# Global Trends

Chapter one: state, nation, and nation state

# 1.1. Nation, Nationalism and State

- the words ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘country’ are used interchangeably and this is not correct
- A nation, in contrast to a state, constitutes a community of people joined by a shared identity and by common social practices.
- at least two types of nations can be identified: 'cultural’ and ‘political
- Culturally, a nation is a group of people bound together by a common language, religion, history and traditions
- Politically, a nation is a group of people who regard themselves as a natural political community, classically expressed through the quest for sovereign statehood.

- A ‘political’ nation is one in which citizenship has greater political significance than ethnic identity
- If a nation is primarily a political entity, it is an inclusive group, in that membership is not restricted to those who fulfill particular language, religious, or ethnic
- It is sometimes argued that the style of nationalism that develops in such societies is typically tolerant and democratic.

# 1.2. Understanding International Relations

- Traditionally, IR concerned with the relationships among the world's governments; but these relationships cannot be understood in isolation.
- Today, IR could be used to describe a range of interactions between people, groups, firms, associations, parties, nations or states or between these and (non) governmental international organizations

- studying IR helps each one of us to understand events
- This, however, requires competence as well as compassion.
- Studying international relations provides the necessary tools to analyze events, and to gain a deeper comprehension of some of the problems that policy-makers confront and to understand the reasoning behind their actions

# 1.3. Actors in International Relations

- Actors are entities that participate in or promote IR
- There are two types of actors: state actors and non-state actors

## 1.3.1. State Actors

- International Relations (IR) traditionally focused on interactions between states.
- However, this conventional view has been broadened over the years to include relationships between all sorts of political entities (‘polities’), including international organizations, NGOs, multinational corporations, societies and citizens.

- states are the leading or primary actors in IR as they are sovereign intity
- They have all embraced basic elements of territory, population, government, sovereignty, and recognition
- The ‘international’ is structurally differentiated from the ‘domestic’ in that where the former, according to this ‘realist’ perspective, is defined as ‘anarchical’, the latter is hierarchical.

# 1.3.2. Non-State Actors

- ✓IGOs, NGOs and multinational corporations (MNCs) are none state actors.
- ✓MNCs(TNCs) have headquarters in one state and operational capability in a range of others – contribute significantly to international relations.

# 1.4. Levels of Analysis in International Relations

- Kenneth Waltz's Man, distinguishes between three levels of analysis: the system, the state and the individual- but the group level is also important to consider as a fourth

# 1.4.1. The individual level

- In this view, the very personalities, behaviors, motivations, beliefs and orientation of the individual leaders shape foreign policy
- The most obvious example of individual level analysis is explaining WWII through Adolf Hitler's leadership; an other would be when scholars attribute the end of cold war to the relationship between president Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachew.

# 1.4.2. The group level

- A group-level analysis focusing on foreign policy would look, for example, at the role of lobbying groups and the way they influence national decision-making on an issue.

1.4.3. The state level

IR scholars would generally regard states as the primary actors in IR

This predominant focus on the state is strongly related to fact that state is the main location of power within the international sphere.

# 1.4.4. The system level

- It conceives the global system as the structure or context within which states cooperate, compete and confront each other over issues of national interest.
- Particularly important in that context is the distribution of power amongst states, meaning, whether there is one main concentration of power (uni-polarity), two (bipolarity) or several (multi-polarity).
- international system is anarchic that lacks a central government that regulates and controls what happens to states in their dealings with each other

# 1.5. The Structure of International System

- IR scholars maintain that political power is usually distributed into three main types of systems namely: (i) uni-polar system, (ii) bipolar system and, (iii) multipolar system.
- In a uni-polar international system, there is one state with the greatest political, economic, cultural and military power and hence the ability to totally control other states.
- In the case of the bipolar system, there are two dominant states (super powers) and the less powerful states join either sides through alliance and counter alliance formations.

# Anarchy

- Anarchy is a situation where there is absence of authority (government) be it in national or international/global level systems.
- Within a country ‘anarchy’ refers to a breakdown of law and order, but in relations between states it refers to a system where power is decentralized and there are no shared institutions with the right to enforce common rules.

## Sovereignty

- Sovereignty is another basic concept in international relations and it can be defined as an expression of:
  - (i) a state's ultimate authority within its territorial entity (internal sovereignty) and,
  - (ii) the state's involvement in the international community (external sovereignty).
- In short, sovereignty denotes double claim of states from the international system, i.e., autonomy in foreign policy and independence/freedom in its domestic affairs.

# 1.6. Theories of International Relations

- Theories of international relations allow us to understand and try to make sense of the world around us through various lenses, each of which represents a different theoretical perspective.
- This section introduces the traditional theories, middle-ground theories and critical theories of international relations.

# 1.6.1. Idealism/Liberalism

- Liberalism depicts optimism by arguing that human beings are good, cooperation is possible and conflict can be resolved peacefully
- states that shared liberal values should have no reason for going to war against one another.
- Democratic values such as respect for human rights, rule of law, accommodation of multiple interest groups inside the state as well as a belief in reconciliation, makes compromise with and between democracies unproblematic as the democratic states appears to be non-violent.

- democracies are transparent and accountable systems of government which work towards “free flow of information” and thus reduce the risk of being misunderstood
- In Kant’s eyes, therefore, the more liberal states there were in the world, the more peaceful it would become,

- Democratic theory argues that democracies(liberal states) rarely go to war b/c of the following reasons
  - people learn from their past mistakes and eventually come to cooperate with one another by leaving war and conflict behind
  - Democracies are inherently peaceful as the people are indirectly ruling their own country through a representative government
  - The power is not concentrated into the hands of a single autocratic leader and that there is several veto groups which prevent a hasty decision to go to war with other states.

- the permanent cessation of war is an attainable goal according to liberalism
- Kant focused on harmony between people overseen by institutions such as judiciary and the representative form of the government where leaders exercise their authority with the consent of the people
- One particular brand of liberalism, which is known as liberal institutionalism came into prominence after the WWI when the President of the USA, Woodrow Wilson laid down the foundation for the League of Nations
- As he presented his ideas for a rebuild world beyond the war, the last of his points was to create a general association of nations, which became the League of Nations.

- the League of Nations was created largely for the purpose of overseeing affairs between states and implementing, as well as maintaining, international peace
- The primary concern of this approach was that conditions which had led to the outbreak of the WWI and the devastation which followed should not be allowed to occur in the future.

- the league of Nations was created to keep international peace and security.
- However, the League collapsed due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939
- Therefore, despite the efforts of prominent liberal scholars and politicians such as Kant and Wilson, liberalism failed to retain a strong hold and a new theory emerged to explain the continuing presence of war.

# 1.6.2. Realism

- Realists do not typically believe that human beings are inherently good, or have the potential for good, as liberals do.
- Instead, they claim individuals act in their own self-interests.
- It believes conflict is unavoidable and so war is common.
- Realism depicts pessimism by arguing that human beings are bad, conflict is inevitable and war is the most prominent instrument of resolving conflict

- International relations are anarchic due to the absence of sovereign authority
- States serve their own interests in the international system by following a strict code of self help due to the absence of any authority above them
- No one state can trust another therefore cooperation is limited and unstable when it occurs

# 1.6.3. Structuralism/Marxism

- Marxism is an ideology that argues that the main source international instability would be the conflict between two classes (a capitalist society is divided into two contradictory classes – the business class (the bourgeoisie) and the working class (the proletariat).
- The source of international instability is not anarchy, but the capitalist mode of production which defines the unjust political institutions and state relations