

THEORY IN BRIEF		CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES ON THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM			
	REALISM / NEOREALISM	LIBERALISM / NEOLIBERAL INSTITUTIONALISM	RADICALISM / DEPENDENCY THEORY	CONSTRUCTIVISM	
CHARACTERIZATION	Anarchic	Three liberal interpretations: interdependence, international order, and neoliberal institutionalism	Highly stratified	International system exists as social construct	
ACTORS	State is primary actor	States, international governmental institutions, nongovernmental organizations, substate actors	Capitalist states vs. developing states	Individuals matter; no differentiation between international and domestic	
CONSTRAINTS	Polarity; distribution of power	Interdependence; institutions	Capitalism; stratification	Ongoing interactions	
POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE	Slow change when the balance of power shifts	Low possibility of radical change; constant incremental change as actors are involved in new relationships	Radical change desired but limited by the capitalist structure	Emphasis on change in social norms and identities	

As the European-based international system emerged as the most powerful and dominant one, how did other regions become part of it? Colonialism and the spread of capitalism by the European powers brought many areas into this system, as Chapter 2 traced.

Struggles persist among these different international societies. The political scientist Samuel Huntington identified these struggles as civilizational, positing that states and state interests were being transcended by cultures, the largest aggregation of which is civilizations. He believed civilizational differences would become the new basis of international conflict.¹⁶ Thus, although the notion of one international system may