

rule, features of most Western states, are not, in their view, true democracy. Instead, influenced by Jürgen Habermas, critical theorists believe in the transforming power of publicity, social movements, and open communication to foster debate, “discourse,” and deliberation rather than majority rule.

Some critical theorists deplore the state as a form of political community because it excludes non-citizens and deprives them of rights. “Virtually all social moralities,” writes critical theorist Andrew Linklater, “have revolved around insider–outsider distinctions that devalued the suffering of distant strangers and even attached positive value to it.”⁴⁸ In the view of critical theorists, individuals should be assisted to identify with humanity as a whole,

not with particular and bounded communities. Pointing to the ways in which concepts like sovereignty and statehood have evolved since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, critical theorists echo constructivists’ belief in the importance of “agency” in changing identities and, therefore, interests. Thus, Linklater believes that: “Political communities which institutionalise new configurations of universality and difference have been one of the directions in which the Westphalian states-system could conceivably evolve.”⁴⁹

Table 1.2 summarizes the key differences among realists, liberals, constructivists, and Marxists and illustrates how the four theoretical approaches speak to one another.

Table 1.2 Realists, liberals, constructivists, and Marxists compared

	<i>Realists</i>	<i>Liberals</i>	<i>Constructivists</i>	<i>Marxists</i>
<i>Level of analysis</i>	Traditional realists favor the individual level (human nature); neorealists focus on the global system	Some liberals focus on the individual and some on the state level of analysis Thus, John Stuart Mill stressed the individual level in advocating educating citizens, and Immanuel Kant emphasized the state level in advocating republic governments Neoliberals stress the global system level	Individual level in transmission of ideas and identities and in the key role of “agents” in altering “structure”	Traditional Marxists focus on the state level in emphasizing dominant economic system Contemporary or neo-Marxists stress the relations of rich and poor countries and thus the global system level of analysis
<i>World view</i>	PESSIMISTIC: wars can be managed but not eliminated and the impediments to global cooperation are impossible to overcome owing to the problem of trust in a condition of anarchy Policies should enhance power Key actors are states	OPTIMISTIC: wars are human inventions that can be prevented by reforms such as education, free trade, economic betterment, welfare, and democracy Policies should enhance justice Key actors are individuals or humanity as a whole	INDETERMINATE: changing ideas produce new identities and interests. Whether or not conflict and violence are intensified or reduced depends on the ideas that take root and attract widespread support and whether or not resulting identities and interests are compatible or not	OPTIMISTIC: history is evolving as a reflection of changing economic forces that are creating the conditions for a world revolution by the proletariat Wars are the result of class conflict. They can be eliminated by the end of capitalism and the introduction of a classless society. Policies should enhance equality Key actors are economic classes

Table 1.2 continued

	<i>Realists</i>	<i>Liberals</i>	<i>Constructivists</i>	<i>Marxists</i>
<i>Human nature</i>	AGGRESSIVE and selfish with no natural harmony of interests among people. Human nature cannot be improved, and imperfect human beings cannot be perfect	BENIGN; human beings are perfectible, and there exists a harmony of interests among people	MALLEABLE; human beings change behavior as a reflection of the changing norms that govern society	BENIGN; human beings are perfectible, but only under socialism, following the elimination of classes. As long as capitalism remains, greed and selfishness dominate behavior
<i>Change</i>	Key features of global politics are permanent and immutable; evils like poverty and war cannot be eliminated	Key features of global politics are mutable and history is moving in a positive direction Interventionist liberals think that history needs a push, while non-interventionist liberals think that their own societies can provide a model for others	Key features of global politics are mutable though change is impeded by material factors. However, the evolution of ideas and resulting change in identities and interests can modify material factors that constitute global structure	Key features of global politics are mutable and history is moving in a positive direction. Marx and Engels believed that history was evolving toward socialism; Lenin believed that history had to be pushed by a "vanguard of the proletariat" – the communist party
<i>Cooperation</i>	Individuals and collective actors are naturally competitive; this propensity is assured by the anarchic nature of global politics	Individuals and states can cooperate to overcome collective problems such as global pollution, poverty, and aggression	Indeterminate. It depends on which ideas become dominant and on how universal the consensus is regarding those ideas	Socialists and capitalist states cannot cooperate. Lenin and Stalin believed that war between socialist and capitalist countries was "inevitable"; after 1956, Soviet leaders argued that " <u>peaceful coexistence</u> " was possible
<i>Public opinion</i>	Elitist; diplomacy should be conducted in secrecy by professional diplomats and politicians who, only in those conditions, can discuss differences freely and make deals to minimize conflict Democracy is not a virtue in carrying out foreign affairs; public opinion is ill informed, fickle, and short-sighted	Favor public diplomacy ("open covenants openly arrived at" in Woodrow Wilson's words) and applaud public opinion as an obstacle to war	Public opinion crucial in forming intersubjective consensus regarding norms and ideas, creating a collective identity, and formulating interests	Public opinion reflects class perceptions and interests; it will mirror the dominant economic class in society
<i>National interest</i>	Leaders serve the interests of their state	States exist to serve the interests of individuals	The national interest is based on national	States serve the interests of the

	<i>Realists</i>	<i>Liberals</i>	<i>Constructivists</i>	<i>Marxists</i>
	<p>by maintaining and improving its security rather than serving the interests of individuals or some vague global interests. Focus is mainly on a few states, the great powers</p> <p>International institutions are suspect as they may pursue interests other than those of their state or attempt to wrest authority from states</p>	<p>States should be limited in their ability to interfere in the lives of people</p> <p>Free trade and human rights are key regardless of state interests</p>	<p>identity; it is "what states make of it"</p>	<p>dominant economic class in society and define the national interest accordingly</p> <p>Bourgeois states define the national interest in terms of economic imperialism and dominance over the "periphery" of poor states</p>
<i>International institutions and organizations</i>	<p>States must be independent, autonomous, and free to act without limits on sovereignty</p> <p>United Nations, international treaties, or other entanglements may limit such autonomy</p>	<p>Support international organizations and institutions like the UN and the World Trade Organization (WTO) as encouraging peace and providing ways to overcome collective dilemmas</p>	<p>Indeterminate as it depends on dominant ideas and identities</p>	<p>Support transnational institutions created by socialist societies</p>
<i>Society</i>	<p>Tend to ignore the role of <i>society</i> as opposed to government and its bureaucracies and see the relationship as one in which government operates in foreign affairs with little interference from social groups</p>	<p>Focus on society and the relations among people rather than on state bureaucracies. Emphasis on the interdependence of actors and insistence that states cooperate to overcome global dilemmas such as environmental pollution</p>	<p>Intense focus on society as the source of ideas and identities created by interactions among individuals and/or social groups</p>	<p>Focus on society, notably relations among classes – especially workers and capitalists – rather than on government</p>
<i>Relative versus absolute gain</i>	<p>Actors do and should seek <i>relative</i> rather than <i>absolute</i> gain. Some states always profit more than others. Moreover, states that do not seek relative gains risk allowing others to gain resources that may provide them with a strategic advantage at some point in the future</p>	<p>There are areas in political life, like trade, in which all participants can profit or all can lose (<i>variable-sum games</i>) and there are few areas of political life in which the gain made by one actor is equivalent to the loss by another (<i>zero-sum game</i>). Actors are more concerned about their <i>absolute gains</i> than about <i>relative gains</i></p>	<p>Indeterminate</p>	<p>Focus on relative gains of socialists compared to capitalists</p>

Table 1.2 continued

	<i>Realists</i>	<i>Liberals</i>	<i>Constructivists</i>	<i>Marxists</i>
<i>Security</i>	Military and economic security are the principal issues of global politics; support for large defense budgets and opposition to free trade that, they fear, will make countries less independent	Human security consists of far more than military security. It includes protection from ill treatment, starvation, homelessness, disease, poverty, and other conditions that may endanger or threaten the lives and wellbeing of citizens	Indeterminate	Human security consists of far more than military security. It involves economic equality and the fulfillment of basic material needs

Feminist international relations

Feminist thinkers were attracted to postpositivism because of its emphasis on the role of language and identity in creating power relations. Since gender relations are usually unequal, gender is “a primary way of signifying relationships of power.” Gendered language reinforces such relationships. Hence, for the most part, feminist theorists agree with political scientist J. Ann Tickner that people assign “a more positive value to [stereotypically] masculine characteristics” like power and rationality and a more negative value to stereotypically feminine characteristics like weakness and emotion. Those who exhibit masculine traits wield more power than those who exhibit female traits. Those women who tend to succeed as national leaders – for example, Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain, Indira Gandhi in India, and Golda Meir in Israel – tend to exhibit the same traits as their male counterparts. Such gender relations affect every aspect of human experience, including global politics.⁵⁰ In Tickner’s view, “feminists cannot be anything but skeptical of universal truth claims and explanations associated with a body of knowledge from which women have frequently been excluded as knowers and subjects.”⁵¹

Feminist theorists contend that major theoretical approaches like realism and liberalism focus on “issues that grow out of men’s experiences”⁵²

and, presumably, would be altered if account were taken of women’s experiences. Women are largely absent from most accounts of global politics and international history. Thus, feminist theorist Cynthia Enloe was moved to ask rhetorically “where are the women?”⁵³ And Christine Sylvester posed the issue as follows:

IR theory does not spin any official stories about such people or evoke “womanly” characteristics . . . Feminists, however, find evocations of “women” in IR as the Chiquita Bananas of international political economy, the Pocohontas of diplomatic practice, the women companions for men on military bases, and the Beautiful Souls wailing the tears of unheralded social conscience at the walls of war. Moreover, “men” are in IR too, dressed as states, statesmen, soldiers, decision makers, terrorists, despots and other characters with more powerful social positions than “women.”⁵⁴

How does the world look from a feminist perspective? Feminist theory, it is argued, views the world from the perspective of the disadvantaged and takes greater account of economic inequality, ecological dangers, and human rights in defining security than conventional (male) international relations theory, which emphasizes military issues. Some feminists argue that they must

Debating...

Has military power become redundant in global politics?

Military power has traditionally been viewed as the chief currency of international politics. However, some argue that in recent decades the threat and use of force have become increasingly obsolete as a means of determining global outcomes.

YES

Obsolescence of war. Military power is redundant because war, certainly in the form of large-scale, high-intensity conflict, is now obsolete in many parts of the world. The spread of democratic governance has led to widening 'democratic zones of peace', democratic states being reluctant to go to war with one another. The emergence, since 1945, of a system of international law (see p. 332) centred around the UN has also changed moral attitudes towards the use of force, making wars of plunder non-legitimate. The advent of total war, and especially the development of nuclear weapons, means that the impact of war is so devastating that it has ceased to be a viable instrument of state policy. Finally, states increasingly have other, more pressing, claims on their resources, notably public services and welfare provision.

Trade not war. One of the key reasons for the obsolescence of war is globalization (see p. 9). Globalization has reduced the incidence of war in at least three ways. First, states no longer need to make economic gains by conquest because globalization offers a cheaper and easier route to national prosperity in the form of trade. Second, by significantly increasing levels of economic interdependence, globalization makes war almost unthinkable because of the high economic costs involved (trade partnerships destroyed, external investment lost, and so on). Third, trade and other forms of economic interaction build international understanding and so counter insular (and possibly aggressive) forms of nationalism.

Unwinnable wars. Changes in the nature of warfare have made it increasingly difficult to predict the outcome of war on the basis of the respective capabilities of the parties concerned. This is reflected in the difficulty that developed states have had in winning so-called asymmetrical wars, such as the Vietnam War and in the counter-insurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. If the USA as the world's only military superpower is unable to wage war with a guaranteed likelihood of success, alternative, non-military means of exerting influence over world affairs are likely to become increasingly attractive.

NO

War is endless. Realists dismiss the idea that war has, or could, come to an end, on the grounds that the international system continues to be biased in favour of conflict. Military power remains the only sure guarantee of a state's survival and security, and the irresolvable security dilemma (see p. 19) means that fear and uncertainty persist. Moreover, 'zones of peace' may contract due to the 'rolling back' of globalization and a shift towards economic nationalism and intensifying great-power rivalry (as occurred before WWI). Further, the USA's massive global military predominance, a major reason for the decline of inter-state wars, is destined to change as world order becomes increasingly multipolar and therefore unstable.

New security challenges. The decline of inter-state war does not mean that the world has become a safer place. Rather, new and, in some ways, more challenging, security threats have emerged. This particularly applies in the case of terrorism (see p. 284), as demonstrated by 9/11 and other attacks. Terrorism, indeed, shows how globalization has made the world more dangerous, as terrorists gain easier access to devastating weaponry, and can operate on a transnational or even global basis. Such threats underline the need for states to develop more sophisticated military strategies, both to ensure tighter domestic security and, possibly, to attack foreign terrorist camps and maybe states that harbour terrorists.

Humanitarian wars. Since the end of the Cold War, the purpose of war and the uses to which military power is put have changed in important ways. In particular, armed force has been used more frequently to achieve humanitarian ends, often linked to protecting citizens from civil strife or from the oppressive policies of their own governments, examples including Northern Iraq, Sierra Leone, Kosovo and East Timor. In such cases, humanitarian considerations go hand in hand with considerations of national self-interest. Without military intervention from outside, civil wars, ethnic conflict and humanitarian disasters often threaten regional stability and result in migration crises, and so have much wider ramifications.