every year, people in affluent countries are in a comparable position to someone watching a child drown in a pond for fear of getting their trousers wet. If we think it wrong to let the child die then we ought also think it wrong to let millions die from preventable hunger and poverty. If we have the capacity to help, then we have the obligation to help. Thus, knowing as we do that many people starve, we ought to consider ourselves morally obligated to help those distant foreigners before we help less needy fellow nationals. This is simply required by an impartial and universalist understanding of morality.

Interdependence and globalisation

However, perhaps the most persuasive characteristic of many cosmopolitan arguments is an emphasis on economic **interdependence**. Rawls argued that justice is only possible in the presence of a 'system of social cooperation for mutual gain' which produces a surplus product. He argued that the international realm does not resemble a system for mutual advantage, therefore justice is inapplicable. However, most critics believe that Rawls's conclusion does not follow from his argument, and that he is open to further cosmopolitan interpretation (Caney 2001). Beitz and Pogge, among others, argue that it is no longer possible to justify treating states as self-enclosed, isolated systems. Instead there is a single global economic network of interdependence. States are intricately interconnected and very few, if any, can claim to be entirely outside of the global economic order. As a result we can claim that the equivalent of a scheme for mutual gain exists: 'All that is required [for justice] is that interdependence produce benefits and burdens; the role of a principle of distributive justice, then . . . would be to specify what a fair distribution of those benefits and burdens would be like' (Beitz 1979: 153).

The second part of this argument goes further and suggests not only that the interdependence *exists* but that the *content* of that interdependence requires justice. According to Pogge the wealthiest states in the world have imposed an economic order which disadvantages the

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Box 9.3:   Discussion points

Pogge on how societies impact on outsiders

> In assessing the institutional structure of a society by looking merely at how it affects its members we fail to come to terms with how our society affects the lives of foreigners (and how our lives are affected by how other societies are organised) – we disregard the (negative) externalities a national social contract may impose upon those who are not parties to it (Pogge 1989: 256).

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poorest. In that context, he argues, we do have duties not to harm, or not to impose unjust institutions upon others:

> . . . there is an injustice in the economic scheme, which it would be wrong for more affluent participants to perpetuate. And that is so quite independently of whether we and the starving are united by a communal bond or committed to sharing resources with one another (1994: 97).

In other words, regardless of the lack of a common culture or 'global society', there are relationships of dominance, dependence and inequality which are unjust to perpetuate. Even if we disagree upon what a just world order would look like, we can agree that the present international order is unjust, and that there is a responsibility to make it more just. Nevertheless the main point is that we have duties to others regardless of whether we are engaged in an activity of mutual advantage: these are general negative duties not to impose harms and to redress the harms we have inflicted.

This leads to a final and related point in favour of cross-border obligations and global justice. According to cosmopolitans, most versions of social contract theory never ask about the effects, positive or negative, of the contract on those outside it. As Henry Shue argues, 'it is impossible to settle the magnitude of one's duties in justice (if any) toward the fellow members of one's nation-state – or whatever one's domestic society is – prior to and independent of settling the magnitude of one's duties in justice (if any) toward non-members' (1983: 603).

For instance, we can imagine a principle of domestic justice which does so only at the cost of a deeply exploitative relationship with another society. If this relationship is a necessary one for the realisation of justice in the first state, then from a cosmopolitan position the contract is not just. Alternatively, we could argue that if domestic justice requires the exporting of environmental hazards or is reliant upon a steady stream of raw materials from another country, subsequently denying the member of that country a measure of domestic justice, then the domestic contract is unjust from a global position.

This argument is very similar to and draws upon the same premises as the Kantian position of Andrew Linklater and Jürgen Habermas. These authors argue the international order, a world divided into separate **sovereign states**, cannot be considered just because it does not rest upon the consent of all those affected by it. This goes both for the institutions of the sovereign state and the institutions of global governance such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). To be just, any social arrangement must be consented to by all those affected, including those formally excluded from, or outside it.

> **Box 9.4: Discussion points**
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> **Rawls's social contract: the original position**
>
> Rawls's social contract is the result of an experiment in which members of a closed society have been told they must design its basic rules. The catch is no individual can know where they may end up within this society. They may be wealthy, poor, black, white, male, female, talented, intelligent, etc. All they know about themselves is that they have a capacity to conceive of 'the good', to think rationally about ends and possess certain basic physical needs. Rawls describes this as decision-making behind a veil of ignorance.
>
> Rawls thinks rational contractors constrained like this would choose a society in which each person would have 'an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others' (1971: 52).
>
> He also thinks there would be a form of equality of outcome as well as opportunity. This he refers to as the difference principle, where 'inequality is unjust except insofar as it is a necessary means to improving the position of the worst-off members of society' (1971). In other words some inequalities are acceptable but only if they increase the absolute position of the poorest.
>
> For the international realm, a second contracting session takes place between the representatives of peoples. The conclusion of this round is a contract that resembles the traditional rules of **international society**: self-determination, **just war**, mutual recognition and non-intervention. In other words rules of coexistence, not justice (1971).

What is a just global order?

In addition to defending moral universalism, theorists of global justice also offer models of what a just, or more just, world order might look like and suggestions as to how foreign policy can incorporate cosmopolitan principles. As already noted, a common argument is that everybody affected by an action, institution or norm should be able to consent or participate in its construction. It follows that all political institutions and the **norms** that govern them ought to be at least minimally just: they must take into account the interests of everybody affected by them. This in turn means that there is an obligation upon states and citizens to develop globally, and not just nationally, just institutions.

Liberal justice

For liberals, the requirement to develop global institutions is met by the account of justice developed by John Rawls, and the most common approaches to global justice have, until very recently, been applications of Rawls's theory of justice (see Box 9.1). For Beitz, Moellendorf and Pogge, Rawls's substantive account of justice, as well as his mechanism for arriving at it, can provide the criteria for justice globally. Because justice is universal, the difference principle must apply globally to individuals and not states. Justice involves 'a just and stable institutional scheme preserving a distribution of basic rights, opportunities and . . . goods that is fair both globally and within each nation' (Pogge 1989: 256). They come to this conclusion

by arguing that we must begin with a cosmopolitan original position not just a national one. There is no need for a second contract between the representatives of peoples because the first 'original' one will necessarily be universally inclusive. The basic structure of international relations should be governed, not by interstate principles, but by cosmopolitan ones that address the inequalities between individuals rather than states. What ultimately matters is how poor or badly off you are *in the world*, and not just in your own country. While Beitz, Pogge and Moellendorf have some differences over the exact mechanisms for addressing inequalities, they nonetheless agree that the rules must improve the conditions of the least well-off members of the human race. 'The terms of international cooperation . . . should . . . be designed so that the social inequalities they allow to arise from natural contingencies . . . tend to optimise the worst representative individual share' (Pogge 1989: 250). In other words, the structure of international trade and economic interdependence should ensure that, despite an unequal distribution of material resources worldwide, no one should be unable to meet their basic requirements, nor should they suffer disproportionately from the lack of material resources. To this Pogge also adds that the rules of the current system actively damage or disadvantage certain sectors of the economy, thus directly contradicting Rawlsian principles of justice. He argues that:

> . . . the citizens and governments of the wealthy societies, by imposing the present global economic order, significantly contribute to the persistence of severe poverty and thus share institutional moral responsibility for it (Pogge 2002: 57).

Therefore we, who gain most from the current order, have an obligation to change it in such a way that the most needy benefit.

Global justice in practice

From this account of the nature of justice a number of things follow for the practical realm of foreign policy and global governance. First and foremost, given its inequalities, there is a duty to reform the existing rules of international order. The current rules of international trade discriminate against the poor by subsidising the rich and blocking access to imports from the poorest countries. Global justice demands that rich countries, like Australia, should open their markets to the poorer countries. Pogge also argues that they can do so without causing disproportionate harm to the rich. Such reforms are no longer a matter for individual states but must take place in global forums such as the WTO. Rawlsians agree that a duty exists to create a just international order that does not systematically disadvantage or harm anyone, especially the poorest people. This is a duty both of international society collectively and of individual states: to change their practices and the multilateral agreements to which they are a party.

Cosmopolitan democracy

While few cosmopolitans would dispute the account given above, for many the reforms suggested by Pogge and others do not go far enough. In particular, insofar as they leave state sovereignty in place, they remain constitutionally unjust. Instead cosmopolitans such as David Held and Andrew Linklater argue that reforming the practices of states and

Box 9.5: Discussion points

Australia as a good international citizen

Middle-sized and small powers like Australia have significant capacity to work towards global justice. They have the opportunity to act, in Hedley Bull's words, as 'local agents of the world common good' or as 'good international citizens'. This idea was championed by Labor Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, who argued that Australia could punch above its weight in the international forum and could promote universal values like human rights in its foreign policy. Peter Singer and Tom Gregg argue that a good global citizen 'seeks global solutions for global problems . . . [and] will not bargain too hard in order to extract the maximum benefit for its own citizens' (Singer and Gregg 2004: 80). Singer and Gregg have made an assessment of Australian foreign policy from a cosmopolitan perspective. They conclude that Australia's current record is not one 'of which any nation could be proud' (Singer and Gregg 2004: 80) in five key areas of **foreign aid** (poor), UN cooperation (poor), trade (moderate), global environment (very poor), asylum seekers and **refugees** (very poor). Australia's standing as a good international citizen therefore has diminished in the last decade due to the changed priorities of the Howard government. In particular its scepticism about **multilateralism**, its reduced commitment to certain values enshrined in UN institutions and its refusal to sign the **Kyoto Protocol** indicate to many that Australia increasingly prioritises its national interest over the common good.

international institutions is only the beginning of the necessary cosmopolitan transformation. Taking their lead from Kant and German critical theorist Jürgen Habermas (see chapter 8) they argue that the categorical imperative requires a full democratising of the international realm, as well as an account of distributive justice.

Cosmopolitan democrats tend to be social contract theorists of a different sort to Rawlsians. They begin by arguing that we cannot simply or fairly imagine what idealised agents might choose in the way that Rawls claims. Human beings are too diverse for any theorist to be able to anticipate what they might agree to. In addition, the Rawlsian solution is vulnerable to the criticism that it is insensitive to cultural differences in varieties of justice because it imposes a liberal view on others.

Instead of beginning with a hypothetical social experiment, cosmopolitan democrats argue that in order to be legitimate, the principles of global justice ought to be derived from a real dialogue between real people. They argue that the idea that people should be able to consent to actions which affect them should be taken literally. This principle has been embodied in democratic societies in the form of representative elections and institutional accountability. The same practices should also apply in the international realm. They argue that there is a duty to create institutional structures that allow participation in decision-making on matters that affect everybody, such as rules of global trade and finance. What is needed to make the international order both more just and more legitimate is the democratising of its core institutions and practices. International institutions such as the UN, the WTO and the **World Bank**, as well as regional institutions, ought to be made representative of people and not just states. This would involve forms of direct representation and election and the creation of a third directly elected chamber in the UN (Held 1997).

The advantage of this approach to global justice is that it is a means for preventing the imposition of a single distributive scheme on anyone. The principles of distributive justice

would not be worked out by politicians or philosophers alone and then imposed on the world; rather they would, at the very least, have to be consented to by the directly elected representatives of all the world's people. In addition, a degree of redistribution would be necessary to enable effective participation in any such assemblies. To participate in democratic practices requires that one not only be physically capable, but also be able to access relevant knowledge and information. Therefore cosmopolitan democracy requires global justice even as it seeks to legitimise the decision-making process.

It is important to note that it is not being argued that global justice requires either a world state or the destruction or homogenisation of other cultures. The main argument is that when people are affected by a rule or a practice of an institution (or other actors) then they ought to be able to participate in the decision-making process or have direct representation in the bodies most involved.

Conclusion

Cosmopolitans of all persuasions begin with the assumption that justice, understood broadly, is the first virtue of social institutions. In other words, the very purpose of the state or political community is to provide justice for its members. Cosmopolitanism also begins with the argument that the equality of the human species requires universal principles of justice. This argument is buttressed by the profound degree to which international institutions such as the WTO now affect people across the world. Interdependence and **globalisation** mean that even 'national' justice is in part dependent upon global factors. Under these circumstances justice necessarily requires global solutions, including the democratising of the international realm.

Questions

1. Why do Rawlsian cosmopolitans criticise Rawls's solution to global justice?
2. What is justice and should it be global?
3. Should the global order be more democratic?
4. Should democracy be cosmopolitan?

Further reading

Beitz, C. 1979, *Political theory and international relations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Early attempt to apply Rawls's insights to international relations.

Linklater, A. 1998, *The transformation of political community: ethical foundations of the post-Westphalian era*, Cambridge: Polity Press. Important attempt to outline a cosmopolitan theory of international relations.

Pogge, T. 2002, *World poverty and human rights: cosmopolitan responsibilities and reforms*, Cambridge: Polity Press. Impressive philosophical account of universal obligations to alleviate poverty.

Walzer, M. 1994, *Thick and thin: moral argument at home and abroad*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. Important exposition of communitarian ethics.

Part 2
The Traditional Agenda: States, War and Law

The Modern State and Its Origins

Richard Devetak

Introduction

This chapter introduces the principal actor in international relations: the **sovereign state**. It begins by defining the **state**. Second, it explores the origins of the state in the transition from the medieval to the modern world. Third, it examines the concept of **sovereignty**, especially as it was enunciated in early modern political thought. Fourth, it surveys different historical explanations of how the sovereign state triumphed over alternative forms of political society. Finally, it surveys some of the continuing debates about the morality and utility of the modern state.

What is a state?

The state may not be the only actor in world politics (see chapter 23), but it is widely recognised as the one that has the greatest impact on people's lives. It is, as John Dunn (2000: 66) says, 'the principal institutional site of political experience'. This is why the title of Australian scholar J. D. B. Miller's book, *A world of states*, seems like such an apt description of international relations. But although we live in a world of states today it was not always thus. At various moments in time, city-states, empires, feudal states, absolutist states or nation-states have been the dominant institutional form. So although humanity has always been divided into separate political societies, the character of these societies has varied historically and geographically. Sovereign states are distinctly modern inventions, and how long they will remain the principal institutional site of politics is a contentious issue, with some scholars suggesting that **globalisation** may be eclipsing the sovereign state. Whether or not they are declining in importance, moral doubts about the sovereign state continue to find expression. The state is, in many respects, a perpetually controversial subject, precisely because it has been so central to domestic and international political life since the sixteenth century.

It is worth noting at the outset that a state, in its loosest and simplest sense (see Box 10.1), refers to an abstract entity comprising a government, a population and a territory. Much more needs to be said about this abstract entity, but for the moment it is enough to note that it possesses 'a collective personality which makes it immortal' (van Creveld 1999: 258).

Box 10.1:   Terminology

The state, the modern state, and sovereignty

State = government + population + territory
Modern state = state + sovereignty + nation
Sovereignty denotes a single, supreme decision-making authority

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Governments come and go, populations are born and die, territorial borders may shift, but the state remains.

The modern assumption, which is now taken for granted, is that a government claims *supreme* and *exclusive* authority to rule over a clearly bordered territory, and that the population residing there constitutes a **nation** (see chapter 11). A modern state therefore is a particular model of political society; it is, most importantly, a state conceptualised as sovereign. Additionally, in many – though not all – cases, it is a nation or nation-state where the people are sovereign (popular sovereignty).

One of the most incisive definitions of the state was offered by the great German sociologist, Max Weber. He defined the state as a 'human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (Weber 1948: 78). While this is consistent with the above definition of the modern state, it places the emphasis firmly on what the state does. States are indeed political associations where governmental apparatuses, composed of politicians and administrative officials, establish and implement laws regulating social life within a particular territory. But the key for Weber is how this rule is sustained: through coercion. For Weber and historical sociologists, such as Anthony Giddens, Michael Mann, Theda Skocpol and Charles Tilly, the state is best defined in terms of *means* specific to its functions; namely, the control and organisation of the force that underpins its rule. Tilly (1985: 170) defines states as 'relatively centralised, differentiated organisations the officials of which more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory'. His definition includes reference to territory and population, but the key issue for him is control over the coercive means. This may seem counter-intuitive given that the state is commonly understood to be concerned with **order** and **peace**, but order and peace require *enforcement* through courts of law and the police. States claim a monopoly over the right to enforce the law internally and provide **security** against external threats through the establishment of police and military forces. So, force and the threat of force have never been far from states, either in their formation or in their maintenance, internally or externally.

One further important point to note hinges on Weber's word 'legitimate'. While states may exercise **power** and seek control, it is *authority* rather than power or control that defines the modern state's sovereignty and legitimacy. Although none can fully control its territory, states nonetheless claim the legitimate right or authority to make and enforce laws of their own choosing.

Origins of the modern state

This section locates the rise of state sovereignty in the transition from medieval to modern Europe. It would be ridiculous to suggest that the sovereign state or modern Europe were born

> **Box 10.2:   Discussion points**
>
> **When a state is not a state**
>
> It should be noted that in countries with federal systems, like Australia and the US, the constituent parts are also called states. But Victoria and New South Wales, California and Texas, as large and wealthy and internationally active as they may now be, are not the states generally referred to in the study of international relations. Primarily, when the word state is used, what is meant is the political unit or 'country' that claims, and is internationally recognised as possessing, sovereignty. These are the states represented in atlases of the world and with seats at the **UN**.

in a particular year. Massive social changes like these are always complex, drawn-out struggles rather than simple transitions.

An important point to keep in mind is that the modern state did not fully develop until the nineteenth century, after the rise of **nationalism**. Even the concept of state itself is not as ancient as may at first be thought. As Quentin Skinner (1989) has demonstrated, it was only in the sixteenth century that the word state acquired a meaning close to the modern sense, referring to an abstract, impersonal entity, separate from the person of the prince. The next part of the chapter sketches some of the features that marked medieval Europe, contrasting it with the modern system that was eventually to follow.

Prior to the birth of state sovereignty, Europe looked like a patchwork quilt of overlapping and intersecting layers of power, authority and allegiance. Power, authority and allegiance were not monopolised by a central government, but shared among different actors, not just prince and parliament, but also the pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, and jealous dukes and counts, many of whom were related by blood – note, the term 'prince' was often used to refer to the king. There existed no effective centre or capital capable of exerting its will exclusively over any territory.

Medieval Europe thus presented a markedly different political map to the modern one with which we are familiar. This is not to say that the medieval world was sheer chaos and disorder. A powerful sense of order and social identity was provided by an overarching Christianity. The many fragments of the European patchwork saw themselves as local embodiments of a much larger universal community under the power of God and His earthly representatives in the Church. Indeed in many ways it was Christendom that provided the only source of unity and identity in a fractured, splintered Europe. However, the Catholic papacy always struggled to exert its authority across all of European Christendom; it constantly ran up against the earthly power and authority of princes, including the Holy Roman Emperor, not to mention Protestant bishops and faithful. Ultimately, none of the pretenders to universal domination could overcome the 'feudal' character of European society.

The fragmented, decentralised system of government that dominated the medieval period (from 800 to 1200 AD) is now known as feudalism. Joseph Strayer (1965: 12–13) identifies three characteristic features of feudalism: the fragmentation of political power, public power in private possession, and armed forces secured through private agreements. Benno Teschke, drawing more from a Marxist perspective, offers a similar account, also emphasising the geographic decentralisation, institutionally personalised government and equally personalised, if divided, control over the instruments of violence. The feudal state, he says, was

essentially 'an ensemble of lordships' (2004: 31) with each lord claiming control over a share of the instruments of violence and, importantly for Teschke (2004: 31–2), a share of the land and labour. Political rather than economic accumulation, he says, was the driving force, pushing forward military innovation while the economy remained stagnant. However, he adds, eventually 'the systematic build-up of military power was also the precondition for, as well as the consequence of, intensifying the exploitation of labour' (Teschke 2004: 32).

Because the king lacked the administrative and financial capacity to extend his authority across the whole divided kingdom, he would appoint representatives, usually a count or duke, to administer justice at the local levels. Strayer (1965: 30) tells us that these local counts exercised 'full military, judicial and financial power' at the king's behest. The danger was that as counts and dukes grew their power by fighting wars, administering law and justice, and raising revenue through taxation, they became increasingly proprietorial; as Strayer (1965: 30) puts it, 'they became virtually independent rulers'. In time, the local power bases of counts and dukes grew to the point where they could challenge the capacity of royal power to impose its will.

Centripetal forces were thus constantly balanced by centrifugal ones in the medieval world. Tangled webs of dynastic power and splintered authority were spread unevenly across a fragmented European geography. Popes and princes had competing and crosscutting interests that were often complicated by inter-marriage, papal decrees, competing or overlapping territorial claims, conflicting religious beliefs, and general diplomatic intrigue and deception. Power and authority were thus shared or partitioned among a variety of actors. As a consequence, as Teschke (2004: 31) notes, there was 'no distinct sphere of anarchical "international" relations', because a clear distinction between the interior and exterior of states could not be drawn.

The important point for us about this medieval mosaic is that political space (territory) and authority (government) rarely, if ever, coincided with homogeneous communities (nations) to produce integrated political units. Finally, it was only with the rise of sovereign states that international relations properly speaking emerged.

The idea of the sovereign state

This section introduces and outlines two of the most central, if controversial, concepts in the study of politics and international relations – sovereignty and the state. It asks two questions: first, what does sovereignty mean? Second, how and why did the idea of the sovereign state arise? To help explain what sovereignty means it will be helpful to understand two pre-eminent attempts to characterise sovereignty in early modern Europe – the absolutist theories of Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes. This will help convey the two interrelated dimensions of sovereignty: internal supremacy and external independence.

The principle of sovereignty found its first systematic presentation in Frenchman Jean Bodin's *Six books of the republic*, published in 1576 (Bodin 1992). This was a time of tremendous political violence and instability in France, driven by religious conflict. In 1572 tens of thousands of Huguenots (French Protestants) were killed on what is known as the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Since the mid-sixteenth century the Huguenots had been agitating for greater religious toleration in France, struggling to resist occasional attempts by

the Catholic crown to impose religious uniformity by force. Although Bodin agreed that the Catholic kings had adopted tyrannical policies against the Protestants, he denied that Huguenots had a right to resist the king. To allow this right would be to unleash **anarchy** and **civil war**, destroying any prospect of political stability.

Bodin's central innovation in the *Republic* was to argue that power and authority should be concentrated in a single decision-maker, preferably the king. He believed that a well-ordered society required an 'absolute and perpetual power', namely the sovereign, who would hold the 'highest power of command' (Bodin 1992: 1). One of the key aspects of sovereignty, as presented by the Frenchman, was that law and order could only be maintained within a society if one power alone possessed a distinct prerogative across the territorial jurisdiction. The emergence of the European sovereign state then was the result of royal power unifying under its rule previously detached territorial segments and populations as centripetal forces began to overwhelm centrifugal ones. Most importantly, the right to use instruments of force had to be monopolised by a single authority. Sovereignty was thus characterised as the single, supreme legal and political power over a society and territory.

Hobbes's *Leviathan* – published in 1651 in the context of English civil strife – advances a powerful argument for establishing state sovereignty around a **theory** of political obligation. He argued that in the condition before a state is formed, individuals live in what he calls a 'state of nature' where there is no 'common Power to keep them all in awe' (1968: 185). In the absence of an overarching authority, there can be no peace or security because there is nothing to stop individuals harming one another. The state of nature is a condition lacking any rules and therefore any justice; mutual fear and insecurity are its defining features. According to Hobbes, only the establishment of a sovereign state – through a 'social contract' where the sovereign agrees to protect and the subjects agree to obey – can create the conditions of security and order necessary for society to develop freedom and industry. Like Bodin, Hobbes pressed the case for a single central authority with the power to enforce decisions. Sovereignty, therefore, implies authority to prevail over a jurisdiction.

The original frontispiece to Hobbes's *Leviathan* provides the perfect image of the sovereign as conceived by absolutist thinkers Bodin and Hobbes (see Figure 10.1 below). It contains the image of a crowned prince standing majestically over his land and people, sword in one hand, sceptre in the other; keeping watch over an orderly and peaceful city and surrounding countryside. A careful look at the image reveals that the prince's body is made up of tiny people all looking up to the prince. The image is a wonderful representation that captures several influential ideas of the time.

- First and foremost, the sovereign is supreme and absolute, standing over and above a loyal people and territory. This absolutist idea is supported by the Latin inscription at the top of the page. It is a fragment from the *Book of Job* which translates as: 'There is no power on earth that can be compared with him . . .'.
- Second, the law (represented by the sceptre) and the instruments of coercion (represented by the sword) are firmly in the grip of the prince. Moreover, they work in tandem. Laws not backed up by force are useless in Hobbes's mind, but force without the backing of law is tyranny. The sovereign (who combines law and force) must therefore monopolise the right to lay down and *enforce* the law.
- Third, the state is like a natural human body. Indeed, it was commonplace then, as now, to speak of the 'body politic'. Hobbes's Introduction to the *Leviathan* explicitly says that the

Figure 10.1: The frontispiece of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, 1651

Source: Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Sydney Library.

state 'is but an Artificiall Man' (1968: 81), from which we can infer a head (of state) with its unique rationality (reason of state), and a unified body with protective skin (borders) to keep out foreign bodies.

Hobbes saw with great clarity that achieving peace *within* a state does nothing to diminish insecurity and violence *among* them; sovereign states were themselves plunged into a state of nature or 'state of war', which in contemporary parlance is called international anarchy. States became 'masterlesse men', in Hobbes's (1968: 238) evocative words, adopting 'the posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their Forts, Garrisons, and Guns upon the Frontiers of their Kingdoms; and continuall Spyes upon their neighbours; which is a posture of war' (187–8). Not only does this point to the state's need constantly to prepare for war if it is to be secure (see chapter 12), but also the external independence (or 'masterlessness') of sovereign states. States claim to be 'constitutionally insular', as Alan James (1986: 25) says; that is, they deny being subject to any outside or superior authority.

Box 10.3:   Discussion points

Sovereignty versus international law

Does state sovereignty imply a rejection of **international law**? The answer is no; sovereign states acquire their rights in relation to evolving international rules and norms. States may sometimes ignore and indeed breach international law, but international law has been built up around states. It is historically a law of and for sovereign states; one which elaborates their rights and obligations (see chapter 16).

Next I want to consider how and why the sovereign state emerged as the resolution to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century political problems. The idea of the sovereign state proposed by Bodin and Hobbes was meant to be a solution to the religious conflict that was tearing European societies apart. Fiercely intolerant religious factions had, since the sixteenth century, generated a crisis of authority that was not only a clash between Christianities, but between civil and religious authority. Did ultimate authority lie with the Church or with civil government? Should governments foster the spiritual salvation of individuals in the afterlife or ensure peace and security here on earth? If religious zealots wanted to subordinate politics to religion, Bodin and Hobbes wanted to de-theologise politics by erecting a state that would stand outside theological disputes and eschew the moral absolutes that fuelled confessional conflict. Its purpose was not to secure everlasting life for the soul of its citizens, but to ensure peace and security as Hobbes insisted.

The principle of sovereignty established a new basis on which to conduct politics, displacing the medieval mosaic of fractured lines of power, authority and allegiance. Politics was now organised along exclusionary lines; the sovereign state came to embody the modern conception of politics, where authority, society and territory were coterminous. The jurisdiction of a political authority, and its related claim to the legitimate instruments of violence, was coextensive with the geographical limits of a society's territory. The notion of sovereignty thus concentrated social, military, economic, political and legal life around a single site of governance, whether this was the power and authority vested in a prince or parliament, that is, dynastic or popular sovereignty.

Even though sovereignty was expressed with such precision by Bodin and Hobbes, it remains a contentious concept. Precisely which rights or prerogatives flow from sovereignty is not just historically variable but politically conditioned. Sovereign powers may like to give the impression that sovereignty is a licence for governments to do anything they please, but this is far from the truth. State sovereignty has always been governed by international rules and **norms** and conditional upon international recognition (see Box 10.3), as two generations of Australian scholars have noted (Bull 1977; Reus-Smit 1999). This means that sovereignty's meaning is historically and socially constituted, and inseparable from shared understandings.

The triumph of the sovereign state: state-building as war making

The rise of the modern state: war making and state-building

The purpose of this section is to outline briefly the historical process by which the modern state emerged. It is important to recall the political and military context. The late sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries were ravaged by trans-European civil and religious wars, trade on the high seas, and wars of conquest and assimilation in the New World. War was endemic during this period of European history. For example, in the years between 1559 (the year of the Treaty of Augsburg) and 1648 (the year of the **Peace of Westphalia**) there were 112 wars in Europe, working out at an average of 1.25 per year (Luard 1986: 35). Moreover, this violence was intensified by the 'military **revolution**' underway in Europe at the time. Armies grew considerably in size, as did the cost of weaponry and equipment. The increasing length and intensity of armed conflict, as siege warfare evolved, also added to the costs of **war**, dramatically increasing the financial burden placed on states.

European rulers could not avoid war; they were, it seems, drawn inexorably into it. Consequently, states were increasingly being fashioned as 'war machines' in order to respond more effectively to the geopolitical situation that prevailed at the time. As we shall see, an effective response required an overhaul of the state's administrative, financial and political organisation in order to monopolise (and pay for) the instruments of violence under a single unrivalled authority.

Historical sociologists have drawn attention to the close connection between state-building and organised violence. Tilly's (1975: 42) pithy statement that '[w]ar made the state, and the state made war' captures the point nicely. The shift from feudal and other forms of pre-modern state grew out of the heightening demands of warfare, which in turn consolidated the state. The more centralised absolutist state, which replaced the feudal one, had the capacity not just to raise sufficient finance for growing military expenditure, but to reorganise and manage the military more efficiently.

In the sixteenth century new methods of bookkeeping and collecting statistics were invented, allowing states to monitor and intervene in their populations much more intensively and extensively. Such knowledge was to prove crucial in the state-building process; it laid the basis for absolutist states to develop and maintain formal systems of regular taxation, and provided state rulers with information about the economic productivity of their populations. Previously, taxes were raised in an ad hoc manner only when required, often after war had already commenced. With the establishment of regular taxation, states were able to ensure a steady supply of funds to fuel military expenditure in times of war and peace. From the seventeenth century on, states needed a constant supply of finance to prepare for endless wars (Mann 1986: 453). Tilly (1985: 180) refers to the continuous increase in levels of finance as the 'ratchet effect', whereby public revenue and expenditure levels rose abruptly during wars, setting progressively higher floors beneath which peacetime levels never sank.

A significant factor in the rising costs was the 'military revolution' of the seventeenth century. Advances in technology and weaponry, innovations in military tactics and strategy, heightened organisation of military forces, the introduction of standing armed forces, the growth in size of the armed forces relative to the population, and the escalating costs of maintaining maritime forces, all ensured that military expenditure would remain high in times of war and peace (Mann 1986: 455). The management of relevant fiscal resources thus became crucial to the rise of the absolutist state and its successor, the modern state. There are two points to note here. First, that systematic revenue raising depended on developing administrative capabilities at the centre of the state. Second, that development of the absolutist state's revenue-raising and administrative capabilities was crucial to its monopolisation of coercive means. The upshot was that states became better able to extend their capacity

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Box 10.4:   Discussion points

Hobbes and Australia's origins

Right at the end of *Leviathan*, his powerful attempt to justify the sovereign state, Hobbes (1968: 722) concedes that 'there is scarce a Common-wealth in the world, whose beginnings can in conscience be justified'. This applies with especial relevance to Australia. The continent now called Australia has been occupied by Aboriginal peoples for some 60,000 years. A little over 200 years ago, in 1788, it was settled by the British under the presumption of what subsequently became known as *terra nullius*, the notion that the land was un-owned and unoccupied. Australia's preeminent historian of colonisation and settlement, Henry Reynolds (1987, 1996), argues that the British (and Europeans more generally) viewed lands like Australia as lacking political authority, bereft of recognisable legal codes, and therefore open to annexation. Colonisation was deemed legitimate because the continent appeared not to be the possession of any sovereign. This was of course false, as demonstrated by the sporadic frontier violence which was instrumental in dispossessing Aboriginal peoples of their lands. State-building in Australia was thus no different to state-building anywhere else – it depended on violence.

   The notion of *terra nullius* has since been repudiated by the Australian High Court in the 1992 Mabo judgment (see Reynolds 1996: chapter 1). The Court determined that the land was indeed occupied and owned by Aboriginal people and that 'native title' was not extinguished by British settlement and dispossession. However, the Court did not and could not rule on the question of sovereignty. Nevertheless, the Mabo judgment shook Australia's foundations, if only momentarily. It is worth reflecting on Hobbes's observation in relation to Australia's eighteenth-century beginnings – can it be justified in good conscience? What are the moral and political implications of accepting or rejecting Hobbes's observation?

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to 'monitor, control and monopolise the effective means of violence' (Tilly 1992: 68), and thereby intensify their rule.

   But what drove this monopolisation process? Historical sociologists are largely in agreement here with realists and with Teschke's **Marxism**. They all agree that the principal cause of this process lies in geopolitical pressures generated by war. In order to protect themselves against external aggression, states had constantly to prepare for war. The **balance of power**, **alliance** formation, diplomacy and military build-ups were therefore essential conditions in the rise of the absolutist state. As Skocpol (1979: 30) explains, 'geopolitical environments create tasks and opportunities for states and place limits on their capacities to cope with either external or internal crises'. The primacy accorded to the external dimension finds agreement in Mann (1986: 490) who argues, 'The growth of the modern state . . . is explained primarily not in domestic terms but in terms of geopolitical relations of violence'.

Disarming competing powers: the triumph of the sovereign state

In the twenty-first century we tend to think of sovereign states as the exclusive holders of the legitimate instruments of force. But as Janice Thomson points out, this was not always the case. It was the result of long historical processes that eventually disarmed **non-state actors** so the control over the domestic and international employment of force would be concentrated in the sovereign state. This meant that privateers and merchant shipping companies who

operated private seafaring vessels charged with the right to wage war; pirates, who used force without any official sanction; and mercenaries, who traipsed from war to war for a pay cheque, would no longer be tolerated as legitimate bearers of arms. Instead, the sovereign state became the exclusive bearer of the instruments of force as privateers, merchant companies, pirates and mercenaries were stripped of their right to bear arms against, or in competition with, states (Thomson 1994). The modern state was therefore the end product of the 'long and bloody struggle by state-builders to extract coercive capabilities from other individuals, groups, and organisations within their territory' (Thomson 1994: 3).

An argument that complements the history narrated by Thomson is to be found in the work of Hendrik Spruyt (1994). He explains how the sovereign state became the constitutive organising principle of the **international system** by displacing and excluding alternative forms of state. He explains why alternatives to the sovereign state, such as feudal, city-league and city-state systems, failed to become the dominant forms of political organisation as Europe shifted from the medieval to the modern system of states.

Spruyt concurs with Thomson that the principle of sovereignty 'altered the structure of the international system by basing political authority on the principle of territorial exclusivity' (Spruyt 1994: 3). The triumph of state sovereignty as a constitutive principle was the result, says Spruyt, of three things: first, its scale afforded greater administrative and organisational efficiency than small city-states and loosely integrated empires; second, it offered a more effective means of organising the external relations of states; third, it successfully eliminated non-territorial, feudal systems of governance.

As the analyses of Thomson and Spruyt indicate, the sovereign state is a distinctively modern resolution of political life that emerged after long and bloody battles over power and authority. One of the most important aspects of the modern state is its spatial configuration. Compared to the fragmented political order of the medieval world, the modern world is based on integrated, homogeneous political spaces ruled by a single and exclusive authority in the interests of a unified national society. Its development is inseparable from violence – external warfare and the monopolisation of the instruments of legitimate violence.

Whither the sovereign state?

This final section briefly surveys arguments about the future of the sovereign state. In particular it focuses on debates surrounding globalisation's impact on and **normative** critiques of the sovereign state. First, however, it elaborates on the various monopoly powers claimed by modern states, since many of the debates revolve around the viability and moral defensibility of these monopolies.

The modern state is built on a series of monopolies. Aside from coercion, modern states claim a monopoly right to:

* manage the economy
* make laws
* international representation
* border control, and
* political loyalty.

It is important to recall here the distinction between authority and control. Although they may aspire to exercise full control over these issue areas, states will never entirely succeed. They will, however, retain the authority to decide matters in these areas.

Ever since globalisation became a hot topic, claims have been made about the demise of the sovereign state (see chapter 25). 'Hyperglobalisationists' tend to see globalisation as a powerful economic and technological force hollowing out the state, depriving it of power over these monopolies. This is almost certainly an exaggeration since the state retains power and, more importantly, authority, over many vital issues, including aspects of globalisation itself as both 'sceptics' and 'transformationalists' agree. But whereas 'sceptics' tend to see globalisation as little more than a myth concocted primarily by Western states to promote neoliberal policy agendas, 'transformationalists' tend to accept that some human activities have been 'deterritorialised', that is to say, they increasingly take place on a global social plane unmoored from territoriality. The state is not a powerless victim of globalisation, so much as one of its vehicles. But no matter how real or powerful globalisation is, the modern state still retains authority (if not control) over how global processes affect its monopoly powers.

Globalisation affects different states in different ways. For example, developing countries are not able to capitalise on all of globalisation's purported benefits in the same way as developed ones. Moreover, some scholars argue that globalisation adversely affects many developing countries by disempowering them or compelling them to adopt harsh austerity measures favoured by the West. In some instances this may have contributed to the proliferation of what many refer to as '**failed states**'. Such states no longer successfully claim the various monopolies over their jurisdiction, as warlords, organised criminal networks or insurgents exert control, and sometimes authority, against the legitimate government.

Cosmopolitan critics, like Andrew Linklater, argue that the sovereign form of state fosters domination and exclusion. In monopolising so many dimensions of politics, the modern state has, through its coercive instruments, participated in the reproduction of violent practices and unjust structures. Australian scholars such as Anthony Burke (2001a) and David Campbell (1998) have delivered powerful critiques of sovereign practices that may be consistent with the kind of **cosmopolitanism** Linklater and his Australian student, Richard Shapcott (2001) have developed. The purpose of these critical accounts of the modern state is to challenge the supposition that authority, territory and community must be coterminous. The hope is that this will allow for freer, less exclusivist, more democratic forms of political society.

Cosmopolitans have explored forms of citizenship and 'post-sovereign' statehood that widen moral and political community beyond national–territorial borders. Linklater, for example, has considered the potential of globalisation to strengthen **democracy** within and extend it between states. This, he believes, would give voice to minorities traditionally marginalised within sovereign states, and also compel states to give greater consideration to how their decisions impact on outsiders. In Linklater's view, modern states have consistently de-emphasised duties to the community of humankind. But he also believes there are progressive tendencies built into states that may promote normative commitments by refusing to see territorial boundaries as morally and politically decisive. His normative vision questions the monopolising tendencies of the modern state, while exploring potentials to share power and authority among different levels of governance: local, national, regional and global. This would necessarily de-emphasise the modern state's persistent distinction between insiders

(citizens) and outsiders (foreigners), allowing for a politics that takes seriously moral and political responsibilities to all human beings.

Conclusion

As the final section shows, there are material and normative reasons for questioning the suitability of the sovereign state in contemporary international relations. This should not be surprising given that the sovereign state emerged as a response to a particular set of issues in the aftermath of medieval Europe. Insofar as the social, political and economic context has changed over the last four centuries, the sovereign form of state, a product of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, may have outlived its usefulness. In truth, it is too early to say, not least because the state has been able to adapt to changing circumstances. What we can say is that vigorous debates will continue about the modern state's desirability and effectiveness in a changing world.

Questions

1. What makes a state sovereign?
2. What is the political significance of sovereignty?
3. Why did the modern state triumph over other forms of political organisation?
4. What are the most important factors in explaining the rise of the modern state?
5. How, if at all, is state sovereignty affected by globalisation?
6. What are the moral and political advantages and disadvantages of the modern state?
7. Must authority, territory and community be coterminous?
8. Is it possible to imagine a state without sovereignty?

Further reading

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Hall, John, and Ikenberry, G. John 1989, *The state*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press. Very useful introduction and overview.
Hinsley, F. H. 1986, *Sovereignty*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Indispensable, classic account of the sovereign state's origins and evolution.
Krasner, Stephen 1999, *Sovereignty: organized hypocrisy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Stimulating and engaging analysis of sovereignty from a realist perspective.
Van Creveld, Martin 1999, *The rise and decline of the state*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Superb historical account of the rise and evolution of the modern state.

Nationalism and War

Gavin Mount

Introduction

This chapter examines two debates that have divided scholars on the meaning and signifi-cance of **nationalism** as a force that has profoundly shaped modern **international society**. The first debate concerns the terminological confusion surrounding the composition of national identity and whether nations and nationalism should be regarded as pre-modern or distinc-tively modern phenomena. The second examines the paradox of why nationalism has been characterised as both a progressive force that helped to build international society *and* a destructive force that causes **war**. From the perspective of the study of international relations in an Australian context, these debates continue to have significant practical implications for understanding some of the most challenging practical problems confronting contempo-rary global politics.

What is a nation?

The terms **nation**, *nationality* and *nationalism* are all notoriously difficult to define. Scholars disagree on whether the most important characteristic of nations should be its physical, spiri-tual or social characteristics, whether it is old or new, whether it is imagined or real, whether it is separate from the **state** or not and so forth (see Box 11.1). As political ideologies, nation-alisms have been characterised as democratic or authoritarian, imperial or anti-imperial, for-ward looking or backward looking, state-led or state-seeking and pre-modern or postmodern. In fact, the only thing that scholars on nations and nationalism seem to agree upon is that the concepts are 'impossibly fuzzy' (Kamenka 1975: 3) and that attempts to arrive at a coher-ent universal definition of these words are at best 'foolish' or at worst, 'a bootless exercise of definitional **imperialism**' (Nash 1989: 125; also see Comaroff and Stern 1997; Connor 1994; Seton-Watson 1977). Regardless of whether academics can define the terms, nationalism is a real force in the sense that it has had, and continues to have, a very real impact on the lives of millions of people throughout the world.

   The first question we must confront in addressing nationalism is: why has it been so resis-tant to definition? There are five reasons. First, the term 'nation' is frequently conflated with

> ## Box 11.1:   Terminology
>
> **Nations and nationalism**
>
> > A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. (Renan 1882).
> >
> > A nation is a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness (Seton-Watson 1977: 1).
> >
> > [Nationalism] is a very distinctive species of patriotism, and one which becomes pervasive and dominant only under certain social conditions which in fact prevail in the modern world, and nowhere else (Gellner 1983: 183).
> >
> > [A nation] is an imagined political community . . . because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (Anderson 1991: 6).
> >
> > A nation can therefore be defined as *a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members* (Smith 1991: 14).
> >
> > Nationalism has been both cause and effect of the great reorganizations of political space that framed the 'short twentieth century' (Brubaker 1996).
> >
> > Nationalism is a political expression of group identity often coupled with a country or state. It is an intense, subjective feeling reflecting elemental ties of individuals to groups. This bonding has existed in many forms long before the group to which such passionate loyalty is given became the nation-state (Hough 2003: 48).

the term 'state'. A typical distinction between the terms is that states are legal and political entities, while nations are cultural ones. The problem is that, both in **theory** and practice, the term nation is constantly used to describe actions of a political and legal entity. For example, when nation is used in terms such as '**national interest**', in the names of organisations such as the League of Nations or the **United Nations (UN)** or even to describe the **discipline** of International Relations, it refers implicitly or explicitly to the interests, membership or relations of political and legal entities which are more appropriately called 'states' (see chapter 10). The term 'nation-state' is often used as a more accurate means of describing the real actors in international relations but, because the cultural composition and degree of homogeneity within territorial states varies dramatically, this can also be misleading.

A second reason is that nationalism is a mass phenomenon but its formal expression is defined and refined by the elite. For example, while an Australian citizen may have a range of understandings about what their nationality means to them, the formal criteria for citizenship, the dominant symbols such as anthems, flags, currency, public holidays or monuments and the narratives of national memory, have all been determined by lawyers, politicians, historians, novelists, artists and other elites.

Third, as an analytical social science category, nationalism is defined from very different intellectual perspectives such as: sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, law,

geography, literary studies and International Relations. Each academic discipline has viewed the subject from slightly different angles and consequently has sought to emphasise different aspects.

Fourth, nationalist ideology seeks to be simultaneously exceptionalist and universalist. As Todorov (1993: 93) notes, nationalism is 'paradoxical because while it is a perspective inherently based upon the centrality of one cultural perspective, it espouses a universal doctrine of humanity'. State-seeking national movements in particular seek recognition by the international community as having a legitimate claim for self-determination under **international law**. A good example of this is the case of the East Timorese who, for twenty-five years, sought recognition for their claim of self-determination until it was finally recognised through the UN by the member-states of Indonesia and Portugal in 1999.

Fifth, while nations claim to have objective geographical, historical and social ties, it has also been observed that many of these claims are invented or imagined (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983). Empirical social science research must grapple with the paradox that while objective evidence of national and ethnic identity may be difficult to document, the members of these groups have very real perceptions that these ties are part of their physical, psychological, sociological or political experience in everyday life. As one commentator pointed out, the fact that national symbols are invented does not prevent people from sacrificing their lives 'with the satisfaction of serving eternal truth' (cited in Connor 2004: 32).

Recognising the malleability of language that surrounds a concept like nationalism illustrates the relationship between language and **power**. The fact that the term 'nation' is substituted in everyday language and political discourse for the term 'state' can be seen as a rhetorical strategy of the elite to give the term a sense of legitimacy and relevance to the masses. That is, governments and politicians have good reason to justify their policies as being 'in the national interest' instead of describing them, perhaps more accurately, as being 'in the state interest'; think here of the way the Howard government has titled its foreign policy white papers, *In the national interest* (1997) and *Advancing the national interest* (2003). It appears politically useful for governments to emphasise that a policy's primary purpose is not only to protect a government but to serve the interests and values of 'the people'.

The main way that the question 'what is a nation?' has been addressed is by examining its significant cultural markers of common ancestry (or descent or race), language and religion. While earlier scholars characterised nations as human groupings primarily concerned with 'a subjective belief in their common descent . . .' (Weber 1996: 35), contemporary scholarship tends to contend that the constant emphasis on 'descent', whether 'real' or 'putative', is too limiting in view of other modes or markers of cultural identification such as language or religion. More usually, ethnic and national identity are understood to be composed of a 'cluster' of features comprising language, religion, common ancestry or some combination of these. In addition to these objective cultural markers, other aspects have been regarded as highly significant for national identity; particularly, a shared history, homeland and sense of solidarity.

Anthony Smith argues that all nations – new and old – are built upon some shared understanding of ethnic origins. While there are some important distinctions between nationality and ethnicity, they share the same cultural characteristics. Smith has provided the field with the most widely used definition of an ethnic group as a named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories and cultural elements; a link with a historic

territory or homeland; and a measure of solidarity (1993: 28–9). This definition emphasises the dynamic character of ethnic and national identity by shifting the focus from objective attributes to social processes such as 'naming', 'memory', 'belonging' and 'solidarity'. Notice that Smith does not single out language, religion, or race per se as necessary components of ethnic identity; the critical distinction for Smith lies in the way these attributes are signified.

> It is the significance with which colour or religion is endowed by large numbers of individuals (and organizations) that matters more for ethnic identification even than their durability and independent existence, as the growing political significance of language and colour over the last two centuries demonstrates. It is only when such markers are endowed with diacritical significance that these cultural attributes come to be seen as objective, at least as far as ethnic boundaries are concerned (1986: 23).

One of the most important ways in which national and ethnic identity is signified is through the medium of gender. Representations of gender and sexuality are not so much primary determinants of ethnic identity as they are necessary 'gateways' through which all representations of race, ethnicity and nationality must travel. Because both race and sex are closely linked as they are bound up in assumptions about biological essentialism that inscribe social meanings onto bodies, the semantics of racism and sexism are often interchangeable. For example, in patriarchal and colonial discourse the same themes of inferiority, irrationality and exoticism are often used to describe both women and non-white people. These frameworks are in turn tied in with systems of social **hierarchy** such as class. A great deal of feminist scholarship has observed how the 'nation', denoting an 'organic' or 'natural' cultural idea, is typically represented as feminine while the 'state', denoting a 'rational', 'public', 'administrative', 'protective' and political institution, is masculine.

Especially in extreme nationalist discourse, women's bodies and lives are often characterised as the 'reproducers' of national purity, 'nurturers' of national values and 'domestic labourers' for the national economy. Conversely, men's bodies and lives are inscribed as protectors, providers and the spokespeople for the state (Pettman 1998; also see chapter 6). In her research on the French **Revolution**, Australian historian Glenda Sluga (1998) has argued that masculine and feminine imagery, while paradoxical, are mutually constitutive in representations of the modern nation-state. This approach helps to explain how a feminine image such as 'liberty' embodies the spirit of the 'rights of man' at a time when women did not have these freedoms. You might know French romantic painter Eugene Delacroix's famous painting of *Liberty leading the people* (1830). It depicts a spirited female figure bearing the French tricolour flag and leading men at arms into battle.

Defining ethnicity and nationality in terms of these social processes of signification is useful for political analysis because it helps us to understand the difference between ethnicity and nationality in terms of power relationships. In international relations this is crucial if we are to understand contemporary phenomena such as 'nation building' (how ethnic groups become nations) or **'ethnic cleansing'** (how ethnic peoples are physically and psychologically displaced). The study of 'ethnification' seeks to understand the processes through which ethnic communities are made to appear different in relation to mainstream culture or normal society. For example, in a far-ranging longitudinal empirical study called the *Minorities at risk project*, Ted Gurr has documented the extent to which ethnic peoples experience some form of

economic, political or cultural 'invidious treatment' within their host societies. This research seeks to predict those groups that are more likely to resort to violence (Gurr 2000: 105). An alternative anthropological approach developed by Charles Keyes examines the political setting that generates conditions of ethnic change.

> What makes cultural differences 'ethnic' differences is a political setting that separates the stories – represented in art, rituals, plays, literature, folklore and so on – that people tell about their heritage from the officially sanctioned stories that are told about the common heritage of those who are said to belong to the same nation (1997: 197).

The above discussion on national identity has argued that one way through the terminological confusion that has plagued the study of nationalism is to avoid searching for essential objective attributes of nationality or ethnicity and rather focus on political processes that have made certain attributes significant. Furthermore, as these political processes have a history, it stands to reason that ideas such as race, ethnicity and nation would rise to prominence in accordance with ideational and political change. For example, the history of race as system of classifying human diversity was not used in its modern sense until around the mid-seventeenth century. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it became so popular that it was often used synonymously with 'nation'. Race continues to play a significant role in marking cultural difference, but with the intellectual discrediting and eventual collapse of South Africa's apartheid system, it has become in contemporary international relations an illegitimate principle of state foundation.

Likewise, the history of ethnicity should be understood in relation to several important geopolitical, historical and socio-political transformations. John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (1996: 4) note that the modern term 'ethnicity' is first recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1953. In particular, the term emerged in the context of the demise or severe curtailing of the notion of 'race' as the main conceptual category for characterising cultural diversity. First, the term 'ethnic' came to be seen as a preferable term to race primarily in the context of describing post-World War II European **refugees** and labour migrants to the United States and other industrialised liberal Western countries. In both its everyday and official policy usage, 'ethnic' was thought to be a more 'polite' term to describe non-Anglo Saxon and non-English speaking foreigners arriving in the US. Second, this preference for the term ethnicity coincided with the creation of newly independent states during the 1950s and 1960s, especially in Africa and Asia. As these new countries became active participants in international forums such as the UN they politicised the identity of race by exposing the negative aspersions that it placed upon people of 'colour' (Vincent 1985). A third factor was the emergence of new social movements, such as **feminism**, civil rights, **peace** and environmental movements, during the late 1960s. These groups had an important influence on politicising the identity of race and discourses of oppression more generally. In particular their focus on **emancipation** from forms of domination, colonisation and domestication were important in challenging the ethical underpinnings of racialist doctrines.

In the Australian context, race, language and religion have been important cultural markers of national identity. The relationship to landscape and geography (the 'bush' and the 'beach'), our national memory (convict heritage, exploration, Gallipoli) and the character of social bonds (sports, egalitarianism, irreverence, mateship, tolerance) have also been

significant. There are also aspects of national identity which, while present, are less comfortable to deal with. These include unresolved or contentious aspects of identity such as the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, a history of **xenophobia**, the relationship between Australian independence and empires or powerful allies, and Australia's identity as a European or Western 'outpost' in the Asia-Pacific. In December 2006, the Australian government launched a new citizenship policy which requires all new immigrants to declare their support to the values of individual freedom, equality between men and women, constitutionalism and parliamentary democracy, among other things.

Revolution, nationalism and war

The greatest debate in nationalism studies concerns the relationship between nationalism and modernity. Arguably the strongest appeal of national identity is that it provides its members with a profound sense of continuity. However, while the official and informal narratives of national and ethnic identity will often refer to ancient traditions of belonging, the events of the American and French revolutions are widely regarded as having formalised the idea of national or popular **sovereignty** in the late eighteenth century (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990). The enactment of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789 is regarded as a key turning point in international relations because this event symbolises a radical shift which modified the shape and character of international relations ever since (Hinsley 1973; Mayall 1990). The American Revolution popularised Lockean natural rights, particularly those concerned with the protection of private property, and the French Revolution equated the rights of nations to the rights of man. This idea spread throughout Europe such that, with the defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the sixteenth-century doctrine of *cuius regio eius religio* (whose rule, his religion) was adapted to the norm of *cuius regio eius natio* (whose rule, his nation). Sovereignty now rested neither with popes, nor with princes, but with the people (see chapter 10).

    Both the American Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen leave no doubt that 'the people' are the only legitimate foundation for sovereign statehood (see Box 11.2). National consciousness may claim a heritage that extends before this revolutionary period in the late eighteenth century but the formal **normative** shift from dynastic to popular sovereignty is widely regarded to have occurred in this period.

    In this sense, nationalism is a distinctively *modern* and progressive ideology. It is formed upon the *humanist* premise that the source of real power and justice of states can only be built upon the representation and protection of individual **human rights** and responsibilities. While all individual 'men' are recognised to have inalienable natural rights, both documents attribute the ultimate right to decide government to a distinct *cultural* collective, simply defined as 'the people' or 'the nation' respectively. Exactly what constitutes the identity criteria for these cultural groups is left unspecified.

    Significantly, these documents were also forged in the context of revolutionary warfare of the American and French revolutions. In the following centuries nationalism has continued to be deeply implicated in the deaths and forced displacement of millions. Whether nationalism is state-led or state-seeking the common element of all nationalist movements is

> **Box 11.2:   Discussion points**
>
> **American and French revolutions**
>
> Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it . . . (Declaration of Independence, United States of America, 1776).
>   The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation (Article 3 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, National Assembly of France, 1789).

that cultural groups have been prepared to kill others and sacrifice themselves for the ideal of protecting or acquiring political independence for their people.

While Western Europe experienced an 'age of nationalism' during the nineteenth century, it would be another century before the norm of self-determination began to be accepted as a universal right. In the early twentieth century, the inherent assumption in international legal and political instruments such as Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points and the League of Nations was that a politically demarcated territory should contain peoples who were racially, linguistically or culturally homogeneous and population transfers were legitimised to achieve this end (Preece 1997). With the advent of the UN, self-determination of colonial peoples became a more developed norm propelling a process of **decolonisation** which brought about both the emancipation of millions of non-European peoples and allowed for a fundamental expansion of international society (Bull and Watson 1984; see also chapter 17).

In contrast to the modernist approach to nationalism, the perennialist approach sees national identity as depending heavily upon an ethno-history that provides the present-day community with a sense of continuity and 'tradition': 'the destiny of the community is bound up with its ethno-history, with its own understanding of a unique, shared past' (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 7). Manning Nash (1989: 4) observes that this connection with the past is reassuring at a deep symbolic and psychological level; 'the idea of a discoverable, fixed, comfortable, and historically continuous identity is highly charged with psychic rewards and appeal'. Traditions are not only oriented towards the past, but attend to the identity needs of the present and seek to preserve a distinct cultural impression in the future.

> Tradition is the past of a culture, as that past is thought to have a continuity, a presence, and a future. These features of tradition bestow upon the past a weight of authority; the very fact of survival, pastness, and continuity give an aura of authority, legitimacy and rightness to cultural beliefs and practices . . . Tradition, while chiefly concerned with the past and hence backward looking, has a forward dimension. The preservation and the continuity of tradition is enjoined on its carriers (Nash 1989: 14).

Ethno-histories help to construct a sense of community in a number of ways. At an individual level, the identification with an eternal community is the surest way to surmount the finality of death and secure a measure of personal immortality. Such an identification promises a 'glorious future similar to its heroic past, even where much of it must be reconstructed or even fabricated' (Smith 1991: 161). At a psycho-social level an ethno-history provides individuals

with a link to a legitimate community or 'political super family', an authenticated 'chosen people' whose dignity is reinforced through 'myths of election', folklore, symbols and historical documents. Together they serve as powerful symbols to 'remind fellow citizens of their cultural bonds and political kinship through reaffirmations of identity and unity' (Smith 1991: 162).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the emergence of extreme or aggressive nationalism – particularly in Germany, Italy and Japan – has been held responsible for causing both world wars. All three states used nationalism to justify notions of territorial expansion, racism, xenophobia and dictatorial political systems, and therefore to justify war. For some scholars, fascism is a perversion of nationalism; for others, extreme nationalism is a disturbing consequence of the impulse of modernisation or modernity (Bauman 1989; Kohn 1967). Others, such as Anthony Smith, argue that the core nationalist ideas of history, homeland and solidarity are present in both fascist and modernising forms of nationalism. The different manifestation of nationalism can be seen in the two world wars and the subsequent **Cold War**.

One way of portraying World War I is as a struggle between divergent understandings of civilisation. At stake was a pitched battle between the Prussian concept of '*kultur*' and the English concept of 'culture'. Both Britain and Germany claimed to be civilised nations but each side sought to portray the other as perverted. Daniel Pick has documented these views from British and German commentators in the period. The common British stereotype of Prussians challenged their 'false code of civilization termed German *kultur*' (Pick 1993: 143) and particularly their obsession with science and industry as leading inevitably towards belligerence. For example, Rudyard Kipling claimed that the Prussians had 'scientifically and philosophically removed themselves outside of humanity' (Pick 1993: 145). English propagandists insisted that the Prussian obsession with science and industry was the principal cause of pan-German belligerence.

For their part the Prussians also presented World War I in terms of a clash of civilisations. Ideas and perceptions of culture were portrayed as being far more important than material interests. For example, a German propaganda message asserted that the war was 'not merely a struggle for territory or for commercial supremacy, as so many superficial observers seem to believe, but a conflict of principles . . . [a struggle] of the human race against the low and sordid aims of races merely veneered with culture' (Pick 1993: 149).

World War II is usually characterised in terms of the rise of extreme nationalism combined with a triangular struggle between fascism, **communism** and liberal **democracy**. Diverging views on the relationship between the market, the state and civil society were important dimensions of these struggles but they do not capture the essence of the nationalist rhetoric that motivated millions to war. Other issues such as the legacy of worldwide cultural domination by the major European empires and the expansionist doctrines of fascist powers such as the German Nazi policy of *lebensraum* or Japan's Co-Prosperity Sphere were also pivotal. However, while the allies could mobilise around defending democracy, fascist propaganda could not rely solely on resentment of the other great powers. At a deep level, the real philosophical prize of World War II was portrayed to the people as a struggle to command 'history' and 'reason'. The Nazis believed that victory would inaugurate a thousand-year *Reich* (rule) and that defeat would render history meaningless. For instance, in 1943 Goebbels, the Nazi's Propaganda Minister, gave a speech which justified the whole project of World War II in terms of the 'logic of history':

> We shall conquer because it lies in the logic of history, because a higher destiny wills it . . . because without our victory, history would have lost its meaning; and history is not meaningless (cited in Wight 1966a: 29).

Conversely, the prospect of a Nazi victory was cast as an unthinkable outcome for Russian communists:

> To imagine for a moment the possibility of Hitler's victory meant to forgo all reason; if it were to happen then there could be no truth, logic, nor light in the development of human society, only chaos, darkness and lunacy; and it would be better not to live (Wight 1966a: 28–9).

While not usually understood in these terms, the ideological conflict of the Cold War also involved the struggle for cultural values. For George Kennan the struggle was about projecting a certain image of 'spiritual vitality' and changing the hearts and minds of the people.

> The United States can create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a World Power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the ideological currents of the time (1946: 581).

Some years later Kennan would claim that the principal strategic doctrine of the Cold War, namely **containment**, was

> not a military or diplomatic program but a *statement* intended to expose the deficiencies with totalitarian regimes . . . It was a race, not a military arms race but an introspective sociological one (1958).

Many regard Kennan's insights and prescriptions for a socio-political rather than military policy of containment as prophetic (Talbott 1990). Although the disparity between Soviet and US arsenals was eventually revealed to be significant, the end of the Cold War was not the result of a decisive shift in military capabilities. To the great 'embarrassment' of orthodox security analysts the conclusion of the Cold War was resolved through the settlement of a struggle between deeply felt sociological ideas that professed a better 'way of life'.

We can see from these examples how the significant nationalist wars of the twentieth century were understood as collisions between grand ideas. The issues at stake – civilisation, history and spiritual vitality – might be dismissed as political rhetoric that simply camouflage the material interests of great powers; but it is possible that these sorts of grand narratives *are* also genuinely the real issues at stake in wars. Political leaders committing their nation-states to war needed to demonstrate how national values would be defended or ruined if they did not succeed.

Australian nationhood and war: 1901 and 2001

A little over a century ago, Australians participated in their first international war as the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia. At the time of Federation (1901) the British Empire

was embroiled in the second Boer War (1899–1902) which was concerned with suppressing the struggle for independence by the Afrikaans or Boers – farmers of Dutch descent in South Africa. As members of the British Empire, Australians were also divided over support for the war. Ideologically, left-wing and pro-Republican movements questioned the notion of supporting imperial adventurism against fellow colonials seeking political independence and fair control over their natural resources. The anti-war movement was fuelled in part by a view of Australian nationalism which sought to assert itself within an empire that stood for liberal values. Those supporting the war viewed it as an important opportunity to demonstrate Australia's ability to engage in military operations on a world stage. The pro-war position was then also premised upon a view of nationalism that comprised national pride, racial arguments – asserting that the Boers were 'inferior whites' – and the national economic interest to protect free access to natural resources throughout the empire.

The British election of 1900 was described as a 'khaki election' because the Conservative Party was returned with an increased majority by making the Boer War a central platform in their campaign. In 2001, Australian Prime Minister John Howard was accused of conducting a khaki election because so much of the campaign focused on the war against **terrorism** and the Iraq War. What are the similarities between these two historical events at either end of the centenary of Australian nationhood?

First, the above case demonstrates that nationalism can coexist with other forms of political identity and authority such as empires. In contemporary world politics there is a debate as to the role of the US as an informal empire which continually informs speculation on the nature of the Australia-US **alliance**. Second, the above example shows how claims about the national interest can be utilised for the purposes of diametrically opposed ideological arguments. In contemporary Australian political discourse, both those for and against the Iraq War will often argue their case in the language of national interest. Third, it shows how claims of nationalist authenticity are often built upon relational claims about racialised ethnic groups. Even though Australian and South African peoples shared a similar experience and status as colonists of the British Empire, the war emphasised the difference of Dutch speaking Boers along the lines of 'language' and 'race'. In the contemporary context, the domestic and international ethnification of Muslim peoples along religious, racial and linguistic criteria has been informed by the activities of so-called **Jihadist** militants and the global war on terrorism (see chapters 26 and 27).

Finally, reflecting on the example of the Boer War illustrates the normative and political significance of self-determination movements throughout the twentieth century. Not only has the ensuing period witnessed the systematic dismantling of the British Empire, but the self-determination of colonial peoples has emerged as arguably the most important normative foundation for the establishment and function of international organisations such as the League of Nations and the UN. The right of peoples to be free from colonial rule, to determine their political representatives and to be guaranteed the right of non-interference continues to be one of the most important normative principles of modern international society. Moreover, it is a testimony to the strength of this principle's importance that the only condition where intervention in the domestic affairs of states has been conceded – that is, through the emergence of the **humanitarian intervention** doctrines in the late twentieth century – is in those circumstances where a host state persecutes its own minority peoples.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown why nationalism has been such an important part of international relations for over 200 years. It was important, first, in giving rise to popular sovereignty as a fundamental principle of legitimacy for states. But, second, it has been instrumental in waging war. Indeed, war and nationalism are closely related insofar as war helps forge national identity, either through self-determination struggles or wars to defend ways of life. For this reason, nations will continue to be a crucial source of senses of belonging and nationalism will continue to be seen as both a progressive and destructive force in international relations.

Questions

1. What is a nation and how does it differ from a state?
2. What creates a sense of national belonging?
3. Do you think nationalism is a modern or an ancient phenomenon?
4. Is the nation gendered?
5. Do you agree with the government's definition of Australian national values?
6. To what extent is nationalism the cause of war?
7. Do you think nationalism is a progressive or regressive force in international relations?

Further reading

Gurr, Ted R. 2000, *Peoples versus states: minorities at risk in the new century*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. Wide-ranging analysis of ethnic and nationalist conflicts since the 1990s.

Hutchinson, John and Smith, Anthony (eds) 1994, *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Valuable collection that includes some classics in the field.

Hutchinson, John and Smith, Anthony (eds) 1996, *Ethnicity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Valuable collection on the topic of ethnicity.

Mayall, James 1990, *Nationalism and international society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Important book on the role of nationalism from an international relations perspective.

Pick, Daniel 1993, *War machine: the rationalisation of slaughter in the modern age*, New Haven: Yale University Press. A historical account of war with interesting observations on its relationship to nationalism.

12
Security

Anthony Burke

Introduction

This chapter introduces the concept and practice of **security** in international relations. It explores various dilemmas of security faced by **states**, individuals and the global community, by first examining how security has been differently defined, and second by surveying how different theoretical approaches (**realism**, **liberalism**, **constructivism**, **feminism** and **critical theory**) have understood and analysed security.

Four crises

In October 1962 an American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft returned from a routine over-flight of Cuba with photographs of Soviet personnel and machinery installing nuclear missiles aimed at the US – precipitating a crisis that almost led to global nuclear war (Blight and Lang 2005).

In July 1997 the government of Thailand floated its currency, the baht, on international markets after losing US$23 billion trying to defend its value from attack by traders. It lost 15 per cent of its value in one day, provoking a contagious effect across East Asia that resulted in widespread corporate bankruptcies, massive falls in economic growth and employment, the fall of governments, and protests, riots and civil violence that took thousands of lives (Robison et al 2000).

Two years later, in September 1999, the people of East Timor voted in a referendum on independence from Indonesia, only to fall victim to a campaign of murder and destruction by Indonesian-backed militias. After many days of carnage and intense international diplomacy, the **UN** Security Council authorised a military intervention led by Australia to stop the violence (McDonald et al 2002).

And on 11 September 2001, a group of nineteen men boarded four aircraft in Boston, Newark and Washington. A few minutes after takeoff they hijacked the planes and directed them towards New York and Washington. Two of the aircraft were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, another into the Pentagon, and the last crashed into a

Pennsylvania field. The towers caught fire and later collapsed. The attacks killed over 3000 people, wounded thousands more, and provoked a response that changed the strategic landscape of the world forever (National Commission 2004).

These are just four examples of many global events and problems that are understood and addressed under the name of *security*. Yet they all constitute very different kinds of crisis and all – apart from the first – constitute a challenge to traditional ways of thinking about security. They thus illustrate two important facts about security issues and security studies. First, they refer to complex and profoundly important problems of survival, prosperity and social cohesion. And second, there is no agreement among scholars and policy-makers about how to make security policy, the problems upon which it should be focused, or how security should be conceptualised and studied. Security is, as it is now commonplace to say, a 'contested concept', *and* a contested practice (Dalby 1997).

Consider the examples above. According to the dominant security paradigm in Southeast Asia, 'comprehensive security', the East Timorese independence movement was considered a threat to Indonesia's national unity and territorial integrity, and Indonesia's neighbours (including Australia) recognised its claim to the territory and largely turned a blind eye to its armed forces' brutal repression of the population. Here the focus of security is the territorial state, and coercive and violent means are seen as acceptable ways of ensuring it. However under a very different security paradigm, that of 'human security', it is the security of the East Timorese people that is most important and the state of Indonesia is seen as the primary threat – this doctrine would have generated efforts to promote **human rights**, demilitarise the territory, and use dialogue to achieve a lasting solution to East Timor's political status. A 'human security' approach also underpinned the obligations felt by members of the UN Security Council to intervene to stop the violence, and hence the 1999 crisis symbolised a profound clash of two paradigms, each of which lay claim to an authoritative understanding of security (see Burke 2001b).

The East Asian crisis of 1997–8 simply did not register on the radar of regional security officials until after it occurred, wherein it was thought of (conventionally) in terms of the economic security and regional resilience of Asia, or, more radically, in terms of the way in which complex political and economic processes combined to gravely affect the human security of millions (Acharya 2001; Burke 2001b; Collins 2003). The **Cuban missile crisis** represented a classical security problem – what the realist scholar Stephen Walt (1991) insists is the proper focus of security studies, that of the threat and use of military force – except that again it exemplified the impact of clashing paradigms. By 1962 the US and USSR were in a very unstable relationship of mutual '**deterrence**', which in classical strategic **theory** is meant to ensure that the weapons will not be used in anger. However the crisis highlighted the failure of this fragile 'balance of terror' to safeguard humanity should deterrence fail. Powerful forces in the US government prepared *and urged* a military invasion of Cuba to remove Castro's regime and deal with the weapons (an earlier example of the 'preventive war' doctrine of the Bush administration), while Kennedy and his advisors like Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara understood that such action could quickly escalate into a global holocaust. They successfully negotiated a deal that exchanged a Soviet withdrawal of the missiles for a later withdrawal of US weapons from Turkey and a guarantee not to invade Cuba, and the experience led to McNamara later becoming a vocal advocate of nuclear **disarmament** (Blight and

Lang 2005: 60–85). Yet nuclear 'deterrence' remains a cornerstone of many states' security policies, including that of the US.

The September 11 attacks, like few events in US history, undermined many assumptions about the utility of military **power** to ensure national security. Thousands were killed by a handful of men armed with nothing more than knives and box cutters. While the US has developed a multifaceted approach to the threat posed by al-Qaeda, it chose to militarise its approach with invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and has been accused both of inflaming anti-Western sentiment and neglecting important priorities such as the need to secure power and chemical plants, or to control and track materials (and scientists) from the former Soviet Union's decommissioned nuclear programs (Clarke 2004). The lesson the Bush administration took from the events was that deterrence no longer holds against terrorists and **rogue states**, and that threats must be met – with military force – before they emerge. This doctrine, which was also taken up by the Australian government of John Howard, was so revolutionary as to put the important security 'regimes' and **'norms'** that the global community has been developing since 1945 under great pressure (see Box 12.2).

Defining security

Given such disagreement, defining security becomes a highly political matter. Different paradigms define security differently and their definitions incorporate biases about who is to be secured and how. The classical (realist) definition, advanced by writers such as Walter Lippmann and Arnold Wolfers, argues that a ***nation**'s* security is determined by its ability to defend itself against threats to 'core' or 'acquired values', in **war** if necessary (Baylis 2001: 255). Hans Morgenthau defined 'national security' as 'the integrity of the national territory and its institutions' and said that it was 'the irreducible minimum that diplomacy must defend without compromise'. These definitions make the nation-state into the 'referent object' of security, and advocate vigilant and uncompromising policies backed by armed force. Morgenthau however did gesture towards an understanding of 'international' security dynamics, one taken up by liberals, when he argued that statesmen must try to see problems from the point of view of other nations and diplomacy must seek to make all nations equally secure. (Morgenthau 1973: 540–1). This contrasts with the views of some realists that security is a **zero-sum game**; that a nation is secure to the extent that others are not. Barry Buzan and his colleagues in the Copenhagen School offer a revealing 'extended realist' definition when they say that:

> . . . security is about survival . . . when an issue is posed as constituting an existential threat to a designated referent object [the state] . . . The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them (Buzan et al 1998: 21).

Critical writers, on the other hand, define security very differently. They argue that security should be holistic and not focused primarily on the state or military conflict. Ken Booth, of the Welsh School of critical security studies, argues that security should be about the 'emancipation . . . of individuals and groups from those physical and human constraints which stop them from carrying out what they would freely choose to do' (Booth 1991: 319). The feminist

scholar J. Ann Tickner defines security as 'the elimination of unjust social relations, including unequal gender relations' (Tickner 1992: 127–44). This shifts the referent to individuals and communities and is biased towards a politics of social transformation. Other critical scholars argue that if we want to understand the (often negative) impacts of security discourse and policy it is helpful to shift from analysing what security 'is' to what it 'does', to see it as a set of practices and techniques. Such scholars argue that just the use of the term 'security' grants governments enormous power. Security is less an end state than a process: it is a form of *power*, a 'political technology' that operates on individuals and populations at the same time. It thus must be 'deconstructed' and placed under suspicion (Burke 2001a and 2006; McDonald 2005). Rethinking security in more human-centred ways can follow such critique.

Key theories and concepts

There are a bewildering diversity of approaches to security policy and analysis. However they can be usefully boiled down to the following broad categories:
- realist (incorporating 'classical' realist, 'neorealist' and 'extended' realist approaches)
- liberal (incorporating 'collective', 'common', 'cooperative' and 'human' security approaches)
- constructivist (incorporating elements of realist and liberal approaches), and
- critical and feminist approaches.

Realist approaches

As we saw with Hans Morgenthau's definition above, the realist paradigm focuses upon *national security*. Realist approaches privilege the state as the object of security and see threats primarily emerging from the military and economic competition between states (see chapter 4). Because they discount the possibility of international cooperation or the development of peaceful norms of behaviour, they emphasise what they call the 'self-help' capacities of states in developing strong military forces and strategic **alliances** with other states. They are sceptical of the value of **international law** or '**collective security**', although they do occasionally endorse the creation of coalitions of powers (such as in the 1991 Gulf War) to punish or discipline a state that has acted in ways detrimental to their **national interests** or security. They regard war as a perennial tendency in human nature and argue that it cannot be abolished or controlled through law or moral suasion. Instead, they believe that the *fear* of unacceptable punishment (the core idea of 'deterrence'), or *prudence* in the face of unacceptable costs or a chaotic result, will restrain statesmen from acting aggressively.

Realists thus think of the threat and use of armed force, after the theorist of war Carl von **Clausewitz** (1989), as dictated by national interests and cost–benefit analysis. They utilise an instrumental, *strategic* perspective that seeks to link violent means with political ends. However in this arena interesting debates among realists have arisen. On the use of force, realists have divided into two groups. A more hawkish group, associated with strategic studies and exemplified by thinkers such as Edward Luttwak (1987) and Colin Gray (1998,

1999), endorses violence as a tool of statecraft and is more concerned with technical issues of weapons systems, military preparedness, and military tactics and strategy. A second group argues that the use of force should always be a last resort and often has chaotic and costly effects that can't be anticipated (see Brown 2003; Burke 2004b; Lebow 2003). The actions of Robert McNamara and his colleagues during the Cuban missile crisis sit within this camp, and the opposition of Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer to the invasion of Iraq is another example (Blight and Lang 2005; Mearsheimer and Walt 2003).

Deterrence, which is defined as 'manipulating another's behaviour through threats', has also generated complex debates (Freedman 2004: 6; Jervis 1979). It developed after 1945 when US planners sought to grapple with the changes wrought by nuclear weapons. The strategist Bernard Brodie is famous for arguing that 'thus far the chief purpose of a military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them' (Brodie 1946: 67). Nuclear and conventional strategy henceforth was framed around the problem of developing doctrines and weapons systems that would deter Soviet or other enemy attack. Such approaches still underpin military strategies around the world, especially in Northeast Asia where the US confronts China and North Korea with nuclear and conventional weapons. Yet realists also identified serious problems with the practice. John Herz (1950) described what he called the **'security dilemma'**, which occurred as defensive measures by one state were perceived as aggressive or threatening by another, who in turn took new measures to secure themselves, leading to a spiral of arms acquisition and mistrust. This could lead to crises such as those over Berlin or Cuba, leading some analysts to point out that once deterrence failed, the doctrine lost all value.

What Alan Dupont calls 'extended' security approaches do not depart from traditional realist understandings of military security dilemmas, but especially since the end of the **Cold War** have pointed to a wider range of security threats and challenges for states, such as **terrorism**, unregulated people movements, transnational crime, disease, or environmental degradation (Dupont 2001). These threats do not emerge from states or by armed violence, but, it is argued, can still affect the basic values and well-being of national communities. Some scholars and not a few policy-makers have also characterised such threats (especially from migration) as threats to the *identity* of receiving states, directly making identity a security issue – something critical scholars strongly question (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998; Chalk 2000).

Liberal approaches

Liberals argue that it is inadequate for security to be based on the power-balancing and deterrence calculations of individual states, believing that the carnage of the two world wars and the dangers of nuclear holocaust require the development of international rules and cooperative institutions to govern state behaviour and punish wrongdoers (see chapter 3). This attitude has influenced the development of an important body of international law and a number of global and regional institutions relating to security. The most important of these are the UN and its Charter, which outlaws armed aggression and will only authorise the use of force in defence against attack with the concurrence of the fifteen-member Security Council. Key treaties, which have the moral force of international law, include those on the

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Box 12.1:   Key texts

Preamble to the UN Charter

We the peoples of the United Nations determined:

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has
    brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human
    person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from
    treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force
    shall not be used, save in the common interest.

Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Compre-
hensive (Nuclear) Test Ban Treaty, and the Ottawa Convention banning landmines. Not only
does the UN seek to control when states go to war (*jus ad bellum*) they seek to control how
states may conduct wars (*jus in bello*) through the **Geneva conventions** regulating war. These
operate against the background of a long list of other conventions protecting fundamental
freedoms and human rights (see chapters 15 and 16).

The treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a particularly important
treaty because it has seen 182 countries agree both *not to develop* nuclear weapons and (in the
case of six existing 'nuclear weapons states') to *disarm* themselves of their arsenals. The treaty
also has provisions for long-term efforts at *general disarmament*, because states recognise that
the processes of conventional and nuclear weapons proliferation are linked. Hence disarma-
ment is an important fact of liberal thinking about security, even if it is acknowledged that
it is difficult to achieve in a world where many states find themselves in dangerous security
dilemmas, and that disarmament (like the 2002 Moscow Treaty between the US and Russia)
needs cooperation and agreement to be effective. However liberals emphasise the importance
of disarmament because they believe deterrence to be dangerously flawed and unstable; hence
they see it as the only effective way to prevent escalation to major war or disasters during a
crisis (see McNamara and Blight 2003; Schell 2001).

Regional cooperative security institutions include the Organisation for Security Coop-
eration in Europe (OSCE), which was established in 1973 to moderate Cold War tensions
(and now includes initiatives on human rights and the environment), and the ASEAN
Regional Forum (ARF), which is an Asia-Pacific grouping of states that seeks to promote
greater transparency and dialogue on regional security problems. Southeast Asia is an inter-
esting case where liberal norms of conduct that preclude the acquisition of nuclear weapons
and the use of force to settle disputes *between* regional states coexist with extended realist

norms *within* regional countries about the need to respond violently to internal threats to national unity and stability. This tangle of ideas is expressed in the Southeast Asian notion of *comprehensive security* – which expands security beyond the military dimension to incorporate political, economic and societal dimensions, but is still focused upon the 'stability' and 'integrity' of regional states (see Acharya 2001; Alagappa 1998: 624–5; Burke and McDonald 2007).

Liberals thus define their thinking and policy around three key concepts:

1. *Collective security* generally refers to efforts to build rules and laws at the international level, to create regional or global decision-making bodies and institutions, and to act in concert to enforce those rules. This is the paradigm at work when the UN Security Council deliberates or authorises military interventions, for example. In theory its decisions are meant to express a collective – even universal – consensus, but they can sometimes express the influence of more powerful states.

2. **Common security** was a concept developed by the 1982 Palme Commission to replace the doctrine of mutual deterrence. Its Chairman, former Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme, argued that in the nuclear era we must 'achieve security not against the adversary but together with him. International security must rest on a commitment to joint survival rather than on a threat of mutual destruction' (Palme Commission 1982).

3. *Cooperative security* is an idea promoted by former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans in the context of the formation of the ARF, one that he claimed could fold collective, common and comprehensive security into a conceptual whole (Evans and Grant 1991: 75–7). This idea he also used to promote more attention to the potential role of the UN in preventing **genocide** or crimes against humanity through diplomatic and military intervention; his and other efforts culminated in a report commissioned by the UN Secretary-General entitled *The responsibility to protect* (ICISS 2001).

However a fourth concept – *human security* – challenges Evans's confidence in the coherence of the cooperative security concept, especially as it incorporates the idea of comprehensive security. Human security, which straddles the liberal and critical approaches, shifts the referent of security from the state to the individual human being, and incorporates a range of possible threats or processes that could negatively affect their basic welfare. While there has been much debate about the legitimate scope of human security, the most authoritative definition came from the United Nations Development Programme who described it as 'safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression, as well as safety from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life' (Roesad 2000). Like 'comprehensive' security, human security incorporates a broader range of security issues but challenges comprehensive security's emphasis on state and regime security and the economic security of elites (see Smith 2005: 51–5).

Human security allows us to conceive of states as threats to their citizens, and to see insecurity arising from complex social, political and economic processes (including those arising from widely accepted paradigms of development or political authority) rather than just military aggression or violence. However human security is not without its critics – in Southeast Asia it challenges existing structures of power and many realist scholars believe that it complicates efforts to tightly define and focus upon security priorities (Bellamy and McDonald 2002; Burke 2001b; Thomas and Tow 2002).

Box 12.2: Discussion points

Liberalism, realism and 'rogue states'

After the September 11 attacks and especially in the lead-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, scholars were confronted with a strange convergence between elements of aggressive realism and moralising liberalism in approaches to so-called 'rogue states' and the proliferation of **weapons of mass destruction**. The Bush administration, dominated by 'neo-conservative' political activists and intellectuals, combined a crude form of strategic realism with liberal rhetoric about promoting freedom and **democracy**, bringing dictators to justice, and preventing terrorists obtaining nuclear technology. They were echoed by the UK government of Tony Blair and by a range of liberal intellectuals such as William Shawcross, Fernando Téson, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Lee Feinstein, Michael Ignatieff, Francis Fukuyama and Jean Bethke Elshtain.

　　These thinkers supported the war against Iraq, arguing that it would remove an abusive regime, help bring stability and democracy to Iraq and the Middle East, and act as a warning to 'rogue states' that efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction would be met with the most robust of responses. Feinstein and Slaughter, in a *Foreign Affairs* article (2004), argued that the new 'responsibility to protect' could be extended to a 'collective "duty to prevent" nations run by rulers without internal checks on their powers from acquiring or using WMD [weapons of mass destruction]' and that force can be an option in the last instance. These thinkers – unlike most liberals – also argued that action by a sole or small group of states is legitimate if the UN will not act.

　　These revolutionary arguments were very controversial and were criticised both by realists, who saw them as leading to military adventurism that would be destructive both to the peoples subject to attack and to US national security, and by critical scholars, who pointed out that such policies will actually *encourage* countries to develop nuclear deterrents, gravely weaken the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and undermine the legitimacy of the United Nations' Charter (see Burke 2005 and Elshtain 2005; Mearsheimer and Walt 2003).

Constructivist approaches

Constructivist approaches to security develop and refine both liberal and realist analyses, although they tend to support liberal approaches in **normative** terms. They seek to understand the way *ideas* and *norms* affect international security and combine with national interests or military competition (see chapter 8). As Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil (2004: 9) argue, 'constructivism is based on the fundamental view that ideational structures mediate how actors perceive, construct, and reproduce the institutional and material structures they inhabit as well as their own roles and identities within them'. Constructivists especially emphasise the way in which norms (broad inter-subjective agreements about what kind of policy or behaviour is legitimate, appropriate or effective) have the effect of controlling international politics (Reus-Smit 2004: 40–68). Particular actions are then shaped or limited either *voluntarily* because an actor has internalised a norm into their own identity or basic convictions, or because an actor feels *pressure* from other parts of their own or the international community.

A significant contribution of constructivist writers to security analysis is their development of Karl Deutsch's concept of the **security community**. As Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett state, this is to assert that 'community exists at the international level, that security politics is profoundly shaped by it, and that those states dwelling within an international community might develop a pacific disposition [and] settle their differences short of war'. Security communities emerge where there is 'a development of shared understandings, transnational values and transaction flows [such as trade]' (Adler and Barnett 1998: 3–4). Amitav Acharya (2001) and Alex Bellamy (2004) have both argued that features of the security community exist in East Asia (especially among the ASEAN countries) who have agreed norms that prevent them settling interstate disputes by force, that limit the role of great powers and prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. While some critical writers acknowledge the value of this, they have also questioned how ASEAN combines liberal values at the interstate level with very coercive and authoritarian norms *inside* their countries (Burke and McDonald 2007). Other constructivist writers such as Bellamy have also questioned the way security communities can shift the antagonism to those *outside* the security community, potentially creating 'regional fortresses preparing for the kind of civilisational conflict envisaged by Samuel Huntington' (Bellamy 2004: 10–11).

Critical and feminist approaches

Critical and feminist approaches to security are diverse, but they have in common a continuation of the basic normative orientation to human security. This is admirably expressed by the 'critical security studies' thinker Ken Booth as a commitment to *security as* **emancipation**, in the form of 'a more just society' that 'progressively limits the repressive structure of powers and processes, steadily squeezing the space for violent behaviour in all its direct and indirect manifestations', and by J. Ann Tickner's vision of a security based upon 'the elimination of unjust social relations, including unequal gender relations' and for a reformulation of international relations in terms of the 'multiple insecurities' represented by ecological destruction, poverty and (gendered) structural violence (see chapters 6 and 8). Booth argues that security needs to be 'holistic and non-statist', because 'the smaller units of universal human society . . . will not be secure until the whole is secured' (Booth 1991 and 2005: 263; Tickner 1992: 127–44).

These are what Matt McDonald has called 'reconstructive' critical perspectives, 'aimed at advancing alternative claims about what security is or should mean'. Another set of critical approaches (although they often converge) is termed 'deconstructive': they aim to put the meaning and operation of security as a *concept* and *politics* into question (Burke and McDonald 2007). These approaches do not reject the desire to rethink security in better ways, but they also show how it has worked historically as a system of power and how this creates a barrier to defining it in ways that support human dignity. They are especially interested in how images of security and threat work to divide the world between 'us' and 'them', to construct identity in opposition to some 'Other' – a nation, group, religion or way of living – which must be contained, destroyed or expelled. Critical scholars argue that this is the case when asylum seekers and **refugees** are constructed as threats to a nation's security, **sovereignty** or way of life; in Australia's case, such arguments have been put into its defence policy white papers and

Box 12.3: Discussion points

Sex and death in the rational world of defence intellectuals

Feminist scholars rethink security in two ways: by alerting us to the distinctive effects of economic processes, war and conflict on women's lives, and by analysing how constructions of gender are central to dominant ways of thinking about security and defence (Tickner 1992: 6). An example was set out in a famous essay by Carol Cohn, who wrote about her experiences studying at a centre for strategic studies. Her essay analysed the very abstract and gendered language through which strategists made nuclear deterrence and war thinkable, acceptable and rational. The very destructive effects of nuclear weapons were sanitised by terms such as 'clean bombs' and 'counter-value attacks', and associated with masculine images of force, power and sexual domination through terms such as 'penetration aids' and arguments that US dependence on nuclear weapons for security was 'irresistible, because you get more bang for the buck', or that 'to disarm is to get rid of all your stuff'. Debates over the virtues of 'protracted' versus 'spasm' attacks were resolved by describing the latter as 'releasing 70 to 80 per cent of your megatonnage in one orgasmic whump'. Cohn suggests that this was both 'a deadly serious display of the connections between masculine sexuality and the arms race' and 'a way of minimizing the seriousness of militarist endeavours, of denying their deadly consequences' (Cohn 1987: 693; 696).

draconian policies of long-term mandatory detention have been put in place (Burke 2001a: Epilogue).

Critical scholars are also interested in how antagonistic constructions of identity are a factor in conflict. They point to the conflicts between North and South Korea, China and Taiwan, India and Pakistan, Indonesia and West Papua, and Israel and Palestine, as particularly dangerous examples. Their argument is that even as there are significant military security dilemmas and other material interests at work, the roots of the conflicts lie in the ways identities have been constructed so as to deny the deep historical interconnections between societies, to suppress or exaggerate claims to autonomy and difference, or to deny the legitimacy and humanity of the other side (Bleiker 2001, 2005; Burke 2001a, 2007a). Hence critical and feminist writers seek to positively support *difference*, so as to show how inequality and violence are differentially distributed (the effects of the global economy or militarised violence affect men and women differently, for example) (Lee-Koo 2002; Pettman 1996; Sylvester 2002).

A further contribution of critical writers is to show the role of *representation* in threat analysis and security policy, and to highlight the increasingly politicised nature of security discourse. They argue that security threats are not objective (and that some threats are not threats at all), but are the product of representation through language and metaphor. Recent Australian examples include the government's linkage of boat people with terrorism and threats to Australia's 'borders', or Islamic religion and culture as a threat to Australia's basic 'values' and 'way of life'. They argue that the politics of fear (or *security politics*) is an increasingly common feature of modern democracies and that it is used to demonise particular groups, to gather votes, and to exert power over minorities or the left (Burke 2007b; McDonald 2005). Some critical writers indeed argue that such a politics is central to the way in which **sovereign states** and political communities have been conceived within modernity, and that it involves

forms of 'biopolitical' power that take hold of ordinary citizens' bodies and souls as a way of entrenching forms of economic **hegemony** and injustice, and violent ways of being (Burke 2007a: Introduction; Agamben 1998). In such a circumstance, emancipation is a difficult task indeed, even if it is important to struggle for.

Conclusion

Security is currently the major preoccupation of modern politics, and has long been one of its most powerful categories and promises. It both expresses important concerns about human survival, values and community, and is liable to abuse by the unscrupulous in their struggle for political power and privilege. It is critically important that students and citizens read and think more about security, as it is one of the most troubled and fascinating areas of international politics. Claims about security can endanger us, or they can make us safer. It is up to us which.

Questions

1. Why is the concept of security 'contested'?
2. What kind of problems and disagreements are there within realist approaches to security?
3. Does the use or threat of force lead to security?
4. What are the benefits and flaws of constructivist theories of security?
5. What is 'critical' about critical security approaches? Are they practical?
6. How might we begin to realise security for all human beings?

Further reading

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Fierke, K. 2007, *Critical approaches to international security*, Oxford: Polity. Excellent guide to the range of critical approaches.

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Arms Control

Marianne Hanson

Introduction

This chapter examines the evolution and practices of **arms control** in international relations. It begins by discussing what arms control is and why it has featured so prominently in world politics, even after the ending of the **Cold War**, the period during which arms control can be said to have developed extensively. After a discussion of the various weapons that are covered by arms control processes, and the legal regimes that accompany these, the chapter proceeds to outline some of the ways in which arms control can be conceptualised and how various schools of thought in international relations can be related to arms control practices. We then look at the specific case of the nuclear weapons regime, as more **states** acquire nuclear weapons, and as calls continue for the elimination of these particular **weapons of mass destruction**. The chapter also examines how Australia has been involved in upholding various arms control and **disarmament** regimes, including its contribution to the nuclear weapons debate.

What is arms control?

Arms control can be described simply as any arrangement made between adversaries to limit the weapons that might be used in warfare between them. A more formal, or classical, definition of arms control is provided by Australian writer Hedley Bull: 'Arms control is restraint internationally exercised upon armaments policy, whether in respect of the level of armaments, their character, deployment or use' (Bull 1961: vii). Arms control can be conducted as a formal process involving treaties and other binding arrangements, or as an informal practice between states. These processes or steps can be unilateral, **bilateral** or multilateral; the most essential element is a willingness to cooperate with other states to achieve **security** interests. These interests could be 'exclusively those of the cooperating states themselves' or interests that are 'more widely shared' in the international community (Bull 1961: 2).

Arms control can be applied to both weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and to conventional weapons, although it has been applied most heavily to WMDs. These are nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons, and are categorised as WMDs because of their enormous potential for causing mass casualties. (These are nevertheless very different types of weapon systems, and their lethality and damage potential varies greatly. By way of example,

consider that the large-scale use of nuclear weapons could result in between sixty and 300 million deaths; biological weapons, from thousands to perhaps twenty million deaths; and chemical weapons the much lower figure of several thousand dead (Butfoy 2005: 22–3).) Equally the ability to produce each of these types of weapon and maintain and deploy them successfully varies greatly.) Despite this heavy focus on this kind of weapon, there is no reason to limit arms control to WMDs only. While WMDs are rightly abhorred for their capacity for destruction, so-called conventional weapons, that is weapons that are *not* WMD, have certainly received much less attention from arms controllers, largely because of the implied right of **sovereign states** to possess a normal or 'conventional' weapons capability. This is changing slightly however, and although the focus continues to be on WMD, certain kinds of conventional weapons are also now being considered as appropriate for restriction or elimination.

Why do states engage in arms control practices?

There are various compelling reasons why states might wish to conduct arms control arrangements. In a landmark study, Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin (1985) explored the motivations that compel states to agree to cooperate. First, mutually agreeing to limit the kinds or numbers of weapons states may hold can help to prevent the outbreak of **war** between them. In this sense, arms control can be seen as a means of lessening, if not overcoming, the negative effects of the '**security dilemma**'. A security dilemma is said to exist when states are uncertain of the capabilities of their adversaries, and fear an attack; they thus seek to protect themselves against any possible attack by arming themselves. This very measure however can stimulate the other state to fear for its own safety, thinking that the original state is undertaking military preparedness, and interpreting this as a possible prelude to attack. This fear impels this state also to undertake militarisation measures, which in turn reinforces the original state's fear, thus leading to a spiral of arms acquisition and increasing suspicion of the other's intent. Given that wars can occur because of the fear of the military **power** of one's adversary, any mutual agreement to limit arms can open up communication between states, lead to greater transparency and a better understanding of a state's intentions. This process is also referred to as a 'confidence building measure'.

Arms control can also reduce greatly the military and economic costs of preparing for war; knowing that an adversary will not acquire a type or particular numbers of weapons is of benefit to states when making their own calculations about military preparedness. There is also, of course, a very compelling humanitarian reason for engaging in arms control: limiting the type and numbers of weapons can mean that if war does break out, deaths and casualties will likely be limited because of undertakings previously made to restrict weapons held by all warring parties.

Cold War arms control

These considerations found particular resonance during the Cold War, when the world was faced with the very real possibility of war – either conventional war or nuclear war – occurring between the major antagonists in that conflict, the US and USSR and their respective allies. The US had exploded the world's first atomic bombs over Japan in 1945; the USSR acquired

its nuclear capability in 1949 and an upward spiral of nuclear arms acquisition quickly followed. The intensification of what is sometimes called the 'first nuclear age' was, by the 1960s, seen as causing the need of formal and binding agreements between these states. Because of the hugely destructive nature of nuclear weapons, the US and USSR determined that various agreements must be reached if these states were to prevent a catastrophic war engulfing humankind. The concept of 'mutually assured destruction' – a situation which would occur if nuclear **deterrence** did not work and nuclear war was launched – was unacceptable to those who advocated an urgent reduction in weapons and the likelihood of war.

Notable products of this effort at arms control by the **superpowers** included the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963), the SALT agreements (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) of 1972 and 1979, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1987 and the START process (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties), begun in 1991. The earlier treaties did little except to enshrine a balance of terror between the superpowers, rather than bring about any meaningful reductions. It was only towards the end of the Cold War, and especially with the emphasis put on arms control by the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, that substantial reductions began to occur.

These were all **bilateral** treaties; there was little or no mechanism for states other than the superpowers to have any substantial impact on arms control during the Cold War. There were three notable exceptions to this series of bilateral arrangements. Even though it was an initiative of the existing nuclear weapon states (and by this time Britain, France and China had also joined the nuclear club) the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was clearly designed to operate at a global level. It was followed in 1972 by the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), also a multilateral treaty, albeit one that lacks effective monitoring and verification abilities. An important arms control achievement related to conventional weapons, the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, emerged in 1990 and was crucial to the winding down of conventional weapons held by the superpowers and their allies in the European arena at the end of the Cold War.

Why is arms control still important in the post-Cold War period?

The ending of the Cold War has not lessened the need for arms control, despite the thaw in relations between the US and Russia. If anything, it highlighted the need to continue to limit or proscribe certain kinds of weapons. It also freed up processes of arms control to include initiatives and participation from a much broader range of states than was possible during the more rigid structure of the Cold War. The need to continue with arms control is not surprising when we consider that although the superpowers have made dramatic reductions in their nuclear arsenals, there still remain between 25,000 and 30,000 nuclear weapons in the world today, many of them on hair-trigger alert. The vast majority of these weapons are held by the US and Russia. (See Figure 13.1 for details.)

If the continued existence of many thousands of nuclear weapons has been an incentive to continue with arms control measures after the end of the Cold War, so too is the view that the numbers of certain other kinds of weapons should be controlled also. Thus, we have seen arms control processes extended to other weapons of mass destruction (chemical weapons), and to certain kinds of conventional weapons such as landmines, because of their highly destructive nature, as well as to the spread of ballistic missiles and materials and
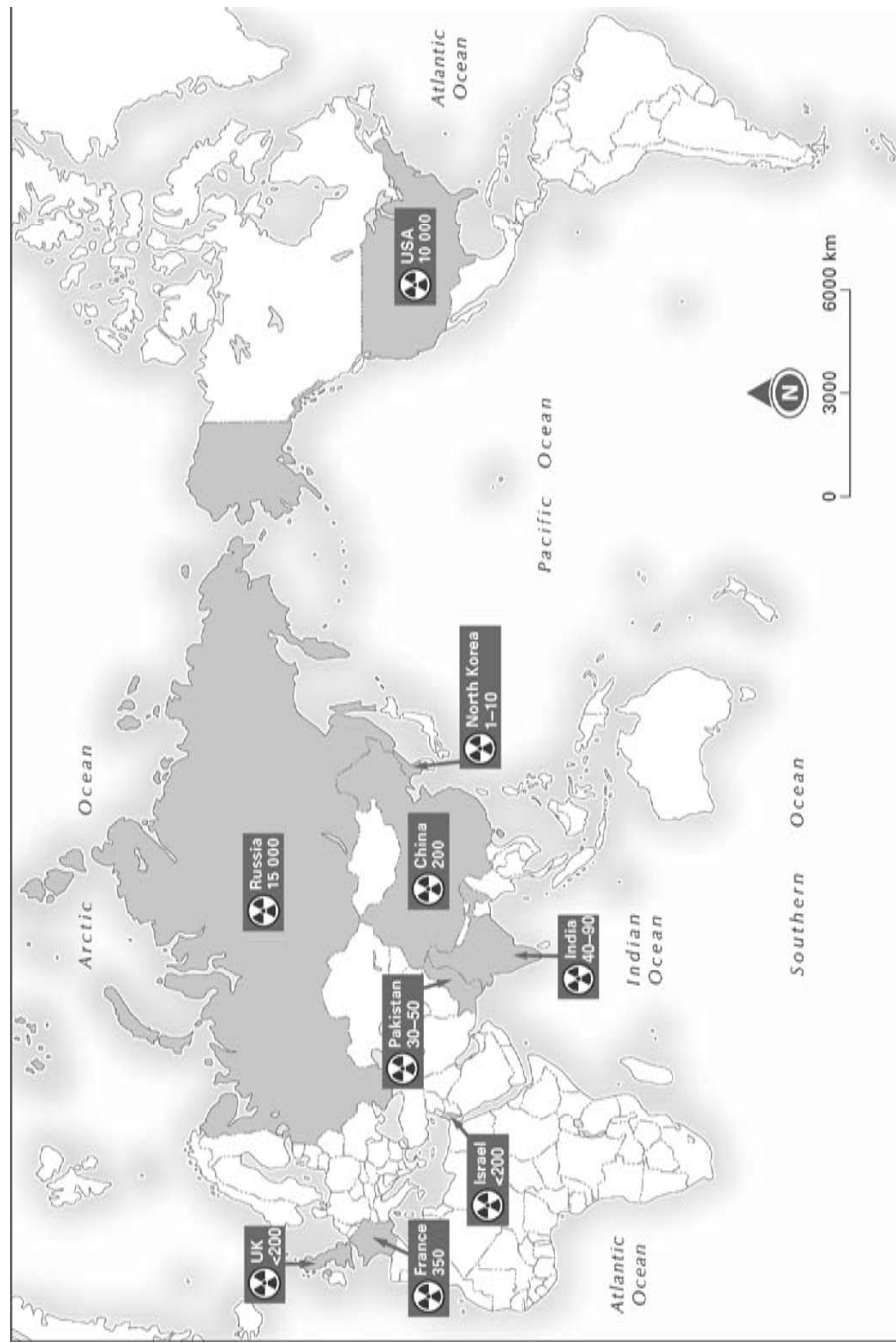
Figure 13.1: Estimated nuclear weapons stockpiles

Table 13.1: Major arms agreements reached since 1990

Name of treaty/convention	Purposes	Relevant difficulties
START 2, 1993	To achieve further deep cuts in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia.	Not ratified by Russia until 2000; Russia then dismissed the treaty in response to US abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002. Eventually overtaken by the SORT treaty.
The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), 1993	Banned the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons; global in scope; included well-developed monitoring and verification procedures.	Signed and ratified by most states, including all large states in the international system; the destruction of stockpiles is slower than envisaged.
The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review and Extension Conference, 1995	Five-yearly reviews of progress made in non-proliferation and disarmament efforts are routine; this review noted for extending the treaty indefinitely.	Marked by tension between the nuclear weapon states pushing for extension, and some non-nuclear weapon states who preferred extension to be conditional on disarmament by those states with nuclear weapons.
The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), 1996	To ban the testing of nuclear weapons; part of the agreement to extend the NPT (note above).	Cannot enter into force until ratified by key states, among them the US, China, India and Pakistan.
The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (The Ottawa Landmines Convention), 1997	To ban the production, stockpiling, and deployment of anti-personnel landmines.	Initiated by civil society groups and supported by Canada; US, China, Russia have resisted signing.
The SORT Treaty (Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, also known as the Moscow Treaty), 2002	To limit the US and Russia to 1700–2200 deployed strategic nuclear weapons each by 2012.	Critics argue that it still allows unlimited numbers of nuclear weapons to be held as non-deployed.

technology that can be used for illicit weapons purposes. The most prominent arms control and disarmament agreements reached since 1990 are listed in Table 13.1.

In addition to these treaties, the post-Cold War era has seen the strengthening of various export-control measures vital to non-proliferation efforts, some of which had been established during the Cold War. These measures include:

- The Zangger Committee, 1974 – Thirty-six members maintain a list of nuclear-related equipment that may only be exported if International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards are applied to the receiving state or facility.
- The Nuclear Suppliers Group, 1975 – An agreement among forty-five nuclear supplying states to ensure that exports of nuclear materials or technology for peaceful purposes cannot be used for weapons purposes.
- The Australia Group, 1985 – An informal arrangement among thirty-nine states to restrict the export of materials that might be diverted to the production of chemical or biological weapons.
- The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods, 1996 – The successor to the COCOM arrangement, this forty-member group attempts to regulate materials pertaining to conventional arms.
- The Missile Technology Control Regime, 1987 – An informal agreement between thirty-four states to prevent the proliferation of missile technology; it was supplemented in 2002 by the International Code of Conduct against Missile Proliferation (ICOC) and its membership of 119 states.

One fact becomes evident when we look at the range of agreements reached. Included among them are explicit programs of disarmament. Although arms control and disarmament have typically been seen as distinct processes, it is possible to argue that we are seeing a greater degree of convergence in these areas. Where arms control is considered to be a discrete process, and one which aims essentially to approve and to *balance* weapons possession between participating states, disarmament is seen as both a process and an end state, the end state being the complete elimination of a type of weapon. Although disarmament earned something of a bad name for itself during the era of the League of Nations (it clearly was not able to disarm Germany effectively, let alone move the world towards even a vaguely defined sense of general disarmament), more recent attempts at the disarmament of specific kinds of weapons have been successful. We saw the banning of biological weapons via the BWC, the destruction of a particular kind of weapon – intermediate nuclear forces – in the INF Treaty, the banning of chemical weapons with the CWC (a process in which Australia had played a prominent diplomatic role), and the completion of the Ottawa Convention banning the manufacture and use of landmines. (Again, Australia had been highly active in this process, although the initiative itself had originated from a number of prominent non-government organisations concerned with the humanitarian effects of landmines.)

While this does not mean that we are inevitably moving towards disarmament at a broad level, it does reveal that any differences between arms control and disarmament processes are now arguably more blurred than they once were. No agreement these days attempts to enshrine indefinitely the possession of weapons by states. Indeed it is possible to see, at least in some cases, arms control processes being part of a desired move towards disarmament. With the SORT agreement for example, one can argue that these reductions are an essential step towards the more elusive goal of the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, something the five 'legitimate' nuclear weapon states are obliged to achieve under the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and despite the fact that the US and Russia did not conclude SORT with disarmament in mind. Sometimes, therefore, the terms 'arms control' and 'disarmament' are used interchangeably, even though the degree of overlap between these processes will vary according to the weapon under consideration.

> **Box 13.1: Terminology**
>
> **Small arms and light weapons**
>
> Small arms are weapons designed for individual use, such as pistols, sub-machine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns. Light weapons are designed to be deployed and used by a crew of two or more, and include grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft and anti-tank and missile launchers, recoilless rifles and mortars of less than 100 mm calibre. This working definition is taken from the website of the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, www.fco.gov.uk.

New initiatives in arms control

As noted at the opening of this chapter, arms control need not be limited to weapons of mass destruction only, although it is indeed WMDs that have received greatest attention from the international community. One important development in the area of arms control study is that conventional weapons, or rather, limited types of conventional weapons, are also now becoming objects of attention. This development should not be overstated; conventional weapons, as their name implies, are seen as 'normal' and it should not be interpreted here that the sovereign right of nation-states to possess (and indeed to manufacture and export) arsenals of various (non-WMD) weapons is coming under serious threat at the moment. We have also noted however that a very important agreement, the 1997 Ottawa Landmines Convention, targeted conventional weapons.

Whether this is the beginning of a trend to scrutinise conventional weapons more closely remains to be seen. Nonetheless since 1995 we have seen increasing concern about the spread and devastating impact of what are called small arms and light weapons (SALW).

The spread of SALW has come to be recognised as posing a substantial threat to international and domestic security, resulting as they do in the deaths of approximately 300,000 people every year, up to 80 per cent of them women and children. This is evident from numerous studies; see for example the report published by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, in their international campaign to prevent small arms violence (IPPNW 2005).

Perhaps it is SALW which we should consider as being the real weapons of mass destruction, as these are used on a daily basis and with devastating results. They are relatively cheap to purchase, easy to handle and have come to be the weapon of choice in numerous deadly internal conflicts around the world. There are approximately 639 million SALW in circulation at present, serving to fuel and prolong conflict, and to make the processes of conflict-ending and development reconstruction immensely difficult. The **UN** initiated a Conference on the Illicit Traffic in SALW in 2001, which resulted in a Program of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, a process which might be seen as the start of a more concerted restrictive process.

It must be noted however that substantial barriers exist to any attempt to regulate conventional weapons generally. These include the fact that a vast global arms trade is perpetuated legally by the most powerful states in the **international system** – France,

Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the US – which account for the production of the majority of conventional weapons. The difficulties associated with restricting conventional weapons and sovereign rights were evident at the UN's SALW Conference; it was not able to address the licensed arms trade of these weapons in any form. Still, these attempts are being made. In October 2006, the vast majority of states at the UN voted in favour of a resolution (co-sponsored by Australia) to establish an International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) that would establish common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, a limited, but nevertheless historic development; 139 states voted in favour of the proposal. The US was alone in voting against it.

Such impediments as the US vote will remain for some time, but there is no doubt that the issue of arms control has evolved over time to the point where we are now beginning to see questions raised even about the (legal) arms trade and the extent to which the world can continue to tolerate the unfettered manufacture and distribution of conventional arms by sovereign states. One of the reasons for this is that **human rights** and humanitarian issues have come to prominence in international relations in the past two decades and have affected the traditional agendas of politics, security and 'business as usual'. So that while the human cost element was raised even in early studies of arms control, we might argue that this issue is only now gaining significant attention in debates on how states may conduct themselves in warfare. The Ottawa Landmines Treaty, one of the first to focus on non-WMD, was propelled by humanitarian concerns; the SALW program of action, together with the proposed new Arms Trade Treaty, might mean that we will begin to see even the normal sovereign rights of states to produce and deploy conventional weapons coming under scrutiny.

Arms control and international relations theory

We can relate the ideas and practice of arms control to certain theoretical understandings of international relations. How might we view the process of arms control at a conceptual level? Which theories of international relations can help us to understand the motivations and objectives of those state leaders who participate in such processes?

Arms control, as noted at the outset of this chapter, is intrinsically tied up with conceptions of international and domestic security and how these might best be achieved. Typically, since 1945, security issues have been dominated by the realist school of thought in international relations. With its emphasis on self-help in an anarchical world, the need for military preparedness, and its contention that ongoing security dilemmas will always affect strategic calculations, we might conclude that for realists, arms control and disarmament matter very little. Cooperation with an adversary can never be as effective as unilateral, independent and unfettered action.

We can also see however that even for realists, the need to cooperate with an adversary can be overwhelming and can bring security benefits, in terms of stability and at least an element of predictability. Most early writers on arms control approached the subject from a hard-headed perspective, but nevertheless understood the benefits, especially in the nuclear age, of exercising restraint. In this sense, we might even argue that such cooperation was an early variant of what has subsequently come to be known as '**common security**', a condition in which states recognise that achieving their own security requires consideration of an adversary's security concerns also. It can be argued then that the practice of arms control and

disarmament is actually an area where realists and liberal institutionalists can agree. Against such an interpretation, we do have to note the continuing relevance of assertions of independence of action, and the risk of defections from arms control regimes. The approach to arms control taken by the US since the late 1990s reminds us that ultimately, sovereign rights cannot easily be dismissed in the search for compliance. The US has withdrawn from a major arms control treaty, and refused to sign or ratify various other significant treaties. Other large states occasionally act in a similar way: China for instance has not ratified the CTBT.

But while these independent or rejectionist approaches might remind us of the anarchical structure of our world, it is also important to note that the vast majority of states have indeed signed up to, and abide by, a wide range of arms control agreements. Here we might apply a liberal, and especially a liberal-institutional, conception of world politics, whereby there is a recognition that while conflict might be a permanent feature of our landscape, nevertheless it can be managed by confidence-building measures, cooperative agreements, and the institutionalisation of these through **international law** and organisations. Related here is the **English School** of international relations **theory** that posits an **international society** bound together by a raft of rules and **norms** that together make for a functioning and orderly international system. At least one Australian former foreign minister has aligned himself with such a perspective, even going so far as to label Australia's contribution to disarmament treaties as 'good international citizenship' (Hanson 2005). Of further interest are the questions posed by **constructivists** who explore the origins and development of ideas and norms in international relations. They might well ask questions such as: how has the nuclear taboo arisen? (Tannenwald 1999); or, why is it that humanitarian issues are increasingly imposing themselves onto strategic calculations?

Nuclear weapons: a special case?

Of all the arms control regimes discussed here, the most prominent (and most shaky) in international relations is that of nuclear weapons. This regime has as its cornerstone the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 (NPT). This treaty is reinforced by a number of related mechanisms and arms control measures, particularly the IAEA which oversees monitoring and verification of compliance with the NPT especially through its enhanced safeguards or 'Additional Protocol' programs (although it is unable to monitor or verify activities of the five established nuclear weapon states), the various mechanisms listed above designed to curb the illicit transfer of nuclear materials and technology, and the creation of nuclear weapon-free zones in various parts of the world.

While the world has not seen the military use of nuclear weapons since they were first used in 1945, there is a fear that they will be used in the future, either deliberately or inadvertently by states which possess them, or, in line with recent concerns, by terrorists or other substate groups. The overwhelming concern that is commonly portrayed is the need to prevent further states and terrorist groups from acquiring these weapons. In other words, the focus is very much on non-proliferation. For others, however, while remaining concerned about proliferation, a concomitant need is to hasten the elimination of nuclear weapons altogether, that is, to move towards nuclear disarmament.

The NPT was essentially a bargain between the nuclear weapon states (NWS) and the non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS): in exchange for the latter promising not to develop or

acquire nuclear weapons, the former – the 'recognised' nuclear weapon states of the US, Russia, Britain, France and China – have promised to eliminate their nuclear arsenals (although there is no date specified for this) and to assist the NNWS with the transfer and use of nuclear materials and technology for peaceful purposes. These three elements: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear technology, make up what are known as the three 'pillars' of the NPT.

All three pillars are now under unprecedented levels of stress. Non-proliferation, while it has been largely successful in that some 183 states have chosen not to acquire nuclear weapons, is now seen to be insufficiently strong against the desire of some states to acquire nuclear weapons. In addition to India, Pakistan and Israel holding nuclear weapons (although these states are not legally part of the regime) we discovered in 1991 the beginnings of a nuclear weapon program in Iraq; a similar program in Libya, now abandoned; the detection in 2004 of the **A. Q. Khan network** that had illegally provided nuclear assistance to various states; the testing in October 2006 of a nuclear device by North Korea; and ongoing suspicions about the nuclear intentions of Iran which, while it has not rejected the NPT, has nevertheless enriched uranium in a covert manner.

Disarmament is at an impasse, as the NWS refuse to implement the promise of elimination made by them under Article VI of the NPT and which they reiterated 'unequivocally' at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. While the numbers of nuclear weapons have dropped considerably from the height of the Cold War, it seems clear that these privileged five states will not move towards the full elimination of nuclear weapons – indeed they continue to modernise their nuclear forces – thus perpetuating a world of nuclear 'haves' and 'have nots'. The problem here, as many observe (Canberra Commission 1996), is that as long as some states hold nuclear weapons, this will inevitably be an incentive for others to acquire them.

The third pillar of the NPT, the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, is also undergoing stress as current and widespread concerns about energy resources propel more states to contemplate the use of nuclear energy. Apart from concerns about the safety of such energy programs, there are fears that recourse to this third pillar – which remains underdeveloped in terms of proper safeguards and controls – will make nuclear weapons proliferation easier.

The weak nature of the NPT is a primary concern for advocates of arms control and disarmament. Moreover, the conflation, after 11 September 2001, of the 'war on terror' with an aggressive counterproliferation policy by the United States, and that state's allegations of WMD in Iraq as a reason for invading and occupying Iraq in 2003, have complicated and made an already difficult task, that of upholding non-proliferation and moving towards disarmament, almost impossible.

All this sits against a background of long-standing calls for the nuclear weapon states to eliminate their arsenals (Blackaby and Milne 2000; Canberra Commission 1996; Rotblat 1998). The reasoning here is compelling: nuclear weapons have little or no utility in resolving modern conflicts, and unless the NWS are seen to be practising the nuclear abstinence that they insist others adopt, it is hard to persuade would-be nuclear proliferators to desist (Hanson 2002). Additionally, the reasoning goes, if chemical and biological weapons have been banned – a ban accepted by all the NWS – why is it that the third kind of WMD, nuclear weapons, remain permitted under international law, and then only to a select group of states? To complicate matters further, even those states once condemned for joining the nuclear 'club' in 1998, India and Pakistan, are now cultivated as strong allies by the US in

its war against **terrorism**. This has been compounded recently by the US, which is completing an arrangement to assist India's civilian nuclear program, despite the fact that India has never signed the NPT. Thus an environment of inequality in international security continues (Perkovich 2005).

Initiatives to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime

Most states, however, are not ready to give up on the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Among these is Australia, which has developed a strong and bipartisan record in promoting arms control and disarmament. This is notwithstanding its close association with its main ally, the US, which, as noted above, has moved away in recent years from cooperative arms control and disarmament measures.

A key Australian initiative to promote disarmament was the Keating Labor government's convening of the Canberra Commission to consider the utility of nuclear weapons and to propose a program for the elimination of these weapons. The Commission released its Report in 1996, and although a conservative and more US-mindful Howard government had by then replaced the Keating government, and was thus reluctant to promote the Report vigorously, the Report was well received internationally and remains a key reference point in the ongoing campaign for elimination. Importantly, the Commission included prominent military and political leaders, all of whom lent their weight to calls for a phased and balanced program of disarmament by the nuclear weapon states. Such calls remain strong today and have been recently echoed even by notable conservatives within the US such as Henry Kissinger (Shultz, Perry, Kissinger and Nunn 2007). Although siding with US interests more than its predecessors had done, and less reluctant to urge a change of policy to its ally very vocally at arms control gatherings, Australia's Howard government, still in power in 2007, nevertheless continued to favour nuclear disarmament and consistently voted in the UN and elsewhere to support those measures, such as the CTBT, held up by the intransigence of other states.

At the same time, Australia has been at the forefront of measures to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation. It was among the first to accept the strengthened safeguards model, the Additional Protocol of the IAEA in 1997; it is closely involved in various export-control measures noted above; and it participates with the US and other states in a new non-proliferation arrangement, the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The PSI is a practice of interdiction of vessels suspected of carrying illicit materials designed for WMD purposes. While still resisted by some states because of possible legal implications, it has nevertheless been welcomed by many as a necessary and more muscular approach to halting WMD proliferation. Australia has also readily embraced UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which tightens the controls on exports related to WMD manufacture, and extended considerable assistance to states in its region in order for them to complete their country reports required by the resolution.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a general overview of arms control and disarmament practices and the ideas that inform these, and has focused on the problems facing the nuclear non-proliferation regime in particular. It noted that arms control, while it primarily involved only

two states and focused on WMD issues during the Cold War, has broadened out subsequently to involve a much larger number of actors, including on occasion non-government organisations, and has also moved to regulate certain conventional weapons.

This conclusion suggests that while there do remain some substantial obstacles to advancing arms control and disarmament further, notably the resistance now shown to such processes by the US and a few others, it cannot be claimed that arms control is 'dead' as some have argued. Indeed an analysis of these processes reveals that much is continuing in this field, and that the majority of states are taking their obligations seriously and accepting new controls on weapons proliferation, such as the program on small arms and light weapons, UN Resolution 1540, and the Arms Trade Treaty. While much will depend on the activities of the nuclear weapon states when we calculate the probabilities of disarmament or further nuclear proliferation, we can take some heart from the fact that the majority of states in our international society readily embrace existing and new measures, designed to reduce the likelihood of war and to protect human life. This broad and habit-forming culture of compliance cannot guarantee an absence of defections, but neither should its **normative** and cumulative power be underestimated.

Questions

1. How important is the process of arms control for mitigating the security dilemma?
2. In what ways do contemporary arms control and disarmament efforts differ from the processes we witnessed during the Cold War era?
3. If the possession and use of chemical and biological weapons have been legally banned, why hasn't such a ban extended to nuclear weapons?
4. Can the nuclear non-proliferation regime survive intact if Article VI, requiring the nuclear weapon states to disarm, remains unfulfilled?
5. Is it correct to say that humanitarian and legal factors are overtaking factors of strategy in the contemporary process of controlling arms?

Further reading

Butfoy, Andrew 2005, *Disarming proposals: controlling nuclear, biological and chemical weapons*, Sydney: UNSW Press. Concise and very useful overview of weapons of mass destruction and the problems facing attempts to restrict them.

Larsen, Jeffrey A. (ed.) 2002, *Arms control: cooperative security in a changing environment*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Edited collection examining arms control in all its aspects, including useful chapters on conventional weapons.

Sagan, Scott and Waltz, Kenneth 2003, *The spread of nuclear weapons: a debate renewed*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Sagan argues for the elimination of nuclear weapons, while Waltz counters with a realist proposal to allow the spread of nuclear weapons to selected countries.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *The SIPRI yearbook 2006: armaments, disarmaments and international security*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Excellent resource, updated annually, reviewing global and regional security developments and listing armaments holdings of key states.

The Changing Character of Warfare

Robert Ayson

Introduction

The **discipline** of International Relations owes its origins to the study of **war** and **peace**. But do the wars of the early twenty-first century differ so fundamentally from their predecessors that they need to be considered in quite different ways? This chapter provides a barometer on the character of warfare and its implications for contemporary international relations. It begins with some comments on the diverse ends and means of warfare before considering five leading issues: the role of violence in warfare, the extent to which that violence is organised, the political nature of war, the interactive nature of warfare, and the scope and scale of war. The overall argument presented here is that while war today may look rather different to wars of earlier periods, much of its essential nature has remained intact. This should make us a bit sceptical about claims that the role of war in international relations has somehow been revolutionised.

The diversity of warfare

Students of International Relations need little reminding that they are traversing a discipline whose leading concepts are hotly contested. But we might be excused for supposing that the meaning and character of something as concrete as *war* would be an open and shut case. As this author has indicated elsewhere (Ayson 2006: 10–24) the field which looks at the place of war in international politics – strategic studies – often avoids endless debates about meaning and terminology, let alone **theory**.

But war can mean quite different things to different people in different parts of the world. Aside from such unhelpful notions as the 'war on terror' and the 'war on drugs' (which are about as meaningful as the idea of a 'war on war' itself), our subject admits to a quite remarkable variety. It includes large-scale and nearly total war between **states** (and groups of nation-states) as seen in the twentieth century's two world wars. It includes interstate war fought in more limited fashion for more limited goals (as in the war between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands in the early 1980s). Also included are the messy internal wars from the American **Civil War** in the 1860s to the Chinese Civil War which ended with the victory of Mao's communist forces in the late 1940s, to the internal fighting which besieged Iraq after the US-led invasion in 2003 toppled Saddam Hussein's regime. War

can also occupy a midway point between internal and interstate as witnessed in Vietnam from the 1940s to the 1970s: to some observers this war was part of the global **Cold War** contest between the **superpowers** and their proxies; to others it was a war for national liberation and unity. And wars certainly do not require formal (and internationally recognised) state boundaries to operate between or within. They existed well before the **Westphalian order** as any student of the Bible (or of Chinese history) will attest.

There has also been significant variety in the means used to wage these wars. The development of military technology following the second industrial revolution of the late nineteenth century meant that the succeeding generation had access to weapons systems its predecessors could only have dreamed of. But as Biddle argues (2004), the pace of military technological innovation is not as rapid as it may seem, and even today wars are fought with weapons of incredible simplicity as well as those of great technological complexity. On the one hand there are the simple firearms (including crude homemade weapons) employed by the irregular armies fighting on Bougainville in Papua New Guinea in the 1990s and more recently on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. On the other hand, we can consider the vast information-processing power behind the American weapon systems used against Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia in the Kosovo crisis in 1999 and in the initial attack against Iraq in 2003. We can stretch our imaginations as well to the prospect of a war involving the only genuine **weapons of mass destruction** – nuclear weapons – although of course for the citizens of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945 no such imagining was required.

This diversity should give us pause before we accept any notion that war's nature (what is at its essence) or even war's character (how it is represented on the battlefield) has changed substantially between one period and another. Nonetheless it is tempting to go along with such assertions, especially when they are linked to periods of major change in international politics. A common example here is the argument that the end of the Cold War has seen intrastate (or internal) wars rise to take the place of interstate armed conflict. We should be wary of such sweeping propositions. Recent research has suggested that while 'civil wars are breaking out at an all-time record rate', the respective frequencies of interstate and intrastate wars have remained stubbornly consistent over many decades (Sarkees et al 2003: 62). The Cold War, famous for the tensions between states (and for interstate wars in places like the Korean peninsula), was also an era of the collapse of colonial empires and struggles for independence: an era characterised by a good deal of intrastate warfare. (The term 'guerrilla' goes back even further to the resistance mounted by sub-state groups in Spain against Napoleon's armed forces in the early nineteenth century.)

Nonetheless we need to take seriously arguments that there have been significant changes in the way wars are fought, in who does the fighting, and in why they do so. But to do this we need a handle on war. Useful here is a definition of war proposed by Jack Levy (1998: 141) as 'large scale organised violence between political actors'. Focusing on the main terms which comprise this definition will provide some important insights into this thing called war and into whether and how its character might be said to be changing.

War as *violence*

Because it involves violence and because of the damage, death and sheer trauma that violence can involve, war represents an extreme form of political action. In international politics, there
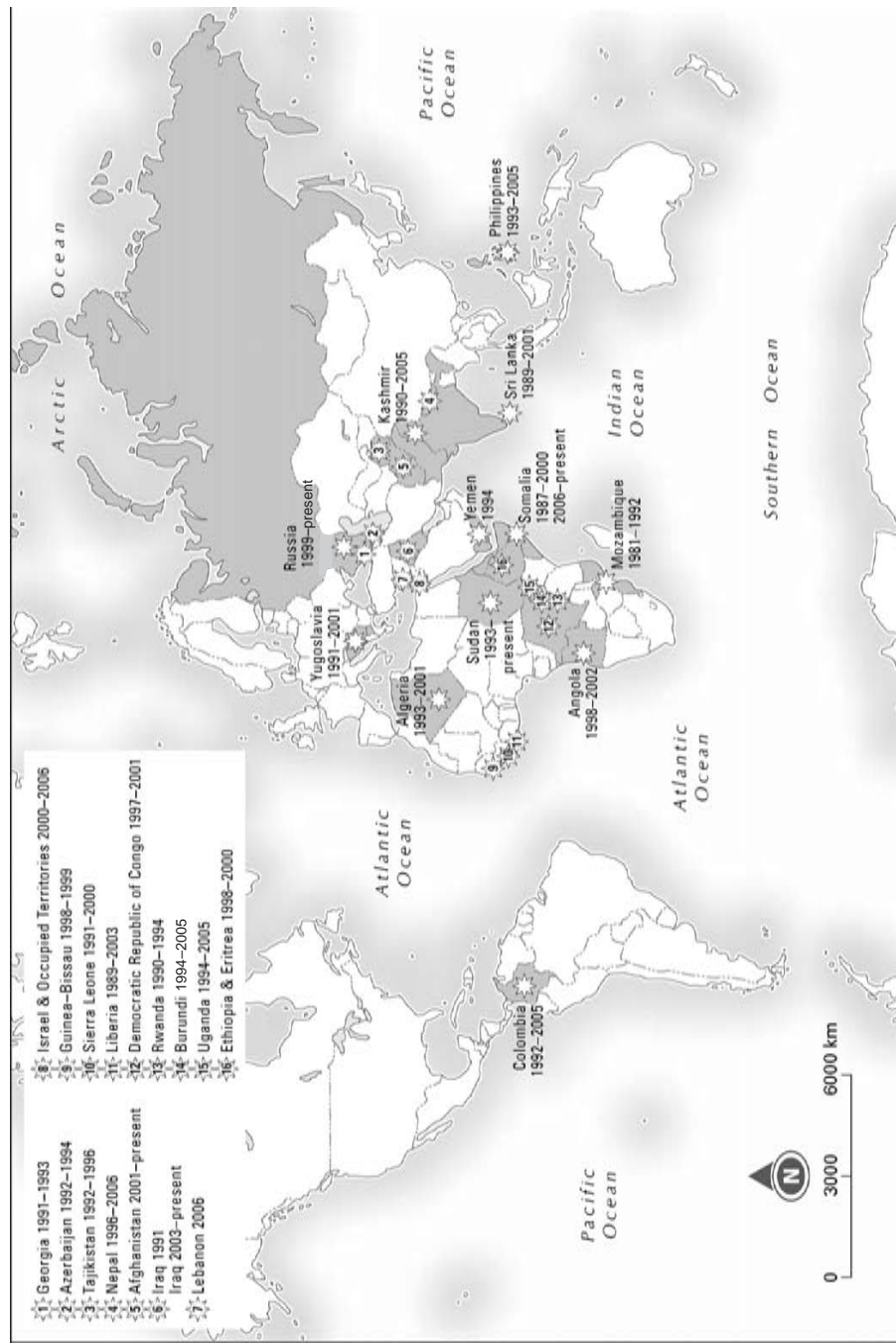
Figure 14.1: Wars since 1990

> ### Box 14.1:   Key figures
>
> **Carl von Clausewitz**
>
> Clausewitz's *On war*, first published in 1832 (a year after his death), has something for almost anyone. For a number of German military thinkers in the build-up to World War I, Clausewitz was the prophet of the offensive. For American strategists grappling with the destructive nature of nuclear weapons, his ideas of limited war for limited aims had obvious appeal. But therein lies both the beauty and the hazard of his writings. *On war* is philosophically ambitious and full of paradox. We can find ammunition today for arguments that war is destined to get messy and out of control and counter-arguments that violence can be adjusted to fulfil the ends of policy. Clausewitz's greatest contribution was to highlight the political context in which war occurs, but because the relationship between force and power can be so difficult, we should be wary of attempts to understand his work in just one dimension.

is no more important decision for a country's leaders to make than to go to war. And there is no more serious threat that one country can make towards another than to indicate that it is prepared to resort to war over the issue at hand. For realists at least (and for some other international relations scholars too) the capacity to wage war is the *sine qua non* of **power** in the **international system**.

The violence inherent to war reminds us that war is a clash rather than a picnic. The use of force can have its own destructive logic. The capacity for war as violence to get out of control is well recognised. For example, the mobilisation crisis of August 1914, as each country responded to the preparations of the other, led to a world war that nobody seemed to want. And what would have happened if President Kennedy had decided to bomb Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis with the Soviet Union? It is anyone's guess as to how hard it would have been to rein in the violence once it had begun (especially once the first nuclear weapons were used). The greatest philosopher of war, Carl von **Clausewitz** (see Box 14.1) – a Prussian officer who saw first hand the capacity for violence which the French **Revolution** allowed Napoleon to wield on the battlefield – saw it thus:

> . . . war is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. Each side, therefore, compels its opponent to follow suit; a reciprocal action is started which must lead, in theory, to extremes. (1989: 77)

Clausewitz also spoke wisely about the curious and unintended consequences of war as violence. One of these is friction where pretty much anything that can go wrong does in the heat, noise and confusion of battle: misunderstood or misleading communications; failing machinery and weapons systems; accidents and mistakes made under stress. A related concept is the fog of war – those things which may seem clear before the first shot is fired become extremely opaque as violence corrodes everything in its wake. War breeds confusion and a sense of chaos.

This sets up a challenge for modern armed forces: with the benefits of advanced technology and training, can they master friction and pierce the fog of war? Some observers argue that the information age has ushered in a new '**revolution in military affairs**' which has completely transformed the way that wars can be fought and the ways that armed forces are

organised to fight them. Pictures have been painted of a situation where pilots and their commanders can have complete awareness of the battlespace around them and are able to deliver their precision-guided munitions to destroy targets with unerring accuracy and minimal wider casualties and damage.

Others are more sceptical about claims of revolution and seek to place any such changes in a wider political context (Freedman 1998). But there is no doubt that the experience of America's technologically sophisticated forces since the 1991 Gulf War encouraged the view that the old obstacles no longer applied. They offered a surgically precise warfare which suited a democratic society's preference for wars without excessive violence. Some of the after-action reports suggested, however, that these campaigns had not been quite as precise or limited as had been hoped. More importantly, the deaths of over 2000 American service personnel in the violence which filled the political vacuum in Iraq in 2003 indicated that the friction and fog of war was all too real, factors also apparent in the war in Afghanistan since 2001. Interspersed with the apparent successes of the 1990s were images of confusion and fear in Mogadishu as Washington's Somalian adventure came undone and stories of millions of dead from the brutal war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The record is therefore mixed at the very least. The characteristics of violence in some wars or in some portions of these wars may have changed. But there is also enough to suggest that it is very hard to seal off the discharge of violence from the old problems of friction and the confounding and destructive logic of war.

War as *organised* violence

All this might suggest that war is inherently uncontrollable and chaotic. Certainly this is an easy conclusion to make for those caught up in its intensity. But war is not only violent behaviour. War is purposeful and organised violence. In other words there is a reason for war (even if we do not agree with it). Clausewitz states that 'war is . . . an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will' (1989: 75). Even though war may have a logic of its own and seem self-perpetuating, it is not an end in itself. It has a wider aim which, says Clausewitz, is policy.

The idea of war as organised violence differentiates it from non-organised or semi-organised violence. While a street riot may involve violence, this sort of generally spontaneous activity is not a war. There are some grey areas here. For example, the riot in the Solomon Islands capital of Honiara which followed the 2006 election result was a curious mixture of spontaneity and political purpose (and it helped achieve a clear political result with the unseating of the Prime Minister-elect only days afterwards). We might also ask: at what stage does civil unrest involving violence become a civil war? (This was a question being asked as the bombings continued in Iraq as this chapter was being finalised in 2007.) Another grey area is whether we consider **terrorism** to be war. One approach here is to regard terrorism as a means of war rather than as a separate form of it. Groups who are seeking to bring down the ruling authority in a revolutionary war may use acts of terror as part of their struggle, which may also include hit and run tactics and more conventional forms of organised violence. But what of groups who seem defined by and in some ways limited to terrorism? Al-Qaeda is an interesting case in point. Are they at war? And if so, with whom?

> **Box 14.2:   Key figures**
>
> **Martin van Creveld**
>
> Few scholars have had a larger impact on the way we think about war today than the Israeli military historian Martin van Creveld. In terms of the serious study of warfare, van Creveld's work on technology's impact on warfare and the often undervalued significance of logistics stand as important contributions. But his *On Future war* (also published as *The transformation of war*) has attracted greatest attention. Van Creveld attacks Clausewitzean war as obsolete because of the demise of the state's monopoly on armed violence. Israel's own challenges in coping with an undeclared war with sub-state actors in the occupied territories clearly had a bearing on this thesis. Some readers may find van Creveld's treatment of Clausewitz akin to the demolition of a straw man. But in a world preoccupied with transnational terrorist groups, weak states and **insurgency**, there is no doubting the appeal of his logic.

One group well known for acts of terrorism thought that it was in a war: this was the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland, and IRA stood for Irish Republican *Army*. This leads to another point about war as organised violence: our tendency to see it represented in organisations designed to fight wars. These armed forces generally consist of three services: armies, navies, and air forces. This takes us back to our understanding of the international system because it is the main actors in this system – states – who are the largest and main organisers of armed forces. Indeed, at least in theory, **sovereign states** are expected to maintain a monopoly on the preparation for and use of armed force (see chapter 10). Wars occur in two main ways here: the first is as organised violence between the armed forces of two or more of these sovereign states. The second is when that domestic monopoly breaks down and there are challengers within states – insurgent groups, **secessionists** and others – who often maintain their own unofficial and irregular armed forces. Contemporary examples of this second category from the Asia-Pacific region include the on-again off-again war between the armed forces of the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or Tamil Tigers) and the contest for Mindanao between the Philippines armed forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and other groups.

Some analysts suggest, however, that it is obsolete for states to concentrate on organising their own armed forces in preparation for possible wars with other states or to prevent war by credible deterrent strategies. Martin van Creveld (1991) (see Box 14.2), for example, suggests that these large, cumbersome military machines are heading for extinction. Instead, the wars of the future will be mounted and fought by irregular, non-state armed forces including paramilitary groups, organised criminal gangs and other sub-state actors. This goes hand-in-hand with his thesis that the Westphalian order of sovereign states is also passing away.

This critique needs to be taken seriously. We seem to live in an age of weak and even failing states, many of which are unable to maintain effective armed forces, thereby posing a greater threat to their own civilians than to the adversaries they are purportedly designed to fight. Certainly the record of some armed forces in Australia's immediate region would attest to this domestic problem – in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and East Timor. And if states are fragile and collapsing then so too is their monopoly on organised violence. But even strong states are

challenged by what is often called 'asymmetric warfare' – where the nominally weaker actors (including sub-state groups who use terrorism, such as the insurgents in Iraq) seem to have pinpointed chinks in Goliath's armour. Indeed in one of its more notable observations about the contemporary international system, the administration of George W. Bush declared that the US 'is now threatened less by conquering states than . . . by failing ones' (The White House 2002: 1).

The organisation of armed force by strong states is not quite a thing of the past. This is evident when we consider the wider Asia-Pacific region to which Australia belongs. Northeast Asia consists of a number of strong states – including China, Japan and South Korea – for whom the building of armed forces with the potential to wage organised violence is far from an outdated practice. Indeed the tensions between these countries (between China and Japan and between South Korea and Japan) have been increasing. And, at least for now, a somewhat precarious sense of balance in that part of the world is maintained by the substantial regional military presence of the US, whose spending on its own armed forces exceeds the combined military expenditure of all other countries on the globe. While any wars in Southeast Asia will most likely be internal affairs associated with the challenges posed by sub-state groupings, in North Asia interstate war involving large armed forces cannot be declared obsolete. States in this part of the world will continue to maintain and develop organised armed forces to deter armed conflict and to fight if that **deterrence** fails.

War and *politics*

The next part of Levy's definition we turn to is the notion that war is organised violence involving *political actors*. This immediately brings to mind the most quoted statement about our subject – again from Clausewitz – that 'war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means' (1989: 87). Rather than the notion that war starts when diplomacy ceases, we are encouraged to regard war as an extension of the political relationship which states (and other political actors) enjoy and endure with one another. The American strategic thinker Thomas Schelling charac-terised this situation very colourfully by referring to the 'diplomacy of violence' (1966: 1–34).

For students of International Relations this puts war at the heart of their discipline which, at least traditionally, is the study of political relationships between the key actors of the international system, namely states. And by political relationships here we mean relationships involving power: who has it and how it is distributed and used in the international system. War is one means (although a highly unpleasant one) through which states – as political actors – attempt to affect the behaviour of others in the pursuit of their interests.

Clausewitz's famous statement will be recognised as an example of classical **realism** since it supposes a **state-centric** world full of self-interested actors. War is not an end in itself – it is a servant of the political interests of these states. We should be wary of this sort of logic for at least two related reasons. The first reason is that it appears to legitimise war. This formulation encourages us not so much to think of war as the product of a faulty international system and poor institutions and practices (as liberals like Woodrow Wilson might encourage us to believe). Instead we might be encouraged to regard war as just another mechanism by which

states seek to achieve their political aims in a world where there is a premium on self-help. Of course this may not be an objectionable proposition in some instances. For Britain, Australia and the other allied powers in September 1939 war was not difficult to justify as a necessary means to a legitimate political end: the defeat of Nazi aggression and tyranny. But as Wilson and others had suggested after the largely unintended catastrophe of World War I, one could argue that war was far from a rational decision taken to further **national interests**.

Second, since war can have a destructive logic of its own it can be somewhat hazardous to see war as just another instrument of the state. War has a habit of changing and corrupting the reasons for which it is originally fought. As Azar Gat has observed, for Clausewitz the political nature of war was organic as well as functional: the nature of war reflects the political nature of the society which wages it and which brings it into being (1989: 215). Even in its purely interstate variety, war reflects the domestic politics of those states which are fighting it. One cannot understand the frequency and the character of war between India and Pakistan since the partition of 1947 without an appreciation of these two states, and the passions which these energetic societies evoke (Ganguly 2001). Domestic politics can also serve to constrain a state's participation in war as the government of Lyndon Johnson learned in the Vietnam War era (Karnow 1994) and as the Soviet government learned in Afghanistan (Evans 2005). Hence in referring to *political* actors we mean domestic as well as international political dimensions.

Of course if we agree with van Creveld we might be inclined to argue that the political actors responsible for war are leaving the stage. Rather than strong states prosecuting war we might need to focus on sub-state actors. But before we dismiss the Clausewitzean/Westphalian universe and the war–politics nexus, we need to look more deeply at some of these supposedly non-traditional actors who are said to dominate today's warfare. First we might consider some of the groups who wage war against established states either to bring them down, or to carve out a piece of the territory for themselves. The MILF, the Tamil Tigers and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army are certainly not states but that does not mean that their approach to war is apolitical. Their aim is to establish independent nation-states of their own. War is a profoundly political activity between them and the incumbent government involved.

We can apply a similar logic to the role of identity as a cause of modern warfare. Using such examples as the Balkan wars which precipitated and accompanied the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, Mary Kaldor (1999) reminds us that elites can manipulate the politics of identity to justify war. These wars are very much acts of political ambition: for Milosevic in Serbia and Tudjman in Croatia warfare was a servant of, and also a product of, politics. There is in fact not that much of a gap here with some of the independence movements which followed World War II: identity and independence are both bedfellows of **nationalism** (see chapter 11). Mao's revolutionary strategy, developed as his Red Army fought for the control of China, is a superb example of the idea of using force for explicitly political purposes and a recognition that those who wage war operate in an intensely political environment.

Of course not all sub-state wagers of war are involved in movements of national liberation, independence or secession. Some at least seem to act out of rather different motivations. In the wake of the September 2001 attacks on the US a number of analysts suggested that there was a difference between old and new terrorism. In the earlier type, prominent in the late 1960s and early 1970s, groups like the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) used acts of terror in the quest for limited political goals: for

example, independence within a particular territory. They were avowedly political actors waging a form of internal war with their target states – in this case with the governments of Israel and Spain respectively. But in the new terrorism, it was unclear what if any political aims motivated groups like al-Qaeda which seemed interested only in causing the maximum death and destruction possible. Such groups almost seem caught up in the theatre (rather than the functionality) of violence. A related argument suggested that radical Islamist groups using terrorism were motivated by religion (often with apocalyptic worldviews) rather than by politics.

These claims deserve serious consideration but are also open to question (Tucker 2001: 1–14). First, it is clear that al-Qaeda has had an interest in perpetuating mass casualty terrorist attacks. But this does not necessarily mean that Osama bin Laden and his colleagues lack a political agenda. Their motives appear to include the removal of Western and especially American forces from parts of the Middle East and the downfall of incumbent regimes including in Saudi Arabia. Second, the distinction between religion and politics is questionable. There is no reason why political aims cannot have religious connotations: consider the idea of a caliphate in the Middle East and the support which the theocratic government of Iran gives to Hezbollah and other groups arraigned against Israel. Of course one might ask whether all groups who use terror are engaged in a war, and whether there are always clear political goals involved wherever terrorism occurs. Small groups operating on the basis of individual grievance (as seems possible in the 2005 London bombings) might be disqualified on both counts as perpetrators of war. But it would be a brave person who argued that Hamas and Israel had been engaged in something other than a war.

Other instances of organised violence may strain the nexus between war and politics in a more resolute fashion. Some actors seem motivated by economic gain and lack any sort of obvious political agenda. Such claims have been made about the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda. For this 'Army' organised violence seemed either an end in itself or was used for reasons of financial greed. But it is still rare for politics to be completely absent. First such a group often needs a particular political situation in which to operate – in this case a virtual vacuum of state power. Second its leaders had interests in their own positions of power and in the survival of their organisation. Third, as Vinci has argued (2005: 360–81), the LRA has used violence to breed fear for political purposes. A group does not need to publish formal policy statements or be interested in setting up a government to be regarded as a political actor. Even so, for states familiar with engaging with other states, it is not easy to know how to win wars against actors whose interests, resources and tactics can seem so different.

War as a case of *between*

This leads us to a fourth observation – that war is more like a game of poker than a game of patience. War is an activity between two or more political actors who are using force (and threats of force) to affect each other's behaviour. The notion of war as a clash of wills, each trying to impose themselves on the other, comes into play here. And it is this violent interaction which helps give war some of its truly horrible elements – friction, uncertainty and confusion are elevated when one is facing an intelligent opponent who is trying to do us harm.

At times war can be more or less symmetrical. This was the case on the Western Front in World War I which led to a multi-year stalemate. It was also the case on the Eastern Front in

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Box 14.3:   Key figures

Thomas Schelling

It probably needed an unconventional economist like Thomas Schelling to show us how much war (and attempts to avoid and limit it) could resemble a bargain between self-interested strategic actors. Drawing on theories of the firm, game theory, and organisational theory, Schelling developed a theoretically appealing approach to strategy in a nuclear age where not finding a tacit agreement with the other side could mean mutual devastation. This was spelled out with particular rigour in *The strategy of conflict*. Schelling was also a pioneer of **arms control** theory and later turned his hand to the study of international environmental problems. He was awarded a Nobel Prize in economics in 2005.

World War II as the armed might of Germany was absorbed at great cost and then repelled by the Soviet Union (USSR). It would have been the case in an especially catastrophic sense had the US and USSR gone to war in the nuclear age. That a third world war was avoided suggests that the capacity for mutual destruction may act to prevent the use of force and that peer competitors can agree to tacit rules of the game by which they constrain the violence which might erupt between them. In this sense, as Schelling (1960) argues, war and threats of war can be treated as bargaining relationships where the sides find some sort of ugly compromise which prevents massive mutual damage (see Box 14.3).

But war can also occur between unequals, both in size and in type. In terms of the former, we live in an age of American political and military supremacy where the world's leading power (and the only real superpower) is likely to dwarf any state it fights – with the possible exception some time down the track of an undesired war with a re-emerging China. Indeed the 1990s in particular were an age of unfair strategic contests between the US (and its allies) on the one hand and an assortment of small 'rogue' states on the other. These included Saddam Hussein's Iraq (twice) and Serbia. Such was the US advantage in these contests that it is a bit difficult to call them real wars in the interactive sense of the term. Indeed Washington was able to fight these wars in the way and time of its choosing. This bred a certain amount of overconfidence in American power. It also went along with what might be called unilateral notions of strategy – in the sense that war was simply the application of violence to achieve one's own ends almost in the absence of anything coming back the other way. War was not a case of 'between' here.

But looking back on 2003 it might be argued that the adversaries of the US in Iraq knew that they could not win such an asymmetrically pitched battle and waited for the moment when the US would be most exposed – as a rather modestly sized occupying force responsible for a huge and fractious country in the post-invasion period. Here something did come back the other way and the interaction, friction and confusion of war returned. Strategy became more like Schelling's (1960: 3) notion, adapted from game theory, where 'the best course of action for each player depends on what the other players do'. Such an approach, he argued, encourages us to 'focus on the **interdependence** of the adversaries' decisions and on their expectations about each other's behaviour'.

The insurgents in Iraq represented a different type of political actor as well as a different size of actor, extending the asymmetry of the interaction even further. In general terms,

states do not fare well in wars against non-state groups. Warlike acts designed to help stabilise a country so that new institutions of government may be built are fraught with difficulty. The fact that wars are between opposing and intelligent parties is one reason why the use of force remains an extremely blunt stick in international politics. Hence while the capacity and intent to use military force may stand as the *sine qua non* of power in the international system, it is a form of power one should be especially reluctant to unleash. The 'between' factor is an essential reason for this reluctance.

War as *large-scale*

Keeping wars small and under control is a risky art-form, not least because it takes two sides to agree on any such limits. America's escalating commitment to Vietnam in the 1960s, which left Hanoi largely unmoved in its resolve, is a good case of how such limits can be hard to negotiate. That failure encouraged the American view (known as the Powell Doctrine after General Colin Powell who later became Secretary of State) that force should only be employed in an overwhelming fashion to achieve the objective quickly rather than through 'a little surgical bombing or a limited attack' which he said is often followed by 'talk of just a little escalation – more bombs, more men and women, more force' (Powell 1992–93: 40). But it is important to note that Powell's argument is against the notion of gradually intensifying war rather than limited war per se. Examples abound of the resort to limited force for limited purposes, an approach which is entirely consistent with the ends–means relationship in Clausewitz's writing. China, for example, taught Vietnam a 'lesson' through a limited war in 1979 (after Vietnam had invaded Cambodia to dislodge the murderous Khmer Rouge) and India and Pakistan have conducted limited wars including one which occurred under the nuclear umbrella in Kargil in 1999.

This raises the question of how large such an exchange of armed violence needs to be before we consider it to be warfare. Partly because they need agreed data sets to test their hypotheses about the occurrence of war, a good many international relations scholars in the US have agreed thresholds which allow them to count some events as wars and others as less than wars. The Correlates of War Project established at the University Michigan in 1963 is one such example. As Levy notes (1998: 141), that project's threshold of 1000 battle deaths per year as a defining requirement for a war to be counted has been adopted widely.

There are some advantages to such an approach. Generally speaking the more extensive and costly the violence, the fewer questions there will be about whether war has in fact occurred. At one extreme, there is little doubt that World War II qualifies, with millions of battle deaths in some years. And there is no doubt that a global nuclear exchange would constitute war, although there might not be many political scientists left to record it. But at the other extreme, what of the occasional exchange of gunfire along the Line of Control in Kashmir? Is war occurring each and every time this happens?

But size does not always matter, at least not *absolute* size. The 1000 deaths per year threshold, for example, would exclude the civil war in the Solomon Islands and at least some portions of the armed conflict on Bougainville. Especially in light of the small populations involved in these places, just a few hundred deaths might be truly catastrophic. Indeed using these somewhat arbitrary quantitative thresholds may allow a good number of intrastate wars to fall under our radar. What is important in establishing that war is taking place is a question

of quality rather than quantity. And those qualitative factors are the ones we have discussed above – the use of armed violence between organised political actors. Whether these are superpowers with potentially millions of combatants and casualties or small rival tribes, the essence of war remains markedly similar.

Conclusion

If Napoleon and Clausewitz had been cryogenically frozen before their deaths and were revived today, they would likely be amazed by many of the features of contemporary warfare. They would probably marvel at what the microchip had done for modern weapon systems. Their jaws might drop as they considered the implications of including air and space as environments for battle. The intercontinental ballistic missile and the nuclear warhead, the air–land battle doctrine used by the US in two wars in Iraq, the possibility of instantaneous and direct communication between commander and soldier, and the depth of the modern battlefield would all be new.

But having absorbed the implications of all of these new characteristics of war, Europe's greatest strategist and strategic thinker respectively might argue that not all that much has really changed. War is still as confusing and as destructive (if not more so) as it was in their day. It still reflects the political interests of the actors who wage it and the moods and energies of the societies in which they are based. As a clash of wills, war retains a logic of its own, only it now wears rather different clothing. If correct, this conclusion implies that the title of this chapter, 'The Changing Character of Warfare', deserves to be followed by a rather large question-mark.

Questions

1. What is war? Is there agreement about what it is?
2. Is Clausewitz's theory of war still relevant to today's world? How have thinkers argued it should change?
3. To what extent does technology change war?
4. Is terrorism a form of war? What is at stake in describing it as such?
5. How do we stop today's wars?

Further reading

Clausewitz, Carl von 1989, On war, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Classic and indispensable treatise that shaped modern understandings of war and strategy.

Freedman, Lawrence 1998, *The revolution in strategic affairs*, Adelphi Paper 318, Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Institute for Strategic Studies. Excellent analysis that emphasises the political rather than technological factors in contemporary warfare.

Kaldor, Mary 1999, *New and old wars: organised violence in a global era*, Stanford: Stanford University Press. Controversial account of how globalisation has changed the character of warfare.

The Ethics and Laws of War

Alex J. Bellamy[1]

Introduction

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the ethics and laws of **war** in three parts. The first part outlines what **international law** and the '**just war**' tradition have to say about recourse to force, the second section explores the conduct of war and the final section explores two contemporary issues as examples of moral and legal debate: the legitimacy of preemptive self-defence and the use of cluster bombs.

In early 2003, millions of people took to the streets of Australia's capital cities to protest the government's decision to join the US in the invasion of Iraq. Protesters argued that the war was immoral (because innocent civilians would die), illegal (because it was neither an act of self-defence nor explicitly authorised by the **UN** Security Council) and unnecessary (because they did not believe that conclusive evidence of Saddam's **weapons of mass destruction** (WMD) program had been presented). In its defence, the Howard government mixed legal justifications with moral and strategic claims. Borrowing advice from the British, it argued that the war was legal because it had been tacitly authorised by UN Security Council resolutions dealing with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990; morally just, because it aimed to overthrow a tyrannical regime that had butchered hundreds of thousands of its own citizens, and strategically important because Saddam's WMD program threatened regional **security** and raised the possibility of a nightmare scenario long predicted by **terrorism** experts – a rogue regime passing WMD capabilities to terrorist groups.

Once war was underway there were also important debates about how it should be conducted: Australian and American forces had different 'rules of engagement' telling them when and how they could attack targets, with Australian rules being considerably tighter than American rules; deep concerns were expressed about the portrayal of Iraqi prisoners of war in the Western media; doubts were raised about whether American forces in particular were taking all reasonable precautions to avoid civilian casualties; and persistent questions remained about the treatment and torture of prisoners suspected of having links to Islamic terrorists or Saddam's regime.

Questions about when it is legitimate to go to war and how war must be conducted are central to public and political debates and play a significant role in policy-making and military

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[1] This chapter derives its argument and some of its text from Bellamy 2006.

decision-making, especially in the West. Although some realists argue that there is no place for morality in decision-making about war, in fact the politics of war is deeply imbued with moral and legal arguments. Decisions to invade Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur or, for that matter, Turkey (Gallipoli) are only partly strategic choices. Indeed, the strategic question of whether we *can* achieve our aims through force is secondary to the question of whether we *ought* to do so. Likewise, decisions about how to fight are shaped by our politics and our ethics.

When is it right to fight? (*jus ad bellum*)

Contemporary international law on the use of force is based upon the **UN Charter**. Prior to the Charter (which was agreed in 1945), it was widely considered that **states** had an inherent right to wage war whenever they believed that they had a case for doing so, be it to defend themselves, protect their interests, or claim a territory. After the horrors of World War II, it was agreed that this regime was too permissive. Thus, Article 2(4) of the UN Charter explicitly forbids the use or threat of force in international relations. This is considered a fundamental rule of international relations, from which there are only two exceptions. First, all states have an inherent right to self-defence when they are attacked, set out by Article 51 of the Charter. Second, the UN's peak body for **peace** and security issues, the Security Council, has a right under Article 39 of the Charter to authorise collective enforcement action. To pass a so-called 'Chapter VIII' resolution, the Council needs to identify a threat to international peace and security, nine of the fifteen Council members must vote in favour, and none of the permanent five (P5) members (US, UK, Russia, China and France) must vote against it. This gives the P5 effective veto on collective action.

  Contemporary 'just war' writers have tended to criticise the UN Charter system for forbidding aggressive war and downplaying the role of justice in determining a war's legitimacy. As Johnson (1999: 57) has argued, labelling a war as 'aggressive' does not resolve the question of whether or not it is just, yet the UN Charter makes precisely that presumption. The Charter's drafters chose this highly restrictive model to help prevent future world wars. The key to conflict prevention, they believed, was to remove any ambiguity in the legal framework by building a 'presumption against aggressive war' into the Charter. This presumption may have contributed towards the steady decline of interstate war since 1945. It has also produced some perverse effects, however. In 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia to remove Pol Pot, a genocidal dictator whose regime murdered at least two million Cambodians. The presumption against aggressive war forced Vietnam to justify its invasion by claiming that it was acting in self-defence, which was rejected by many states who imposed sanctions on Vietnam, demanded its immediate withdrawal from Cambodia and even offered indirect support to the *genocidaires* (Wheeler 2000: 78–110). This tension between law's presumption against aggressive war and an ethical 'presumption against injustice' (Johnson's term) is arguably the central dilemma of *jus ad bellum* today. The moral rules governing recourse to force found in the 'just war' tradition are more permissive than positive law in that they permit war in a wider number of instances. But they also impose more conditions. There are three types of rule: substantive, prudential and procedural. *Jus ad bellum* contains four substantive criteria.

  The first criterion is *right intention*. Individuals must wage war for the common good, not for self-aggrandisement or because they hate the enemy. Right intention is seldom discussed

nowadays and it has recently been suggested that it should be dropped because it is not clear why actors must have right intentions when they wage war (Brown 2002: 108–9). This argument overlooks the role that right intentions play in the justification of killing itself. Most moral traditions accept the basic proposition that killing for personal gain or through hatred or envy is wrong. When a soldier kills another, therefore, he must do so only because it is the only way of defending the common good or righting a wrong.

The second substantive rule is that war may only be waged for a *just cause*. This is usually limited to self-defence, defence of others, restoration of peace, defence of rights, and the punishment of wrongdoers. Just cause is often viewed in absolute terms: a combatant either has a just cause or does not. Today, this tendency is supported by legal **positivism**, which holds that actors either comply with the law or violate it (Walzer 1977: 59). However, since Vitoria (1991) in the sixteenth century, most 'just war' writers separated objective or true justice (knowable to God) from subjective justice (knowable to humans). Thus, wars can appear just on both sides. There are two ways of coping with this. First, as Vitoria argued, princes should show due care before they wage war. They should seek advice from learned people and listen to the opponent's arguments. Second, the just cause rule should be understood in relative terms. It is not a matter of either having or not having a just cause, but of having more or less of one. Sometimes this is labelled 'sufficient cause': do we have a sufficiently just cause to legitimise the actions we plan to take? This, of course, requires an assessment of two factors: the reason for war and the intended strategy.

Proportionality of ends asks whether the overall harm likely to be caused by the war is less than that caused by the wrong that is being righted. Vitoria suggested (1991) that proportionality played a significant role in judgments about the legitimacy of war. Whilst war was legitimate to right wrongs, not all wrongs legitimised war. Some wrongs were neither grievous nor widespread enough to legitimise the inevitable evils that war entailed. On this view, proportionality is more than a prudential calculation. After all, prudence is always viewed from the eye of the beholder. A prudential account of proportionality would ask only whether the likely costs to *us* are greater than the likely benefits. Proportionality in the Vitorian sense requires a calculation of *all* the likely costs.

The final rule is that of *last resort*. Is the use of force the only, or most proportionate, way that the wrong is likely to be righted? Last resort does not require the exhaustion of every means short of force. If it did, force would never be licit because one can always continue to negotiate. Instead, last resort demands that actors carefully evaluate all the different strategies that might bring about the desired end, selecting force if it appears to be the only feasible strategy for securing those ends.

Prudential criteria impose important checks on decisions to wage what would otherwise be justifiable wars. The principal prudential check is *reasonable chance of success*. This criterion holds that as war always entails some degree of evil, it is wrong to wage war for a justifiable purpose unless those instigating it can reasonably expect to prevail. From a realist perspective, prudence includes both the overall likelihood of success and calculations about the costs of success. In other words, a state may be able to prevail but the cost of prevailing may be higher than it wishes to pay to satisfy a particular just cause. Because, from a realist perspective, political leaders have a primary moral responsibility to the welfare of their own citizens, they may not sacrifice that welfare unless their *vital* interests or fundamental values are at stake.

The third type of constraint covers the procedural requirements of *right authority* and *proper declaration*. In the Middle Ages, canon lawyers and scholastic intellectuals resolved

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Box 15.1:   Terminology

***Jus ad bellum* criteria**

1 right intention
2 just cause
3 proportionality of ends
4 last resort
5 prudential check, and
6 procedural requirements.

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the first question in favour of sovereign princes. Only those leaders with no clear superior could legitimately authorise war. In the modern era this translated into **sovereign states** and from the eighteenth until the mid-twentieth centuries, states were effectively given a free hand to authorise war whenever they saw fit. This right was heavily restricted, however, by the 1945 UN Charter as we saw earlier. The question of who has the right to authorise war remains a moot point today. Positive law suggests that only states under attack and the UN Security Council have this right. Others hold that individual states and coalitions may legitimately wage war in other instances. Furthermore, it is widely accepted today that other actors, such as national liberation movements, may also legitimately wage war in some circumstances.

The requirement for *proper declaration* had its origins in the Roman system. During the Middle Ages, the declaration requirement supported the right authority test because only those princes with the **power** to declare war and not be removed from power had the right to wage war. The requirement also forced those about to embark on war to clearly state their case, providing an opportunity for peaceful restitution. Nowadays, the declaration can serve a third purpose: it clearly marks the transition from peace to war and hence the type of legal rules that ought to be applied.

How should war be waged? (*jus in bello*)

The legal and moral rules governing the conduct of war are much more clearly defined than the *jus ad bellum* rules, and today there is even an International Criminal Court (ICC) to prosecute those charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity and **genocide** in cases where the host state is either unwilling or unable to prosecute offenders.

International society's first attempt to grapple with *jus in bello* issues after World War II came in the form of the four **Geneva conventions** of 1949. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) convened a meeting of experts in 1947, which produced a draft convention that was then put to states at a conference in Geneva in 1949. Although there was considerable agreement on the fundamentals, such as the need to afford further protection to non-combatants and prisoners of war, and the need for some sort of oversight, a number of issues proved contentious. The ICRC's draft had envisaged a convention that applied to all forms of armed conflict, but many states – particularly newly decolonised states and colonial powers – did not want protection afforded to rioters, guerrillas and terrorists. On the other hand, countries that had been recently occupied by the fascists worried that a rule giving states

a free hand to suppress local insurgents could be used by unjust aggressors to justify brutality towards the host population and insisted that the convention recognise that partisans had liberated parts of Europe. The result was a compromise. Common Article 3 committed parties in 'non-international' wars to respect **human rights** without specifying any particular privileges for insurgents and the Convention on the Protection of Civilians (Convention IV) offered comprehensive legal protection to non-combatants in occupied territories. The upshot, however, was that the victims of international wars received more protection from the laws of war than the victims of **civil wars**.

The Geneva conventions comprised a comprehensive code of *jus in bello*, granting wide protection to non-combatants, the wounded and sick and prisoners of war. By the 1980s, it was widely held that the conventions had the status of customary law binding on all. Consequently, grave breaches of the conventions were universally punishable, though there remained no instrument for punishing perpetrators. Moreover, within a decade or so of their enactment, it became clear that there were significant gaps in the conventions. Not least, there was no prohibition on indiscriminate bombardment and no proportionality clause in the four conventions (Best 1994: 106–7). Furthermore, **decolonisation** and the overwhelming preponderance of internal wars created an impetus for extending the protections afforded in international wars to internal conflicts. Between 1974 and 1977, states returned to Geneva to negotiate additions to the conventions.

The first Geneva Protocol significantly extended the protection afforded to non-combatants. It insisted that attacks be strictly limited to military objectives, defining these as 'those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage' (Article 52, Protocol I). In other words, soldiers were forbidden from attacking non-combatants or their property, though so-called 'dual use' facilities remained lawful targets. Soldiers were also obliged to evaluate the proportionality of their attacks, with Article 51(5) outlawing attacks on military objects which 'may be expected to cause' excessive civilian casualties. The Protocol also forbade the indirect targeting of non-combatants through attacks calculated to destroy vital civilian infrastructure and cause starvation. The Protocol's principle of discrimination provided the catalyst for conventions banning weapons considered inherently indiscriminate. For example, the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons and subsequent amendments banned booby traps, lasers, and weapons that injure by creating fire and heat, on the grounds of inherent indiscriminacy. The 2000 Convention prohibiting the manufacture, sale and use of landmines was also justified on this basis. Of course, the question of discrimination made it problematic for the nuclear powers to adopt the Protocol because it is very difficult to see how nuclear weapons could be used discriminately. Despite the non-signature of states such as the US, UK and Russia owing to concerns about the legality of their nuclear arsenals, all three have indicated that they believe the Protocol to be binding and that the legality of the use of nuclear weapons is indeterminate, a position confirmed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the *Legality of Nuclear Weapons* case.

Protocol II regulated how states might respond to internal insurgents. Above all, it reinforced the basic idea behind human rights law, that states were not free to treat their own citizens however they liked, though Protocol II afforded states considerable latitude in deciding whether or not a particular **insurgency** could be labelled an 'armed conflict', thereby bringing

the Protocol into play. Nevertheless, some states – particularly the US – complained that Protocol II gave too many rights to 'terrorists' and tied the hands of states combating them.

Through the Geneva conventions and protocols and other instruments such as the Genocide Convention (1948), a comprehensive system of positive law designed to moderate the use of force and protect non-combatants has been created. The system did little, however, to deter despots such as Pol Pot and Idi Amin from systematically massacring non-combatants. Furthermore, in the so-called 'new wars' of the 1990s, the direct targeting of non-combatants once again became a war strategy. As a result of this seemingly growing impunity before the law, the question of enforcement was raised once again, culminating in the creation of the ICC in 2002.

The moral restrictions on the use of force are very similar to the legal prohibitions. There are three basic rules. First, the principle of *discrimination*: non-combatants must never be deliberately attacked. Second, the principle of *proportionality*: military targets may only be attacked when their military value outweighs the foreseeable destruction that will result. Third, combatants must not use prohibited weapons or conduct themselves in ways that violate the laws of war.

Underpinning the *jus in bello* is the doctrine of double-effect, first articulated in the thirteenth century by St Thomas Aquinas. According to Aquinas, the doctrine holds that any act may have two consequences: one that is intended and one that is not. Even if we intend good, our actions might cause unintended negative consequences. According to the doctrine of double-effect, unintended negative consequences are excusable if four conditions are satisfied:

1. The desired end must be good in itself.
2. Only the good effect is intended.
3. The good effect must not be produced by means of the evil effect.
4. The good of the good effect must outweigh the evil of the evil effect (proportionality) (Ramsey 1961: 43; 48–9).

There is a major flaw with this rendition and double-effect injunctions ought to be treated sceptically. It is worth quoting Walzer (1977: 156) at length here:

> Simply not to intend the death of civilians is too easy . . . What we look for in such cases is some sign of a positive commitment to save civilian lives. Not merely to apply the proportionality rule and kill no more civilians than is militarily necessary . . . Civilians have a right to something more. And if saving civilian lives means risking soldier's lives, the risk must be accepted.

The idea that it is possible to separate intent and act, particularly when referring to individuals in combat, has often been criticised. Critics argue that there is no practical difference between *intending* the deaths of non-combatants near military targets and merely *foreseeing* it (McKeogh 2002). According to Walzer and the contemporary laws of war, although we can never fully know an actor's intentions, we can ascertain something approximating intentions by focusing on actions. To display an intention not to harm non-combatants, combatants must demonstrate *both* that they did not deliberately seek to kill non-combatants and that they have taken every reasonable precaution to minimise the likelihood of harming non-combatants (due care). However, there remain significant differences over *how much* additional risk should be accepted. These debates cannot be resolved in the abstract, but

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Box 15.2: Key texts

International humanitarian law: some important documents

— Hague Conference (1899)
  • Convention (II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land
  • Declaration on the Launching of Projectiles and Explosives from Balloons
  • Declaration on the Use of Projectiles the Object of Which is the Diffusion of Asphyxi-
    ating or Deleterious Gases
— Hague Conference (1907)
  • Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land
— Geneva Conventions (1949)
  • Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in
    Armed Forces in the Field
  • Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick and Ship-
    wrecked Members of the Armed Forces at Sea
  • Convention (III) Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War
  • Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War
— Additional Protocols to the Geneva Convention
  • Additional Protocol (I) Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed
    Conflict (1977)
  • Additional Protocol (II) Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International
    Armed Conflicts (1977)
  • Additional Protocol (III) Relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem
    (2005)

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only through empirical assessments of individual cases. The remainder of the chapter outlines two important contemporary debates, one in relation to recourse to force and the second in relation to the conduct of war.

Jus ad bellum dilemma: preemption

After 11 September 2001 both the US and Australian governments have put forward a case for preemptive self-defence. John Howard, for example, argues that Australia would use force overseas if it received information that terrorists were preparing an attack against Australians and the host state refused to act. This doctrine was condemned by both Australia's neighbours and Howard's domestic opponents, but is it illegal and/or unjust?

Since 1945, interpretations of Article 51 of the UN Charter have tended to fall into one of two camps, restrictionists and counter-restrictionists. Restrictionists insist that Article 51 expressly rules out preemption, arguing that states have a right to use force in self-defence only *after* an armed attack has occurred, a view supported by the ICJ in the *Nicaragua v. US* case. They argue that if these limits were loosened, states would be encouraged to abuse the right to self-defence, eroding the distinction between aggression and defence (Cassese 1986: 515–16). Although there is evidence that the Charter's drafters intended Article 51 to provide only a limited right of self-defence, the idea that a state should wait to be attacked before taking measures to defend its citizens has been widely criticised. Sir Humphrey Waldock (in Roberts 1999: 483) described it as 'a travesty of the purposes of the Charter'.

> **Box 15.3:   Case study**
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> **The *Caroline* affair**
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> In 1837, there was an armed insurrection against British rule in Canada. The rebels used an American-owned ship, the *Caroline*, to transport supplies from the American side of the Niagara River. On 29 December 1837, Canadian troops loyal to Britain boarded the ship, killed several Americans, set the ship alight and allowed it to drift over the Niagara Falls. At the time of the attack the *Caroline* was docked on the American side of the border not in its usual port on the Canadian side. The US protested against the attack, claiming that its **sovereignty** had been violated but the British insisted that they were exercising their right to self-defence.
>   The British defended their action by blaming the Americans for failing to prevent the use of its territory by the Canadian rebels and justified the attack as 'a necessity of self-defence and self-preservation'. Not surprisingly, the US rejected this argument, insisting that the level of threat that could justify 'hot pursuit' must be 'imminent, and extreme, and involving impending destruction'. In 1840, the US government invited the British government to apologise for the incident and pay compensation in return for the dismissal of charges against a soldier imprisoned in connection with the incident. The British Minister agreed immediately and despatched an apologetic note to the US government. In an 1842 reply to the British, the American Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, explained that for the claim of self-defence to be justifiable Britain was required to 'show a necessity of self-defence, instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation'. The action taken must also involve 'nothing unreasonable or excessive; since the act, justified by the necessity of self-defence, must be limited by that necessity and kept clearly within it' (see Bellamy 2006: 161–2.).

Counter-restrictionists argue that Article 51 does not diminish a state's inherent right to preemptive self-defence. There are at least three justifications for this view. First, it is implied in the Charter's language. Article 51 explicitly endorses a state's *inherent* right to self-defence. That inherent right is said to include a right of preemption. Second, states have tended to judge preemption on the merits of each case. When the threat is demonstrably imminent, international society has shown itself willing to tolerate preemption. The paradigmatic case of this was the world's reaction to Israel's 1967 preemptive attack on Egypt. Although some states condemned Israel, many others accepted that it was necessary for Israel to use force to defend itself.[2] Finally, there is a strong tradition of moral thinking in favour of preemption. Historically, prominent writers like Grotius and Pufendorf in the seventeenth century, and Vattel in the eighteenth century have tended to identify a limited right of preemption.

The balance of argument suggests a right of self-defence that permits preemption in some cases but forbids 'preventive' attacks before a threat has become imminent. In what situations is preemption justifiable? Where do we draw the line between preemption and prevention? We can begin to answer these questions by considering the exchange of diplomatic notes between the UK and US concerning the sinking of the *Caroline* in 1837 (Box 15.3).

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[2] C. Gray 2000, *International Law and the Use of Force*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 112–13.

According to the *Caroline* case, in order to invoke a right of preemption, a state has to demonstrate (1) the imminence of an attack, (2) the necessity of preemption and (3) the proportionality of its intended response.

States therefore have a limited right of preemption in cases that satisfy these three criteria. Jurists worry, with good reason, that expanding the right beyond the *Caroline* formula would blur the boundary between legitimate defence and unjust aggression. In the post-September 11 world, we are confronted with a tricky dilemma – defining what 'imminence' means in relation to terrorism. As George W. Bush (2002) put it, when it comes to terrorism, 'we cannot wait for the final proof – the smoking gun – that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud'. One way of rethinking 'imminence' without undermining the legal and moral balance would be to suggest that an attack is imminent if the enemy has demonstrated an intention to attack and has acquired the means to do so. In relation to terrorism, this might suggest that states are entitled to use force to preempt an attack even if they do not know the precise timing and location of an expected attack. It is imperative, however, that those using force in this way provide compelling evidence of the target's intent to attack and ability to do so.

Jus in bello dilemma: cluster bombs

Cluster bombs are designed to deliver a large amount of smaller submunitions over a significant area, increasing the overall radius of destruction that a bomb can achieve. They are generally meant for use against troop concentrations, airfields – especially runways – and air defence units. Even when targeted at military objects, cluster bombs present two sets of problems: first, because the submunitions are not individually targeted there is a high chance that the bomb attack itself could cause casualties among non-combatants. Second, unexploded submunitions effectively become anti-personnel landmines. As a result, in 2007 a group of states and non-government organisations led by Norway began a campaign to ban the use of cluster bombs.

The key question here is whether the inability to direct each submunition and the threat that unexploded submunitions pose to non-combatants makes the weapon inherently indiscriminate. The 1977 Protocol I provides guidance. The Protocol prohibits attacks 'which employ a method or means of combat which cannot be directed at a specific military target' (Article 51(4)(b)) and forbids bombings that treat 'separate and distinct' military targets as one (Article 51(5)(a)). At very least, this suggests that cluster bombs can only be discriminately used against military targets that are well away from civilian areas. Even if this condition is satisfied, however, cluster bombs may still have an indiscriminate *effect*. Protocol I defines indiscriminate attacks as including those 'which employ a method or means of combat the effects of which cannot be limited as required by this Protocol' (Article 51(4)(c)). Coupled with the requirement to take 'all feasible precautions' to protect non-combatants, it is difficult to see how an attack in an area likely to be frequented by non-combatants before those that launched the attack have had the opportunity to remove unexploded submunitions can be considered discriminate (Cryer 2002: 61 n.137).

The US made widespread use of cluster bombs against frontline targets in Afghanistan. In several cases, cluster bombs killed non-combatants on impact. According to Human Rights

Watch, the choice of cluster bombs to strike targets relatively close to residential areas constitutes a failure to take 'all feasible precautions'. Indeed, it argues that the use of cluster bombs near residential areas should be presumed indiscriminate (2002: 24). The element of indiscrimination comes into play when a cluster bomb hits its intended target but some of its submunitions nevertheless harm non-combatants. However, in many cases the non-combatant casualties may have been the result of bombs *missing* their target, meaning that the killings were a mistake rather than a direct consequence of the type of munitions used. Given this, it is worth posing the proportionality question of whether the danger posed by large numbers of small munitions is greater or less than that posed by the alternative – a single unitary bomb. The US Defense Department is on the record as arguing that unitary bombs cause more **collateral damage** than cluster bombs because they have a larger blast range (Human Rights Watch 2001: 10 n.33). Whilst the submunitions damaged civilian buildings, unitary bombs would have flattened them.

The much more problematic issue in relation to cluster bombs is their indiscriminate *effects*. Each submunition that fails to explode on impact effectively becomes a landmine – commonly believed to be inherently indiscriminate because it detonates irrespective of whether it is touched by a combatant or non-combatant. Do these ostensibly indiscriminate effects mean that the use of cluster bombs themselves should be deemed indiscriminate? One could argue that cluster bombs are much like any other weapon in that all weapons pose an indiscriminate threat when they malfunction. However, has the US taken every feasible precaution to minimise the damage that unexploded ordnance causes to non-combatants and civilian property?

At war's end there were between 12,221 and 53,772 unexploded submunitions in Afghanistan. Even at the lower end, this posed a significant threat to non-combatants. The first way to reduce this threat would be to lower the failure rate. The failure rate of newer weapons is considerably lower than older weapons but there are reports that the US made extensive use of old munitions weapons in Afghanistan. Because unexploded submunitions pose a continuing threat to non-combatants after the cessation of hostilities, those that delivered them have a responsibility to do everything feasible to remove them. Anything short of this breaches the principle of due care. Although de-mining and the removal of unexploded munitions have progressed apace in Afghanistan, the overwhelming bulk of the effort was conducted by the UN Mine Action Programme and **nongovernmental organisations** such as HALO. By the end of 2002, 111 cluster bomb sites had been cleared out of an estimated total of 227 with much of the remainder being cleared in 2003–4 (Human Rights Watch 2002: 33). The most troubling issue was the very limited role played by the US government, the actor with the primary moral responsibility for removing the weapons. Most de-mining agencies in Afghanistan told Human Rights Watch that the US government provided little or no help, and that it had not even provided accurate information to de-miners. In the first eight months after the war, the US donated only $7 million in cash and equipment to the de-mining effort (Human Rights Watch 2002: 37–8).

On two counts, therefore, the US failed the due care test. First, it used old weapons with relatively high failure rates in close proximity to residential areas. Second, having dropped cluster bombs, the US and its allies failed in their responsibility to remove the threat to non-combatants posed by unexploded submunitions.

Conclusion

Without ethical and legal constraints on both the decision to wage it (*jus ad bellum*) and its conduct (*jus in bello*), war is nothing more than the application of brute force, logically indistinguishable from mass murder. But it need not always be this way. Today there is a well-developed set of moral and legal rules governing the use of force and international institutions designed to enforce them.

Nonetheless, it is the ever-present danger of the descent into barbarism that makes the ethics and laws of war so important today and in democracies especially every individual has a responsibility to use his or her own judgment to interrogate the morality of violence employed in their name. To return to where we started, the Australian debate about whether or not to invade Iraq and when to withdraw demonstrates only too well the practical veracity of the rules and ideas set out in this chapter. Neither advocates nor opponents rejected the existence of rules. Instead, they disagreed about the guidance they gave in this specific instance. This is entirely as it should be. The principles described in this chapter do not provide answers; they simply set out ways of having meaningful conversations about the myriad dilemmas presented by war. These are not idle or unimportant debates because they determine not only the future trajectory of politicians' careers but also the future life-chances of countless thousands, if not millions, of people.

Questions

1. What is the relationship between the 'just war' tradition and the laws of war?
2. In what ways should the 'just war' tradition be reformed to bring it up to date?
3. Are some weapons, like cluster bombs and nuclear missiles, inherently immoral or does it all depend on how they are used?
4. Why was there so much opposition to the 2003 invasion of Iraq? Do you think this opposition was justified?
5. Is it fair that both the just side and the unjust side in war have to abide by the same rules?
6. Does the 'just war' tradition serve to limit war or enable it by providing moral justifications for killing?

Further reading

Best, G. 1994, War and law since 1945, Oxford: Clarendon Press. The most comprehensive account of international humanitarian law since 1945.

Johnson, J. T. 1999, Morality and contemporary warfare, New Haven: Yale University Press. Excellent account of 'just war' thinking grounded in the tradition's history.

Walzer, M. 1977, Just and unjust wars: a philosophical argument with historical illustrations, New York: Basic Books. Modern classic account of the 'just war' tradition.

16
International Law

Shirley Scott

Introduction

This chapter presents an account of how **international law** functions in relation to international relations. First, it surveys the sources and philosophical underpinnings of international law. Second, it outlines the scope of subjects addressed by international law. Third, it considers some of the ways international law impacts on Australia. Finally, it addresses the question of whether international law really matters in international relations.

International law began as a system of law governing relations among **states**. It has evolved in conjunction with the evolution of the international states-system so as to encompass the activities of intergovernmental organisations, **multinational corporations**, not-for-profit **non-governmental organisations** and individuals. It is essential for students of world politics to learn about the functioning of the international legal system because international law is integral to world politics. The breadth of the subject matter encompassed by international law and the increasing complexity of the international legal system mean, however, that even international lawyers often specialise in only a few aspects of international law and whole books are devoted to single topics in international law. This chapter does not attempt to cover all the content of international law but to introduce the reader to how the system of international law functions and to offer guidance as to where to find information on particular subject areas of international law when the need arises. While the system of law with which we are concerned in this chapter is generally referred to simply as 'international law', be aware that the term 'public international law' is sometimes used to distinguish it from the 'private international law' that regulates commercial relationships across international borders.

The sources of international law

What are the sources of law? There is no international legislature to make international law and there is no one single book containing an authoritative statement of international law. If we want to know what international law has to say on a particular issue we need to examine several *sources* of international law.

Box 16.1: Discussion points

Sources of international law

Article 38(1) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice sets out the basis on which the Court is to reach a decision. Although in a narrow sense the article refers only to the sources of international law to be drawn on by the Court, it is widely held to be a statement of all of the current sources of international law:

> The Court, whose function is to decide in accordance with international law such disputes as are submitted to it, shall apply:
>
> 1. international conventions, whether general or particular, establishing rules expressly recognised by the contesting states;
> 2. international custom, as evidence of a general practice accepted as law;
> 3. the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations;
> 4. subject to the provisions of Article 59, judicial decisions and the teachings of the most highly qualified publicists of the various nations, as subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law.

Treaties

Treaties are the most important source of international law today. A treaty is a legally binding agreement among states; in some circumstances intergovernmental organisations may also be parties to a treaty. A treaty may be **bilateral** (between two states only) or multilateral (between three or more states). An example of a bilateral treaty is the Australia-US **Free Trade** Agreement. With over 130 signatories, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention) is an example of a **multilateral** treaty. A treaty sets out what the parties agree to do and/or to refrain from doing in relation to a particular issue. Intergovernmental organisations are established by multilateral treaty. The **United Nations**, for example, was founded by the 1945 **United Nations Charter** and the **World Trade Organization** by the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization.

The structure of a treaty

A treaty will usually begin with a list of phrases, each beginning with a verb. This is called the *preamble*, and while its contents do not contain legal obligations as such, they are a good indication of the intellectual climate within which the treaty was negotiated and may be used to assist in the interpretation of the treaty. The substantive provisions containing the detail of the treaty's legal obligations begin after the preamble. Treaties are divided into articles, which may be further divided into paragraphs and sub-paragraphs. In a longer treaty the articles may be grouped into chapters and the chapters into parts or sections. Article One, paragraph four is written as article 1(4). Following the substantive provisions the treaty addresses matters relating to the mechanics of the operation of the treaty, such as who may be a party to it and under what conditions, how the treaty text may be changed, and for how long the treaty will last.

A state is not required to comply with the provisions of a treaty of which it is not a party. States A, B, and C cannot negotiate a treaty and claim it to be binding on State D. This makes it important to locate not just the text of a particular treaty but information as to which states are parties to that treaty. Such information is provided in a *status list*. The status

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Box 16.2:   Key texts

Finding treaty texts

Your understanding of international relations will be much enhanced if you read the actual text of relevant treaties rather than paraphrased accounts of their terms. If you are looking for a treaty whose title you already know it is often possible to find the treaty text on the internet simply by typing the title into a search engine such as Google. It is also useful to know of specialist sites, such as the following:

Operated by Tufts University, this treaties database will be particularly useful if you are starting with a subject area and looking for treaties addressing that subject.

http://fletcher.tufts.edu/multilaterals.html

The Australian Treaties Database is an online resource for researching treaties to which Australia is a signatory, or in relation to which Australia has taken other treaty action. This database can be searched by subject as well as by treaty title.

http://www.info.dfat.gov.au/treaties

This is the official website concerning the activities of the UN in the field of international law. It contains a link to the UN Treaties Database but access to the Database requires payment of a subscription.

www.un.org/law/

Established by the American Society of International law, this site provides not only treaty texts but other international law materials, links to websites and online guides.

www.eisil.org

Some who use treaties on a regular basis find it useful to have a published collection of documents to which to refer. General collections include Brownlie (2002) and Scott (2006).

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list for most treaties can now be found on the internet, often accompanying the treaty text. A status list uses terms such as signed, ratified, acceded, and withdrawn and so some knowledge of the treaty-making process is needed in order to understand a status list.

The treaty-making process
A treaty is the outcome of a process of negotiation. Negotiations may last for weeks, or sometimes sessions may continue on an intermittent basis for several years. Note that when you hear reference to the 'conclusion' of a treaty this refers to the conclusion of the negotiations for a treaty, not to the life of the treaty itself. A state that signs a multilateral treaty is not by that act bound by the treaty. A second step, referred to as *ratification*, is a state's confirmation of its willingness to be legally bound.

The conclusion of a multilateral treaty at the end of a process of negotiation similarly does not usually thereby create law. Within the final provisions of the treaty is a statement as to what is required for that treaty to enter into force as law. It may, for example, be a certain number of ratifications, or a period of time, or ratification by designated states. A treaty is usually dated from the year in which it was concluded rather than that in which it entered

Table 16.1: Well-known treaties in some major fields of international law

Field of International Law	Examples of Multilateral Treaties in this Field
International human rights law	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
	International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
International humanitarian law	Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War
	Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts
International space law	Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies
International criminal law	Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
	The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
	International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism
International environmental law	Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer
	The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer
	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
	Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

into force and there may be a considerable difference between the two dates. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for example, entered into force in 1994. A state that wishes to become party to a treaty once that treaty has entered into force does so in a single step, of *accession*.

The final provisions of a treaty may indicate the conditions under which a state can withdraw from the treaty. While withdrawing from a major treaty is not an everyday occurrence, there have been several high-profile examples in recent years. The US met with considerable criticism when it announced on 13 December 2001 its intention to withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, as did North Korea for its announcement on 10 January 2003 that it was withdrawing from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Custom
Much of international law – including that relating to the treatment of diplomats, the law of self-defence, and much of the law relating to the use of the oceans – has evolved through customary international law. Custom has two essential ingredients: state practice – what a state does and does not do and what it says – and *opinio juris* – evidence that the state has been choosing to behave in that way for reasons of law. Custom can be quite a slow way of creating international law, although that need not be the case. One of the principal differences

Table 16.2: Cases before the ICJ involving Australia

Dates	Case	The Issue	Outcome
1973–74	Nuclear Tests (Australia v. France)	New Zealand and Australia initiated proceedings after France had ignored their protests at French nuclear testing in the Pacific.	The cases were discontinued after France gave unilateral undertakings not to proceed with any atmospheric tests.
1989–93	Certain Phosphate Lands in Nauru (Nauru v. Australia)	Nauru instituted proceedings against Australia in respect of a dispute over the rehabilitation of phosphate lands that had been worked out before Nauru attained independence.	Australia settled the dispute out of court, agreeing to pay Nauru a cash settlement of A$107 million over a period of years.
1991–95	East Timor (Portugal v. Australia)	Indonesia occupied East Timor in 1975. In 1979 Australia entered into negotiations with Indonesia over the seabed boundary between East Timor and Australia. Portugal, the former colonial ruler of East Timor, instituted proceedings against Australia, claiming that Australia had failed to respect Portugal as the administering power of East Timor and the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination.	The Court decided that Indonesia was a necessary party to the dispute and that the Court could not proceed in its absence. Portugal could not bring a case against Indonesia because Indonesia had not given its consent to the jurisdiction of the Court.

between treaty law and customary international law is that under customary international law a state may become bound by the general practice of other states if it has not protested against the emergence of a new rule, whereas in treaty law a state is bound only if it is a party to the treaty. Custom is in many cases codified and clarified in a treaty.

Judgments of international courts and tribunals

The Statute of the International Court of Justice refers to judicial decisions as a subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law. A notable feature of world politics in the twentieth century was the growth in the number of international courts and tribunals.

The Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) was established in 1922 and replaced after World War II by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). There are many similarities between these two courts and both are referred to as the World Court. The International Court of Justice (http://www.icj-cij.org/) is situated at The Hague in the Netherlands. Only states can be parties to cases before the ICJ. The Court has fifteen judges, no two of whom may be from one country. The ICJ gives two types of decisions: advisory opinions (answers to questions about international law) and those in contentious cases (arising from a dispute between states). The General Assembly, Security Council and sixteen of the UN's specialised agencies can request advisory opinions – that is, ask the Court questions about international law. There is usually a political motive behind a request for an advisory opinion.

If the Court is asked to hear a contentious case it must first decide whether the case is one suitable for the Court to hear and whether the parties have given their consent to the Court doing so. It might seem strange that the ICJ can only hear a contentious case where the parties concerned have given their consent, but the principle of consent is central to the system of international law among **sovereign states**. A minority of states have given their consent to the jurisdiction of the Court irrespective of who might wish to initiate proceedings against them and on what subject, and sometimes a state willingly grants its consent to a specific case. But it is often not so straightforward. A state may, for example, have given its consent to the Court for hearing only some types of disputes and so the Court has to determine whether a particular dispute falls into the specified category.

When the Court gives a judgment on the 'merits' (the substance of the dispute), that judgment is binding on the parties. Cases before the ICJ in which Australia has been either an applicant or respondent illustrate the fact that the impact of the Court is not, however, confined to its judgments; sometimes the Court proceedings serve to influence a diplomatic process through which a dispute is ultimately resolved.

The International Criminal Court or ICC (www.un.org/icc/index.html), also situated in The Hague, began its work in 2002. Unlike the ICJ, the ICC has jurisdiction over individuals. Its jurisdiction encompasses four crimes: **genocide**, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression (once a provision defining this crime and setting out the conditions for the exercise of such jurisdiction is adopted). Under the principle of 'complementarity', the Court can only conduct a case in instances in which a national jurisdiction is unwilling or unable to carry out the investigation or prosecution. Proponents nevertheless regard the ICC as a significant step towards individual accountability for serious international crimes.

The philosophical underpinnings of international law

International law is primarily a *positivist* legal system, which means that the law is believed to derive from the will of people/states who have made that law rather than from a source external to the human world. States are required to comply with international law because they have given their *consent* to those laws. A state is in turn only able to consent to international law because of its **sovereignty**. That is, it must have legal independence from other states before it is able to choose to consent to particular rules of international law.

The principle of consent may sometimes become a little stretched and it is very obvious that no country in the world enjoys pure independence, but it is important to be aware of these foundational concepts in the system of international law. They can perhaps be best understood if contrasted to a system of *natural law*. In a system of natural law, the law derives its authority from religion or metaphysics. International law used to be primarily a system of natural law and it is possible to still see some evidence of natural law, particularly in the international law of **human rights**.

Fields of international law

International law is usually categorised according to the subjects with which it deals. Following is a list of common categories of international law. Bear in mind that these fields overlap somewhat.

International human rights law

At the core of international human rights law is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two treaties to which it gave rise: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Refugee Convention is usually placed in this category as are the treaties condemning racial discrimination and discrimination against women.

International humanitarian law

International humanitarian law seeks to regulate the conduct of **war**. The 1949 **Geneva conventions** and their protocols are at its core. The International Committee of the Red Cross has played a pivotal role in the development of international humanitarian law; visit its website at http://www.icrc.org/.

International law and the use of force

One of the great innovations of the UN Charter was its general prohibition on the use of force. The Charter provides for two exceptions: if authorised by the Security Council and if in self-defence. The details of the law of self-defence are found in customary international law.

International space law

Foundational here is the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty) which provides that space is not subject to national appropriation.

International criminal law

This is a rapidly evolving field of international law. International and transnational crimes include war crimes and crimes against humanity, cybercrime, **terrorism**, money-laundering, traffic in narcotic drugs, and organised crime and corruption.

International environmental law

International environmental law is essentially a post-World War II branch of international law. Typical in this field is to negotiate a general framework convention, containing overall objectives, followed by a more detailed 'protocol' containing specific obligations. The 1991 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was, for example, followed by the 1997 **Kyoto Protocol**.

International economic law

One of the most significant recent treaties in this field is the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization. Of increasing controversy has been the relationship between this body of international law and that seeking to protect the environment.

Law of the sea

The core treaty in this field, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, was the product of long negotiations for a legal framework in which states could conduct their

trade, fishing, and naval operations as well as protect the marine environment and provide for regulation of possible mining of the deep seabed. The Convention is sometimes dubbed a 'constitution for the oceans'.

The impact of international law on Australian law

Australia subscribes to the *dualist* **theory** of the relationship of international law to municipal (domestic) law, by which international law is not automatically part of Australian law but must be incorporated into it. Once there has been a decision to agree to a treaty, the Commonwealth government must decide whether existing legislation is adequate to give effect to those obligations or whether new legislation is required at the Commonwealth and/or state/territory level. Sometimes there will be a delay in this process. In the case of the Genocide Convention, for example, Australia ratified the Convention in 1949 but did not legislate to make genocide a crime in Australia until 2002!

International law is having an increasing impact on Australian law. The *Mabo* decision of 3 June 1992 was a classic example of the High Court drawing on international law to effect change in Australian common law. This decision, the first Australian judicial recognition of a native title to land, was justified by the finding that Australia had not been *terra nullius* (a term of international law) at the time of European colonisation. This finding was, in turn, justified by the 1975 *Western Sahara* decision of the ICJ. Critics of the influence of international law on Australian law and politics sometimes claim that Australia is losing sovereignty through its participation in international law but supporters of international law claim that the very act of participation is an act of sovereignty.

Australia's involvement with international law has also had a controversial impact on federal–state relations. Australia has a federal system of government in which **power** is shared between levels of government. The powers of the Commonwealth government are set out in Section 51 of the constitution, leaving the states to address remaining subject areas. Where a federal and a state law conflict, the federal law overrides that of the state. The decision of the High Court in the 1983 *Tasmanian Dams* case made it clear that the Commonwealth may use its external affairs power to legislate to implement treaties whose subject matter would otherwise fall within the domain of the states. As international law has expanded into subject areas traditionally addressed by states the Commonwealth could, theoretically at least, override most state legislation. In practice this is unlikely to happen.

Does international law really 'matter' in the real world? Law versus power

Comments are often made to the effect that 'almost all nations observe almost all principles of international law and almost all of their obligations almost all of the time' (Henkin 1979: 47). Such statements are intended to counter the assumption of realists that international law does not really matter in world politics. According to sceptics, the international law of telecommunications or airline travel may well be regularly complied with but when it comes

to questions of 'high politics' such as the decision to use force, international law plays a minor role if any in national decision-making. Many realist authors do not even waste their time arguing against the effectiveness of international law; they simply ignore its existence and avoid using the 'l' word.

While it is probably true that most states do comply with most of their international legal obligations most of the time, even if only because most aspects of policy and routine actions are not being constantly re-evaluated, the statement is not based on any empirical analysis of the rate of compliance with international law (Chayes and Chayes 1993: 177). There has in recent years been increased interest in researching compliance, but such research is limited by the nature of international law. One of the most fundamental points to understand about the functioning of the international legal system is that international law is to a considerable extent *indeterminate*. This means that what one international lawyer (or state) maintains is a legal action, another may label illegal. The indeterminacy of international law makes it particularly difficult to undertake objective empirical analyses of rates of compliance other than in relation to very technical obligations that leave little scope for debating whether the state in question has or has not complied in that instance.

One of the most important incentives for a state to comply with its international legal obligations is *reciprocity*. Consider the treatment of diplomats for example. If State A were to imprison and mistreat the diplomats of State B one might anticipate that State B would retaliate and treat the diplomats of State A in a similarly bad way. It is therefore in the best interests of State A to treat diplomats well in the first place. Reciprocity is least likely to be an effective incentive for complying with international law in a situation in which the power differentials are great. The US is at present so much more powerful than any other state that there is a natural temptation on the part of US decision-makers to discount the need to respect international law; it is not easy for any other state to retaliate if it does not like its treatment at the hands of the US government.

The US has in recent years undertaken many actions in relation to international law for which it has met with international criticism. These include US opposition to the new International Criminal Court and its failure to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the announcement of President Bush in December 2001 that the US was withdrawing from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the US practice of 'extraordinary rendition', by which prisoners are transferred to other countries, including Egypt, Morocco or Syria where they are then tortured. The 1984 Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Torture Convention) not only requires a state to take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in its own territory but by Article 3(1) expressly prohibits extraditing a person to another state where there are 'substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture'.

On 20 March 2003 the US, UK, and Australia invaded Iraq. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter forbids a state from using force in its international relations. There are two exceptions to the general rule: if the use of force has been authorised by the Security Council and if the use of force is in self-defence. These countries have claimed that Resolutions 678 and 687 in combination with Resolution 1441 of November 2002 justified the invasion (the text of these resolutions can be found at http://www.un.org/documents/scres.htm), but only a minority of international lawyers – even in the countries concerned – agree with this reading of the

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Box 16.3:   Key texts

Key provisions of the United Nations Charter on the use of force
General Prohibition on the Use of Force

Article 2(4): All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

The Role of the Security Council

Article 39: The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international **peace** and **security**.

Article 40: In order to prevent an aggravation of the situation, the Security Council may, before making the recommendations or deciding upon the measures provided for in Article 39, call upon the parties concerned to comply with such provisional measures as it deems necessary or desirable. Such provisional measures shall be without prejudice to the rights, claims, or position of the parties concerned. The Security Council shall duly take account of failure to comply with such provisional measures.

Article 41: The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

Self-defence

Article 51: Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Read the whole Charter at www.un.org/aboutun/charter/.

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relevant resolutions. It is likely that the apparent disregard of international law by the US has contributed to a perceived loss of US foreign policy legitimacy.

Conclusion: Australia and international law

It is sometimes said that international law is of most importance to 'middle powers', such as Australia. Weak states are unlikely to have the necessary expertise to participate fully in the system of international law while the most powerful states can generally act as they wish, whether or not they do so with the support of international law. It is the middle powers

that stand to benefit most from active engagement in a well-functioning system of international law. Successive Australian governments have sought to further Australia's interests via international law. Australia has contributed actively to many developments in the international legal system, including aspects of the Law of the Sea and the establishment of an International Criminal Court. Australia has produced many highly distinguished international lawyers, both academics and practitioners, and has on occasions been proactive in helping break deadlocks in negotiations for new treaties, as was the case with the Chemical Weapons Convention. As international law continues to expand rapidly and increase in complexity, the need for political scientists to understand the workings of the international legal system and its place in world politics has never been greater.

Questions

1. Why is international law important? How, if at all, does it contribute to international **order**, security, and justice?
2. What are the key sources of international law, and how is it made?
3. How are customary and treaty law different?
4. What do you think are the most important treaties or documents, and why?
5. Do political considerations affect either the development or implementation of international law?

Further reading

Barker, J. Craig 2000, International law and international relations, London: Continuum. An introductory international relations text on international law, which includes clear explanations of how the various international relations theories view international law.

Beck, Robert J., Arend, Anthony Clark and Vander Lugt, Robert D. (eds) 1996, International rules: approaches from international law and international relations, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Useful guide to alternative theoretical approaches to international law.

Blay, S., Piotrowicz, R. and Tsamenyi, B. M. 1997, Public international law: an Australian perspective, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Australian textbook on international law.

Brownlie, Ian 2002, Documents in international law, fifth edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press. General collection of international legal documents.

Byers, Michael (ed.) 2000, The role of law in international politics, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Essays by leading writers on aspects of the political functioning of international law.

Malanczuk, P. 1997, Akehurst's modern introduction to international law, seventh review edition, London and New York: Routledge. Introductory textbook on international law often used by political scientists as well as law students.

Sands, P. 2005, Lawless world: America and the making and breaking of global rules, Camberwell: Penguin. Provocative critique of the Bush and Blair administrations' attitudes towards international law by an eminent international lawyer.

International Society and European Expansion

Paul Keal

Introduction

This chapter examines the evolution of **international society** through European expansion. It considers, first, the nature of international society: does such a society exist? What are its features? What purpose does it serve? And does it have the requisite unity to act as an agent in international relations? The discussion here draws upon the work of the **English School** which pioneered the notion of international *society*. Second, the differing approaches to international society taken by solidarism and pluralism will be navigated. Third, the history of international society through **colonialism** and **decolonisation** will be charted, revealing the neglected story of an ongoing capacity for 'international society' to colonise the space of non-liberal **states**. Such a capacity throws up a challenge to international society to act as a standard bearer for countries that continue to be subjugated to the interests of greater powers.

International society

'International society' is a central term and focus of the English School (see Box 17.1). It is used to refer to both an influential concept and an actual society of states that is fundamental to world politics. This distinction matters because it is very easy to slip between these two meanings when thinking about international society; the concept doesn't easily correspond to how the world is actually constituted. Bearing this in mind, international society as an actual entity in world politics involves two stories; one of which is familiar and the other neglected. The familiar story presents international society as having its origins in newly formed sovereign European states, and recognising the need to regulate their mutual relations. Essential to this is an acceptance of plural conceptions of what is good and the entitlement of each **sovereign state** to conduct its internal affairs as it chooses. Cultural, religious and political differences are not seen to be a source of conflict, so long as there are rules of coexistence to guide states in their mutual relations. Largely as a consequence of the overseas expansion of Europe, and of colonisation and then decolonisation, the sovereign territorial state became the primary mode of political organisation, with practically all states becoming members of international society. From its inception international society constituted a

> ## Box 17.1   Discussion points
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> ### The English School
>
> The English School has grown in popularity over the past twenty years as a school of international relations. Though some scholars see the English School as an offshoot of **realism**, its proponents believe it offers a middle way between and beyond realism and liberal **idealism**.
>
> Ironically, the English School came into existence in the process of a polemical attack on international relations scholars closely associated with the London School of Economics. Roy Jones (1981) launched a withering assault on Hedley Bull, Michael Donelan, Alan James, C. A. W. Manning, Fred Northedge and Martin Wight, who he thought formed a more or less coherent School. He called for the School's closure, arguing that their defence of the 'classical approach' to international relations was idealist, unempirical and ignorant of scientific procedure.
>
> Tim Dunne's (1998) pioneering 'history of the English School', to borrow from his book's subtitle, made the case for viewing the English School as an outgrowth of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics, a group of international relations scholars that began meeting at the University of Cambridge from the late 1950s onwards. Its members included its leading figure, the historian Herbert Butterfield, as well as Wight, Bull, Michael Howard and Adam Watson among others. Dunne (1998: 6–11) argues that these scholars shared a particular tradition of inquiry, an interpretive approach to its subject, and an acknowledgment of the subject's inherently **normative** content. Interestingly, and controversially, Dunne also includes E. H. Carr as a member of the English School.
>
> Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami (2006) have recently presented an impressive reassessment and reconstruction of the English School. They question the inclusion of Carr in the School and argue instead for the inclusion of Manning who heavily influenced the thought of Hedley Bull, the Australian who has arguably been the most significant theorist to emerge from the School. Whatever their differences regarding who's in and who's out of the English School, for Dunne as for Linklater and Suganami, the School's key contribution to the study of international relations lies in the notion of international society. The English School argues that states exist in an international society, based on common rules, institutions and **norms**. This establishes and maintains order among states and supports the proposition that while states exist in a formal **anarchy**, they nonetheless make up a society of states. In this respect, the English School continues a line of thought that extends from Hugo Grotius in the seventeenth century (Bull, Kingsbury and Roberts 1990), which is why it is sometimes known as a **Grotian** approach.

moral community, meaning that members, at least in theory, treated each other as they would themselves be treated. Throughout the history of international society great powers have been central actors with both privileges and duties. Of these the most important duty has been to contribute to international **order**. At the core of this version of international society is a success story of the state as a form of political organisation and the historical maintenance of the society of states.

The second, but neglected, story of international society concerns the adverse and lasting impact of European expansion on non-Europeans and **non-state actors**. As well as extending international society from Europe to cover the globe, European expansion involved the

subjugation, colonisation and the 'civilisation' of non-European others. It often involved the brutal treatment of non-Europeans, including acts of **genocide**. This is consequently a story of dispossession and injustice, a story in which political **theory** and **international law** progressively served, until quite recently, to justify the appropriation of the lands occupied by non-Europeans. European expansion was, however, not a simple story of domination and subjection. There are many important examples of Europeans adopting the cultures that surrounded them, with some making 'really dramatic journeys across cultures' (Dalrymple 2002: 10). Even so, colonised and dispossessed peoples were generally excluded from the moral community of people entitled to the same rights and treatment that Europeans conceded to each other. In spite of decolonisation in the second half of the twentieth century and earlier, many peoples did not gain self-determination and remained in what they perceived as a state of internal colonialism. In spite of decolonisation there was no self-determination for many peoples within post-colonial states. They consequently made and continue to make rights claims against states and keep alive unresolved issues related to the harm caused by how they have been represented, by historic injustices and the moral legitimacy of the states in which they are located. This then is a story of the failure of states to resolve divisions in them and of international society to act as standard bearer for the marginalised and dispossessed.

What follows elaborates aspects of both these interwoven stories of international society and has as its starting point what Martin Wight regarded as one of the primary questions of international theory: what is the nature of international society? Again, the discussion draws heavily from the work of English School scholars such as Wight, Bull and R. J. Vincent.

The nature of international society

International society is first and foremost a society of states. In the same way that individuals sharing a common bond or interest form a society, of which the simplest example is a club, territorial sovereign states with common interests are the members and principal actors in international society. Sovereign states are, in theory, independent actors in world politics, and in international law have equal rights with all other states. At the same time that they have authority over the people and territory within their borders, sovereign states are supposedly independent from other states and have no higher authority standing above them (see chapter 10). From this follow two fundamental points.

First, international society is a society of mutual recognition. The states that constitute international society mutually recognise their right to **sovereignty**, independence and equality in international law. They recognise, in effect, each other's right to exist and have freedom of action as long as they do not threaten the sovereignty of another state. Without this recognition there can be no international society and from this follows the rule of non-intervention, which has been called the cardinal rule of international society (Vincent 1974). Without the approval of the **United Nations (UN)** Security Council, or unless falling under limited and justified conditions, states are not to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. This raises the question of whether and under what circumstances it is permissible to intervene in sovereign states (Wheeler 2000). Second, within states, order and the rule of law are maintained by institutions of the state, such as courts, police forces and various administrative bodies. International society has no government of this kind. Except for the UN

Box 17.2:   Discussion points

Hedley Bull on system and society

A *system of states* (or **international system**) is formed when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions, to cause them to behave – at least in some measure – as parts of a whole. (Bull 1977: 9).

A *society of states* (or international society) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions. (Bull 1977: 13).

(see chapter 32) – which, it should be emphasised, is an association of states and is often ineffective – there is no supranational authority able to impose or maintain order in international society. For this very reason Hedley Bull (1977) called it an 'anarchical society'; which is to say a society without government. The question arising from this, then, is: how is order between states maintained? One way to approach this is through asking a further question: how do we know that there is an international society?

Bull defined international society 'as a group of states' which is 'conscious of certain common interests and common values', and which accordingly sees itself as bound by a common set of rules 'and as sharing in the working of common institutions' (Bull 1977: 13). According to him, we know there is an international society because states behave as if there is one. Most states, most of the time, respect the rules of coexistence and participate in common institutions (Bull 1977: 42). In particular, they articulate common interests and values and also norms and rules, which their behaviour is in turn shaped by. The rules and norms might (but need not) have the status of international law. Equally, they need not be written or openly stated, but can be unspoken or tacit (Keal 1984). Rules and norms, whether written into law or not, are fundamental to international society because they guide the behaviour of states if they are to avoid conflict with each other. Unspoken or tacit rules are a response to situations where states either cannot or will not communicate openly.

In important cases the coordination of common interests in international society involves the creation of mutual expectations coupled with reciprocity. In other words, one state or group of states will do or not do *x* if it expects another state or group of states will respond by doing or not doing *y*. An example might be to forgo the development of a particular weapons system. For such expectations to work and achieve the common interest of not developing a particular class of weapon, it must be mutually understood that there is likely to be reciprocity if, and only if, A can be confident that B will reciprocate by not doing *y* if A does *x*. This is a process that requires decision-makers in one or more states to put themselves in the shoes of decision-makers in other states. It is a process known as intersubjectivity. We cannot know what is in the minds of decision-makers in other states, but we can imagine what they might do. And if they then do that, our expectation is confirmed, and in this way norms and rules emerge and can become settled.

For Bull, the common interests that define international society are ones that require powerful members, from time to time, to set aside their own perceived interests and act in the interests of the society of states as a whole, especially if the survival of the society of states itself is at risk. In relation to this, it is important to ask whether international society serves the interests of all states, or only some, thus promoting the interests of a particular group of states. Among others, Chris Brown (1995) has suggested that international society might not amount to more that an inner circle of rich liberal states concerned mainly with promoting their own interests. Around this inner core is an outer circle whose membership in international society is less secure, and whose interests and values may be in opposition to those of the inner core. The importance of this is that far from setting aside their own interests for the sake of the international society as a whole, particular states might, by pursuing their own interests, undermine it.

Martin Wight's (1977) approach to probing the nature of international society was to identify the distinguishing marks of historic state-systems. These corresponded closely to what Bull represented as the institutions of international society, which together contribute to the maintenance of order. These institutions include:

- great powers, which have special duties and responsibilities for maintaining order
- diplomacy
- international law
- **war**, which has been a major mechanism of change, and
- the **balance of power**, which in Vattel's words has had the role of 'preventing any one power from becoming too powerful and laying down the law to others' (cited in Bull 1977: 7).

In other words its historic role has been to prevent **hegemony**, which would spell the end of the states-system. Towards the end of the **Cold War** Bull warned of the danger that would ensue were the two great powers of the day to neglect their responsibilities to international society as a whole and become 'great irresponsibles' (Bull 1980). Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, critics of the US have asked whether this term applies to it, particularly at a time when there appears to be no meaningful balance of power and the US is widely perceived to be a hegemonic **power**, or possibly even a new imperium (Dunne 2003, Hurrell 2005). It is easy to understand how other powerful states, and groupings of them, have agency. But it is less easy to think of examples in which all states have acted together, and this comes back to the concern that international society might not amount to more than a particular group of states.

Even if this is true, international society has a wider significance. The rules and norms generated by states and other actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), extend beyond merely guidelines for coexistence. They also include prescriptions for how states should treat both the people within their borders and distant strangers beyond them. Like a club that stipulates conditions for membership and imposes a code of conduct, international society has always been concerned with the question of which states have the legitimacy to be included. As Ian Clark puts it, 'legitimacy lies at the heart of what is meant by an international society' (Clark 2005: 5). It is the collective judgment of international society that determines the legitimacy of states in world politics. International society is a moral community and it does have the capacity to decide which states belong to it. States that do not meet certain standards are excluded from being treated in the same way as members. International society acts in this way as a standard bearer for all states; this raises the problem of

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Box 17.3:   Discussion points

R. J. Vincent on egg boxes

R. J. Vincent (1986: 123) proposes thinking about international society as an 'egg box'. In this metaphor, 'States are the eggs, the goodness within contained by a (fragile) shell. The box is international society, providing a compartment for each egg, and a (less fragile) wall between one and the next. The general function of international society is to separate and cushion, not to act'.

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whether the values upheld by international society are those of a select group of liberal states imposed upon other cultures, or of more universal application.

The foregoing account of the nature of international society has emphasised the idea of it being an association that accommodates plural conceptions of the good. There is, however, tension between this idea and actions taken either to uphold particular norms of international society, for instance the defence of a population against genocide, or in the interests of international society as a whole. An example of this would be going to war to expel the armed forces of a state that had violated the sovereignty of another, which was ostensibly the reason for the 1991 Gulf War. Actions such as these are examples of solidarism among states and in the literature on international society it is contrasted with pluralism (Wheeler 1992). The essence of this contrast is that pluralists take a more restrictive approach to what is required to justify, for instance, intervention. Pluralists also have a narrower view of the capacity of international society to represent the interests of human beings as a whole. Solidarism, in contrast, extends beyond calculations of what is simply in the interests of the system of states, to consider the well-being of individual human beings. It is consequently essential to humanitarian actions across borders and vital to the moral purpose of international society (see chapter 28). In other words, international society has a moral purpose to the extent that it furthers the well-being of individuals around the world (Dunne 1998: 35). As with many other dichotomies, the decision that one is either a pluralist or a solidarist should be firmly resisted (see Linklater and Suganami 2006: 59–68). There will always be circumstances in which the principles that animate one of these views are more appropriate than those informing the other. To maintain a rigid adherence to one rather than the other might result in sacrificing the good of others in favour of dogmatism.

The limits of international society

The focus of this chapter so far has been on depicting international society as an association of sovereign states recognisable as a society because its members articulate norms and rules that then guide their actions and inactions in their mutual relations. They do this to achieve order in their mutual relations. The central concern of Bull's *Anarchical Society* is the pattern of order in international society. It is, at the same time, the 'pattern of order that developed in the European states-system, through relations between European rulers and nations'. This is, in a number of ways, an incomplete and inadequate account which involves at least three important omissions.

The first is that at the same time as states are the most important units of political organisation they are not the only, or even the most important, actors in world politics.

Non-governmental organisations (which are regarded as part of an emerging global civil society), **transnational corporations** (some of which have incomes far in excess of many states) (for both see chapter 23), and sub-state groups all have important roles in international society. Through **human rights** laws and norms, individuals also have increasingly gained legal standing in international society (see chapter 29). Appeals to the standards set by international society are often the only recourse individuals, and particular classes of individuals, including women, children, indigenous peoples and other minorities, have against the states in which they are citizens or alternatively in which they are being accommodated as **refugees**.

Second, sovereignty has generally been perceived as being located in a single source of authority and as being indivisible (see chapter 10). At this juncture of history, sovereignty appears to be more fluid. It is being contested at sub-state and supra-state levels and is recognised as something that has in practice always been divisible.

Third, international society was, in its inception, European. The generally accepted account of this is that as the modern state emerged from the medieval world of Christendom, in which there had been a number of authorities, sovereign states began to look for ways of governing their mutual relations. In this process the 1648 **Peace of Westphalia** is generally presented as having marked the inauguration of the states-system that has been in place at least up until the **UN Charter**. The states-system established in Europe was then exported to other parts of the globe colonised by Europeans. By this means international society gradually spread to encompass the whole globe. In short, the story of international society has been told as a success story of states in which the sovereign form of state was universalised, with all states ascending, or at least aspiring, to full membership. Obscured by this is the second story of dispossession, dominance and oppression that has led to lasting resentments against 'the West', and to claims against former colonial powers and a number of the states they first established as colonies. As well as this, there was the question of how non-European states came to be accepted as members of international society. Consequently the next section turns to European expansion and deliberately construes this as more than simply expansion of the international society of states.

European expansion

Edward Keene argues 'that alongside the pattern of order that developed in the European States system' a second pattern 'developed roughly simultaneously in the colonial and imperial systems that were established beyond Europe' (Keene 2002: xi). Within Europe ('the family of civilized nations'), 'the main point of international political and legal order was to encourage respect for the equality and sovereignty of individual states or nations'. However, in the non-European world it was 'to promote the civilization of decadent, backward, savage or barbaric peoples' (Keene 2002: 7). With few exceptions, Europeans did not regard non-Europeans as part of the 'civilised' world. They did not see non-Europeans as belonging to the same moral community and consequently they did not have the same rights as Europeans accorded to each other in their mutual relations. From the first significant European encounters with non-European others, European states set the conditions for membership in international society and engaged in practices that have resulted in divisions, exclusions and injustices that have lasted to the present.

The first significant encounter between Europeans and non-Europeans was marked by Columbus's arrival in Central America (Pagden 1993), which was soon followed by the conquest of Mexico led by Hernando Cortés. When the conquest began in 1508 the population of Mexico was estimated to be twenty million. By 1600 it had been reduced to 1.5 million (Sterba 1996). The encounter with Amerindians provoked a debate about whether they were human and whether they had sovereign rights against Europeans. If so, what were these rights? Debates about the encounter contributed to the development of international legal thought and political theory. Europeans progressively moved from supporting rights for non-Europeans to denying them. Through the way non-Europeans were represented, both international law and political theory had a role in justifying the dispossession of non-Europeans of the lands they had traditionally occupied, in some cases since 'time immemorial'. In the earlier phases of European expansion, the treatment of non-European others was determined by whether they had the capacity to be Christian. In the wake of the **Enlightenment** it became a matter of whether the others could be counted as rational beings; and by the end of the nineteenth century, under the influence of social Darwinism, many peoples were regarded as simply not civilised, and not entitled to the rights Europeans gave to one another (McGrane 1989). With some notable exceptions (Muthu 2003), non-Europeans were typically represented in European political thought in ways that dehumanised them, thus making it easier to justify a denial of their rights.

These observations apply only to the peoples Europeans regarded as more primitive on the ladder of human development. Europeans distinguished between peoples they did and did not recognise as living in societies with social and political organisation. Those regarded as more advanced clearly were located in a civilisation. By the end of the nineteenth century, international law varied according to whether it governed relations between European states, European and civilised non-European states or between Europeans and less civilised states, lower in the perceived order of social and political organisation. Indeed, the criterion for accepting a state into international society was whether or not it met the so-called 'standard of civilisation' (see Box 17.4). This required that non-Europeans had a form of political and social organisation that was both recognised as such, and could give Europeans the level of protection they would enjoy in their own countries.

The development of law is a crucial aspect of European expansion and of considerable importance for Keene's argument concerning two patterns of order. Part of his argument is that in contrast to the states of European international society, in which sovereignty was located in a single authority, in the non-European world sovereignty was divided between the colonial or imperial power and local authorities. Complicating this was that boundaries of authority between culturally different social and legal systems had to be drawn. The result was a process in which the 'structure of legal authority and the creation of cultural hierarchies [were] inextricably intertwined' (Benton 2002: 2). There was no uniform location of political authority, Benton (2002: 3) observes,

> across the international system. Yet international order depended on the ability of different political authorities to recognise each other, even if that recognition fell short of formal diplomacy or treaty making. The law worked both to tie disparate parts of empires and to lay the basis for exchanges of all sorts between politically and culturally separate imperial or colonial powers.

Box 17.4: Terminology

The 'standard of civilisation'

According to Gerrit Gong (1984: 3) a 'standard of civilisation' embodies tacit and explicit assumptions used to distinguish civilised from the uncivilised societies. It formed a bench-mark against which Europe's self-proclaimed 'civilised' powers measured and excluded non-European societies from membership in international society. The 'standard' not only differentiated Europe from the rest of the world, it elevated it to a position of superiority. Most importantly, for several centuries (even into the twentieth century) it governed the way Europe dealt with non-European peoples, treating them as 'backward', 'primitive', 'savage' and 'barbarous'.

As well as this connection with law, culture had a still wider significance in the European expansion. Non-European others were indispensable in gauging what it meant to be European. A significant example of this is the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, the relevance of which continues into the ongoing debate over whether Turkey should be admitted to the European Union. The Ottoman Empire became progressively drawn into the international relations of Europe, and Turkey was the first non-European state to be accepted as a full subject of the law of nations regulating relations between the members of international society. Turkey was, in this way, accepted as being *in, but not of,* Europe. The Muslim peoples of Turkey had the vital role of revealing to Europeans what they were not, and so helping to define European identity (Neumann and Welsh 1991). Turkey is today a member of **NATO** but has yet to be admitted to the European Union. One of the arguments deployed against its inclusion continues to be that its Islamic identity makes it fundamentally alien to Europe.

   Probably the most influential statement of the idea that 'the orient has helped define Europe' is Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979: 1). By 'orientalism' he did not mean simply the study of the Orient but instead 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (1979: 3). For him it was about the control, manipulation, even incorporation of 'what is a manifestly different . . . world; [and was] . . . above all, a discourse' that exercises power (1979: 12). As a discursive practice, orientalism uses knowledge as a means to power. It involves the 'construction' of others, primarily by Europeans for their own purposes. When others are constructed in negative ways and represented as inferior, physical and structural harm can more easily be done to them. How we perceive others impacts the way in which they are treated and the rights that are extended to them (Fry 1997). Stereotypes 'confirm the necessity and desirability of colonial government by endlessly confirming the positional superiority of the West over the East'. The result is an 'unchanging image of "a subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves"' (Ghandi 1998: 77, citing Said). Colonialism thus 'marks the process whereby the "West" attempts systematically to cancel or negate the cultural difference and value of the "non-West"' (Ghandi 1998: 16). This cancellation or negation of cultural difference is fundamental to the neglected story of international society in relation to European expansion.

It must, however, not be overlooked that colonialism was not a simple story of the subjugation and denial of non-European cultures. 'At all times colonialism has involved complex interactions between cultures and there has not been simply colonialism but colonialisms' (Keal 2003: 47). In other words, colonial encounters and the practices of colonialism differed from one time and place to another and involved complex interactions. In late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century India, for example, there was 'widespread cultural assimilation and hybridity. . . . Virtually all Englishmen in India at this period Indianised themselves to some extent' (Dalrymple 2002: 10). Colonialism invariably involved intersubjective relationships in which the colonisers and the colonised constructed each other. There have been, and continue to be, numerous cases in which cultures have not been and are not irreconcilable. In spite of this the outcome of colonialism was generally that the identity of colonised peoples was submerged, or at least altered, to suit the purposes of the colonisers (Thomas 1994: 191).

With decolonisation the majority of former colonies became not only states, but members of international society. The hitherto subjugated peoples belonging to the new states gained self-determination and the chance to be the authors of their own identities. Importantly, decolonisation did not result in self-determination for either the indigenous peoples contained in settler states that had long since ceased to be colonies, or particular groups that did not necessarily wish to be subject to the sovereignty of the new states. In the name of order, self-determination was tied to the principle that colonial boundaries were not open to revision. The political world that resulted from decolonisation threw into sharp relief the problem of difference within states; which takes us back to the tension between the two stories of international society, canvassed at the beginning of this chapter. The dominant story is one in which the Peace of Westphalia not only established sovereign independent states, but dealt with the problem of 'difference' in international relations (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). The Westphalian system of sovereign states assumed that difference would be contained within the inviolable borders of each state. It did not address the problem of difference within states, which has often impacted on international order and has become more rather than less important with the passage of time. It is all too obvious that in important cases cultural, religious and ethnic difference between peoples within states has been and continues to be a source of deadly violence.

In the particular case of indigenous peoples, the subjugation and dispossession of indigenous peoples resulting from European expansion has left a legacy of problems yet to be fully resolved. These include arguments over how best to deal with historical injustices, the harms caused by dehumanising representations of indigenous peoples and questions about the moral legitimacy of the state. It has, for instance, been argued that Australia is morally illegitimate to the extent that it was 'founded on European denial of the continent's prior ownership by indigenous people' (Rowse 1993). It follows that until such issues are resolved through mutual negotiation between states and their indigenous inhabitants, the moral legitimacy of particular states will remain in doubt. Further to this, given that one of the crucial purposes of international society is to preserve the system of sovereign states, it might also be complicit in perpetuating structures of oppression and domination. If some of the states that constitute international society are morally illegitimate and the business of international society is to preserve those states, then international society itself could also be seen to be morally illegitimate. An important difference between states and the society to which they belong is

> **Box 17.5: Discussion points**
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> **Racial hierarchy and dispossession of Australian Aboriginal peoples**
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> 'During the eighteenth century it became common to distinguish different types – or races – of men and to arrange them in hierarchical sequence. The Europeans were invariably placed on the top, with non-Europeans strung out down the chain till savages merged with the more advanced monkeys. . . . Such ideas of racial **hierarchy** were carried to the Australian colonies and were widely disseminated' (Reynolds 1987: 110).
>
> '[R]acism furthered the material interests of most settlers. It made it so much easier to take Aboriginal land without negotiation or purchase, to crush resistance to the dispossession and then keep survivors "in their place"' (Reynolds 1987: 129).

nevertheless that the latter has the capacity to act as a standard bearer for the just resolution of relations within states.

Conclusion: relevance for Australia

The two interrelated stories of international society outlined above have considerable relevance for Australia and for understanding the world. First, at the level of relations between states, international society can contribute, and has contributed, to international order. The norms and rules crucial to international society guide the mutual relations of states by articulating how they are to behave if they are to avoid conflict and contribute to order. This will sometimes require states to set aside their own narrowly defined **national interests** and act in the interests of the society of states as a whole. It points to the value of **multilateralism**, which has been derided in twenty-first century Australian foreign policy. The first dominant story should also alert us to the role of great powers in world politics and the idea that as well as contributing to order, they have the capacity to undermine it by acting as 'great irresponsibles'. Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq there has been widespread concern that the US is in danger of becoming, if it has not already become, a 'great irresponsible' in this regard (Dunne 2003, Hurrell 2005). Consequently, it can be argued in giving uncritical support to some US initiatives, Australia may be contributing to the erosion of order and the norms of international society.

The second story of international society tied to European expansion helps us to understand the evolution of the contemporary culturally plural international system. It can, in particular, help us to see ourselves as those once colonised or still internally colonised and to understand what needs to be done to settle unresolved issues left over from the past. Crucial to this is the question of how moral communities come into being and the legitimacy of the rationale for including or excluding people from them. This is of fundamental importance not only for how Australia conducts itself in the Asia-Pacific region, but also in relation to asylum seekers (see chapter 30). This is in part a question of the extent to which Australia has duties to strangers beyond its borders. In both theory and practice, international society has been concerned not solely with relations between states, but also elements of a solidarist, **cosmopolitan** vision of the world. This is a vision in which international society has moral value only to the extent that it contributes, in however small a way, to improving the

welfare of humans everywhere, regardless of race, culture or creed. Whether it is reflected in the foreign policy of a state is indicative of how that state is likely to be regarded in the court of world opinion. An additional lesson for Australia contained in the second story is the need to achieve reconciliation with its indigenous population. Failure to do so could diminish its moral standing and status in international society.

Questions

1. What are the differences between an international system and an international society?
2. Are the rules of international society Eurocentric?
3. Was the 'standard of civilisation' a legitimate means of establishing an international society of uniform states and shared norms?
4. Does international society exist today? And, if it does, does it still bear the legacy of its colonial expansion?
5. Can international society endure the degree of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity that presently exists?
6. How does US hegemony impact on the rules and norms of international society?

Further reading

Bellamy, Alex (ed.) 2006, International society and its critics, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Excellent collection of essays, both sympathetic and critical, on the English School's notion of international society.

Bull, Hedley and Watson, Adam (eds) 1984, The expansion of international society, Oxford: Clarendon Press. Large and indispensable collection of essays on the expansion of international society from its European origins to its global limits.

Keal, P. 2003, European conquest and the rights of indigenous peoples: the moral backwardness of international society, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Expanded version of the argument presented here.

Keene, Edward 2002, Beyond the anarchical society: Grotius, colonialism and order in world politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Valuable historical account of tensions between two types of international order promoted by international society: toleration and civilisation.

Linklater, Andrew and Suganami, Hidemi 2006, The English School of international relations: a contemporary reassessment, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Impressive assessment of the English School's contribution to the study of international relations by two leading theorists.

Order and Decolonisation in Southeast Asia

Anthony Burke

Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the history, key processes, and structures of Southeast Asia's international relations since World War II. It does so not just because they have shaped the region, but because they have often been intricately linked to struggles over the shape of global **order**. It is also an area in which Australia has had a deep and sometimes troubled involvement: Australia has supported the independence of some **states**, tried to prevent that of others, and provided large amounts of aid, investment, diplomatic support and military assistance. It has joined wars and tried to end them, and has been a significant player in many of the major regional institutions and initiatives. Southeast Asia's recent history has been turbulent and extraordinary, taking in terrible wars and **genocides**, dictatorship and democratisation, rapid economic growth and social change, economic and political crisis, and novel and difficult experiments in regional diplomacy and intervention. It has challenged some of the dominant **norms** of international relations, and been subject to some of its most destructive forces.

In 1941, just prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Southeast Asia was an imperial playground. None of its peoples were free, and with the beginning of the Pacific War they were soon to exchange one colonial **power** for another, suffer the consequences of **war** and occupation, and emerge four years later into a radically transformed regional and international order that is still changing. Indonesia was a Dutch colony known as the Netherlands East Indies (NEI); Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Singapore, Burma (now officially Myanmar), Malaya (including present-day Malaysia and Singapore), and Brunei were dominated by the British, and Hawaii and the Philippines by the US; the countries of Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) and the island of New Caledonia were colonies of France; Macau and East Timor were colonies of Portugal; and Papua New Guinea was a 'protectorate' of Australia, gained after Germany's defeat in 1918. Siam (Thailand) was the only nominally independent kingdom.

Southeast Asian societies were 'underdeveloped' in modern terms: largely agriculture-based peasant societies, with small middle classes of traders and administrators and tiny (often royal) elites. In some cases, such as Indonesia, colonial powers had expropriated land from the peasantry and forced them to farm crops for export to Europe, reducing subsistence standards

of living even further. Industrialisation was discouraged in favour of importing manufactures from Europe. Colonial powers sought to co-opt local elites, and often took repressive approaches to those who challenged their power – imprisoning and exiling dissenting leaders or, in cases such as Bali and Aceh, fighting protracted and bloody wars to subdue the population. Out of this situation emerged a generation of independence leaders inspired by the European **Enlightenment** and its ideas of freedom, **emancipation** and national self-determination (see chapter 11). European powers saw Southeast Asia in ruthlessly instrumental terms: as a source of wealth and crucial raw materials (spices, sugar and oil from Indonesia, tin and rubber from Malaya, teak from Thailand and Burma), new markets, and cheap labour power (Elson 2004). Southeast Asia was a region of crucial 'strategic' interest and, while no power challenged the claims of another, an 'order' of a kind. However this order was politically and economically unsustainable, and by the end of 1942 it had been swept away, beginning a process of rapid change and transformation that continues to this day.

Decolonisation and the Cold War

Japan invaded Indochina in 1940; Malaya, the Philippines and Portuguese Timor in 1941, and Java, Borneo and Sumatra in 1942. That year it also landed forces in New Guinea and attacked the Australian naval base at Darwin (Wigmore 1957). Japan was governed by a military dictatorship, but its primary motives were economic. The Great Depression of the 1930s had seen Western powers retreat from **free trade** into exclusive trading blocs based in spheres of imperial power or geopolitical influence. Having thrown off Western attempts to subjugate them in the mid-nineteenth century, Japan had embarked on a rapid course of industrialisation. The combination of its exclusion from imperial trading blocs and sanctions imposed on it after its invasion of China led it to fear for its future as an industrial **nation**. Its military leaders saw direct conquest as the answer (McQueen 1991: 35–46). However the US and other Western powers could not accept this challenge to their interests. By 1944 Japan's ability to hold on to its new possessions was largely destroyed, much of its forces were starving, cut off and dying in the allied push towards Japan and the Philippines. The war was ended by the explosion of two atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, a decision argued persuasively by historians as motivated more by a desire to intimidate the Soviet Union than military necessity (Alperovitz 1995). They were thus the first blows of the **Cold War**.

European powers quickly moved to repossess their colonies, often in the face of indigenous independence movements fostered by the Japanese through its slogan 'Asia for the Asians'. In many places this initiated terrible conflicts: the Netherlands fought a bloody war against Indonesian nationalist forces until it was forced to concede independence in 1949, and France moved quickly back into Indochina and began to fight nationalist forces under the command of the communist Ho Chi Minh. Realising it could not turn the nationalist tide, the British granted independence to Malaya, India and Burma, after ensuring that its economic and strategic interests would be preserved and that new indigenous leaderships would cooperate with them. Despite Franklin Roosevelt's wartime anti-colonial rhetoric, and the insertion of the right to self-determination in the Atlantic and United Nations charters, the US and Britain (which for a time controlled Indonesia) allowed France and the Netherlands to return. These decisions were influenced by the Western powers' perceived strategic interests in

Europe. The US had also effectively annexed a chain of North Pacific islands including Guam and the Marshalls (which were later used for military bases and nuclear testing), returned to the Philippines (where it established a client government and set up large military bases), and took control of the Japanese island of Okinawa (where it also established a large military base). Its military occupation of Japan, commanded by US General Douglas MacArthur, was initially directed to the democratisation of Japan and the use of Japanese reparations to help Southeast Asia industrialise. However as the Cold War intensified the US State Department abandoned the reform process and sought to 'contain' communist China and the USSR by creating a trade and investment 'triangle' between the US, Japan and Southeast Asia (Schaller 1995). This had the effect of retarding Southeast Asian industrialisation, especially in populous nations like the Philippines and Indonesia, and incorporated the region into a pattern of trade and production with strong similarities to the colonial era (Borden 1984).

From this point **decolonisation** became entangled with Cold War tensions. US, British and Australian policy-makers increasingly began to see Southeast Asian politics and conflict through a narrow lens coloured by fears of Chinese and Soviet expansion into the region. Indigenous political movements were scoured for leftist sympathies and seen in terms of their allegiance to either the Western or communist blocs. Certainly large communist parties were developing, especially in Indonesia and Vietnam, but in Indonesia they had little real power and in Vietnam took an independent stance from both the USSR and China, while gratefully accepting aid and matériel from them for the war of independence against the French. Ironically Ho Chi Minh had in 1945 written to the US asking for its support against the French, to no avail – illustrating a tragically wasted opportunity to develop an **alliance** of sorts with a left-wing government that wished to be beholden to neither the Western nor communist blocs (Sheehan 1990: 147–51; McNamara et al 1999: 16–17).

Instead, the US provided military aid to the French and, after their defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, used its diplomatic weight to force a partition of Vietnam at the seventeenth parallel (that is, seventeen degrees north of the equator and running midway through Vietnam) and took over support for the client regime in the South (Yahuda 1996: 128). In 1950 they imposed a new leader, Ngo Dinh Diem, later conniving in his assassination; he was followed by a succession of incompetent and corrupt military regimes. The 1954 Geneva Conference heralded a deepening involvement in Vietnam that saw US (and Australian) military advisors deployed in 1962 and ground forces in 1965, with a peak of well over 550,000 troops in 1968. While most of their forces were withdrawn after 1973, US troops and advisors remained until the fall of Saigon in April 1975 (Sheehan 1990). In particular, destructive bombing raids continued and were expanded secretly into Cambodia in 1973–4, killing as many as 150,000 (Kiernan 1985: xii).

The war was a brutal and phenomenally destructive affair, seeing nearly five million military and civilian lives lost, the widespread use of napalm and defoliants which disfigured people and poisoned the environment, the use of torture and assassinations by all sides, and the bombing and strafing of villages from the air. It has also been argued that its expansion into (neutral) Cambodia, along with the installation of a military regime in Phnom Penh by the US, strengthened the radical **insurgency** led by the fanatical Maoist Saloth Sar (better known as Pol Pot) who perpetrated appalling abuses on his people after he took power in April 1975 – emptying out cities, closing schools and hospitals, and killing or starving a third of the population (Kiernan 1985). Pol Pot's regime also attacked Vietnam, which responded by launching an invasion and occupation of Cambodia in 1978 and installing a

new government. Their invasion launched a new round of regional Cold War politics that proved very challenging to resolve.

In 1948 the British had defeated a much smaller communist insurgency in Malaya ('the emergency'), the success of which deluded the US and its allies into believing that the tactics could be successfully transplanted into South Vietnam. The same year the Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno repressed a communist rebellion in the town of Madiun in Java. After the defeat of Chiang Kai Shek's Kuomintang government by Mao Tse-Tung's Chinese communist forces in 1949, the geopolitical doctrine the Western powers developed to understand the regional situation came to be called 'the domino theory'. It added to the global doctrine of '**containment**', a paranoid fear that all of Southeast Asia would be swallowed up by **communism**. As a US National Security Council document of 1949 put it: 'Asia is the target of a co-ordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin . . . motivated in part by a desire to gain control of Southeast Asia's resources and communication lines, and deny them to us' (Pemberton 1987: 12).

Sharing the **security** fears of the US, Australia sent forces and military aid to Korea, Vietnam, Malaya and Borneo according to its policy of 'forward defence', negotiated a security treaty with the US (the **ANZUS** pact) in 1951 and joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1955. This organisation (which included the US, Britain, France, New Zealand, Australia, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines) was the first regional organisation established in Southeast Asia, but it was one dominated by the Western powers and primarily aimed at confronting communist 'subversion' in Indochina. Importantly it did not include Indonesia or India, who respectively denounced it as 'neo-colonial' and a new 'Monroe doctrine' (dividing the world into spheres over which the US might exert its dominance) unilaterally declared over the countries of Southeast Asia. The wife of the Indian Prime Minister quipped that it was a 'southeast Asian alliance minus Southeast Asia' (Burke 2001a: 111–12). Indonesia's President Sukarno rapidly became a *bête noire* of the West: he denounced the new federation of Malaysia as a neo-colonial plot and developed ever-closer relations with Chinese and Soviet leaders.

Hence in 1964 and 1965 the epicentre of the Cold War shifted to Indonesia, where membership of the communist party, Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), was growing and Sukarno's management of the economy becoming ever more disastrous. In 1965 he moved directly against Western interests, expropriating US-owned Goodyear plantations and signing an order for the nationalisation of all foreign investment. At the same time, the US and Britain had been developing links with the anti-communist Indonesian army, who moved to seize power from Sukarno in October after army leaders were killed by members of Sukarno's palace guard. The army blamed the killings on the PKI – whose involvement has never been proven – and initiated a nationwide massacre of communist party members and their families, in which many young Muslims and Catholics participated (Burke 2001a: 121–5; Cribb 1991; Crouch 1988).

By mid-1966 over half a million had been killed, and hundreds of thousands more were imprisoned. General Soeharto, who became President that year, engineered a dramatic reversal in Indonesia's foreign and economic policies, which in turn had great significance for regional order. He opened up the country further to foreign investors, ended the confrontation with Malaysia, froze relations with China and the Soviets, and joined the new regional organisation – the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – established in 1967 (Burke 2001a: 133). This grouping, which initially included Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia,

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Box 18.1: Discussion points

Robert S. McNamara and Vietnam

Robert S. McNamara became the US Secretary of Defense in 1961, and was a prime architect of the Vietnam War until his forced departure in 1968. In that period he moved from being an enthusiastic advocate of US military escalation to having grave doubts about both the moral and strategic merits of the war. He believed it had become increasingly inhumane and could not be won, and in his last memos to President Lyndon Johnson advocated a staged US withdrawal. However his views were known to only a small number of key insiders, until he broke his public silence in 1995 with the publication of his book *In retrospect*. There he stated that the US should have withdrawn its forces in 1963 and that 'we misjudged . . . the geopolitical intentions of our adversaries' and 'underestimated the power of nationalism to inspire a people' (McNamara 1996: 322–3). Between 1995 and 1998 he also participated in a series of roundtables with former Vietnamese leaders, summarised in a 1999 book *Argument without end* (McNamara et al 1999).

 From this we can outline an important dispute about the relevance of Vietnam to the development of Southeast Asia's regional order. The critical perspective holds that the US badly misjudged the intentions and potential impact of a communist victory in Vietnam which, at the very least, would have seen it maintain a distance from both China and the USSR and certainly not have precipitated the fall of regimes across the region. Analysts argue that communism flourished in conditions of domestic hardship and injustice (including colonial injustice) and was not driven by geopolitical conspiracies. And, as the Khmer Rouge and Chinese attacks on Vietnam showed, communist governments were often hostile to each other. This perspective also blames the Cambodian trauma of genocide, invasion, **civil war** and authoritarian government directly on the impact of the Vietnam War.

 In contrast, conservatives argue that, whatever its costs, the war was beneficial to Southeast Asian order. Former US Ambassador to Vietnam General Maxwell Taylor argued in 1972 that Indonesia's 'freedom from an internal communist threat is attributable, to a large degree, to what we've accomplished in South Vietnam'. The entry of substantial US ground forces after 1965, he maintained, emboldened the generals 'to run the risk of eliminating President Sukarno and destroying the Indonesian communists'. Others have more recently argued that US intervention in Vietnam provided a 'shield' for the rest of Southeast Asia to develop, free from communist influence (Burke 2001a: 126–7).

Singapore and the Philippines, was aimed at containing communism, limiting great power involvement in the region, and supporting its members in their attempts to consolidate their regimes. It thus had two paradoxical effects. Internally, it legitimated authoritarian rule and helped insulate member governments from international censure, but externally it challenged some of the dominant norms of **international society** by ruling out the use of force between its members and moving early to eschew the presence of nuclear weapons in their defence forces. The paradox also affected its ability to deal with regional crises, as events in Cambodia, East Timor, Burma and the 1997 Asian economic crisis (discussed below) were to demonstrate (Burke and McDonald 2007).

 Yet as Indonesia's 1969 'Act of Free Choice' in West Papua and its 1975 invasion of East Timor showed, along with the experience of indigenous peoples in Malaysia and Thailand, these valuable rules and rights applied only if one was already recognised as a state; if not, the use of military violence and coercion by states was not only accepted but protected by the
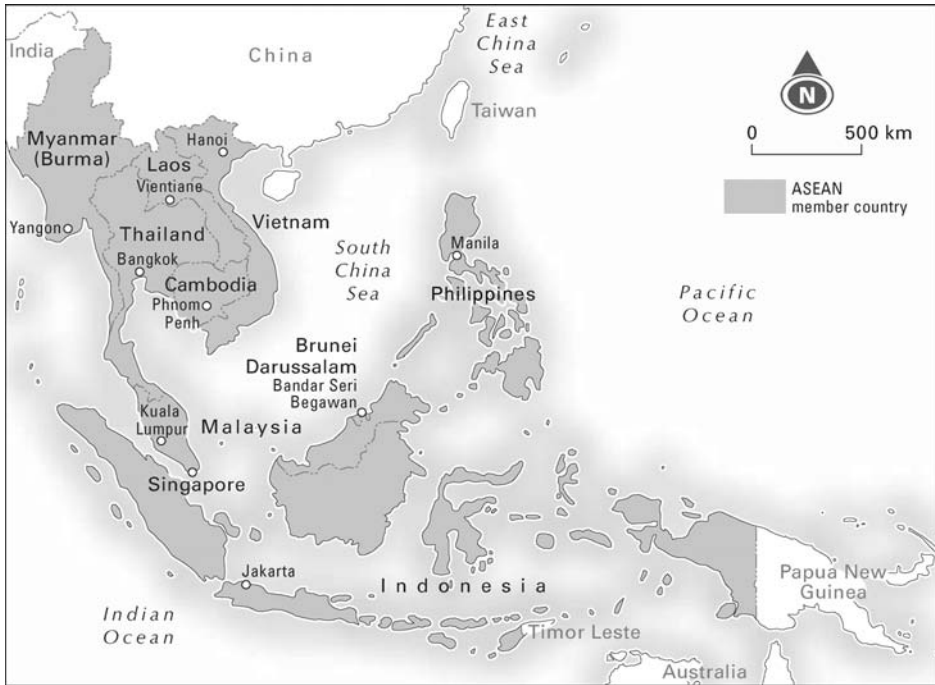
Figure 18.1: ASEAN and the Southeast Asian region

non-interference rule. However the 1997–8 economic crisis and haze caused by forest fires in Indonesia, the 1999 East Timor crisis, and difficulties caused by the inclusion of Cambodia, Burma and Vietnam as ASEAN members, put the ASEAN way under some stress. Hence, intense debate has ensued about whether or not the non-interference rule could be modified in favour of 'constructive engagement', or whether such informal modalities allowed some members to get away with bad behaviour damaging to the whole, and thus undermine the effectiveness of regional organisations (see the discussions in Acharya 2001; Burke 2001b and 2004a; Collins 2003; Gilson 2007).

From Asian miracle to Asian crisis

The geopolitical 'order' created by the US decision to rebuild Japan, contain China and destroy communism in Indonesia also enabled the rapid growth of capitalist economies and regional trade in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asian countries tried a mix of approaches to development: a combination of foreign investment, concentration on resource extraction and agriculture for export, and state direction of key industries via regulation, tariffs and monopolies. This mix changed over time, and by the mid-1980s Singapore had reached developed country levels of wealth, Malaysia and Thailand were not far behind, while the more populous, unstable and corrupt nations such as Indonesia, the Philippines and Burma still had significant levels of extreme poverty and limited industrial or technological industries (Felker 2004). All the ASEAN countries could claim significant levels of growth and poverty

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Box 18.2: Case study

ASEAN, regional organisation and change

ASEAN was formed at Bangkok in August 1967 with a declaration of aims to 'strengthen the economic and social stability of the region' and 'promote regional co-operation in Southeast Asia' (ASEAN Bangkok Declaration 1967). Its key treaty document, to which all members must agree, is the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Co-operation (TAC) based on five principles:

1. Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of all nations.
2. The right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion and coercion.
3. Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another.
4. Settlement of differences and dispute by peaceful means.
5. Renunciation of the threat of use of force (Acharya 2001: 47).

Together these principles form the core of the so-called 'ASEAN way' which has governed much of the region's diplomacy and influenced the nature of subsequent regional organisations, including the security cooperation body the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (**APEC**) forum, and the East Asia Summit (EAS) (see Ball and Acharya 1999; Gilson 2007). These organisations emphasise mutual agreement and non-binding decisions for their effectiveness rather than rules and enforcement, and are unlike some international regimes in that they preserve much freedom of action for states. The TAC principles amounted to a resounding rejection of **colonialism** and neo-colonialism, and in the eyes of many established a new cooperative '**security community**' in the region, in contrast to many realist assumptions about state behaviour and interests (Acharya 2001).

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reduction by the 1990s, and with a dramatic shift in the investment strategies of Japanese and other multinational companies in the 1990s, growth levels were running at a phenomenal 5–8 per cent annually. This prosperity however came with significant costs and problems: the Philippines and Indonesia had millions of poor landless workers, many of whom went abroad or eked out a parlous existence in major cities such as Jakarta and Surabaya, constituting a simmering store of resentment. Many Southeast Asian countries had underdeveloped welfare and taxation systems to support public services and infrastructure investment, or propped up the incomes of the poor with wasteful subsidies of basic goods such as rice, energy, cooking oil and fuel. At the same time, and especially as they sought to attract foreign investment in the 1980s and 1990s, they repressed independent trade union activity in order to keep wages low, in some cases below the minimum need for survival. Rapid growth and a lack of regulation also meant great levels of environmental destruction and damage: polluted air, rivers and seas, deforestation, land degradation and loss of biodiversity are just some of the impacts that will hinder economic opportunities and human health in future (Elliott 2004; Felker 2004).

Few serious questions were asked about the region's economic paradigm until 1997, when a crisis of confidence in international share and equity markets saw nearly US$60 billion in short-term capital flee from the region, causing massive falls in currency values, bankruptcies, job losses and falls in living standards. Indonesia's rupiah lost 80 per cent of its value and its economy contracted by 14 per cent. Within a few months governments in South Korea and Thailand had fallen, and in May 1998 Indonesian President Soeharto was forced

from office amid terrible rioting that saw enormous property damage and attacks on Chinese citizens. Analysts later blamed a mixture of liberal economic reforms urged on Asian countries, such as the opening up of banking and share markets to short-term investment, and the 'Asian model' of state–market co-coordination, which in some countries meant that corruption undermined the ability of regulators to ensure that investments were sound (Robison et al 2000). More radical analysts argued for the export-oriented model of development to be modified more fundamentally, and for short-term capital flows and international currency trading to be curbed (Bello et al 2000). In the decade after the crisis most countries have returned to growth, but the underlying causes have not been adequately addressed, especially the volatility of international capital flows, leaving countries still vulnerable to global fluctuations. In other ways the crisis demonstrated the close interconnectedness of economic, governance and security issues, and led to a debate within ASEAN about whether it needed to change its norms to be more effective, especially to modify its non-interference principle. However key nations resisted the push, and the region faces new uncertainties with much of its political and **normative** architecture unchanged.

Conflict, crisis and resolution

Writers such as Amitav Acharya have correctly identified how revolutionary and valuable ASEAN's approaches to interstate security were. Yet at the same time their members' intense anti-communism clashed with their anti-colonialism, leading them to conform with Cold War stereotypes. In other cases, states like Indonesia and Burma were determined to establish their territories according to the boundaries of the old colonial state, despite there being internal debate after independence about whether to absorb West Papua for example (Osborne 1985).

   In 1974, when Portugal announced its intention to decolonise East Timor, the Soeharto government chose to see the prospect through Cold War eyes: the presence of a tiny Marxist faction in one Timorese party led them to invade and 'integrate' the territory in December 1975. Despite an outcry in the **UN**, Indonesia had the support of its ASEAN neighbours, Japan, Australia and the US. Even as Australia recognised Indonesian **sovereignty** in 1979 and negotiated a revenue-sharing agreement for Timor's offshore oilfields, and eventually negotiated a **bilateral** security treaty in 1995, Indonesia was never able to get the UN to acknowledge its claim or to defeat the armed Timorese resistance. Through the 1990s a large global solidarity movement also developed to put pressure on Indonesia, with the US cancelling its military training programs and the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize being jointly awarded to the Bishop of East Timor, Carlos Belo, and the resistance's external representative, Jose Ramos Horta (Burke 2001a: 148–219; Dunn 1983; Taylor 1999).

   The Timorese people paid a terrible price during this conflict, with some 250,000 of them (out of a pre-war population of 750,000) dying through starvation, war or killing. Indonesia used the same **counter-insurgency** techniques trialled by the US in Vietnam which, while reducing the armed resistance to a rump by the early 1990s, stimulated an urban independence movement which staged large demonstrations in front of the world's media. This pressure stimulated Soeharto's successor B. J. Habibie – against the wishes of the Indonesian military, *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI), and much of the parliament – to allow a UN-supervised referendum on independence to be held in 1999. Although East Timor voted for

independence, the TNI organised militias to conduct a year-long campaign of killing and intimidation, which culminated in a two-week spree of violence and destruction that killed over 2000 people and was only stopped by an intervention force led by Australia. A number of ASEAN countries later joined the force at Indonesia's request, but they had earlier been uncooperative in diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis (Burke and McDonald 2007). East Timor has observer status at ASEAN meetings but is yet to be admitted as a member, and emerged from 1999 as the world's poorest nation, struggling to find the political and social stability that could underpin its economic survival.

ASEAN had paid little attention to Cambodia prior to 1978, when Vietnam's invasion raised fears in Thailand and Singapore of a new strategic threat supported by the USSR. They combined with China (an ally of Pol Pot and enemy of Vietnam) and the US (still bitter about its defeat) to block international recognition of the new Vietnamese-imposed government which, however lacking in democratic legitimacy, had the responsibility to revive a starving and demoralised people. Hence the UN's humanitarian machinery could not be activated inside Cambodia, and this callous *realpolitik* saw Thailand, China and the US conniving to harbour and feed Khmer Rouge fighters in a war against the new Cambodian government, prolonging the misery of its people for a decade. However Indonesia and Malaysia were more sympathetic to Vietnam and during the 1980s worked with Australia in attempts to promote dialogue that might facilitate a Vietnamese withdrawal and elections. This culminated in an agreement in Paris in October 1991 to end the fighting and hold new elections, and a bold plan conceived by Australia and the US to have the UN administer Cambodia until a new legitimate government was established (Acharya 2001: 80–99; Berry 1997). This model inspired a new international approach to **peacekeeping** and state-building that underpinned later international missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan.

Other ongoing sources of conflict and tension in the region included a communist insurgency in the Philippines during the 1970s and 1980s, and an Islamic (Moro) insurgency on the Philippine island of Mindanao. The Burmese military regime has been fighting the Shan, Karen and Mon ethnic minorities on its borders for decades, committing appalling **human rights** abuses and generating hundreds of thousands of permanent **refugees** on the border with Thailand (Lang 2007). In addition to East Timor, Indonesia has fought armed and non-violent resistance to its rule in West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) and Aceh, where it negotiated a **peace** agreement in 2006 (Aspinall and Chauvel 2007). In recent years **terrorism** (and in some cases the policies employed to combat it) has emerged as a significant source of conflict and insecurity. This has seen movements with domestic roots (such as Indonesia's Jemaah Islamiyah, derived from the Darul Islam of the 1950s, and the Philippines Abu Sayyaf group) linking with parts of the global al-Qaeda network of Islamic fundamentalists to carry out destructive attacks on western targets in Thailand, Bali, Java and elsewhere. These are rightly seen as serious threats, but writers have also rejected inflammatory views that Southeast Asia is the 'second front' of the war on terror because of the historic influence of Islam (Collins 2003: 201), and pointed to the anti-democratic and self-defeating impact of some US and regional counter-terrorism cooperation and policy (Kadir 2004; McDonald 2007). Finally, Christmas 2004 brought one of the worst disasters to hit the region in many years, when the following day an earthquake in the Indian Ocean triggered a tsunami that smashed coastal communities in Sumatra, Malaysia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka killing some 283,000 people. The ASEAN Regional Forum had in previous years held discussions on cooperation in disaster relief but the region possessed no early-warning system (Burke and McDonald 2007: 1).

Conclusion: norms and the future of international relations in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia has had a difficult, troubled and dynamic history, developing many successful and innovative solutions to the problem of regional order and others that are less savoury or sustainable. It also faces a number of profound challenges in coming decades. Developing stable, sustainable and fair economies in a very rigid international context is a major challenge, and most recently the **IMF** (2006b: 63) has identified a worrying trend of rapidly increasing inequality across the region. This will require a willingness to tackle domestic privilege and corruption whilst lobbying for change to international economic rules where more powerful states set the agenda. As the tragedy of the 2004 tsunami showed, climate change is likely to hit the region hard, yet regional countries are ill-equipped to make the dramatic cultural and structural changes that mitigation will require, and they will need international support to do so. At the same time the rest of the world must no longer view the region cynically as an area of merely 'strategic' interest. It may be that those who after 1998 sought to further modify ASEAN's norms of non-interference and sovereignty so as to improve the region's ability to collectively solve pressing problems were prescient, and that their vision will be returned to. In a world of increasing political, economic, cultural and ecological **interdependence**, legitimate concerns about sovereignty cannot be allowed to override those about human beings, whose dignity, passion and creativity hold the keys to a challenging and potentially hopeful future for Southeast Asia.

Questions

1. How has 'order' been historically defined in Southeast Asia, and how has it changed and why? Has this led to conflict or suffering?
2. Did the Asian crisis challenge existing ideas and structures of regional order?
3. Was decolonisation handled well in Southeast Asia? What different paths might you suggest?
4. Should ideas such as democracy, human rights and social justice matter in Southeast Asia? Can they be accommodated in regional forms of governance and institutions?
5. What are the dilemmas for Australia in engaging with Southeast Asia?

Further reading

Acharya, Amitav 2001, Constructing a security community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order, London & New York: Routledge. Theoretically informed account of the process and problems of building the ASEAN security community.

Kingsbury, Damien 2005, South-East Asia: a political profile, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Useful introduction to political, security, and economic issues in the region.

Tarling, Nicholas 2001, Southeast Asia: a modern history, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Very informative, if slightly outdated, account of the region and its history.

The Cold War

Nick Bisley

Introduction

The **Cold War** was the most important feature of the **international system** in the second half of the twentieth century. The rivalry between the Soviet Union and the US shaped the contours of conflict and cooperation among **states** and peoples in the period between 1945 and 1991. Although the conflict did not drive all aspects of international relations, its force permeated every corner of the globe. From the Cape to Cairo, Sydney to Shanghai, the influence of geopolitical and ideological conflict was unmistakable. More importantly, the Cold War created rivalries and political fault lines which continue to be a central factor in international relations long after the conflict has passed.

The Cold War was a conflict between the Soviet Union and the US. The two powers who emerged from World War II as preeminent in world politics became engaged in a protracted global conflict which, though actual combat between them never eventuated, involved the largest and most destructive military arsenals in history. The two camps could destroy the entire planet thousands of times over with their nuclear weapons and each side's military was on a hair trigger for the conflict's duration. It was a dispute that was driven both by traditional concerns about **security** – each felt the other threatening to their survival and their interests – as well as by ideological antagonism. Both embodied universal ideologies which were predicated on the superiority of their own social system. In this respect the Cold War was as much a contest over social systems as it was a competition for strategic influence and nuclear superiority.

In contrast to traditional wars which one can date with some precision, a declaration of war or an invasion or attack, there is no clear starting date for the Cold War; instead there existed a gradual escalation of tensions. Although some historians have argued that the Cold War has its origins in the Russian **Revolution** of 1917 (Powaski 1998) – not unreasonable given that the tension of the Cold War was primarily a function of the revolutionary ideology at the heart of Soviet **power** – as a geopolitical and socio-economic contest, the Cold War began in the wake of World War II, with the collapse of the Grand Alliance (between the US, Britain and the Soviet Union). Likewise, its termination has no clear surrender date or 'armistice day', although two dates commonly cited are those of the fall of the Berlin Wall on the night of 8–9 November 1989 and the dissolution of the USSR on New Year's Eve, 1991.

Box 19.1:　Terminology

Cold War: meanings and temperature

The term Cold War is generally used in two ways. First, it refers to the conflictual relations between the US and the USSR and their respective allies. Second, the term is also used as a label for the broader period in which it was the preeminent feature. In spite of the many wars which were caused directly or indirectly by Soviet-American rivalry, such as in Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan, the conflict is referred to as 'cold' because although there were near misses, most notably in Cuba in 1962, direct military action between the two protagonists never eventuated.

The beginnings of the Cold War: 1945–53

During the planning for the post-war world that had begun to get underway towards the end of World War II, tensions between the Soviet and American allies began to emerge. The death of President Franklin Roosevelt in April 1945 contributed further to the breakdown of the **alliance** as his successor, Harry Truman, took a decidedly more anti-Soviet line than his predecessor. After the defeat of Japan in August 1945, the alliance that had been formed in 1941 to defeat the Axis powers (Japan, Germany and Italy) began to unravel swiftly. With the Soviet Union reneging on commitments to self-determination in Eastern Europe, its failure to withdraw troops from Iran and its demand for territorial concessions as well as bases from Turkey, American policy took a more confrontational line. This approach was informed by George Kennan's 'Long Telegram' of February 1946 where the Moscow-based diplomat argued that an accommodation between the Soviets and the Americans was impossible due to the political and ideological basis of Soviet power (see Box 19.2).

Box 19.2　Discussion points

Containment and George Kennan

George Kennan was one of the most influential figures in the early years of the Cold War and said by many to be the father of America's grand strategy of **containment**. The 'Long Telegram' was first sent as a diplomatic communiqué in February 1946. It was subsequently published in 1947 in *Foreign Affairs*, the influential American journal, with the author described as 'X' (Kennan 1946). In the text Kennan argues that the best American response to the Soviet Union was to establish lines of containment to limit the spread of Soviet power. This would constrain Soviet influence and allow the natural superiority of the American system to win out over what he saw to be a deeply flawed USSR. The policy of containment, limiting Soviet expansion but not intervening around the world, took on a more interventionist dimension as the Cold War developed, most notably in Vietnam. Kennan felt that this interventionist approach was counterproductive to American interests.

The mistrust and suspicion soon turned into geopolitical and ideological competition (Yergin 1978). In 1947 the US pursued what came to be known as the **Truman Doctrine** whereby the US presented its assistance to Turkey and Greece as part of a broader response to Soviet aggression and expansion. The view that the USSR sought to take advantage of post-war Europe's vulnerability, where **communism** had considerable appeal in the ashes of **war**, was the motivating force behind the **Marshall Plan**'s economic reconstruction of Western Europe. The US recognised that an economically robust Western Europe would be politically stable and not as susceptible to the challenges of communism. The Plan involved large-scale loans which underwrote the economic reconstruction of Europe and added momentum to the creation of the European Communities. The Plan was offered, somewhat disingenuously, to the Soviets who turned it down as they recognised that it would compromise their strategic and economic interests in Eastern Europe.

The status of Berlin was the source of the first significant crisis of the conflict. Post-war Germany had been divided into four sectors each run by an allied power. Berlin was similarly divided but was located in the centre of East Germany, which was under Soviet control. The Soviets sought to claim Berlin and in mid-1948 severed road and rail communications for the entire city. A massive airlift which lasted nearly a year ensured West Berlin remained out of Soviet control but political tensions had escalated considerably as a result.

A year later the USSR successfully tested an atomic bomb. Now the animosity and rivalry were backed with the terrible power of atomic weaponry. This led to the establishment of the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**. NATO was intended to provide a formal structure for an American military presence in Europe that was to deter Soviet aggression. In response, the Soviets created the **Warsaw Pact** as a counter-weight in 1955. Thus, in ten years the allies that had fought so successfully to defeat Nazi Germany were now lined up against one another. Europe was divided between a Soviet-dominated East where liberated states were run by communist regimes loyal to and propped up by the Soviet Union, and a democratic West whose security relied on American military power. Concerns about Soviet expansionism in the West appeared to be confirmed by Berlin and the bomb; fear in the East about American threats was realised by the basing of conventional and atomic weapons in Western Europe.

The Cold War had its origins in and was, in its primary motivation, a conflict over Europe. From the outset, however, its challenge was global. Two events in Asia brought this home. The defeat of Japan had reignited the Chinese **Civil War** which had been running since the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911. The surprising victory of Mao Tse-Tung's Soviet-supported communist forces meant that the world's largest state, as well as its most populous, was now communist. Viewed from Washington, Soviet forces and allies spread from the Baltic Sea across the Eurasian landmass to the South China Sea. The second element of the Cold War's spread was in Korea. The Korean peninsula had been a Japanese colony since 1895 and was hastily divided in the wake of Japan's defeat. In June 1950 the Soviet-backed North launched an attack on the American-supported South which confirmed, in the minds of the Western allies, that communist forces were not only aggressive but emboldened by success in China and elsewhere. Aided by the newly formed **UN**, America and its allies, including Australia, fought a long and bloody war where more than three million lost their lives. In 1953 an armistice was signed and to this day the border remains a geostrategic flashpoint.
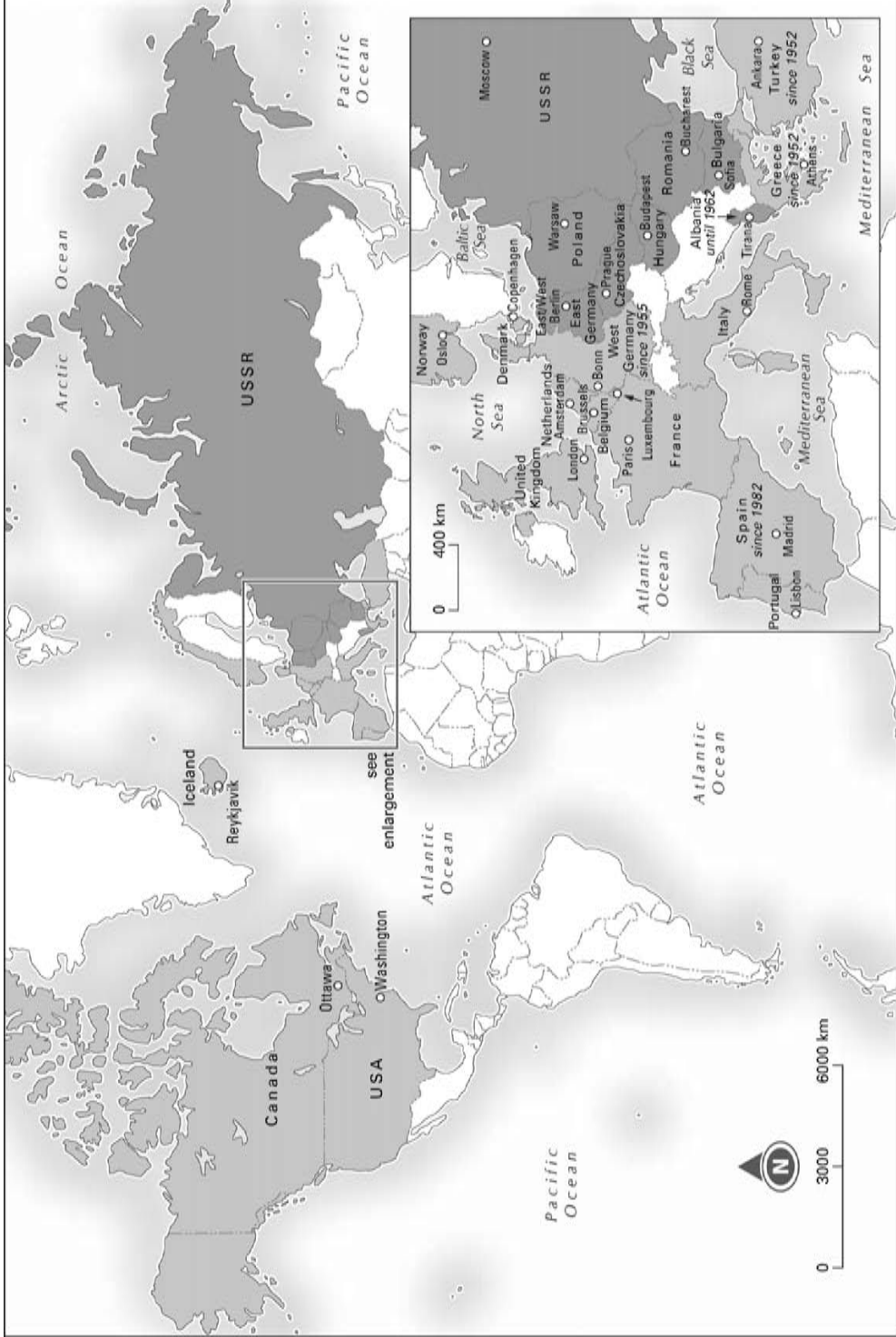
Figure 19.1: The Cold War: NATO and Warsaw Pact countries (1949–89)

Legend: NATO members – light shade

Warsaw Pact members – dark shade

The Cold War spreads: 1953–69

The Korean War not only convinced the Americans and their allies that communism was aggressive but fuelled the perception that it was a monolithic bloc. Soviets, Chinese and Koreans appeared to be part of a unified system with global ambitions. As such a concerted global response was thought to be necessary. This prompted the US to sign a series of alliance treaties in the Asia-Pacific, including **ANZUS** in 1951 and SEATO in 1954. It was also a key factor driving America's policy in Indochina. In Europe, NATO was organisationally and militarily strengthened with the US committing to a long-term and large-scale military presence to deter Soviet conventional forces. Through the 1950s and 1960s both sides enhanced both their conventional and nuclear arsenals.

  After Korea, the dynamics of East–West confrontation began to spread and interact with regional developments across the world. It had particular purchase in the range of struggles going on in many parts of the world as the European empires were dismantled. In Iran, Guatemala and the Middle East in the early 1950s, local political elites attempted to gain domestic advantage by playing on US and Soviet perceptions of their relative strategic importance. Although Stalin's death in March 1953 brought the more conciliatory Nikita Khrushchev to power, Soviet support for national liberation movements, such as in the Congo and Cuba, along with its intervention in Hungary in 1956 confirmed the perceptions in Washington that the USSR continued to pose a threat to America, its allies and its economic and strategic interests.

  Tensions reached a high point in the Berlin crisis of 1961 and the **Cuban missile crisis** in 1962. The first involved a dangerous military stand-off that led to the construction of the infamous Berlin Wall which prevented East Berliners moving to the West. The heavily fortified physical division of the city was a potent symbol of the split and its tragic human consequences, as hundreds were killed trying to cross from East to West during the wall's existence. The second, where the USSR secretly deployed missiles 90 miles off the American coast only to withdraw them after tense negotiations, led to a humiliating climbdown for Khrushchev. The Soviet leader had attempted to place strategic pressure on the US but, in spite of achieving a trade-off removal of American missiles from Turkey, was perceived to have been outfoxed by Kennedy. His position at home was fatally weakened and American decision-makers began to believe that they were gaining an upper hand in the global contest. Both crises had brought the world extraordinarily close to nuclear annihilation and this resulted in improved communications between Washington and Moscow and a somewhat more stable platform for Soviet-American relations for the next ten years or so.

  This did not slow down the rate of the arms race (see Box 19.3), which continued apace during this phase, and did not deter their indirect rivalry across the world. In 1965 America made the fateful decision to escalate its support for South Vietnam in its struggle with the North and to participate in a large-scale ground war which led to an embarrassing withdrawal in 1973 after political support for the conflict collapsed. Few of its allies supported the action and only Australia committed combat troops to the conflict. American and Australian involvement was driven by the ultimately unfounded fears that defeat of South Vietnam at the hands of Ho Chi Minh's communist forces would destabilise the region and strengthen the appeal and success of communism in Southeast Asia.

Box 19.3:   Discussion points

The arms race

One of the central features of Cold War rivalry was the competition over strategic arms. In the years following World War II technological sophistication in weaponry was growing at a considerable pace and each advance appeared to give the holder a decisive advantage. The arms race was the acute end of the conflict and involved both conventional and nuclear weapons. It began with Soviet efforts to break the American atomic monopoly which they achieved in 1949 and involved both an expansion in the quantity of weapons as well as more sophisticated delivery systems such as intercontinental bombers, ballistic missiles, and multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles (MIRV). In 1950 the US had a stockpile of around 450 atomic weapons and the USSR had several. By 1985 the US had over 11,000 nuclear weapons and the USSR around 9500, including both bombs and missile warheads.

In part, these fears did not come to fruition due to the breakdown of Chinese-Soviet relations. While the West had perceived a monolithic communist entity in the Soviet-China alliance, relations had always been uneasy. After Stalin's death, personal clashes between Mao and Khrushchev, along with ideological differences and competition for leadership of the communist movement, as well as Soviet refusal to pass on atomic technology, led to the deterioration of relations. Few in the West realised that relations had become so bad and it was not until the short 1969 Sino-Soviet border war that it became clear that the Communist Bloc had fragmented.

Détente and the 'second' Cold War: 1969–85

The policy of **détente** was a deliberate attempt to improve Soviet-American relations, and the hostility that had emerged between China and the Soviet Union provided the strategic opening that made it possible. The Americans, led by President Nixon and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, sought to improve relations with China and Russia, which their mutual antagonism now allowed, so that they could extricate themselves from Vietnam and contain Soviet nuclear weapon acquisition. America's official recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1972, the signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty in the same year and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 were the key achievements of détente. The latter was notable for establishing principles of **human rights** as the basis for future discussions. Symbolically, détente was embodied by the meeting of an American Apollo and Soviet Soyuz spacecraft in orbit in July 1975.

Yet the achievements in **arms control**, improvements in communication and the civility of diplomatic language did not remove the underlying hostility between the two sides and their mutual distrust was never far from the surface. Both sides were entangled in the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 and by the mid-1970s the mood began to shift. The Soviet Union was perceived to have been taking advantage of the improved relations to escalate their support for revolutionary movements around the world. The success of revolutions in Ethiopia, Iran,

Cambodia, Angola, Afghanistan and Nicaragua in the second half of the 1970s, and most particularly, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, was seen by many as the result of détente.

This prompted a sense of weakness in American foreign policy at home that was matched by a poorly performing economy, badly affected by the oil shocks of the 1970s and the decline of its manufacturing base. These palpable concerns propelled Ronald Reagan to the White House. Reagan had campaigned on taking a harder line on the USSR and upon accession to the White House began to put pressure on the Soviet Union. This involved large increases in military spending, an active intervention in Soviet allied states such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, and an increasingly bellicose rhetoric. The Soviet shooting down of a Korean Air Lines passenger jet which had strayed over USSR airspace in 1983 was symptomatic of the increase in tensions and sense of risk at the time. Arms control negotiations collapsed, America increased its interventions in Central America and elsewhere, and Reagan launched a space-based missile defence initiative dubbed 'Star Wars'. By the end of his first term Europe was experiencing levels of tension unseen since the early days of the Cold War and a sense that nuclear war was a very real possibility had returned (Halliday, 1986).

The end of the Cold War: 1985–91

The transformation of the Cold War was as radical as it was rapid and was a function of both individuals and the broader structural circumstances of international relations. The key development was the selection of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary in 1985 (see Box 19.4) by the Politburo, the Communist Party's key policy-making and governing body. The Soviet Union's economy had been stagnant since 1978 and its strategic position was being compromised as its capacity to fund its geopolitical commitments was severely tested, to say nothing of the cost of trying to maintain technological parity with the US. Gorbachev's leadership determined to undertake a reform program which was intended to revitalise the Soviet economy and society. A central element of the program was the belief that a peaceful international environment was necessary to allow it to occur and to that end Gorbachev launched a program of foreign policy reform.

Following his first-term hostility, Reagan undertook a significant change in attitude towards the USSR during the re-election year of 1984. After a summit meeting in Geneva in late 1985 he became receptive to the arms reduction proposals set out by Gorbachev and together they enhanced the two states' sense of trust (Garthoff 1994). The Soviet Union's foreign policy reform program involved a massive reduction in conventional and nuclear weapons, a shift to a purely defensive military doctrine, the adoption of a liberal posture towards the international system – that is, one focused on institutions, human rights and the international rule of law – and the cessation of support for revolutionary movements and 'fraternal' communist regimes.

The reforms developed in a piecemeal fashion between 1985 and 1989 and famously culminated in the velvet revolutions in Eastern Europe. As Gorbachev was reforming the USSR with policies of *perestroika* (restructuring), *glasnost* (openness) and democratisation, popular dissatisfaction with the regimes in Eastern Europe emerged. This sentiment was led

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Box 19.4:   Key figures

Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev

The final leader of the Soviet Union was the only leader other than Lenin to graduate from university. He was made General Secretary of the Communist Party in March 1985 following the death of Konstantin Chernenko who had only been in power for thirteen months following the 1984 death of Yuri Andropov. He was a surprise choice, having only been elevated to the Politburo in 1978 and being one of its youngest members. Following decades of dour and elderly political leaders in Moscow, Gorbachev, and his foreign minister, the charismatic Eduard Shevardnadze, represented an important shift in generation, experience and worldview. Gorbachev was educated, had travelled and, most crucially, did not follow the traditional Kremlin path in his dealings with outsiders. Margaret Thatcher famously declared that he was a man 'with whom we can do business' and it was this capacity to 'do business' that was central to his success. Many individual leaders played important parts in the development of the Cold War but none can match the significance he played in bringing the curtain down on the Cold War.

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by movements for change, most famously embodied in Lech Walesa's Solidarność (Solidarity) – the Eastern Bloc's first independent trade union – and creating huge pressure on Soviet control mechanisms. The Soviet leadership determined that the time had come for an end to the situation (known as the Brezhnev doctrine) whereby the USSR essentially determined the direction of politics and strategy in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev felt that the regimes, if they stood for anything, would have to stand for themselves, which they proved utterly incapable of doing. After 1989 the reform program within the USSR began to spin out of the Communist Party's control as democratisation and new freedoms mixed with an explosive **nationalism** that eventually destroyed the Soviet Union. The USSR was replaced by a series of new **sovereign states** which were based on the organisational structure of the Soviet Union's constituent republics and the geopolitical map of Central and Eastern Europe was rewritten as the Soviet-supported governments were rejected en masse (see Box 19.5).

Box 19.5:   Discussion points

A new European map

The end of the Cold War transformed the geopolitical map of world politics, bringing a raft of new states into the international system. From the collapse of the USSR came the following new sovereign states: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. Russia became the legal heir of the Soviet Union's international commitments, such as its seat at the UN, and founded the Commonwealth of Independent States (incorporating twelve of the USSR's republics) to try to assert some vestiges of its **hegemony**. In Eastern and Central Europe, more states were created. Czechoslovakia peacefully divided into the Czech and Slovak republics. The collapse of Yugoslavia involved a series of bloody wars that created new states from the constituent republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.

It was the shift within the USSR and the acceptance of this by the American-led West which brought about the end of the Cold War. It had been a conflict between competing ideologies as well as a geopolitical struggle between states. It came to an end with the rejection of the Soviet Union's revolutionary ideas and the policies that sprang from them by the elites within the Communist Party. While the Cold War had been very much about strategic threats and nuclear weapons – they were a means through which competition was played out – they were not the contest itself. Many tend to think that Reagan won the Cold War through out-spending the USSR in the military competition. There is little evidence to support this view. The Soviets were most certainly at a decisive strategic disadvantage by the late 1970s but the motive force behind the foreign policy reform program was not strategic but political and economic.

The Cold War and International Relations

International Relations **theory** has a close relationship with the Cold War, as many of the **discipline's** theoretical developments were a function of changes in the dynamics of conflict. The rise of **realism** was produced by the dominance of **geopolitics** during the early phases of the Cold War. Détente's optimism helped revive liberal internationalism and brought the cooperative possibilities of **interdependence** to the table; and the role that ideas played in the Cold War's demise helped facilitate **constructivism**'s rise. Beyond this, the Cold War provokes many questions which theory can help answer. Why did the US-Soviet alliance, which had worked so well during World War II, break down? Why did the US and the Soviet Union never come to blows? What role did the leaders play in shaping the conflict? Why did it end so suddenly? Why did no one predict its demise?

Of the many issues the question of causation is perhaps most important. What were the causes of the Cold War? The answer to this complex question depends on which theory one turns to and thus which assumptions one makes. For realists, the answer lies in the power vacuum in the international system after 1945 (see, for example, Gaddis 1990; Wohlforth 1993). Prior to World War II, both the US and the Soviet Union were significant powers but neither was dominant and neither was interested in projecting its power much beyond its borders. Germany, Britain, France, and Italy were all major powers with expansive international interests and considerable military force. The calamity of World War II destroyed the basis of these states' power and into this vacuum stepped a largely unscathed US and a battle-damaged but militarily dominant USSR. The Cold War was a product of the inexorable workings of the international system whereby major powers are compelled to expand their interests or fall prey to others who have expanded. In Western Europe there was no dominant power and thus the system induced American and Soviet rivalry; this went global as **decolonisation** provided further opportunities for advantage. For realists, the Cold War was a contest of **power politics** in which ideology was little more than window dressing.

From this view, the roots of rivalry lay in the structure of the international system and the distribution of power across the states. A different theoretical approach, that of **liberalism**, does not look at the system so much as the attributes of the states. While liberals do not

deny the importance of the military rivalry, for an explanation of the conflict they look to ineffective policies, misperceptions and miscommunication between political elites (see, for example, Jervis 1976; Larson 1985). While realists see conflict as inevitable, liberals see it as contingent on specific actions. The Cold War was not caused by a power vacuum but instead was the product of diplomatic blundering and misunderstanding. Rivalry was not inevitable, but was the product of a mutual sense of insecurity that could have been resolved. Improved communication and better understanding of the other side's intentions and concerns could have produced a workable and cooperative international system and a much more peaceful post-war setting.

There are a host of other explanations as well, with some arguing that the Cold War was a product of capitalist international relations which fosters militaristic competition among states. For others, the Cold War was not really a clash of values and interests, but a military exercise that was used by both sides to establish and further their respective domination of domestic society (Chomsky 1982; Kaldor 1990). Theories produce different answers because they place explanatory emphasis on different aspects of the conflict. They can help clarify thinking but careful attention must be paid to the basic assumptions about social behaviour which they make and upon which they place explanatory weight.

The most enduring conundrum of the Cold War relates to something that did not happen. Why did the US and the USSR avoid military conflict? The greatest source of concern for all who lived through the Cold War was the apocalyptic prospect of nuclear war. There are many reasons put forward to explain the absence of war. Some point to good communication and effective diplomacy in times of crisis, others argue that it was their lack of physical proximity that kept the peace. The most influential answer to this question is also one of the most controversial: that **peace** between the US and the USSR was brought about by nuclear weapons. So massive was the price that would have to be paid if conflict eventuated that both sides were forced to adopt less bellicose policy. From this point of view the long post-war peace (at least between the chief protagonists) was kept by the very weapons they had acquired to destroy one another. The idea that peace was enforced by a balance of terror is hard to refute for the simple reason that it is logically impossible to say why something did *not* happen. It is no doubt true that the weapons urged caution, as indeed did the scale of conventional weapons, but we cannot say with any certainty that peace was the product of nuclear weapons. More importantly, the level of risk that is involved in structuring the international system around nuclear **deterrence** is massive and as many have argued it must surely be the least rational means of managing international peace yet devised.

Conclusion: echoes of the Cold War

For its duration, the Cold War rivalry played a dominant role in world politics. Nowhere was its influence more evident than in anti-colonial struggles and in the politics of post-colonial states. From Tehran to Tokyo, Jakarta to Johannesburg, East–West rivalry put local conflicts into a global context. The political struggles to fill the holes created by departing European powers had a broader consequence as both Soviets and Americans saw the other's gain as

its loss in the battle for hearts, minds and strategic influence in the decolonising world. A communist North Vietnam or Ethiopia was thought not only to be a loss from the ledger of capitalist states but a decisive strategic advantage for Soviet communism. Just as Soviet-American rivalry had consequences far from home, the Cold War has left a legacy with which we are still coming to terms (Westad 2005).

Three of the most pressing issues in world politics, the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula, the status of Taiwan, and the war on terror have their roots in the Cold War. In Korea, the Cold War divisions are most glaring. The peninsula is still divided. The North is one of the few states that retains a command economy and a Stalinist political system, and added to this has been the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Cold War tension continues to shape the strategic balance in Northeast Asia. Taiwan's uncertain political status is also the unfinished business of the Cold War. Created by the nationalists who had lost the Chinese Civil War, Taiwan was initially recognised by the US as the legitimate China only to have this recognition removed as America improved its relations with the People's Republic of China during détente. Tension across the Taiwan Straits has grown precipitously in recent years and America's commitment to their recently democratised ally makes it the most likely location of major power conflict in the international system.

As the horror of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 unfolded before a television audience of billions, few realised that they were witnessing an after-shock of the Cold War. Yet it was the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the American funding of guerrilla insurgents that gave birth to al-Qaeda and its fellow travellers. Soviet forces were defeated by a combination of Afghan militias and guerrillas of a militant Islamist variety whose funding and organisation were heavily assisted by the US. Most of the militant Islamists active today, from members of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria to Hambali and Imam Samudra in Indonesia, learnt their trade in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The 'war on terror' which has taken centre stage in the foreign policy of the US and many of its allies is a conflict which is a direct, though utterly unintended, consequence of the Cold War's strategic competition and the indirect manner of its prosecution.

The decade following the Cold War's demise was one of distinct optimism in international relations. Long-unrepresented peoples were able to enjoy self-determination, the prospect of imminent nuclear annihilation had receded and the strife associated with East–West rivalry largely faded into the distance. Yet developments in international relations do not spring forth from the ether. They have a history, both political and economic, and in the history of contemporary crises and challenges the Cold War has a heavy weight. In Korea, Taiwan and Islamist **terrorism** we see only the most acute examples of this legacy. From ethnic conflicts in the states of the former Soviet Union to environmental problems in Eastern Europe, from civil war in Angola to the still unresolved political problems in Cambodia, the Cold War's imprint can still be seen around the world. Some argue that it is not only in the events that we feel its effect, but believe that in the very way in which the US and its allies think about international politics one can detect the continuing influence of a Cold War approach to the world. In the search for an enemy to defeat, and for military threats to snuff out, one sees an approach to international politics that is born of the East–West **bipolar** conflict. The Cold War may be nearly twenty years gone, but it will be a long time until its influence has passed from being among the central concerns for scholars, policy-makers and analysts of international relations.

Questions

1. Could the Cold War have been avoided?
2. Does the Cold War confirm or refute the view that conflict is inevitable in the international system?
3. The Cold War began as a dispute in Europe. Why did it spread around the world?
4. How important was the Cuban missile crisis to the dynamics of Cold War conflict?
5. Was the American historian John Lewis Gaddis right to describe the Cold War as a 'long peace'?
6. Did détente fail?
7. What role did nuclear weapons play in the Cold War?
8. Who should take credit for the end of the Cold War?
9. In what ways is the Cold War still visible in the contemporary international system?

Further reading

Crockatt, Richard 1995, The fifty years war: the United States and the Soviet Union in world politics, 1941–1991, London: Routledge. Systematic and thorough assessment of Soviet-American relations in the broader context of international relations.

Gaddis, John Lewis 2005, The Cold War: a new history, New York: Penguin. The doyen of American Cold War history here provides a concise but comprehensive account of the diplomatic and military manoeuvring.

Oberdorfer, Don 1998, revised edition, From the Cold War to a new era, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Best single overview of the events of the end of the Cold War written by a senior *Washington Post* journalist.

Walker, Martin 1993, The Cold War and the making of the modern world, London: Fourth Estate. Erudite overview of the history benefiting from Walker's experiences as *The Guardian*'s Moscow correspondent during the final years of the USSR.

Part 3
The New Agenda: Globalisation and Global Governance

Multilateral Economic Institutions

Marc Williams

Introduction

This chapter will explore the role of three multilateral economic institutions (MEIs) in con-temporary economic governance: the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, the **World Bank**, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). As we will see there is no single vantage point from which to view these institutions or from which to assess their importance. The first part of the chapter discusses global governance and **globalisation** and examines some perspectives on international organisations. Controversies over the role of the MEIs in the global econ-omy have focused on the economic impact of their activities and their representative nature as institutions of governance. The second part of the chapter therefore explores the historical evolution of the IMF, World Bank and WTO as they adapted to the challenges of an evolv-ing global economy. This section examines competing claims concerning their competence as economic managers. Recently, the legitimacy, accountability and representative nature of MEIs have been called into question. The third part of the chapter focuses on the debate over the democratic credentials of the multilateral economic institutions.

In November 1999 some 50,000 protesters disrupted the Third Ministerial Meeting of the WTO. Less than six months later mass protesters also greeted the delegates arriving for the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF in April 2000 in Washington, DC. Reported extensively by the global media, the actions of the protesters subjected the activities of these three MEIs to intense public scrutiny. While there are a number of MEIs engaged in various forms of economic governance, this chapter focuses on the three institutions targeted by the 'anti-globalisation' demonstrators. The World Bank, IMF and WTO are, arguably, the most important MEIs in contemporary world politics. In order to understand the activities of these institutions and the controversies surrounding them, it is necessary to look at both their his-torical evolution and the various ways in which writers analyse international organisations.

Multilateralism in **peace** and **security** issues and in economic policy has been a feature of world politics since the end of World War II (Ruggie 1993). Decades before scholars began to write about **interdependence** (in the 1960s) and globalisation (in the 1980s) policy-makers recognised that in an interdependent world economy, the success of national economic poli-cies depended on successful international cooperation (Gardner 1956). As World War II drew to a close the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference was held in July 1944 at

Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA. This conference laid the foundations for the post-war international economic **order**. At the Bretton Woods conference two organisations were formed – the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development which was later popularly called the World Bank, and the IMF. These two organisations were meant to be two parts of a tripartite structure of international economic organisations that would provide the foundations for post-war recovery and prosperity. The third part of the economic architecture was meant to be created at the Havana Conference on Trade and Employment in November 1947, and although the delegates agreed to form an International Trade Organisation (ITO), this institution never came into existence since the charter of the ITO was never ratified. With the failure of the ITO, the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** became a forum for the reduction of tariffs and for international trade policy until it was replaced in 1995 by the WTO.

Global governance and the global economy

There are, of course, many definitions of the term 'global governance'. For the purposes of this chapter governance will be taken to mean the sum of the many ways that individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. (Commission on Global Governance 1995). Following from this definition of governance, global governance will be understood as the system of governance mechanisms (institutions, rules, **norms** and regimes) designed to regulate human affairs in the world (O'Brien and Williams 2004: 316). MEIs represent one of the key actors making up the pieces of global governance (Karns and Mingst 2004: 4–21). While the World Bank, IMF and WTO are now inescapable features of the international economic landscape, permanent multilateral economic institutions are a relatively recent historical creation.

As mentioned above, the World Bank and the IMF were the direct result of negotiations during World War II among allied governments. The rationale for the creation of a multilateral economic order underpinned with formal institutions lay in two considerations. First, many policy-makers believed that one of the major causes of the war was the economic instability of the 1930s (Calleo and Rowland 1973: 35–37). The international economic system experienced a number of shocks in the inter-war period including the Wall Street Crash of 1929, the Great Depression of the 1930s and a breakdown in international economic cooperation. These policy-makers believed that the rise of fascism, Nazism and militarism in the 1930s was a direct result of economic instability and economic rivalry. They therefore set out to establish an economic framework that would provide a firm foundation on which to build a peaceful post-war world. Second, policy-makers believed that an open trading system and a stable monetary and financial system were essential prerequisites for the recovery of European economies devastated by the war. Sixty years on from the Bretton Woods conference and from the first activities of these organisations, some critics query the continued necessity for such institutions.

There is no single answer to the question: do we need multilateral economic institutions? However, any attempt to answer this question in the contemporary world must take account of current economic and political conditions. The positive answer to this

question framed by governments in the immediate aftermath of World War II was conditioned by their experience of the Great Depression, **war** and the challenge of reconstruction. A contemporary answer must be framed in relation to globalisation. While recognising that globalisation remains a contested term with disputes taking place not only over its meaning but also over its very existence (Scholte 2000), no better concept exists that captures the profound changes that have taken place in economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of society.

Arguably, globalisation is not a recent phenomenon and many facets of economic interdependence and transborder communication are not novel. However, contemporary globalisation is distinct from other historical forms of the phenomenon. There are three key features of contemporary globalisation. First, central to contemporary globalisation is a 'widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness' (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 1999: 2). Second, and linked to the idea of global interconnectedness, is the notion that globalisation is a multidimensional affair covering economic, political, social, technological, ecological and cultural dimensions of social life. Third, globalisation is inclusive of both material and ideational/**normative** dimensions. Globalisation refers not simply to changes in material structures and processes but also to ideological and ethical issues. This three-fold approach suggests that globalisation is a set of processes rather than an end state.

Globalisation is an uneven process and therefore for the global economy and multilateral economic institutions it poses both challenges and opportunities (Woods 1999: 25–34). On one hand, global economic interdependence is a process which brings national economies closer together, thus requiring better coordination and harmonisation of policies (UNDP 2005). On the other hand, globalisation unleashes forces which appear to speed up the processes whereby the gap between winners and losers in the world economy widens more quickly (Wade 2004) and with more serious consequences than at previous times. MEIs are thus faced with the task of ameliorating these adverse consequences of globalisation. These challenges have been central to the higher profile that MEIs have experienced in the past decade.

Frequently globalisation is confused or conflated with a particular type of economic policy, namely **neoliberalism**. However, neoliberal economic policy is one response to globalisation and not the only available mix of economic policies. Neoliberal economic policies, in this context, refer to policies supportive of market solutions to economic problems, increased emphasis on the private sector, a lessening of government intervention in the economy, and a reduction in welfare provisions. Many of the critics of the MEIs focus on their role as instruments in the spread of economic liberal ideas and strategies. In the 1980s and 1990s the World Bank and IMF adopted a neoliberal approach known as the **Washington Consensus** (See Box 20.1). But before we examine the contested record of the MEIs it is necessary to take a brief look at contrasting perspectives on international organisation since assessment of the possibilities and limitations of MEIs is conditioned by the perspective held by the analyst.

Perspectives on multilateral economic institutions

While there are numerous questions that scholars and practitioners pose concerning the role played by MEIs in global governance, these can be seen to be variations on two central questions, the first being: are MEIs important?; and the second, whose interests are served by MEIs?

> ### Box 20.1:   Terminology
>
> **The Washington Consensus**
>
> The Washington Consensus is a term coined by economist John Williamson. It refers to a set of policies designed to foster economic development that had a broad support among officials and economists in the US government (especially the US Treasury), IMF and World Bank. Although Williamson's original thesis applied solely to Latin American countries, the term has been given wider applicability. These policies included fiscal discipline (balancing budgets), liberalising trade, freeing exchange rates and interest rates, privatising state industries, deregulation, tax reform to broaden the tax base, redirecting public expenditure to increase economic returns and redistribute income, and securing property rights.

These two questions contain both positive and normative components. That is, they embrace both issues relating to what has been accomplished by these organisations and also issues surrounding the goals or purposes of these bodies. Views about MEIs are related to beliefs about international cooperation and international organisation more generally (Pease 2006). Liberal theories have been dominant in approaches to thinking about international organisation because liberal theories take international organisation seriously, unlike realist theories with their emphasis on **state** behaviour (see chapter 3). Liberals hold a number of core assumptions which lead them to think that MEIs are important. First, liberals believe that international cooperation is a rational response to an interdependent world economy (Rittberger and Zangl 2006: 16–20). Liberals believe that states are rational actors, and they thus see MEIs as a rational response to the complexities of international economic transactions. No single state can secure its economic goals in an interdependent world economy, and therefore mutual vulnerabilities will lead states to create MEIs. Second, liberals believe international cooperation on the basis of reciprocity increases mutual gains for all parties (Karns and Mingst 2004: 37). Thus MEIs can benefit all members since they promote efficiency and stability in the world economy. While liberals provide positive answers to both questions, realists tend to take the opposite view.

All forms of **realism** take the state as the basic and most important unit in international relations (see chapter 4). Thus, from a realist perspective, MEIs are only important to the extent that they serve the interests of the states which created them in the first place. Because international organisations are viewed from this focus on **power**, realists will tend to argue that international organisations will reflect the interests of the dominant states (Waltz 2000: 26). Therefore an MEI will serve the interests of the most powerful state in the organisation.

From a constructivist perspective (see chapter 8) international organisations can be important and independent actors in international relations (Barnett and Finnemore 1999). Constructivists focus on norms and identity formation and from this perspective MEIs both reflect the normative consensus underlying their creation and influence their members through changing their beliefs and understandings and shaping their behaviour (Karns and Mingst 2004: 50–2). While there is no settled view on the interest served by MEIs, the dominant liberal constructivist view focuses on the dissemination of liberal norms (Barkin 2003).

Multilateral economic institutions and the management of the global economy

This section presents a brief sketch of the performance of the three major multilateral economic institutions. As mentioned above, different theorists will arrive at different conclusions about the impact of a specific MEI, since there are no agreed criteria by which to measure the performance of MEIs. Again, different approaches to international relations will emphasise different values. For example, realist scholars are primarily interested in issues relating to security. From a realist perspective the key issue is likely to be the extent to which these institutions contribute to international stability. And more specifically, they may be assessed in relation to the ability of these institutions to fulfil the goals of key state actors. Liberal theorists may share this emphasis on stability since, from a liberal perspective, one of the main aims of an international institution is to help to solve collective action problems. But many liberals are also interested in issues relating to efficiency and thus their primary interest is likely to be an assessment of the contribution of the MEIs to economic efficiency. Of course, efficiency and stability need not be opposed goals! From a number of critical perspectives on international relations the main emphasis is likely to be economic justice. These analysts are likely to be concerned with the activities of MEIs designed to reduce inequalities and to lessen disparities between rich and poor, men and women.

The International Monetary Fund

MEIs exist within a changing global environment and one measure of their success is their ability to adapt to change. In some respects the IMF has responded creatively to the challenges posed by a changing international financial order. It has extended the range of services it provides. Initially the IMF was essentially a short-term lending institution, providing twelve to twenty-four month loans through its Stand-by Arrangements. It has progressively expanded its lending role and developed lending facilities to cope with specific problems, for example the Extended Fund Facility – first established in 1974 for countries suffering serious **balance of payments** problems; the Supplemental Reserve Facility – first devised in 1997 to provide short-term financing on a large scale; and the Compensatory Financing Facility – initiated in 1963 in response to pleas for special financial resources by countries experiencing balance of payments difficulties as a result of fluctuating commodity prices. The IMF was also at the forefront of adjustment efforts in the management of the debt crisis in the transition to **capitalism** of the command economies of Eastern and Central Europe and the search for solutions to periodic financial crises that have assailed the international financial system.

Two issues have dominated discussion about the IMF's role in global governance. Critics and supporters of the IMF fail to find common ground on both of these issues. The first issue concerns the impact of the IMF's policies in the developing world (Vreeland 2003). There has been a long-running debate over the impact of its policies on recipient countries (Williams 1994). As it became more heavily involved in structural adjustment lending (see Box 20.2) following the onset of the debt crisis in 1982, the criticisms became more widespread. Essentially the critics argue that IMF policies have a negative impact on economic growth, result in adverse distributional impacts and lead to political instability. The IMF has argued that the overall record of its programs is positive and that the initial conditions in borrower countries

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Box 20.2:   Terminology

Structural adjustment policies

A typical structural adjustment package contains prescriptions leading to:
- devaluation of the national currency
- cuts in government expenditure
- reduction of the role of the state in production and distribution
- liberalisation of foreign trade
- price liberalisation and deregulation, and
- restructuring government expenditure through privatisation.

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have a significant impact on the success of adjustment programs. The second issue concerns the role of the IMF in stabilising the international financial system. A series of financial crises in the last decade has highlighted the vulnerability of the international financial system. The Mexican crisis in 1994, the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the Russian crisis in 1998 and the Argentine crisis in 2000–1 have exposed the failures of governance mechanisms. Debate has ranged over the IMF's surveillance policies and its prescriptions to countries experiencing financial crises (Mosley 2004). Critics argue that the IMF has been of limited success in providing stability to the international monetary system and its foray into development financing is inappropriate and fails to contribute to economic justice (Woods 2003).

The World Bank

Like its twinned institution, the World Bank has shown a degree of flexibility and adaptability to a changing international economic order. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) was established in 1956 to promote private sector growth in developing countries through investing in private projects, supporting the growth of private capital markets and encouraging flows of domestic and foreign capital. The International Development Association (IDA), created in 1960, is the soft loan affiliate of the World Bank and provides loans to the poorest developing countries on very favourable terms. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), established in 1988, aims to encourage the flow of direct investment to developing countries through the lessening of non-commercial investment barriers.

The World Bank has also adapted its approach to development over time. Since its early years the Bank has had four identifiable shifts in its approach to the financing of economic development. Its early lending programs focused on industrialisation and large infrastructure projects. A central belief at this time was that economic growth would trickle down from rich to poor and thus no specific anti-poverty measures were required. Beginning in 1973 the Bank embarked on what became known as the Basic Needs strategy. The focus in this era was on poverty-oriented policies designed to meet the basic needs of target populations. While industrial projects remained heavily favoured, there was increased funding of agriculture and the rural sector. The Basic Needs policy was supplanted with adjustment lending in 1980. The move to structural adjustment loans which were the key feature of adjustment lending

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Box 20.3:   Key texts

The Millennium Development Goals and targets for 2015

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day. Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education. Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender-equality and empower women. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality. Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate of children under five.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health. Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability. Integrate sustainable development policies into development programs. Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. Achieve significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development. There are seven targets to achieve this goal.

For more on the Millenium Development Goals see www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml.

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saw a shift from poverty alleviation to one of improving the balance of payments and overall economic performance of client states. A renewed emphasis on poverty alleviation characterises the current Bank approach. The sustainable development paradigm has shifted Bank priorities towards governance reforms, an increased role for the private sector in development and a greater focus on poverty reduction (Pincus and Winters 2002). The current focus of the Bank is on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (see Box 20.3). One could conclude that the World Bank has shown flexibility in adapting to the changing demands of the development agenda, thus contributing to stability and efficiency. Given its centrality in the development regime, the World Bank is the leading multilateral agency.

Nevertheless, the World Bank remains a deeply controversial institution. Supporters of the Bank contend that it provides developing countries with much needed capital and maintain that the projects it supports are vital in the fight against world poverty. In their view, these resources provide important supplementary assistance for the governments of developing countries and enhance the perceived stability of the economy to international investors. Supporters of World Bank policies think that the conditions it attaches to its loans provide a framework of sound financial management for the governments of its borrower nations (Picciotto 2003). On the other hand, critics accuse the Bank of putting profits before people, and of distorting development (Caufield 1996; Danaher 1994). To the critics these resources are often insufficient, inadequate and ineffective. They contend that the specific conditionality imposed by the Bank privileges external interests over those of the recipients and is focused on repayment of the loan rather than improving welfare.

Box 20.4:   Key organisations

The WTO's organisational structure

- The Agreement establishing the WTO.
- The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and other multilateral trade agreements for goods including Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), the agreement on technical barriers to trade (TBT), and the Agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs).
- The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).
- The Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property measures (TRIPs).
- The Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes.
- The Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM).
- Plurilateral Agreements governing civil aircraft; government procurement; and dairy and bovine meat (the acceptance of these agreements is not mandatory for WTO members).

The World Trade Organization

Assessment of the WTO's contribution to global governance has varied depending on the view taken of the organisation's ability to affect countries' trade policies and analysis of the beneficial effects of trade liberalisation. The WTO provides a complex framework for the organisation of international trade (see Box 20.4).

First, as an international organisation the WTO is primarily a legal agreement which provides a framework of rules, norms and principles to govern the multilateral trading system. For supporters, the WTO provides a level playing field and thus can be effective in constraining damaging economic nationalist policies (Blackhurst 1997). Critics of the WTO argue that major states dictate the rules of the organisation (Kwa 2003).

Second, it is a forum for multilateral trade negotiations. The organisation, itself the outcome of a round of multilateral trade negotiations, presides over the process through which further trade liberalisation is achieved. Negotiations under the auspices of the WTO specify the principal contractual obligations determining trade negotiations and trade legislation. And the WTO's Trade Policy Review Mechanism facilitates the evolution of trade relations and trade policy through its surveillance of the policies of member-states. Supporters of the WTO point to the beneficial impact of trade liberalisation for all countries (Bhagwati and Srinivasan 2002). Critics contend that further unfettered trade liberalisation can be damaging to poor countries (Chang 2005) and the environment (Conca 2000). Since its inception the WTO has presided over piecemeal liberalisation but has yet to oversee a round of substantial reduction in barriers to trade. The currently stalled Doha Round of trade negotiations provides ammunition for supporters and critics alike. The critics argue that the failure to conclude the round shows the importance of the rich countries' interests in managing outcomes in the WTO. Supporters of the WTO argue that the stalemate is proof that a multilateral institution is necessary.

Third, the WTO through its Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) facilitates dispute resolution. The DSU provides the machinery for settling members' differences on their rights and obligations. For some, this function is crucial because it contributes to the stability and further evolution of the world trading system, since liberalisation will not take place in the absence of effective dispute settlement procedures (Jackson 2002: 108–9). For others, the

dispute settlement procedures give authority to unelected judges to make decisions affecting the livelihoods of groups unrepresented in the process (Wallach and Woodall 2004: 239–61). The WTO is committed to the promotion of a liberal trading order. Its policies are predicated on an assumption that trade is better than no trade, and that barriers to trade are harmful to national and international welfare. As a successor to the GATT the WTO widens and deepens global regulation of international trade and payments. It extends GATT disciplines into areas previously governed by protectionist devices in the post-war global trade regime, that is, agriculture, and textiles, and brings 'new' issues such as intellectual property rights and investment measures under regulatory control.

Legitimacy, democracy and multilateral economic institutions

Like many organisations, MEIs have been the subject of intense debate concerning their democratic credentials, accountability and legitimacy (Esty 2002; Woods 2001; Zweifel 2006). In this debate supporters of the **status quo** have attempted to defend the current arrangements against a wide variety of critics. This section first outlines the defence of current arrangements, followed by the arguments of the critics in order to provide a framework for understanding the controversy. The defence of the status quo can be called a statist approach. It begins from the assumption that the accountability of MEIs is situated with the state actors that constitute their membership (Keohane and Nye 2001). That is, MEIs are accountable to states and not to other actors in the **international system**. It follows that an MEI is legitimate to the extent that its members accept its authority.

On the basis of these assumptions, the extent to which the World Bank, IMF and WTO are democratic institutions has been made the subject of three tests. The first concerns the extent to which the organisation is representative of the members of **international society**. At its simplest level, representation refers to inclusiveness of the membership. In this sense an international organisation is democratic if its membership actually covers all states that potentially have an interest in the selected issue-area(s), and an organisation is undemocratic if it deliberately excludes from membership states that meet the criteria for membership and have a legitimate interest in its activities.

Using these criteria the World Bank, IMF and WTO are democratic institutions since all three organisations boast a wide membership. Not only are most of the world's states members, but in terms of the activities covered by these organisations, no significant states are denied membership. Second, representation can be conceived as a process of fair decision-making. In this sense **democracy** refers to the decisional rules of an international organisation. The statist perspective rejects criticism of the weighted voting mechanism of the World Bank and the IMF. Statists argue that in a financial institution a weighted voting system is necessary to protect the interests of the major shareholders without whose contributions a pool of finance for borrowing states would not exist. With respect to the WTO, the statist perspective contends that the consensus decision-making rules are ultra-democratic, since every member country has a voice. The third criterion is that of transparency, and supporters of the status quo emphasise recent developments, especially at the World Bank and the WTO, to increase access to information. They defend the necessity of secret negotiations and argue that further openness is the responsibility of national governments.

A number of critical voices have been raised in opposition to these arguments. They argue that, in the contemporary world, a focus on intergovernmental relations is too limiting, since the forces of interdependence and globalisation have reduced the degree of autonomy and independence implied in the traditional statist concept of **sovereignty**. Globalisation, it is argued, poses fundamental questions for the exercise of global democratic governance. Critics reject the claim that these institutions are democratic because they are accountable to their member-states. First, there are limitations on state sovereignty in the sense that the authority and power of national authorities is undermined by the activities of the MEIs. The conditionalities imposed by the World Bank and the IMF, and the expanded mandate of the WTO, mean that national governments and their citizens are increasingly subject to new forms of regulation over which there is little direct control (Williams 1999; Woods 2001: 88–90).

Second, it cannot be assumed that the decision-making structures are fully representative. The weighted decision-making of the World Bank and IMF results in a system in which poorer countries are inadequately represented (Woods 2003: 84–7). Moreover, the critics reject the argument that decision-making in financial organisations should reflect the interests of the most powerful. They argue that a fair decision-making system should take into account those most affected by the decisions taken. Furthermore, a restriction of decision-making to governments does not satisfactorily capture the range of stakeholders likely to be affected by the activities of the MEIs. Critics argue that the conventional answer that states represent their citizens and therefore the politics of MEIs reflects the interests of diverse groups in national society is no longer tenable (if it ever was) given the sub-national and transnational groups who believe that current state structures marginalise rather than represent their interests (Williams 1999).

Responding directly to the claims of defenders of the status quo, critics of the MEIs have argued that they are not sufficiently transparent. In this context transparency refers to two issues (Williams 2005: 42). First, transparency is concerned with the process whereby decisions are made. Critics allege that decisions are frequently made in secret and that the visible part of proceedings is a mere masquerade with little relation to the real exercise of power that takes place outside the public gaze. Second, transparency refers to access to information. Critics argue that access to information on which decisions are made should be more readily available. Additionally, critics argue that the statist approach fails to take account of shifting authority patterns and structures in a changing world order. A key aspect of globalisation has been the creation of new non-state centres of authority. One feature of this is what can be termed the privatisation of regulation (Cutler 1995; Sinclair 1994). Policy decisions taken by, for example, financial institutions can have profound effects on the policies of governments and intergovernmental organisations (see chapter 22).

Conclusion

The activities of the IMF, World Bank and WTO have far-reaching consequences for the livelihood of people around the globe. The international economy has changed dramatically since the IMF and World Bank were founded; both organisations have adapted to this

changing environment. The IMF's role in maintaining the stability of the international monetary system has changed and it has moved into longer term development lending. The IMF's macroeconomic policy coordination, crisis management skills and its role in economic development have all sparked debate and controversy. The World Bank as the world's leading multilateral development agency has a crucial role to play in poverty alleviation. While the Bank has not been a static institution and has changed its priorities over time, its credibility as a development agency remains in question. The creation of the WTO in 1995 signalled a stronger institutional base for the multilateral trading system. But the tension between further trade liberalisation and sectional interests has stymied its ability to fulfil its role.

Questions

1. How do you explain the establishment of MEIs after World War II?
2. Do the World Bank, IMF and WTO adequately reflect the will of poor states?
3. Whose interests are served by the MEIs?
4. Why have MEIs become the subject of intense debate over the past decade?
5. Why, if at all, do we need MEIs?
6. Can we measure the legitimacy and effectiveness of MEIs?

Further reading

Narlikar, A. 2005, The World Trade Organization: a very short introduction, Oxford: Oxford University Press. A short and accessible introduction to the WTO.

O'Brien, R., Goetz, Anne Marie, Scholte, Jan Aart and Williams, Marc 2000, Contesting global governance, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Presents a detailed examination of the relationship between the IMF, World Bank, WTO and environmental, labour and women's movements.

Woods, N. 2006, The globalizers: the IMF, the World Bank and their borrowers, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Examines the effects of IMF and World Bank lending in Africa, Mexico, and Russia.

21
Global Trade[1]

Maryanne Kelton

Introduction

This chapter examines both the concepts and structures of the global trading regime before considering the ensuing debates. It also provides an analysis of Australia's place in the global trading regime. First, it outlines the international **free trade** regime. Second, it identifies some of the problems that have beset this system. Third, it notes the growth in preferential trade agreements. Fourth, it examines Australia's historical place in global trade before, finally, surveying more recent trends in Australia's global trade.

Recall the intense protests at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Millennium Round's Third Ministerial Meeting in Seattle, November and December 1999. Here we witnessed a dramatic illustration of the disputes being fought over the operation of the world trading regime. These public battles reflected both intellectual and policy concerns surrounding the nature of global trade. In particular, this major dispute reveals a broad coalescence of dissatisfaction with the liberal international economic **order** that was established immediately after World War II. Born after a period of devastation wrought through two world wars and the Great Depression, the new economic order attempted to remove barriers to trade and thereby prevent a repeat of past tragedies. The emergent system sponsored by the US aimed to implement a liberal trading regime that both espoused and practised free and open trade. Part of the post-war reconstruction process involved countries profiting from access to markets and removal of barriers to capital movement. Towards the latter half of the twentieth century this process was given greater impetus through rapid developments in transportation and communication. Market internationalisation increased significantly and countries became increasingly interdependent. In short, international trade expanded enormously during this period.

By 1999, however, opposition to the global trading regime had become widespread. Not only were there intellectual criticisms directed at the theoretical limitations of the free trade paradigm but also practical concerns over the injustices of the trading regime. Criticisms mostly coalesced around the inability of the current arrangements to redress global inequities. Critics pointed to the inherent lack of distributive justice in the system (see chapter 9). Some

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[1] My thanks to Alex Stephens and Owen Covick for their assistance with this chapter.

remonstrated that the trading regime was manipulated to advantage by a few industrialised, powerful **states**. Others protested the largesse of the profits taken from the system by **multinational corporations**. Labour groups in some industrialised countries protested the erosion of their wages as they competed with cheaper wage arrangements in developing countries while environmentalists railed against the ever-increasing capitalist demands on resources.

As a developed country, Australia has benefited from the general principles of the liberal trading regime. With a small population and consequent small domestic market for its goods, trade has been crucial to its economic development. Although initially dependent on trade with Britain and protected behind high tariff walls, from the 1980s Australia attempted to become more outwardly oriented and liberalise its trading barriers. For the most part Australia has been the beneficiary of this approach. Nevertheless, like many developing countries, it encounters problems with the **international system**'s intractable barriers to agricultural trade. Its active international trade diplomacy from the 1980s onwards demonstrated a brand of middle **power** activism, successfully exacting whatever gains could be had at the margins of world trade. Increasingly too, as services feature more prominently in its trading profile, Australia has aimed to become active in multilateral negotiations to effectively and equitably liberalise trade in this sector. Its recent switch to a focus on **bilateral** trade diplomacy, following a wider global trend since the late 1980s, has revealed mixed results and reinforced the difficult trade position in which Australia finds itself in the early years of this century.

Free trade and the international trading system

In 2004 approximately US$8.9 trillion of merchandise goods and US$2.1 trillion in commercial services were traded across national boundaries globally. In real terms export growth for 2004 was 9 per cent with 6.5 per cent expected in 2005. These figures surpassed world gross domestic product (GDP) growth. The WTO documents that the dynamic traders of 2004 were located in Asia, Central and South America and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Some of this was fuelled by solid commodity prices and, as always, exchange rates exert a significant influence on trade flows (World Trade Organization 2005).

Trade has always been part of people's lives throughout the globe. With the extension of the Roman Empire in the West and that of the Chinese in the East, through the age of discovery to the peak of colonial rule in the nineteenth century, trade has been partner to the **security** agenda. It is, however, the nature of the current trading system and its origins that concern us most here. In the inter-war period of the 1920s the major international economies increasingly employed *protection* to shield their domestic industries from imports from their international competitors. As a consequence world trade declined dramatically with the end result being the Great Depression. With the Depression came the rise of militarism and fascism, culminating in World War II. Trade was perceived to be inextricably connected not only to prosperity but also to **peace**. As the US emerged from the war in a position to oversee any new international economic order and had drawn a line from *economic nationalism* to the devastation of **war**, it was intent on overseeing a post-war economic order based on principles of *economic liberalism*. Undoubtedly it was in the interests of the US to establish a system of free trade, as it would be a significant beneficiary of its ability to produce goods and services

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Box 21.1: Terminology

Key global trade terms

economic liberalism Perspective that favours free and open trade, separate from politics, believing that this approach maximises economic efficiency and thereby prosperity.

economic nationalism Government policies designed to protect local industries from foreign competition.

mercantilism Trade policies designed to maximise state power/wealth, often at the expense of others.

most favoured nation GATT Article I principle of non-discrimination between trading partners.

national treatment The principle, enshrined in GATT Article III, that requires imports receive the same treatment as domestically produced goods.

nontariff barriers Protection measures other than direct taxes designed to limit foreign competition. These may include quotas (or limits), sanitary regulation or import licensing.

orderly market arrangements Bilateral arrangements where the exporting country cooperates to limit exports. Voluntary Export Restraints (VER) and Voluntary Restraint Arrangements (VRA) are similar mechanisms.

protection Barriers designed to defend local producers from foreign competition.

public goods Goods that can continue to be enjoyed despite others' use. Benefits can extend across borders and generations, for example, a lighthouse.

radicalism Perspective that critiques a competitive and conflictual capitalist trading regime and argues for system change.

tariff Customs duty on imported merchandise. Protects local goods from competition. Revenue raising for governments.

terms of trade Ratio of the price of export commodities against import commodities.

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in demand by other countries. Nonetheless, the argument crafted affirmed the benefits that would be distributed to all traders in the international system. It was a positive-sum game.

These free trade arguments were derived from the work of both Adam Smith (1723–90) and David Ricardo (1772–1823) who argued that free trade, through the encouragement of competition, advanced economic efficiency and created better products and cheaper prices of goods for consumers. Smith attempted to demonstrate that 'the invisible hand of the market', in allowing individuals to pursue private gains, would ultimately benefit the collective public interest (Smith 1975). Ricardo built upon this advocacy of free trade by developing the **theory** of comparative advantage. In the international economy, states received a net gain in welfare where they specialised in what they produced. This specialisation could result from their natural endowments or policy prescriptions and were those items they could produce more efficiently, relative to other countries. These products could then be traded for items produced by other states as a consequence of their comparative advantage (Ricardo 1973). For example, when we compare Australia's climate, space and topography with that of China's, we find that Australia has a comparative advantage vis-à-vis China in the production of wool versus clothing. (That is, Australia has one comparative advantage in the production of wool, whereas through the abundance of labour, one of China's comparative advantages lies in the mass production of apparel.) Liberal economists argue that through this division of labour efficiencies are maximised and the international trading system can deliver benefits to all.

This theory of liberal economics was given material form through the meeting of forty-four states at **Bretton Woods**, New Hampshire in 1944 where the new liberal economic order was constructed and the multilateral institutions of the **World Bank**, **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** were established (see chapter 20). Originally the Bretton Woods states had envisioned the International Trade Organization to establish and implement the new trading regime. However, US Senate opposition prevented its formation. Although at its formal instigation in 1947 the GATT was intended as a temporary institution, it oversaw the reduction of tariffs, particularly on manufactured goods, through multilateral trade negotiations rounds or talks until its transformation into the WTO in 1995. The driving tenet of the GATT was its category of *most favoured nation* (also now normal trading relations) status and *national treatment* rules based on principles of non-discrimination. These principles aimed to encourage trade on an open multilateral basis.

Yet, despite the intention that the GATT should be a vehicle for comprehensive trade liberalisation there were some notable exceptions. These exemptions were granted as a consequence of the political nature of its inception and testimony to the compromise wrought between *laissez-faire* economists and domestic interventionists, and later became known as 'embedded liberalism'. Keen to protect their farmers, the US and Western European countries exempted agricultural barriers from discussion. Discriminatory trading blocs such as the European Economic Community and the British Commonwealth who conducted preferential trading within their membership group were granted exemptions. Services trade too was initially outside the boundaries of the negotiations, principally because of its lesser import in the 1940s. Yet each of these exceptions would become important obstacles in the development of Australia's international trading profile.

In much of the American literature at least, stability and maintenance of the system, nonetheless, would be brokered by the US as a hegemonic power. Hegemonic stability theory posits that the dominant economy would ensure that in the liberal economic system, free trade rules would be enforced (Gilpin 2001). In addition the hegemon's responsibilities were to manage global macroeconomic policy. This included overseeing the international monetary system and acting as lender of last resort for those states in financial crisis. In the trading system the US provided the 'club good', the non-discriminatory access to US markets that underpinned the GATT (Kerr 2005). Control over production, markets and capital would not only provide collective or *public goods* for all but undoubtedly would benefit the hegemon.

An imperfect system

Although the post-war liberal economic system was designed to remove obstacles to free trade, many still exist and for an array of reasons. As tariffs were gradually reduced or removed an assortment of *nontariff barriers* were deployed to serve the same function. In addition to both import and export quotas, financial subsidies exist to assist specific industries and producers. For example, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidies in 2004 were estimated to be worth €43.5 billion while in 2002 the US Farm Bill provided US$190 billion over ten years in assistance for its farmers. Australia's stringent quarantine regulations occasionally have been perceived as a vehicle for protectionism by stealth by preventing the import

of a range of foreign agricultural products. Furthermore, both countervailing duties (taxes on imported goods that are believed to have benefited from government subsidies) and antidumping duties (taxes designed to counteract markets being swamped by the sale of goods at below cost prices) have been utilised to counter foreign governments' suspected use of subsidies.

These vehicles designed to promote and preserve a state's trading advantages are components of a government's strategic trade policy. In theoretical terms this is known as economic *mercantilism* and is derivative of realist politics. During the 1970s and 1980s the effects of foreign state use of mercantilist policies was felt acutely in the US. This coincided with the threats felt by the US to its hegemonic position, arising as a consequence of the resurgence of the Japanese economy and the newly industrialising economies of Asia but also with the reconstruction of the European economies. Countries hitherto given concessions as part of the **Cold War** by the US were increasingly thought to be free riders on the US economy. That is, they were enjoying the benefits of the international system as sponsored by the US but their outlays were comparatively small. There was no question that many of the Asian states pursued a mercantilist model of economic development and that the Europeans had consistently managed a system of preferential trading. Consequently by the end of the 1960s the politics of neo-mercantilism became more predominant and the international system was seen by some in increasingly zero-sum terms.

US preparedness to underwrite the system snapped in 1971 when US President Richard Nixon announced that the US would no longer guarantee fixed exchange rates, thus signalling that it was no longer prepared to underwrite the international financial system (see chapter 22). Following across the next two decades in the trade domain, the protectionist ante was upped. The US implemented a plethora of *orderly market arrangements*, including *voluntary export restraints* to preserve domestic industries and attempted to redress the proclivity for overextension. Where possible the costs of structural adjustment would be transferred offshore through a trade policy of aggressive **unilateralism**. Australian wheat growers were particularly affected in their third country markets by the US Export Enhancement Programme (EEP), implemented in May 1985, in which the US provided subsidies to farmers for the export of specific commodities to certain countries.

Nonetheless, the problems with the system were more widespread than those of competition between developed countries. While there were arguments expressed particularly by the European Union and Japan that in certain circumstances the state had a legitimate role in preserving local and community interests, the arguments were exacerbated by the difficulties experienced by developing and least developed countries within the system. As Friedrich List (1798–1846) had theorised, government intervention was necessary to ensure the individual's interest in acquiring personal assets did not conflict with the interests of the **nation**. Yet, liberal economic theory remained dominant. And as Dani Rodrik has claimed, 'in many "emerging" economies traditional developmental concerns relating to industrialisation and poverty have been crowded out by the pursuit of "international competitiveness"' (Rodrik 1999: 1). Furthermore, it was argued that free trade of itself was not responsible for growth, instead that macroeconomic stability and investment were more significant determinants (Rodrik 1999). Outside the mainstream discourses *radicalism* developed in response to the dominance of the liberal economists. While **Marxism** informed the structure of the communist economies and trade between the central and Eastern European **Warsaw Pact** countries, through the 1960s and 1970s radical theorists posited that liberal economic policies

and the international trading regime only exacerbated the problems of inequality. Dependency theorists argued that **capitalism** entrenched the wealth of the powerful states and left the developing countries in a fixed state of exploitation. Feminists, too, critiqued the trading regime as it neglected the effect of the system on women. The discourse of fair trade in this respect contested the ability of the existing system to provide for all in a just manner. Moreover, critics argued that instead of everyone benefiting from the rising tide of free trade, frequent storms often swamped the opportunities of some.

Currently the trading regime is beset by problems arising from these tensions. By November 1999 these critiques from both right and left coalesced around the impending WTO meeting in Seattle. The Seattle meeting was convened to establish a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. Although the critics succeeded eventually in altering the focus to one of development, by 2006 the 150 member participants in the Doha Development Round (as it came to be known) struggled to find agreement particularly in the reduction of agricultural subsidies. If the Round collapses completely, questions remain as to the possible marginalisation of the WTO itself and a return to a global trading system riven by competing preferential trade blocs.

Preferential trade arrangements

The inability of the current system to maintain the pace of multilateral liberalisation has provided some of the impetus for the recent spate of preferential trade arrangements. While states often refer to these arrangements as free trade agreements (FTA) or regional trade agreements (RTA), most are discriminatory in structure. Nevertheless, the WTO rules allow for these agreements as long as they incorporate substantially all sectors of trade and do not exclude others from trading. It is generally understood that the phase-in period for these arrangements should not exceed ten years. Currently there are approximately 300 free trade agreements in existence with 100 of these negotiated after 1995. An additional seventy-five are presently under negotiation. Not all of these agreements comply with WTO rules. For Australia and the US, the failure of the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun, September 2003, to reach consensus particularly over investment, competition, government procurement and trade facilitation measures, compounded the problems of the Seattle gridlock and drove them away from the **multilateralism** and down the bilateral track that led to the AUSFTA (Australia United States Free Trade Agreement).

Adding to the quest for greater access to partner country markets there exist a number of other rationales for FTA negotiations. Other factors include the weakness of existing regional institutions and attempts to hasten domestic reforms by coupling restructuring to international agreements. Some negotiations attempt to implement 'WTO plus' or 'third wave' considerations that reach beyond border constraints into areas traditionally regarded as public policy concerns. Related to this is the demonstration effect for other countries' consultations as agreements incorporate attempts to write rules for new areas to be integrated into trade agreements. The strengthening of intellectual property rights in the AUSFTA can be regarded as demonstrative of this modelling. And if the US-Israel free trade agreement signed in 1985 was principally concerned with security objectives, arguably more of the recent FTAs

are also motivated by geostrategic themes. If it can be contended too that some of these con-
temporary FTAs demonstrate little economic benefit then these alternate explanations must
be considered. It should also be noted that many of these motives for bilateral or regional
agreements have proved no less contentious in the public domain as the opposition to the
AUSFTA and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) has testified.

Australia and the global trading regime

Australia, with its small population and limited markets, is heavily dependent on a rules-based
trading regime. Historically, Australia remained a deeply protected economy until the 1980s
and, given the strength of primary commodities in its export profile, for much of its past it
identified as a developing country. Industry protection was an intrinsic part of the 'Australian
settlement', the informal bargain between government and the people at Federation in 1901.
Obviously much of its early trade relations was shaped by Britain. This was extended by Aus-
tralia's participation in the Ottawa Agreements of 1932 which established a system of imperial
trading preferences through the Commonwealth. Further, Australia's trade diversion policy
of 1936 entrenched the prominence of Britain by diverting imports from both the US and
Japan. Even by 1948–49, Britain imported 48.9 per cent of Australia's trade, which at the
time was comprised of approximately 80 per cent rural commodities or raw materials. Indeed
this primary commodities profile often skewed Australia's negotiations to one of a developing
country.

Despite the dependence on British markets, nonetheless, Australia was involved in the
multilateral trade negotiations from the outset and has remained prominent at significant
times since in key global trade negotiations. Not only was Australia one of twenty-three sig-
natories to the GATT initially, it was also nominated to contribute to the establishment of
the post-war trade system. Initially, as Ann Capling records, Australia's role in these nascent
negotiations was in attempting to temper US dominance of the system. Further to these ini-
tial negotiations, in the following decade it attempted to redress the imbalance enshrined
in Article XVI of the GATT which outlawed manufacturing export subsidies but permitted
subsidies for agricultural exporters. While structural factors would always circumscribe the
possibilities for Australia's success, its niche activism and expertise could exploit the gains
to be made. Illustrative of this was its inability to ban agricultural export subsidies per se but
instead achieve awareness of the problem and accomplish marginal gains (Capling 2001).

By 1956 the Australian government had established the Department of Trade, recog-
nised the ongoing limits of the Ottawa Agreement, and instead flagged the increasing signif-
icance of the Asian economies with the signing of the Australia-Japan Trade Treaty in the
following year. MFN status was exchanged with Japan; Australia gained market certainty in
primary commodities while it provided Japan with a reduction in import licensing and lower
tariffs. These were important gains for Australia as it continued to experience intransigence
in global agricultural liberalisation. Demonstrative of its practical approach, Australia's trade
with 'mainland' China, particularly in wheat, flourished despite the ideological and security
tensions with 'red' China. Meanwhile Britain's eventual accession to the European Economic
Community in 1973 underscored the value of the geographic reorientation of its trade
relations.
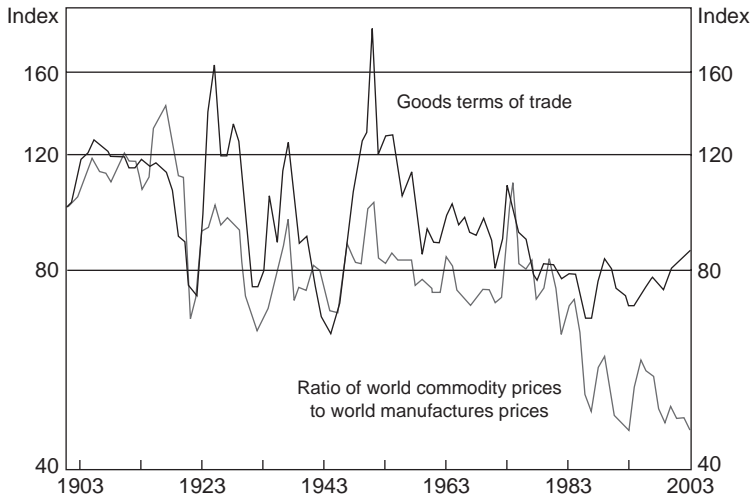
Figure 21.1: Relative commodity prices and Australia's terms of trade

Source: Christian Gillitzer and Jonathan Kearns 2005, 'Long-term Patterns in Australia's Terms of Trade', Research Discussion Paper 2005–01, Reserve Bank of Australia.

The 'banana republic' strikes back

Diversity, however, was not enough by the time the 1980s arrived. With the eighties dawned the realisation that Australia's capacity to deliver material wealth and prosperity to its citizens was in decline. Australia's participation in the high end international economy was moribund. An examination of the trade statistics revealed that Australia's share of global trade was approximately 1.3 per cent, having slipped from approximately 3.4 per cent in the immediate post-war period. National income had declined in real terms and its terms of trade had experienced significant erosion in the early 1970s. By 1981–82 Australia had the highest current account deficit in thirty years. Though agricultural exporters had become efficient and productive, prices for commodities were suffering a long-term decline. Treasurer Paul Keating's quip – that hypothetically, should these indicators persist then Australia's prospects were akin to that of a banana republic – struck home (Snape et al 1998).

Responding to these challenges, the newly elected Hawke government embarked on a series of changes to increase both competitiveness and productivity. Opening the economy to international forces was perceived as a mechanism to induce domestic structural adjustment. Long-standing industry protection was dismantled via the reduction of tariffs and import quotas. Industries such as steel, automotive, telecommunications, plastics and chemicals were forced to compete internationally. In 1968 tariffs had peaked in some industries as high as 98 per cent but by 1992 the maximum tariff for most industries was less than 15 per cent. Partners to the internationalisation of the Australian trading system were labour market changes, microeconomic reform and financial deregulation. The dollar was floated, restrictions on capital movement removed, many regulations limiting foreign investment were abolished, and sixteen foreign banks were allowed entry (see chapter 22). Despite a recession through
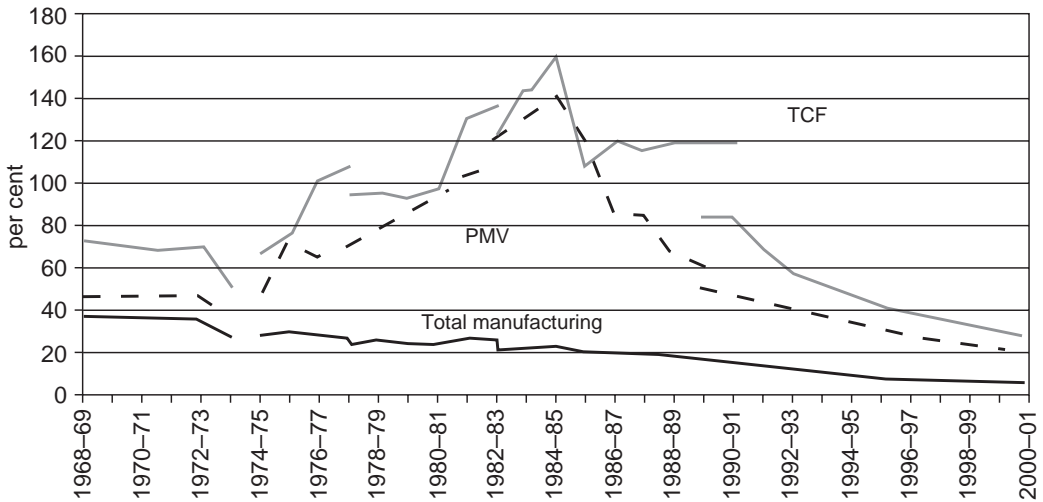
Figure 21.2: Tariff protection rates for manufacturing: passenger motor vehicles (PMVs) and textiles, clothes and footwear (TCF)

Source: Productivity Commission 2000, 'Review of Australia's general tariff arrangements', Report No. 12, Canberra: AusInfo, p. 18.

1989–92, the changes spectacularly reshaped the economy. Exports of manufactured goods and services increased dramatically while economic growth was sustained for the following decade and a half.

Multilateral initiatives

Coupled with these instruments was a series of innovative international trade diplomacy measures. Small power coalition-building and niche diplomacy that maximised Australia's resources were effectively implemented to address the domestic economic crisis on an international front. Driven by necessity, Australia's policy activism was assiduously pursued. After the collapse of the 1982 GATT Ministerial talks in Geneva and the complete disinterest in the inclusion of agriculture on any agenda, Australia reviewed its options. **Bilateralism** as a trade strategy was deemed inappropriate because of the lack of leverage Australia could exert against the major players in the reduction of agricultural subsidies. It was thought too that agriculture would not even be included in any substantive fashion in a bilateral agreement. Moreover, it was perceived that there was an opposition within Asia to preferential trade deals. Given Australia's ever-increasing trade ties with Asia, there was little fervour to jeopardise lucrative markets (Capling 2001: 100).

Compounding Australia's problems at this time was the fear that the global trading system was disintegrating into a world of trade blocs from which Australia would be isolated. Thus a renewed push into the multilateral arena was necessitated. Unilateral tariff reduction had conferred upon Australia status as a country committed to economic liberalisation. As an
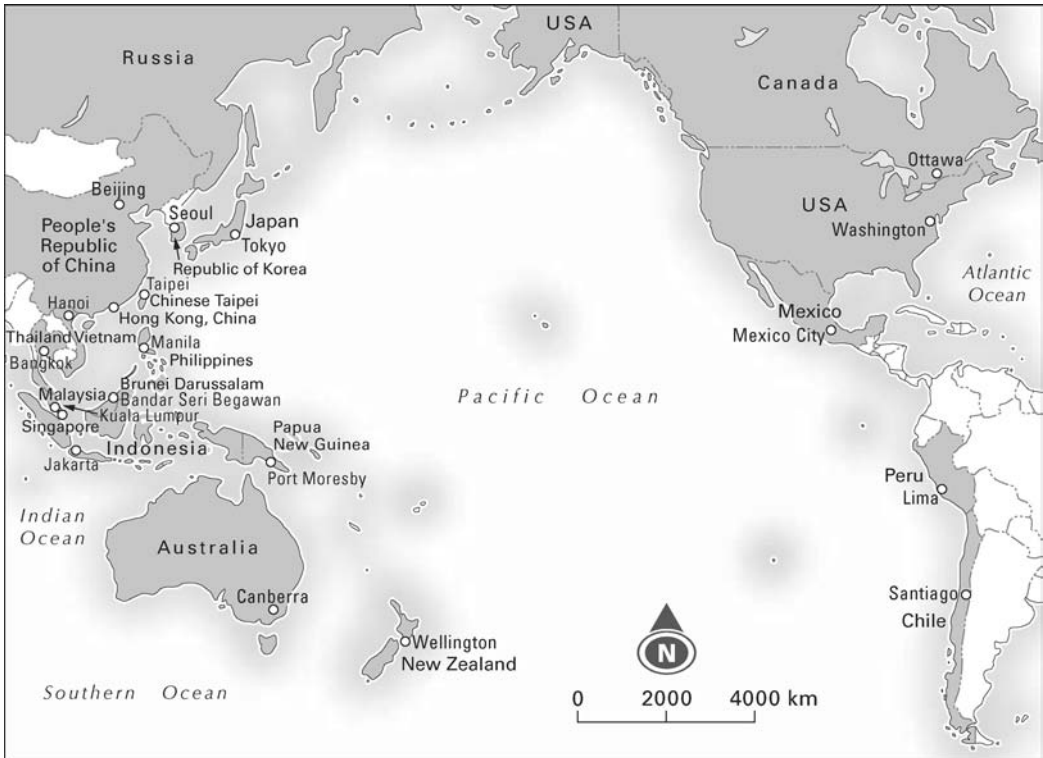
Figure 21.3: APEC and the Asia-Pacific region

efficient agricultural producer with impressive bureaucratic expertise it was also ideally placed to sponsor an initiative creating an alternate force in multilateral agricultural negotiations. In August 1986 a group of disparate agricultural 'fair traders', separate to the major players, but producers of approximately 25 per cent of agricultural trade, met in Cairns to plan a strategy for the GATT Punta del Este meeting to launch the Uruguay Round. Their intent was to maximise their negotiating clout to liberalise the trade in agriculture (Snape et al 1998). Ultimately the Cairns Group achieved some limited success in forcing agriculture onto the multilateral agenda, but nonetheless the intransigence of the major states to eliminate subsidies remained robust.

Australia too, had been cognisant that even to ride agricultural trade liberalisation to the negotiating table it required the support of a global leader. Consequently, it actively engaged the US on this front. Yet in part the *quid pro quo* for this backing was Australia's support for US interests in promoting further liberalisation in services and intellectual property rights. Ironically, however, it was in this sector in the global trade rounds that Australia demonstrated further that it possessed the capacity to materially influence the negotiation process. Here, it worked to establish equitable rules for the negotiation of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and its actions worked to avoid a repeat of the establishment of a regime that was skewed to the interests of the powerful.

Further to its activism in both agriculture and services in the multilateral arena, Australia sought to develop regional economic cooperation through its 1989 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (**APEC**) initiative with Japan. APEC was designed as a regionally based non-discrimination trade agreement, with goals of increased collaboration in trade facilitation and liberalisation, investment and technology transfers. Though one of its immediate objectives was to advance the negotiations in the Uruguay Round, once again its design was to counter the prospects of Australian isolation through the development of exclusive trade blocs. Moreover Australia was concerned by the trade tensions between two of its major trading partners, Japan and the US. With its incorporation of a heads of government meeting in 1993 not only did APEC become more prominent in each country's domestic sphere but it also provided an opportunity for regional leaders to organise informal bilateral meetings. The 'Bogor' declaration, agreed upon in Indonesia in 1994, set commitments for free trade and investment for developed countries by 2010 and 2020 for developing countries.

However, it is unlikely these commitments will be met, including by Australia. After the Asian financial crisis struck in 1997, trade liberalisation in some countries was stalled and APEC's dramatic expansion detracted from its capacity to proceed decisively. While the twelve original members were Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Canada, the United States and the six ASEAN states, it eventually grew to twenty-one member economies including the 'two Chinas', Russia, Chile and Mexico. In 2004 these economies accounted for 57 per cent of the world's GDP (US$20.7 trillion) and 45.8 per cent of world trade. Since 1988 average tariffs in the region have fallen from 16.6 per cent to 6.4 per cent in 2004 (APEC Secretariat).

Bilateralism and the AUSFTA

As APEC experienced problems in the latter half of the 1990s and as the WTO trade liberalisation meetings in both Seattle and Cancun collapsed, many governments turned to alternate trading options. As the Bush administration in the US had been granted trade promotion authority by Congress to negotiate trade agreements without Congressional interference, the Howard government chose this opportunity to pursue a free trade agreement with the US. In its early forays into bilateral dealings with the US in the leather and lamb tariff disputes, it had come unstuck as the leverage the US could exert in these transactions was persuasive. Moreover, Australia's attempts to lever off its cultural relationship was always found wanting in the face of US attention to its domestic producers' interests. But by 2000 the Australian government saw both longer term economic integration and political advantage as benefits of seeking an agreement. While Australia has signed bilateral trade agreements with New Zealand and more recently with Singapore, Thailand and the US, the treaty with the latter has proved to be the most contentious. This was particularly so because of its 'third wave' incursions into social policy and its failure to adequately incorporate agricultural liberalisation into the agreement after a public promotion of anticipated gains in this sector. As to an accurate evaluation of its economic benefits, it is most likely that this will be possible only in five or ten years from now. In the meantime there is no doubt that the Congressional liaison and business links established by the embassy in Washington considerably raised Australia's profile in the US.

Conclusion: an ongoing battle?

No doubt trading tensions between countries will persist and the battles over the nature of the trading regime will continue. Two of the more prominent questions at present are whether the attention that states have devoted to bilateral and regional trade agreements have detracted from their capacity to focus resources on the WTO regime. Consequently, if the current Doha Round of talks completely collapse or a hollow finale is agreed upon it is likely that damage will be inflicted on the legitimacy of the WTO itself. If it survives, and it is improbable that a wholesale trashing of the current regime will occur, it is reasonable to insist that the system be modified to incorporate greater attention to issues of distributive justice.

For Australia's trading regime at this time, some of the more fascinating questions remain in the interconnection between trade and security issues. Given that Australia has been an entrenched security ally with the US, will it be able to manage a concurrent deepening economic and trade relationship with China?

Questions

1. Is economic efficiency the only consideration in determining the nature of the trading regime?
2. Is trade fair? If not, how can this be resolved? Should this be resolved?
3. How does domestic politics affect trade?
4. To what extent should domestic policy be influenced by trade policy and 'third wave' trade agreements?
5. Does trade reduce poverty?

Further reading

Capling, Ann 2001, Australia and the global trade system: from Havana to Seattle, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. An excellent account of Australia's place in the global trading system.

Capling, Ann 2005, All the way with the USA: Australia, the US and free trade, Sydney: UNSW Press. A succinct analysis of the recently negotiated free trade agreement between Australia and the US.

Gilpin, Robert 2001, Global political economy: understanding the international economic order, Princeton: Princeton University Press. A comprehensive account of the history and competing ideologies of international political economy.

22
Global Finance

Leonard Seabrooke

Introduction

This chapter presents a fleeting history of key changes in global finance during the past century based around the themes of *crisis*, *architecture*, and *socialisation*, with an emphasis on the role of US **power** in shaping global finance. Through these three themes we can see why global finance has become increasingly internationally institutionalised, as well as how it is having an ever-greater impact on our everyday lives. The first section of the chapter discusses global finance in the first half of the twentieth century. The second section considers the emergence of the post-World War II **Bretton Woods** regime. The third section outlines the rise of private capital in the 1970s. The fourth section traces the impact of the debt crisis of the 1980s. The fifth section considers discussions of global financial architecture in the 1990s. The sixth section discusses the role of surveillance in our contemporary global financial system. Finally, the seventh section examines Australia's role in global finance.

Who is afraid of the global financial system?
Within international relations, calls for the study of global finance were initially based on fears that market actors had gained the upper hand over **states** after the collapse of the Bretton Woods system of international finance (explained below). It was thought that the international political economy would be prone to frequent and severe economic crises, with advanced industrial economies forced to dismantle their welfare regimes at the behest of international financial competition. Increased power to financial markets, the logic followed, would also increase developing states' structural economic dependence on the West as the drive for increasing profits led to a more aggressive extraction of resources and exploitation of cheap labour.

Since this foundational work, the study of global finance in international relations typically considers three key themes: (1) *crisis* – why the contemporary world economy is prone to international financial crises; (2) *architecture* – how to combat crises through international institutions and organisations; and, most recently, (3) *financial socialisation* – how financial innovations in domestic systems are changing global finance. The most common aspect of all three is the role of the US as the 'hegemon' within the global financial system, as it respectively exercises: market power through financial competition and innovation; state power

through its treatment of international regimes on global finance; and a combination of state and market power as it propagates new financial practices among its population to broaden and deepen its domestic financial system, with global implications (see Seabrooke 2006a). The US economy is also critical to the character of global finance since the size of its capital and current account deficits directly influence world interest rates.

Death of the last great financial globalisation, 1900–45

It is difficult to imagine the death of financial **globalisation**, but it has happened before. As shown by Maurice Obstfeld and Alan M. Taylor's (2004) measures of international capital mobility (which resemble the conventional, stylised view depicted in Figure 22.1), the world experienced intense financial globalisation a century ago. This earlier form of financial globalisation differed greatly from our own in the nature of financial crises, the extent to which the international financial **order**'s architecture was centred on international organisations, and the depth of financial socialisation within domestic economies. First of all, the centre for this earlier international financial order was not New York but unequivocally the City of London. Some 40 per cent of all debt securities in the world were issued from London, and it has been suggested that one-third of British wealth was invested abroad (the US's financial market today is overwhelmingly domestic). Most of this investment was going into what we would now call 'emerging market economies', which, in this earlier period of globalisation, included states like Australia, Argentina, Denmark, the US, and others. Nearly one-fifth of investment went to Latin American states, and the common form of investment was in government debt and heavy industries such as railways, mining and metallurgy (see Seabrooke 2006b: 151). In fact, compared to our own period of financial globalisation, there was much greater investment from advanced economies into emerging market economies. Financial crises during this period were quite different from now. While today's crises are short, sharp shocks, crises a century ago were slow-burning affairs. One reason for this was that the international financial order lacked centralised organisations that could resolve information problems concerning a state's creditworthiness. Instead, private associations, like the Corporation for Foreign Bondholders (Lipson 1985), coordinated information to assess creditworthiness and sent it back to London investors to judge. Given this rickety system, foreign investors called for state support to protect their investments, as occurred with the sending of British warships to Latin America in the early 1900s.

The pairing of intense financial globalisation and the threat of the use of state-sanctioned force led many actors to call for international regulation that could separate private investment from public violence. During ongoing conferences in The Hague, various national elites called for the formation of a new international financial architecture. Particularly prominent here was Luis Drago, an Argentinean lawyer, who in 1907 successfully called for an agreement among states that public violence should not be used to enforce private investments. This 'Drago Doctrine' was strongly supported by the US and can be seen as an extension of Monroe Doctrine principles: that European powers should keep their noses out of Latin America. Within Europe itself, there was a long-standing perception that global finance was becoming too speculative. In 1912 an international convention to create an international
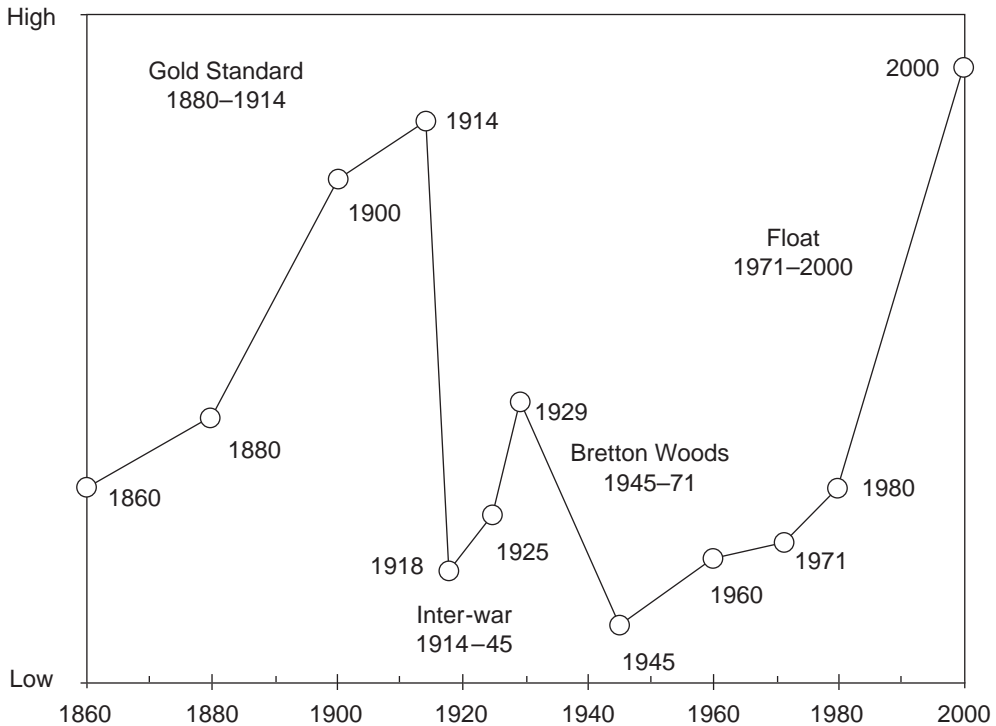
Figure 22.1: Conjecture? A stylised view of capital mobility in modern history

register of securities trading was supported by European states but rejected by the US and the UK as too invasive on individual rights and economic freedoms.

The US and UK choice to reject the close international monitoring of speculative capital in global finance was not a reflection of mass public will. Financial socialisation in the leading financial powers did not extend to the general population. Rather, especially in the British case, it was based on 'rentiers' – those who earn money from 'unproductive' passive investments, like being a landlord or investing in government debt (Seabrooke 2006a: chapter 3). In part as a consequence of financial wealth being concentrated among a small elite, the principal centres of global finance were very prone to external shocks. World War I provided an enormous shock as high levels of international capital mobility collapsed. Many investors were caught out with financial relationships in states that were now enemies, clearly unable to see the link between their dependence on imperialist forms of investment and the rising militarism associated with it. During the reconstruction of global finance in the 1920s, domestic financial systems once again were concentrated among small elite groups and with thin governmental regulations. The lack of financial socialisation encouraged speculation and herd-like behaviour in domestic and international financial markets (only 1.2 per cent of Americans had brokerage accounts; see Seabrooke 2001: 61). The Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s was indicative of a general contraction of economic

activity throughout the world. This was only corrected by a change in thinking to Keynesian economics and more interventionist governments in the 1930s and 1940s during World War II.

The rise and fall of the Bretton Woods system, 1946–71

The formation of the Bretton Woods system in the late 1940s was centred on the idea that global finance should serve national purposes. The system was embodied in its new key international institutions, the IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the **World Bank**). For monetary affairs, in particular, the IMF's Articles of Agreement set out that all of its member-states should seek to maintain high levels of growth and employment, and that they should avoid the types of predatory currency practices seen during the Great Depression. This system ideally provided the 'embedded liberalism compromise' (Ruggie 1982), where states engaged in pro-growth international finance and trade while also retaining the right to steer their domestic welfare regimes. The key for the new system was the rule that states would keep in check their domestic currencies in relation to a fixed exchange rate of US$35 per ounce of gold. This 'gold-dollar' standard would ideally ensure that all states in the global system would not fall into 'fundamental disequilibrium' with global standards (Best 2005).

The key financial crises that occurred during the duration of the Bretton Woods system reflected its purposes and ambiguities; they were primarily the problem of states dealing with their currencies and capital accounts to stay within the official system. So, while we think of the IMF as an organisation that deals only with developing states, during the 1960s many Western states organised loans from the IMF. However, the source of financial problems during the 1960s was that much financial trading increasingly took place through an unofficial system. From the mid-1950s the development of 'Euromarkets' allowed financial actors to wrestle autonomy away from the state, an autonomy it had maintained since the Great Depression. The Euromarkets are a bit of a mind-bender. The markets were named 'Euro' because they were primarily located in London and Paris, although legally they operate in no-man's land. The markets were anonymous, untaxed, and highly liquid secondary markets for securities (meaning the trading of IOUs among third parties, not the issuer) and for currency trading. Between 1960 and 1970 the size of the 'Eurocurrency' market expanded from $2 billion to $57 billion, while 'Eurobond' and foreign bond markets grew from $0.8 billion to $5.3 billion (Webb 1995: 98). This private system for global finance provided states and financial institutions with more options than the official system. The US government also implicitly supported it, since it favoured the expansion of US banks overseas during a period in which they were trying to maintain high growth with little inflation inside the US. Within the US, the growth of 'People's Capitalism' included greater participation in the stock market from the population, and the generation of institutions for financial socialisation: VISA and Mastercard, for example, both started up business during this time (Seabrooke 2001: 60–1).

In this period the key problem for global finance was that the US dollar was the world currency. It was controlled by governments with international responsibilities but a domestic electorate. Given the growth of Euromarkets, there was a great degree of uncertainty and speculation about the real value of the US dollar in relation to an ounce of gold. The

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Box 22.1: Key organisations

Key international regimes for global finance

African Development Bank – www.afdb.org
Asian Development Bank – www.adb.org
Bank for International Settlements – www.bis.org
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development – www.ebrd.com
European Central Bank – www.ecb.int
Financial Stability Forum – www.fsforum.org
Group of Twenty – www.g20.org
Inter-American Development Bank – www.iadb.org
International Accounting Standards Board – www.iasb.org
International Association of Insurance Supervisors – www.iaisweb.org
International Monetary Fund – www.imf.org
International Organization of Securities Commissions – www.iosco.org
Islamic Development Bank – www.isdb.org
Joint Vienna Institute – www.jvi.org
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – www.oecd.org
Paris Club – www.clubdeparis.org
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development – www.unctad.org
World Bank Group – www.worldbank.org
World Federation of Exchanges – www.world-exchanges.org

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architecture for global finance groaned under the weight of such speculation. In the late 1960s and early 1970s many central banks called the US's bluff by exchanging their US dollars for gold at $35 per ounce when in private markets the rate was thought to be US$41 per ounce. Eventually, under such pressure, President Richard Nixon closed the 'gold window' in August 1971, claiming that the US had been subsidising the world economy for too long (Seabrooke 2001: 73–80).

Domestic stagflation and international over-lending, 1972–81

Nixon's closing of the 'gold window' and the sheer weight of private capital now in the world economy signalled a change in global finance away from state-led to market-led forms of governance (Helleiner 1994). The collapse of the 'gold-dollar' exchange rate system soon gave way to a 'paper-dollar' system, despite attempts to coordinate a new fixed exchange rate regime based on the IMF's currency, Special Drawing Rights (Seabrooke 2001: 85–7). The new floating and flexible system was fuelled also by the massive amount of private capital generated by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) oil crisis of 1973–4. During this crisis, Arab oil producing states strongly signalled their opposition to Western support for Israel during the Arab-Israeli 'Yom Kippur' War by using the 'oil weapon' to quadruple oil prices for Western states. The huge sums of capital transferred to OPEC states then became recycled 'petrodollars' through the Euromarkets.

Financial crises during this period reflected the increased privatisation of global finance, as well as states learning to manage and regulate a global financial order with a capacity for self-implosion not seen since the 1920s. In particular, Keynesian economic thinking was given a shock as states experienced high unemployment and high inflation at the same time (a phenomenon called 'stagflation' that had previously been thought unlikely). Western economies slowed down despite vast increases in the amount of private capital within the world economy. International banks then began to compensate for weak domestic lending activity by using petrodollars (capital invested in the Euromarkets derived from the oil crisis) for lending to developing states. Such 'over-lending' boomed during the mid-1970s as mainly US banks, within international bank syndicates (where, say, ten banks each take a share in a loan), lent 'jumbo' loans of US$500 million, and 'mammoth' loans of US$1 billion. Eighty per cent of these loans went to the governments of developing states. At the same time as such over-lending, banks dropped their 'capital adequacy ratios', the amount of money they keep aside in proportion to their loans in case there is a crisis (Seabrooke 2001: 95). Banks also engaged in increasingly speculative activity on foreign currency trading, leading to major bank collapses in Germany and the US, with the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) calling for a new international financial architecture to improve banks' capital adequacy ratios.

Within Western states the liberalisation of banks' activities in international markets saw a parallel in domestic markets, with customers calling for greater flexibility in how they managed their accounts and for more competitive interest rates. In the US, in particular, the development of Cash Management Accounts and the removal of interest cap restrictions signalled the forthcoming wave of financial socialisation.

Debt crises at home and abroad, 1982–92

Most of the 'jumbo' and 'mammoth' loans of the 1970s were issued by US banks and in US dollars. The governments within emerging market economies who had to repay these loans needed foreign export earnings to pay their loans off. In the early 1980s the ongoing stagflation in Western economies and an international problem of 'surplus capacity' in production (basically a glut) made it very difficult for borrowing governments to repay their loans – which meant that borrowing states faced an export earnings trade deficit crisis. Given this, in 1982 the Mexican government declared that it needed four months of non-payment or it would face a major crisis. Similar experiences occurred throughout the Americas and also in Eastern Europe. This 'debt crisis' shook the US financial system to its core, since the top US banks had grossly overcommitted capital within syndicated bank loans. The consequence was that the big international banks went to the 'London Club' where borrower repayment negotiations for private interests were coordinated, while the 'G7' states (US, UK, France, Japan, and Germany) discussed coordinating debt repayments at the 'Paris Club'. International organisations were also brought in to reform the affected borrower states, namely the IMF and the World Bank. The use of Structural Adjustment Programs in Latin America gave both international organisations, but especially the IMF, bad reputations for decades to follow because of stringent conditions imposed on the way governments managed their finances.

Changes to the global financial architecture were, of course, directly informed by the debt crisis. The most prominent change was the development of the Basel Accord of 1988

Box 22.2:   Terminology

Disintermediation and securitisation

To understand many of the changes during our most recent period of financial globalisation, two processes are crucial to keep in mind.

The first is *disintermediation*. Disintermediation is the process of moving away from traditional forms of lending, like bank loans, into the use of debt securities (essentially 'IOUs') by states and markets. Basically, banks have been increasingly behaving more like brokers than lenders.

The second process is *securitisation*. Securitisation is the process of backing or supporting debt securities with steady streams of income, like a home mortgage or even a car loan payment.

Both processes, originated in the US, have revolutionised global finance since the 1980s and led to a much stronger international emphasis on creditworthiness and surveillance.

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under the auspices of the Bank for International Settlements. This new regime for international financial regulation introduced different risk weightings for the different kinds of assets banks held. The regime gave a clear advantage to US banks and was a clear disadvantage to Japanese banks, which had to buy an enormous amount of safe assets, namely US Treasury bonds. The US was able to exercise its 'structural power' in the global financial system by changing the rules of the game in its favour (Strange 1988).

The US was able to extend its advantage not only through shaping the rules of the game internationally, but also through innovations that spurred on financial socialisation in its domestic system. In particular, one key effect of the debt crisis was that banks moved away from traditional loans and towards disintermediation and securitisation. During the 1980s and early 1990s the US government supported these changes by enabling regulations for en masse mortgage securitisation (where financial institutions can package a dedicated income stream from a mortgage into new debt to be sold to an investor in return for capital to keep lending) (Seabrooke 2006a: 123–7), as well as permitting commercial banks to trade securities (which was banned during the Great Depression). Financial socialisation spurred further innovations within the US domestic market that gave US financial institutions a competitive advantage in global finance, as well as attracting international investment into US markets.

Talking about architecture, 1993–2000

By the mid-1990s the intensity of financial globalisation present at the beginning of the century had returned. The number of financial crises reflected the increased intensity of capital mobility in the system. These financial crises, like those in earlier decades, were primarily concerned with the repayment of debts. However, unlike in the 1980s debt crisis, in the 1990s the problem was not typically a lack of export earnings, but a liquidity problem (having the ready cash) at moments when investors chose to withdraw their capital. Such problems were related to the spread of disintermediation as a preferred way of doing finance, with financial

institutions choosing to use short-term bonds that could easily be withdrawn from the borrower, rather than using more traditional loans.

Many emerging market economies embraced this new way of financing, with their issuance of bonds for government debt increasing from US$13.9 billion in total in 1991 to US$127.9 billion in 1997 (Mosley 2003: 108). By the late 1990s most emerging market economies were using bond financing rather than loans as their principal means of financing. And with opportunity comes risk. To engage in global bond markets states were required to liberalise their capital accounts, with many emerging market economies permitting rapid inward investments with weak regulations or oversight to make sure the investments were sound.

As a consequence of these processes, the 1990s was peppered with crises related to nervousness over the value of a home currency where borrowers had to repay on short-term debt securities in US dollars. This scenario occurred in Mexico in 1993–4 when government debt denominated in dollars faced massive capital flight when US investors thought the peso was overvalued. It happened in Southeast Asia in 1997 when mainly Japanese and European investors became nervous about the value of their investments in real estate and the stock market given a potential currency collapse. And it happened in Russia in 1998, as investors and international organisations clamoured to save investments when the stock market, and the government's capacity to repay debts, collapsed (Seabrooke 2001: 165–85). In all of these crises, changes in the value of the US dollar, altered through US interest rates, played a crucial role, especially as many states had adopted 'currency pegs' where they moved the value of their own currency in accordance with the dollar. In short, an interest rate spike in the US sent quick shockwaves to emerging market economies, which had to push up their own currencies, in turn feeding speculation over their capacity to do so. In all of these crises the role of the US in international organisations was questioned during a period in which the changing shape of global finance gave it more power over decision-making. For example, within the IMF the approval of a 'special decision' for an extraordinarily big loan requires 85 per cent of members' votes. Votes within the IMF are allocated according to subscriptions and the US held between 17 and 18 per cent of the vote throughout the 1990s. As such, loans to Mexico, Thailand, etc, came under the scrutiny of the US Congress, who did exercise its right to veto loans. The consequence was that large international loans for crisis financing were increasingly cobbled together by the IMF in association with the BIS and wealthy member-states (Seabrooke 2006a: 187–8). The IMF was then criticised as a puppet for US foreign economic policy, leading it to try to publicly demonstrate its own transparency and accountability through the establishment of an Independent Evaluation Office in 2001.

More generally, there was a shift in the global financial architecture in the 1990s as international organisations placed less stress on enforcement and more emphasis on common global standards. There was an efflorescence of forums to increase cooperation among international organisations, including agreements between the IMF, BIS, World Bank, and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), on data-sharing. Finance ministers within the most powerful states, the 'G7' (Russia joined what is now the G8 in 1997), held numerous meetings on the 'global financial architecture' to try to harmonise financial regulations. In 1999 they created a 'Financial Stability Forum', which now includes twenty-six states (including Australia), the BIS, IMF, OECD and the World Bank, as well as expert committees.

Finance ministers and international organisations were right to be concerned with introducing greater means for data-sharing and surveillance in the global financial system, since the creation and diffusion of financial innovations continued apace. Within the US, in particular, financial socialisation led to greater securitisation of mortgages and even consumer debt, as well as greater investment in stock and bond markets as institutional investors, especially those controlling workers' pension funds, became ever more prominent.

Promises, promises: creditworthiness in global finance, 2001 to the present

Now that the dust has settled from the big financial crises of the 1990s, our current global financial system is characterised by surveillance and **containment**. Financial crises have typically been short sharp shocks based around currency speculation or asset overvaluation. Or they have been highly localised within corporate scandals, such as the accounting scandals at Enron and World Com. In general, the more recent financial crises do not demonstrate the mania and panics of the 1990s. This can in part be explained by a consensus around creditworthiness and surveillance by private and public international organisations, as well as improved monitoring and prudential regulation in emerging market economies.

Particularly important in recent years has been the growth of what we can call 'quasi-regulators' with private authority for governance of the global financial architecture. Especially important here is the role of bond rating agencies. These agencies, such as Standard and Poor's and Moody's, provide evaluations of the creditworthiness of governments' and corporations' debt securities. Their opinions are considered crucially important by financial market traders in the global financial system, providing a form of 'government-at-a-distance' over emerging market and, especially, 'frontier' economies (Sinclair 2005: 147). International organisations have embraced the role of these agencies, with the BIS integrating their assessments within its new regime for international banking, Basel Accord II. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has also been giving assistance to sub-Saharan African states to build up their capacity to be rated. The increased role of surveillance and creditworthiness assessments provides emerging market and frontier economies with some capacity to provide clear signs of their creditworthiness and attract more investment. It also makes them conform to what could be called a 'global standard of market civilisation' (Seabrooke 2006b). States and economies that fail to do so are increasingly punished in the global financial system, not only through a lack of access to capital, but also through international 'naming and shaming' techniques from international organisations. The OECD's campaign to 'blacklist' small island tax havens provides one particularly interesting case (Sharman 2006).

Much of the increased surveillance and checks for creditworthiness in global markets can be attributed to their prominence within the US domestic financial system and its now intense financial socialisation. Again, this is good and bad. The good part is that the US now leads the world in minority shareholder protection legislation, providing additional transparency measures so that pension fund holders should not lose out if corporations collapse under financial scandals (Gourevitch and Shinn 2005). The bad news is that financial socialisation has greatly increased the amount of risk individuals place upon themselves for their economic futures – and not all of us are good at managing those risks when compared

with having fewer but more secure benefits by socialising risk through state welfare manage-ment. The diffusion of financial socialisation may therefore lead to greater economic uncer-tainty, insecurity, and inequality because it places responsibility for welfare on the individual rather than the state (Watson 2007).

Australia and the contemporary global financial system

During the 1980s the Australian economy liberalised quickly to allow its integration into the contemporary global financial system. In the early 1980s the government permitted foreign banks to have subsidiaries in Australia, to establish full branches after 1992, and then removed foreign exchange controls in 1987. In the mid-1990s the extent of financial innovation led the Reserve Bank of Australia to declare in a 1996 inquiry that 'everything is blurring' in the roles and purposes of different financial institutions within Australia and how they engage global finance (1996: 30). In the last couple of decades Australia has become more of a shareholding economy, a train set in motion by the Keating government's reforms for compulsory employer-funded superannuation, as well as the privatisation of public utilities. This trend intensified under the Howard government. As such, Australians enjoy minority shareholder protection rights that are only bettered by those in the US, Singapore, Canada, and the UK (Gourevitch and Shinn 2005: 48). Australia can claim with some confidence that its own domestic system, as well as its integration into global finance, is based on transparent prudential regulation following extensive financial deregulation and re-regulation. Indeed, the Asian financial crisis barely left a scratch on the Australian economy (the same can be said for the US).

One good reason why Australia was relatively unscathed by the Asian financial crisis is that investors show a clear bias towards investing in the US (around 40 per cent), the UK (around 15 per cent) and Japan (around 10 per cent), and not in other states because of fears of a lack of financial oversight. Australia has one of the lowest levels of investing abroad among all the states in the OECD (Mishra and Daly 2006). This is not to suggest that investment in share markets within Australia has not developed; indeed they grew strongly in the 1990s. While ordinary Australians may be shy of global finance, the Australian corporate world has become more integrated with the issuing of debt securities. In particular, the growth of mortgage securitisation has been so fast that the Australian system now only ranks behind the US and the UK in the size of its mortgage-backed debt issues. Financial socialisation has moved at a fast pace in Australia.

With regard to the global financial architecture, the Australian government has been very active in promoting the 'G22' (the 'G8' and other, mainly Asian, states), and then the 'G33' (a group of developing countries), during the 1990s to foster international data-sharing and regulatory cooperation. Australia has signed up to the BIS's Basel II framework, to be introduced in January 2008, and has been active in propagating its own International Financial Reporting Standards, as well as embarking on extensive anti-money laundering pro-grams in association with the OECD's Financial Action Task Force. It has also been a strong advocate for governance reform in the IMF. In sum, Australia is an advocate for increased cooperation in global finance while also being a conservative international investor with ever-blossoming domestic securities markets. The Howard government certainly encouraged these changes, a shift that has also involved a rhetorical retreat of the Australian welfare state

and greater stress on Australians to accept individual responsibility for their own economic futures.

Conclusion: how should we study global finance?

This chapter has provided a lightning history of global finance in the twentieth century until the present, with an emphasis on US influence in global finance. Let us finish not on a note of impending doom in global finance, but by considering how the processes discussed here relate to theories of international relations. The two main approaches to studying global finance within international relations are those associated with **neoliberalism** and **realism**, on the one hand, and constructivist and **Gramscian** work, on the other (see chapter 8). Neoliberals and realists commonly focus on states as actors competing with each other for financial power and the determination of currency values; seeing private financial relations as an extension of a state's foreign economic policy; and 'Principal–Agent' problems between international organisations and their member-states (basically, asking 'who is in charge?') (see Mosley 2003). This perspective tries to map assumed self-interests (wanting more wealth and power) and sees national structures as more or less having fixed characteristics over time. Most of the time these approaches get it right in being able to *explain* a lot. However, constructivists and Gramscians place more emphasis on seeking to *understand* how actors form their preferences on the grounds that self-interest is not automatically given to actors but framed within a social context. As such, the Gramscian literature has typically focused on explaining the evolution of long-term material structures for global finance by identifying actors who are able to use a mixture of coercion and consent to legitimate policy changes (Germain 1997). Separate to this, the constructivist literature has focused on how ideas can be used as weapons to change the appropriateness of certain financial policies (see Kirschner 2003), as well as studies of how financial power rests on social legitimacy (Seabrooke 2006a). After all, if the global financial system is dependent on increasingly complex webs of surveillance for creditworthiness, it is crucial that all the players have the right idea about how the game should be played.

Questions

1. Is the global financial system naturally prone to crisis?
2. What were the key features of the Bretton Woods system?
3. What are the main features of contemporary global financial regulation?
4. To what degree are global financial markets shaped by private authorities?
5. How have developments in global finance changed the character of states?
6. What caused the Asian financial crisis?
7. How has Australia responded to changes in the architecture of global finance?

Further reading

Helleiner, Eric 1994, *States and the reemergence of global finance*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Classic text tracing the evolution of the politics of the post-war global financial

system, clashes between key states, and the transition to more market-driven forms of power.

Sinclair, Timothy J. 2005, The new masters of capital, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Traces the emergence and importance of bond-rating agencies in global finance that have the power to punish and reward governments and corporations.

Watson, Matthew 2007, The political economy of international capital mobility, London: Palgrave. Walks the reader through key theories of financial markets and shows their importance through case studies of crisis and change.

Key international relations journals that commonly discuss global finance include: *International Organisation, International Politics, International Studies Quarterly, New Political Economy, Review of International Political Economy*, and *World Politics*.

23

Non-State Actors: Multinational Corporations and International Non-Governmental Organisations

James Goodman

Introduction

World politics has always had a plurality of players. The key is not so much to determine which have primacy, but how they interact to produce the prevailing **order**. This chapter is structured around a discussion of **multinational corporations (MNCs)** and international **non-governmental organisations** (INGOs) respectively. Each is discussed in terms of first, the degree to which it has transnationalised, second, the extent to which it constitutes a social formation able to exert international agency, and third, the degree to which it is able to marshal political influence and status. It is argued there is no necessary antagonism between **state** and non-state realms. Instead, relations between state and non-state forces are intermeshed, and shaped by broader systemic conflicts. The chapter charts material class antagonisms that shape the role of MNCs and INGOs, and argues that these generate patterns of transnational contestation within international relations.

In the post-**Cold War** context, **globalisation** theory made considerable headway. For hyperglobalisationists at least (see chapter 25), newly powerful transnational forces were overwhelming state and interstate incumbents. With US **power** embedded in a range of interstate frameworks, a model of multilateral **unipolarity** appeared to be emerging – a model wherein US dominance was embedded in and restrained by a network of multilateral institutions. More recently we have seen the advent of a significantly more unilateralist unipolarity, as the US increasingly disengaged itself from multilateral institutions by adopting exceptionalist and preemptive doctrines. The consequences for globalisation **theory** have been wide-ranging. By the mid-2000s not only had the hype been exposed as ideology, but the ideology itself was claimed to have been superseded (see McGrew 2007).

A key reason for the collapse was the assumed impact of globalisation on state power. As Rosenberg argued (2000: 15), the return of state-centred politics has been 'as devastating for globalisation theory as it has always been for alternative approaches which have left untheorised the terrain of **geopolitics**'. This chapter attempts to clarify the role of **non-state actors** in relation to states and the states-system, and posit a more 'genuinely social theory of the international system' (Rosenberg 2000: 15), one that does not abstract states from broader social and economic processes and structures.

MNCs: transnationalised material power

The definition and role of multinational corporations is hotly debated. **Transnational corporations** (TNCs) are usually defined as corporate entities that have no clear national base; MNCs are then presented as nationally centred entities with international interests. The UNCTAD World Investment Report finds most corporations operating across national borders fall into the MNC category: its 'index of nationality' measures the foreign proportion of assets, sales and employment for large corporates and finds the bulk are nationally centred (UNCTAD 2005). But while it may be more accurate to use the MNC category, this does not mean the impact of MNCs is primarily national. If we examine the ways that MNCs behave, we find their qualitative impact is much broader than their operational scope would suggest. The power that MNCs exert is embedded within existing interstate hierarchies and power structures, but MNCs are not simply tools of nationally centred elites. They operate against as much as within national contexts, and, as social formations, allow an interlocking of national elites to the extent of forming a class bloc, what Leslie Sklair calls the 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair 2001).

Transnationalisation: MNCs

The central driver and rationale for MNCs is the exercise of material power across national jurisdictions. Across finance, production and distribution, MNCs exploit power-gaps between spatially fixed governments and fluid cross-national flows of money and commodities. Transnational finance relations express hierarchies of risk, in effect assessments of the future potential for capital accumulation, with each national context measured against each other. Transnationalised productive relations reflect the strategies of dominant multinational firms in exploiting and reproducing divergent relations of production and consumption. Trading, distribution and retail relations express hierarchies of inter-national dependence through unequal exchange, embedded in a diffused culture-ideology of consumerism.

Finance MNCs set the pace. In 2004 the assets of the top ten financial MNCs amounted to US$13 trillion while the assets of the top ten non-financial MNCs stood at $3.1 trillion (UNCTAD 2006: A.1.11; A.1.14). Finance MNCs have ascended the corporate league tables: in 1989 none of the world's fifty largest companies was based in the finance sector; in 2003 there were fourteen such companies on the list (UNCTAD 2005: 19). The success of finance houses is reflected in a wholesale financialisation of assets. Finance and business accounted for 25 per cent of total foreign direct investment in 1990; by 2004 it accounted for 47 per cent (UNCTAD 2006: A.1.3). Total international private lending stood at about a tenth of global income in 1980; in 2006 it stood at nearly half of global income (McGuire and Tarashev 2006). In 1978 finance flows were ten times the value of world trade; in 2000 they stood at about fifty times the value of world trade, with total flows amounting to $1.5 trillion per day. In large part this reflects the explosion in financial derivatives: there were 478 million derivatives created in 1990, by 2004 there were 6144 million (International Monetary Fund 2006a: Statistical Annex, Table 6). In terms of value, in 2003 options and futures stood at $36,786 billion; in just three years that had risen to $84,020 billion (Bank for International Settlements 2006: Statistical Annex, Table 23A). With global GDP standing at about $40 trillion this suggests a remarkable process of global concentration and financialisation.

> **Box 23.1: Discussion points**
>
> **MNCs and tax avoidance**
>
> MNCs routinely avoid tax. In 2002 US MNCs 'sheltered' more than half of their total off-shore profits in low-tax jurisdictions. In 2006 the Australian Tax Commissioner stated that MNCs accounted for the bulk of tax avoidance in Australia.
>
> In an effort to address this, in 2003 the Pacific Association of Tax Administrators, a group that draws together tax authorities in Australia, the US, Canada and Japan, produced a scheme to enable corporate compliance with OECD guidelines. Tellingly, the scheme was voluntary.
>
> In practice, tax minimisation and sheltering have become legitimate, accepted by the OECD as unavoidable. Governments, meanwhile, compete with each other to cut corporate taxes in order to attract investment funds.
>
> The USA – the world's most powerful state – has been ahead of the pack in this 'race to the bottom'. In 2004 the American Jobs Creation Act provided a one-off tax cut on repatriated profit from 35% to 5.25%, explicitly to encourage MNCs to bring funds back to the US.
>
> In March 2006 the American Shareholders Association, a strong supporter of the Act, reported that 350 US MNCs would be repatriating a total of $307 billion in 2005 (up from $36 billion in 2004), and that this could rise still further in 2006 (see Webb 2004).

In terms of manufacturing MNCs, in 1971 there were 7000 companies with overseas subsidiaries in operation; by 2005 that number had risen to 77,000, with close to 800,000 affiliates (UNCTAD 2006: 9; Annex Table A.1.6). In 1996 MNCs accounted for a fifth of global manufacturing output and a third of private assets. In 1982 MNC assets stood at about a fifth of global income; in 2005 MNC assets were marginally higher than world income (calculated from UNCTAD 2005: 9). Perhaps most importantly, MNCs control 50 per cent of global research and development funding (UNCTAD 2005). At the same time there has been an upsurge in cross-national mergers and acquisitions. Centred on the developed countries of the North, in 2004 alone total merger activity accounted for at least $3800 trillion, or approximately 9 per cent of global GDP (UNCTAD 2005: 14). The result has been an increased concentration of economic power across the various sectors of economic activity. Aside from finance, a key emerging sector is in the provision of services, reflecting the global wave of infrastructure, telecom, power and water privatisation (accounting for one-fifth of the largest 100 MNCs in 2003) (UNCTAD 2005: 15).

MNCs also play a central role in trade and retail activity, and in associated media and advertising industries. A small coterie of media empires span the globe, providing much of what suffices for global entertainment, advertising and news (McChesney 2001). Four conglomerates account for half of global advertising and public relations; one conglomerate, WPP, claims 300 of the Fortune 500 as clients (Miller and Dinan 2003). Meanwhile, the retail sector has created the world's largest private employer, Wal-Mart, with 1.7 million workers. In 1982 total MNC sales were equivalent to about a quarter of global income; by 1995 this had risen to 50 per cent (calculated from UNCTAD 2005: 9). In 1998 UNCTAD estimated that about half of MNC trade was intra-firm trade, allowing MNCs to routinely declare profit in the lowest-taxing economies (see Box 23.1).

International agency: social formation

In the wake of MNC growth, global material power has become increasingly concentrated. A report on global wealth found the wealthiest 2 per cent own 51 per cent of the world's wealth (Davies et al 2006: 26). In terms of income, the gap between the richest fifth and the poorest fifth has widened from 31:1 in 1960 to 74:1 in 1997 (Pieterse 2004: 63). The high-income, high-wealth class has become increasingly self-aware and able to act for itself, forging strategies that deliver discernible political leverage for MNC elites.

In the first instance, MNCs create a bidding war between governments. They impose a systemic restraint on government measures that delimit rates of return, such as labour protections, corporate taxation, environmental regulation, or other limits to 'market access'. Deregulated corporate enclaves – 'offshore' financial havens, 'export processing zones', 'flags of convenience', '*maquiladoras*' and 'special economic zones' – emerge as aberrations or exceptions that over time become institutionalised into **norms** of 'good governance'. In 1975, for instance, there were seventy-nine export processing zones worldwide; in 2002 there were 3000 (Hayter 2004). Such norms are then expressed as conditionalities imposed by financial institutions such as the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, or as corporate guidelines generated by hegemonic blocs such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), or as international standards-setting regimes for 'market access' such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), or indeed as direct corporate rights regimes with trade and finance agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). MNCs, and the structural incentives they create, are chief instigators in the emergence of these regimes.

MNCs 'cascade' across the globe: while 80 per cent of MNC parents are based in high-income countries, about 60 per cent of their branch plants are located in low-income countries. MNCs create global supply chains, webs of outsourced risk that exert influence at arm's length. Their power extends into the 'domestic' sphere through franchises, licensing arrangements, contract growing, supply contracts, equity investment, cross-ownership and joint ventures. One good example is the McDonald's franchise restaurant, where all the risk rests with the owner-franchisee. MNCs set the pace for the 'domestic' economy: as observers of 'Macdonaldisation' and 'Walmartisation' attest, MNCs establish transnational industry standards. Not surprisingly, the management consultancy industry, concentrated on just four companies, underwent phenomenal growth in the 1990s. Three global credit ratings agencies – Standard and Poor's, Moody's and Fitch – now set the framework for national policy-making worldwide. Governments pay the agencies six-figure sums to provide a 'sovereign' rating that determines access to international finance. In 1975 Standard and Poor's conducted three country ratings; in 2004 it produced more than a hundred.

Political status and influence

Corporations pursue joint political interests through international business associations. The International Chamber of Commerce, for instance, has been in place since 1919. Over the last thirty years these international business NGOs have proliferated and become increasingly integrated (Carroll and Carson 2003). A key approach is to disseminate the notion of popular **capitalism** – an approach that has generated whole media conglomerates such as *Fortune* and *Forbes* dedicated to ranking global corporations, engendering pride in global business,

and recruiting aspirants. At the same time, transnational alliances of free-marketeering think tanks have emerged, funded by MNCs, with remarkable access to the international policy-making process (Struyk 2002).

The MNC lobby is most clearly manifested in the World Economic Forum (WEF) (Robinson and Harris 2000). Created in 1987, the WEF draws major MNCs to its annual conference in Davos, Switzerland. The Forum self-consciously develops strategy: the theme at Davos 2007 was 'Shaping the Global Agenda'. The Forum commissions a yearly survey gauging corporate reputation: conducted in thirty countries with 20,000 interviewees, it shows a decline in the trust accorded to corporates since 2001. In response to this 'trust deficit' the WEF aspires to 'entrepreneurship in the global public interest', and positions itself as the leading global policy forum, actively recruiting non-corporate 'Global Leadership Fellows'. Lobbying is not always successful: from the late 1990s several states in Asia and Latin America have intervened to constrain finance flows, demonstrating abiding state capacity (Higgott and Phillips 2000). Nevertheless, as UNCTAD reports, of the 271 government measures affecting foreign investment in 2004, 87 per cent favoured MNCs, reducing the average tax for MNCs from 29.7 per cent to 26.5 per cent (UNCTAD 2005: 26). One of these 2004 measures was the 'American Jobs Creation Act', discussed in Box 23.1.

MNCs have also influenced international public policy agendas. MNC interventions into the sustainability debate, such as through the Business Council on Sustainable Development and the Global Climate Coalition (GCC), are especially significant (Sklair 2001). The GCC was set up by a group of oil and energy MNCs in 1989 to target the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and helped to limit the Climate Change Convention to declarations of intent. After the 1997 **Kyoto Protocol** put some limited commitments into place, the GCC successfully campaigned for the US to renege on its commitments. In 2002 the group was officially wound up, declaring it had 'served its purpose'. Corporate PR now sits at the heart of the **UN**, with a 'Global Compact' that explicitly offers MNCs the possibility of 'leveraging the UN's global reach and convening power' (Coleman 2003).

Finally, there is recourse to legal offence, to sue critics and claim compensation. The corporate use of SLAPPs – 'Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation' – became so prevalent in the US in the 1990s that by 2006 over thirty-five US states had introduced legislation to protect freedom of speech. But governments themselves are not beyond the reach of corporate litigation. From 1994, under Chapter 11 of NAFTA, corporations gained the right to sue signatory governments for discriminatory regulation. NAFTA's investor protection provisions, that treat corporations 'as an equal subject of **international law**, on a par with governments', have since been extended into other FTAs and investment agreements (Gal-Or 2005: 122). Cases taken against states under these clauses have 'risen dramatically' (UNCTAD 2005: 3) (see Box 23.2).

Overall, MNCs are transnational actors, 'oligopolistic at a global level', capable of exerting significant influence on the world stage, influence expressed in various forms of legal recognition of their role and status (Nolan et al 2002: 101). Such legal personality is hardly new – it can for instance be thought of as 'transnational mercantilism' (Graz 2004). Nevertheless it is clearly growing, complemented by an expanding international law of state-MNC arbitration (Teubner 1997).

Box 23.2:   Discussion points

Investment protection and corporate–state litigation

Investor protection commitments and rights to arbitration for corporates have been written into a growing proliferation of international investment agreements. There were less than eighty such agreements in 1990. By 2004 there were more than 400.

Increasingly, corporations have used these rules to sue governments. When a corporation believes it has suffered from government actions, and believes those actions violate investment agreements, it can make a claim for lost earnings. Their claim then goes to an international arbitration court for decision.

In 2006 there were 255 such cases, taken against seventy countries (including thirty-nine cases against the Argentine government following the country's financial crisis). Several cases have led to large pay-outs. In 2002 Ecuador was required to pay $71 million. In 2004 Slovakia paid $834 million. In 2006 Argentina was instructed to pay $165 million.

Developing countries, UNCTAD notes, are especially 'vulnerable'. Increasingly, though, arbitrators are ruling against corporate claims. After awarding claims against the Argentine government, arbitrators have accepted the financial crisis created a 'state of necessity' that absolved it of obligations under investment treaties (see UNCTAD 2005).

INGOs: transnationalised normative power

INGOs are most simply defined as international organisations that represent sectors of society independently of governments. The UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines an INGO as any international organisation that is not established by interstate treaty. In order to be accorded consultative status with ECOSOC, INGOs must be of recognised standing, representative, accountable, transparent, democratic and be funded by voluntary non-government sources. The Union of International Associations uses a similar seven-point definition, including requirements for autonomy from governments and operations in more than two countries. These definitions encompass a wide variety of organisations, including business NGOs. The focus here is on public interest INGOs that engage in international advocacy in the name of a cause or issue.

Transnationalisation: INGOs

In recent years an INGO 'explosion' has paralleled the MNC 'explosion' (Josselin and Wallace 2001: 1–2). In 2002 the UNDP described the INGO boom as a 'revolution', noting that one-fifth of the 37,000 INGOs in place in 2000 had emerged since 1990, and that these had generated over 20,000 INGO networks, a 'revolution [that] parallels the rapid growth of global business over the same period' (UNDP 2002: 102).

Since 2000 the Centre for Global Governance (CGG) has used data from the Union of International Associations to map the INGO phenomenon. Its data show a worldwide 43 per cent rise in the number of INGO secretariats (to 17,428) between 1992 and 2002, with the rise in low income countries standing at 27 per cent (Kaldor, Anheier and Glasius 2003: Record 15, 327–33). Membership growth, though, has been faster in lower and middle

income contexts (Anheier and Katz 2004: 338). Secretariats remained concentrated in high income contexts: of the fourteen cities housing more than a hundred INGO secretariats, two were in the US, one in Japan and nine in Western Europe, and one each in Africa and Latin America. The CGG project thus identifies the geopolitical heartland of Northwest Europe as the centre of global INGOism, with much of the South as peripheral.

The CGG findings confirm the expansion of INGOs while suggesting INGO distribution mirrors interstate hierarchies. The pattern is replicated at the UN, where only 251 of the 1550 registered NGOs are based in developing countries (UNDP 2002: 111). Indeed, another assessment finds the North–South divide in INGO participation to be proportionately deeper than North–South income divides (Beckfield 2003). International relations of advocacy are clearly conjoined with interstate relations: we may further argue that INGOs are simply an international version of the 'extended state', an expression of interstate **hegemony** over 'global civil society' (Hirsch 2003). If INGOs are to be seen as an emergent force, capable of mobilising alternate sources of power, a different distribution would be expected. Researchers in political geography have tested these possibilities, in one case looking at connectivity between INGOs as an alternate measure of INGO geography (Taylor 2004). The resulting maps of INGO connectivity reveal a different pattern, where 'Nairobi, Bangkok, New Delhi and Manila [are] at least as important as Brussels, London and Washington', suggesting INGOs are indeed creating their own autonomous trans-urban geography (Taylor 2004: 272).

Hierarchies among INGO coalitions can directly mirror interstate hierarchies and clearly INGOs are inadequate as channels for formal political representation (Chandhoke 2005). Yet INGO power relations, unlike MNC relations, rest on **normative** claims to legitimacy grounded in transnational consciousness (Hudson 2001). Policy advocacy to address global problems such as environmental change, global development, labour rights and gender division, rests on the capacity to mobilise legitimacy across the North–South axis. Yet INGO advocacy has different drivers from interstate politics, and forces into view an alternative geopolitics centring on normative claims (Bebbington 2004).

International agency: social formation
There is no doubt INGOs have an important influence on international political agendas. As Halliday (2001: 2) argues, 'the climate of international opinion, be it that of states or informed public opinion, *has* been significantly affected by what these NGOs, linked to social change, have brought about' (emphasis in original). INGOs have drawn on a vast font of legitimacy as representatives of public opinion in their confrontations with corporations and governments, establishing something of a 'pro-NGO norm' (Reimann 2006). Reflecting this, the WEF-funded survey mentioned above found that NGOs attracted remarkable levels of trust, with between 80 and 90 per cent agreeing that NGOs would 'operate in the best interests of our society'.

The influence of INGOs is often seen as extending the domestic public sphere into international contexts (Price 2003). Advocacy INGOs can be seen as vehicles for 'globalisation from below', offering an antidote to 'predatory globalisation' (Falk 2000b). Such vehicles can be seen as prefiguring new forms of 'cosmopolitan **democracy**', filling political vacuums between transnationalised power sources and national democratic structures (Held 1995). In

the process, INGOs may be interpreted as extending forms of global citizenship, enabling the application of universal principles of citizen rights beyond state borders (Linklater 1998).

INGOs do indeed act as semi-autonomous institutional nodes, promoting a deepened globalisation. They mediate and translate normative principles and discourses from one context to another, creating a politics of flows that constitutes a less hierarchical transnational politics (Walker 1994). While INGOs find their inspiration in transnational fields of contention, they find political traction in relation to states and interstate regimes (Joachim 2003). INGOs make claims on states and interstate bodies, and reproduce state centrality. Their leverage rests on the capacity to deploy normative and informational power, provoking public argument about the most desirable or necessary course of action for governments and for interstate bodies (Holzscheiter 2005). Confined to the non-state realms of 'global civil society', they constitute a self-limited 'loyal' opposition, that respects Lockean liberal categories of state and non-state, public and private, and reproduces these as naturalised universals (Chandhoke 2005). INGOs are therefore not necessarily pitted against states: like MNCs, INGOs constitute transnational realms of action that realign rather than transcend interstate power relations. We may see INGOs, then, not so much as harbingers of a new order, but rather as key players in reforming the existing one.

Political status and influence
A central factor in the growth of INGOs as players in international relations is the capacity to politicise cross-national issues under-addressed by state and interstate sources of authority. Benefiting from the increased connectivity that results from transnational communication, INGOs are able to expose the inadequacies of existing frameworks, and mobilise public opinion to challenge both the policies and legitimacy of interstate agencies. Through the 1990s INGOs actively constructed their own capacity, primarily through coalition-building targeted on MNCs and interstate bodies, with considerable success (Yanacopulosi 2005). Reflecting this, INGOs have considerably more involvement in countries that are engaged with interstate institutions (Smith and Wiest 2005). These 'transnational advocacy networks', and the sources of political leverage they provide, have become a crucial aspect of INGO activity (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Indeed, given their orientation to transnational concerns, INGOs have at times had an advantage over MNCs in interstate policy-making (Kellow 2002).

INGO coalitions play a formative role in a range of international policy issues, from the development of international **human rights** regimes to the management of global environmental change, to the creation of international norms on the status of women. On these and other issues INGOs have become key agents in instigating and developing the emergence of interstate normative and policy regimes (see Box 23.3) (Reimann 2006). In the process INGOs 'find themselves involved in setting the agenda for political negotiations and decision-making' (Hirsch 2003: 250).

INGOs are formally recognised but only in a limited sense. In 1986 for instance the Council of Europe recognised INGOs with the proviso they are at first recognised in a national jurisdiction. The 1996 resolution regulating the role of NGOs in the UN conferences clearly states that 'active participation of non-governmental organisations therein, while welcome, does not entail a negotiating role'. In 2002, the UNDP outlined a series of responsibilities for INGOs, effectively imposing ground rules for INGO engagement (UNDP 2002). While

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Box 23.3:   Discussion points

UN – INGOs 'catalyse change'

Since 1990 the United Nations Development Programme has published the yearly *Human Development Report*. The *Report* has been instrumental in promoting a holistic measure of international development.

　　In 2002 the *Report* was subtitled 'deepening democracy in a fragmented world', and focused on democratic involvement as a key aspect of development. The *Report* discussed deepened democracy at the global level, pointing to INGOs as key agents for cross-border democratisation.

　　The UNDP *Report* cited six examples of INGO campaigns that had forced the creation of new interstate agreements and regimes. The six campaigns are:
- Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt relief
- campaigns for essential HIV/AIDs drugs
- the campaign for an International Criminal Court
- anti-dams campaigns
- anti-poverty campaigns, and
- campaigns for corporate responsibility.

　　All had been led by INGO coalitions, demonstrating INGO capacity and 'potential to catalyse change'. According to the *Report*, INGO campaigns herald a 'new global politics' (UNDP 2002).

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interstate bodies may seek to circumscribe their formal role, INGOs have become deeply engaged with interstate regimes, to a significant degree influencing intergovernmentalism, such as at the UN Millennium Forum (Alger 2002).

　　As central players in 'complex **multilateralism**' INGOs have tailored their proposals for interstate bodies and have become increasingly professionalised (Martens 2006). In response, interstate bodies have adapted procedures to enable structured dialogue with INGOs, such as through inclusion in government delegations, consultation, involvement in convention drafting, acceptance of alternative reports and accreditation arrangements (Cooper and Hocking 2000). In some contexts INGOs have entered into tripartite relations with corporations and intergovernmental institutions, whether in service delivery, in compliance monitoring, or indeed in projecting influence (Ottaway 2001). Such engagement comes at a price as INGOs are required to accept the institutional legitimacy of interstate bodies and of their dominant policy frames (Kamat 2004). A good example drawn from the field of global environmental policy is the role of the Climate Action Network in negotiations over the Climate Change Convention, and the subsequent Kyoto Protocol. The Network aggregates opinion within the transnational environment movement, correlating and calibrating its proposals to the negotiating agenda (Paterson et al 2003). In the process, the interstate regime is bent to the needs of environment NGOs, but also vice versa (Haas 2002).

　　While INGOs play a key role in generating and collaborating with some interstate initiatives, they have also been successful in exposing and halting others. These interventions are embedded in transnational perspectives, but gain political leverage by exploiting interstate divisions. An important and relatively early example was the campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment – a corporate rights agreement proposed by the OECD in

the mid-1990s. Here INGO campaigners deliberately played national jurisdictions off against each other (Goodman and Ranald 1999). This same 'monkey-wrenching' approach was used successfully to block the World Trade Organization's 'Millennium Round' in 1999, and also the subsequent WTO 'Development Round', which finally unravelled in 2006.

INGOs have also sought to generate their own positive programs. The World Social Forum, first staged in Porto Alegre in 2001 as a deliberate counter to the WEF, was deliberately geared to developing such agendas (Soeane and Taddei 2002). The WEF Davos forum had been the focus for protesters in 1998. In 1999 a counter-conference was organised in Davos, and in 2000 an anti-Davos 'global forum' was held in Paris (Houtart and Polet 2001). In 2001 a World *Social* Forum was convened to debate alternatives to the WEF, symbolically located in Brazil, part of the developing world (Byrd 2005). Since 2001 the social forum process, expressed as a dialogue for alternatives in the WSF Charter of Principles, has been highly influential. It has attracted many tens of thousands of participants, and has been replicated across the globe. Subsequently the WSF has been on the move, to countries of Asia and Africa, deepening its legitimacy beyond the Latin American context. INGO involvement in the WSF lent an infrastructure to the global justice movement that emerged in the early 2000s. Latterly, in the face of the so-called 'war on terror', INGOs and wider social movements were able to proactively engage the states-system, deploying their autonomy to seize the agenda, and in 2003 mount the largest mobilisation the world has seen in anti-war demonstrations in capital cities across the world (Rupert 2003).

Positioned at the nexus between transnational flows and national jurisdictions, INGOs have charted channels for influence, in the process broadening the logic of interstate politics. They have been key players in a 'new public diplomacy' where governments exercise power with an eye to normative INGO agendas (Vickers 2004). They have also charted alternatives to official channels, constructing their own shadow structures (Goodman 2007). These are highly uneven, especially in their North–South dimensions, reflecting the contingent and limited logic of transnational awareness and consciousness (Kiely 2005). But the leverage remains, both as a contingent present-day reality and as a transformative potential.

Conclusion

MNCs and INGOs have a central and abiding constitutive role in international relations. As non-state actors, though, they are embedded in the interstate system. From **Cold War bipolarisation** to post-Cold War US predominance and the revival of American exceptionalism after the terrorist attacks of September 11, non-state forces have been harnessed as constituent elements of **sovereign states**. They have also persistently constituted themselves and exercised their own autonomy: international antagonism between corporate power exemplified by MNCs and 'people power' expressed by advocacy INGOs is thus much more than an interstate conflict. States and interstate bodies clearly play a role as the vehicle for the corporate rights agenda and as the main focus for INGO appeals. But it is the non-state players, MNC business associations and advocacy INGOs, which define the terms of the conflict. This non-state dynamic of agency and contestation generates its own autonomy, shaping definitions of the global common good. In this respect their role is not so much political as meta-political.

Such transnational contestation is most clearly expressed in the conflict between the WEF and WSF. The similarities between the two are instructive: both seek to frame the public sphere through agenda-setting strategic interventions; both are predicated on the principle of dialogue and engagement on how best to address mutual problems. In both there is a deliberate attempt to articulate and assert legitimacy on the world stage and thereby influence governmental and interstate bodies. Both the WEF and WSF are not so much policy-making institutions as discursive interventions, geared to concertising and coalescing political blocs, and to manifesting principles and values that can guide interstate and state authorities. Taken together they constitute a clash of guiding principles framing the state-system. More generally, their role demonstrates the need for an approach that apprehends the co-constitutive international relations of states and non-state actors. Following Halliday (2001), to understand the role of non-state actors today we need a political sociology of state power rather than an international relations of state-ness. Such an approach offers us the critical scope we need to identify the overarching or meta-antagonisms of international relations, and to highlight strategic fractures and sources of instability and transformation.

Questions

1. What are the similarities and differences between MNCs and INGOs?
2. Have non-state actors shifted power away from states and the states-system?
3. How do you explain the rise in number and influence of MNCs and INGOs?
4. To what extent have MNCs influenced state economic management?
5. To what extent have INGOs managed to curtail state power?
6. How do MNCs and INGOs impact on the North–South divide?

Further reading

Centre for the Study of Global Governance 2001–, Global civil society yearbook, London: Sage. Compiles commentary and data on the role of INGOs in global politics. Available online at www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/correspondents.htm.

International Labour Organisation 2004, Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, Geneva: ILO. Collection of papers on social aspects of globalisation, including the role of MNCs housed under the heading 'Knowledge Networks' at www.ilo.org/public/english/fairglobalization/.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 1991–, World investment report, New York: United Nations, www.unctad.org, housed under the heading 'Main publications'. A mine of information on all aspects of MNCs, including their role in international politics.

United Nations Development Programme 1990–, Human development report, New York: United Nations, http://hdr.undp.org/reports/. Invaluable resource for debates on global issues affected by INGOs and MNCs.

World Economic Forum: www.weforum.org. The WEF site provides an archive of conference statements dating back to 2003 under the title 'Knowledge Navigator'.

World Social Forum: www.forumsocialmundial.org.br. The WSF English version contains a 'Library of Alternatives', effectively an archive of WSF perspectives since 2001.

Global Poverty and Inequality

Heloise Weber and Mark T. Berger

Introduction

This chapter examines poverty and inequality in global politics. The first section provides the background for our analysis of global poverty and inequality. We demonstrate how different perspectives of development and the causes of poverty have implications for how one responds to poverty and inequality. The second section examines three key contemporary initiatives for global development. The final section focuses on the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative. Through an analysis of the MDGs we reconnect to the key points put forward in the first section of this chapter.

Background to poverty and inequality

Global poverty and inequality are high on the agenda in world politics at the start of the new millennium. At the same time, the capacity of developed countries to eradicate poverty and address inequality has probably never been better. However, contemporary research continues to make clear that there is not only a growing gap worldwide between the rich and the poor, but also that there has been an unprecedented rise in insecurity and vulnerability in the everyday lived experiences of many people, specifically the poor. There is no shortage of figures and statistical evidence to draw upon in order to substantiate these claims (see for example, the **World Bank**'s *World Development* reports since 1990 and the United Nations' *Human Development* reports). Activists, **non-governmental organisations** (NGOs), policy-makers, politicians and scholars are all engaged in rigorous debates about the scale and character of global poverty and inequality. Yet any meaningful discussion of these issues is incomplete without addressing their corollary, namely development or the lack thereof.

It is not surprising then that debates about global poverty and inequality have always been situated within the wider development debate. In turn, debates about development have historically centred upon the erstwhile Third World. Today, however, concepts such as the First, Second and Third World have little analytical utility. This is partly because the idea of the three worlds of development was historically specific. During the **Cold War**, the First World was identified with the core capitalist nation-states, the Second World with the

nation-states of the socialist bloc and the Third World generally with a loose coalition of post-colonial nation-states. The latter sought, in theory, to pursue a developmental path between the liberal **capitalism** of the First World and the state socialism of the Second World.

Despite the passing of the Cold War and the dramatic and uneven transformation of the one-time Third World, the high ground in the development debate continues to implicitly take the idea of a 'developing' Third World as its point of reference. Some observers and institutions engaged in the **theory** and practice of development, however, have turned to a more historically informed global perspective on the dynamics of development and inequality that seeks to transcend understanding global poverty and inequality in terms of binaries such as 'developed–developing', 'developed–underdeveloped', or 'First World–Third World' (McMichael 2004; Saurin 1995).

We find this latter approach more useful for analysing and understanding global poverty and inequality today. This is mainly because the former approach is premised on a state-centred perspective in the sense that it takes the nation-state as its key analytical referent. This means that development and poverty are primarily conceptualised in terms of the territorial and spatial categories of conventional international relations theory, rather than in terms of social networks and relations constituted within a global context. Our approach in this chapter is premised on this latter perspective.

A relational approach to global poverty, inequality and development

Often when we think about global poverty and inequality we tend to associate these with a lack of development or the unfulfilled promises of development. This is misleading. Global poverty and inequality are outcomes of a long historical process of uneven global development. This means that there is an intrinsic *relationship* between development and inequality. Let us illustrate this briefly. Have you ever wondered why very poor people live in slum dwellings on the edge of cities or sometimes in cities? Have you ever wondered how their condition came about? Unless their circumstances have been 'voluntary' (which is generally unlikely), they have usually found themselves living in urban poverty as a result of having been displaced from their rural homes and lands as part of a wider process of modernisation-based national or international development (see Box 24.1). Often such displacements occur because decisions have been taken at a national level (in coordination with international networks) to build, for instance, large dams, so that local, national or regional industrial plants can be facilitated by new energy sources. However, not everyone benefits from such a model of development and, more importantly, not everyone even subscribes to such a conception of development.

The case of the Narmada Valley dam in India (see Box 24.2) is just one example that captures the complexity of the ongoing power struggles over development: what it is and how to achieve it? The dam project in question was an ambitious proposal to develop the Narmada River, a proposal which would, it is estimated, benefit some fifty million people. The costs, on the other hand, include ecological damage and displacement of millions of peasants who live in villages along the course of the river. What it illustrates is that conditions of inequality and poverty are neither natural nor given. Rather, they are outcomes of the complex historical

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Box 24.1:   Terminology

Modernisation theory

Modernisation theory (MT) is premised on a stages-of-growth approach to development. From this perspective all countries and their societies will transcend their specific social, cultural and material forms and converge on the Western liberal model through the mechanism of the market (albeit under the tutelage of the **state**, and not necessarily a democratic state). MT emerged from the US in the context of the Cold War, although it has its roots in European philosophical thought about progress more generally. Modernisation as development was generally accepted by many of the erstwhile 'Third World' states. However, they disputed the conditions under which they were to modernise, identifying the legacy of the colonial and international division of labour as an obstacle. Modernisation theorists on the other hand identified 'domestic' factors (culture, society and economy) as key obstacles to development, which was conceived in terms of MT. Representative authors: Hoselitz 1952; Rostow 1960.

Box 24.2:   Case study

Narmada Valley dam

In this case the villagers of Jalsindi (a group of villages identified for submersion by the dam's architects) did not wish to give up their lifestyle and their cultural links with their ancestral lands. While not totally cut off from the 'modern' world, the villages of Jalsindi nevertheless were fairly self-sufficient and were only living partly in exchange with the cash economy. In a cash economy, how well one survives materially is contingent upon what one earns in cash. If, however, jobs are scarce, as in many poorer societies, and there is no formal welfare system in place to support the under- or unemployed, then such persons effectively become destitute. Importantly, displacement and destitution affect not just the material well-being of people, but their dignity, their senses of identity and belonging, and recognition by others. The identity of the villagers, including their own conception of development, is not valued or understood by the developers, for whom development is the pursuit of modernisation. Resistance to the Narmada Valley dam project is ongoing, with the villages of Jalsindi continuing to struggle against their displacement (see www.narmada.org/gcg/gcg.html).

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and political dynamics of the pursuit of development as a planned project. Furthermore, development is conceptualised differently by different people, and as such it is continually contested and infused with relations of **power** and identity. We can build on this relational understanding of development and say that global poverty and inequality are outcomes of ongoing historical and political struggles over development. While specific examples may be situated locally or nationally, to varying degrees they will have historical roots and political similarities with distant locales and peoples. For example, the historical development and modernisation of contemporary European states was facilitated through colonial and imperial relations that extended well beyond the territorial boundaries of the modernising imperial states concerned. Similarly, the European encounter with distant peoples not only influenced how Europe developed culturally and materially but also influenced the development path

of their former colonies and protectorates (Cooper 2005). Neither of these encounters was experienced in a homogeneous way. Thus, for instance, the drive for modernisation in India after independence from Britain in 1947 was grounded in the legacy of the colonial experience. Today, in an increasingly globalising world, social relations and experiences are not only more interconnected, but have taken on an even more global dimension (McMichael 2004).

By now you should have some appreciation that there are foundational questions central to debates about development, global poverty and inequality, which need to be engaged with in order to answer specific questions such as, for example; what *is* development? What is the *relationship* between development and poverty and inequality? Let us now reconnect some of these issues to the **discipline** of International Relations. Today, any introductory course in International Relations will include at least a basic introduction to concerns about development, global poverty and inequality. It is also likely that these concerns will be set in the context of national and international **security** and questions about global governance. You will more than likely be asked to write an essay on such topics, including perhaps one on the MDGs initiative, adopted as part of the United Nations' Millennium Declaration (see Box 20.3). The MDGs initiative is one of the more recent approaches adopted *globally* as a response to *international* poverty and inequality. This observation already indicates that there is some recognition that there *is* a global dimension to the everyday and localised lived experiences of poverty and inequality.

It is important to remember that poverty, inequality, and development are not *new* to world politics. Our objective in the rest of this chapter is to develop further the above themes. Before we proceed we can summarise the key points we have made:

- Global poverty and inequality are not natural or inevitable. On the contrary, contemporary problems of inequality and poverty are the outcomes of a long historical process of uneven global development.
- Development in turn is also not a natural phenomenon, but a process that is socially and politically organised and contested.
- There is no such thing as an apolitical development perspective or process. How we *explain* global poverty and inequality is highly political because ultimately it has implications for our understanding of the *causes* of poverty, and hence how we organise political responses to it. This in turn will be contingent upon our respective conceptions of development.
- Development is much more than a linear process of material advancement and modernisation. Development and modernisation involve issues of identity, power, and conceptions of justice.

We examine global poverty and inequality in a way that foregrounds these broader issues. First, we demonstrate that there is an intricate relationship between conceptions of development and experiences of poverty and inequality. We highlight the fact that how one *conceptualises* development will inform how we respond to poverty and inequality. Second, and related to the above point, we argue that the **method** one chooses to evaluate and analyse development also has implications for poverty and inequality. Our choice of method is contingent upon both a prior theory or understanding of poverty and inequality and is related to our respective conceptions of development. Third, in keeping with these points, we suggest that development has always been, and will continue to be, the focus of political and social debate and struggle. The reason for this is that whichever way development is conceptualised

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Box 24.3: Terminology

Dependency theory

Dependency theory argued that the asymmetrical structure of world politics, in particular the way in which the global economy was organised, was biased in favour of the Western capitalist states. The Third World was situated in a subordinate position as a consequence of **colonialism** and the colonial division of labour, which did not change after political independence. There are variants of this argument. The general thrust of dependency theory, however, was structural, in the sense that the development of capitalism was theorised as a structural process resulting in uneven and combined development. Inequality and poverty were conceived as inherent to the overall structure of economic development. Representative authors: Amin 1990; Frank 1967.

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and pursued in practice 'it is not just a goal, but a method of rule' (McMichael 2004: 31). The relevance of these observations for the study of development, global poverty and inequality will become clearer as you proceed through the chapter.

We proceed with an outline of the contemporary context of development and explore this through the example of the MDG initiative. The purpose of this exercise is to set the scene for the discussion by starting with 'where we are now'. There are, of course, any number of ways to introduce students to global poverty and inequality, particularly when the emphasis is on the history and politics of development. We could, for instance, start with the famous 1949 speech by former US President Harry S. Truman, a speech which for many symbolically, if not substantively, divided the world into the 'developed' and the 'underdeveloped' and led to what became known as the Point IV Program. On 20 January 1949, in his inaugural address at the start of his second term as president, Truman concluded by sketching out an expanded **foreign aid** policy to assist the 'freedom loving nations' to develop (Berger 2004: 43). This was a decisive moment in the history of development. However, we intend to 'fast-forward' our historically informed approach to global poverty and inequality and focus on the MDGs of the early twenty-first century, which may in retrospect also eventually be seen as an important turning point for development and world politics. As the brief discussion of the Point IV Program makes clear, global poverty and inequality did not start and will not end with the MDGs. Neither do we intend to provide a comprehensive account of the MDGs per se. It is important also to recognise the extent to which contemporary debates about development have come to the fore in *relation* to both previous debates such as dependency theory and also in relation to contemporary political trends (see Box 24.3).

From the Washington Consensus to the Millennium Development Goals

As the world entered the twenty-first century a new consensus was emerging among key policy-makers and politicians about global poverty and inequality. This new consensus is seen as a departure from the dominant development policies of the 1980s and 1990s. In particular the new consensus has been presented as a shift away from the '**Washington Consensus**' (see chapter 20, Box 20.1) advocated by key global institutions such as the World Bank
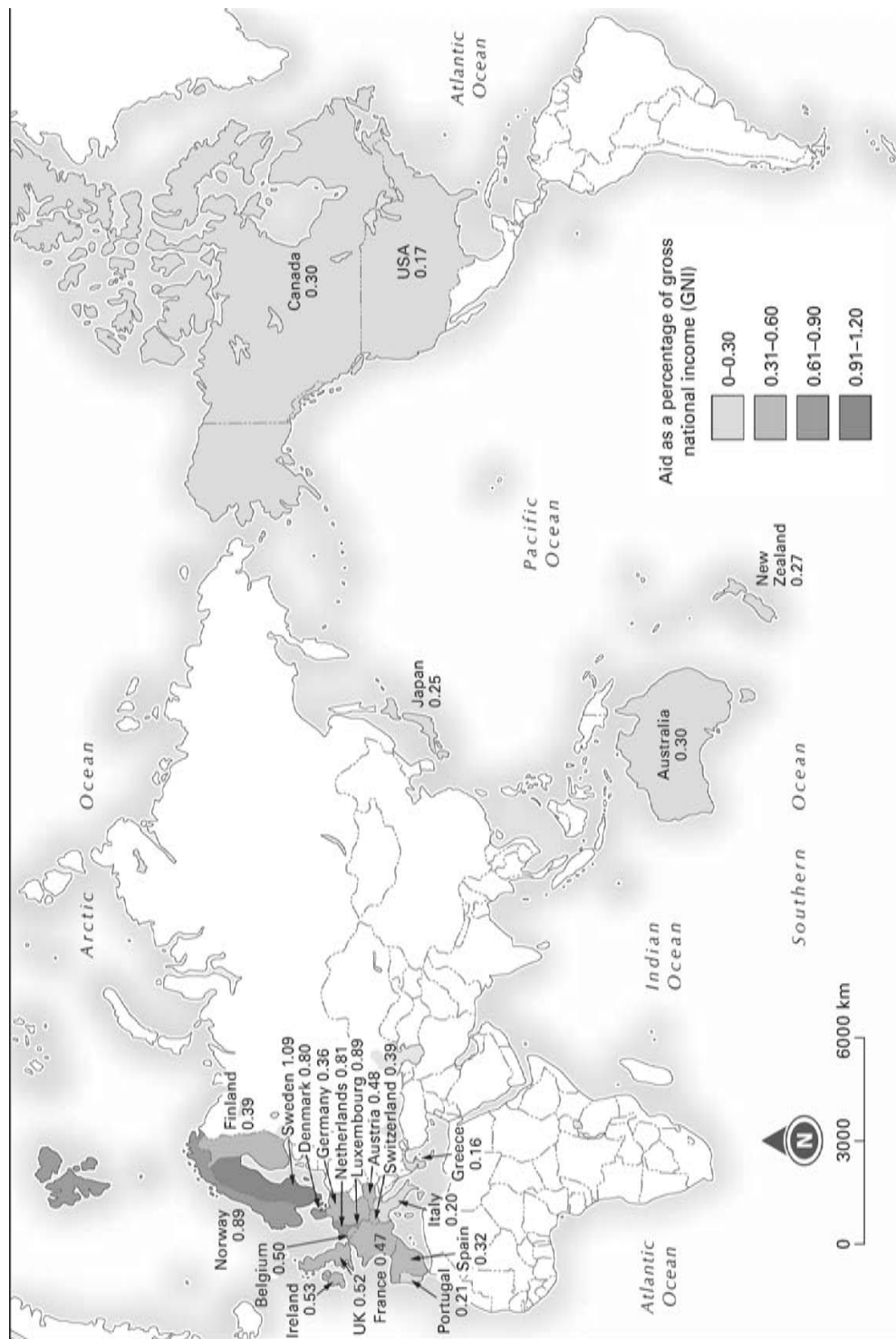
Figure 24.1: Overseas development assistance, 2006

Source: 2006 International Development Statistics online, Development Cooperation Directorate, OECD. Available at www.oecd.org.

and the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** (see chapter 20). The Washington Consensus maintained a focus on macro-political restructuring, such as managing national budgets in a more austere style in the hope this would facilitate 'economic growth' in the long run, enable sovereign debt repayments *and* also reduce poverty. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) gained increasing influence in the 1980s and included policy initiatives such as privatisation, liberalisation and the cutbacks on state subsidies for basic staple foods and other products, and more general welfare programs (see chapter 20, Box 20.2). In a substantive sense, the Washington Consensus was seen as the best approach to development, which in turn, it was hoped, would redress the *social* crises of global poverty and inequality.

However, as a consequence of the negative social and political implications of SAPs, the Washington Consensus came under critical scrutiny from various quarters. It is in the context of this crisis of legitimacy of development (centred on the Consensus) that the shift to integrate *micro-political experiences* with an ostensibly more poverty-focused macro-political governance agenda emerged in a comprehensive way. This entailed a radical shift in the *representation* of poverty and the articulation of development policy. These important changes were reflected in development policy processes at various levels, particularly at the level of key multilateral economic institutions, which included the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

For example, in contrast to the 1980s and 1990s, all three institutions have now come to represent their *raison d'être* in terms of development. The shift in focus, from concerns with macro-economic and political processes of development to concerns about the everyday lived experiences of poor people came to be labelled the Post-Washington Consensus. This is generally understood to entail two substantive departures from the Washington Consensus. In addition to the foregrounding of concerns about poverty and how to alleviate it, the Post-Washington Consensus is generally understood to imply a change in the process of development policy formulation itself. It is assumed that poverty reduction and development policy will not be premised on a preset general framework, but rather be the outcome of context-specific concerns premised on a more inclusive policy-making process. In particular, there is expected to be more participation and input from the global poor. Thus, the thrust of the Post-Washington Consensus approach to development ostensibly gives priority to the 'voices of the poor'.

Let us briefly consider three key development initiatives that were formalised under the Post-Washington Consensus. First, in 1999 the World Bank and the IMF adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) initiative over the previous SAP process. A PRSP is compulsory for countries wishing to access credit from the World Bank and the IMF to finance development. The PRSP sets out a comprehensive national development plan that ought to encompass in an integrated way macro-political aspects of governance with micro-political concerns. This means that a typical PRSP will have policies, including projected expenditure, for various sectors (such as health, education, poverty and so on) set out on the basis of three- to five-year plans. These plans are in turn correlated to the projected national budget (based on anticipated income and expenditure) of the state concerned. The PRSP initiative has generally been represented as a country-specific document that sets poverty reduction as the core objective. To the extent that it focuses on poverty reduction, there is little to disagree with. It is also correct to say that the PRSP initiative goes beyond the SAPs

approach, in that it legalises a comprehensive national development plan linking local level policies to a globally constituted framework for development.

Second, in keeping with the consensus that poverty reduction and development are key rationales of MEIs, the WTO has also agreed to facilitate this objective. The WTO 2000 Doha Round of Talks was represented in terms of a comprehensive 'development' agenda.

Third, it is within this Post-Washington Consensus context that the MDGs were also adopted as a way of monitoring concrete outcomes of the reorientation in global development. While there is no doubt that under the Post-Washington Consensus global poverty and inequality have been put centre stage, debates continue over the global politics of development and poverty (Higgott and Weber 2005; Weber 2004, 2006). For this reason, we will refer to the vision and, most significantly, the practice of development as espoused by MEIs not in terms of the Post-Washington Consensus, but rather as a reconfigured, while still orthodox modernising approach to development, as this more accurately captures the substantive issues at stake.

Not everyone shares this reconfigured orthodox modernising vision of development and the processes via which it is to be achieved (Munck and O'Hearn 1999; Rahnema with Bawtree 1997). For example, the diverse groups that coalesce under the umbrella of the World Social Forum (WSF) exemplify a fairly large and globally constituted alternative **globalisation** movement (see chapter 25). Within this movement there are, for instance, peasant organisations who are interested in ecologically sustainable food production systems, which reflect a comprehensively different development vision to the orthodox one (McMichael 2006). To make clear what is at stake in the ongoing debates about development we now turn to the specific example of the Millennium Development Goals.

Perspectives on the Millennium Development Goals and global poverty

Through a brief examination of divergent perspectives on the MDGs (see chapter 20, Box 20.3) we demonstrate the degree to which these debates are reflective of differences over how development is conceptualised and divergent views about the root causes of poverty. These divergent perspectives can be captured through a few select quotations on the MDG initiative.

For advocates of the MDG initiative, including Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the **UN**, under whose leadership the UN adopted the MDG declaration, it 'was a seminal event in the history of the United Nations' (Annan 2005). Other advocates are cautiously optimistic about the potential value of the MDG initiative, and in this context suggest that at least the initiative has made global poverty a key focus in world politics (Fukada-Parr 2004).

For some critics, the MDG initiative is better conceived as a strategy to further justify and entrench a neoliberal conception of development, and hence they call for a rejection of the MDG approach (Amin 2006; Bond 2006). Thomas Pogge (2004), on the other hand, argues that it is morally objectionable to focus on reducing a *proportion* of the poor when there are sufficient resources to meet the basic needs of all of humanity. Jeffrey James in contrast, cautions over the emphasis the MDG initiative places on quantitative goals and

targets (2006). While for its advocates quantifiable targets can demonstrate in a concrete way whether poverty reduction goals are being achieved, for critics it displaces what development *ought to be* about. James illustrates his point through a simple example. Primary school enrolment is an MDG target: is this in itself an adequate measure of development? Or rather should there be a meaningful consideration of the *quality* of the education and what one can do with it after that? Following Amartya Sen, such critical perspectives place an emphasis on the quality of life rather than targeting outcomes per se. These arguments do not deny that poverty and inequality exist and that we ought to redress the lived experiences of those subject to vulnerabilities. Instead, they resonate with foundational questions about what development actually is, or is about.

These are what we might call the first-order questions that underpin debates about development. Whether we are talking about the PRSPs, or the WTO Doha agenda, or indeed the MDGs it is possible to discern some fundamental differences between the critical and orthodox approaches. On closer examination these different perspectives can be seen to diverge precisely with reference to first-order questions about development, global poverty and inequality.

- What *is* development?
- What is the *relationship* between development and poverty and inequality?
- Development for whom, and for what purpose?

Let us extrapolate these differences by carefully considering what is substantively at stake in the divergent perspectives on the MDG initiative. Why is it the case that for its advocates the MDG initiative is reflective of a seminal event in world history, while others remain so critical of this initiative specifically and the orthodox development and modernisation project more generally?

Advocates of the Millennium Development Goals initiative

From this perspective development is broadly conceptualised in terms of modernisation; for example, it places faith in the value of modern, scientific knowledge and technology, and accepts that development is to be achieved through the implementation and regulation of forms of private rights. This entails an intensification of a market-based approach to public goods and services. Thus, the orthodox approach is ultimately premised on expanding a growth-based framework for development, within which individuals can compete to enhance their private gains. This perspective is underpinned by a set of foundational assumptions about development and poverty: first, it takes for granted that everyone in the world thinks about their everyday lives in individualistic terms *and* values modern scientific knowledge and technology as progress. It assumes that society is comprised of atomistic individuals who prioritise individual gain through competition. This view of the world is premised on a perspective that begins with a fixed conception of human beings. They are, in this view, rational agents acting in accordance with individual decisions made on the basis of explicitly economic calculations: profit maximisation, consumption needs and desires in the context of available information about the more general workings of the economy. Given that such a conception begins with the individual rather than society as a whole, poverty and inequality in turn are not conceptualised as an outcome of development (a socially and politically organised system), but rather as an outcome of *individual* failure to successfully pursue development so conceived.

From such a perspective, global poverty and inequality are understood not as an outcome of development but rather as a condition extraneous to the process of development as such. To be clear, this is not to say that the orthodox approach does not have a conception of *a* relationship between poverty and inequality and development. It does; but it is conceptualised in a non-relational way. That is to say that the orthodox conception and theory of development ultimately rest on an *abstraction* from social relations, presupposing an individualistic perspective congruent with private property rights that renders invisible the social, historical and political contexts.

From this perspective, a social **order** that is beset with the injustices of class relations, gender inequalities and racial hierarchies is treated as if it were 'given', rather than socially and politically constructed. Instead of proceeding from the basis of historically specific experiences and struggles, the promises of development for the orthodox proponents of development and modernisation are conceived in a linear vision of progress tied to the future. In this sense, the orthodoxy is premised on a temporal vision (future time) and also spatial stratification. The MDG initiative is exemplary of both these observations. It focuses on a future date to realise the promises of development and retains a spatial conception of the political organisation of development to the extent that the state is still charged with ultimate responsibility for poverty and inequality.

Critics of the Millennium Development Goals initiative

From the perspective of critics, the MDG initiative is not only inappropriate, but is set to reproduce and entrench global poverty and inequality because it is conceptualised from within an orthodox approach to development. The core of the critique is not so much an attack on the goals of the MDGs (even if they might be limited) but rather its conceptual framework. That is to say, as Amin (2006) argues, (a) it does not adequately address the relationship between development and poverty, and (b) it does not act on a conception of development that moves beyond an economic and technocratic frame of reference. Let us consider these two points in more detail. For critics, what is particularly problematic is the way in which the MDG conceptual framework remains premised on a neoliberal conception of development and associated policy processes. We must note that the MDGs are to be *realised* through the wider context of the development process. These include the PRSP process, the WTO framework and so on, which are all firmly grounded within a set of 'free market' policies and strategies. This relies on growth rather than redistribution, which was precisely the cause of much social distress in the 1980s under SAPs (Thomas 2000).

From a critical perspective such an approach is tantamount to a form of governance based on what Stephen Gill has called 'disciplinary **neoliberalism**' advanced through an associated regulatory framework of 'new constitutionalism' (Gill 2002). This approach is *ahistorical* because it continues to conceive development in a way that abstracts it from the social relations of power and concrete forms of dispossession it engenders; it does not take into account the way in which development is – and came to be – organised. So, the legacy of colonialism, which, among other things, instituted an asymmetrical international division of labour between the 'North' and the 'South' with precarious terms of trade, is not factored into the MDG conceptual framework. The current organisation of the production of goods and services continues to be precarious and impacts adversely on the lived experiences of many.

To presume social contexts as being primarily constituted in terms of rational self-interested agents acting in the image of consumption-oriented and profit-maximising individuals is, from the perspective of the critics, flawed. To understand the politics of inequality and poverty, it is imperative to appreciate the complex nature of development, just as it is to historicise development and inequality. This would entail asking questions about the relationship between knowledge about development and social power relations (Saurin 1996).

Conclusion

To sum up, global poverty and inequality are not *new* phenomena to international relations. It may appear so depending on one's theoretical perspective. If we see the world as organised into a system of discrete territorial units (states) then we may find reasons to celebrate the MDGs. On the other hand, we may still find comfort in the narrative of a global system of discrete territorial states, but hope to struggle for alternative approaches to development as modernisation. Either way, under both scenarios, we would be *abstracting* from the social reality of everyday lived experiences of historical and contemporary social relations, which have configured the global project of development and inequality. From such a state-centred perspective we are unable to account for 'transnational' relations which constitute the making of, and resistance to, global development through inequality. Development implies progress; conceived as a linear approach it involves the subordination of the present to the past and the future. Human beings, however, complex as we are, *live* the present in relation to memories (real or imagined) of the past and aspirations of the future (real or imagined). While it can be said that the orthodox and critical perspectives of development both operate within conceptions of time and space, they nevertheless differ fundamentally. The orthodox approach to the temporal dimension of development is linear, projecting a particular conception of the history of development into the future. The history of development is conceptualised in non-relational terms, spatially and socially. On the other hand, critical perspectives are premised on substantive aspects of the social and political contexts of development. If we are to respond to global poverty and inequality, it is our contention that we must return to first-order questions about development itself. The complexity of development necessitates an appreciation of development as co-constitutive of a process of recognition of the other(s) as well as redistribution in the material sense (Fraser and Honneth 2003; Nandy 1987). To wholly comprehend this dynamic, we would do well to begin with an appreciation of the global dimension of national and local development, as well as the richly diverse and complex social contexts of human beings and their relation to nature.

Questions

1. What differentiates orthodox and alternative approaches to development?
2. What is the relationship between conceptions of development and the method we use to 'measure' development?
3. How are poverty and development related?

4. To what extent are assumptions about development relevant for how we respond to poverty?

Further reading

Berger, Mark T. 2004, The battle for Asia: from decolonization to globalization, London: Routledge Curzon. Provides a detailed overview of the history of the theory and practice of international development from the end of World War II down to the Asian financial crisis of 1997 and beyond.

Berger, Mark T. and Weber, Heloise (forthcoming), Rethinking the Third World: international development and world politics, London: Palgrave. Provides a much more elaborate and detailed discussion of the key themes raised in this short chapter on global poverty and inequality.

McMichael, Philip 2004, Development and social change: a global perspective, third edition, Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press. Engaging and accessible account of the history of development that challenges the reader to rethink problematic assumptions about development.

Rahnema, Majid with Bawtree, Victoria (eds) 1997, The post-development reader, London: Zed Books. Unconventional collection of essays on development and poverty; challenging and inspiring.

Globalisation and Its Critics

Steven Slaughter

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the contemporary theoretical debates surrounding **globalisation**. It illustrates the main features of protests against the social consequences of a globalised economy, and it identifies some of the key political issues that scholars and students of International Relations must face when addressing the promotion of justice and effective governance within a more densely connected world.

Since the mid-1990s the term globalisation has entered common usage and become a central issue in public debates in most countries around the world because of the apparently changed structure of world politics and economics. Globalisation has become associated with the controversial social outcomes that have stemmed from an increasingly integrated global economy, and the resulting public disquiet and controversy around the world, as particularly symbolised by the 1999 protests in Seattle against the World Trade Organization (WTO). Globalisation has also become an important – although essentially contested – concept within the field of International Relations and other social science **disciplines**. It is therefore essential to try to understand what globalisation means.

Understanding globalisation

Globalisation is a messy term that encompasses a wide variety of human activity. As you may be aware there are trade statistics and other economic facts that suggest the world is becoming increasingly globally integrated (Held et al 1999: 169–75). Nevertheless facts do not tell the whole picture. Consequently, in an effort to systematise the examination of globalisation, a variety of scholars have advanced arguments about what globalisation means. The seminal globalisation work *Global transformations* offers a systematic study of the history and nature of globalisation and suggests three explanations for contemporary global integration (Held et al 1999); see Box 25.1. The first is '*hyperglobalisation*', a position held by liberals like Kenichi Ohmae (1995) who claim that globalisation represents a recent and near-complete triumph of liberal values and global markets that is tightly integrating **states** and people around the world. They argue globalisation is a significant force for human progress.

Box 25.1: Terminology

Three explanations of globalisation

<p style="text-align:center">Hyperglobalist</p>

Globalisation is:	Real and new.
Why?	Globalisation is the consequence of information and communications technology as well as **capitalism**.
Main elements:	Global economy.
Role of the state:	End of effective state capacity.
Moral stance:	Positive process.
Proponents:	Thomas Friedman, *Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999); Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State* (1995).

<p style="text-align:center">Sceptical</p>

Globalisation is:	Nothing new: either is not real or is a long-standing process.
Why?	Globalisation is a myth – there is a continuing international economy.
Main elements:	Capitalism as usual.
Role of the state:	Persistence of 'normal' state capacity for policy-making.
Moral stance:	Globalisation is imaginary.
Proponents:	Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in question* (1996); Linda Weiss, *The myth of the powerless state* (1998)

<p style="text-align:center">Transformationalist</p>

Globalisation is:	A real but long-standing spatial process.
Why?	Long-term processes of technology, ideas and institutions have stretched human activity across time and space.
Main elements:	Globalisation is multifaceted social process – different aspects of life are becoming global in varying degrees.
Role of the state:	State capacity is undergoing transformation. The line between the foreign and domestic policy has become blurred.
Moral stance:	An ambiguous process that is producing both 'winners' and 'losers', as well as reconstituting traditional political communities.
Proponents:	David Held et al, *Global Transformations* (1999); Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World* (1999 BBC Reith Lectures).

The second position is a *sceptical* set of observations which suggest that globalisation is overstated and largely a myth because the level of global integration during the 1990s is less than the period between 1870 and 1914 (Hirst and Thompson 1996: 2). Far from a world where markets have trumped states, the world economy is still shaped by state-to-state interaction; there remain significant differences between the strategic choices made by states in response to the world economy and strong states are still 'able to work the system to their advantage' (Waltz 1999: 7). Marxists are also sceptical on the grounds that global interconnections are an essential part of the capitalist mode of production; globalisation is seen as a 'long standing process always implicit in capital accumulation rather than a political-economic condition that has recently come into being' (Harvey 1997: 421).

The third account of globalisation is the '*transformationalist*' perspective that seeks to locate globalisation in a more historical framework and has become the predominant explanation of globalisation. The transformationalist position conceives globalisation as a spatial process whereby various forms of human activity are increasingly traversing the world and connecting people in differing parts of the world more densely and more quickly than in previous times. This spatial interconnectedness is largely due to developments in transportation and communications technology that enable long-distance social relations. Anthony Giddens (1990: 64) exemplifies this account when he defines globalisation as 'the intensification of world wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'. In this process national borders are transcended on a regular basis by various flows of resources, people and ideas. It is important to emphasise that this account contends that globalisation is multifaceted in that it is not restricted to the economic realm alone, as people are increasingly affected by various forms of economic, cultural and political activity. Equally important, the transformationalist position argues that globalisation is not novel to the late twentieth century as individuals and polities have been interconnecting across the world for at least 500 years, with some dynamics of globalisation evident even earlier.

Essentially we can see the history of globalisation as a spatial process firmly etched into the history of Australia. The incorporation of the Australian continent into the British Empire can be seen as a form of political and cultural globalisation in that **colonialism** involves global forms of political and economic structures of domination. Indeed, it is clearly the case that global connections have sped up, with the First Fleet taking 252 days to reach Australia, the first commercial airlines from the UK taking nine days in the 1930s, and contemporary airlines from the UK taking twenty-two hours. Global economic connections have been important to Australia since its inception as an English colony, as it was set up to service English economic interests. In many senses this logic of external connection has continued but the external interests have changed, with other nations being involved in various economic linkages and new forms of economic coordination such as Australia's involvement with the **Bretton Woods** economic institutions after World War II. Private **transnational corporations** have also become more systematically involved in recent decades. These political and economic connections have not been culturally neutral, as they have exposed Australians to various cultural values from around the world. It is safe to say that Australia, like most countries around the world at present, is increasingly affected by decisions and events elsewhere as its people are increasingly aware of events happening in other parts of the world. There is a faster transmission of fashions, information and ideas, an increased ability to participate in new forms of association, from **non-governmental organisations** (NGOs) and transnational corporations (TNCs) to internet chat rooms, and an increasing sensitivity to economic and political events in other parts of the world.

There are four main political implications of this spatial process for Australia and world politics. First, while nation-states remain as important actors in world politics, global connections and the development of communications technology have *empowered a new range of actors* to operate in politically significant ways (Held et al 1999: chapter 1). Clearly globalisation has made it easier to develop NGOs that promote a certain set of political values, but it has also made it easier for terrorist groups and organised crime to transfer people, resources and harm across national borders. Transnational corporations have also been greatly

empowered – if not enabled – by these accelerated forms of global linkage. Second, globalisation leads to *global connections and ramifications* that are more authentically transnational and universal. Indeed,

> political communities and civilisations can no longer be characterised simply as 'discrete worlds': they are enmeshed and entrenched in complex structures of overlapping forces, relations and movements . . . But even the most powerful among them – including the most powerful nation-states – do not remain unaffected by the changing conditions and processes of regional and global entrenchment (Held et al 1999: 77–80).

 However, these overlapping forces are often uneven and have greater local or regional implications for some people or states. Third, in many senses, *the lines between foreign and domestic policy have blurred* due to the intense and widespread forms of global integration and connection. This leads to issues such as **terrorism**, organised crime and environmental impact that intersect national borders and thereby can only be addressed by elaborate international cooperation.

Fourth, as a result of the previous points, there are increasingly *complex forms of international and transnational cooperation* that have become referred to as 'global governance'. The previous points create the situation where the nation-state cannot be assumed to be the only major political actor in issues like **security**, economic prosperity, or environmental sustainability. It is now the case that international or intergovernmental forms of organisation such as the **UN**, regional bodies like the EU or non-public bodies like TNCs, business councils or NGOs are increasingly important to understanding the enactment of policy-making. Jan Aart Scholte (2000: 138–9) indicates that these public and private bodies are 'supraterritorial constituencies' that are external influences over the operation of state policy-making. As we will see in the last section of this chapter, this is problematic because it can be seen to undermine **democracy** within nation-states.

It is important to be aware that some scholars are sceptical of the incidence or significance of the spatial implications of globalisation. As I mentioned previously, sceptics claim the **power** of the state is still largely intact – and there is plenty of evidence, especially in the post-September 11 context, to demonstrate the power of the state. Even transformationalist scholars argue that globalisation is not a monolithic force – different states and groups of people are affected by global integration in differing ways. However, there are also scholars who believe that while the spatial implications of contemporary global integration may be largely correct, they ignore any examination of the ideas and interests that are dominating and championing the contemporary shape of global economic integration. Some critically minded scholars emphasise the importance of *neoliberal and free market capitalist ideologies and policies* in shaping the way the global economy has developed since the 1970s (Cox 1997; Gill 1998).

Neoliberalism (also known as economic rationalism) is a strand of liberal thought that advances a range of policies ushered in by many Western – especially Anglo-Saxon – countries and the multilateral economic institutions (MEIs), such as the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank**. Neoliberalism is an ideology and philosophy based on the principle that human welfare is best promoted by economic growth, which in turn is best enabled by reducing the interference of governments in the private sector. Neoliberals also support

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Box 25.2:   Terminology

Examples of neoliberalism

Deregulation: In 1983 the federal Labor government deregulated Australia's banking sector by removing government controls on bank lending and opening the sector to other financial organisations.

Liberalisation: Trade liberalisation is promoted by the WTO and disputes over whether a country has abided by these provisions are handled by the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body.

Privatisation: Australian governments have sold various public assets to the private sector including Qantas, Telstra and the Commonwealth Bank.

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measures that enable trade and finance to have unrestricted movement across national borders. These policies attempt to 'roll back' the state and the role of government, and leave decisions about allocation, production and distribution in the economy to the global market thereby excluding or limiting measures that restrict or redistribute the wealth of individuals (Gill 1998). These 'market friendly' policies are evident in the policies of *deregulation* that remove 'political' interferences and rules from the operation of markets, *privatisation*, which entails the sale of state assets to the private sector or the 'contracting out' of public services to the private sector, and the *liberalisation* of restrictions on the movements of capital or trade across state borders. Neoliberals claim that an unregulated market is the best way to promote individual freedom and increase global economic growth, which will ultimately benefit – and 'trickle down' – to everyone. These policies have been influential around the world and have replaced the more moderate Keynesian **liberalism** that sought economic growth and social stability by allowing an active domestic role for the state.

Consequently we can see a close relationship between neoliberalism and contemporary processes of global integration. Indeed, the hyperglobalist position best captures the perspective of many Western governments – including that of Australia – which conceives globalisation as an inexorable economic force. From the early 1980s onwards, globalisation was seen as an external technological and economic force compelling Australia to adjust its economic policies, largely through liberalisation and deregulation. This vision was articulated in Australian economic foreign policy in the 1997 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade white paper:

> Not only are national policy settings judged by the international marketplace, individual companies – irrespective of whether they are exporters – are increasingly subject to the disciplines of international best practice. Globalisation makes further integration with the global economy even more essential to advancing Australia's national interests. It also makes reform of the Australian economy essential: continuing reforms are crucial to the international competitiveness of Australia in a global economy (DFAT 1997: 20).

This idea of globalisation being a monolithic external force was challenged by scholars who claimed that successive Australian governments used the idea of 'globalisation' to mask the neoliberal agenda driving economic policy (Emy 1993; Walter 1996). While it is now

generally accepted that globalisation is a broader phenomenon encompassing more than just economics, there is no doubt that neo-liberal ideas and policy-making are an important component of political life at a national and global level.

The focus of neoliberal ideas and policies is upon unleashing innovation, profitability and economic growth through encouraging unimpeded transnational economic linkages. Neoliberal ideas underpinned the formation of the '**Washington Consensus**' orthodoxy of the MEIs in the 1980s (see chapter 20), expressing a view articulated by the US government and development economists that neoliberal policies were the only path to prosperity and development. As such this orthodoxy has been evident in the policies of the IMF and World Bank, especially in the policies of structural adjustment, in directing developing countries to introduce neoliberal measures. Substantiation of the impact of neoliberalism is also evident in the rising tide of public concern over the implications of neoliberalism. While trade liberalisation can promote public disquiet – because jobs are often affected and the losers in this scenario tend to be more vocal than the winners – during the 1990s the focus throughout the Western world shifted towards a broader concern for global justice. This is perhaps an indication that globalisation as a spatial process had impacted on public awareness and that neoliberal policies had some unpalatable social implications. We now turn to the substance of these public concerns and protests.

The anti-capitalist movement

Although NGOs like Oxfam and Greenpeace have been interested in the global economy for many years, and people in developing parts of the world have likewise contested the policies of the IMF for some decades, since the mid-1990s individuals and NGOs concerned with global social justice grew exponentially in number and voice. As such, it has become common to refer to these protests as a social movement – the 'anti-globalisation' or more accurately, the 'anti-capitalist movement'. However, the unity of this movement is open to debate. The anti-capitalist movement (ACM) is a global social movement (or collection of movements) that challenges the domination of transnational corporate interests and neoliberal/free market policies because of the perceived impact of this type of global capitalism on social justice. As such, sometimes this movement is referred to as the 'global justice movement'. Ultimately, the groups involved in this movement seek to challenge the orthodoxy of trade liberalisation and neoliberalism that exclude efforts to regulate or redistribute economic activity (Klein 2001). They do not accept the economic assumptions and arguments associated with neoliberalism, and they see that economic gain and the interests of market actors need to be considered along with other public goals such as good labour standards, environmental protection and **human rights**. They claim that the defenders of neoliberalism and **free trade** frequently fail to acknowledge the needs of vulnerable people around the world in favour of the economic interests of the affluent (Klein 2001).

While most people became aware of the ACM with the protests against the WTO meeting in Seattle in 1999, the real beginnings of the movement against global capitalism began in 1994 with the Zapatista struggle against neoliberalism (See Box 25.3). On 1 January 1994, a grassroots rebellion in the impoverished southern Mexican state of Chiapas began against the introduction of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a regional treaty

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Box 25.3: Discussion points

A brief timeline of the global anti-capitalist movement

January 1994:	EZLN (Zapatista) revolt against North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) begins in Chiapas, Mexico.
1998:	Internet-coordinated protests publicising details of secret negotiations on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) bring about their collapse.
18 June 1999:	The first Day of Global Action, with protests against financial centres in forty-one countries.
December 1999:	Sixty to eighty thousand people from around the world demonstrate as part of the Day of Global Action at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle.
September 2000:	Twenty thousand protesters against World Bank and IMF in Prague and more than 20,000 protesters against the World Economic Forum meeting in Melbourne that same year.
April 2001:	Eighty thousand protest against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Quebec.
July 2001:	During protests by 200,000 people against the Group of 8 (G8) meeting in Genoa, the police kill one protester.
September 2004:	Protests against the WTO in Cancun. WTO dialogue between the member-states stalls and collapses (again).
July 2005:	Protests against the G8 meeting in Gleneagles; the Live 8 concerts.

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animated by explicit neoliberal principles. While the Zapatistas employed some forms of active resistance, the true impact of the movement was its explicit recognition of the importance of challenging neoliberal ideas and an effective use of the internet to communicate their cause. This played a crucial role in mobilising a wide variety of causes from around the world to the question of neoliberalism. These events were followed by a global internet campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). The MAI was an agreement being devised by the OECD in secrecy from 1995, with the aim of applying trade liberalisation principles to the realm of investment. It was feared by those in and beyond the ACM that this would have eliminated the right of states to control many aspects of policy-making such as regulated working conditions or environmental standards (Goodman and Ranald 1999: 34). Once a copy of the MAI draft treaty was leaked onto the internet it catalysed a worldwide campaign that exacerbated the differences within the OECD and in 1998 negotiations collapsed, leading to the treaty being scrapped. The successful anti-MAI campaign was quickly followed up by large-scale physical protests at Seattle in 1999 and a protest against the WEF in Melbourne on 11 September 2000 (see Box 25.4), which, despite some violence, involved the heavy use of entertainment and carnival-like themes to capture public attention.

An important development for the ACM occurred in January 2001 when the World Social Forum (WSF) was created in Porto Alegre in Brazil. The WSF was created as a political space to discuss and formulate alternatives to neoliberal globalisation and thus challenge the ideas of the World Economic Forum that meets annually in Davos, Switzerland and intermittently in other places. The WSF annual meetings have been growing in size and in 2006 there were simultaneous meetings in Mali, Venezuela and Pakistan (see Box 25.5).

Box 25.4: Case study

The Australian anti-capitalist movement: The S11 protests in Melbourne

'THE S11–S13 protests in Melbourne marked a sea-change in Australian politics. Thousands of workers and even more young people came out onto the streets for 72 hours of continual actions against capitalism. They blockaded a meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) at the Crown Towers hotel, where 1,000 of the world's richest chief executive officers met to discuss furthering their neo-liberal agenda' (Stephen Jolly, S11 activist and Socialist Party secretary: see www.socialismtoday.org/51/australia.html).

Box 25.5: Discussion points

World Social Forum attendance at a glance

The World Social Forum is not a formal organisation, but:

. . . an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and inter-linking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the earth (World Social Forum 2002).

2001 Porto Alegre: 10,000
2002 Porto Alegre: 40,000
2003 Porto Alegre: 70–80,000
2004 Mumbai: 100,000+
2005 Porto Alegre: 155,000
2006 Bamako (Mali), Caracas (Venezuela) and Karachi (Pakistan): 120,000+

Sources: www.glovesoff.org/columns/cooney_2005wsf.html;
www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=14_6&cd_language=2

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 had a significant impact on the ACM, with the political climate moving away from social justice concerns. However, in the lead-up to the US-led war in Iraq, the increased public concern on the defensibility of that war led to a high level of cross-pollination of anti-war and global social justice concerns. This was followed in 2005 with the 'Make Poverty History' campaign and the 'Live 8' concerts aimed at galvanising public awareness about the impact of global poverty. It should be noted however, that there is some controversy about the coherence of the Make Poverty History campaign with the previously stated goals of the ACM. In particular while the ACM has sought to significantly reform or dismantle global capitalism, the Make Poverty History campaign seemed to accept the core aspects of global capitalism coupled with measures that promote 'trade justice', 'drop the debt' and offer 'more and better aid' (Make Poverty History campaign 2005). Whether this is a maturing or a weakening of the ACM's agenda depends ultimately on your perspective.

It must be clear that there have been, and continue to be, significant differences within the ACM over the goals of protest and the tactics that should be utilised. There are groups that advocate violence and vandalism against capitalist icons, those who support non-violent protests and those who wish to engage in constructive dialogue with TNCs and the MEIs. There are socialist groups that aspire to move beyond capitalism and some groups that seek to reform the capitalist system. However, while the diversity and global extent of the protest movement speaks volumes about the social problems facing the world and the diversity of moral viewpoints of those resisting neoliberalism, developing political coherence amidst such diversity is the most significant challenge facing the protest movement. It is important also to see that the ACM itself has been actively countered by the MEIs and the many pro-capitalist business councils and lobby groups that continue to play an important role in supporting the development of economic globalisation. There are, as Leslie Sklair (1997) has pointed out, 'social movements for global capitalism' in developing and defending economic globalisation. Economists and business councils play a crucial role in supporting and legitimating neoliberal ideas and the type of global capitalism we take for granted.

Also, while there has not yet been a momentous transformation in the economic orthodoxy away from neoliberalism, the impact of these protests is not insignificant. It is clearly the case that the protest movements have brought the structure and neoliberal policies of the MEIs to world attention when previously they were not significant topics of public consideration. The protest movement has politicised the global economy and opened up some avenues for dissenting ideas and voices by making clear that contemporary globalisation is a political and cultural structure as much as an economic one. The ACM has essentially politicised the ideas and private bodies that stand behind the institutional infrastructure of contemporary globalisation, such that corporate think tanks and transnational business councils have been taken out of the realm of conspiracy theory and placed into the discourse of any reasonable explanation of the contours of contemporary globalisation. The increasing attention paid to the social and institutional underpinnings of prosperity by the MEIs can also be seen to reflect a reaction to outside voices as much as internal learning processes inside the MEIs (O'Brien et al 2000: 228). In some cases the ACM has frustrated and slowed the development of the institutionalisation of neoliberalism. The Seattle protest and the anti-MAI campaigns are examples of protests that amplified the divisions *within* the intergovernmental negotiations and were consequently successful at slowing down the institutional growth of neoliberal globalisation.

Most significantly, it appears that in terms of organising global economic affairs we are witnessing a shift away from conventional interstate cooperation towards a more complicated model of cooperation where NGOs and social movements have some impact. This is a significant departure from the **Westphalian** idea of international relations being about state-to-state interaction. Indeed, some scholars suggest that this is the emergence of 'complex **multilateralism**' where states are overlaid by **non-state actors** (O'Brien et al 2000: 207). The consequence of this is simple; the institutions that states have set up are not alone in making public decisions – they have to interact with NGOs in order to work effectively. The days of international bodies making decisions in splendid isolation are over – increasingly people are questioning the legitimacy and competency of these bodies (Esty 2002). The operation of the NGOs complicates the 'smooth' operation of the MEIs and can be seen to play a blocking role even if they cannot or do not play a constructive role. This is a trend that is

unlikely to go away: people are concerned that trade liberalisation and economic globalisation may be increasing inequality, poverty and environmental degradation. These public perceptions are important because NGOs play a growing role in the nature of world politics through informing the public and through promoting alternative perspectives on the desirability of neoliberal ideas and assumptions.

The significance and future prospects of these protests against global capitalism depend heavily upon how the ideas and energy created by the ACM are interpreted by citizens around the world and especially how powerful political and economic actors respond to future social problems that are directly or indirectly connected to global capitalism. The future of these protests and indeed globalisation itself also depend heavily upon what we consider as being the appropriate political structures that should be maintained or developed in future. Should we develop extensive forms of global democracy or protect state **sovereignty**? Consequently, questions of international relations **theory** and political theory are tremendously significant to the future shape of globalisation.

Scholarly critiques of globalisation

One of the core questions facing International Relations scholars, and indeed everyone on our planet, is: how are we to organise political authority and effective governance within the context of globalisation? Despite significant public disquiet about the type of globalisation that currently exists, the fact remains that over the last two or three decades various forms of international cooperation and governance have developed so that global capitalism and other forms of global integration are able to secure their existence. The role of non-state actors has also increased. These forms of international and transnational governance coupled with processes of economic and cultural globalisation have called into question the nation-state's future role in a world system that promotes stability or justice. We are witnessing a 'double displacement of state authority' towards private market influences and towards global and regional bodies that are external to any state (Slaughter 2005: 71). There are real questions whether states around the world, even the most powerful, can control their domestic affairs in the face of globalised structures and forces.

Consequently, in international relations literature the idea of 'cosmopolitan democracy' has become a significant conjectural alternative to contemporary globalisation. Contemporary scholars such as Richard Falk, Anthony McGrew and David Held have argued we need to institutionalise the idea that people are 'citizens of the world'. While the idea of **cosmopolitanism** has been around for some time (see chapter 9), in recent times cosmopolitans are more forthright in their support for global institutions and a single global democratic space. They contend that the various processes of globalisation have fundamentally limited the capacity of the nation-state to have any real sense of control over its destiny because its populace is now routinely affected by 'outside' decisions and forces (Falk 1995; Held 1995). Held claims that 'the idea of a political community of fate – of a self-determining collectivity which forms its own agenda and life conditions – can no longer meaningfully be located within the boundaries of a single nation-state alone' (1998: 21). In the context of globalisation, cosmopolitans argue that the only way to overcome these disjunctures is to include in decision-making processes

everyone who stands to be affected by them, thereby making the appropriate site for democracy, at least on some issues, a global one. In pursuing this alternative and globally extending democracy *across* states borders – the state and other actors such as TNCs will be increasingly bound by global laws and standards (Held 1995: 234–5), and individuals – not states – will be the primary moral agents in world politics.

Obviously, there are many critics of cosmopolitan proposals. After all, the idea of global democracy seems a far-fetched and utopian attempt at world government. While the proponents of cosmopolitan democracy suggest that we think creatively for a more just form of global **order**, the communitarian critics of cosmopolitanism claim that cosmopolitans understate the power and utility of national forms of identity and loyalty (Miller 1999). More particularly, communitarian and republican critics claim that a global democracy is not necessary for global cooperation and that citizens of democratic states ought instead direct their states to be more just and cooperative with respect to their foreign policies (Slaughter 2005). While it is easy to be critical of the feasibility of cosmopolitan democracy, it is harder to be critical of calls to promote an increased concern for human rights at home and abroad. However, in terms of the future, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that we need new forms of governance and political community, and while cosmopolitan claims may not square with the political realities of a world where nation-states are still predominant, cosmopolitans are posing important questions.

Conclusion

This chapter has indicated the variety of ways in which world politics is increasingly important to our everyday lives. Contemporary globalisation entails a blurring of local, national and world politics. Neoliberal policy-making's emphasis on promoting economic growth and excluding efforts to regulate or redistribute economic activity are having profound effects around the world and are provoking public concern as to whether this is the path to a sustainable and socially just future. This chapter has also illuminated the way that ordinary people around the world have become engaged with the question of how global political life should be organised in the hope of promoting a more just and stable world. Consequently, the level of our knowledge of world politics and our stance in relation to how we could achieve effective governance and justice are fundamental questions to us as citizens and as students, as we live a shared future in an increasingly globalised world.

Questions

1. Do you think the hyperglobalists, sceptics or transformationalists provide the better account of globalisation?
2. Why has globalisation stimulated so much resistance? Is it justified?
3. Why has democracy become such a central issue in globalisation debates?
4. Do protests against globalisation make a difference? If so, how?
5. Who or what should the anti-capitalist movement target?
6. Do protests against globalisation reflect cosmopolitan or communitarian sentiment?

Further reading

Burchill, S. 2000, 'Resisting neoliberalism: a bibliography of intellectual self-defence', *The Australian Financial Review* (Review Section), 21 July, http://scottburchill.net/ shorthistory.html. Wide-ranging review of the criticism of neoliberalism in the Australian context.

Goodman, J. and Ranald, P. (eds) 1999, Stopping the juggernaut: public interest versus the multilateral agreement on investment, Annandale: Pluto Press. Series of accounts regarding the various forms of public opposition to the MAI in Australia.

Held, David 2004, 'Globalisation: the dangers and the answers', *openDemocracy*, www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-6-27-1918.jsp#. Detailed statement of how cosmopolitan democracy would differ from neoliberal globalisation.

Stiglitz, J. 2002, Globalization and its discontents, London: Penguin Books. Insider's view of the issues surrounding the policies of international financial institutions.

The Globalisation of Islam[1]

Shahram Akbarzadeh

Introduction

This chapter presents an examination of the place of Islam in international relations today. It begins by offering a brief account of Islam's growth and evolving identity. It then outlines Islamic militancy's destabilising effects before discussing Islamist globalism, Muslims in the West and efforts to counter Western **hegemony**.

Islam in the world today

There are in excess of 1.5 billion Muslims in the world. The great bulk of this population lives in South and Southeast Asia, where Muslims constitute the largest religious group. **States** with Muslim population majorities are often called Muslim states, regardless of the system of government and political system. But there are also significant Muslim populations in other states. Population movement in the second half of the twentieth century has led to the growth of Muslim communities in Europe, the US and Australia. Muslim migration to Europe seems to have closely reflected colonial links, so that the biggest Muslim community in the UK is from South Asia where the British Empire held sway, while Muslims from Algeria constitute a significant community in France. This picture, however, is fast evolving and Muslim minority groups in non-Muslim states are becoming increasingly heterogeneous in ethnic background and creed.

     The demographic spread of Muslims has led to some key questions about identity, community and citizenship. Islam emerged in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, but was not tied to that geography. It quickly spread to other regions and by the late nineteenth century was firmly grounded in North Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia. With short-term and long-term migration of Muslims to Europe and later to North America and Australia after World War II, and the emerging phenomenon of conversion to Islam, Islam now constitutes an ethnically heterogeneous global community of faith.

     It is easy to be carried away with the idea of community. All Muslims, regardless of colour, ethnic background or gender, believe in the five pillars of Islam: unity of God and

Muhammad as the prophet, prayer, fasting in the holy month of Ramadan, almsgiving to the needy, and pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). Beyond these fundamental tenets of faith, Muslims vary markedly in their social and political persuasions. Indeed, the ideal of Muslim unity, or *umma* (the community of the faithful), has done nothing to stem the rise of ethnic nationalisms in the Muslim world. State boundaries in the Muslim world may have been drawn by colonial powers, but soon acquired tangible meanings for the affected populations as the governing regimes embarked on nation-building projects. State-based education systems, taxation, economic development and defence forces helped generate and foster national identity. The ideal of Muslim unity has not presented a serious challenge to the solidification of state-based divisions.

Muslims' response to **globalisation** has been varied. Muslims may constitute a global community on one level, that of religious belief, but they are as politically and ideologically diverse as any other people. As a result it is difficult to talk about a unitary Islamic position. Islamic political thinking informs a diverse range of movements, a reality which allows different, sometimes opposing trends, to claim Islamic credentials. The Muslim response to globalisation may be divided into three broad clusters: traditionalist, reformist and Islamist.

As the name suggests, traditionalism rests on a mix of religious traditions, local peculiarities and ethnic/national rituals. The traditional Muslim identity is grounded in its links with past practice, regenerated and emphasised through rituals and regular festivals. The growing popularity of pop culture in Muslim societies, made possible through satellite TV and the movement of people to and from Europe and North America, has placed significant strain on local traditions and threatens to push them to the periphery. While local practices and the corresponding traditional Muslim identity are not in danger of being wiped out, as some may fear, they are now under pressure to contend for an increasingly shrinking cultural space. Many traditional Muslims feel they are fighting a rear-guard action and blame globalisation or Westernisation for the decline in their social mores.

The almost synonymous connection between globalisation and Westernisation in the above approach is very significant, as it reflects a widespread belief that the former is a cover for the latter. Western economies have provided the impetus and logic for the globalisation process, leading to suspicions about its hidden agenda. Furthermore, modern notions of **democracy**, individual liberty and political openness which originated in the West appear to have gained a new momentum through the process of globalisation. The pressure to open up and integrate with the global community could seem like a thinly disguised attempt by former colonial powers to regain hegemony over the Muslim world. Not surprisingly, traditional Muslims take a highly sceptical view of globalisation.

This scepticism is not exclusive to traditional Muslims. A pervasive sense of injustice against powerful states and economies is entrenched in the Muslim world. Yet not all Muslims are traditional in their outlook. A significant trend among Muslims has tried to bridge the gap between the two worlds, relying on the technological advances of globalisation to link Muslim societies with the West and explore common grounds. This trend may be called reformist because it asserts that Islam is a dynamic faith which moves forward with the times and evolves accordingly. Reformists see significant overlaps between Islamic and Western civilisations and argue that modern notions of democracy and civil liberties are in tune with the spirit of Islam. This claim has major ramifications for international relations as it challenges the notion of irreconcilable differences and inevitable conflict between the two. Instead, by emphasising
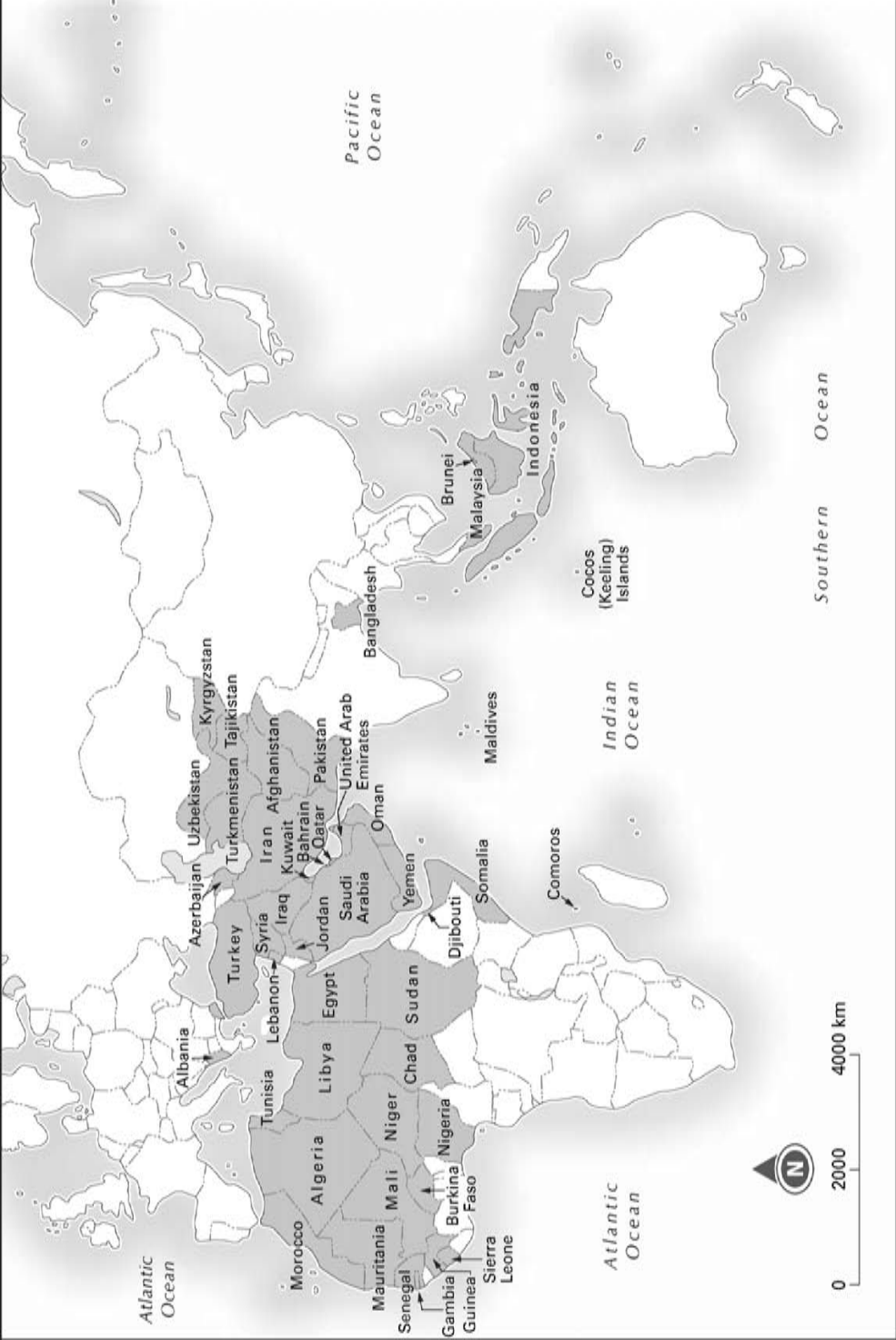
Figure 26.1: Global distribution of Muslim population

Box 26.1:   Terminology

Islamism

Islamism is a modern political ideology that treats the Islamic faith as a blueprint for political action. Islamists reject any divisions between religion and politics and insist on governance in accordance with Islamic law (Shari'a). As a consequence, they dismiss the legitimacy of secular rule and man-made laws and call for their abolition. An early example of Islamism was the Muslim Brotherhood which first emerged in Egypt in 1928. Other examples are Hamas in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda and *Hizb ut-Tahrir* in the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia. The *modus operandi* of Islamists may or may not be violent. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, for example, has been involved in a concerted campaign to shore up a broad popular base through its educational and welfare activities.

   The Muslim reformists' message, however, is often subsumed by the sensational coverage of Islamists which tends to dominate international news. Islamism presents a challenging category as it is at once traditional, modern and reformist and its response to globalisation reflects these influences. Islamism is traditional in the sense that it glorifies the traditions of the prophet; it is reformist in the sense that it seeks to cleanse the faith from what it regards as corruption and expediency, and most significant of all, it is modern as it pursues a very modern objective. The Islamist goal of a major social and political **revolution** in accordance with its understanding of Islamic law relies on all modern tools of government, force and propaganda. A prime example of this extensive Islamist use of the modern state machinery of suppression and indoctrination is the Islamic regime in Iran. This case has been instrumental in making Islamism an international challenge.

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the common ground in the basic principles of justice, equity and fairness, reformists suggest much less daunting prospects for relations between Islam and the West.

   Globalisation for Muslim reformists offers a useful tool, whether in terms of ease of movement which allows Muslim reformists to travel back and forth between their home countries and Western capitals, or in terms of instantaneous communication which allows 'virtual' community building. At the same time, Muslim reformists are also sensitive to the concerns of Muslim traditionalists. Rampant consumerism and the loosening of moral standards which seem to follow the tide of globalisation concern reformists. However, unlike traditionalists who reject globalisation in its entirety, reformists take a measured approach to it and try to discriminate between positive and negative aspects of this process. Accordingly, reformists do not automatically equate globalisation with Westernisation. Despite the obvious influence of Western powers in setting the agenda, Muslim reformists see globalisation as multifaceted and too complex to be reduced to this simplistic interpretation.

Islam and international instability

Islam burst on the international stage with the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran and the hostage-taking at the US embassy in Tehran. The hostage-taking, which lasted for 444 days, was lead news in the US, finally paving the way for President Carter's electoral defeat in 1981. Hard-line rhetoric became the currency of the new leadership in Iran, causing anxiety and concern in the Persian Gulf and beyond. The Iran–Iraq war (1980–88) took place against this background and contributed to a hostile impression of Islam as a force for instability and

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Box 26.2:   Discussion points

Key events in the 'war on terror'

11 September 2001	Suicide attacks on New York and Washington DC.
6–7 October 2001	The US launches strikes against suspected al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan.
12–13 November 2001	The Taliban fall.
19 March 2003	The US and its 'coalition of the willing' launch invasion of Iraq with initial bombing raid and invasion from the south of the country.
9 April 2003	Baghdad falls.
1 May 2003	Bush declares 'mission accomplished' in Iraq.
13 December 2003	Saddam Hussein captured.

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conflict. As far as the US public opinion and policy-makers were concerned, Islamic militancy in the Persian Gulf threatened to set the region ablaze and challenge US-friendly states like Saudi Arabia. Washington's support for Iraq in the 1980s was justified in terms of containing the Islamic threat emanating from Iran. This episode made a lasting impression in Western capitals and entrenched a negative image of Islam as a force for instability and conflict.

Concurrent with the brewing tensions between the US and the Islamic regime in Iran, in neighbouring Afghanistan a different type of Islamic militancy was being promoted by Washington. The *mujaheddin* (holy warriors) fighting the Soviet occupation force were financed and armed by the US in one of the most expensive proxy wars of the **Cold War** era. With the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan in February 1989, however, Washington's interest in that country quickly waned as Afghanistan descended into a prolonged period of **civil war**. Factional infighting in Afghanistan was brought to a close in 1994 with the emergence of the Taliban who imposed a strict reading of Islam and ruthlessly suppressed rival groups. Distasteful as the Taliban rule may have been to Washington, Afghanistan was not regarded as a high priority on the US foreign policy agenda and the Taliban were left alone to wreak havoc on the Afghan population.

But Washington could not ignore Afghanistan for long. The country played a key role in the months that led to the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, a testimony to shrinking time and space due to the revolution in communication technology. The Taliban offered refuge to Osama bin Laden, a rich Saudi citizen who had helped fund the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviet Union a decade earlier. Bin Laden was committed to dismantling the House of Saud in Saudi Arabia for what he regarded to be incompetence, corruption and failure to protect the sacred land of Islam, especially during the 1991 Gulf War. Bin Laden's anti-Saudi politics made him anti-American by default as Washington was closely tied to the regime in Saudi Arabia. This was a case of blurring borders between domestic and international politics. As for Afghanistan, while this country was widely seen as an insignificant backwater in global politics in the 1990s, it played a critical role in the historic events that have arguably shaped the first decade in the twenty-first century.

The September 11 attacks were planned and carried out by bin Laden's al-Qaeda. This was a carefully coordinated assault, involving recruitment and training of al-Qaeda operatives in geographically dispersed areas such as Afghanistan, Europe and the US. It demonstrated

al-Qaeda's ability to make effective use of high-tech global communication and organise itself transnationally. The US response to this attack was swift and decisive as the international community rallied behind Washington in its 'war on terror'. The Taliban were removed from power in December 2001 and bin Laden started life on the run.

In 2003 the US formed a 'coalition of the willing' to enforce regime change in Iraq. Britain, Australia and a host of other states joined the US in this military campaign. This move was justified in the context of the war on terror and alleged links between Saddam Hussein and terrorist groups, especially since Saddam's regime was alleged to possess **weapons of mass destruction**. Regime change in Iraq was a lengthy process. While President Bush declared victory in May 2003, this did not mean the end of fighting as **insurgency** continued to dog the occupying forces.

The impact of these events has been enduring and is likely to influence the nature of relations between the West and the Muslim world in the coming decades. Reports of Islamic revolution, civil wars and **terrorism** could not but germinate a distinct sense of unease and mistrust about Islam in the West (Saikal 2003). Public declarations of holy war (*jihad*) against the US and its allies by al-Qaeda and its ilk contributed to pervasive wariness about Islam. Not surprisingly, this distrust was replicated in the Muslim world as Muslims grow uneasy about a perceived Western agenda to humiliate Islam. The West and the Muslim world appear locked in a zero-sum battle which will only end with the total victory of one over the other. For Islamists this battle was inevitable. Ironically this view seemed to be shared by Samuel Huntington, a renowned American political scientist, who warned about a *clash of civilisations* between Islam and the Judeo-Christian West (Huntington 1993).

Academic writings on the role of Islam in international relations fall into two broad camps. Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis (1990: 47–58) and Daniel Pipes (2002), to name a few, have emphasised the intrinsic antipathy of Islam towards modernity, democracy and **liberalism**. In 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', for example, Lewis argued that Islamism draws strength from a history of animosity between Islam and the West and a collective sense of injustice that is not related to current experiences. In this perspective, the question of Palestinian-Israeli conflict, for example, serves as a mere excuse for deeply entrenched civilisational animosities to emerge. This perspective is disputed by other writers such as Fred Halliday (2003) and Richard Falk (2000a) who argue that this essentialist depiction of Islam as intrinsically violent and anti-Western grossly miscalculates the current dynamics. Falk, for example, has pointed to a series of double standards in the handling of Muslim grievances by the US to argue that discontent with the apparent anti-Muslim bias in the **international system** creates an opportunity for radical ideas to spread in the Muslim world. The aggressive US policy towards the Middle East (e.g. the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and endorsement of Israeli sorties on Lebanon in 2006) has led to broad disillusionment about the US agenda and the capacity of the international system to accommodate Muslim grievances. In this perspective, tension between Islam and the West is not an inevitable outcome but a consequence of policies that affect international relations.

Islamist globalism

The logic of the Islamist worldview is not dissimilar to Western-inspired globalisation. Islamists are committed to the ascendancy of their version of Islam in the Muslim world and

beyond. Accordingly, the Islamic value system and rules on social mores and public life are to govern all of humanity. The Islamist ideology, like any other political ideology, is global (Lapidus 2001: 37–55). Despite practical limitations to its universal aspirations, Islamists systematically reiterate their commitment to this ideal. A good example of this universal Islamism is *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Party of Liberation) which has successfully managed to combine its transnational vision with a transnational organisation.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has a physical presence in Europe (especially the UK and Germany), the Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia (especially Indonesia). The party complements its geographical spread with an elaborate and active multilingual website which acts as a point of reference for party activists. This web resource helps unify party cadres and bring ideological unity to organisational units which otherwise act semi-autonomously. The transnational organisation of the party is matched by an ambitious transnational objective, as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* promotes the ideal of Muslim unity and the resurrection of a unified Caliphate. The idea of a centralised Islamic polity, dubbed the Caliphate, occupies a central place in the political thinking of this party and is regarded as imperative for the global ascendancy of Islam.

As a mirror image of Huntington's *clash of civilisations* paradigm, *Hizb ut-Tahrir* argues that the West is bent on destroying Islam and subjugating Muslims. Conflict between Islam and the West is seen as inevitable. This cataclysmic vision, therefore, makes it even more important for *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and other Islamists who share its worldview to actively prepare for the coming conflict. As might be expected, such preparations are not confined by territorial boundaries, just as the impending conflict would not be (Snyder 2003: 325–50).

Muslims in the West

The ideological and political mobilisation of Muslims by *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and its ilk takes place throughout Muslim lands (where Muslims constitute the majority population) and beyond. The growth of such ideas is especially notable in Europe, where some thirteen million Muslims live. The combined experiences of immigration, ethnic/religious marginalisation and suppressed socio-economic aspirations among Muslim youth have provided fertile ground for utopian ideas of restoring Islam's glory and regaining global supremacy. Such ideas may be fanciful. However, their simple logic appeals to a new generation of Muslims who, on the one hand, have little connection with their traditional culture and its support network, because they have grown up in the West, and, on the other hand, feel out of place and not welcomed in their countries of residence.

Not surprisingly the spread of Islamist views in some Muslim circles in the West has sent alarm bells ringing and contributed to public suspicions and antagonism directed at the entirety of Muslim residents in the West. These suspicions centre on the question of Muslims' loyalty to their Western homes, effectively treating Muslims as a fifth column in the bosom of the West. This approach questions the sincerity of Muslim citizens on the basis of their religious beliefs. In this context of mistrust and suspicion, rogue elements in Australia, the US and Europe have taken it upon themselves to defend what they perceive to be cultural purity and a 'way of life'. Attacks on mosques and Muslim women in scarves in Western cities have demonstrated the ease with which international issues can affect local politics. The race riots on Sydney beaches in December 2005, where those with Middle Eastern appearances were attacked by a mob waving the national flag, were a manifestation of the same dynamics.

Table 26.1: Muslim minority population in selected Western countries

Country	Total population	Muslim percentage	Muslim population
Australia	19,357,594	2%	387,152
Austria	8,150,835	4.2%	342,335
Belgium	10,258,762	4%	410,350
Canada	31,592,805	1.5%	473,892
Denmark	5,352,815	2%	107,056
France	59,551,227	7.5%	4,466,342
Germany	83,536,115	3.7%	3,090,836
Netherlands	16,318,199	6%	979,092
Sweden	9,800,000	3.6%	320,000
UK	58,489,975	2.7%	1,579,229
US	293,027,571	3%	8,790,827

It is often argued that state boundaries have become more porous through the process of globalisation. The public debate on the role of Muslims in the West which has emerged in the wake of al-Qaeda terrorism and the war on terror is a prime example. This debate is most evident in France, Australia and the UK where the right of Muslim women to wear the *hijab* while at work or school has been challenged by those who argue that it undermines secularism. France may be the most extreme case in this category as it banned the *hijab* in classrooms and threatened Muslim girls wearing the headscarf with expulsion in March 2004. In Australia, Bronwyn Bishop, a federal parliamentarian from the ruling Liberal Party, caused uproar when she suggested that a French-style ban should be adopted in the Australian education system.

Putting aside radicalised youth gangs, the response by Muslim citizens in Western states is complex. On the one hand Muslims emphasise their dual ability to remain faithful to their Islamic heritage and at the same time perform the duties and responsibilities of good citizens. This position decouples ethnicity and citizenship, itself a vestige of the early twentieth-century European experience. In effect this challenges the almost predetermined nature of national identity which rests on ethnic/cultural foundations. The insistence on the voluntary aspects of citizenship for Muslim residents in Western states is in tune with the process of globalisation which emphasises the free movement of people and ideas, justifying the voluntary conferral or withdrawal of political loyalty. In this sense Muslims become active agents of globalisation.

On the other hand, Muslims in the West maintain contact with their ancestral countries through frequent visits, post, the internet, satellite TV and radio. Events in their ancestral lands affect them and influence their outlook. Not surprisingly, the US-led coalition war in Iraq and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian dispute tend to suggest to many observers in the Muslim world that the odds are stacked against Muslims in the international system. This sense of alienation with the international community is felt keenly in the Muslim diaspora as they can follow every twist and turn in the Muslim world on their TV screen. The consequent feeling of powerlessness is easily accentuated at times of crisis as the impact of international events filters through Western societies and adversely affects racial and inter-faith relations. In this sense, globalisation has accelerated the alienation of the Muslim diaspora from the international community and their Western home countries. They may act as agents

of globalisation on one level, but on another level Muslims in the West are deeply troubled with the direction of this process and feel powerless in affecting it.

Countering Western hegemony

A frequent complaint among Muslims is what they perceive to be an ingrained anti-Islamic bias in the international system. This is most palpable in the media coverage of Islam. The Western media's reporting on Islam and the Muslim world is often seen by Muslims as unfavourable. As a result, the emergence in 1996 of the Arabic language satellite television station Al-Jazeera was greeted with excitement. Funded by the Sheikh of Qatar to fill a gap following the collapse of the BBC's Arabic language TV venture that year, Al-Jazeera soon secured a regional following for its probing journalism and uncensored news coverage. BBC-trained journalists served at the core of this new venture. In the late 1990s, it seemed as though notions of freedom of speech and the uncensored dissemination of information were becoming a reality in the Middle East (Eickleman 1998: 80–9), leading the US to praise the contribution of Al-Jazeera for opening up the Arab world.

But it was not until the launch of the war on terror that Al-Jazeera made a name for itself beyond its Arabic speaking viewers. Al-Jazeera journalists were on the ground and filmed the US bombardment of Kabul in October 2001, broadcasting images of **war** and destruction to a global viewing base. Al-Jazeera also broadcast a number of video clips made by Osama bin Laden, countering the US version of events and delivering threats of more carnage. Although Al-Jazeera moved to restrict its broadcast of later bin Laden tapes to shield itself against charges of inciting violence, the monopoly of Western news sources was broken. This qualitative break became even more evident when the US-led 'coalition of the willing' launched its attack on Iraq in 2003. Al-Jazeera journalists were again among the handful of journalists who could film the effectiveness of US cruise missiles in finding their targets. Al-Jazeera then continued to report on the growing insurgency in Iraq and prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison.

Al-Jazeera presents a successful example of Muslim actors utilising the available technology and expertise, which has become accessible through globalisation, to challenge the dominant trend in news coverage. This alternative coverage in Iraq seemed so effective that the US felt compelled to castigate the network for its alleged anti-US bias. The extent of Al-Jazeera's bias against the US, however, is a moot point. What is not in contention is the extent to which Arabic speaking Muslims in the Middle East and beyond see in Al-Jazeera a counterpoint to challenge the Western domination of news.

Another example of a deliberate effort by Muslim groups to utilise the tools of instantaneous communication to advance an alternative agenda is the increasing popularity of Islamic internet sites. Islamonline.net, Fatwa-Online.com, Islamicity.com and many others like these are constructed to present an 'authentic' position on Islam and help counter what the relevant webmasters call Islamophobia. These Islamic websites offer increasingly IT-savvy Muslim youth a convenient way to connect to the idealised Muslim identity and feel part of the community. This mode of cyber-communion also allows its members to assert their youthful independence from the traditional confines of mosque congregations that they associate with the older generation. The Muslim cyber-community reflects the dynamism and unfettered nature of globalisation, as users log on from internet cafes in Karachi, Istanbul and London

to chat about news of the day (Bunt 2003). By virtue of its existence in the cyber-realm, this mode of community building transcends geographical and national boundaries. This is a liberating experience for Muslim internet users. At the same time, this is an isolating experience as the users operate outside their immediate physical surrounding. There is an apparent contradiction between the individualised experience of logging on to cyber *umma* and engaging in community building on the internet. This apparent contradiction encapsulates the internalisation of the logic of globalisation and its dynamism by cyber-Muslims, emphasising the significance of individual experiences and the desirability of global connectivity (Stone 2002: 121–31).

Conclusion

Globalisation means different things to different people. For the Muslim world the process of globalisation carries strong connotations of Westernisation because Western economies have been its driving force (Murden 2002). The close relationship between the West and the process of globalisation has caused suspicion and unease for many observers. The Muslim response, however, is far from uniform. For Muslim reformists, and a significant majority of traditional Muslims, the process of globalisation is seen as either an opportunity or a *fait accompli.* Muslim reformers view the political and social values carried in globalisation to be consistent with the essence of Islam and seek to channel the international momentum for social, political and economic transformation to their campaign for domestic reform. For traditional segments of the community, Western values entailed in globalisation present a familiar challenge. The Muslim world has been at the receiving end of colonial, political and cultural encroachment for decades. Traditional Muslims have learned to navigate these external pressures by accepting an uneasy division between private and public life where traditional value systems are fostered and regenerated in the former while Western-inspired values tend to pervade the latter. This delicate equilibrium can fall apart if the traditional tendency towards political apathy is challenged from within, demonstrated for example in the 1979 revolution in Iran.

The challenge from within has come in the form of Islamism. For adherents of political Islam, globalisation presents an unacceptable form of Western domination and those in the Muslim world who acquiesce to it, even worse promote it, are working against Islam. This rigid perspective with its simplistic message of returning to Islam as the ultimate solution to contemporary malaise has made Islamism appealing to disenfranchised segments of the community who feel politically, culturally and economically marginalised. In this sense Islamism is a reaction to globalisation. But that is only one side of the coin. Islamism, represented by the likes of *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and al-Qaeda, is a very modern phenomenon both in terms of goals and means. The Islamist vision of countering Western supremacy with universal values that are derived from Islam shares with the process of globalisation an underlying assumption: human values are universal and should not be confined to political boundaries. This is a significant conceptual departure from the Muslim traditional approach. While traditionalists are concerned with preserving their identity and have little interest in what happens beyond Muslim boundaries, Islamists promote a universalist vision.

The contemporary and modern features of Islamism are reinforced through the elaborate and effective use of modern technology that has become accessible through globalisation.

From intercontinental travel to the transfer of ideas on the internet, Islamists have proven to be highly adept at taking advantage of the means of globalisation for their own ends. In the sense that Islamists utilise globalisation to advance a counter-vision, Islamists act as agents of globalisation. The obvious caveat is that the Islamist vision differs markedly from what is commonly understood by globalisation in London, Washington, Tokyo and Canberra. Islamism represents a counter-globalisation.

The emergence of Islamist counter-globalisation in the past decades has unavoidable implications for Australia, internationally and domestically. Australia's involvement in processes that are seen in the Muslim world as blatant attacks on Islam has placed this country in the 'Western' category, along with the US and former colonial powers – even though Australia has never been a colonial **power**. Australia's involvement in the US-led attack on Iraq in 2003 and the presence of Australian forces in Muslim lands have made Australia a visible player as an agent of the Western domination.

Australia's increasingly robust international posture has facilitated the mirroring of global tension onto domestic affairs. The sense of unease about Australia's role in the Middle East among the Australian Muslim population has thrown up difficult questions about competing loyalties and limits of citizens. Australian Muslims have managed to assert their political loyalty to their adopted country, while voicing discontent with government policies. This is a difficult balance and voices of intolerance have used the Muslim objection to the war on terror and the war in Iraq as a sign of treason and betrayal. The London bombing of July 2005 by a group of British-born Muslims has made the issue even more pertinent. The public discourse on Muslim citizenship in Australia gained greater significance as riots broke out on Sydney beaches where Anglo-Celtic and Lebanese youth went on a rampage. Australia may be physically removed from the rest of the world, but it is nonetheless directly affected by issues and challenges that are shaping our world.

Questions

1. Are there features of the Muslim religion that give it a special affinity with globalisation?
2. How do you explain the rise of Islam as a global political phenomenon?
3. To what extent do you think militant Islam is a reaction to Western imperialism?
4. How has the rise of global militant Islam impacted on international relations?
5. How is the 'war on terror' likely to reshape relations between Islam and the West?

Further reading

Kepel, Gilles 2003, Jihad: the trail of political Islam, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press. Provocative argument that the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, rather than demonstrating the growing power of militant Islam, demonstrate its decline.
Roy, Olivier 2004, Globalized Islam: the search for a new ummah, New York: Columbia University Press. A broad-ranging and informative account of the globalisation of Islam.
Saikal, Amin 2003, Islam and the West: conflict or cooperation, New York: Palgrave. A good examination of the relationship between Islam and the West by an Australian scholar.

27
Global Terrorism

David Wright-Neville

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview and analysis of global **terrorism**. Its main argument is that any understanding of terrorism must come to terms with its global root causes. The first part emphasises the importance of locating terrorism in its social and historical context if it is to be properly understood. The second, whilst acknowledging the contested nature of terrorism, offers a working definition of what terrorism is. The third addresses some of the reasons why terrorism is such a controversial subject. The fourth elaborates how terrorism has been transformed under conditions of **globalisation**. The final part clears up some misconceptions surrounding terrorism's root causes.

Contemporary terrorism in context

More than five years after the tragedy of 11 September 2001 and President Bush's declaration of the 'war on terror', the threat of terrorism is more pervasive than ever. Since September 11, attacks have occurred against commercial and civilian targets across a diverse terrain including Britain, Jordan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Turkey. At the same time, although they have not attracted as much attention, less spectacular terrorist strikes have imposed similarly serious economic, social and psychological costs on communities in sub-Saharan Africa and in Central and South America. The net effect of this pattern of violence has been a steady supply of media-friendly outrages that have kept terrorism at the forefront of the Western imagination and turned counterterrorism into a new organising principle within domestic and international politics (see Table 27.1).

This has not always been the case. Although there have been periods in history when individual **sovereign states** have wrestled with the threat of terrorism, such as Britain's struggle in the 1970s and 1980s with violence by Irish terrorists, the emergence of a globally networked terrorist menace marks a new development in international affairs. Indeed, for some writers the emergence of transnational terrorists with an ability to strike almost anywhere

Table 27.1: Recent trends in terrorist violence

	Terrorist Incidents	**Injuries**	**Fatalities**
2001	1733	6403	4571
2002	2649	7349	2763
2003	1898	6203	2347
2004	2647	10,861	5068
2005	4925	15,015	8161

Source: RAND–MIPT Terrorism Incident database
www.rand.org/ise/projects/terrorismdatabase.

at any time signals the end of an **international system** in which **states** enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the ability to wage **war** (Bauman 2002; Kaldor 1999).

What are the forces that are leading a growing number of individuals to detach from the protective membrane of the state and to try to rectify perceived injustices by taking matters into their own hands? Why are a steady stream of mainly young people abrogating national allegiances and defining themselves in transnational religious or cultural terms and in ways that sit in high tension with the dominant identities of the societies into which they were born? The answers to these conundrums provide vital clues to the deeper forces that are driving the spread of global terrorist networks and the ideologies that sustain them. Unfortunately, the complex multidimensional character of these issues means that easy answers are elusive. Explaining *how* this evolution in global politics has occurred requires the student of International Relations to sift through a complex amalgam of economic, political, social, and technological forces. The task becomes even more difficult if we want to understand *why* a growing number of individuals appear willing to engage in or even support the use of terrorist violence. To address this part of the terrorism puzzle we need to add insights from psychology and sociology so that we can understand how attitudes and behaviour are shaped by the increasingly global character of economic, political and social issues. In short, global terrorism is a highly complex phenomenon and there is no single academic **discipline** which holds the key to understanding its root causes.

However, there are some general attributes which have recurred with terrorist movements in different historical epochs and which allow us to make some general claims about the political and social character of terrorism. The most important of these characteristics is that terrorism rarely bursts forth spontaneously. Rather, it is almost always the result of a prolonged period of increasing alienation and anger among those who perpetrate the violence. Another important but often ignored historical fact is that even though terrorism has always been a feature of organised human societies, the causes of the anger that inspire it – and the types of violence used – differ over time. In this sense, as we shall see, in recent years terrorism has become both more deadly, as terrorists adopt new destructive technologies, and more transnational, as a result of globalisation (see chapter 25). Putting this point in a slightly more controversial way, the root causes of terrorism lie not in religion or culture but in the economic, political and social structures of the society in which it emerges. For a historical example, see the case of the Sicarii and the Zealots (Box 27.1).

Box 27.1:   Case study

The first terrorists?

Around the first century of our common era, violent groups emerged in the area of Judea, a region now located in present-day Israel. Among them were the 'Sicarii' and the 'Zealots', made up of members from Jewish sects opposed to Roman rule in Judea (see Goodman 2007; Horsley 1979). Forced to pay taxes to their Roman conquerors, to display reverence for Roman gods, with limited or almost no influence over Roman policy, and confronting what was a far superior and highly professional Roman army, some of these individuals resorted to terrorism as the only conceivable way of liberating themselves from occupation. The tactics employed to drive the Romans from Judea included the stalking and execution of Roman soldiers, officials, Greek merchants, and even fellow Jews considered to be collaborating with the Roman authorities. For the Sicarii and the Zealots, the utility of their violence lay in its potential to strike fear into the Roman community and those who supported them, and by so doing either drive them from Judea or cause an implosion of the Roman administrative apparatus so that Judea was rendered ungovernable. However, it is important to note that Zealot and Sicarii terrorism was not a function of their Judaism, or of any innate hatred of Romans or Roman collaborators. Rather, their terrorism sprang from feelings of alienation and humiliation experienced as a subjugated people which, when combined with the psychological effects generated by an overwhelming sense of political impotence felt in the face of exclusionary political structures and a substantially more powerful occupying army, triggered in some people an urge to strike out violently against their perceived oppressors. Understanding how the economic, political and social structures of Roman **imperialism** in Judea generated feelings of alienation is thus the first step to understanding Zealot and Sicarii terrorism.

It is therefore always worth keeping in mind that no one is born a terrorist and that those who eventually become terrorists do so only after passing through an evolutionary progression involving a complex mix of social, political and psychological forces. Putting the argument slightly differently, terrorism is a form of learned behaviour and as such it rests upon a highly personal and symbiotic relationship between potential and actual terrorists and the society in which they exist. And because the societies in which we live are becoming increasingly global in character, it is not surprising that the grievances that inspire terrorists, and the methods that they use to try to rectify these grievances, are also becoming increasingly global.

What is terrorism?

Very few concepts in politics can evoke as negative a response as terrorism. Even the debates that swirl around the classification of a person or a government as 'despotic' or 'dictatorial' pale in comparison with the near-universal opprobrium carried by the concept of a 'terrorist'. After all, one can claim to be a 'benign despot' or a 'benevolent dictator' and there are also circumstances in which despotic or dictatorial governance is deemed (rightly or wrongly) as acceptable and legitimate. For instance, many people argue that during periods of warfare or social turmoil there is a need to suspend **democracy** until **order** is restored. Others argue that authoritarian and non-democratic governance can be culturally sanctioned, which is an argument that is used to legitimate the regimes of countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia

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Box 27.2:   Discussion points

Some recent terrorist acts

21 December 1988:   Lockerbie/Pan Am flight 103 bombing
26 February 1993:   Attack on and partial destruction of World Trade Center
20 March 1995:   Tokyo underground sarin gas attacks
19 April 1995:   Oklahoma City bombing
7 August 1998:   East Africa, bombings of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es
                      Salaam
11 September 2001:   Attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon
12 October 2002:   Bali bombing
11 March 2005:   Madrid bombings
7 July 2005:   London bombings
1 October 2005:   Bali bombing
11 July 2006:   Mumbai train bombings

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and Singapore. However, while some people might be willing under some circumstances to accept being called despotic, dictatorial or authoritarian, almost nobody accepts the charge of 'terrorist'. Even Osama bin Laden rejects strongly the charge that he or his followers are terrorists.

Despite the widespread acceptance that terrorism is a bad thing, debates about what terrorism actually is remain clouded by confusion. Indeed, perhaps the most commented-upon issue in terrorism research is that there is still no definition of terrorism that attracts anything close to universal approval. What is more, this definitional chaos is not confined to academe but stretches into the domestic and international policy realms. For example, the definition of terrorism used by the US Central Intelligence Agency is slightly different from that used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which is different again from the definition used by the Pentagon and US Department of Defense. Meanwhile, at the international level, more than four decades after beginning the debate the **UN** has still not settled upon a definition that satisfies all members. Much of the disagreement centres on when violence by **non-state actors** should and should not be considered legitimate. For many smaller countries, especially those that have experienced **colonialism**, there are occasions when organised violence by non-state groups can be considered justifiable. It is often pointed out, for example, that Nelson Mandela was charged, convicted and imprisoned as a terrorist in the early 1960s by the apartheid government of South Africa. Any blanket definition that encapsulates all acts of politically motivated violence by non-state groups is therefore seen by many of these smaller states as an implicit rejection of their own struggles for independence and as diminishing the legitimacy of causes that they continue to see as just. For similar reasons, many states with large Muslim populations reject any possible UN definition of terrorism with the potential to delegitimise the cause of Palestinian independence.

The intricacies of this debate need not concern us here; suffice to say that for the purposes of understanding the contemporary significance of global terrorism a useful working definition is as follows: 'terrorism is the actual or threatened use of violence against a civilian population undertaken in the pursuit of a political cause'. To be sure, such a definition raises

more questions than it answers, but it is useful because it captures four of terrorism's most important and less controversial features.

1. Violence (or the threat of violence) has a purposive value for terrorists in that it is used to generate fear and uncertainty within a community and to elevate this fear to such a level that it becomes psychologically unbearable and thereby forces a change in the political or social behaviour of that community, or it forces them to pressure their political leaders to change their behaviour or policies.

2. The fact that the violence is directed at achieving political goals is similarly important. Threats of violence for personal financial gain constitute criminal extortion or blackmail. Terrorism is *sui generis*; it is of course a criminal act, but it is simultaneously political.

3. I have suggested confining our definition of terrorism to actual or threatened violence against civilian targets for the simple reason that to include threats against military or police targets introduces the complicating issue of insurgencies and guerrilla warfare. Naturally there are **insurgency** groups in many parts of the world which not only engage in conventional military combat against soldiers and police but who also occasionally resort to acts of terrorism against civilian targets, but once again the nexus between insurgency and terrorism is complex and introducing it here would only serve to unnecessarily confuse an already complicated issue.

4. The definition above also recognises the uncomfortable truth that terrorism is a tactic that is not only used by non-state actors but which is also used by some governments against their own populations or against the populations of other states. However, as with the relationship between insurgencies and terrorism, the phenomenon of state terrorism is similarly complex and as such it does not form an important part in the ensuing discussion.

Some secondary warnings for the unaware

At first blush the brief introductory points set out above are unlikely to appear controversial. Sadly, however, in the field of terrorism studies there is precious little that can sustain a consensus for anything but a brief moment. Therefore, for those about to embark into the field of 'terrorism studies', it is worth keeping in mind that very little of what you encounter and study will ever be without its critics. Indeed, as pointed out in the preceding section, even the concept of 'terrorism' itself is contested. Perhaps the most famous aphorism in the field, that 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter', remains as true today as it was when it was first coined by one of the veteran terrorism scholars, Brian Jenkins, in the 1970s.

As mentioned above, terrorism is a highly emotive issue. Just as political debates about terrorism are inevitably highly charged and sometimes highly divisive affairs, so too is terrorism scholarship often highly volatile. Indeed, even the premise of this very chapter – that to understand global terrorism we need to understand its global root causes – would not be accepted by some scholars. For such critics the search for root causes of terrorism weakens the moral clarity that our society needs if it is to defeat terrorism (see Newman 2006). In other words, they worry that any discussion about *why* terrorists kill risks legitimising their actions at a time when what is needed is universal condemnation. For others, including this author, not only is this argument logically flawed – we can understand why a person might

murder a business rival without accepting the act as morally legitimate so why can we not apply the same principle to understanding global terrorism? – but it is also a potentially dangerous argument. Allowing our justifiable outrage at the murder of innocent human beings to divert us from the search for an understanding of what motivates terrorists to kill ignores the obvious point that to effectively manage a threat we first need to understand it (see Silke 2004). Having an *understanding of terrorism* is not the same as having an *understanding with terrorism*.

Second, conceiving of terrorism as a phenomenon with its roots deeply embedded in the society in which it takes place obliges us to develop an understanding of what we mean by 'society'. This is not the place to interrogate the various ways in which the concept of society has been and is currently debated in domestic and international politics (for example, is there such a thing as a 'society of states'?), but it is very important to note that the concept is critical to understanding terrorism. In fact, one way of viewing terrorism is as a tactic used by individuals who see themselves at war with other groups in society. Typically, the terrorists have as their goal an alternative vision of society, or even the establishment of their own separate society. Historically speaking, individuals who might have felt alienated, disempowered and inclined to lash out almost always targeted local symbols – local politicians, regional police services, national governments, or neighbouring ethnic groups. However, because of globalisation, grievances have taken on an increasingly global character; with anger born of events both at home *and* abroad, blame is attributed to both local *and* global forces, violence is aimed at both local *and* global targets. This is what is meant when we speak of the 'globalisation of terrorism'; it is the emergence of global issues as a source of local anger and the development of global networks as a way of lashing out violently against the perceived causes of this anger.

The idea that terrorism is a political act motivated by anger brings us to the third and final issue which needs to be clarified. It is not possible to begin to understand the complexity of terrorism until we combine the idea of terrorism as an increasingly global phenomenon with the act of violence itself as something more than an act of 'evil' or 'mad' people. As stated above, nobody is born a terrorist; terrorists are made from a combination of social circumstances and individual psychologies. Terrorism does not spring forth spontaneously but, as shown in the biographies of individual terrorists and the histories of terrorist movements, it typically emerges only after a long gestation period whereby the anger and frustration eventually erupt into hatred and violence (see Davis 2004; Sageman 2004; Silke 2003). However, this does not mean that there exists a single magic formula which, once identified, will allow us to understand the precise mix and measures of ingredients that once combined will produce a terrorist. Terrorism is essentially an 'acting out' of accumulated feelings usually associated with alienation, anger, frustration and humiliation, *but this does not mean that every person who experiences such feelings will become a terrorist or even sympathise with terrorist causes*. For example, as has been pointed out by many authors, prolonged exposure to the deprivations of an authoritarian state might breed a deep sense of non-violent anomie in some people, while a shorter exposure can inculcate an energised embrace of violence in others. There is no single avenue along which all terrorists have travelled in their journey towards violence. Rather, to paraphrase Taylor and Horgan, there are only 'individual routes to terrorism, and furthermore those routes and activities as experienced by the individual *change* over time' (Horgan and Taylor 2006: 597; see also McCauley 2007).

Box 27.3:   Discussion points

Bush and Howard on the terrorist threat

'A terrorist underworld, including groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Jaish-i-Mohammed, operates in remote jungles and deserts, and hides in the centres of large cities.'

'Thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes, are now spread throughout the world like ticking time bombs, set to go off without warning.' (President George W. Bush, 'State of the Union Address', 29 January 2002.)

'With the fall of the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001, free and open societies entered a new age of vulnerability and threat. We learned that . . . even the most powerful nations can be shaken by shadowy gangs whose destructive ends are fettered only by their grasp on the means of terror.' (Prime Minister John Howard, 'Australia in the World', address to the Lowy Institute for International Policy, 31 March 2005.)

The globalisation of terrorism

As mentioned above, one of the defining features of terrorism in our world today is the enhanced role played by global contact in shaping the different routes that individuals have taken to terrorism. This aspect of the contemporary terrorism phenomenon should alert us to the extent to which the emergence of terrorist groups that are international in their aims and contacts, such as al-Qaeda, is part of the same general trend that is also leading to other problematic developments in terms of **peace** and **security**. Under the conditions of globalisation there has emerged a wide array of issues that elude resolution by states acting alone. Among the most obvious is the rapid deterioration in the sustainability of the earth's ecosystems, but into the mix we also need to include the re-emergence of militarily significant private armies, crime syndicates with sufficient financial and fire-power to intimidate, and perhaps even control, the governments of small nations, and of course terrorist organisations.

Looking at this development from a different angle, globalisation has also eroded the protective **power** of national borders and diminished the capacity of conventional military doctrines and equipment to provide the fulcrum upon which national security rests. There is very little that the best equipped and most technologically advanced army in the world can do to protect the welfare of a **nation** suffering the effects of drought or floods brought on by climate change that in turn is caused by the actions of the entire global community (although clearly some members cause more damage than others). Similarly, there is little that conventional military forces can do to combat the threat to national security posed by individuals whose anger is invisible but intense, who travel with legitimate visas and passports, who carry legally mandated identity cards, and who have learnt from the internet how to make a bomb from products found in almost every kitchen in the West. In this way, globalisation is feeding a curious development which might be called the 'privatisation of violence'; the

situation whereby states are losing their erstwhile monopoly over the means to wage war. Although it is true that states are likely to remain the sole proprietors of cutting-edge military technology costing billions of dollars, globalisation is feeding the development of new forms of warfare which are allowing enemies of the state, such as terrorists, to 'level the playing field' through the use of simple, cheap but highly deadly technologies and tactics. Reflecting on the implications of the attacks of September 11 for international politics, the distinguished scholar Robert Keohane (2002: 89–90) observed that:

> [t]he terrorist attacks on New York and Washington force us to rethink our theories of world politics. Globalism should not be equated with economic integration. The agents of globalization are not simply the high-tech creators of the Internet, or multinational corporations, but also small bands of fanatics travelling on jet aircraft and inspired by fundamentalist religion. The globalization of informal violence has rendered problematic our conventional assumptions about security threats. It should also lead us to question the classical realist distinction between important parts of the world, in which great powers have interests, and insignificant places, which were thought to present no security threats although they may raise moral dilemmas. Indeed, we need to reconceptualise the significance for homeland security of geographical space, which can be as much a carrier of malign informal violence as a barrier to it.

Implicit in Keohane's observation is another aspect of the nexus between globalisation and terrorism, albeit one that is often absent from conventional studies. Most particularly, globalisation has helped to generate and to feed a new set of terrorist motivations. As mentioned above, terrorism has always been a feature of human societies, but it is only recently that it has broken free of local issues and environments and assumed a genuinely global presence, most particularly in the form of al-Qaeda, the organisations with which it is affiliated, and the individuals who, although not formal members of any group, are nevertheless motivated by its ideology. Within this context, although bin Laden and other senior al-Qaeda figures are most energised by the plight of Muslims in the Middle East, from where they themselves come, they see Western economic and political interference in these countries, along with the simultaneous spread of Western cultural values, as the main reason for the plight of the people they claim to represent. Just as the Zealots and Sicarii attributed the secondary status of Jews in ancient Judea as stemming not so much from the corruption of Jewish leaders but from the cooperation of these leaders with the oppressive occupying Roman forces, so too does al-Qaeda see the oppression of Muslims as resulting from a coalition of corrupt local leaders with more powerful foreign forces.

Under conditions of globalisation, however, the dominance of external powers does not have to take the form of direct military occupation. The occupation and humiliation of the weak by the strong can now be secured through the more subtle manipulation of cultural, economic, and political institutions by the powerful. It is partly for this reason that the al-Qaeda leadership believes that by provoking the West, particularly the US and its allies, into wars in Afghanistan and Iraq they have revealed to the rest of the world how Western economic and cultural power is ultimately underpinned by a willingness to use force to defend their de facto control over the cultural, economic and political destinies of non-Western peoples. Consistent with terrorists throughout history, al-Qaeda sees its own violence as a legitimate way of fighting back against an oppressor of overwhelming economic, cultural and

military superiority. The failure to fight back in this way, for the terrorists, constitutes a form of submission that will only prolong the powerlessness and humiliation of the weak. As the Harvard scholar of terrorism, Louise Richardson, has noted of bin Laden:

> Bin Laden's statements and interviews constantly reassert his desire to redress Muslim humiliation. Declaring to his followers 'Death is better than life in humiliation,' bin Laden calls on his Muslim brothers 'to expel the enemy, humiliated and defeated, out of the sanctuaries of Islam' (Richardson 2006: 126).

However, under conditions of globalisation the boundaries of the 'sanctuaries of Islam' are much less clear than were the 'sanctuaries' of Judaism that motivated the Zealots and Sicarii two millennia earlier. Peoples' sense of identity and belonging increasingly transcend the state, cutting across the local and encompassing the regional and the global.

Some final misperceptions

In this final section I want to cast a critical eye over three propositions which are often held to explain contemporary terrorist behaviour but which in reality are highly suspect.

The first is the often heard view that religion causes terrorism. Regardless of the religion involved, there are a sufficient number of life histories of terrorists claiming to be acting in the name of Christian, Hindu, or Muslim causes to question the view that religion in general, or some religions in particular, are prone to fomenting violence. Very few of those terrorists who claim to be acting in the name of religion have been pious for the majority of their lives. Contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of terrorists are radicalised by their anger or frustration and embrace violence *prior to becoming religious*. Indeed, biographical surveys of members of violent Islamist, Christian, and Hindu groups suggest that fundamentalist interpretations of religion appeal mostly to individuals who are already radicalised because they provide a pseudo-ethical justification for a *preexisting urge to act out violently* against those who are perceived to have acted unjustly against the individual concerned and his/her 'in-group'. In other words, they do not become angry or violent because they are fundamentalists, they become fundamentalists because they are already angry and open to violent impulses.

Second, it is often believed that terrorists suffer from some form of psychopathological condition that impairs their capacity to make informed rational judgments. Indeed, of all myths that cloud our understanding of terrorism it is this view which has proven the most difficult to debunk. Sustained by media sensationalism and the melodramatic instincts of political leaders, the mistaken assumption that terrorists are 'mad' has led to a series of poorly calibrated counter-terrorism policies that habitually underestimate the operational and strategic intelligence of the vast majority of terrorists. While it is impossible to speak of a single terrorist personality type, there exists a growing body of evidence that terrorists possess high levels of political and social literacy and are directed by a clear capacity for rational decision-making. In short, most terrorists are 'dangerously normal' (Horgan 2005).

The final misconception is that terrorists are motivated to violence because they 'hate us for our way of life', which in the modern Western context translates into the argument that they are moved to violence because they despise the secular **liberalism** and democracy

that characterises Western societies. Those who make this claim tend to base their claims on the rhetoric of terrorist leaders such as Osama bin Laden and in the unproven assumption that his utterances are taken as gospel by all terrorists who might act in his name. But close examination of the individual motives of terrorists evinces very little proof that this is the case. A more powerful influence in shaping the attitudes of individual terrorists is less an innate rejection of dominant cultural and political structures of the society in which they live, than a sense that these structures have failed them and impede their efforts to empower themselves and improve their own lives. In this sense, the ideologies that sustain terrorists grow out of perceived failures in the existing social order and are not independent of it. Terrorist ideologies do not grow in a vacuum, they are built out of the life experiences of those who live in a system but who have also experienced its failures. In other words, rather than saying the terrorists hate our democracy because they hate the idea of freedom, it is more accurate to say they hate our democracy for a perception that it fails to accommodate them and their own aspirations for freedom (see Wieviorka 2004).

Conclusion

Terrorism is a dynamic phenomenon, which means that it is inherently fluid and changes along with wider shifts in the character of human society. And just as human societies are becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent in terms of their ecological, economic, political and social needs, so too is the ancient practice of terrorism changing and evolving a global logic. Just as the terrorism of the Zealots and the Sicarii cannot be understood without interrogating the economic, political and social structures of the Roman Empire in Judea, contemporary terrorism cannot be understood without being contextualised within the increasingly global nature of modern social structures. In terms of the issues that can motivate people to anger and violence, in terms of the new technologies that allow for the emergence of formal and informal networks of individuals who share this anger, and in terms of the new destructive technologies that allow these communities to act out their anger, the forces of globalisation have unleashed a powerful force that is likely to challenge states for the foreseeable future.

It is argued by some (e.g. Bauman 2002) that we are on the cusp of a new era in which the forces of globalisation have unleashed new dynamics that are reshaping the way people define themselves, their interests, and respond to political and social disappointments and frustrations. Global terrorism signifies only the most extreme manifestation of this wider social process which also encompasses a wide variety of other social movements, very few of which resort to violent means but all of which constitute a challenge to traditional forms of political behaviour. The 'war on terror' launched by the US and supported by many of its allies including Australia in the wake of the September 11 attacks represents an attempt to deal with this problem mainly through conventional military means. However, more than six years after the declaration of this 'war' there is little evidence that the risk of global terrorism has been reduced. Indeed, even intelligence services in the West now agree that since 2001 the threat of terrorism has increased rather than decreased.

What is needed is a new global approach to combating the threats posed by global terrorism that involves bold decisions that have thus far eluded governments. This will not happen

if emerging generations of scholars and policy-makers retreat into analytical comfort zones that refuse to acknowledge how globalisation has changed the nature of terrorism and which reproduce simplistic explanations which reduce terrorism to unicausal factors such as religion, culture or the alleged 'madness' of the perpetrator.

Questions

1. How do you define terrorism?
2. Has globalisation facilitated the growth of terrorism?
3. What are the root causes of terrorism?
4. What are the motives behind al-Qaeda's attacks on Western targets?
5. Do you agree with the saying that 'one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter'?
6. Has the character of terrorism changed in recent years? If so, how? And what has caused this change?

Further reading

Burke, Jason 2003, Al-Qaeda: casting a shadow of terror, London: I. B. Tauris. Measured and insightful analysis of the origins and motives of al-Qaeda.

Guelke, Adrian 2006, Terrorism and global disorder, London: I. B. Tauris. Useful overview of how global forces unleashed since the end of the Cold War have changed the nature of terrorism and turned it into a new organising principle in international politics.

Horgan, John 2005, The psychology of terrorism, London: Routledge. Accessible yet thorough examination of the complex mix of individual, group and social forces that shape the evolution of terrorist personalities.

Richardson, Louise 2006, What terrorists want: understanding the terrorist threat, London: John Murray Publishers. One of the most up-to-date and wide-ranging introductory analyses of terrorism in its historical and modern forms.

Sageman, Marc 2004, Understanding terror networks, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Explores the socio-psychological reasons why people join terrorist networks like al-Qaeda.

Humanitarianism and Armed Intervention

Jacinta O'Hagan

Introduction

This chapter begins by briefly outlining some of the key principles and concepts that are widely viewed as comprising the core of modern humanitarianism. It then outlines why and how humanitarian ideas and concerns have become more prominent in international relations, before reflecting on the challenges posed and faced by humanitarianism.

The basic idea that underpins humanitarianism – that we have an obligation to assist others who are suffering – is an old one that can be found in many cultures across the world. For many years, humanitarianism was an issue that dwelt in the margins of international relations thinking, yet humanitarianism now forms a central plank of the 'new agenda' of international relations. It permeates a variety of issues in the contemporary agenda of world politics, such as debates about **security**, intervention, **international law**, **human rights** and development. Humanitarian concerns are the subject of transnational civil society activism, and increasingly referred to by **states** and the **UN** as central dimensions of their policies. Increasingly the provision of humanitarian assistance or protection is invoked as a way of demanding or legitimating particular actions, including armed intervention.

Key concepts and questions

Humanitarianism is important because it poses difficult questions to us about the nature of our moral communities and the relationship between our moral and political communities. By moral community I mean those to whom we feel we owe obligations and who owe them to us. How far does this community extend? Communitarians might argue our obligations are largely limited to those within our immediate community, to our fellow citizens, whilst cosmopolitans would argue that we also owe certain basic obligations to everyone who is a member of the community of humanity, even strangers. Humanitarianism sits more comfortably in the cosmopolitan school of thought. Concerned with the welfare of humanity, contemporary understandings of humanitarianism suggest there is as an ethic of responsibility to assist those in grave danger regardless of who they are; it is an obligation to reduce unnecessary suffering as well as not to impose it (Terry 2002: 17).

Humanitarianism is often defined today by reference to four 'core principles': humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. *Humanity* refers to the basic goal of alleviating human suffering through providing assistance and protection. It is an obligation that embraces all of humanity, entailing a recognition of a common humanity lying beneath political divisions even in war (Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1996: 16). Linked to the principle of humanity is that of *impartiality*: that is, assistance and protection should be afforded on the basis of need without discriminating on the basis of nationality, race, religious or political beliefs or on the basis of possible outcome. This principle is based on the assumption that all human beings are of equal worth and value. Together these two principles constitute the 'humanitarian imperative' to provide assistance and protection wherever it is needed.

The third principle is *neutrality*. Neutrality entails the assumption that humanitarian agents do not take sides, that they are non-partisan. It denotes a duty to refrain from taking part in hostilities or from undertaking any action that furthers the interests of one party to the conflict, or that might compromise the other party (Terry 2002). This stance is adopted as a means of ensuring that humanitarian agents are not perceived as interfering in the course of a conflict. This facilitates access to those in need of assistance and protection. The principles of impartiality and neutrality imply the further principle of independence. This suggests that humanitarian agencies endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy. *Independence* is the condition that ensures humanitarian action is exclusively concerned with the welfare of humanity and free of political, religious or extraneous influences (Terry 2002: 19). Again, the goal of this principle is to enhance trust and facilitate access to those in need of assistance and protection through removing humanitarians from the politics of the conflict at hand.

These four key principles were originally developed by the Red Cross movement to guide their work protecting the wounded and non-combatants in wars. However, they have come to be widely understood as forming the core principles of humanitarian actions today. These principles are often viewed as helping to generate 'humanitarian space': an arena of activity that is removed from the political stakes of a conflict or crisis (Terry 2002). At the same time, these principles were developed largely in the context of interstate conflict. Humanitarianism today operates in quite a different environment of complex emergencies where battlefields, frontlines and zones of conflict merge with the everyday lives of civilian populations, producing direct and indirect civilian suffering in a broad range of crises.

The pursuit of humanitarian goals in the contemporary international environment raises some interesting and challenging questions. The first is: how extensive is this humanitarian obligation? The immediate humanitarian imperative in any crisis initially appears clear: the imperative is to relieve undue suffering and save lives (Barnett 2005). This is often referred to as the minimalist interpretation of the humanitarian ethic. But should humanitarians focus only on relieving suffering in the short term? In contrast to the minimalist, the maximalist position suggests a more extensive responsibility: where possible, the humanitarian actors should bring to light, reverse or prevent the conditions that lead to suffering (Weiss 1999). This position suggests humanitarianism involves a duty to protect, and even prevent, as well as to alleviate suffering. This raises questions about the extent to which humanitarianism encompasses not just delivery of palliative care, but should also seek to transform the conditions that give rise to suffering, through development, conflict resolution and advocacy.

A second question is: what **methods** should we use to assist and protect others who are suffering? In particular, is it legitimate to use military force to achieve humanitarian aims? This

issue of armed **humanitarian intervention** occupies an increasingly prominent and important place in the new agenda of international relations. This is because humanitarian intervention challenges us to rethink one of the central pillars of the modern international **order**: **sovereignty** and the norm of non-intervention. Advocates of humanitarian intervention argue that, while sovereignty remains a central feature of the **international system**, in circumstance where states are either unwilling or unable to protect their citizens from gross violations of human rights – such as **genocide** or **ethnic cleansing** – the international community has a responsibility to intervene to protect the vulnerable. This argument gained influence in the post-**Cold War** era, but continues to concern many. Some fear that this emergent norm of humanitarian intervention threatens to compromise the sovereignty and the norm of non-interference that provided some measure of protection for smaller and weaker states from the interference of larger and more powerful states. There remains a fear that humanitarian aims could be invoked by larger powers to cloak other strategic, political or economic aims that may provide the principal motivation for intervention. These concerns were at least partially refuelled by the 2003 war in Iraq in which the US, Britain and Australia used humanitarian concerns as part of their justification for the war (Wheeler and Morris 2006).

A further set of concerns about armed intervention focuses on the relationship between humanitarianism and force. For some, force and humanitarianism are antithetical. Collaboration of humanitarian agents with the military in the use of force is seen as a perversion of humanitarianism, potentially compromising the immunity and access that neutrality may otherwise afford humanitarian agents (Chandler 2001; Rieff 2002a). Yet at the same time, stability and security are often the preeminent needs of many in conflict zones. In addition, the delivery of humanitarian assistance often requires the restoration of some measure of security that may only be achievable through military intervention. This raises difficult questions about what the relationship between military and humanitarian actors should be, and whether it is ethical to use force for humanitarian purposes.

History of the idea

Humanitarianism as a distinct concept and word emerged in English in the mid-nineteenth century. Two of the best known international humanitarian movements that came into being in this era were the anti-slavery movement and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The anti-slavery movement in Europe lobbied for the elimination first of the slave trade, then of slavery itself. An important aspect of its argument was that there are inalienable rights that derive from our common humanity and dignity as human beings which slavery contravened. The argument that as human beings we all have inalienable rights underpins the idea of universal human rights that ultimately came to be embodied in human rights law.

The ICRC has its origins in the work of Henry Dunant and Gustave Moynier. Dunant and Moynier set about lobbying states to subscribe to a set of rules that permitted neutral parties to assist the wounded on the battlefield. This became the First **Geneva Convention** (1864) and the foundation of contemporary **international humanitarian law** (Finnemore 1996). The aim here was not and is not to eliminate **war** as an institution, but to mitigate its violence (Slim 2001). However, this move towards the mitigation of the violence of war gained further momentum as war became more violent. The mass slaughter of both

combatants and civilians in World War II ultimately gave rise to the establishment of the Genocide Convention (1948) and to the war crimes tribunals of Tokyo and Nuremburg, during which the concept of 'crimes against humanity' was first articulated. Four more Geneva conventions and two protocols were later introduced (1949 and 1977). These conventions sought to further protect the most vulnerable in war, including the wounded and prisoners of war, and to provide humane treatment for civilians in war zones. They suggest that, even during warfare, some measure of responsibility to limit undue suffering remains, even among belligerents.

In certain respects, therefore, the Geneva and Genocide conventions acknowledge the persistence of basic human rights in conflicts. The experiences of the Holocaust, in addition to the impact of the **decolonisation** movement, gave further impetus for the acknowledgment of human rights. This was expressed in the **UN Charter** and in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and in the 1966 conventions on Civil and Political, and Social and Economic Rights.

International humanitarian law and human rights law are the institutional representations of two key manifestations of the humanitarian impulse. A third is humanitarian assistance. This is concerned with providing material and services that meet the immediate needs of victims of natural or political crisis, such as food, shelter and medical care. The obligation to provide assistance to those in need underpins the third key aspect of humanitarian law, those laws aimed at protecting **refugees**, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, supported by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Who are the humanitarians?

Humanitarianism is an area in which both international institutions and civil society have played an important role. As noted above, the UN has been a crucial site for the promotion and institutionalisation of humanitarian law. The international agencies formed under the auspices of the UN have played a crucial role in providing both resources and coordination of humanitarian assistance. For instance, agencies such as UNHCR, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme play an important role in providing assistance to vulnerable populations during instability and crisis. The position of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (formerly the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs) were created to help the UN coordinate humanitarian responses to complex emergencies and disasters, as well as to assist with policy development and humanitarian advocacy.

But civil society has also played an ever more prominent role in both the provision of humanitarian assistance and lobbying for respect of humanitarian law and human rights. The powerful expressions of humanitarian concern found in civil society have given rise to a range of **non-governmental organisations**. Over the years these have been important in providing emergency relief and humanitarian assistance to peoples in crisis. Many of these organisations in the Western world, such as Save the Children Fund, CARE and Oxfam, were founded in response to the crises and suffering caused by wars, blockades and **revolution**. Their focus was on providing relief and assistance on an impartial basis. Initially their concerns were focused on crises in Europe, but in the 1960s and 1970s their range of activities expanded to crises occurring in the developing world. The interests of groups such as Oxfam also came

to extend beyond the provision of immediate humanitarian relief into assisting with broader development goals. The 1980s saw rapid growth in the number and profile of humanitarian NGOs, due in no small part to the massive public response generated by the Band Aid movement aimed at increasing public awareness of the famine in the horn of Africa. This wave of renewed **cosmopolitanism** was spurred by the growing capacity of the media to project immediate images of this intense suffering into the lounge rooms and consciousness of people across the world. As Mark Duffield has observed, the actions of movements such as Band Aid 'gave substance to the view that humanitarian assistance was a universal and unconditional right' (Duffield 2001: 76).

An emerging norm of humanitarian intervention?

Therefore, both at the level of civil society and in the institutions of **international society**, there has been a growing acknowledgment that there exists some basic humanitarian principles which should be respected. The robust application of the idea that the 'distant strangers' should not only be assisted, but protected, was constrained by the rigid bipolar politics of the Cold War era. The Cold War international system acted as a disincentive for either bloc to interfere in the affairs of the other for fear of sparking a broader conflict. In addition, **superpower** rivalry tended to act as a deadlock on the activities of the UN Security Council. The ending of the Cold War brought with it the prospect of a more effective multilateral world order in which the UN would play a leading role. It initially appeared to provide an environment in which humanitarianism would become an organising principle for international relations.

One of the features of this post-Cold War order was the emergence of the concept of human security. This concept is increasingly being used

> . . . to describe the complex of interrelated threats associated with civil war, genocide and the displacement of populations . . . While national security focuses on the defence of the state from external attack, human security is about protecting individuals and communities from any form of political violence (Human Security Report, 2005).

The concept of human security has become increasingly relevant with the prevalence in the post-Cold War world of 'new wars', frequently occurring within rather than between states. In these conflicts, the line between belligerent and non-combatant is often hard to draw and civilians are frequently the victims and even the targets (Kaldor 1999; Leader 2000). The emergence of the concept of human security in the context of these new and difficult conflicts generated momentum for a critical rethinking of the norm of non-intervention. Advocates such as Médicins Sans Frontières founder Bernard Kouchner began to speak of a 'duty to intervene' to protect populations and deliver humanitarian assistance (Abbott 2005).

The relaxation of **bipolarity** and the more fluid environment of the international system in the 1990s provided a more permissive environment for armed intervention to pursue humanitarian aims. The idea that there was an emerging norm of humanitarian intervention was given substance by the UN-sanctioned interventions to establish 'safe havens' for Kurds in Northern Iraq following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and subsequent interventions in Somalia and Bosnia in 1992 to assist with the delivery of humanitarian supplies. These

were multilateral interventions undertaken to protect peoples who were often of a different faith or race. Did this signal the emergence of a genuinely universal norm of humanitarian intervention?

Optimism about the emergence of a universal norm was necessarily qualified. It was becoming evident that humanitarian intervention was fraught with problems. For example, the rapid escalation of the UN intervention in Somalia from a mission to protect humanitarian assistance to one to eradicate local warlords, resulted in the death of eighteen American rangers and the rapid withdrawal of US troops, raising questions about the commitment of states to high-cost interventions. The failure of the UN to take any decisive action to halt the massacre of ethnic Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 raised questions about the effective commitment of the international community to an impartial policy of humanitarian intervention. The massacres of Muslim men and boys in the UN's 'safe haven' of Srebrenica in 1995 further highlighted the problems of limited mandates and the limited use of force, as well as impartiality in humanitarian interventions (Dunne, Hanson and Hill 2001: 103).

The response to these difficulties in the late 1990s was a more 'muscular' form of intervention, involving an increased willingness to use force to pursue humanitarian objectives. This was evident in the **NATO** intervention in Kosovo in 1999. Here NATO troops used air strikes on Serb military facilities in order to protect ethnic Albanians. It was further reinforced by the Australian-led deployment of the INTERFET intervention force to help restore order and deliver humanitarian assistance in the wake of widespread violence following the ballot in favour of East Timorese independence from Indonesia in August 1999. The Kosovo intervention, however, was criticised, particularly in regard to the fact that the intervention was undertaken without a UN Security Council mandate. This raised questions about how the international community should respond when the UN's capacity to act was constrained by political deadlock in the UN Security Council. In contrast, the INTERFET mission took place not only with UN consent, but also with the consent of the Indonesian government. Australia was also careful to gain support from other countries in the Asia-Pacific region in order to enhance the legitimacy of the mission in the region. Australia subsequently built on the experience of East Timor and undertook further 'cooperative interventions' in the Pacific in the early 2000s that involved 'coalitions of the willing' in responding to internal crises that threatened to generate local and regional insecurity and commensurate humanitarian problems (Downer 2004).

Nevertheless, Australia's involvement in the East Timor intervention still received criticism, both from within Indonesia and the region more generally, stemming from concerns it was being used by a more assertive Australia to actively promote its own Western values in the region (Dee 2001: 9; Dunn, Hanson and Hill 2001: 108). The interventions of the 1990s therefore raised serious questions concerning selective commitment, coordination, effectiveness and authority in relation to armed humanitarian interventions.

Addressing these problems, the UN Secretary-General urged the international community to respond to the challenges of humanitarian intervention, posing the question: 'If humanitarianism is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica – to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?' (Abbott 2005; Annan 2000). The response came, in part, in the International Committee on Intervention and State Sovereignty's 2001 report *The responsibility to protect*, which sought to establish a framework for deciding when and how humanitarian intervention should be conducted. In so doing it also sought states'

Box 28.1:   Discussion points

Australia and the responsibility to protect

The Australian government has clearly supported the emerging norm of a 'responsibility to protect': 'Put simply', argued Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in 2004, 'the international community cannot stand by and allow the perpetrators of genocide and other egregious human rights abuses free rein'. He went on to acknowledge the importance of humanitarian intervention as an evolving principle and 'an influential factor in determining the responses of members of the international community in situations where inaction would result in massive violations of human rights' (2004: 4). The government has therefore endorsed the idea that the international community has a collective 'responsibility to protect' but has also called for the development of some other form of legal authority to intervene where the UN is unable to respond to humanitarian crises in a timely or effective way (2004: 5).

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endorsement of the norm that it was legitimate in some extreme cases to employ armed intervention to promote humanitarian aims. In essence the report argued that while states have the primary responsibility to protect their citizens, in circumstances where states were either unwilling or unable to provide protection from 'avoidable catastrophe', such as mass murder, rape or starvation, then that responsibility must be borne by the wider community. It also broadened the notion of the 'responsibility to protect' to encompass certain 'maximalist' humanitarian aims: aims of not simply protecting people from the extreme effects of conflict in the short term but to seek both to prevent and to assist in rebuilding societies after conflict to prevent further suffering.[1] The notion that states do have a 'responsibility to protect' was endorsed at the 2005 UN World Summit.

At the same time, the norm of humanitarian intervention remains contested and its implementation inconsistent, as the 'dismal failure' of the international community to respond effectively to the ongoing crisis in Darfur in the early 2000s testified (Wheeler and Morris 2006: 457).

New wars and the emergence of new humanitarianism

The failure of humanitarian intervention in Srebrenica and Rwanda also had an important impact on thinking about the principles and politics that should guide those involved in humanitarian assistance projects. The Rwandan genocide and the Bosnian War were symptomatic of a shift in the nature of conflict which was changing the context within which humanitarian assistance was being provided. In these 'new wars' the link between conflict and humanitarian crisis, or the emergence of complex humanitarian emergencies that entailed

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[1] As Chris Abbott notes, this 'responsibility to protect' encompasses three specific notions: the responsibility to prevent such crises arising – looking at the causes of conflict; the responsibility to react – meaning the responsibility to respond appropriately when crises arise; and the responsibility to rebuild – to provide assistance in post-conflict reconstruction (Abbott 2005). The report also seeks to establish criteria for judging when and how armed intervention should be undertaken. These include right intention, that the aim of the mission is primarily humanitarian – to relieve or avert suffering; intervention as last resort after non-military means have been exhausted; the use of proportional means; and reasonable prospects of success.

abuse of human rights, famine and huge population displacement, had become ever more evident. The proliferation of conflicts meant there was an ever-growing demand for humanitarian action, with humanitarian actors increasingly working in the midst of conflicts and crises rather than on the fringes as had traditionally been the case (Terry 2002). At the same time combatants involved in these conflicts were often not states and were not necessarily committed to respecting international humanitarian law or the principles that had guided humanitarian action in interstate conflicts. Carving out a humanitarian space in such contexts was ever more difficult (Leader 2000; Mills 2005).

These factors created the conditions for the promotion of 'new', or 'political' humanitarianism in the 1990s as a response to both the ethical and operational problems that humanitarian actions were encountering (Duffield 2001; Macrae 2002). Advocates of 'new humanitarianism' argued that up till now humanitarianism had been acting merely as a band-aid to crises. It was necessary to move beyond traditional minimalist aims of saving lives and reducing suffering on a non-political basis to address the sources of suffering. As Srebrenica had demonstrated, there was little point providing assistance in the short term if it failed to protect people in the medium or long term. New humanitarianism was to be politically engaged based on a respect for the dignity and human rights of others rather than on philanthropy (Fox 2001).

New humanitarianism also questioned the principle of neutrality and the norm of consent, suggesting where there was disproportionate suffering of others, it was the duty of humanitarians to speak out and draw attention to the nature of the crisis. Similarly, the humanitarian imperative may demand some form of intervention even without the consent of all the parties involved. There was also a call for a growing recognition of the political impact humanitarian assistance could have in conflicts and complex emergencies. Such impact, it was argued, was not always positive but could unwittingly fuel or exacerbate conflict (Anderson 1999). It was argued that this is what occurred in Rwanda, where perpetrators of genocide were among those who received assistance in the refugee camps in Zaire in which they were rearming and reorganising (Terry 2002). The new approach sought to more consciously and openly reflect upon the factors guiding decisions in the implementation of humanitarian assistance, and on the possible impact of any such assistance. In heightening transparency and accountability, this approach sought to both demonstrate good faith and to minimise the adverse impact of assistance, to 'do no harm' where possible (Anderson 1999). Therefore the new humanitarianism combined the philosophy of 'do no harm' with efforts to address the root causes of suffering (Duffield 2001).

New humanitarianism evolved in the context of a growing emphasis on enhancing the 'coherence' of the humanitarian, political and military responses to conflict-related crises. The need for greater coherence between **peacekeeping** and humanitarian agents was one of the lessons learnt by the UN from Somalia, Bosnia and Rwanda. Placing humanitarian assistance into the broader framework of military and diplomatic action was viewed as crucial to enhancing its contribution to **peacebuilding** and ensuring it would 'do no harm' (Fox 2001; Macrae and Leader 2000). It is also argued that greater integration of humanitarian activities with peacekeeping and development activities would enhance its effectiveness and the potential to build enduring and peaceful orders. This suggested a shift from perceiving humanitarian action as focused on palliative care to deeper involvement with conflict resolution mechanism and human rights advocacy (Barnett 2005; Macrae 2003).

> **Box 28.2:   Discussion points**
>
> **Australian humanitarian policy**
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> In many respects the Australian government has embraced the new, assertive and integrated humanitarian agenda. The Australian *Humanitarian action plan* of 2005 highlights the need for the integration of humanitarian action and development activities. The policy situates itself clearly within the core principles of humanitarian action arguing: 'The delivery of humanitarian assistance to all populations in need must be neutral, impartial and independent' (AusAID 2005: 3). It recognises that the increasingly difficult environment presented, for instance, by intrastate conflict, has resulted in a 'closer relationship between the military peacekeepers, civilian police and humanitarian workers', going on to note that:
>
> > 'Humanitarian action must bridge the tension between political or military objectives. It must [promote] international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law, advocate peaceful solutions to crises and do no harm in prolonging or aggravating conflict or by discouraging self-reliance' (2005: 8).

The humanitarian agenda therefore expanded as the concept was invoked to legitimate and justify a wider range of actors and activities. This is positive in many respects, suggesting that humanitarian concerns are now a more prominent and powerful aspect of the new international agenda. However, in practice, this shift to a broader more politically engaged humanitarian agenda that is also used to invoke the use of armed intervention has raised several ethical and political dilemmas, which have been accentuated by the 'war on terror'.

The contemporary challenges

The first challenge is the apparent shift from a focus on short-term emergency assistance to a longer term focus on transforming the conditions that give rise to suffering. As Hugo Slim observes, there is an irresistible logic to the idea that the humanitarian obligation does not end once a life has been 'saved' in the short term (Slim 2004). But there is also a concern that a focus on long-term transformative projects may distract attention and resources away from alleviating immediate suffering, and become increasingly conditional on anticipated outcomes. Should immediate assistance be withheld, for instance, to encourage compliance with longer term human rights or conflict resolution goals? How should the humanitarian imperative be interpreted?

This concern is exacerbated by the fear that increased politicisation of humanitarianism is shrinking the 'humanitarian space'. A key concern here is that the abandonment of neutrality could contribute to the perception that humanitarians are no longer 'outside' particular conflicts or crises but partisan or even agents of external forces. This can restrict the access of humanitarian workers to those in need and also make humanitarian workers more vulnerable. The growing number of casualties of humanitarian workers, including the murder of members of MSF in Afghanistan in 2003, the attack upon the Red Cross mission in

Baghdad 2003 and the murder in Iraq of CARE's Margaret Hassan, suggests this is a serious concern.

The closer association between humanitarian workers in the field with armed intervention forces in conflict zones and the increased blurring of tasks between military forces and humanitarian agents can further fuel this perception. This also raises the question of whether, how and when military actors should act themselves as humanitarian agents. Militaries have often performed valuable services in delivering assistance, but if their role within a mission shifts between humanitarian and security functions, this can lead to confusion as to whether their mandate is humanitarian or military. In some cases military forces have used humanitarian assistance to try to win 'hearts and minds' (Christian Aid 2004). This may undermine perceptions that humanitarian assistance is impartial and granted simply on the basis of need.

Efforts to enhance cohesion between humanitarian agents and objectives and broader political and strategic objectives lead to difficult questions about the control and direction of humanitarian agendas. There are concerns that aid is becoming increasingly bilateralised with states increasingly channelling assistance through non-governmental organisations rather than through multilateral agencies. This has tended to increase the influence of donors on the direction of assistance flows, with assistance increasingly going to regions of strategic interest to donor states (Barnett 2005; Stoddard 2003). This again raises questions about the ongoing independence and impartiality of humanitarian assistance.

Concerns about the politicisation and securitisation of humanitarianism have been accentuated by the 'war on terror'. Since 2001, 'failed' or 'failing' states are increasingly seen as 'breeding grounds' for **terrorism** and vulnerable to organised crime. In this context, assistance and development aid come to be seen as much a 'weapon' against potential threats as a means through which to alleviate the suffering of others. The language of the humanitarian imperative and national security has become increasingly blurred. This blending of causes and objectives was evident in the way in which humanitarian concerns such as the protection of human rights were invoked to justify the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively. 'Ridding the world of Saddam', argued British Prime Minister Tony Blair, 'would be an act of humanity. It is leaving him there that is in truth inhumane' (cited in Wheeler and Morris 2006: 449). Australian Prime Minster John Howard also spoke of the 'immense moral and humanitarian dividend that has flowed from [Saddam's] removal' (Howard 2003). As Wheeler and Bellamy have noted, the fact that the US, the UK and Australia have felt it necessary to employ humanitarian arguments to justify the intervention demonstrates how powerful this concept has become as a justification (2005: 573). However such invocations are not without consequences for humanitarianism. As Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, noted, 'the effort to justify it [the Iraq War] even in part in humanitarian terms risks giving humanitarian intervention a bad name. If that breeds cynicism about the use of military force for humanitarian purposes . . . it could be devastating for people in need of future assistance' (Abbott 2005: 91–2).

Conclusion

Humanitarianism today is a powerful yet problematic concept. It invokes a sense of a universal obligation to alleviate and even prevent the undue suffering of others, even in war. Over the last century it has become an increasingly prominent part of the **norms** and institutions of our

contemporary international society. It forms an important plank in the new agenda of world politics. Yet it remains contested conceptually and in practice. There is contest about the principles that should guide humanitarianism; about how broadly or narrowly the 'humanitarian imperative' should be interpreted; and about how humanitarianism should be conducted in practice. There is also contest about whether humanitarianism can ever be associated with the use of force. In addition we do not always live up to the humanitarian principles and norms that are ostensibly embedded in our institutions and international laws. Finally there is contest as to the degree to which humanitarianism can be effectively integrated with the policies and practices of development, of peacekeeping and particularly of security. Does such integration enhance or undermine the achievement of humanitarian goals? Perhaps at the heart of these contests is the question of the relationship between humanitarianism and politics. In practice we cannot separate humanitarianism out as an ideal ethical realm removed from the cruder cut-and-thrust of politics, since humanitarianism is in and of itself a form of politics. But we must also be aware of the way in which it interacts with, and is incorporated into, broader political agendas, since this will have significant consequences for how humanitarianism is perceived in the future. In particular, there may be consequences for whether or not it continues to be seen as a universal ethic of assistance to those in need, or an instrument through which the powerful exercise influence.

Questions

1. How do you explain the rise of humanitarian ideas and organisations?
2. Do humans have a responsibility to outsiders who may be in grave danger?
3. Should humanitarian organisations continue to strive for neutrality?
4. Is there an emerging norm of humanitarian intervention in international relations?
5. When, if at all, is it legitimate for states to use armed force to intervene in another sovereign state?

Further reading

Anderson, Mary 1999, Do no harm: how aid can support peace – or war, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Important – if controversial – account of humanitarian options in conflict zones.

Duffield, Mark 2001, Global Governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security, London: Zed Books. Critical analysis of the impact of globalisation and global governance on contemporary conflict.

ICISS 2001, The responsibility to protect: report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, Ottawa: International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. Highly influential report that helped reshape debate about humanitarian intervention.

Wheeler, Nicholas, 2000, Saving strangers: humanitarian intervention in international society, Oxford: Oxford University Press. One of the most important books published on the topic; examines the circumstances under which armed intervention in a sovereign state is legitimate.

29
Human Rights

Anthony J. Langlois

Introduction

This chapter examines the rise and growth of **human rights**. First, it discusses the historical development of human rights. Second, it outlines how human rights are understood today. Third, it explains how the liberal universalism that lies behind human rights has come up against cultural resistance. Fourth and finally, the chapter touches on some challenges that lie ahead in the struggle for human rights.

The doctrine of human rights has become one of the central political doctrines of international politics. This is a remarkable state of affairs, given that only sixty years ago the idea, while championed by some, had little or no traction on the behaviour of **states** towards one another. The end of World War II was the key marker in the birth of the human rights movement as we know it today. Prior to that war, human rights – or 'the rights of man' as they were known – had few political supporters in international relations. The doctrine of **realism**, or *realpolitik*, seemed an accurate description of international politics and stood opposed to the kinds of **idealism** and moralism which the idea of human rights was thought to embody. Importantly too, the idea of universal rights had fallen on hard times in intellectual terms, being subject to various critiques which undermined its authority and persuasive **power**.

World War II was one of a series of tragedies which gripped the world in the twentieth century. The particularly horrific atrocities manifested by Germany through the Holocaust precipitated a radical change in the structures of international politics, and in the place that moral concerns were given within those structures. The **international system** underwent a crisis of legitimacy, and one component of the restoration of that legitimacy was the emergence of the modern human rights movement. Above all else, this movement sought to establish minimum standards for the behaviour of states, in order for them to have legitimate standing in the international community.

These standards were expressed through, and were to be monitored and implemented by, a new organisation founded after World War II, the **United Nations (UN)**. Human rights were articulated in the **UN Charter**. In 1948, the key document of the human rights movement was promulgated by the UN: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This

document was created pursuant to an international drafting effort, which sought to capture in declaratory form the essence of those values which, when adopted, would prevent the atrocities of World War II from being repeated.

From the beginning, however, there were political difficulties. The Declaration was itself not binding in **international law**: it was a document of aspiration, in the first instance. Second, the document did not receive universal acceptance among the states of the post-war era. The USSR and five of its allies refused to endorse it, accompanied by South Africa and Saudi Arabia. These refusals were not surprising, not least because – despite the universalist rhetoric of the human rights movement – the values embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are a distilled version of the political **liberalism** which animated the allied West.

The greatest obstacle of them all was that of giving human rights teeth – a genuine capacity to do something other than make pious statements about how the peoples of the world might live together more harmoniously. In the first instance, this capacity was found in the drafting of two international treaties, known as Covenants. These were the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These were promulgated in 1966 – almost two decades after the original Declaration. They had to wait a further decade until a sufficient number of states had signed up for the treaty to take any kind of effect.

It is still the case that not all states have signed these two basic human rights treaties: of the 190-odd states that comprise the international system, only 140 have signed both. There have been many other human rights instrumentalities which have been developed under the auspices of the UN since the promulgation of the Covenants – some of the more well known would be those on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It represents a major shift in international politics that we can say that all states have signed on to at least one such human rights law instrument. Despite the inevitable problems of compliance and politicisation, this fact nonetheless represents a significant change in the politics and structures of international relations since the end of World War II.

Box 29.1: Key texts

Key human rights instruments of the UN

United Nations Charter 1945
Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984
Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families 1990

The historical development of an idea

As noted above, the idea of human rights was invoked after World War II as a way of expressing both moral outrage and a determination to prevent the recurrence of the events that provoked that outrage. But this begs the question – why was it that human rights were not already there, in action, to prevent the atrocities of that and other wars? If they are indeed *universal* rights – the rights of all peoples in all places at all times – why were they not available in the lexicon of international politics until after World War II?

The term 'universal human rights' is a modernised, updated version of a number of other terms which have, in fact, been around for a very long time. These are the ideas of natural law, natural right, and the rights of man. These ideas together provide the foundation for many of the political structures which we in the West take for granted today. And it was these ideas which the West looked to in its crisis of legitimacy after World War II. The difficulty is that these ideas themselves are not unproblematic; indeed, we can see that a number of the key political problems associated with human rights today have their roots in the way in which these older political and moral ideas were appropriated by the modern human rights movement.

The Nuremburg and Tokyo trials held after World War II convicted people of committing crimes against humanity. The natural law was basis for this justice. This same natural law is often appealed to as the basis for human rights. But it is by looking at this appeal that we can see what some of the difficulties with the idea of human rights are, and why it is that the idea – or the earlier forms of the idea – had come to be viewed as problematic. The idea of natural law is the idea that there is a moral or ethical law which is built into our nature as human beings, that, in fact, is built into the nature of the cosmos. This idea has strong pre-Christian antecedents, but it finds its fullest expression in the Western tradition in Christian theology, to the extent that once Christianity started to be doubted and repudiated by Western thinkers, the idiom of the natural law was also fundamentally challenged.

The great irony of the history of the human rights idea is that the same historical period furnished both the most damaging criticisms of the ideas and the most important political victories for the idea. During the period that is known as the **Enlightenment**, or the Age of Reason, in Western intellectual history, universal rights became both politically efficacious and intellectually passé.

This period was marked by famous rights declarations: 1776 saw the 'unanimous declaration of the thirteen united States of America', followed in 1789 by the French 'Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen'. Rights language was in vogue, and it was making very significant political gains for the new political classes. However, the foundations of these claims were being questioned by many of the philosophers of the day. These thinkers appealed to new ways of thinking which challenged many of the intellectual pieties of the past. Human reason was the standard these thinkers appealed to, not class privilege, religious revelation or social authority. And for many, the language of rights, with its foundation in natural law, was too tainted with false premises from older ways of thinking to remain legitimate.

The most famous critique of all from this period, perhaps because of its rhetorical excess, is that put forward by the utilitarian thinker Jeremy Bentham. He said, 'Natural rights is simple nonsense: natural and imprescriptable rights, rhetorical nonsense – nonsense upon stilts.'

These rights were 'unreal metaphysical phenomena'. Why so? Again, the common point here is the association with the Christian intellectual tradition. Natural rights came via the natural law which was given by God. But if you take away God, you appear to have no foundations for natural rights or natural law. The only rights you have are in fact those provided by people through political institutions: all other rights are merely idle talk. As we will see, however, this position has its own difficulties.

From this we can start to answer our earlier question – why it was that human rights were not there to prevent the atrocities of World War II, if they are universal in the way claimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our brief excursus into intellectual history – the history of ideas – helps us to see that the idea of rights itself does not stand alone, but is linked to the broader intellectual and political climate of the day. This climate had been unfavourable to the idea of universal rights for some time before the mid-twentieth century. In the eighteenth century natural rights were in their heyday; by the twentieth the idea had lost both its intellectual justification and its political limelight. That was until the atrocities of mid-century which caused the West to reach into its past for a set of terms that would adequately articulate its sense of moral outrage about what members of its own civilisation had done to one another.

The human rights idea today

It is tempting to respond to these historical considerations by claiming that the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represents a break from the past – both the immediate past of Holocaust atrocity, and the longer past of intellectual prevarication about the nature of human rights. The Declaration, it might be said, sets new standards and is justified by the participation of the members of the international community in its creations and extension via subsequent human rights law instrumentalities. From this point of view, troubling ourselves with past philosophical debates about the nature and justification of rights is to miss the main game: that we now have an international human rights regime, mandated and overseen by the UN; that this regime sets the standards for human rights matters; and that this regime has a secure place within the architecture of international politics today.

This argument is one that is called the argument from legal **positivism** – and it is not unlike that argued by Jeremy Bentham. His claim was that the only rights you in fact have are those which are provided by political institutions. This appeal to the realities of contemporary human rights law is an antidote to the philosophical problems with human rights; however, it has serious shortcomings at both the conceptual and the political level. Indeed, this is so much the case that if we allow it to stand, we find that the language of human rights itself will fail to play the role that was envisaged for it by those who sought to introduce it as a medium for justice in international politics. To see this, we need to recognise the fatal flaw of the argument from legal positivism.

The legal positivists' way of answering the question: what are human rights?, is to point us to international human rights law: to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to the Covenants, and to the various other legal instrumentalities which operate at state, regional and international levels. The problem with legal positivism is that, in this manner,

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Box 29.2:   Terminology

Three generations of rights

First Generation Rights: these are civil and political rights which form the basis of the human rights tradition, and which are represented in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These rights emerged to protect the interests and negative liberties of the individual against the power and encroachment of states. They include rights such as freedom of speech, religion and association.

　　Second Generation Rights: this generation of rights represents the recognition that people need a certain set of political and economic circumstances to be provided before they can flourish as human beings – indeed, before they can even properly take advantage of their civil and political rights. The second generation thus includes rights to basic levels of economic subsistence, education and work, among others. These rights are numerated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

　　Third Generation Rights: also known as group rights, these rights attend more to the communal aspects of human being; thus, these rights extend the reach of human rights to matters such as the recognition of minority groups, social identity and cultural issues. These rights are often provided for by dedicated UN human rights instrumentalities.

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it is reductionist: it reduces human rights to these laws. Rather than seeing these laws as instruments which *protect* human rights, human rights are reduced to *being* these instruments. Human rights, then, do not exist whenever these structures are not in place. Human rights are created when these structures are created. Human rights change when these laws change.

　　Because international human rights law, then, is law that is created by states working together, and because human rights laws within states are created by states, this legal positivist argument has as one of its key consequences – albeit one that is not always immediately apparent – that human rights can be reduced to the will of the state. If human rights are reduced to laws which are created by states, and states then decide to change those laws, the implication is that human rights change as well. And the logic here dictates that should states repudiate human rights, they go out of existence. But this leaves us powerless against the state when it seeks to act unjustly against people; it leaves us with no defence against the kind of behaviour that led to World War II.

　　The argument from legal positivism is appealing because it seems to shortcircuit the endless debate of moral philosophers about the nature of justice. However, it appears that if we want to ensure justice, we need to appeal to more than the human rights-respecting legal structures that were developed at some point in history; we need to appeal to the moral and philosophical reasons which tell us why such legal structures are good things, and why it is claimed that they are universally good: good for all human beings.

The politics of liberal universalism

It is the universalism of human rights which has made it so powerful as a tool of political and moral critique. The claim is that there are universal moral standards which the laws of all states should conform to. It is this claim to universality that gives human rights its moral

bite – it is a claim to something that goes beyond the interests or laws of any given state (or, for that matter, non-state agent). And for precisely this reason, it is the claim that this 'something', being greater than all of us, applies to all of us. The challenge is to articulate what that 'something' is. For the modern human rights movement, the **norms** and values which are translated into human rights are derived from the liberal tradition of political thought. It is this tradition which is the inheritor of the notions of natural law and right, and which has transformed them into documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Liberal universalism is a particular kind of universalism. It makes the claim that a certain set of values *should* be applied to all peoples in all states at all times. Thus, it is not a claim about empirical universality – it is not a claim that these values do now exist or can now be seen in all societies. Rather it is a **normative** claim: these values can be justified as being good for all human persons, and so we should strive to implement them universally.

The values in question are liberal values. That is, they are centred around the idea that each individual is important as an individual, that each individual has equal value, and should be free to follow his or her own interests. The conception of the person that is implied here emerges out of Western political and cultural history. It owes its provenance to such broad movements as the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and – preeminently – the European Enlightenment. The liberal values articulated via the new doctrines of rights were individualistic, rational, universal, secular, democratic and radical. The focus here is squarely on the individual as the building block of society. The individual is conceptualised as a willing self – hence the importance of freedom: *I must have the space in which to act the way that I will myself to act.* This conception of the individual – often called the transcendental self – is a key aspect of the way in which theorists have justified the universality of human rights. If all human persons have these characteristics, and if these characteristics lead us to posit human rights, then human rights can be universal. In this view, it is the self which is considered to be the core of our humanity, despite all the differences between individuals or groups of individuals: differences such as religion, culture, socialisation, and politics.

This is a key issue, because it is factors such as religion, culture, socialisation and politics which lead people to engage in behaviour that is not acceptable on the basis of human rights standards. It is at this point that the political nature of human rights comes to the fore. One of the consequences of the universalist rhetoric of human rights has been that the political nature of human rights has often remained hidden. The politics of human rights is most often revealed, however, in the transition from the grand claims of universalism, to the very specific changes which need to be made to legal and political systems to make them conform to international human rights standards. The legal instrumentalities of the international human rights regime do not merely urge states to cease behaving in undesirable ways, but they prescribe specific standards which must be met.

The universalism of the human rights regime foundered from the very beginning because of these political tensions. The world was prepared to unite in its condemnation of the events of the Holocaust. But agreement on a rights regime that required something more than claiming the moral high ground was harder to come by. The principal disagreement on human rights issues was one which sundered the world, and was aligned with the political and economic differences between the post-war superpowers. The **Cold War**, among other things, was a dispute about which kinds of rights should take precedence in a given society: political and civil rights, or economic and social rights. Both types of rights were included in the Declaration

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Box 29.3:   Discussion points

Asian values

The Asian values debate followed the end of the Cold War and a period of unprecedented economic growth in Asian economies. The debate was spearheaded by political elites from Malaysia, Singapore, China, Burma (now officially Myanmar), Indonesia and Japan. The principal claim was that because Asian societies have different cultural backgrounds from those of the West, they need not be subject to the same standards of human rights and **democracy** as those asserted by the West.

The argument from culture fails however because the claims of political elites to be the only legitimate spokespersons for a culture are spurious. Many Asians, including some political leaders, spoke out against Asian values, demonstrating that cultures are dynamic and contested, and cannot be easily enlisted by the powerful **status quo** political elite.

Along with the argument from culture was an argument from economic development: that human rights needed to be rolled out sequentially, and that economic and social rights come before political and civil liberties. Asia is not as economically developed as the West and therefore should not be expected to live by the West's standards. But the real question here is not whether rights must develop sequentially, but whether the provision of economic rights *requires* the deprivation of political rights.

Another issue here is the threshold issue: Singapore, for example, is clearly well developed, and yet is reluctant to give its citizens full first generation rights. Asian states also argued using the principles of state sovereignty, claiming that the norm of non-intervention protects them from external critique.

The Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s saw the end of the Asian values debate as an expression of political hubris; this, however, does not mean the end of the issue. Asia is a broad region with many diverse value systems which do not all sit easily with the international human rights regime, even when they are not being exploited by self-interested political elites. How to manage such global pluralism is one of the key challenges facing the doctrine of human rights.

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of Human Rights. Human rights became a pawn in a larger conflict; rights became politicised and for a period the ability of rights discourse to advance the well-being of all persons was severely constrained by the refusal of Soviet and aligned states to accept either the spirit or the letter of human rights law.

More recently a similar set of claims have been played out in the Asian region (see Box 29.3). In this debate, authoritarian political elites have claimed that because the human rights doctrine is centred around the Western idea of the individual as the preeminent building block of society, it was a doctrine which had less application in their societies. In Asian societies, so it was claimed, the community, not the individual, is preeminent. This means that the rights and freedoms of individuals are always subservient to the state, and not vice versa. Other regions of the world – notably Africa – have debated this doctrine on similar grounds.

What is at stake in these debates is the idea that a cultural, religious or philosophical tradition that is less disposed to viewing individual rights favourably may be put forward as a legitimate alternative way of organising society. The outcome of these alternatives is that many of the standards claimed by international human rights law may come into question. Particular issues that arise have to do with female **emancipation**, religious freedom, the rights

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Box 29.4:   Discussion points

Australian human rights promotion: difficult cases

Since the establishment of the UN human rights regime, Australia has been an important human rights supporter on the global stage. However, different Australian governments have had different policy approaches to the issue of human rights, ranging from liberal internationalist perspectives to the more conservative, realist approaches. Controversy about **method** often focuses on difficult cases. The current Australian government has chosen to use the mechanism of 'dialogue' in order to engage with some difficult cases: China, Vietnam and Iran are countries who have been involved with dialogue processes. In a similar vein, also, Australia has engaged Burma (Myanmar) by offering human rights workshops there. These policy responses by government represent a particular way of engaging with states that have poor human rights records. They are controversial policy responses, because while they seek to support the UN human rights regime in general terms, they are not conducted under the UN auspices. Here, the fundamental question is whether more is gained for human rights by using a **bilateral** policy approach rather than that of engagement via international human rights regimes.

A second fundamental question also arises from these examples: to what extent do you promote human rights by direct confrontation over rights-abusive state behaviour, and to what extent do you try to change that behaviour by indirect engagement in other areas? In addition to the states mentioned above, Australia's relationship with Indonesia is a key illustration of this issue, in particular with what is now the world's newest independent state, East Timor, and with respect to Australia's policy towards other regions of Indonesia which have strong separatist movements, members of which routinely suffer human rights abuses at the behest of state institutions.

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of children, family and criminal law, the standing of social minorities (indigenous peoples, gays and lesbians, and others) and various political and economic freedoms.

In most cases, the legitimacy of this debate is brought into question because the proponents of these views tend to be the same strongmen who run their countries in an authoritarian fashion. A conflict of interest is immediately apparent, in that the arguments presented serve to preserve the status quo of the political elites and their interests. Moreover, dissenting voices are not difficult to come across. Indeed, it is these voices that are the more significant and interesting, and who represent the real challenge to the universal claims of liberal values; for while these dissenters criticise their own governments, they may also have reservations about the liberal predisposition of international human rights standards. Thus we see, for example, religious organisations from all the world religions crafting alternative bills of rights which diverge on crucial key issues from those of the UN. With the renewed salience of religion to international affairs since the end of the Cold War, these groups and movements represent a significant political challenge to the prevailing international human rights regime.

The future of human rights

Human rights has proven to be a revolutionary political tool for those concerned with ethical standards in international politics. While human rights has often been derided as 'soft', because of its fundamental subservience to **sovereignty** in international affairs, it has,

nonetheless, changed the landscape of international politics since the end of World War II. The UN and other human rights organisations have been at the forefront of this transformation of international politics which, along with developments in the international political economy, has introduced new and powerful **non-state actors** into the international arena. Moreover, human rights has become central to the standard-setting rhetoric of all states, and while in many cases critics will be frustrated at the 'it's just words' nature of this development, in many other cases human rights standards-setting has led to the creation of institutions which have brought about transformations in the processes of both domestic and international politics. Institutionally, then, human rights has become an entrenched fixture in both domestic and international politics.

There remain political challenges, the key one being directly linked to the main conceptual challenges regarding the nature of human rights. Our answer to the question 'what are human rights?' will lead us directly to substantive issues about what values should be enshrined by our human rights laws and institutions. Some countries, for example, press for different legal systems for members of different religions. This has implication for the way in which we think about the universality of freedom of religion, of women's rights, of children's rights, and of criminal law. This in turn leads to troubling questions about how different human rights regimes should then interact with one another; and about how people who cross jurisdictions will be treated in different places. Is it possible to speak of human rights being universal, when your rights appear to change as your geography changes?

The liberal universalism of human rights, which stands at the foundation of the international human rights regime, is under challenge in these various ways and others. The key developments in the future of human rights will lie with the way in which the philosophical, institutional and political issues entwined at the heart of this challenge are engaged over coming decades.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the way in which the concept of human rights has become one of the central political doctrines of global politics. It has examined the institutional development of human rights through the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has also considered the importance of the philosophical justification of human rights and the challenges that this task presents, particularly in the face of global cultural diversity. The universalist political liberalism which underlies the human rights movement has been contested by various constituencies, and the way in which the movement responds will shape the future of the global politics of human rights.

Questions

1. Are human rights a Western prejudice?
2. Are there 'Asian values'? And how, if at all, do they impact on human rights?
3. Why have human rights grown in stature and popularity in recent decades?
4. Is the prevailing international human rights regime effective?

5. Should all sovereign states be compelled to apply human rights standards to their own citizens?
6. Should human rights be balanced against the demands of **security**?

Further reading

Dunne, T. and Wheeler, N. (eds) 1999, Human rights in global politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Excellent collection comprising various theoretical perspectives.

Forsythe, D. 2000, Human rights in international relations, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Very good overview of human rights.

Langlois, A. 2001, The politics of justice and human rights: Southeast Asia and universalist theory, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Theoretically informed account of human rights and cultural difference by an Australian scholar.

Shue, H. 1980, Basic rights, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Excellent philosophical defence of human rights.

30
Migration and Refugees

Sara E. Davies

Introduction

This chapter will proceed in five sections. The first section looks at how the two terms, migrant and **refugee**, came to be defined as distinct from each other in the context of the modern **state**. As the reification of borders intensified in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, citizenship became an essential part of 'belonging' to a state as well as indicating the strength of the state itself. Hence, the categorisation of those 'outside' the state developed as a way of ascertaining who belonged and who did not. The second part of this chapter then examines how states define and categorise refugees through laws that seek to contain and limit their flow. The third section is concerned with the consequences of limiting the definition of a refugee, which has led to an unequal burden between developed and developing states. In the fourth section, we look at the specific case of Australia and the development of its relationship with refugees. The final section examines the case of the MV *Tampa* and traces how the Australian government's response to this boatload of rescued asylum seekers marked a new chapter in its migration laws. Ultimately, this chapter seeks to demonstrate that the choices made by states in border protection become the key determinants of how refugees will be accepted. Adherence to international refugee law will not necessarily address all the problems associated with refugees, but nor will seeing refugees as unwanted intruders in contrast to 'desirable' migrants.

States, refugees and immigrants

The Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, campaigned in the 2001 federal election under the banner 'we will decide who comes to this country and under what circumstances' (Marr and Wilkinson 2003: 277). As this slogan demonstrates, there is arguably no greater control than determining who is a 'legitimate' citizen of the state – that is, determining who can and cannot live within your borders. Being able to secure borders and identify when they are being breached is essential to state sovereignty. Entry into a state without permission is seen as an 'illegal' breach of sovereignty, or even a threat to sovereignty. The determination of whether an individual's entry into a border is to be deemed as illegal, threatening or permissible is part of how a state constructs its identity and territoriality. Therefore this chapter will

first look at how states define an individual's entry through tracing the development of the term 'refugee', contrasting it to the term 'migrant' and exploring how this delineation affects the lives of people seeking entry into states, focusing especially on Australia.

Controlling migration – a brief history

Even before the creation of the 'modern state', there were attempts to 'territorialise' borders in order to control who could and could not enter and exit political communities. Evidence of early migration policy exists in China's political history from at least the second millennium BC. From the second millennium BC to 800 AD, planned migration was a constant feature of Chinese population movement. What has changed with the advent of modern states is how they have responded to foreigners entering sovereign territory.

In the new world of nation-states, individuals needed to be 'territorialised'. Since the seventeenth century many terms have been used by states in an attempt to distinguish new entrants from residents – foreigner, exile, alien, refugee, migrant. In more recent times, the tendency to classify people has become a central feature of the bureaucratic state and reflects the concern of bureaucrats to attach people to domiciles where 'they can be registered, enumerated, taxed, drafted and watched' (Tilly 1978: 49).

Today, a migrant is defined as a person who chooses to move from their country of origin to another which will accept them. The causes of migration are important because the term migrant is associated with choice – a choice that the person makes to seek a life elsewhere and a choice by the state to accept that person. When new states such as Canada, Australia and the US were being industrialised and urbanised, migrants were a welcome addition; though some were considered more preferable than others, as is still the case today. For instance, as we will discuss later, the first act that the new Australian federal government passed in 1901 was the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, the White Australia policy. This policy was reflective of most industrialising states at the time which had a need for migrants but were fearful of taking on groups deemed to be 'inassimilable'. The US, UK and Canada all had Alien Laws at the same time, which prohibited 'undesirables' such as Asians and Jews from entering their state. As part of the 1901 Act in Australia, there were quotas on the number of Asians that could enter per year as well as language and health tests (which allowed migrant officials to randomly apply them to those that were, by appearance, deemed undesirable). Nonetheless, the idea of choice when thinking about migration is very important – the premise here is that you have a will to leave your country of origin with the knowledge that the receiving state will accept you.

By contrast, the term refugee has no association with choice. It is a relatively new term, first arriving in English usage at the end of the seventeenth century. Originally referring in French to someone searching for refuge and assistance, the term refugee came to be associated with people fleeing some form of persecution. When it first came into English usage, it was used to describe the Protestant Huguenots who fled Catholic France in 1648, fearing persecution because of their refusal to convert to Catholicism. The Netherlands and England, the primary receiving states of the Huguenot population, were not resistant to accepting the Huguenot population because a large proportion of them were wealthy, aligned with aristocracy (which

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Box 30.1:   Terminology

Migrants and refugees

A *migrant* is a person who leaves their state by choice, and whom the receiving state accepts by choice.

A *forced migrant* refers to a person who did not leave their country by choice, but nor are they eligible for refugee status under the 1951 Convention (see the next section).

An *illegal migrant* is a migrant who enters another state without seeking permission first to do so and will often remain in the host state without a visa which allows them to stay or work there.

A *refugee* is often forced to flee, to enter a state without its permission and is not always welcomed in the state in which they seek refuge.

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particularly suited England's form of state rule), of similar religion and, in some cases, skilled.

Conversely though, if the population had been poor, uneducated and without social or religious links to their host country, there arguably would not have been such acceptance, and it is this *lack* of guaranteed state reception, alongside the forced nature of flight that distinguishes the refugee from the migrant in the modern state. Though the term refugee is associated with fleeing and a lack of choice, it is also associated with an imposition upon the receiving state. The state has little choice to accept or refuse because the refugee has nowhere else to go. This was never more marked than after the Russian **Revolution** of 1917 and at the end of World War I, when approximately twenty million refugees existed in Europe and could not, due to changes in state identities, borders and citizenship, return to where they originally lived. This left Western European countries with large numbers of displaced people that newly emerging states did not want because of this group's potential burden on attempts to rebuild infrastructure, distribute housing, and provide employment and social welfare for their own population.

The origins of refugee law

Contemporary international refugee law has its origins in the inter-war period between World Wars I and II. In 1921, the League of Nations was enlisted to assist with the resettlement of post-war refugees, principally Russians and Armenians. By the end of World War II, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created under the **UN** umbrella to deal with the forty million refugees across Europe. A crucial part of guaranteeing resettlement places (see Box 30.2) for these refugees required the creation of criteria that could be used to define who was eligible for such assistance and who was not, so that not just 'anyone' could be given refugee status along with all the legal and economic benefits that came with such status.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) agreed that it would be a fear of political persecution that would determine whether a person was a refugee or not. This definition had its origins in the work of the League of Nations Office for Refugees from 1926 to 1939.

Box 30.2:   Terminology

Definitions of a refugee according to international law

Resettlement is the relocation of a refugee from a refugee camp to another state that will accept them and provide them with the same rights and benefits as a citizen.
    The 1951 Convention (Article 1A) defines a refugee as a person who:

> 'Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.'

The 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees was an addendum to the 1951 Convention which removed the time (prior to 1 January 1951) and geographic constraints (in Europe) from Article 1 of the 1951 Convention. This meant that a state could sign the 1967 Protocol and still follow all the remaining articles in the 1951 Convention, but without any limitations to its applicability. A number of newly decolonised states in Africa had discussed creating their own refugee instrument, due to their resistance to the time and geographic limitations of the 1951 Convention. The UNHCR sought to prevent this through introducing the 1967 Protocol.

By the time UN member-states had to vote on what the definition of a refugee would be in 1951, the association of persecution with politics became the only legitimate understanding of what makes one a refugee. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter referred to as 1951 Convention, see Box 30.2) was created by the fifty-five states that were members of the Third Committee of the United Nations. The 1951 Convention was created as a legal guideline for states to use. Each Article within the Convention contributes to the process of refugee determination – including the definition of a refugee, how a refugee should be treated when first seeking asylum on a foreign border, the right not to be returned to their country of origin once determined as a refugee (*non-refoulement*), and what rights and benefits a refugee should receive from their host state – that is, recognition of marriage, intellectual property, employment and so on. What was most important about this Convention, though, was that it determined who a refugee was and thus excluded many who would claim such status.

When the 1951 Convention was created the only people who could receive the status of a refugee were those affected by events in Europe prior to 1 January 1951. States did have the option to apply the definition of a refugee to those outside Europe, but it could be only due to events prior to 1 January 1951. It is also important to bear in mind that the 1951 Convention was created at the beginning of the **Cold War**. The US and France argued that the spread of **communism** across Eastern Europe was a growing cause for the flow of refugees into Western Europe, and that refuge for this group should be the primary focus for resettlement for they were fleeing the worst kind of political persecution: communism. Thus, the political over-tones associated with refugee status were apparent and the 1951 Convention was used as an instrument by Western states *against* communism, and to support those fleeing it. This did not change until the end of the Cold War in 1991, though the time and geographic constraints

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Box 30.3:   Key texts

Important articles within the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

Article 31

The host state is not to impose penalties on refugees for their illegal entry or presence when they come directly from a country where their life or freedom was threatened; provided they present themselves to authorities without delay. Nor should their movement be restricted for an undue length of time.

Article 33

Refugees bear the right not to be forcibly returned or expelled to a situation which would threaten one's life or freedom. This is the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Article 34

The host state should, upon conferment of refugee status, begin procedures to naturalise the refugee and provide citizenship rights.

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were removed by the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1967 Protocol) (see Box 30.2).

What is the purpose of refugee law?

International refugee law has three primary purposes. The first is to provide states with a process for recognising people who have entered sovereign territory without permission. These 'recognition of refugee status' procedures permit states to identify whether the entrant is worthy of admission without punishment for arriving illicitly. Second, it gives the refugee a form of recognition that should provide them with rights – such as the right to not be returned to their country of origin, as stated under Article 33 of the 1951 Convention. Another right is encompassed in Article 31, which stipulates that a person once deemed to be a refugee is neither to be penalised nor detained for entering the host country without permission and must be provided with legal protection by the host state. This means that there can be no such thing as an illegal immigrant if found to be a refugee, and this means that the state, if a signatory to the Convention, is required to determine the person's status first so that refugees are not wrongly punished.

The third purpose of refugee law is to provide the state with an exclusion process. Unlike a migrant, a refugee is meant to be able to enter any country without fear of return or penalisation. States wanted to be able to make sure that the person was 'worthy' of these rights; they did not want their state to be encumbered by people who just wanted to make a better life for themselves without the fuss of going through the migration application processes, or people who could be criminals or **security** threats masquerading as refugees. However, due to its emphasis on political persecution, the definition of a refugee reflects a very narrow definition of what causes someone to flee and seek protection from another state. In practice, it is very difficult for an individual to prove a genuine fear of political persecution. The times

that refugee status has been granted to a 'mass' group of refugees, such as an ethnic population or a group with defined political affiliation, have been very rare, largely because it requires the UN General Assembly to pass a resolution allowing the UNHCR to grant mass refugee status to this particular group. Examples where this has occurred are, for example, the Hungarian population fleeing a communist crackdown on the state in 1954, and Indochinese refugees fleeing communist repression from 1979 to 1989.

The distribution of refugees around the world

The global distribution of refugees exemplifies the dilemma that the world currently faces with the movement of people. Developing countries hold 95 per cent of the world's refugee population (van Selm 2003: 261). There are, generally speaking, three reasons for this – the definition of a refugee, the instability of developing countries, and geography.

    As stated earlier, the refugee definition is very narrow, and is usually given only after the individual has proven they would face political persecution if returned to their country of origin. This definition excludes anyone fleeing mass violence – because they cannot necessarily prove that they are being specifically targeted because of their politics or even racial or religious characteristics. Anyone fleeing because of an unstable government causing generalised fear or violence does not immediately receive refugee status until it is first proven. If a person is fleeing because of a lack of medical services or dire economic circumstances, that is, because a type of treatment is unavailable, or because they face malnutrition and even starvation – these conditions are not considered legitimate reasons for flight under the 1951 Convention. Further, forced uprooting due to natural disasters technically does not fall under the 1951 Convention definition. What this means is that even if a person is able to seek asylum in a state that is a member of the 1951 Convention, refugee status will not be granted because of a generalised fear of violence, authoritarian rule, poverty, famine, natural disaster or failed medical care. However, people still flee due to these conditions, which partly explains why such high numbers of refugees and displaced persons take flight from the developing world. The number of refugees is staggering – two million refugees live on the Pakistan border having fled Afghanistan, while the Sudanese refugee population increased by 21 per cent to account for 43 per cent of the total refugee population in 2004 (UNHCR 2005: 2–3). After the **genocide** in Rwanda, 250,000 people fled to Tanzania in forty-eight hours (Halverson 2001: 308). It is impossible in such conditions to individually assess who does and does not meet the narrow definition of a refugee, yet in order for resettlement places to be offered by Western countries, this is precisely what must happen. So many refugees remain in often unsafe, unsanitary, miserable conditions in refugee camps because no other state will take them under a refugee program until it is proven that they fall under the narrow legal definition.

    The second reason for the high number of refugees in developing countries is political instability. Much work has been done in development studies about how the era of **decolonisation** in the early 1950s through to the late 1960s left many Third World states with very little state capacity. The result is that many developing countries have had unstable governments, at best fluctuating economies and sometimes civil law. Furthermore, there is a level of apathy within developing countries with refugee populations, because as Western states

Table 30.1: Persons of concern to UNHCR – by region

Region	1 Jan 2004*	1 Jan 2005
Asia	6,112,500	6,899,600
Africa	4,285,100	4,861,400
Europe	4,242,800	4,429,900
North America	978,100	853,300
Latin America & the Caribbean	1,316,400	2,070,800
Oceania	74,400	82,400
TOTAL	17,009,300	19,197,400

*Revised year-end figures.
Source: UNHCR 2006

Table 30.2: Estimated number of refugees and total persons of concern to UNHCR worldwide*

Year	Refugees	Total Population of Concern
1980	8,446,000	—
1981	9,706,000	—
1982	10,310,000	—
1983	10,610,000	—
1984	10,717,000	—
1985	11,851,000	—
1986	12,620,000	—
1987	13,114,000	—
1988	14,331,000	—
1989	14,716,000	—
1990	17,378,000	—
1991	16,837,000	—
1992	17,818,000	—
1993	16,306,000	—
1994	15,754,000	—
1995	14,896,000	—
1996	13,357,000	19,795,000
1997	12,015,000	19,895,000
1998	11,481,000	20,628,000
1999	11,687,000	21,871,000
2000	12,130,000	19,922,000
2001	12,117,000	20,779,000
2002	10,594,000	17,009,000
2003	9,680,000	19,197,000
2004	9,237,000	

*Includes revised year-end figures. All figures as at 31 December of each given year
Source: UNHCR 2006

increasingly absolve themselves of any responsibility for refugee populations located outside of their borders, the financial and 'burden sharing' assistance has declined and shifted onto developing states. This results in cases where refugees may be forcibly returned to their country of origin, which increases the instability in the area and results in even more refugees flowing out. An example of this was on the border between Thailand and Cambodia during the 1970s and 1980s. After Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1979 and removed the Khmer Rouge government, many Cambodians tried to enter the Thai border to seek refuge from the continued fighting between the Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese forces. Often, the Cambodian populations would be forcibly returned at gunpoint – only to return as the pressure on food grew and stability decreased with ever-larger displaced populations trying to exist on the Thai-Cambodian border.

This border impasse brings us to the third point of difference between developing and developed states – geography. The majority of Western, developed states have either 'buffer' states between themselves and the countries that refugees flee from, or are completely isolated from other states by water. Western Europe has, since the end of the Cold War, obligated Eastern European states wishing to join the European Union to sign on to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, so as to compel them to deal with any refugee populations moving from the East. This has relieved the pressure on Western Europe from being the only regional bloc in Europe to provide legal refugee status. A country such as Australia has an even easier time ensuring that no refugees surreptitiously pass a rocky border region, or thickly covered forest area that demarcates a border, because entering by sea or air is the only way to enter Australia. Seeking asylum by sea is a very dangerous and obvious way of seeking asylum, thus its rates are incredibly low (as is discussed below). Entering by tourist visa or a working visa and then claiming asylum at the airport, or illegally overstaying visa conditions, are the more common ways that people seek entry into Australia. But once again, it is also a difficult process as the Australian government is well able to provide for enough customs stations and surveillance to catch the great majority of those attempting to stay as an 'illegal migrant'.

The geographic point is a very important one because it not only highlights the significance of defining borders – in that the more that a state can isolate itself from other countries the more 'secure' the state is from illegal migrants – but it also highlights another reason for the apathy that developed countries have to the plight of developing countries with swelling refugee populations. When you consider that the developed world looks after only 5 per cent of the present 19.2 million refugee population, the remainder have to try to gain refugee status and eke out an existence in countries that can barely provide for their own populations (UNHCR 2006; van Selm 2003: 261). Therefore, the refugee 'problem' remains much more in developing countries than developed (see Tables 30.1 and 30.2).

Australia: from the White Australia policy to *Tampa*

Between 1901 and the mid-1960s, Australia's policy towards migration was best encapsulated by the White Australia policy. The White Australia policy came about largely for two reasons. The first was the new labour movement, predominantly made up of Irish migrants and supported by the Australian Labor Party, which did not want their labour industry to

be overrun by 'inferior' races. This term indicated a deeply racist sentiment on behalf of the labour groups, but also a fear that 'if inferior races used to inferior conditions were able to dominate the labour market' white Australians would be out of their jobs (Jupp 2002: 8). The second reason was the fear of the 'Asian peril', which was that if Australia was not careful, it would be taken over by the Asian races. Chinese migrants had, like the Irish, Italian and indeed English populations, been coming to Australia for a new life and new opportunities since the nineteenth century. However, after the discovery of gold in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1851, their numbers increased. This disturbed the white labour unions, and politicians felt that the white British settler identity was in danger from Chinese immigration. The White Australia policy thus sought to actively discourage and even bar those who could not speak English or were not of Anglo-Saxon origin.

The use of the White Australia policy as a party platform was eventually abandoned by both the Liberal and Labor parties in the 1960s, at least partly because racist policy was hampering closer relations with newly independent Asian states. John Gorton's Liberal government started the erosion of White Australia policy while in power in the 1960s, and the Whitlam government formally abolished any discrimination of migrant entry based on grounds of race, skin colour or nationality in 1973. Australia was the pivotal sixth country to sign the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1954, which meant that the 1951 Convention could be brought into operation for all states to sign. Yet, it was not until 1978 that Australia took steps to implement formal procedures for determining refugee status in accordance with the Convention. Before then, the highest migrant population to have entered Australia were the post-World War II European refugees accepted under a migration scheme, which had still insisted that these people had qualities appealing to the Australian government (regardless of their reasons for fleeing).

However, between 1975 and 1985, Australia had accepted 85,000 Indochinese refugees, and their flight from their homelands had led to the implementation of refugee law into Australian domestic law (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1985: 68–9). By the late 1980s the Labor government under Hawke continued with high immigration levels in order to stimulate the economy, but the level of humanitarian (or refugee) intake remained low. Instead, the emphasis was put on finding migrants who were skilled and had businesses to introduce within Australia (Gibney 2004: 184).

Today, Australia has continued to maintain an intake quota each year of between 9000 and 12,000 for refugees, though this quota is rarely filled (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs 2006). This is largely because the conditions that Australia places upon who they will accept as a refugee are too narrow to fit with the profile of many refugees needing resettlement. It is quite common for Australia to place conditions on refugees awaiting resettlement from camps, for instance, to speak English, have a certain standard of education, and be physically and mentally healthy; there is even an age threshold. This set of criteria is very hard to meet considering the people seeking asylum often have little education, have survived in refugee camps for long periods of time with minimal health or educational facilities, have little or no assets and often large families that vary in age and health. In the light of these entrance criteria, it is not surprising that Australia rarely fills its quota, with no more than 4000 Convention refugees accepted each year (Jupp 2002: 182–7).

Generally speaking, Australia's quota system is not severe in the sense that it is no more or less stringent than other developed states. A further legitimate concern is the need for

careful security screening of refugees, which has become a particular priority since the 'war on terror'. Yet it is important to briefly point out here that with the exception of three individuals involved in the July 2005 bombing in London, no other al-Qaeda attack has been perpetrated by refugees or terrorists seeking entry as refugees (van Selm 2003). Nonetheless, governments constantly raise this to justify harsher refugee procedures. The result of developed states' reluctance to relax their criteria for refugee resettlement though is that the overwhelming majority of refugees today have to endure harsh conditions in a relatively poor country of first asylum, which can be as dangerous as the country they just fled. It is with this situation in mind that one begins to understand why people will seek avenues other than staying in overcrowded refugee camps and relying on overworked UNHCR temporary offices in the area (Maley 2003).

People smuggling was first termed 'queue jumping' by the Keating government and has since been adopted by the Howard government. While there is, as illustrated above, no real queue to jump, the Australian government presents itself as providing stability and **order** against cheating asylum seekers (Gibney 2004). Between 1998 and 2005, as we will see in the case of the MV *Tampa*, the Australian government sought to control the situation by presenting the asylum seekers in this particular light, in order to justify the actions that the government took to 'stabilise' the situation. What was forgotten though was that these people *were seeking asylum* and it is worth noting that the majority of those on the MV *Tampa* have since been granted refugee status.

The influx of refugees had been a political issue in Australia before the *Tampa* crisis of August 2001. Between 1999 and 2000, 8316 new asylum seekers arrived by boat in Australia in comparison to only between 4000 and 6000 in the previous years (Bostock 2002: 293; Jupp 2002). But compared to those arriving without permission by plane – some 50,000 are estimated to overstay their visas each year – this number was still not high (Mares 2001: 30). Rather, it was the visual impact of seeing a border being crossed that played a more powerful role in generating domestic fear.

During the *Tampa* Crisis (see Box 30.4), Howard sought to excise Christmas Island, which is where the refugees would have originally been delivered by the *Tampa*, from Australian waters for migration purposes. This legislation was rushed through Parliament as the Migrant Amendment Act 2001. This Act meant that refugees could not be processed on a part of Australian territory that had been excised from Australian migratory law. The second piece of legislation was the Border Protection Act 2001, which allowed people detained on ships, boats or aircraft to be removed and sent elsewhere to be processed. The final legislative act was the Migration Legislation Amendment Act 2001, which denied refugees the right to legal access to the Federal Court when seeking to overturn a Refugee Review Tribunal decision. The reinstatement of temporary visas to recognised refugees, as opposed to permanent settlement, was also introduced with more stringent categories for why temporary visa holders could *not* obtain permanent protection after their three-year stay.

It is important to note that each of these amendments breached the 1951 Convention: the excision of islands for processing refugees is against the spirit of the Convention in that the request for asylum when having landed on a part of territory that belongs to a country must be recognised. The Border Protection Act results in the sometimes forcible removal of people which is also against Article 3 (non-discrimination), Article 28 (provision of travel documents) and Article 31 (no penalties for entering a country without permission). The

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Box 30.4:   Case study

The *Tampa* crisis

The MV *Tampa* was a container ship owned by a Norwegian shipping company which was making its journey from Western Australia to Indonesia in August 2001. It had just entered Indonesian waters when a distress call was made across the radio for a leaky boat carrying 433 refugees needing assistance just inside Australian waters. The MV *Tampa* radioed that it was closest to the location of the boat and, in accordance with international maritime law, said that they would assist with the rescue. However, when the MV *Tampa*, now carrying the refugees on board, attempted to enter Australian waters Prime Minister Howard insisted that as the refugees had been attempting to illegally enter Australian territory, entry would be denied. This left the Captain of the MV *Tampa* in a difficult position. On the one hand he had a duty to take these refugees to the closest destination in the territory which they were in – Australia – but on the other hand, according to international maritime law, the ship still needed the permission of the territory before it could dock there. The *Tampa* refugees were eventually taken to Christmas Island and immediately sent to the Pacific island of Nauru. This subsequently has become known as the 'Pacific Solution'. The Australian government has provided approximately $500 million to poorer nations such as Nauru and Papua New Guinea in return for agreeing to allow Australian immigration officials and international organisations such as the UNHCR to process so-called 'illegal' arrivals who attempted to enter Australian shores. Once an asylum seeker is processed, they must wait to hear if Australia or another Western country is willing to resettle them. This solution has become the queue that never before existed. Attempts by the Federal Court to amend this situation and prevent the Pacific Solution from continuing have only resulted in the government repeatedly changing its legislation so as to outflank the Court's decision.

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final act prohibiting access to Australian courts is forbidden by Article 16 which demands that refugees must be able to access all avenues of the host country's legal system.

   The biggest problem with this refugee response 'solution' is that the premise which it rests upon – that these are illegal migrants – is flawed. Australia, as a member of the 1951 Convention and having implemented many of the articles that set out the recognition of refugees into domestic law, can be considered as breaching its own laws. There is no law against seeking to enter Australia for asylum purposes – even without prior permission (Gibney 2004: 191). As long as the person states that they are seeking asylum, they cannot be punished or labelled as an illegal migrant.

Conclusion

Between 1947 and 1972, Australia had taken in 260,000 refugees; between 1972 and 2002, 320,000 have arrived under refugee and humanitarian programs for permanent settlement (Jupp 2002: 181–2). Detention for 'illicit' arrivals is widely used and there appears to be no let-up of the use of temporary visa protection, whilst gaining access to courts for refugees is becoming a daily struggle for their lawyers. Furthermore, in early 2006 the Australian

government temporarily considered strengthening the 2001 Border Protection Act, which would have forced *all* asylum seekers arriving by boat to have their claims processed offshore.

This chapter has demonstrated that the development of refugee policy at the international level has sought specifically to differentiate between a migrant and a refugee, with the implicit idea that the term refugee is a special status granted to few due to exceptional circumstances. However, as this chapter has also shown through highlighting the shared burden of the refugee population between the developing and developed world and the specific case of Australia, the number seeking refuge still remains high and the need for equitable sharing of the burden among states is crucial. The imbalance between developing states and developed states does affect refugees and the choices they make in seeking asylum. The fact that 95 per cent of the world's refugee population remain in mostly cramped, unsafe conditions in the developing world indicates why people seek other desperate means to have a chance of a better life.

Questions

1. What is the difference between a *migrant* and a *refugee*?
2. Should the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees have a broader definition of 'refugee' in Article 1A?
3. Do you think that the majority of Western states are protected by their borders from asylum-seeking populations? Does this mean that refugee populations are not the West's 'problem'?
4. Does Australia have a responsibility to process asylum seekers? Locate the responsibility at the domestic and/or international level.
5. Do you think Australia would ever reinstate the White Australia policy? Why or why not?
6. Does Australia's temporary visa system for refugees who arrived via 'illegal entry' seem like punishment? Should these individuals be punished for their mode of entry?

Further reading

Castles, Stephen and Miller, Mark J. 2003, The age of migration, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan. Useful account of migration in an age of globalisation.
Gibney, Matthew J. 2004, The ethics and politics of asylum: liberal democracy and the response to refugees, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Important theoretically informed account of how liberal democratic states (Australia, Germany, UK, US) deal with refugees.
Jupp, James 2002, From White Australia to Woomera: the story of Australian immigration, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Good historical account of immigration and refugee policy in Australia.
Zolberg, Aristide, Suhrke, Astri and Aguayo, Sergio 1989, Escape from violence, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Historically and sociologically informed account of refugee flows.

Robyn Eckersley

Introduction

This chapter will introduce three of the most prominent global environmental discourses: sustainable development, environmental security and environmental justice. It begins by tracking the emergence of environmental problems as a 'global' political problem and traces the discursive shift from 'limits to growth' in the early 1970s to sustainable development in the 1980s. It then highlights the environmental challenges of the post-**Cold War** period and introduces the discourses of environmental justice and ecological security. This is followed by a brief introduction to the different ways in which the basic questions of global environmental politics have been addressed (or ignored) by the three broad traditions of international relations: **realism**, **liberalism** and **critical theory**. Finally, the chapter turns to contemporary challenges, focusing on the failure of both the US and Australia to take a leadership role in tackling the most serious global environmental problem of all – global warming.

The study of global environmental politics has emerged as a problem-oriented and multidisciplinary field of inquiry that seeks to understand (i) how and why global ecological problems arise and persist; (ii) how ecological risks are distributed through space and time; and (iii) how the global community (encompassing **states** and **non-state actors**) should respond. These three basic questions frame the field of inquiry of global environmental politics. Not only that, but they also signal the enormous political challenges facing international and transnational collective efforts to protect the earth's ecosystems and climate in a world of 190-odd **sovereign states** with vast disparities in capacity, resource endowments, population, cultures and levels of economic development.

Global environmental politics is a sprawling field of study, both in terms of the sheer breadth of the object of study and the variety of disciplinary frames that are relevant to global ecopolitical problems. While the primary object of study is political responses to global and transboundary environmental problems, the distinction between global and transboundary, and national and local, environmental problems is hard to maintain. All global ecological problems produce local effects, and local environmental problems often have transboundary causes and/or consequences. For example, local ecological problems such as species extinction or deforestation are globally ubiquitous, and tied into **international systems** of investment, production and exchange. To give another example, severe local drought or deforestation

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Box 31.1: Key texts

Where can I find published research on global environmental politics?

Academic journals covering debates in global environmental politics include: *Environmental Politics; Global Environmental Politics; Global Environmental Change; Climate Policy; Environment and Planning A, B* and *C; Journal of Sustainable Development and Innovation; Environment and Organisation;* and *The Journal of Environment and Development.* Systematic reporting of global environmental trends can be found in the regular *State* of the *World* reports and *Vital Signs*, both published by the World Resources Institute, and the *Geo* reports produced by the United Nations Environment Programme.

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can give rise to ecological **refugees**. The term 'global' in global environmental politics has therefore grown to encompass all those transborder flows and relationships that are implicated in the generation and management of environmental problems, along with the global and transnational discourses that frame our understanding of these problems. This encompasses not only international relations between states but also transnational relations between state and non-state actors, ranging from scientists and **transnational corporations** to international organisations and environmental **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**.

It is now a trite observation that ecological problems transgress political borders and that any comprehensive understanding of global environmental politics likewise requires the crossing of disciplinary borders. Reflecting these insights, the field of global environmental politics includes scholars working within a variety of research traditions within the **discipline** of International Relations as well as the broader field of global politics or **globalisation** studies (see Box 31.1). This has produced a variety of strikingly different theories of global environmental politics, ranging from explanatory to **normative** and conservative to radical. At the same time, several prominent global environmental discourses have emerged in both the practice and study of global environmental politics that cut across sub-disciplinary boundaries, anchor general debates, and inform political proposals for institutional reform.

The rise of the environment as a global political problem

The 'modern ecological crisis' – marked by an exponential increase in the range, scale and seriousness of environmental problems around the world – is generally understood to have emerged only in the second half of the twentieth century, although its beginnings may be traced to the processes of modernisation and globalisation that followed European global expansion and the industrial revolution. The long period of economic boom following the end of World War II produced a range of mass produced goods but also a mass of ubiquitous ecological problems. In all, rapid world economic growth, the proliferation of new technologies and rising population in the post-World War II period generated increasing energy and resource consumption, new sources of waste (for example, nuclear waste) and rising levels of pollution and waste production and the rapid erosion of the earth's biodiversity. International concern over environmental problems heightened in the 1980s with the discovery of the 'hole' in the ozone layer and the problem of global warming.

From limits to growth to sustainable development

The systematic tracking and politicisation of global trends in population, resource and energy consumption, pollution and species extinction began in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the so-called 'limits to growth' debate, which publicised the uncanny correlation between the escalating rates of global economic growth and environmental degradation. Influential publications such as the Club of Rome's *The limits to growth* (Meadows et al 1972) offered dire predictions of impending ecological catastrophe. This period also saw the consolidation of the modern environment movement as a persistent and ubiquitous social movement and the enactment of a raft of new environmental legislation in many OECD countries. The new global environmental consciousness was also reflected in the increasing popularity of the metaphor of 'Spaceship Earth' and the circulation of the first images of the planet taken from outer space by NASA. The new metaphors and images of the whole earth, along with the oil crisis of 1973–74, contributed to the growing popular recognition of the fragility of life-support systems, the finite character of many of the earth's resources, and the need for a collective response to global ecological problems. The first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972 led to the creation of the first official **UN** environmental organ – the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

However, the general message of the limits to growth advocates – that environmental protection required drastic measures, including the curbing of economic growth and human population – attracted a critical backlash from technological optimists and proved to be unpalatable to political leaders. In any event, the discourse of limits to growth was soon overshadowed by the new discourse of 'sustainable development' following the publication in 1987 of *Our common future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, otherwise known as the Brundtland Report) (WCED 1987). The WCED, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, was set up in 1983 by the UN General Assembly to take stock of global ecological problems and develop a global agenda for change. After reviewing global environmental trends, the WCED called on the international community to adopt a new path of sustainable development that would meet the needs of present generations without sacrificing the needs of future generations. Whereas limits to growth advocates had called for a curbing of economic growth or a new steady-state economy, the WCED argued that sustainable development merely required the 'decoupling' of economic growth and environmental protection through constant technological innovation that reduced the amount of natural resources and energy consumed and waste produced per unit of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This has also served as the central claim of the more recent discourse of 'ecological modernisation', which argues that improving the environmental efficiency of production through technological innovation actually improves rather than retards national economic competitiveness.

However, the WCED not only called for improvements in the environmental efficiency of production; it also called for intra- and inter-generational equity, noting that communities that are impoverished are often forced to utilise their environment in unsustainable ways. It argued that a relatively rapid rise in per capita income in developing countries was an essential step towards sustainable development and it recommended that both the rich and poor worlds had to keep growing, with the poor world growing faster in order to 'catch up'. This argument highlights the paradoxical, and still deeply contested, relationship between economic growth and environmental quality: further growth increases societal capacity to respond to environmental degradation but also increases environmental degradation. Increasing

the environmental efficiency of each unit of production merely slows the rate of increase in environmental degradation, but does reduce the aggregate levels of energy and resource use.

Nonetheless, the WCED's 'win-win' compromise was politically appealing and widely endorsed by governments, key environmental NGOs and business leaders. The concept of sustainable development served as the organising theme of the second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the 'Earth Summit') held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It also framed the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (the core principles of sustainable development), and Agenda 21 (the global action plan for sustainable development). Many national, provincial and local governments around the world have developed sustainable development strategies or 'green plans', albeit with varying levels of commitment and success. In the wake of Brundtland, the 'limits to growth' idea that economic growth and environmental protection stand in a simple, zero-sum relationship has now been replaced with the idea that it is possible, at least to some extent, to *integrate* environment and development goals. Exactly how much remains a matter of serious political debate.

The post-Cold War context

From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, the 1992 Earth Summit marks the high water mark of international environmental concern in the twentieth century. This unprecedented gathering of heads of state, NGOs and world media occurred in the wake of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986, the 'discovery' of new global problems such as the thinning of the ozone layer and global warming, the publication of the influential Brundtland Report and the rise of green political parties. It also served as the meeting for the final negotiation and signing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The thawing of the Cold War had prompted considerable speculation about the possibility of a new world **order** that would not only be peaceful but also ecologically sustainable. Lester Brown, for example, in the 1991 *State of the World* report, suggested that 'the battle to save the planet will replace the battle over ideology as the organising theme of the new world order' (Brown 1991: 3).

Instead of replacing the old ideological debates between East and West, however, the discourse of sustainable development now constitutes one of the new ideological debates of the post-Cold War period. The fall of **communism** signalled the triumph of **capitalism** over communism as a more efficient system for allocating resources but not for protecting nature or maintaining the viability of ecosystems upon which human well-being depends. The new, overlapping strategies of sustainable development and ecological modernisation promise improvements in the environmental efficiency of production but they provide no means of ensuring that economies operate within the carrying capacity of ecosystems. Indeed, improving environmental productivity also fuels more investment, production and consumption. The more radical wing of the environment movement has argued that capitalism is inherently unsustainable because it is inherently expansionary, it discounts the future and it privatises profits while socialising or 'externalising' the ecological costs of economic activity. Strict environmental regulation of investment, production and consumption is defended as necessary to protect life-support systems and biological diversity. However, this critical environmental analysis runs against the dominant consensus (reflected in the Brundtland Report,

and the policies of the **World Bank**, the OECD and other international organisations) that capitalist economic growth and environmental protection are, for the most part, compatible.

Ecological security

The lifting of the iron curtain eased one form of insecurity (the imminent risk of nuclear war between the **superpowers**) only to reveal new forms of environmental insecurity, such as dwindling supplies of fresh water, fisheries, arable soil, the erosion of biodiversity and the serious threats of global warming. Instead of invading armies, citizens now contemplated the prospect of 'invading' deserts and oceans, ultraviolet radiation, and malaria-carrying mosquitoes, all of which challenge traditional notions and practices of territorial defence. Predicted sea level rises and damage to coastal infrastructure from global warming are expected to trigger a mass movement of ecological refugees that is likely to generate political friction within and between states. Some analysts have predicted that competition over the increasing scarcity of natural resources (such as timber, arable land and especially oil and water) is likely to lead to an increasing incidence of armed conflict. There have even been proposals for the establishment of a UN Environmental Security Council to deal with major environmental conflicts and disasters. However, critics point out that purely environmental conflicts are rare and that they are usually entangled with other conflicts.

Although the concept of ecological security has not enjoyed the same notoriety as the concept of sustainable development in the international environment and development debates, it nonetheless has some influential advocates, including Gro Harlem Brundtland and former US Vice President Al Gore. Yet there are many who doubt the wisdom of employing the language of **security** in order to raise the status of ecological problems to a matter of 'high politics'. Indeed, sceptics have pointed to the potential for the concept to backfire and ultimately impede the quest for an ecologically sustainable new world order. Far from greening the state, the military and global governance, critics have suggested that the discourse of ecological security unwittingly may serve to reinforce a **Hobbesian** state system and legitimate the militarisation of state responses to environmental threats (Deudney 1990). However, proponents argue that a more comprehensive security framework enables critical reflection on the sources, moral referents, responses and conditions for long-term environmental and human security. They also claim that it has the potential to transform narrow, state-centred security thinking and possibly enable the redirection of military spending towards national and international environmental protection. Proponents of a more comprehensive (and critical) security framework also highlight the need to democratise societal processes of risk assessment, both nationally and internationally.

Environmental justice

The period of 'global environmental awakening' in the 1970s drew heavily on the Spaceship Earth metaphor, which underscored the common ecological fate of humankind. However, many critics on the left of the political spectrum were quick to point out there were stark differences between those travelling first class and those working in the engine room. Indeed, the skewed distribution of environmental 'goods' (for example, urban amenity, clean air and water) and 'bads' (such as pollution) has emerged as a major source of political conflict at the local, national and global levels over the last two decades. Emerging from the black ghettos of the US, the environmental justice movement has highlighted the fact that three out of

five African-Americans and Latino Americans live in communities with abandoned toxic waste sites while none can be found in leafy middle class suburbs. National and regional environmental and labour organisations have pointed out that many polluting industries have relocated from the developed to the developing world where labour is cheaper and environmental standards weaker and/or poorly enforced (such as the Mexican *maquiladora* region just south of the US border).

In international environmental negotiations, developing countries have drawn attention to the huge disparity in per capita levels of resource and energy consumption and waste production between the rich world and poor world. The United Nations Environment Programme's Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, completed in March 2005, found that approximately 60 per cent of the ecosystem services that support life on earth are being degraded or used unsustainably (UNEP 2005). It also found that the world's poor are suffering a disproportionate share of the harmful effects of environmental degradation. The report predicted that the continued degradation of life-support services could, in the absence of radical policy shifts, intensify over the next fifty years and undermine the achievement of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has also reported that low-income populations in developing countries, especially in tropical and sub-tropical regions, will be the most vulnerable to the risks of climate change (IPCC 2001: 9, 13). In short, many communities that consume the least energy and resources are destined to suffer the worst effects of global environmental degradation.

Environmental justice arguments have been especially prominent in the climate change negotiations. A key concern of developing countries is that the developed world may use ecological problems such as global warming as an excuse to 'kick the ladder down' and deny developing countries the opportunity to increase their consumption of energy and resources to raise the standard of living of their people relative to the developed world. These developing country concerns have been acknowledged in general terms in the Brundtland Report, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and a number of major environmental treaties, including the UNFCCC and its offspring, the **Kyoto Protocol**. For example, the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility' enshrined in the Rio Declaration also serves as a core environmental justice principle in the UNFCCC and in the 'Berlin mandate' that set the negotiating parameters for the Kyoto Protocol. Applied to the climate change challenge, this principle acknowledges that the developed world should take the lead in tackling climate change because it has a greater responsibility for past global emissions along with a greater capacity to absorb emission cuts than developing countries. It also acknowledges specific development needs and special circumstances of developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Accordingly, under the Kyoto Protocol, only developed countries are required to commit to mandatory greenhouse gas reduction targets in the first commitment period (2008–12). As we shall see, both the US and Australia have expressly rejected this requirement.

Theories of global environmental politics

Realism and neoliberal institutionalism

The environment emerged as a 'new agenda issue' in international relations around the late 1970s. Most of this new environmental scholarship formed part of a larger research project

on increasing global economic **interdependence** and the challenge of designing international institutions that enabled interstate cooperation under conditions of **anarchy**. This new institutionalist turn, which has been dominated by neoliberal institutionalism, has produced a significant body of empirical work on both the negotiation and implementation phase of environmental treaties or 'regimes', which has successfully refuted realist predictions that it is more rational for states to 'defect' and 'free ride' than to cooperate in international environmental treaties and strategies.

Realists had argued that the anarchic character of the international system is such that there is no solution to 'the tragedy of the commons' unless it is imposed by coercion or bribery on the part of a hegemonic state or powerful **alliance** of states. States have no incentive to take multilateral or unilateral action to protect the environment whenever this might create costs or disadvantages relative to other states. Nor is it in the interests of states to protect the environment ahead of more fundamental security and economic interests. While this explanation appears to account for the positions of Australia and the US in relation to the Kyoto Protocol, it is unable to explain why 162 countries have ratified the Protocol. Nor can it explain the general proliferation of environmental treaties over the last three decades.

Neoliberal institutionalists also begin with the fundamental insight that states are self-seeking, rational egoists operating in an anarchic environment, but they diverge significantly from realists in their assessment of the efficacy of the rule of **international law** and international institutions and about the importance of relative versus absolute gains. They have shown that states will cooperate under well-designed environmental treaties or 'regimes' in order to avoid the 'suboptimal' consequences of international anarchy in situations of complex interdependence. In terms of the three basic questions of global environmental politics, neoliberal institutionalists regard international anarchy as the central 'problem' of global environmental politics to which well-designed treaties are the solution. To the extent that neoliberal institutionalists have addressed questions of environmental justice, this has been through an examination of the incentive structure of treaties, such as whether they provide an acceptable distribution of benefits and burdens for the contracting parties in terms of relative economic costs, relative environmental vulnerability and relative capacity to adjust to environmental problems. However, the broader normative debates about environmental justice and responsibility are not part of the research agenda of neoliberal institutionalism, which is confined to explanation, prediction and problem-solving rather than fundamental critique.

From critical theory to global political ecology

In contrast to the 'problem-solving' approach of neoliberal institutionalism, the critical tradition of inquiry within international relations has explicitly set itself the task of drawing attention to structures of social and economic domination and highlighting and encouraging counter-hegemonic discourses and movements that seek to overcome such domination. Building on this broad tradition, a school of international relations **theory**, variously referred to as 'global political ecology', 'critical political ecology' or 'Third World political ecology' emerged in the 1990s as a direct challenge to the environmental analyses and reformism of neoliberal institutionalists. Drawing on the **Gramscian**-inspired critical political economy of Robert Cox, globalisation studies and radical environmental scholarship in the social sciences and humanities, this new branch of international ecopolitical inquiry has identified

global capitalism, rather than the system of sovereign states, as the primary culprit for global environmental degradation, as well as the skewed distribution of ecological risks. From this perspective, global capitalism is shown to leave highly uneven patterns of development and impacts across different human communities and ecosystems both within and between particular states, with some social classes and communities leaving much bigger 'ecological footprints' at the expense of others. Whereas traditional international political economy had always focused on investment and production, global political ecology has also highlighted uneven patterns of consumption, as well as global patterns of advertising, retailing and disposal in global commodity chains. It has also highlighted the **power** of consumer and environmental organisations to redirect patterns of investment and production through consumer boycotts and green labelling.

More generally, global political ecology has highlighted the ways in which economic globalisation and the ascendancy of neoliberal economics have weakened both the steering capability and political legitimacy of states. Instead of serving as the protector and provider of public goods and services (such as the environmental quality), states are increasingly acting as facilitators of privatisation, commodification, marketisation and deregulation. At the same time, global political ecology has drawn attention to a range of new public, private and hybrid forms of governance that shape environmental policy at the local, regional and transnational levels. Examples include the corporate responsibility movement, environmental management systems, the Commission for Sustainable Development and environmental NGO product certification schemes.

Finally, for global political ecologists, the study of global environmental politics is by no means restricted to the norms and structures of global *environmental* governance, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), global environmental treaties, strategies and policy networks. Rather, it also extends to the norms and structures of *economic* governance, including organisations such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the **International Monetary Fund** that are directly implicated in structuring global resource use and development patterns. Indeed, the contradictions between international economic and environmental governance have emerged as one of the central preoccupations of global political ecology. For example, increasing attention has been directed to the ways in which the international trade regime and the management of Third World debt have promoted unsustainable development patterns and undermined the effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements.

Unlike neoliberal institutionalists, global political ecologists argue that fine-tuning environmental regimes is only part of the solution to global environmental problems. Their broader goal is to transform social structures to promote environmental justice and more sustainable patterns of production and consumption around the world.

The US and Australia – two rogue states

The US and Australia are the only two developed countries who have declined to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, yet they are also two of the world's highest per capita greenhouse gas emitters (see Figure 31.1). With less than 5 per cent of the world's population, the US consumes around a quarter of the world's fossil fuels and is the world's largest aggregate emitter. However, in
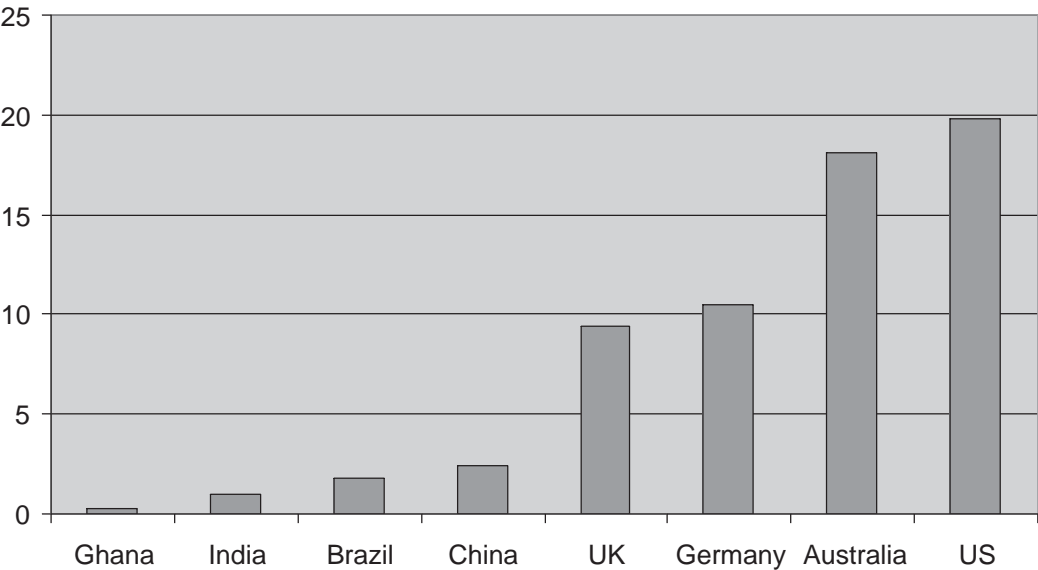
Figure 31.1: CO_2 emissions per capita for selected countries

Units: metric tons per person in 2001

Source: IEA. Data obtained from World Watch Institute, Earth Trends: Environmental Information, available at: http://earthtrends.wri.org/searchable_db/.

repudiating the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001, the Bush administration expressly rejected the principle of common but differentiated responsibility in claiming that the US would not commit to mandatory greenhouse reduction targets unless developing countries (most notably China, India and Brazil) also accepted mandatory targets in the same timeframe. The Bush administration has also made it clear that it will not undertake any greenhouse abatement measures that would harm the US economy, especially given its heavy reliance on cheap fossil fuels. American capitalism has become dependent on cheap oil, made possible by significant subsidisation of the oil and gas industries and very low fuel taxes by comparison to most European countries. The Bush–Cheney National Energy Strategy and new Energy Policy Act, passed in 2005, continue to promote oil exploration and drilling through heavy subsidisation of the oil and gas industries.

The Howard government in Australia has also declined to ratify the Kyoto Protocol for substantially the same reasons as the US, although it has maintained, somewhat schizophreni-cally, that it will nonetheless endeavour to meet its Kyoto targets (Christoff 2005). Whereas the Clinton–Gore administration accepted a 7 per cent reduction target at Kyoto in 1997, Australia was one of only three developed countries that succeeded in negotiating a target that allowed an increase (of 8 per cent) in greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 base-line to the end of the 2008–12 Kyoto commitment period. The Australian delegation at the Kyoto negotiations had argued that Australia's economic structure and trade profile (which is highly energy intensive and dependent on fossil fuels, particularly cheap coal) demanded that allowance be made for some emission growth. However, critics have pointed out the economic

modelling upon which Australia based its arguments merely looked at the economic costs of taking action but failed to factor in the costs of not taking action, and the longer term benefits of moving away from a carbon-based economy. They claim Australia will remain tethered to a carbon-based economy as the rest of the developed world (except the US) moves away from fossil fuels towards cleaner and greener energy sources,

In both their domestic and foreign climate change policies, the Bush administration and the Howard government have rejected mandatory targets and timeframes, national carbon trading schemes and strict compliance mechanisms, and have concentrated instead on promoting the voluntary technological development, deployment and transfer of existing and emerging clean technologies (including research on geosequestration or 'clean-coal'). For example, Australia has joined the US, China, India, South Korea and Japan in the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate 2004, which is a technology exchange agreement that operates outside the UN-auspiced climate change negotiations.

The Bush administration's repudiation of the Kyoto Protocol is also illustrative of a more general failure on the part of the US to follow through on the 1992 Earth Summit commitments. Under President Bush the elder, President Clinton and President Bush junior, the US has failed to develop a concerted national sustainable development strategy or otherwise implement the principles of the Rio Declaration in any systematic manner. Although the US remains a party to the UNFCCC, it has failed to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol. George W. Bush chose not to attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development held at Johannesburg in 2002. The US has also lost its leadership role in domestic environmental law and policy, which it enjoyed in the 1970s, and the European Union has now emerged as the 'green leader' in domestic and regional environmental initiatives and in the climate change negotiations.

Australia's commitment to environmental **multilateralism** over the last two decades has also waned. For example, the Hawke Labor government produced a National Strategy on Ecologically Sustainable Development and a National Greenhouse Response Strategy in 1992, the year of the Rio Earth Summit, and Australia moved quickly to ratify the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Under the Keating Labor government, Australia joined France in playing a leading role in securing a fifty-year moratorium on mineral exploration and mining in Antarctica in the Madrid Protocol. However, the Howard government has followed the US in declining to ratify the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol and, like President George W. Bush, Prime Minister Howard chose not to attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. On the domestic front, the government's modest renewable energy target of 2 per cent is overshadowed by its energy white paper, *Securing Australia's energy future* (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2004), which outlines an eight-year national plan that locks Australia into the continued use of fossil fuel.

Conclusion

Despite significant developments in environmental multilateralism, which have increasingly acknowledged the vast discrepancies in the vulnerabilities, institutional capacities, and responsibilities of the world's 190-odd states, the post-Cold War period has witnessed a degree of 'environmental summit fatigue'. This has been characterised by a lack of environmental

leadership on the part of the world's remaining superpower. The former co-chair of scientific assessment for the IPCC, John Houghton, declared in 2003 that global warming must be considered a weapon of mass destruction that is at least as dangerous as chemical, biological or nuclear weapons and **terrorism**. Others have pointed out that global warming will claim far more lives than terrorism while also amplifying existing security threats. The IPCC's next assessment report, due for release in 2007, is expected to warn of a higher rise in global average surface temperatures than previously predicted, which will set in motion even more severe consequences for ecosystems and human communities over the next 100 years and beyond.

It is somewhat of an irony that the US and Australia – two prominent members of the 'coalition of the willing' and the world's two highest per capita carbon emitters – should choose to devote so many resources to eradicating conventional **weapons of mass destruction** yet do so little to address global warming. However the seriousness of the consequences of global warming, along with the predicted onset of 'peak oil' in the next decade, may eventually prompt a re-examination by the US and Australia of their national security and energy strategies, and domestic and foreign environment policies.

Questions

1. What is 'sustainable development'? And why did the UN World Commission on Environment and Development propose it?
2. To what extent does the states-system contribute to global ecological problems?
3. Do you think the environmental crisis (extending from dwindling supplies of fresh water, fisheries and arable soil to the erosion of biodiversity and the threat of global warming) is best conceived in terms of environmental 'security'?
4. Which international relations theory offers the best means of grasping environmental issues in international relations?
5. Why have Australia and the US repudiated the Kyoto Protocol? How damaging is their repudiation to the global environmental regime?

Further reading

Bernstein, Steven 2001, The compromise of liberal environmentalism, New York: Columbia University Press. A constructivist analysis of the history of the discourse of sustainable development debate, showing how the discourse has been constrained by the requirements of capitalist economics.

Clapp, Jennifer and Dauvergne, Peter 2005, Paths to a green world: the political economy of the global environment, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Examines the relationship between economic globalisation and the environment, including trade, investment and finance, with a particular focus on developing countries.

World Watch Institute 2005. State of the world 2005: redefining global security, Washington: World Watch Institute. Explores the underlying sources of global insecurity including poverty, infectious disease, environmental degradation, and rising competition over oil and other natural resources.

World Watch Institute, online feature: 'Climate Change: Climate Change Resources' available at www.worldwatch.org/node/3950#7. Provides a rich variety of online resources on climate change, from the science of global warming to activists' networks such as the Climate Activist Network.

Global Governance and the United Nations

Samuel M. Makinda

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of global governance and the special place of the **United Nations (UN)** in international relations.[1] The chapter begins by explaining what this relatively new term 'global governance' means. It is important that global governance not be confused with global government. It then outlines the UN and its structure before discussing the special role played by the UN in embodying and fostering global governance. One of the most vital roles the UN plays in this regard is in **war** prevention and **peacebuilding**. Founded on the desire to manage conflicts peacefully, the UN has, however, occasionally seen fit to authorise the use of force, not least in response to humanitarian emergencies. Nonetheless the UN's commitment to maintaining international **peace** and **security** remains primary. The chapter concludes by reflecting on how the UN and global governance continue to rely on each other for existence.

What is global governance?

Governance occurs at various levels of social activity, from the village or local council to the **state** and the **international system**. Whenever human beings or social groups interact for extended periods, they establish a structure consisting of rules, **norms** and institutions. This structure constitutes governance and may perform diverse functions, but it is particularly significant for providing **order**, certainty and stability as perceived by the most powerful actors.

International Relations scholars started to use the term 'global governance' frequently in the 1980s, but the activities it describes have existed for centuries (Murphy 1994). Global governance currently refers to a multifaceted process in which states, individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), **multinational corporations (MNCs)**, and intergovernmental organisations participate and pursue their goals (Makinda 2000: 163–4). At the core of global governance are the rights and responsibilities of human beings, global civil society, states and other global actors. For this reason, the Commission on Global Governance

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[1] I am grateful to David Mickler and William Clapton for critical comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

Box 32.1:   Terminology

Global governance

The issues that have been canvassed under global governance since the 1980s include: **human rights**, the environment, women's rights, anti-personnel mines, international trade and **humanitarian intervention** (Wilkinson and Hughes 2002). Therefore, the following conventions and organisations reflect some of the recent achievements of global governance:
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Chemical Weapons Convention
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- World Trade Organization
- Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and
- International Criminal Court.

Australia played key roles in all of the above, but it declined to ratify the **Kyoto Protocol** to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (see chapter 31).

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defines governance as 'the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs' (Commission 1995: 2). It is important to distinguish global governance from global government. The latter is a centralised, hierarchical system of rule, whereas global governance is a looser system of rule generated by different actors and institutions. The form that global governance takes is historically contingent because it evolves as the norms, rules and institutions that underpin it change. This is why Rosenau (1998: 34) argues that 'freezing [global governance] in time is to ensure failure to comprehend its nature and vagaries'.

At the conceptual level, global governance is a process in which all global actors have equal opportunities to participate. However, in practice, global governance assumes a '**power politics**' dimension, reflecting the interests and preferences of the great powers. While middle powers, and even NGOs, may champion some norms and rules, these actors may themselves be products of the structure constructed by the great powers and may advocate what is consistent with hegemonic interests. For example, the fact that a new regime, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, was promoted by Australia does not contradict the claim that it is the great powers that shape global governance. Australia champions only those norms that are in agreement with the dominant Western values. The UN, MNCs such as Shell, and NGOs like Amnesty International also influence the practice of global governance. However, the most influential NGOs and MNCs are based in the powerful states and reflect the values of these states (see chapter 23). It is also the same powerful states that influence the activities of intergovernmental organisations. As Samuel Huntington (1993: 40) argues: 'The West in effect is using international institutions, military **power** and economic resources to run the world in ways that will maintain Western predominance, protect Western interests and promote Western political and economic values'.

To the extent that the interests and preferences of hegemonic states shape global governance, it does not accurately reflect global cultural diversity. Nor does it reflect accurately the contributions of women (Charlesworth et al 1991). Instead, it marginalises the contributions

of women and the values, cultures and standards of the weaker states and societies. Therefore, to the marginalised groups, global governance might appear as a form of external domination. To such groups, the term global governance serves as a metaphor for the processes through which the global North imposes its values on the global South.

Many of the recent achievements of global governance have been negotiated through the UN (Diehl 2001).

What is the United Nations?

Some people have equated global governance with the UN, but this is incorrect. Global governance preceded the UN and could, theoretically, outlast it. Moreover, global governance, which involves **non-state actors**, is much wider than the UN, whose agenda is circumscribed by state agents (Weiss and Gordenker 1996). The UN, which was established shortly after World War II in 1945, is currently the only universal multilateral organisation in the world, with a membership of 190-odd states. Its primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security (Weiss et al 2001). Its other goals, which are no less important, include sustainable development and poverty alleviation, the promotion of science and technology, the setting of environmental management standards, and the generation of global norms, including democratisation, social justice and **human rights**. The UN's work is conducted in six languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Most of the UN's functions take place through five major organs: the General Assembly; Security Council; Economic and Social Council; International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat. Its sixth organ, the Trusteeship Council, has no function because there are no trust territories for it to report on. Moreover, Article 78 of the **UN Charter** (the set of rules which outlines the UN's purposes and procedures) prohibits the establishment of trusteeships over member-states. The former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's *Millennium Report*, issued in 2000, encapsulates the responsibilities, goals and aspirations of the UN in global governance. In the *Report* Annan called for member-states to work together to eradicate poverty and inequality, safeguard the environment and improve education, increase peoples' security and reduce HIV/AIDS.

The UN's responsibility in global governance has sometimes been contested by states. For example, in 2002, this role came under public scrutiny when the US, supported by Australia and the UK, sought to invade Iraq and wanted UN authorisation to do so. Australia argued that the UN would lose legitimacy, relevance and effectiveness if it failed to authorise the invasion of Iraq. Opponents of the war claimed the UN would lose its independence, legitimacy and moral standing if it authorised an unwarranted war. The war's opponents also claimed that the invasion of Iraq without authorisation by the Security Council would violate Articles 2(4) and 2(7) of the Charter. These claims and counter-claims, which attempted to define the legitimacy of the UN in terms of its role in the American-led invasion of Iraq, raised important questions. Should the UN be expected to authorise war when it was established to eliminate interstate warfare? Should the UN be judged to have lost legitimacy when it refuses to serve as an instrument of one state's selfish interests? These questions are unlikely to find definitive answers, but they do illustrate the competing understandings of the UN's

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Box 32.2: Key texts

Key articles in the UN Charter

Article 1(1) – States that the purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security.

Article 2(4) – Requires member-states to refrain from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state.

Article 2(7) – Prohibits the UN from intervening in matters 'which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction' of any state.

Article 10 – Permits the General Assembly to discuss any matter within the scope of the Charter, except as specified in Article 12.

Article 12 – Prohibits the General Assembly from making recommendations on any matter that is under discussion in the Security Council.

Article 78 – Prohibits the UN from establishing a trusteeship over a member state.

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role and responsibilities in relation to decisions to use force, especially when powerful states feel frustrated by the UN's decision-making structures.

The structure of the UN

This chapter considers the five principal organs that constitute the UN: the General Assembly; Security Council; Economic and Social Council; the Secretariat, which includes the office of the Secretary-General; and the International Court of Justice. In principle, all these organs are on a par with each other, but real decision-making power lies in the Security Council. For example, the Secretary-General may make recommendations to the Security Council, but it can ignore the advice if it chooses. Also, while the International Court of Justice is an important source of **international law**, it does not have the mandate to sit in judgment over the Security Council's decisions. Only the Security Council may review its own earlier decisions.

Box 32.3: Key organisations

Structure of the UN

The main organs of the UN and the sections of the Charter that explain their functions are as follows:
• The General Assembly: Chapter IV
• The Security Council: Chapter V
• The Economic and Social Council: Chapter X
• The Trusteeship Council: Chapter XIII
• The International Court of Justice: Chapter XIV
• The Secretariat: Chapter XV

General Assembly

The General Assembly comprises all members of the UN. In this context, each member possesses sovereign equality. For example, East Timor, with a tiny population, is equal to China, with a population of more than one billion. Some analysts view the General Assembly as the most democratic organ of the UN because all members are represented and cast equal votes. However, the influence that small states exercise in the General Assembly is determined by the structure of the international system. During the **Cold War**, when the international system was bipolar, developing states exercised leverage because they could play the Soviet Union against the United States or vice versa. With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, developing states lost the freedom of action they had previously enjoyed.

The General Assembly has the mandate to address any matter that falls within the Charter. These include economic, educational, health, environmental and security issues. Its resolutions are non-binding on member-states though. Notwithstanding the non-binding nature of its resolutions, the General Assembly may make recommendations to any other organ of the UN or to member-states. For example, acting under Article 96 of the Charter, the General Assembly requested the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in late 2003 to provide an advisory opinion on the legality of Israel's security fence. It would be mistaken then to conclude that the the General Assembly's resolutions are of no consequence; they have a **normative** function, and also serve as a potential source of international law because the ICJ takes some of them into account in its rulings.

The Charter restricts the General Assembly's role in international peace and security. For example, Article 12 of the Charter prohibits the General Assembly from making recommendations on a security problem that is still under consideration by the Security Council. The most visible part of the General Assembly's work is the plenary, usually held in September and October every year, when heads of state or government or their representatives present speeches. This is also the time when the Secretary-General presents his agenda for the coming year. However, much of the General Assembly's work takes place through seven committees away from the public limelight.

Security Council

The Security Council's primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security, but what constitutes security has changed over time. In the initial period, security threats were defined in terms of the aggression of one state against another. However, since the 1990s, humanitarian disasters have been described as threats to peace and security. The Security Council comprises fifteen members, five of which – China, France, Russia, UK and the US – have permanent seats. The other ten hold seats for two calendar years and are prohibited from serving two consecutive terms. The non-permanent members represent the five geographical groupings within the UN: three from Africa, two from the Americas, two from Asia, two from the West European and Other States group, and one from Eastern Europe. Australia, which has been a member of the West European and Other States group, was among the first six non-permanent members to serve on the Security Council in 1946. Australia has served four separate terms on the Council: 1946–47; 1956–57; 1973–74 and 1985–86.

The presidency of the Security Council is held for one month at a time, and rotates according to the alphabetical order of the members' names in their English version. Ultimate power in the Security Council is wielded by the permanent members (P5). Article 27 of the Charter states that decisions of the Security Council on procedural issues require only nine votes, but on any other matter they need nine votes as well as the concurrence of the P5. Thus, any one of the P5 can cast a veto on anything other than procedural matters. It is the P5 that constitute the great power concert in the modern world. If the P5 reached a consensus that protecting human rights was more important than respecting **sovereignty** in some circumstances, nothing would prevent them from enforcing such an understanding. Much of the time, the decisions of the Security Council reflect the narrow interests of the P5, not necessarily the will of **international society**. Indeed, the Security Council is a highly politicised organ.

It is generally acknowledged that the Security Council is unrepresentative of the general membership in several ways. First, in terms of numbers, when the UN was established in 1945, five permanent members represented fifty-one member states. By the middle of 2007, the same P5 represented 190-odd members. In racial terms, Caucasians are over-represented, with only one Asian, and no African, permanent member. From the perspective of geographical regions, neither Africa nor Latin America has permanent members on the Security Council. It is partly for these reasons that many have criticised the Security Council for being out of touch with current international political and economic realities. Since the early 1990s, there have been numerous proposals for reform of the Security Council, but it is doubtful that effective reform will come about unless the P5 agree to dilute their powers.

Economic and Social Council

Unlike the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has been flexible in accommodating the interests of the developing states. ECOSOC is the most diverse of all UN organs. It coordinates the work of fourteen specialised agencies, ten functional commissions and five regional commissions. According to the Charter, ECOSOC deals with international economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific, health and related matters. It facilitates international cultural and educational cooperation while also encouraging universal respect for human rights. It comprises fifty-four members, eighteen of which are elected every year, and retiring members are eligible for re-election. Its seats are based on a geographical formula: fourteen from Africa, thirteen from Western Europe, eleven from Asia, ten from Latin America and the Caribbean, and six from Eastern Europe. ECOSOC's regional commissions are the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. The main functions of these regional commissions are to work closely with member-states in their regions to try to overcome obstacles to economic growth, trade and development.

The UN's specialised agencies, programs and funds, such as the Children's Fund, the World Health Organisation, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the UN Environment Programme, the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Conference on Trade and Development, the Development Fund for Women and the World Food Programme, are also affiliated with ECOSOC.

> **Box 32.4: Key figures**
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> **UN Secretaries-General since 1945 and their countries of origin**
>
> - Trygve Lie (1945–1953), Norway
> - Dag Hammarskjöld (1953–1961), Sweden
> - U Thant (1961–1971), Myanmar/Burma
> - Kurt Waldheim (1972–1981), Austria
> - Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (1982–1991), Peru
> - Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992–1996), Egypt
> - Kofi Annan (1997–2006), Ghana
> - Ban Ki-Moon (from January 2007), ROK.

These outfits, which are technically subsidiary agencies of the General Assembly, play important roles in peacebuilding and in the reconstruction of 'failed' states. Some of them are concerned with capacity building, poverty alleviation, the preservation of forests, fisheries and biodiversity, the spread of scientific know-how, especially in developing states, and the promotion of human rights norms.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General, who is something like the chief executive officer of the UN. The Secretary-General's role is to determine the UN's priorities, to bring to the Security Council's attention matters that may impact on international peace and security, and, most challenging of all, to work towards balancing the interests of individual member-states and international society as a whole.

The Secretariat comprises an international civil service that serves other principal organs of the UN. Its employees answer to the UN alone for their activities and take oaths not to receive or seek instructions from any other authority. The Secretariat is based in New York, but it has offices in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna. The responsibilities of the Secretariat are quite varied, ranging from administering **peacekeeping** operations to monitoring human rights violations and preparing studies on sustainable development.

The Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. This means a permanent member of the Security Council can use the veto to deny this office to a person it does not like, as the US did in 1996 when Boutros Boutros-Ghali was seeking a second term. The Secretary-General's length of term is not specified in the Charter, but they have conventionally served five-year terms. The number of terms each person may serve is also not specified in the Charter, but in practice most of them have served a second term.

According to Article 99 of the Charter, the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which, in his/her opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international security. As the CEO of the UN, the Secretary-General attends the meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council and ECOSOC, and presents reports to them. He/she is required to make an annual report to the General Assembly highlighting the work of the organisation. Some of the Secretary-General's functions on conflict

prevention take place through special envoys and 'Good Offices' (the moral authority and impartiality of the Secretary-General's position).

International Court of Justice

The ICJ, which is based in The Hague, the Netherlands, is the judicial organ of the UN. It comprises fifteen judges who are elected jointly by the General Assembly and the Security Council. The ICJ composition reflects the UN geographical divisions as follows: three judges from Africa; two from Latin America; three from Asia; five from the Western Europe and Other States grouping; and two from Eastern Europe. Despite this, the ICJ judges act independently of the countries and regions from which they come. Each judge serves a nine-year term and is eligible for re-election. For purposes of ensuring continuity, five judges are elected every three years. The Security Council's P5 are not allowed to use their veto during the election of judges. While there is no requirement for judges to be drawn from any particular country, conventionally, the ICJ has always included judges from the P5.

The ICJ decides on disputes between states only; that is, in cases where one state accuses another state of some wrongdoing. It does not deal with disputes between individuals or between a state and a non-state actor. Any state's participation in the ICJ proceedings is voluntary as the court does not have the power to compel states to appear before it. However, if a state chooses to participate, it has to comply with the ICJ ruling. The ICJ also provides advisory opinions to the General Assembly, the Security Council and other UN agencies when requested. For example, in July 1996, it gave an advisory opinion on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons in response to requests from the World Health Organization and the General Assembly.

The UN and global governance

Understanding the place of the UN in global governance requires acknowledgment that the organisation is not just a product of global governance, but also a leading generator of the ideas and norms that constitute global governance. When the World War II victors created the UN, they were participating in global governance. Moreover, when the UN engages in war prevention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, development and the promotion of human rights, it enhances global governance. In this sense, the UN and global governance are inseparable. However, the UN appears to represent different things to various groups, including analysts from rival paradigms.

Realists, for example, care about the legitimacy of the UN, but for them this legitimacy is derived from the UN serving as an instrument of state interests. A UN without the potential to serve as a device through which states pursue their **national interests** has little legitimacy for realists. An organ like the Security Council appears to provide a platform for power politics. What concerns developing states is that most of the power within the UN is held by Western states, which dominate the international system politically, economically, technologically and militarily. Western states also have the means to promote their values and norms more effectively than the non-Western states.

If realists have been mainly interested in the pursuit of national interests, liberals have been interested in the UN's universalist and progressive character. Liberals believe that the UN has put power politics under check and facilitated the collective management of global public goods. From some liberal perspectives, the UN derives legitimacy from its inclusiveness and its potential to bring about human progress. On the issues of democratisation and participation, some liberals argue that the UN has neglected non-state actors for too long. Hence the increasing calls for the UN to involve the 'global civil society' more deeply in global governance. Some NGOs have achieved phenomenal success in specific issue-areas. However, the search for a mechanism for their participation with the UN in global governance has raised difficult questions. Some critics argue that NGOs have the capacity to do a great deal, but they have no obligation to do anything. Voluntary organisations are not accountable, even in theory, to those whom they serve.

For constructivists, the legitimacy of the UN is derived from its constitutive and transformative character. The UN is both a product, and a producer, of ideas, norms and values. It has been an agent of transformation. It has generated numerous ideas on such issues as development, the environment, human rights, women's rights and peacekeeping. In this respect, the UN has become an important norm-setting organisation. As the interests, preferences and identities of states are neither fixed nor exogenously given, the UN has participated, however marginally, in influencing the way they are defined and redefined.

However, there is a perception in the developing world that the UN's transformative power has been harnessed by the West and works to the detriment of non-Western interests. Some of these criticisms came out at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, where China and developing states described the argument for the universalisation of human rights as a conspiracy by Western governments to pressure non-Western states into changing their identities and political and economic systems. However, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which was adopted by consensus at the Conference stated that human rights were universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated, while also recognising the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds. The Vienna Declaration underscored the clash of two principles – universalism and relativism. Western states and NGOs from both the North and the South supported the universalist perspective, while non-Western states took the relativist line.

Critics argue that the exigencies of global governance require the UN to rethink its norms, procedures and practices. If the UN were to make a major difference to global governance, it would need to address more seriously the imperative for democratisation in its agencies, taking account of growing demands for transparency and popular participation. Greater openness would not be achieved without creative efforts to recast sovereignty. For example, in discharging their responsibilities in the human rights area, UN Secretaries-General have often been constrained by the UN Charter, especially Article 2(7). However, in his address to the General Assembly in September 1999, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said there was nothing in the Charter that precluded recognition that there were rights beyond borders. Some critics argue that this line of rethinking should be stretched further. With the rapid changes brought about by globalisation, what was essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of states in 1945 may not remain so in the twenty-first century.

The UN Secretary-General's 1999 speech reflected the extent to which international law and diplomacy have changed in response to shifts in global values. Some of the most important changes stem from the growth in **international humanitarian law** and the proliferation of international human rights instruments since 1945. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the most significant step in efforts to universalise rights. The impetus for it was the brutality of World War II, and especially the extermination of Jews and others in the Holocaust. International society's response to the Holocaust was to establish the Nuremburg tribunal, which was set up to prosecute war criminals. This was a normative development that placed human rights in the domain of global politics, helped to redefine aspects of morality at the global level, and, for the first time in history, gave coherence to the idea of crimes against humanity. This idea stems from the assumption that each human being has a duty to other human beings. This development is one of the UN's major contributions to global governance. Another is the UN's role in war prevention and peacebuilding (Roberts and Kingsbury 1993).

War prevention and peacebuilding

The UN was established primarily to eliminate conditions that lead to interstate warfare. Despite this, the UN has occasionally authorised war in order to rescue people from famine and starvation or to maintain international peace and security. How can one explain this complex relationship between the UN and war?

The first issue to note is that it was due to the violence associated with World War II that the UN was established. The war broke out in 1939 as a result of the ambitions of Nazi Germany. However, the war was also partly blamed on weaknesses in the twenty-year-old League of Nations. For this reason, the victorious states were determined to establish the UN as an organisation that would ensure peace and prosperity. Thus, the UN is essentially a product of war.

The second issue is that the UN's primary function is to put an end to interstate war and foster international peace and security. The preamble of the Charter claims that the UN was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Moreover, Article 1(1) says the principal purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security. Kofi Annan's *Millennium Report* talks of freedom from fear (United Nations 2000). To achieve this goal, the UN uses various strategies that are likely to eliminate the main causes of war. At the military level, the UN seeks to halt the arms race through various **arms control** measures. It also seeks to curb the arms trade with a view to reducing the dangers posed by small arms, nuclear weapons and the proliferation of missile technology.

The UN also pursues other programs, such as peacebuilding, peace-making and conflict prevention in efforts to discourage war. Another major war-averting instrument that the UN frequently resorts to is peacekeeping (Makinda 1998: 101–15). Peacekeeping is not mentioned in the UN Charter, but it was improvised in the 1950s with ideas borrowed from Chapter VI of the Charter, on the 'Pacific Settlement of Disputes', and Chapter VII, which is about peace enforcement. Through peacekeeping operations, the UN has intervened in numerous conflicts without compromising the sovereignty of the states in question.

For example, since 1990, the UN has deployed peacekeeping forces in various places, including Cambodia (1992–93), Somalia (1992–96) and Rwanda (1993–96). Australia took part in these operations. Indeed, the commander of the military component of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia was an Australian, Lieutenant General John Sanderson.

The third element in the relationship between the UN and war is that the UN occasionally authorises war in order to end human suffering on a grand scale or to enhance security. UN-authorised war generally takes the form of peace-enforcement operations, which were authorised for several contingencies, including Korea in 1950, Iraq in 1990, Somalia in 1992–93, Haiti in 1994 and East Timor in 1999. The UN does not have its own military forces, so most of its peace-enforcement operations have been sub-contracted to interested parties. For example, the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) in 1999 was led by Australia. The only peace-enforcement operation that was commanded and controlled by the UN Secretariat was the second UN Intervention in Somalia (UNISOM II, 1993–95). All other peace-enforcement operations have been sub-contracted. There have been other occasions when the Security Council has refused to endorse war efforts by interested parties. For example, it did not approve the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** intervention in Kosovo in 1999, and declined to authorise the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Whether the UN authorises war or not depends on how such a war advances the UN's aims. In the case of the intervention in Kosovo, some Security Council members believed that it would violate Yugoslavia's sovereignty and set a precedent that would lead to more global instability. However, the UN Secretary-General did not condemn it outright. Instead, he argued that the UN would in future have to weigh the balance between respect for state sovereignty and respect for human rights. In the case of Iraq in 2003, the majority of Security Council members believed that there was no convincing evidence that Iraq was a threat to international security. They also believed that the principle of preemptive war, which the US advocated, would undermine peremptory norms of international law and lead to greater instability in the world (Thakur 2006).

Box 32.5:   Case study

International force for East Timor (INTERFET): September 1999–February 2000

INTERFET was the second of a three-phase UN intervention in East Timor between 1999 and 2002. The first phase, which was deployed from June to September 1999, was the UN Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), which was an electoral assistance group that did not have a peacekeeping mandate. Following the elections of 30 August 1999, in which 78 per cent of East Timorese voters rejected autonomy within Indonesia and, by default, voted for independence, pro-Jakarta militia, supported by Indonesian troops, rampaged through cities, towns and villages, shooting, raping, burning and looting. It was then that the Security Council passed resolution 1264 on 15 September 1999, authorising the formation of INTERFET. Led by Australian General Peter Cosgrove, INTERFET's mission was to stop the killings, protect UNAMET, restore order, facilitate humanitarian assistance, and establish an environment for security. INTERFET was replaced by the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in February 2000.

Conclusion

While the UN should not be equated with global governance, it is hard to separate the two under present conditions. The UN is partly a product of global governance and partly a creator of global governance. As states constructed the UN at the end of World War II, they were participating in global governance. Since then, the UN has been the leading generator of the ideas, rules, values and norms that constitute global governance. Indeed, whenever the UN engages in war prevention, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, development, international law-making, and the promotion of human rights, it enhances global governance. In this sense, the UN and global governance continually enhance each other. However, global governance involves other actors, such as MNCs, NGOs and individual human beings, who are not members of the UN. Moreover, were the UN to disappear in the future, global governance would still continue.

Questions

1. What is global governance?
2. Whose interests are represented by the new architecture of global governance?
3. What are the forces driving global governance?
4. What is the UN's purpose?
5. Is the UN effective? Has it historically been so?
6. How was the UN's legitimacy affected by the US-led invasion of Iraq?

Further reading

Diehl, P. F. (ed.) 2001, The politics of global governance, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. Good, wide-ranging collection of chapters on growing influence of international organisations.

Thakur, Ramesh 2006, The United Nations, peace and security, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Important account of the UN's changing role in relation to the use of force in international relations.

Weiss, T. G., Forsythe, D. P. and Coate, R. A. 2001, The United Nations and changing world politics, third edition, Boulder: Westview. Useful and regularly updated account of the UN and how it meets contemporary challenges.

Glossary terms are highlighted throughout the text. Words in italics are defined elsewhere in the glossary.

A. Q. Khan network – An illicit global network for the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology named after one of its leading figures, Pakistani nuclear scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan.

Alliance – A formal agreement between two or more *sovereign states* to cooperate on matters of *security* and defence.

Anarchy – The absence of rule or government. In international relations it does not mean disorder and chaos.

ANZUS – A *security* agreement between Australia, New Zealand and the US which came into force in 1952. Each party agrees, under certain conditions, to assist others in the case of armed attack. Since New Zealand refused entry to US ships that may have been carrying nuclear weapons in 1986, the US has not recognised its commitment to New Zealand.

APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) – A forum for countries of the Asia-Pacific region to discuss and negotiate matters of common economic interest, especially trade matters. Members include: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and the US.

Arms control – The exercise of restraint in the development, acquisition, stockpiling and use of weapons. The management of this process is usually achieved through negotiated agreements or treaties.

Balance of payments – A *state's* capital account surplus or deficit, based on the difference between the amount of money flowing in or out of the state. It is the account of a state's financial transactions with the rest of the world.

Balance of power – Refers to a mechanism that operates to prevent one *state* from achieving such a preponderance of *power* that it is in a position to lay down and enforce the law over all others. Central to realist theories, it can be viewed as the deliberate product of foreign policies, or as the unintended consequence of several states seeking to protect themselves. In any case, states align with others to counter-balance the growth in another's power, seeking to preserve international *order* and a degree of equilibrium.

Balance of trade – A *state's* annual net trade surplus or deficit, based on the difference in value between imports and exports. It is the account of a state's trade relations with the rest of the world.

Bilateralism – A term referring to discussions, negotiations and decisions made by two *states* on matters of mutual interest. Compare with *unilateralism* and *multilateralism*.

Bipolarity – Refers to an *international system* where two overwhelmingly powerful *states* dominate. Like magnetic poles, the two *powers* both attract and repel at the same time. They attract friends and allies, and repel rivals and enemies. The *Cold War* is the best example of a bipolar system. Compare with *unipolarity* and *multipolarity*.

Bretton Woods – Refers to the post-World War II system of international trade and finance. It saw the establishment of the *International Monetary Fund (IMF)* and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, popularly known as the *World Bank*. Together with the *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)* which was established by the *UN*, it formed the system which was intended to stabilise the

international economy under liberal economic policy goals. It is named for the place in New Hampshire, USA where the original agreement was struck.

Capitalism – A social system that favours free and open markets based on private property and the accumulation of private wealth. Eighteenth-century Scotsman Adam Smith is conventionally associated with the ideological defence of capitalism, while Karl Marx is capitalism's greatest critic.

Civil war – War fought largely within the territorial boundaries of a single *sovereign state*.

Clausewitzean – An adjective describing strategic thought influenced by the work of Prussian military officer, Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831). His *On war*, published posthumously in 1832, is still widely recognised as the most important treatise ever written on military strategy. For Clausewitz, *war* is a decisive encounter between two or more armed forces of a *state*. His most famous proposition is that war is simply the continuation of politics by other, namely violent, means.

Cold War – Describes a condition of hostile encounter between two *states* or *alliances* which falls just short of 'hot war' or direct violent conflict. It is mostly used to name the conflict between the US and USSR from roughly 1946 to 1989. Though the two *superpowers* did not apparently fight one another directly, they often fought by proxy. Because it is historically unusual for two preeminent *powers* not to wage war against each other, some commentators also refer to the Cold War as a 'long *peace*'.

Collateral damage – A euphemism used to refer to the unintended damage done to civilians and civilian infrastructure by military action.

Collective defence – Also draws from the Three Musketeers' motto, 'one for all and all for one', but the collective is limited to those who are members of a particular *security* or defence agreement. Examples include *ANZUS*, *NATO* and the *Warsaw Pact*.

Collective security – Draws from the Three Musketeers' motto, 'one for all and all for one'. Rather than leave *security* in the hands of each individual *state*, security for all is shared by all. If one state is threatened or attacked, the collective will react. Collective security is embodied in the *UN* Charter.

Colonialism – The practice of occupying foreign lands by forceful or peaceful means with the intention of developing or civilising 'backward' peoples of the non-European world. In the twentieth century colonialism has earned a bad name because it often reinforces racial stereotypes or discriminatory practices.

Common security – Underpinned by the idea that *security* is best achieved with others rather than against them. Common security is promoted through *arms control* and *confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs)*. It originated in the *UN* Palme Commission Report of 1982, but found energetic political support in former Soviet premier, Mikhail Gorbachev and former Australian foreign minister, Gareth Evans. It is premised on the belief that the *security dilemma* can be overcome or at least lessened.

Communism – A social system that favours government-controlled markets based on collective ownership and the distribution of wealth according to need. Karl Marx was communism's greatest advocate. Communist ideology is also said to have governed the USSR, though Marx probably would have disagreed.

Communitarianism – A political theory that emphasises individuals' attachments to the community in which they grew up. The communities in which we grow up are thought to be the source of all moral values. Communitarianism adopts the ethical position that a person's moral obligations are always first and foremost to members of our own community and that they cannot be extended beyond that community's boundaries. Moreover, it believes that communities should not be expected to submit to abstract or universal values or obligations advocated by *cosmopolitanism*.

Confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) – The attempt to build mutual trust and reassurance through demilitarisation, *disarmament*, *arms control*, joint military training exercises and greater consultation and dialogue. The purpose is to reduce fear, suspicion, misperception and uncertainty, the elements that make the *security dilemma*.

Constructivism – A theory that challenges the belief that social structures are more or less natural phenomena. Constructivists argue that the social world is formed through language and social practices, thus leaving open the possibility for societies to transform their social worlds. In this respect constructivism converges with *critical theories* such as *feminism* and *Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, as well as some *Marxist* theories. However, some critical theorists believe that constructivism sometimes remains too close to *positivist methodologies*.

Containment – A *Cold War* US strategy for keeping the USSR within its extant boundaries and preventing the further spread of *communism*. The *Truman Doctrine* and *Marshall Plan* are said to be respectively the military and economic aspects of containment.

Cosmopolitanism – A political *theory* that emphasises individuals' obligations to all other human beings. It rejects the *communitarian* position that a person's moral obligations end at the political borders of our community. When asked where he came from, the ancient Greek philosopher, Diogenes the Cynic, responded by saying he was a 'citizen of the world'. Cosmopolitanism does not deny local or national attachments and obligations; it just does not see why they must always be privileged. *Critical theories* often have strong inclinations to cosmopolitanism.

Counter-insurgency – The government's response to *insurgency*.

Critical theory – Any *theory* that seeks to question traditional theoretical methods and purposes. It is usually guided by a suspicion towards *empiricism* and *positivism*, and a commitment to overcoming forms of social, economic and political domination. It thus includes *feminism*, *postmodernism* and *Critical Theory* among others, all of which are sceptical of claims that the world is as it must be. In this respect it converges with *constructivism* too.

Critical Theory – a specific type of critical theory deriving from the *Frankfurt School* of social theory.

Cuban missile crisis – Occurred in 1962. The US discovered that the USSR was installing medium-range nuclear missiles in Cuba, only miles from the coast of Florida. When President Kennedy imposed a naval blockade, a thirteen-day stand-off ensued in which the world came very close to nuclear *war*. Kennedy and Khrushchev eventually reached a compromise that allowed the Soviets to 'save face' and the Americans to remove the missiles. It inaugurated a period of *détente* between the *superpowers*.

Decolonisation – The process by which *colonial powers* withdrew from or were expelled from foreign territories over which they ruled. It granted *sovereign* independence to peoples formerly ruled by colonial powers. The years following World War II saw the height of this process.

Democracy – Born in ancient Athens, it is a powerful idea and popular political practice for ensuring that individuals and communities rule themselves by participating in decision-making processes that affect their lives. In his Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln famously defined democracy as 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'. Democracy may be direct, as in ancient Athens where small face-to-face communities deliberated and decided on their own political futures, or indirect, where representatives are elected to govern on behalf of the people.

Democratic peace theory – The theory that democratic *states* do not fight *war* against each other. A good amount of *empirical* evidence has been collected indicating that war has never been fought between two stable *democracies*.

Détente – Relaxation of tensions between rivals. A period of the *Cold War* that commenced in the early 1960s after the *Cuban missile crisis* and was reinforced by the initiatives of President Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger.

Deterrence – A policy or strategy based on the threat of massive retaliation in the event of an attack. It is premised on the notion that if the destruction threatened in retaliation is great enough, it will deter any initial attack. It is mostly associated with nuclear weapons. Nuclear deterrence is also known as mutually assured destruction (MAD).

Diplomacy – The formal and informal activity by which *states* interact with each other. Somewhat romantically described as 'the art of negotiation', diplomacy involves the exchange of agents (diplomats, envoys, consular officials) who represent the *state's* interests abroad and negotiate on its behalf. Diplomacy may take place secretly or publicly, *bilaterally* or *multilaterally* (for example at the *UN*).

Disarmament – A means and an end involving the reduction or elimination of weapons.

Discipline – A branch of learning focused on a relatively distinct subject matter, including a distinctive focus, set of institutions, and traditions of thought.

Emancipation – The process and condition of being free from all forms of domination, oppression, exclusion and injustice. It is thus central to *liberalism* as well as critical theories, including *Marxism*, *feminism* and *Frankfurt School Critical Theory*, though how each theory defines freedom differs greatly.

Empiricism – A philosophy based on the idea that experience is the source of knowledge. Empiricist *methodologies* proceed through examination of phenomena that can be perceived through the senses. It is sceptical

of knowledge drawn from ideas, beliefs and *norms* or any knowledge which does not appear empirically verifiable.

English School – An approach to international relations that focuses on the rules and institutions that bring *order* to *international society*. It holds the view that while *states* exist in a formal *anarchy*, they still form a society. It draws upon and is closely associated with the *Grotian* tradition.

Enlightenment – A period commencing in the late seventeenth century and culminating at the end of eighteenth-century Europe that saw tremendous intellectual change in the natural, human and social sciences, including the rise of *liberalism* and the American and French *revolutions*. It also refers to the process of employing reason to challenge received ways of thinking and acting. Though diverse, enlightenment as process includes some common features: the exercise of suspicion towards authority, especially traditional modes of religious and political thinking; the expression of moral, legal and political equality among all humans; the commitment to *emancipation* from unnecessary constraints.

Ethnic cleansing – The systematic, deliberate and violent attempt to expel or eliminate targeted ethnic groups from disputed or conflict-ridden territories. Ethnic cleansing was conducted, probably by all sides, but most prominently by Serbian militia, during the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Failed state – A state where the government is no longer able to exert authority or *power* over its people and territory.

Feminism – A *critical theory* that focuses on the place of women and on the role of gender in international relations. It highlights the way women are historically marginalised and disempowered by the prevailing structures of domestic and international politics. Additionally, it has explored the way gendered stereotypes (masculinity and femininity) shape actors' identities and expectations.

Foreign aid – The transfer of money and resources to less developed or developing countries from developed countries. Usually the aid is given as a long-term loan with conditions attached.

Frankfurt School – The name given to a group of German émigrés, led by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, who fled to New York and California during World War II after working in the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research. They pioneered a form of critical social *theory* influenced by German thinkers Immanuel *Kant* and Karl *Marx*, among others, that challenged prevailing social, political and economic structures in an effort to *emancipate* all individuals and communities from unjust forms of domination and exclusion. It is the inspiration behind *Critical Theory*.

Free trade – The idea that governments should not interfere in cross-border trade. Closely associated with *liberalism* and *capitalism*, it is also the governing ideology of the *WTO (World Trade Organization)*, formerly the *GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade)*.

Fundamentalism – Refers to the tendency to suppose that one's own ideological or belief system is unquestionably true and should be adhered to absolutely. Anyone who does not adhere to the purity of this system of beliefs is thought to be a heretic or infidel, and is often cast as evil. It is often associated with religions, for example, Islamic or Christian fundamentalism, but any ideology or belief may be susceptible to fundamentalism.

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) – Established under the *UN* to develop rules governing international trade. Founded on *liberal* principles of *free trade*, its main objectives are to reduce and eliminate tariff barriers and to provide a forum in which *states* can mediate disputes and negotiate a more open system of trade. In 1995 the GATT was replaced by the *World Trade Organization (WTO)*.

Geneva conventions – Comprised of four *international humanitarian law* treaties codified in 1949, and the additional protocols of 1977. The 1949 conventions relate to the treatment of prisoners of *war*, the treatment of military personnel when sick or wounded at sea or on land, and the protection of civilians during war. The two additional protocols of 1977 outline protections due to the victims of international and civil wars.

Genocide – The deliberate and systematic act of destroying in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. It is outlawed under the UN Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide. Twentieth-century cases of genocide include the Turkish genocide of the Armenians, the Nazi genocide of the Jews and others, and the Hutu genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda.

Geopolitics – The study of the effects of geography (human and physical) on international politics. It is often closely related to the *balance of power*.

Globalisation – The stretching and intensification of social and economic relations across the globe made possible by new communication and computer technologies and advances in transport. It is thought by many to inaugurate an unprecedented degree of global interconnectedness, although some deny its novelty by pointing to similar levels of *interdependence* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Still others criticise globalisation for being a vehicle of *neoliberal* ideology.

Gramscian – An adjective describing a perspective on international relations influenced by the work of Italian socialist and union organiser, Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). Gramsci was a *Marxist* who cautioned against overemphasising the economic 'base' of society. He argued that the 'superstructure' of society, which includes schools, churches and civil society more generally, also played a vital part in the reproduction of *capitalist* societies and in their possible transformation. In international relations his work has been adapted to focus on the way ideas and *states* interact to maintain dominant world *orders*.

Grotian – An adjective describing a perspective on international relations influenced by the work of Dutch seventeenth-century jurist, Hugo Grotius (1583–1645). Closely associated with the *English School*, the Grotian tradition of international thought places great emphasis on the rules and *norms* of international relations. It aims to secure *order* and coexistence among *states* rather than the *Kantian* ideal of perpetual *peace* or the *Hobbesian* horror of '*war* of all against all'.

Guerrilla warfare – 'Hit and run' tactic employed by small, highly mobile bands of armed forces against more conventional armed, and usually invading or occupying, forces. Guerrillas operate by taking full advantage of their environment, both physical and urban. It was a tactic employed to good effect by German tribes against the Roman army, and the Vietcong against the US in Vietnam.

Hegemony – The preponderance of *power* and influence by a *state*. Always involving military might, hegemony without ideological or political suasion is unlikely to last long. It is often argued that the durability of Rome's or America's hegemony rests on the ability to balance coercion with the consent of subordinates.

Hermeneutics – The art or *method* of interpretation. Derived from Hermes, the messenger god, hermeneutics originally referred to the textual interpretation of the Bible, but in modern times it has referred more generally to the interpretation of texts, theories and ideas, as well as the action and behaviour of social and political agents. Its main purpose is to further understanding of others' meanings or intentions.

Hobbesian – An adjective describing a perspective on international relations influenced by the work of seventeenth-century political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). He emphasised the political importance of *state sovereignty* and the necessity of *states* to be prepared to use threats and force to achieve *security*. He is thought to have likened international relations to a 'state of *war*', a lawless, insecure and conflict-ridden condition which he described as a 'war of all against all'.

Hierarchy – The structured differentiation of rank and authority. In the study of international relations hierarchy is often opposed to *anarchy*.

Human rights – The entitlements thought to be due to all humans simply by virtue of their humanity. Human rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which is a non-binding document, and in the legally binding Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (both 1966).

Humanitarian intervention – The coercive interference in a *sovereign state* to prevent or end massive *human rights* violations. Generally thought to be prohibited by *international law* and the *UN Charter*, it has enjoyed increased international support since the brutal conflicts, *ethnic cleansing* and *genocides* witnessed in the 1990s. *NATO*'s 1999 bombing of Serbia to protect Kosovars remains the most controversial instance of humanitarian intervention.

Idealism – A *theory* of international relations whose chief purpose is to eradicate *war*. Flourishing after World War I, it embraced the *Enlightenment* and *liberal* values of *peace* and progress, believing that peace could be achieved through *collective security* arrangements, respect for the rule of law and greater *interdependence*.

Imperialism – The projection or expansion of a *state*'s domination over foreign lands and peoples through conquest and control. Often associated with a high-handed and rather brutal treatment of those under imperial *power*.

Insurgency – Political violence with the subversive intent of destabilising or overthrowing a ruling government.

Interdependence – The mutual dependence developed among *states* by utilising new technologies and through the growth of international cross-border commerce, communication and travel. A term used before *globalisation* became popular.

International humanitarian law – Set of rules integrating *human rights* into *international law* with the purpose of protecting individuals (civilians and combatants) during times of *war*. It comprises the four *Geneva conventions* and two additional protocols. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is the custodian of these rules.

International law – Set of rules applying to *sovereign states*. Traditionally it has focused exclusively on *states*, but since World War II it has increasingly incorporated rights and duties of individuals. The sources of international law include custom, treaties, judicial decisions and esteemed legal opinion. Because they define law as orders backed by force, *realists* are sceptical that international law, which lacks an enforcement mechanism, deserves the status of law.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) – Established as part of the *Bretton Woods* system, its main task is to create a stable international exchange rate system and to provide emergency assistance to *states* facing temporary *balance of payments* problems.

International society – Exists when two or more *states* become conscious of being bound by common rules and institutions. One of the *English School*'s key concepts, international society, or the society of states, allows for cooperation in institutions such as *diplomacy* and *international law*.

International system – Exists when two or more states have sufficient contact with each other that they become conscious of existing in the same environment and conscious of the need to consider other *states*' interests and capabilities in the pursuit of their own interests.

Jihad – Militant Muslims use the word to mean the violent struggle against infidels and heretics who threaten Islam. In its original theological sense it means the self-discipline or internal struggle to pursue noble goals. Western commentators often mistakenly equate *jihad* with the Christian notion of 'holy *war*'.

Just war – A *war* deemed to be conducted fairly (*jus in bello* in Latin) and for the right reasons (*jus ad bellum*). The tradition of distinguishing between just and unjust wars goes back to antiquity, was continued by Christian theologians throughout the Middle Ages and persists in secular form today. Since the late nineteenth century numerous *international humanitarian law* treaties outlining prohibited conduct during war have come into force. *Humanitarian intervention* has however forced a reconsideration of rules relating to *jus ad bellum*.

Kantian – An adjective describing a perspective on international relations influenced by the work of eighteenth-century *Enlightenment* philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Most famous in international relations for his essay, 'Towards perpetual peace', Kant argued that *states* ought to subject their conduct to political, legal and moral rules consistent with *liberalism* so that *peace*, justice and freedom can flourish for the whole community of humankind.

Kyoto Protocol – An agreement signed at the 1997 Kyoto (Japan) climate change conference to address global warming. *States*, excluding most notably Australia and the US, committed themselves to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 5 per cent below 1990 levels by the year 2012.

Liberalism – A political *theory* that prizes individual freedom. It believes individuals should be free to do as they please, without the interference of others, so long as they do not harm or limit the freedom of others. In international relations it has tended to focus on the development of *international law*, the spread of *democracy* (*democratic peace theory*) and the expansion of *free trade*. Immanuel *Kant* is one of the leading liberal theorists of international relations.

Machiavellianism – A term usually employed pejoratively to criticise cunning or ruthless political behaviour. It derives from the name of Niccolò Machiavelli, especially the advice he gives to rulers in his infamous tract, *The prince*, written in 1513. It would be wrong to assume, however, that Machiavelli was Machiavellian.

Marshall Plan – The US aid program designed to reconstruct and stimulate the economies of Western Europe after World War II. Introduced in 1947 it is best understood as the economic aspect of the US strategy of *containment* alongside the *Truman Doctrine*. It aimed to stabilise Western Europe's economies and immunise them against the threat of *communism*.

Marxism – An adjective describing a perspective on international relations influenced by the work of nineteenth-century thinker, Karl Marx (1818–1883). Marxism's most central feature is its powerful critique of *capitalism* for exploiting and dehumanising workers. Marxists believe that international relations is shaped by the changing patterns of capitalism and the conflict it generates between classes. It thus tends to see *states* and the *international system* as a reflection of deeper socio-economic structures and processes. Marxists believe that capitalism is only a stage on the way to a truly *emancipated* society of humankind.

Method, Methodology – A way or means of attaining knowledge. Some ways are more *hermeneutic* or interpretive, others are more *positivist*. In any case, methodology is the study of different ways of attaining reliable knowledge.

Multilateralism – A term referring to international structures and processes in which many *states* discuss, negotiate and decide on matters of international significance. Compare with *bilateralism* and *unilateralism*.

Multinational corporation (MNC) – A commercial actor with branches or operations in several countries and interconnected business strategies. Increasingly such corporations see the globe rather than any single national economy as their marketplace. They tend to advocate *globalisation* and *neoliberal* policy ideals. Also see *transnational corporation (TNC)*.

Multipolarity – Refers to an *international system* where more than two powerful *states* dominate. *Realism* sees multipolar systems as more unstable than *bipolar* ones.

Nation – A community of people bound together by belief in common historical, cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic ties. Nations quite often, but not always, demand exclusive allegiance from their citizens.

National interest – A notoriously plastic term that refers to the *state*'s foreign policy aims. The national interest is said to be the same regardless of the government in *power*, but different governments will hold different ideological agendas and priorities, meaning that the national interest will change accordingly.

Nationalism – The political ideology that prizes and exults in the *nation* as the primary and exclusive source of allegiance.

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) – A military *alliance* formed in 1949 by Western European and Northern American countries aligned against the USSR during the *Cold War*. Unlike the *Warsaw Pact*, it did not die with the end of the Cold War. Instead, it expanded by absorbing former Warsaw Pact countries into its membership.

Neoliberalism – Used in two senses. One is as a *theory* of international relations which argues, contrary to *realism* and *neorealism*, that cooperation is possible even in conditions of international *anarchy*. A revised version of *liberalism*, neoliberalism focuses on the rules and *norms states* are socialised to accept by working through international institutions. It is most closely associated with the work of Robert Keohane. The other is as a late form of *liberalism* that focuses heavily on free market economic policies of trade liberalisation, deregulation of financial markets and the workplace, and privatisation of government-owned industries and utilities. In Australia this latter sense often goes by the name of 'economic rationalism'.

Neorealism – A *theory* of international relations which seeks to improve upon *realism* by making it more scientific and by obtaining a clearer picture of how the structure of *anarchy* shapes and shoves *states*. Most closely associated with the work of Kenneth Waltz, neorealism argues, contrary to older versions of realism, that states seek to maximise *security* rather than *power*.

Non-governmental organisation (NGO) – Specialised not-for-profit *non-state actors* that seek to raise consciousness and change the activities of governments and populations on a variety of issues. NGOs have proliferated over the last century, advocating and lobbying on issues such as *human rights*, landmines, poverty, animal rights, and the environment among many others.

Non-state actor – An actor not part of the official *state* or governmental apparatuses.

Normative – An adjective referring to the moral quality of something. For example, normative *theories* of international relations are primarily concerned with posing moral questions of actors or assessing the moral justification of structures and processes.

Norms – Moral standards or expectations.

Order – A sustained pattern of social arrangements. Order should not be confused with peace or stability. *Peace* is a particular order whereby the pattern of social arrangements excludes *war*. But, unlike peace

and war, order and war are not mutually exclusive conditions. Order is also distinguishable from stability because stability and instability are properties of order. That is, orders may be more or less stable or unstable.

Peace – Most simply it is the absence of *war*. This definition has been found wanting because it says nothing about the positive requirements of peace, which are usually thought to include justice and basic human needs among other things.

Peacebuilding – Initiatives taken to rebuild political and legal institutions and civilian infrastructure, including markets, in post-conflict situations. It has the long-term objective of establishing lasting *peace* and prosperity within stable political conditions.

Peacekeeping – Military operations undertaken with the consent of all major parties to a conflict with the purpose of maintaining the terms of a truce or ceasefire. Only a temporary or provisional measure, peacekeeping is intended to open opportunities for dialogue among the parties that will lead to lasting *peace*.

Positivism – An approach to knowledge based on the conviction that the human and social sciences, including the study of international relations, must emulate the *methods* of the physical sciences. That means facts must be separated from values and beliefs to allow for pure investigation of *empirical* or observable phenomena (namely, facts). *Critical theories* dispute the feasibility and desirability of completely separating facts and values in the human and social sciences.

Postmodernism – A theoretical approach to the social and human sciences that questions not just *positivism* but aspects of *hermeneutics* too for believing that all questions can be finally resolved by attaining the Truth. For postmodernism there are likely to be as many truths as there are perspectives on any given issue since there is no single vantage point from which all social, political and moral questions can be addressed.

Power – Classically defined as the ability to get an actor to do what they would otherwise not do. This is power in the sense of domination or power over others. But power can also be thought of in terms of capability or power to do or act. *Realist* theories hold the belief that international relations are a constant struggle for power.

Power politics – A nickname given to hard-nosed *realist* policies because of the great emphasis realists place on the struggle for *power*.

Raison d'état – French for 'reason of state'. It refers to the logic which drives policies employed in the service of the *state* itself. Such policies do not serve the common good or the welfare of the population, they are intended to preserve and strengthen the state alone. Commonly associated with *realist* policies.

Realism – A *theory* of international relations that posits the struggle for *power* and the condition of *anarchy* as two fundamental realities of international relations. These are realities with which both *states* and students of the subject must grapple.

Realpolitik – German term connoting hard-nosed *realist* politics. It is more or less a synonym of the English term *power politics*.

Refugee – A person forced to flee his or her country because of persecution. Refugees have fled their homelands for centuries because their lives and livelihoods were in grave danger for nothing other than their religion, their ethnicity, their race, their gender, or their political beliefs. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the formation of the *UN* High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) have helped draw attention to the global flows and plight of refugees.

Revolution – A sudden, usually violent change of government. The great revolutions (England in 1688, America in 1776, France in 1789, Russia in 1917) promised to *emancipate* the people from the tyranny of the so-called 'old regime', although on occasion the revolutionaries have brutally *terrorised* the people after seizing *power*.

Revolution in military affairs – The transformation in the way *war* is fought. In the West, especially the US, technological advances have led to changes in the organisation and operation of armed forces, and in the military hardware and weapons systems available to them. Some commentators now speak of a 'Western way of war' which depends heavily on taking full advantage of new war technologies to fight wars from the skies or from afar so as to minimise their casualties. The accuracy of so-called 'smart' weapons is also claimed to minimise civilian casualties.

Rogue state – A *state* deemed to be a serial violator of *international society*'s rules, *norms* and standards of expected behaviour. A highly subjective political term, the rogue state has been used by the US to decry its

enemies, but critics of US foreign policy have also labelled the US a rogue state for its perceived violations of international rules and norms.

Secession – Breaking away or separating from an existing *state* to become an independent *sovereign state*.

Security – The condition of being free from harm or threat. Over recent decades scholars and practitioners have increasingly spoken of human security, but traditionally, the *state* is the referent of security, that is, the actor to be made secure. One of the difficulties for states in achieving security, according to *realists*, is that they must deal with the *security dilemma*. But in recent decades attempts have been made to overcome the dilemma by reconceptualising security in terms of *common security*.

Security community – A group of *states* that have integrated their social, economic and political structures to a degree where *war* no longer seems likely among them. The European Union is the best example.

Security dilemma – A condition in which *states* find themselves because every measure taken to make themselves more secure may simply urge other states to respond in such a manner that all states end up feeling less secure and more anxious. The security dilemma arises because states will never know with absolute certainty what the intentions and capabilities are of other states. *Realists* believe there is nothing that can be done to overcome this dilemma. *Liberals* believe *confidence and security-building measures* may open opportunities for going beyond the security dilemma. Also see *common security*.

Sovereign state – The modern form of political society in which authority is concentrated in a single, supreme decision-maker. See *state* and *sovereignty*.

Sovereignty – Denotes a single, supreme political decision-making authority. In early modern Europe the monarch was the sovereign. In modern *states* sovereignty tends to lie with the executive arm of government. A controversial term, sovereignty depends on authority, not *power*. That is, the sovereign claims the right or authority to decide matters of interest to the state, even if it cannot control everything that occurs within its territory.

State – A political society comprising a government that extends its authority and *power* over a territory and its inhabitants (citizens and foreign visitors). Several features have become characteristic of the modern state: *sovereignty*, *nationalism* and the monopoly over the instruments of violence.

State-centric – A view of international relations that places the *state* at the centre. State-centrism underplays the significance of *non-state actors*, believing that they have little impact on issues of international importance.

Status quo – The existing state of affairs.

Superpower – A preeminent *state* whose *power* is vastly greater than other states. The term was first used to describe the US, USSR and UK immediately after World War II. For the duration of the *Cold War* only the US and USSR retained the title.

Terrorism – The use of violence designed to spread fear for political purposes. Sometimes this violence is aimed at so-called 'legitimate' targets such as politicians or military forces; at other times it is aimed at civilians.

Theory – Reflective or abstract thought aimed at an understanding or explanation of social phenomena that goes beyond common sense. It makes us more self-conscious of our assumptions and prejudices. Some theories, such as *positivism*, may aim for universal explanatory laws. Others, such as *critical theories*, tend to be more *hermeneutic* in approach.

Transnational corporation – A commercial actor with branches or operations in several countries and interconnected business strategies. Increasingly such corporations see the globe rather than any single national economy as their marketplace. TNCs tend to see the globe as a borderless market, which is why they advocate *globalisation* and *neoliberal* policy ideals. Also see *multinational corporation (MNC)*.

Transnationalism – The process and condition of cross-border interaction. *Globalisation* is often associated with increased levels of transnational or cross-border activity.

Truman Doctrine – US policy commitment to provide military aid to Western European countries in an effort to resist *communism*. Originally offered to Turkey and Greece, the military aid and support was eventually extended to other European countries thought to be under threat of communist subversion. Announced in 1947, it is best thought of as the political-military aspect of the US strategy of *containment* alongside the *Marshall Plan*.

UN (United Nations) – An international organisation whose membership is open to all *sovereign states*. Founded in 1945, its primary purpose is to maintain international *peace* and *security* through *diplomacy* and negotiation where possible. It comprises six principal organs: the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretariat, the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice, of which the first is the most important politically because it has the authority to pass binding resolutions.

UN Charter – The set of rules which acts as a kind of constitution for the *UN*. Among other things, the Charter prohibits *war* or the threat of war except in self-defence or when the UN Security Council authorises war. It also prohibits intervention in a *sovereign state*'s domestic affairs, unless authorised by the Security Council.

Unilateralism – A term referring to decisions and actions taken by a *state* on its own, without consulting others, not even friends and allies, on matters of international significance. Contrasts with both *bilateralism* and *multilateralism*.

Unipolarity – Refers to an *international system* where one overwhelmingly powerful *state* dominates. Some commentators regard the post-*Cold War* era as unipolar because the US seems unchallengeable as the sole *superpower*. Compare with *bipolarity* and *multipolarity*.

War – Organised political violence or armed conflict. The opposite of *peace*. Conventionally understood war involves two armed forces, but the term is also used to cover asymmetrical wars where an official armed force confronts an unofficial force of *insurgents*, *guerrillas* or *terrorists*.

Warsaw Pact – A military *alliance* formed in 1955 by Eastern European countries aligned with the USSR during the *Cold War*. It was largely a response to the formation of *NATO*. Its members were: USSR, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Albania (until 1961). It dissolved when the Cold War ended.

Washington Consensus – A set of *neoliberal* policy prescriptions that find strong support among the Washington-based *multilateral* economic institutions: the *IMF*, the *World Bank*, and the US Treasury.

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – A term referring to nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. These three classes of weapon are thought to be more destructive than conventional weapons and likely to inflict greater *collateral damage*. Each is also the subject of an international convention or treaty.

Westphalia, Peace of – Refers to the two treaties (of Osnabrück and Münster) that brought the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) to an end. The Thirty Years' War was essentially fought over the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire to resolve disputes relating to religion and the relative political rights of the Emperor and the emerging territorial *states* under the Empire's jurisdiction. As significant as the year 1648 is, it is overstating things to say, as many scholars do, that the *sovereign state* was born in the treaties of Westphalia.

World Bank – Originally formed to help post-World War II economic reconstruction, the World Bank provides funds and long-term loans at reduced interest rates to developing countries. Part of the *Bretton Woods* system, its policy prescriptions are consistent with the *Washington Consensus*. The Bank has been subject to a good deal of intense criticism for uncritically accepting and promoting *neoliberal* principles.

World Trade Organization (WTO) – Formerly the *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)*, the WTO provides a more permanent institution in which *states* can work towards the reduction and elimination of tariff barriers and in which they can mediate disputes and negotiate a more open, *free trade* system.

Xenophobia – Fear of outsiders or foreigners.

Zero-sum game – A situation in which gains made by one actor unavoidably come at the expense of another or others.

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