

CHAPTER 1

Introducing Global Politics

'Only connect!'

E. M. FORSTER, *Howards End* (1910)

PREVIEW

How should we approach the study of world affairs? How is the world best understood? World affairs have traditionally been understood on the basis of an *international* paradigm. In this view, states (often understood as 'nations', hence 'international') are taken to be the essential building blocks of world politics, meaning that world affairs boil down, essentially, to the relations between states. This suggests that once you understand the factors that influence how states interact with one another, you understand how the world works. However, since the 1980s, an alternative *globalization* paradigm has become fashionable. This reflects the belief that world affairs have been transformed in recent decades by the growth of global interconnectedness and interdependence. In this view, the world no longer operates as a disaggregated collection of states, or 'units', but rather as an integrated whole, as 'one world'. Global politics, as understood in this book, attempts to straddle these rival paradigms. It accepts that it is equally absurd to dismiss states and national government as irrelevant in world affairs as it is to deny that, over a significant range of issues, states now operate in a context of global interdependence. However, in what sense is politics now 'global'? And how, and to what extent, has globalization reconfigured world politics? Our understanding of global politics also needs to take account of the different theoretical 'lenses' through which the world has been interpreted; that is, different ways of *seeing* the world. What, in particular, is the difference between mainstream perspectives on global politics and critical perspectives? Finally, the world stubbornly refuses to stand still. Global politics is therefore an arena of ongoing and, many would argue, accelerating change. And yet, certain aspects of global politics appear to have an enduring character. What is the balance between continuity and change in global politics?

KEY ISSUES

- What is meant by 'global politics'?
- How has international politics been transformed into global politics?
- What have been the implications of globalization for world politics?
- How do mainstream approaches to global politics differ from critical approaches?
- How has global politics changed in recent years in relation to the issues of power, security and justice?

CONCEPT

Politics

Politics, in its broadest sense, refers to the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live. Politics is inextricably linked to the phenomena of conflict and cooperation. On the one hand, the existence of rival opinions, different wants, competing needs and opposing interests guarantees disagreement about the rules under which people live. On the other hand, people recognize that, in order to influence these rules or ensure their enforcement, they must work with others. However, politics is an 'essentially contested' concept (Gallie 1955/56). It has been defined, variously, as the art of government, as public affairs generally, as the non-violent resolution of disputes, and as power and the distribution of resources (Heywood 2007).

● **Globalization:** The emergence of a complex web of interconnectedness that means that our lives are increasingly shaped by events that occur, and decisions that are made, at a great distance from us (see p. 9)

● **The state:** A political association that establishes sovereign jurisdiction within defined territorial borders (see p. 114)

WHAT IS GLOBAL POLITICS?

What's in a name?

Why 'global politics'? What does it mean to suggest that politics has 'gone global'? And how does 'global' politics differ from 'international' politics? The term 'global' has two meanings, and these have quite different implications as far as global politics is concerned. In the first, global means *worldwide*, having planetary (not merely regional or national) significance. The globe is, in effect, the world. Global politics, in this sense, refers to politics that is conducted at a global rather than a national or regional level. There is no doubt that the global or worldwide dimension of politics has, in recent decades, become more significant. There has been a growth of international organizations, some of which, like the United Nations (see p. 449), come close to having a universal membership. A growing number of political issues have also acquired a 'global' character, in that they affect, actually or potentially, all parts of the world and so all people on the planet. This particularly applies in the case of the environment, often seen as the paradigm example of a 'global' issue, because nature operates as an interconnected whole, in which everything affects everything else. The same, we are often told, applies to the economy, where it is commonplace to refer to the 'global economy' or 'global capitalism', in that fewer and fewer countries now remain outside the international trading system and are unaffected by external investment and the integration of financial markets. For theorists of **globalization**, this trend towards global interconnectedness is not only perhaps the defining feature of modern existence, but also requires that traditional approaches to learning need to be rethought, in this case by adopting a 'borderless' or 'trans-planetary' approach to politics.

However, the notion that politics – and, for that matter, everything else – has been caught up in a swirl of interconnectedness that effectively absorbs all of its parts, or 'units', into an indivisible, global whole, is very difficult to sustain. The claim that we live in a 'borderless world', or the assertion that the **state** is dead and sovereignty is irrelevant (Ohmae 1990, 1996), remain distinctly fanciful ideas. In no meaningful sense has politics at the global level *transcended* politics at the national, local or, for that matter, any other level. This is why the notion of global politics, as used in this book, draws on the second meaning of 'global'. In this view, global means *comprehensive*; it refers to *all* elements within a system, not just to the system as a whole. Global politics thus takes place not just at a global level, but at and, crucially, across, all levels – worldwide, regional, national, sub-national and so on (see Figure 1.1). From this perspective, the advent of global politics does not imply that international politics should be consigned to the dustbin of history. Rather, 'the global' and 'the international' coexist: they complement one another and should not be seen as rival or incompatible modes of understanding.

The approach we take in this book acknowledges that it is as absurd to dismiss states and national governments as irrelevant as it is to deny that, over a significant range of issues, states now operate in a context of global interdependence. The choice of *Global Politics* as its title reflects the fact both that what goes on *within* states and what goes on *between* states impact on one another to a greater degree than ever before, and that an increased proportion of politics no

CONCEPT

Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the principle of supreme and unquestionable **authority**, reflected in the claim by the state to be the sole author of laws within its territory. *External sovereignty* (sometimes called 'state sovereignty' or 'national sovereignty') refers to the capacity of the state to act independently and autonomously on the world stage. This implies that states are legally equal and that the territorial integrity and political independence of a state are inviolable. *Internal sovereignty* refers to the location of supreme power/authority within the state. The institution of sovereignty is nevertheless developing and changing, both as new concepts of sovereignty emerge ('economic' sovereignty, 'food' sovereignty and so on) and as sovereignty is adapted to new circumstances ('pooled' sovereignty, 'responsible' sovereignty and so forth).

● **Authority:** The *right* to influence the behaviour of others on the basis of an acknowledged duty to obey; power cloaked in legitimacy.

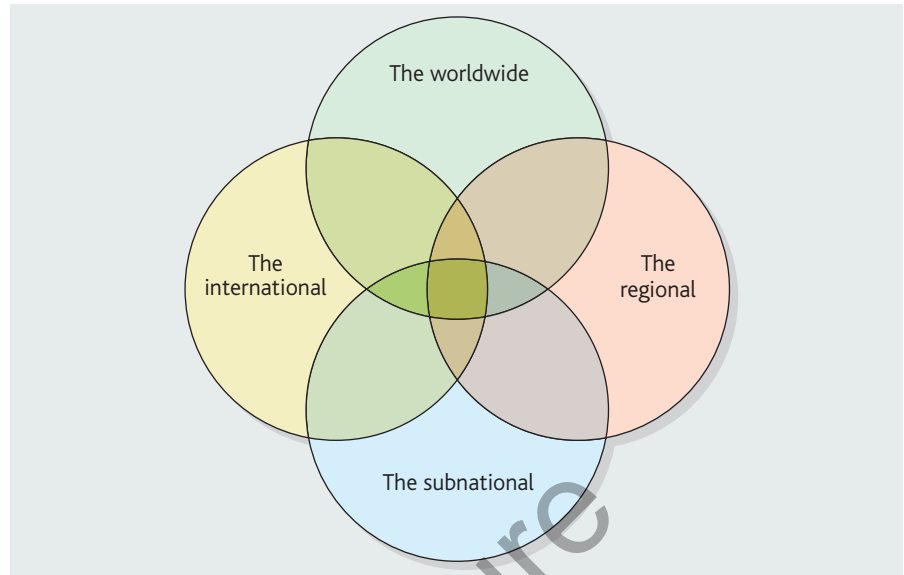


Figure 1.1 Dimensions of global politics

longer takes place simply in and through the state. As such, it moves beyond the confines of what has traditionally been studied under International Relations and allows for the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach that takes account of issues and themes from across the social sciences, in the process bringing a wider range of debates and perspectives into focus. At the same time, however, particular attention is given to International Relations, as this is the field in which most of the relevant research and theorizing has been done, especially in view of theoretical developments in the discipline in recent decades.

From international politics to global politics

In what ways has 'international' politics been transformed into 'global' politics, and how far has this process progressed? How have the contours of world politics changed in recent years? The most significant changes include the following:

- New actors on the world stage
- Increased interdependence and interconnectedness
- The trend towards global governance.

The state and new global actors

World politics has conventionally been understood in international terms. Although the larger phenomenon of patterns of conflict and co-operation between and among territorially-based political units has existed throughout history, the term 'international relations' was not coined until the UK philosopher and legal reformer, Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), used it in his *Principles of Morals and Legislation* ([1789] 1968). Bentham's use of the term acknowl-

Focus on . . .

International Relations: the 'great debates'

The academic discipline of International Relations (frequently shortened to IR) emerged in the aftermath of World War I (1914–18), an important impetus being the desire to find ways of establishing enduring peace. The central focus of the discipline has been on the study of the relations of states, and those relations have traditionally been understood primarily in diplomatic, military and strategic terms. However, the nature and focus of the discipline has changed significantly over time, not least through a series of so-called 'great debates'.

- The first 'great debate' took place between the 1930s and 1950s, and was between liberal internationalists, who emphasized the possibility of peaceful cooperation, and realists, who believed in inescapable power politics. By the 1950s, realism had gained ascendancy within the discipline.
- The second 'great debate' took place during the 1960s, and was between **behaviouralists** and traditionalists over whether it is possible to develop objective 'laws' of international relations.
- The third 'great debate', sometimes called the 'inter-paradigm debate', took place during the 1970s and 1980s, and was between realists and liberals, on the one hand, and Marxists on the other, who interpreted international relations in economic terms.
- The fourth 'great debate' started in the late 1980s, and was between positivists and so-called post-positivists over the relationship between theory and reality (see *All in the mind?* p. 75) This reflected the growing influence within IR of a range of new critical perspectives, such as social constructivism, critical theory, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, feminism and green politics.

edged a significant shift: that, by the late eighteenth century, territorially-based political units were coming to have a more clearly national character, making relations between them appear genuinely 'inter-national'. However, although most modern states are either nation-states (see p. 164) or aspire to be nation-states, it is their possession of statehood rather than nationhood that allows them to act effectively on the world stage. 'International' politics should thus, more properly, be described as 'inter-state' politics. But what is a state? As defined by the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, a state must possess four qualifying properties: a defined territory, a permanent population, an effective government, and the 'capacity to enter into relations with other states'. In this view, states, or countries (the terms can be used interchangeably in this context), are taken to be the key actors on the world stage, and perhaps the only ones that warrant serious consideration. This is why the conventional approach to world politics is seen as **state-centric**, and why the international system is often portrayed as a **state-system**. The origins of this view of international politics are usually traced back to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which established sovereignty as the distinguishing feature of the state. State sovereignty thus became the primary organizing principle of international politics.

However, the state-centric approach to world politics has become increasingly difficult to sustain. This has happened, in part, because it is no longer possible to treat states as the only significant actors on the world stage.

● **Behaviouralism:** The belief that social theories should be constructed only on the basis of observable behaviour, providing quantifiable data for research.

● **State-centrism:** An approach to political analysis that takes the state to be the key actor in the domestic realm and on the world stage.

● **State-system:** A pattern of relationships between and amongst states that establishes a measure of order and predictability (see p. 6).

Focus on . . .

The Westphalian state-system

The Peace of Westphalia (1648) is commonly said to mark the beginning of modern international politics. The Peace was a series of treaties that brought an end to the Thirty Years War (1618–48), which consisted of a series of declared and undeclared wars throughout central Europe involving the Holy Roman Empire and various opponents, including the Danes, the Dutch and, above all, France and Sweden. Although the transition occurred over a much longer period of time, these treaties helped to transform a medieval Europe of overlapping authorities, loyalties and identities into a modern state-system. The so-

called 'Westphalian system' was based on two key principles:

- States enjoy sovereign jurisdiction, in the sense that they have independent control over what happens within their territory (all other institutions and groups, spiritual and temporal, are therefore subordinate to the state).
- Relations between and among states are structured by the acceptance of the sovereign independence of all states (thus implying that states are legally equal).

Transnational corporations (TNCs) (see p. 99), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (see p. 6) and a host of other non-state bodies have come to exert influence. In different ways and to different degrees groups and organizations ranging from al-Qaeda (see p. 295), the anti-capitalist movement (see p. 70) and Greenpeace to Google (see p. 142), General Motors and the Papacy contribute to shaping world politics. Since the 1970s, indeed, pluralist theorists have advocated a **mixed-actor model** of world politics. However, although it is widely accepted that states and national governments are merely one category of actor amongst many on the world stage, they may still remain the most important actors. No TNC or NGOs, for instance, can rival the state's coercive power, either its capacity to enforce order within its borders or its ability to deal militarily with other states. (The changing role and significance of the state are examined in depth in Chapter 5.)

Increased interdependence and interconnectedness

To study international politics traditionally meant to study the implications of the international system being divided into a collection of states. Thanks to sovereignty, these states were, moreover, viewed as independent and autonomous entities. This state-centric approach has often been illustrated through the so-called 'billiard ball model', which dominated thinking about international relations in the 1950s and later, and was particularly associated with realist theory. This suggested that states, like billiard balls, are impermeable and self-contained units, which influence each other through external pressure. Sovereign states interacting within the state-system are thus seen to behave like a collection of billiard balls moving over the table and colliding with each other, as in Figure 1.2. In this view, interactions between and amongst states, or 'collisions', are linked, in most cases to military and **security** matters, reflecting the

• **Mixed-actor model:** The theory that, while not ignoring the role of states and national governments, international politics is shaped by a much broader range of interests and groups.

• **Security:** To be safe from harm, the absence of threats; security may be understood in 'national', 'international', 'global' or 'human' terms.

GLOBAL ACTORS . . .

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a private, non-commercial group or body which seeks to achieve its ends through non-violent means. The World Bank (see p. 373) defines NGOs as 'private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development'. Very early examples of such bodies were the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (formed by William Wilberforce in 1787) and the International Committee of the Red Cross, founded in 1863. The first official recognition of NGOs was by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, when 41 NGOs were granted consultative status following the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (indeed, some NGO activists believe that only groups formally acknowledged by the UN should be regarded as 'true' NGOs). A distinction is often drawn between operational NGOs and advocacy NGOs:

- *Operational* NGOs are ones whose primary purpose is the design and implementation of development-related projects; they may be either relief-orientated or development-orientated, and they may be community-based, national or international.
- *Advocacy* NGOs exist to promote or defend a particular cause; they are sometimes termed promotional pressure groups or public interest groups.

Significance: During the 1990s, the steady growth in the number of NGOs became a veritable explosion.

By 2000, over 1,000 groups had been granted consultative status by the UN, with estimates of the total number of international NGOs usually exceeding 30,000. If national NGOs are taken into account, the number grows enormously: the USA has an estimated 2 million NGOs; Russia has 65,000 NGOs; and Kenya, to take one developing country alone, has about 2,400 NGOs coming into existence each year. The major international NGOs have developed into huge organizations. For example, Care International, dedicated to the worldwide reduction of poverty, controls a budget worth more than 100m dollars, Greenpeace has a membership of 2.5m and a staff of over 1,200, and Amnesty International is better resourced than the human rights arm of the UN.

There can be little doubt that major international NGOs and the NGO sector as a whole now constitute significant actors on the global stage. Although lacking the economic leverage that TNCs can exert, advocacy NGOs have proved highly adept at mobilizing 'soft' power (see p. 216) and popular pressure. In this respect, they have a number of advantages. These include that leading NGOs have cultivated high public profiles, often linked to public protests and demonstrations that attract eager media attention; that their typically altruistic and humanitarian objectives enable them to mobilize public support and exert moral pressure in a way that conventional politicians and political parties struggle to rival; and that, over a wide range of issues, the views of NGOs are taken to be both authoritative and disinterested, based on the use of specialists and

academics. Operational NGOs, for their part, have come to deliver about 15 per cent of international aid, often demonstrating a greater speed of response and level of operational effectiveness than governmental bodies, national or international, can muster. Relief- and development-orientated NGOs may also be able to operate in politically sensitive areas where national governments, or even the UN, would be unwelcome.

Nevertheless, the rise of the NGO has provoked considerable political controversy. Supporters of NGOs argue that they benefit and enrich global politics. They counter-balance corporate power, challenging the influence of TNCs; democratize global politics by articulating the interests of people and groups who have been disempowered by the globalization process; and act as a moral force, widening peoples' sense of civic responsibility and even promoting global citizenship. In these respects, they are a vital component of emergent global civil society (see p. 152). Critics, however, argue that NGOs are self-appointed groups that have no genuine democratic credentials, often articulating the views of a small group of senior professionals. In an attempt to gain a high media profile and attract support and funding, NGOs have been accused of making exaggerated claims, thereby distorting public perceptions and the policy agenda. Finally, in order to preserve their 'insider' status, NGOs tend to compromise their principles and 'go mainstream', becoming, in effect, deradicalized social movements. (The impact and significance of NGOs is examined further in Chapter 6.)

CONCEPT

Great power

A great power is a state deemed to rank amongst the most powerful in a hierarchical state-system. The criteria that define a great power are subject to dispute, but four are often identified. (1) Great powers are in the first rank of military prowess, having the capacity to maintain their own security and, potentially, to influence other powers. (2) They are economically powerful states, although (as Japan shows) this is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for great power status. (3) They have global, and not merely regional, spheres of interests. (4) They adopt a 'forward' foreign policy and have actual, and not merely potential, impact on international affairs (during its isolationist phase, the USA was thus not a great power).

● **Diplomacy:** A process of negotiation and communication between states that seeks to resolve conflict without recourse to war; an instrument of foreign policy.

● **Transnational:** A configuration, which may apply to events, people, groups or organizations, that takes little or no account of national government or state borders; transnational as distinct from 'international' and 'multinational'.

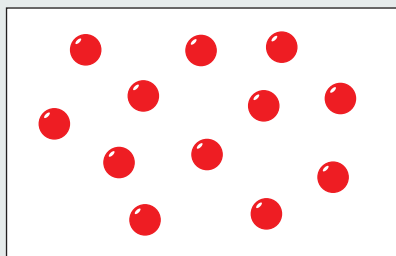


Figure 1.2 Billiard ball model of world politics

assumption that power and survival are the primary concerns of the state. International politics is thus orientated mainly around issues of war and peace, with **diplomacy** and possibly military action being the principal forms of state interaction.

The billiard ball model of world politics has two key implications. First, it suggests a clear distinction between *domestic* politics, which is concerned with the state's role in maintaining order and carrying out regulation within its own borders, and *international* politics, which is concerned with relations between and amongst states. In this sense, sovereignty is the hard shell of the billiard ball that divides the 'outside' from the 'inside'. In short, borders matter. Second, it implies that patterns of conflict and cooperation within the international system are largely determined by the distribution of power among states. Thus, although state-centric theorists acknowledged the formal, legal equality of states, each state being a sovereign entity, they also recognized that some states are more powerful than others, and, indeed, that strong states may sometimes intervene in the affairs of weak ones. In effect, not all billiard balls are the same size. This is why the study of international politics has conventionally given particular attention to the interests and behaviour of so-called 'great powers'.

The billiard ball model has nevertheless come under pressure as a result of recent trends and developments. Two of these have been particularly significant. The first is that there has been a substantial growth in cross-border, or **transnational**, flows and transactions – movements of people, good, money, information and ideas. In other words, state borders have become increasingly 'porous', and, as a result, the conventional domestic/international, or 'inside/outside', divide is increasingly difficult to sustain. This trend has been particularly associated with globalization, as discussed in the next main section. The second development, linked to the first, is that relations among states have come to be characterized by growing interdependence (see p. 8) and interconnectedness. Tasks such as promoting economic growth and prosperity, tackling global warming, halting the spread of weapons of mass destruction and coping with pandemic diseases are impossible for any state to accomplish on its own, however powerful it might be. States, in these circumstances, are forced to work together, relying on collective efforts and energies. For Keohane and Nye (1977), such a web of relationships has created a condition of 'complex interdepend-

CONCEPT

Interdependence

Interdependence refers to a relationship between two parties in which each is affected by decisions that are taken by the other. *Interdependence* implies mutual influence, even a rough equality between the parties in question, usually arising from a sense of mutual vulnerability.

Interdependence, then, is usually associated with a trend towards cooperation and integration in world affairs. Keohane and Nye (1977) advanced the idea of 'complex interdependence' as an alternative to the realist model of international politics. This highlighted the extent to which (1) states have ceased to be autonomous international actors; (2) economic and other issues have become more prominent in world affairs; and (3) military force has become a less reliable and less important policy option.

● **Anarchy:** Literally, without rule; the absence of a central government or higher authority, sometimes, but not necessarily, associated with instability and chaos.

● **Self-help:** A reliance on internal or inner resources, often seen as the principal reason states prioritize survival and security.

● **Balance of power:** A condition in which no one state predominates over others, tending to create general equilibrium and curb the hegemonic ambitions of all states (see p. 256).

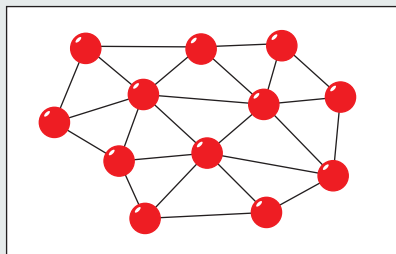


Figure 1.3 Cobweb model of world politics

ence', in which states are drawn into cooperation and integration by forces such as closer trading and other economic relationships. This is illustrated by what has been called the 'cobweb model' of world politics (see Figure 1.3). Nevertheless, such thinking can be taken too far. For one thing, there are parts of the world, not least the Middle East, where states clearly remain enmeshed in military-strategic conflict, suggesting both that the billiard ball model is not entirely inaccurate and that levels of interdependence vary greatly across the globe. For another, interdependence is by no means always associated with trends towards peace, cooperation and integration. Interdependence may be asymmetrical rather than symmetrical, in which case it can lead to domination and conflict rather than peace and harmony.

From international anarchy to global governance?

A key assumption of the traditional approach to international politics has been that the state-system operates in a context of **anarchy**. This reflects the notion that there is no higher authority than the state, meaning that external politics operates as an international 'state of nature', a pre-political society. The implications of international anarchy are profound. Most importantly, in the absence of any other force attending to their interests, states are forced to rely on **self-help**. If international politics operates as a 'self-help system', the power-seeking inclinations of one state are only tempered by competing tendencies in other states, suggesting that conflict and war are inevitable features of the international system. In this view, conflict is only constrained by a **balance of power**, developed either as a diplomatic strategy by peace-minded leaders or occurring through a happy coincidence. This image of anarchy has been modified by the idea that the international system operates more like an 'international society' (see page 10). Hedley Bull (2002) thus advanced the notion of an 'anarchical society', in place of the conventional theory of international anarchy.

However, the idea of international anarchy, and even the more modest notion of an 'anarchical society', have become more difficult to sustain because of the emergence, especially since 1945, of a framework of global governance (see p. 455) and sometimes regional governance. This is reflected in the growing importance of organizations such as the United Nations, the International Monetary

CONCEPT

Globalization

Globalization is the emergence of a complex web of interconnectedness that means that our lives are increasingly shaped by events that occur, and decisions that are made, at a great distance from us. The central feature of globalization is therefore that geographical distance is of declining relevance and that territorial borders, such as those between nation-states, are becoming less significant. By no means, however, does globalization imply that 'the local' and 'the national' are subordinated to 'the global'. Rather, it highlights the *deepening* as well as the *broadening* of the political process, in the sense that local, national and global events (or perhaps local, regional, national, international and global events) constantly interact.

- **Collective dilemma:** A problem that stems from the interdependence of states, meaning that any solution must involve international cooperation rather than action by a single state.
- **Globality:** A totally interconnected whole, such as the global economy; the end-state of globalization.
- **Globalism:** An ideological project committed to the spread of globalization, usually reflecting support for the values and theories of free-market capitalism.

Fund (IMF) (see p. 469), the World Trade Organization (WTO) (see p. 511), the European Union (see p. 505) and so on. The growing number and significance of international organizations has occurred for powerful and pressing reasons. Notably, they reflect the fact that states are increasingly confronted by **collective dilemmas**, issues that are particularly taxing because they confound even the most powerful of states when acting alone. This first became apparent in relation to the development of technologized warfare and particularly the invention of nuclear weapons, but has since been reinforced by challenges such as financial crises, climate change, terrorism, crime, migration and development. Such trends, nevertheless, have yet to render the idea of international anarchy altogether redundant. While international organizations have undoubtedly become significant actors on the world stage, competing, at times, with states and other non-state actors, their impact should not be exaggerated. Apart from anything else, they are, to a greater or lesser extent, the creatures of their members: they can do no more than their member states, and especially powerful states, allow them to do.

Globalization and its implications

No development has challenged the conventional state-centric image of world politics more radically than the emergence of globalization. Globalization, indeed, can be seen as the buzz word of our time. Amongst politicians, for instance, the conventional wisdom is that the twenty-first century will be the 'global century'. But what actually is 'globalization'? Is it actually happening, and, if so, what are its implications?

Explaining globalization

Globalization is a complex, elusive and controversial term. It has been used to refer to a process, a policy, a marketing strategy, a predicament or even an ideology. Some have tried to bring greater clarity to the debate about the nature of globalization by distinguishing between globalization as a *process* or set of processes (highlighting the dynamics of transformation or change, in common with other words that end in the suffix '-ization', such as modernization) and **globality** as a *condition* (indicating the set of circumstances that globalization has brought about, just as modernization has created a condition of modernity) (Steger 2003). Others have used the term **globalism** to refer to the *ideology* of globalization, the theories, values and assumptions that have guided or driven the process (Ralston Saul 2005). The problem with globalization is that it is not so much an 'it' as a 'them': it is not a single process but a complex of processes, sometimes overlapping and interlocking but also, at times, contradictory and oppositional ones. It is therefore difficult to reduce globalization to a single theme. Nevertheless, the various developments and manifestations that are associated with globalization, or indeed globality, can be traced back to the underlying phenomenon of interconnectedness. Globalization, regardless of its forms or impact, forges connections between previously unconnected people, communities, institutions and societies. Held and McGrew (1999) thus defined globalization as 'the widening, intensifying, speeding up, and growing impact of world-wide interconnectedness'.

CONCEPT

International society

The term 'international society' suggests that relations between and amongst states are conditioned by the existence of norms and rules that establish the regular patterns of interaction that characterize a 'society'. This view modifies the realist emphasis on power politics and international anarchy by suggesting the existence of a 'society of states' rather than simply a 'system of states', implying both that international relations are rule-governed and that these rules help to maintain international order. The chief institutions that generate cultural cohesion and social integration are international law (see p. 332), diplomacy and the activities of international organizations (see p. 433). The extent of social integration may nevertheless depend heavily on the extent of cultural and ideological similarity between and among states.

● **Hyperglobalism:** The view that new, globalized economic and cultural patterns became inevitable once technology such as computerized financial trading, satellite communications, mobile phones and the Internet became widely available.

The interconnectedness that globalization has spawned is multidimensional and operates through distinctive economic, cultural and political processes. In other words, globalization has a number of dimensions or 'faces'. Although globalization theorists have championed particular interpretations of globalization, these are by no means mutually exclusive. Instead, they capture different aspects of a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Globalization has been interpreted in three main ways:

- *Economic* globalization (see p. 94) is the process through which national economies have, to a greater or lesser extent, been absorbed into a single global economy (examined in greater depth in Chapter 4).
- *Cultural* globalization (see p. 147) is the process whereby information, commodities and images that have been produced in one part of the world enter into a global flow that tends to 'flatten out' cultural differences between nations, regions and individuals (discussed more fully in Chapter 6).
- *Political* globalization (see p. 118) is the process through which policy-making responsibilities have been passed from national governments to international organizations (considered in greater detail in Chapter 5).

Globalization: myth or reality?

Is globalization actually happening? Although globalization may be the buzz word of our time, there has been intense debate about its impact and significance. No sooner had (roughly by the mid-1990s) academics and other social commentators seemed to agree that globalization was 'changing everything', than it became fashionable (in the early 2000s) to proclaim the 'end of globalization', or the 'death of globalism' (Bisley 2007). The most influential attempt to outline the various positions on this globalization debate was set out by Held *et al.* (1999). They distinguished between three positions:

- The hyperglobalists
- The sceptics
- The transformationalists

The hyperglobalizers are the chief amongst 'the believers' in globalization. **Hyperglobalism** portrays globalization as a profound, even revolutionary set of economic, cultural, technological and political shifts that have intensified since the 1980s. Particular emphasis, in this view, is placed on developments such as the digital revolution in information and communications, the advent of an integrated global financial system and the emergence of global commodities that are available almost anywhere in the world. Indeed, hyperglobalism is often based on a form of technological determinism, which suggests that the forces creating a single global economy became irresistible once the technology that facilitates its existence was available. The chief image of hyperglobalism is captured in the notion of a 'borderless world' (discussed in more detail in Chapter 21), which suggests that national borders and, for that matter, states themselves have become irrelevant in a global order increasingly dominated by transnational forces. 'National' economic strategies are therefore virtually

Focus on . . .

Definitions of globalization

- '[T]he intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant localities in a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (Giddens 1990)
- 'The integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, direct foreign investment, short-term capital flows, international flows of workers and humanity generally, and flows of technology' (Bhagwati 2004)
- 'The processes through which sovereign nation-states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks' (Beck 2000)
- 'A process (or set of processes) which embody the transformation of the spatial organization of social relations and transactions' (Held *et al.* 1999)
- 'A reconfiguration of social geography marked by the growth of transplanetary and supraterritorial connections between people' (Scholte 2005)

unworkable in a global context. Resistance to the dictates of global markets is both damaging – countries prosper to the extent that their economies are integrated into the global economy – and ultimately futile. Hyperglobalizers therefore have a strongly positive attitude towards globalization, usually assuming that, in marking the triumph of markets over the state, it is associated with economic dynamism and growing worldwide prosperity.

Nevertheless, hyperglobalism offers an unbalanced and exaggerated view of globalization, in at least two senses. First, it overstates the extent to which policy-makers have been dominated by 'irresistible' economic and technological forces, underestimating the importance of values, perceptions and ideological orientations. Second, the images of the 'end of sovereignty' and the 'twilight of the nation-state' can be said to feature amongst the myths of globalization (sometimes called 'globalony'). Although states may increasingly operate in post-sovereign conditions, in a context of interdependence and permeability, their role and significance has altered rather than become irrelevant. States, for example, have become 'entrepreneurial' in trying to develop strategies for improving their competitiveness in the global economy, notably by boosting education, training and job-related skills. They are also more willing to 'pool' sovereignty by working in and through international organizations such as regional training blocs and the WTO. Finally, the advent of global terrorism and intensifying concern about migration patterns has re-emphasized the importance of the state in ensuring homeland security and in protecting national borders. (The implications of globalization for the state are examined more fully in Chapter 5.)

The sceptics, by contrast, have portrayed globalization as a fantasy and dismissed the idea of an integrated global economy. They point out that the overwhelming bulk of economic activity still takes place within, not across, national boundaries, and that there is nothing new about high levels of international trade and cross-border capital flows (Hirst and Thompson 1999). Sceptics have, further, argued that globalization has been used as an ideological device by politicians and theorists who wish to advance a market-orientated economic

APPROACHES TO . . .

GLOBALIZATION

Realist view

Realists have typically adopted a sceptical stance towards globalization, seeing it more in terms of intensifying economic interdependence (that is, 'more of the same') rather than the creation of an interlocking global economy. Most importantly, the state continues to be the dominant unit in world politics. Instead of being threatened by globalization, the state's capacity for regulation and surveillance may have increased rather than decreased. However, realists are not simply globalization deniers. In assessing the nature and significance of globalization, they emphasize that globalization and the international system are not separate, still less rival, structures. Rather, the former should be seen as a manifestation of the latter. Globalization has been made *by* states, *for* states, particularly dominant states. Developments such as an open trading system, global financial markets and the advent of transnational production were all put in place to advance the interests of western states in general and the USA in particular. Furthermore, realists question the notion that globalization is associated with a shift towards peace and cooperation. Instead, heightened economic interdependence is as likely to breed 'mutual vulnerability', leading to conflict rather than cooperation.

Liberal view

Liberals adopt a consistently positive attitude towards globalization. For economic liberals, globalization reflects the victory of the market over 'irrational' national allegiances and 'arbitrary' state borders. The miracle of the market is that it draws resources towards their most profitable use, thus bringing prosperity to individuals, families, companies and societies. The attraction of economic globalization is therefore that it allows markets to operate on a global scale, replacing the 'shallow' integration of free trade and intensified interdependence with the 'deep' integration of a single global economy. The increased productivity and intensified competition that this produces benefits all the societies that participate within it, demonstrating that economic globalization is a positive-sum game, a game of winners and winners. Liberals also believe that globalization brings social and political benefits. The freer flow of information and ideas around the world both widens opportunities for personal self-development and creates more dynamic and vigorous societies. Moreover, from a liberal standpoint, the spread of market capital-

ism is invariably associated with the advance of liberal democracy, economic freedom breeding a demand for political freedom. For liberals, globalization marks a watershed in world history, in that it ends the period during which the nation-state was the dominant global actor, world order being determined by an (inherently unstable) balance of power. The global era, by contrast, is characterized by a tendency towards peace and international cooperation as well as by the dispersal of global power, in particular through the emergence of global civil society (see p. 152) and the growing importance of international organizations.

Critical views

Critical theorists have adopted a negative or oppositional stance towards globalization. Often drawing on an established socialist or specifically Marxist critique of capitalism, this portrays the essence of globalization as the establishment of a global capitalist order. (Indeed, Marx (see p. 69) can be said to have prefigured much 'hyperglobalist' literature, in having highlighted the intrinsically transnational character of the capitalist mode of production.) Like liberals, critical theorists usually accept that globalization marks a historically significant shift, not least in the relationship between states and markets. States have lost power over the economy, being reduced to little more than instruments for the restructuring of national economies in the interests of global capitalism. Globalization is thus viewed as an uneven, hierarchical process, characterized both by the growing polarization between the rich and the poor, explained by world-systems theorists in terms of a structural imbalance between 'core' and 'peripheral' areas in the global economy, and by a weakening of democratic accountability and popular responsiveness due to burgeoning corporate power. Feminist analysts have sometimes linked globalization to growing gender inequalities, associated, for example, with the disruption of small-scale farming in the developing world, largely carried out by women, and growing pressure on them to support their families by seeking work abroad, leading to the 'feminization of migration'. Postcolonial theorists, for their part, have taken particular exception to cultural globalization, interpreted as a form of western imperialism which subverts indigenous cultures and ways of life and leads to the spread of soulless consumerism.

agenda. The globalization thesis has two major advantages in this respect. In the first place, it portrays certain tendencies (such as the shift towards greater flexibility and weaker trade unions, controls on public spending and particularly welfare budgets, and the scaling down of business regulation) as inevitable and therefore irresistible. Second, it suggests that such shifts are part of an impersonal process, and not one linked to an agent, such as big business, whose interests might be seen to be served by globalizing tendencies. However, although such scepticism has served to check the over-boiled enthusiasm of earlier globalization theorists, it is difficult to sustain the idea of 'business as normal'. Goods, capital, information and people do move around the world more freely than they used to, and this has inevitable consequences for economic, cultural and political life.

Falling between the hyperglobalizers and the sceptics, the 'transformationalist' stance offers a middle road view of globalization. It accepts that profound changes have taken place in the patterns and processes of world politics without its established or traditional features having been swept away altogether. In short, much has changed, but not everything. This has become the most widely accepted view of globalization, as it resists both the temptation to over-hype the process and to debunk it. Major transformations have nevertheless taken place in world politics. These include the following:

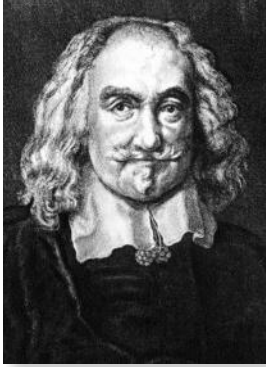
- The *breadth* of interconnectedness has not only stretched social, political, economic and cultural activities across national borders, but also, potentially, across the globe. Never before has globalization threatened to develop into a *single* worldwide system.
- The *intensity* of interconnectedness has increased with the growing magnitude of transborder or even transworld activities, which range from migration surges and the growth of international trade to the greater accessibility of Hollywood movies or US television programmes.
- Interconnectedness has *speeded up*, not least through the huge flows of electronic money that move around the world at the flick of a computer switch, ensuring that currency and other financial markets react almost immediately to economic events elsewhere in the world.

LENSES ON GLOBAL POLITICS

However, making sense of global politics also requires that we understand the theories, values and assumptions through which world affairs have been interpreted. How do different analysts and theorists *see* the world? What are the key 'lenses' on global politics? The theoretical dimension of the study of global politics has become an increasingly rich and diverse arena in recent decades, and the competing theoretical traditions are examined in depth in Chapter 3. This introduction, nevertheless, attempts to map out broad areas of debate, in particular by distinguishing between 'mainstream' perspectives and 'critical' perspectives.

Mainstream perspectives

The two mainstream perspectives on global politics are realism and liberalism. What do they have in common, and in what sense are they 'mainstream'?



Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)

English political philosopher. Hobbes was the son of a minor clergyman who subsequently abandoned his family. Writing at a time of uncertainty and civil strife, precipitated by the English Revolution, Hobbes developed the first comprehensive theory of nature and human behaviour since Aristotle. His classic work, *Leviathan* (1651) discussed the grounds of political obligation and undoubtedly reflected the impact of the Civil War. Based on the assumption that human beings seek 'power after power', it provided a realist justification for absolutist government as the only alternative to the anarchy of the 'state of nature', in which life would be 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. Hobbes' emphasis on the state as an essential guarantor of order and security has led to a revived interest in his ideas since 9/11.

Realism and liberalism can be viewed as mainstream perspectives in the sense that they, in their various incarnations, have dominated conventional academic approaches to the field of international politics since its inception. Realist and liberal theories have two broad things in common. In the first place, they are both grounded in **positivism**. This suggests that it is possible to develop objective knowledge, through the capacity to distinguish 'facts' from 'values'. In short, it is possible to compare theories with the 'real world', the world 'out there'. Robert Cox (1981) thus describes such theories as 'problem-solving theories', in that they take the world 'as it is' and endeavour to think through problems and offer prudent advice to policy-makers trying to negotiate the challenges of the 'real world'. Second, realist and liberal theorists share similar concerns and address similar issues, meaning that they, in effect, talk to, rather than past, one another. In particular, the core concern of both realism and liberalism is the balance between conflict and cooperation in state relations. Although realists generally place greater emphasis on conflict, while liberals highlight the scope for cooperation, neither is unmindful of the issues raised by the other, as is evidenced in the tendency, over time, for differences between realism and liberalism to have become blurred (see *Closing the realist-liberal divide?* p. 65). Nevertheless, important differences can be identified between the realist and liberal perspectives.

How do realists see global politics? Deriving from ideas that can be traced back to thinkers such as Thucydides (see p.242), Sun Tzu, author of *The Art of War*, Machiavelli (see p.55) and Thomas Hobbes, the realist vision is pessimistic: international politics is marked by constant power struggles and conflict, and a wide range of obstacles standing in the way of peaceful cooperation. Realism is grounded in an emphasis on **power politics**, based on the following assumptions:

● **Positivism:** The theory that social and indeed all forms of enquiry should conform to the methods of the natural sciences.

● **Power politics:** An approach to politics based on the assumption that the pursuit of power is the principal human goal; the term is sometimes used descriptively.

- Human nature is characterized by selfishness and greed.
- Politics is a domain of human activity structured by power and coercion.
- States are the key global actors.
- States prioritize self-interest and survival, prioritizing security above all else.
- States operate in a context of anarchy, and thus rely on self-help.

- Global order is structured by the distribution of power (capabilities) among states.
- The balance of power is the principal means of ensuring stability and avoiding war.
- Ethical considerations are (and should be) irrelevant to the conduct of foreign policy.

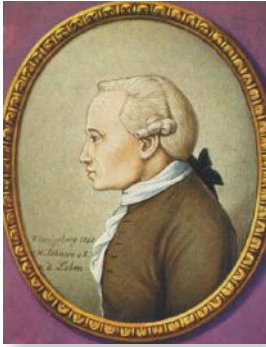
By contrast, how do liberals see global politics? Liberalism offers a more optimistic vision of global politics, based, ultimately, on a belief in human rationality and moral goodness (even though liberals also accept that people are essentially self-interested and competitive). Liberals tend to believe that the principle of balance or harmony operates in all forms of social interaction. As far as world politics is concerned, this is reflected in a general commitment to **internationalism**, as reflected in Immanuel Kant's (see p. 16) belief in the possibility of 'universal and perpetual peace'. The liberal model of global politics is based on the following key assumptions:

- Human beings are rational and moral creatures.
- History is a progressive process, characterized by a growing prospect of international cooperation and peace.
- Mixed-actor models of global politics are more realistic than state-centric ones.
- Trade and economic interdependence make war less likely.
- International law helps to promote order and fosters rule-governed behaviour among states.
- Democracy is inherently peaceful, particularly in reducing the likelihood of war between democratic states.

Critical perspectives

Since the late 1980s, the range of critical approaches to world affairs has expanded considerably. Until that point, Marxism had constituted the principal alternative to mainstream realist and liberal theories. What made the Marxist approach distinctive was that it placed its emphasis not on patterns of conflict and cooperation between states, but on structures of economic power and the role played in world affairs by international capital. It thus brought international political economy, sometimes seen as a sub-field within IR, into focus. However, hastened by the end of the Cold War, a wide range of 'new voices' started to influence the study of world politics, notable examples including social constructivism, critical theory, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, feminism and green politics. What do these new critical voices have in common, and in what sense are they 'critical'? In view of their diverse philosophical underpinnings and contrasting political viewpoints, it is tempting to argue that the only thing that unites these 'new voices' is a shared antipathy towards mainstream thinking. However, two broad similarities can be identified. The first is that, albeit in different ways and to different degrees, they have tried to go beyond the positivism of mainstream theory, emphasizing instead the role of consciousness in shaping social conduct and, therefore, world affairs. These so-called post-positivist theories are therefore 'critical' in that they not only take issue with the conclusions of

● **Internationalism:** The theory or practice of politics based on cooperation or harmony among nations, as opposed to the transcendence of national politics (see p.64).



Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

German philosopher. Kant spent his entire life in Königsberg (which was then in East Prussia), becoming professor of logic and metaphysics at the University of Königsberg in 1770. His 'critical' philosophy holds that knowledge is not merely an aggregate of sense impressions; it depends on the conceptual apparatus of human understanding. Kant's political thought was shaped by the central importance of morality. He believed that the law of reason dictated categorical imperatives, the most important of which was the obligation to treat others as 'ends', and never only as 'means'. Kant's most important works include *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784) and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1785).

mainstream theory, but also subject these theories themselves to critical scrutiny, exposing biases that operate within them and examining their implications. The second similarity is linked to the first: critical theories are 'critical' in that, in their different ways, they oppose the dominant forces and interests in modern world affairs, and so contest the global status quo by (usually) aligning themselves with marginalized or oppressed groups. Each of them, thus, seeks to uncover inequalities and asymmetries that mainstream theories tend to ignore.

However, the inequalities and asymmetries to which critical theorists have drawn attention are many and various:

- Neo-Marxists (who encompass a range of traditions and tendencies that in fact straddle the positivist/post-positivist divide) highlight inequalities in the global capitalist system, through which developed countries or areas, sometimes operating through TNCs or linked to 'hegemonic' powers such as the USA, dominate and exploit developing countries or areas.
- Social constructivism is not so much a substantive theory as an analytical tool. In arguing that people, in effect, 'construct' the world in which they live, suggesting that the world operates through a kind of 'inter-subjective' awareness, constructivists have thrown mainstream theory's claim to objectivity into question.
- Poststructuralists emphasize that all ideas and concepts are expressed in language which itself is enmeshed in complex relations of power. Influenced particularly by the writings of Michel Foucault, post-structuralists have drawn attention to the link between power and systems of thought using the idea of a 'discourse of power'.
- Feminists have drawn attention to systematic and pervasive structures of gender inequality that characterize global and, indeed, all other forms of politics. In particular, they have highlighted the extent to which mainstream, and especially realist, theories are based on 'masculinist' assumptions about rivalry, competition and inevitable conflict.
- Postcolonialists have emphasized the cultural dimension of colonial rule, showing how western cultural and political hegemony over the rest of the



Michel Foucault (1926–84)

French philosopher and radical intellectual. The son of a prosperous surgeon, Foucault had a troubled youth in which he attempted suicide on several occasions and struggled to come to terms with his homosexuality. His work, which ranged over the history of madness, of medicine, of punishment, of sexuality and of knowledge itself, was based on the assumption that the institutions, concepts and beliefs of each period are upheld by 'discourses of power'. This suggests that power relations can largely be disclosed by examining the structure of 'knowledge', since 'truth serves the interests of a ruling class or the prevailing power-structure'. Foucault's most important works include *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Order of Things* (1966) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976).

world has been preserved despite the achievement of formal political independence across almost the entire developing world.

- Green politics, or ecologism, has focused on growing concerns about environmental degradation, highlighting the extent to which this has been a by-product of industrialization and an obsession with economic growth, supported by systems of thought that portray human beings as 'masters over nature'.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN GLOBAL POLITICS

Finally, global politics is an ever-shifting field, with, if anything, the pace of change accelerating over time. Recent decades have witnessed momentous events such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the September 11 terrorist attacks on the USA and the global financial crisis of 2007–09. While these and other events have changed the contours of global politics, sometimes radically, certain features of world affairs have proved to be of more enduring significance. This can be illustrated by examining the balance between continuity and change in three key aspects of world politics:

- Power
- Security
- Justice

Power

All forms of politics are about power. Indeed, politics is sometimes seen as the study of power, its core theme being: who gets what, when, how? Modern global politics raises two main questions about power. The first is about where power is located: who has it? During the Cold War era, this appeared to be an easy question to answer. Two 'superpowers' (see p. 38) dominated world politics, dividing the global system into rival 'spheres of influence'. East-West conflict