

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES: PERSPECTIVES, DIVERSITY AND APPROACHES IN GLOBAL POLITICS**

MINDAUGAS NORKEVIČIUS

Vytautas Magnus University  
Faculty of Political Sciences and Diplomacy,  
PhD candidate of Department of Political Science  
Email: [m.norkevicius@pmdf.vdu.lt](mailto:m.norkevicius@pmdf.vdu.lt)

***INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES: DISCIPLINE AND DIVERSITY,***  
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The editors Dunne, Kurki, and Smith present a new textbook to the growing market of International Relations theory textbooks. This book under the title *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* aims to cover the most prevailing theories of liberalism, realism and constructivism, feminism, the English School, Marxism, critical theory, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, green theory, and globalization in the international relations sphere. The authors put a special emphasis on the comprehensiveness of the theories and a distinguishing contribution was made on a critical reflection of theoretical literature in this field. The sub-title of the textbook 'Discipline and Diversity' speaks to a key issue that the discipline of international relations has become quite diverse. All the chapters include up-to-date scientific findings and cases that include considerations of new developments in the world politics. Despite the fact that there is a lack

of consensus about the condition of pluralism in the field, it seems that pluralism is mostly accepted in this book as being beneficial. In the introduction, the authors acknowledge that “more is better”, because theoretical pluralism has a positive value that can open up “new agendas that speak more directly to changing threats and potentialities”. My intention in this review is to present and critically evaluate each of the individual chapters.

In the introduction written by Steve Smith, a significant role of theories is emphasized by stating that theories are a key component in explaining international relations. The author admits that the field of international relations is so complex and subtle that all insights about international relations have to be carried out “in the language of some theory”. It seems reasonable to agree with the author, because our society is living in an increasingly complex world and facing a myriad of issues ranging from global warming problems to the continuing risk of terrorism. Therefore, we need a variety of different theories to help us make sense of the world. This statement is supported by the argument that theories explain the world around us and ‘out there’. All theoretical perspectives enable us to understand the world from the ontological ones (what features need explaining) and epistemological ones (what counts as explanation). However, the counter-argument might be that too much pluralism leaves a divided discipline that not only fails to speak with one voice, but cannot even agree on what we should be studying, focusing on, or seeking to explain. Even though some counter-arguments exist, it makes perfect sense to expose students to as many theories as possible.

M. Kurli and C. Wight in the first chapter explicitly endorse the view that the discipline of philosophy is an inseparable part of the international relations. This chapter begins with a brief historical overview and explanation of key terminology like ontology, epistemology and methodology. The contemporary disciplinary debates surrounding the philosophy of social science are then examined. The final section highlights some of the key ways in which meta-theoretical positions shape theoretical approaches to the study of the world politics.

From the perspective of learners, the authors contend that every theory should be critically reflected. In other words, it is especially important to highlight some positive and negative perspectives of the theories in the academic field. Even the most persuasive theoretical concepts should be open to be challenged from other perspectives. M. Kurli and C. Wight state that the supporters of theories tend to “sell you” a perspective. However, each theoretical or meta-theoretical avenue involves a number of judgments that should be noticed and reflected seeking to discover reliable knowledge of the world within IR.

The second chapter written by Toni Erskine explores a normative IR theory that focuses on the ethical dimension of world politics. The author starts this chapter by defining this theory and exploring its origins. The author acknowledges that IR theory encompasses a variety of theoretical models, including political theory, moral philosophy and IR theory. It is stated that there are two main sources of this theory. Firstly, international problems (for example, the Cold War policy of nuclear deterrence and the Vietnam War) that started since the 1960s and 1970s. These incidents challenged to discuss ethical dilemmas within philosophers. Secondly, normative IR theory is viewed as a longstanding tradition building on work of great philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, and Marx. Generally, normative IR theory is divided into cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. Cosmopolitanism sees all people globally as having equal moral standing. Meanwhile, communitarians support the moral significance of our special communities and loyalties. Moreover, this theory is between consequentialist and deontological forms of reasoning. A consequentialist reasoning acknowledges that moral decisions can be done on the basis of the outcomes of our choices and actions. Accordingly, deontological reasoning doctrine admits that some actions are unfair and wrong in themselves, regardless of their consequences. The final section puts theory into practice by asking for evaluation of shooting innocent women and children. This case study poses significant questions with regard to the question of responsibility. The author shows that this accident might be judged differently according to different perception of theories.

The third and the fourth chapters explore realism as a classical theory in IR field. This theory is classified into classical and structural realism. Classical realism is presented by Richard Ned Lebow. This chapter might be considered as a typical textbook for students exploring IR area. Firstly, the writer presents a historical overview of this theory. Realism provides a state-centric, power-political understanding containing an assumption of conflict as a permanent condition of world politics. He contends that the roots of this theory reach Greek historian Thucydides and his account of the Peloponnesian War. The main features of classical realism have been outlined as well. Realists see states, pursuing interests, in an anarchic setting where the real possibility of war, and with it the prospect of subjugation or annihilation, must be accounted for. Realists perceive people as actors with political instincts. It is admitted that human beings organize into groups that are discriminatory and typically conflictual, and they need power. In the fourth chapter, written by John J. Mearsheimer, the question is raised why states and people need power. Realist Hans Morgenthau answers that human nature requires dominance. Virtually everyone is born with a will to power. However, structural realists oppose by stating that human nature has little to do with why states want power. Rather, they believe that architecture of the international system forces states to pursue power.

Further Richard Ned Lebow and Hans Morgenthau present the key ideas of realists like Morgenthau, Machiavelli (classical realists), Mearsheimer (offensive realist) and Kenneth Waltz (defensive realist). The works of these authors give a stable background for students who want to explore the theory in-depth. The credibility to these theories has been given by exemplifying them with a case study. Therefore, both writers encourage students to critically explore the theories and develop their own views on why states pursue power, how much power is enough, and when security competition is likely to lead to war.

In the fifth chapter, Bruce Russett addresses liberalism as another mainstream theory in the IR sphere. According to the author, liberalism imposes the idea that human beings, despite their self-interest, are able to cooperate and construct a more peaceful and harmonious

society. In other words, liberals base their opinions on Kantian thoughts and explain the fact that war and conflicts can be avoided through the changes in both the domestic and international structures of governance. The author divided the information into separate paragraphs and explained coherently intended issues. Firstly, he enables the reader to understand a background information by discussing graphical information on the key changes in the world politics over the past century. Graphics enable the reader to process information in a fast and reliable manner, therefore, visual information is a preferential tool for students, especially for inexperienced readers. Later, he outlines the constraints of the militarized conflicts, dividing them into realist and Kantian constraints, and explaining each in a separate section. To strengthen his theoretical insights, he provides a consistent analysis of the global experience of a century.

In the sixth chapter, neoliberalism theory is addressed by Jennifer Sterling-Folker. Neoliberalism focuses on international institutions that positively influence and international cooperation. To understand how these institutions do so, the author analyzes neoliberalism itself. She also explains how neoliberalism theory studies international institutions. Finally, The World Trade Organization is used as an illustrative case.

The seventh chapter explores English school insights for the IR area. The article written by Tim Dunne provides a general framework how this theory plays an advantageous role in the IR field. Firstly, it provides a solid framing for understanding securitization. Second, it puts core concepts into a socio-historical perspective. Third, it highlights the importance to security perceptions of thinking about insider/outsider status. Fourth, it enriches the ability to think about regional differences.

Marxism is addressed by Mark Rupert in the eighth chapter. Mark Rupert seeks to explain this theoretical model through a different approach emphasizing that this theory generally is not solely preoccupied neither with economy, nor with domestic relations. The writer admits that this theory mainly focuses on critical understanding of capitalism as a historically particular way of organizing social

life that involves political and cultural as well as economic relations and practices.

Steven Roach in the ninth chapter presents critical IR theory. This chapter is essential reading for those interested in critical theory. This rich and comprehensive narrative addresses the story of how this theory entered into the field of IR and seeks to deepen the reader's historical and sociological understanding of the emancipatory project of critical IR theory. Critical international theory coexists with other analytical approaches to world politics along the broad spectrum of IR theories. The author gives a critical overview of the contributions of theorists such as Kant, Hegel and Marx, moving on to a more detailed study of the Frankfurt School. Interestingly, Roach approaches these authors from an international perspective, showing us how internationalism has always been an important point of reference for normative and critical theories, rather than taking the social theories of critical theorists and extrapolating them on to the international level, which gives his analysis an original perspective sometimes lacking in the discipline of International Relations. As the previous authors, he dedicated the second chapter to cases study. It seems that this chapter is applicable and invaluable source of knowledge for IR students.

In the tenth chapter, Steven K. M. Fierke critically discusses the development of constructivism in International Relations. In the introduction and first section, the ideas of constructivism are addressed. It is stated that IR is a social construct that is dependent on a surrounding environment. In contrast to traditional theories of IR, constructivism assumes the importance of social contexts, like the place, history, location, language or people. In other words, social beings, including individuals or states, cannot be separated from a context they function in. Moreover, constructivists admit that these individuals or states actually influence their environment where they live, as well as they are influenced by it. Therefore, as the author states, "space for choice can be mutually constituted". As opposite to rationalists, constructivists focus mainly of the concept that the subjects of international politics are not "uniformly and universally

rational egoists but have distinct identities shaped by the cultural, social, and political – as well as material – circumstances in which they are embedded.” Constructivism is heavily indebted to the ‘linguistic turn’. It is built on the notion that we cannot get behind our language. A case given is an illustrative example of how identities, actions and human suffering are constructed through a process of interaction.

Feminist theories are explored in the eleventh chapter by J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg. IR feminist theories emphasize the importance of gender to the state system and even to all global economy and security. This theory probably seeks not only to outline the women’s issues in the IR field, but also calls the attention to the way international policies can be framed, studied and implemented on the basis of gender differences. The proponents of feminism acknowledge that most knowledge is socially constructed by men and about men. This chapter helps understand the variety of feminism theories by categorizing them and providing their main features. Feminists also explore the importance of gender to understanding security and insecurity questions. According to them, security threats include poverty, domestic violence, and gender subordination. IR feminists also see military power as a threat to individuals’ security, especially for women, rather than a state’s arsenal to defend against security. This theory has been illustrated by a case of UN sanctions on Iraq. Feminists understand the sanctions regime on Iraq as an example of the systematic exclusion of women’s voices from decisions about international policies that disproportionately affect them.

Poststructuralism is addressed by David Campbell in the twelfth chapter. In comparison with other IR theories, poststructuralism does not see itself as a theory. Yet, according to the author, this theory can be conceptualized as an attitude or ethos that pursue critique in particular ways. It seems that this theory imposes the view that political leaders, scholars, political activists and academic community are involved in interpretation and representation of ‘the world’ of politics. Therefore, this theory seeks to reflect critically different theoretical approaches, analyse relationship between power and knowledge,

and reflect on the politics of identity in the production and understanding of global affairs.

Postcolonialism, explored by Siba N. Grovogui, challenges traditional theories (for example, Western rationalism of IR by pointing out that IR field can be explored through the lens of multiple perspectives, traditions from different regions, historical contexts and academic disciplines. It refers to the study of identity and culture that are formed in a particular context. Postcolonialism theorists are sceptical of hegemony, unilateral rules and memory of IR. It notes the failure of the international system to fully include postcolonial nations in decision-making.

Robyn Eckersley presents green theory in the fourteenth chapter. It is comprehensively presented and well-structured chapter that gives information about the origins of the theory, their main concepts, associations with other theories like rationalism and positivism. Despite the fact that international debates are constantly evolving within green theorist, the green theory plays a significant role in conceptualizing of how states could become more responsive to environmental and security problems.

The fifteenth chapter is devoted to globalization. The author Colin Hay admits that “globalization” is a multi-facet process that has been understood differently among scientists and researchers in IR field. Therefore, conceptualization of globalization is a pretty difficult task. The author explains the globalization debates in IR that is based on an ontological dispute between state-centric and non-state-centric approaches. In depth analysis of globalization allows students to approach it from different perspectives and adapt a critical view of the issue.

On the basis of the chapters discussed in this book, the last chapter, written by Ole Wæver, addresses the issue of how these theories help conceptualize IR as a discipline. Seemingly, the consensus has been reached among scholars that IR is a stable discipline with a pluralistic background that is beneficial for the contemporary state of the discipline.

This innovative book of IR provides students, scholars, and practitioners with a comprehensive overview of a huge variety of competing theories in international relations. It is undeniably true that textbooks which introduce the range of international relations theories have a strong advantage over those that do not. The chapters of the book are well-written, clear, and precise. Each chapter starts with a clear description of its content and structure. All the descriptions of the theories and discussions are explained in an organized way and are well-exemplified. The texts lend themselves to understanding the complex and conflicting ideas that make up international relations theories.