

Aspects of
**INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**
Since 1919



Arunima Ray (Chowdhury)
Parthapratim Sen

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Arunima Ray Chowdhury



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by Parthapratim Sen, Arunima Ray Chowdhury

© Authors

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To
Alakananda Chowdhury

PREFACE

As we move towards the second decade of the twenty first century, the world bares before us immense opportunities as well as challenges. The world community has devised mechanisms either to harness those opportunities to its advantage or meet those challenges or at least reduce their ill-effects if any. However, this process of harnessing is not universal and certainly not based on unanimity. The nature of international relations and politics therefore, gets determined by these complex calculi of opportunities and challenges as to who gets what and how.

The experiences of the First World War had shown that hardly any country was able to insulate itself from it and the upsurges that followed as its aftermath. Today it is more so. We have traversed a long history of international processes through which states have engaged themselves not just in war with each other but also in trade and commerce and developed different channels of communication and cross cultural connections. The phenomena of Globalization and Terrorism have acquired newer dimensions and connotations. The speculations that states will die their natural death have somewhat taken backseat. International organizations like the UNO and regional groupings like the EU are vying for space to work with non-state actors and non-governmental organizations.

Our work is a humble effort to trace the international relations and politics since 1919. This will help a student to make a comprehensive analysis of the contemporary world politics. We believe that without a proper understanding of the root it is almost impossible to jump to the issues and aspects of contemporary world affairs and initiate discussions. We have tried our level best to provide updates and touch

upon some of the most important topics that a student of History and Political Science need to grapple with in their under-graduate courses and beyond. We claim no originality; neither have we credited ourselves with such accomplishments as the task of creating knowledge. But we believe that the effort was sincere with the sole aim of providing the student with easy access to information so that he/she is enriched enough to meet the requirements of the courses he or she is pursuing.

We sincerely like to express our deep sense of gratitude to the librarians and staff –members of National Library, Kolkata, Departmental Library of the Department of International Relations Jadavpur University for their support. Finally, we acknowledge the willingness of Mr. Milinda De of Sarat Book House to accept this project and undertake the initiative to publish it. The staff of Levant Books deserves our gratitude too for executing the final tasks of printing the book.

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Parthapratiim Sen
Arunima Ray(Chowdhury)

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Chapter I

The Discipline of International Relations

International Relations(IR) as an academic discipline has acquired a wide spectrum of issues and topics within its fold. Students are in fact faced with a dilemma whether to concentrate solely on the international politics or to include socio-economic parameters with which such politics is determined; whether to concentrate on the sole relations between the states or to include what scholars have termed as non-state actors. Academic planners of universities still jostle among themselves to include International Relations into their respective curriculum. While political scientists establish their primary claim over the discipline since its basic concern after all is international politics, economists claim their share of contribution as being no less if not equal. The relations among states have been based on trade and commerce from times immemorial and the advent of economic regimes in a globalized world have buttressed their claim. Historians prefer to stick to the international events and analyze them in the light of a time span and chose not to theorize, but to concentrate on the historical significance of events and the actors associated with them.

Michael Nicholson has included, "peace and war; imperialism and nationalism; the wealth of some societies and the poverty of others; nuclear weapons and possibility of extinction; the environment and the global warming; human rights across the world; the merging of states and splitting up of states; the European Union; international organizations; religions and multinational corporation; race and gender around the globe; globalization and the information revolution."

as some of the topics that concern humankind's political and moral trepidations.¹ Some of these problems are global and affect every corner of the world, while some are region specific. While environmental issues know no borders and can have direct and profound impact on the globe; events like the Arab-Spring of 2011, affect the political and social set up of states belonging to a specific region. Nevertheless, since the ushering of the idea of global-village and the revolution of information technology, the world can no longer remain insulated from local or regional issues, and ultimately they affect the civilization as a whole.

The most common view of international relations is the state-centric one. According to this view, states attach primary importance to security interpreted in militaristic terms. This particular way of setting one's goal was in vogue among most of the European states till the end of Second World War. With the gradual induction of the element of economic security as a major parameter of foreign policy execution, the issues of war and military security were relegated to a secondary position, even though the possibilities of war was not written off altogether. Thus Nicholson states, – "Governments seem as concerned with economic issues as they are with security issues, adjusting their foreign policies as much to guide lucrative contracts to their nationals as to further anything that could plausibly be regarded as security."² The international relations more and more became determined by the dynamics of non-state actors and international organizations like the United Nations, International Labour Organization (ILO) or the World Health Organization (WHO) gradually started to play the role of an arbitrator to maintain peace among states and foster global social and economic development. The global economy and finance started operating under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Then there are the Multi-National Corporations or MNCs as they are called which operate and manage production and sales in more than one country. Finally the oil producing countries or the OPEC directly affect the oil prices and regulate the pace of world economy.

¹ *International Relations: A Concise Introduction*, Michael Nicholson p1, Palgrave Macmillan, NY, 2005

² Nicholson, p2

Non-state actors today are not just regulators of world economy but also the intensifier of conflicts and wars. Various terrorist outfits have emerged and evolved over the years and have often forced countries to initiate such policies which have adversely affected their quest for development and in many cases have retarded the course of economic and social prosperity. The war on terror initiated by the USA after the 9/11 attacks have brought about changes in the "underpinnings" of the post Cold War geopolitics. According to experts- "What is perhaps most significant about the changes is the genuine unpredictability of future events, and the extent of their significance on global politics and economics. We are witnessing a structural change every bit as significant as what occurred in 1945 and 1989. The difference is that these changes have already altered the way most people in the world live, and they promise to impact our lives in ways we have not even imagined."³

The discipline of International Relations is not a cohesive one. There are various strands of thought regarding how the discipline of International Relations should be studied, explained and analyzed. In short there has been a series of disagreements among scholars over method, content and scope of International Relations. At the dawn of the millennium, thinkers and practitioners of International Relations had met at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association in 2000 held in Los Angeles. There the meeting came up with not less than ten "Millennium Reflections Panel" and similar proliferation of such "state of art" articles at various journals of International relations⁴ According to Yossef Lapid, attempt has also been made to create another angle of inquiry -what may be termed as 'sculpting the vision' of the discipline, in addition to the 'w questions' (why study, what to study, whom to study, where to study, which methods, what curricula etc) as once posed by K J Holsti.⁵ This metaphor seems to have fulfilled

³ *Terrorism's Impact on International Relations* by Daniel Wagner in <http://www.irmi.com/expert/articles/2003/wagner03.aspx> (Accessed on 22.12.2011)

⁴ "Sculpting the Academic Identity: Disciplinary Reflections at the Dawn of a New Millennium" by Yossef Lapid, in Donald J Puchala ed. *Visions of International Relations: Assessing an Academic Field* University of South Carolina Press, 2002, p 1.

⁵ Ibid

both the 'rigor and inspirational demands' of the discipline. That is to say in order to successfully develop the discipline of International Relations the learner like a sculptor, must carefully plan and use the available resources of research and bring out the living figure of the discipline hidden inside the monolith of academics. Lapid refers to Eviatar Zerubavel, a noted sociologist with the Rutgers University and says that the use of sculpting metaphor involves conscious and active construction of distinct mental identities and not just passively identifying the existing ones.⁶ Besides, academic sculpting metaphor involves mental acts of clubbing together of presumably homogeneous clusters and separating them from presumably other separate identities, that is to say to create borders of the academic discipline, in this case it is International Relations. Finally sculpting of the discipline will also require exploration of different types of mind-sets which come across while constructing academic identities.

Margaret G Hermann opines that the field of International Relations "has become a little like the tower of Babel, filled with a cacophony of different voices..... a set of tribes that are very territorial, sniping at those who come too close and preferring to be with those like them. As a result, the field has become an administrative holding company, rather than an intellectually coherent area of inquiry or a community of scholars."⁷ Writing in the dawn of the millennium she found that the sweeping changes in the world have obliterated or at least blurred the boundaries of the discipline. The issues of identity, environmental security, humanitarian intervention, norms, migration and globalizations have made it imperative that dialogues among sub-fields and specializations should be included. She observes that the discipline has acquired some sort of an 'anarchic' character because of the changes, and due to the inability of the scholars to evolve a distinct identity for the discipline.⁸

⁶ Ibid, p 2

⁷ "One Field, Many Perspectives; Shifting from Debate to Dialogue" by Margaret G Hermann, in Puchala, opcit, p 16

⁸ ibid

The history of International Relations based on sovereign states is often traced back to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, a stepping stone in the development of the modern state system. Prior to this, the European medieval organization of political authority was based on a vaguely hierarchical religious order. Contrary to popular belief, Westphalia still embodied layered systems of sovereignty, especially within the Holy Roman Empire. International Relations emerged as a formal academic 'discipline' in 1918 with the founding of the first 'chair' (professorship) in IR - the Woodrow Wilson Chair at Aberystwyth, University of Wales.⁹ This was followed by establishment of IR at US universities and Geneva, Switzerland. In the early 1920s, the London School of Economics' department of International Relations was founded at the behest of Nobel Peace Prize winner Philip Noel-Baker, and was the first institute to offer a wide range of degrees in the field. Furthermore, the International History department at London School of Economics, developed as primarily focused on the history of IR in the early modern, colonial and Cold War periods.

The first university entirely dedicated to the study of IR was the Graduate Institute of International Studies (now the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies), which was founded in 1927 to form diplomats associated to the League of Nations, established in Geneva some years before. The Graduate Institute of International Studies offered one of the first Ph.D.degrees in International Relations. Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service is the oldest International Relations faculty in the United States, founded in 1919. The Committee on International Relations at the University of Chicago was the first to offer a graduate degree, in 1928.¹⁰

⁹ <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/interpol/> (Accessed on 22.12.2011)

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_relations#cite_note-0 (Accessed on 22.12.2011)

Chapter II

Selected Theories of International Relations

The scholars of International Relations (IR) have little or no agreement as to what constitutes the matter of the discipline. Therefore, it is quite obvious that there will be no single theory of IR. There are epistemological as well as methodological divisions among scholars and for over five decades they have debated over the perspectives of studying IR¹ However, it is also a fact that it is not desirable that there should be a unitary formula by which IR should be studied. As Stephen Walt in his article 'International Relations: One World, Many Theories' has explained, – "No single approach can capture all the complexity of contemporary world politics. Therefore, we are better off with a diverse array of competing ideas rather than a single theoretical orthodoxy. Competition between theories helps reveal their strengths and weaknesses and spurs subsequent refinements, while revealing flaws in conventional wisdom. Although we should take care to emphasize inventiveness over invective, we should welcome and encourage the heterogeneity of contemporary scholarship."²

In any event, the mutual neglect of international relations and political theory has changed over the last two decades; although

¹TOWARD AN A PRIORI THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS by MARK R. CROVELLI in http://mises.org/journals/jls/21_4/21_4_9.pdf (Accessed on 22.12.2011)

²*International Relations: One World, Many Theories* by Stephen Walt, in Foreign Policy, Washington, Spring, 1998, http://www.columbia.edu/itc/sipa/S6800/courseworks/foreign_pol_walt.pdf (Accessed on 22.12.2011)

mainstream international relations theory remains explanatory and positivist in approach, and much political theory still ignores the international, there now exists a substantial community of 'international political theorists'. Some have entered this community as a result of dissatisfaction with conventional international relations theory's neglect of the normative and issues of interpretation, while others, are analytical theorists who have become equally dissatisfied with accounts of justice and rights that ignored or sidestepped the international dimension to these topics. International political theorists have also emerged from non-analytical traditions; adherents to discourse ethics, constructivism, radical feminism, poststructuralism, postmodernism and many other varieties of late modern thought have found it necessary, in an age of globalization, to encompass the international.³

Theories in international politics are conceptual models which help us to study, understand and analyze international relations. Ole Holsti describes that international relations theories act as a pair of coloured sunglasses, allowing the wearer to see only the salient events relevant to the theory. An adherent of realism may completely disregard an event that a constructivist might pounce upon as crucial, and vice versa.⁴ According to Alexander George and Juliette George, theory is "a body of internally consistent empirical generalizations of descriptive, predictive, and explanatory power."⁵ These generalizations are expressed in testable, verifiable, falsifiable and quantifiable hypotheses and propositions. Scott Burchill has noted how varied the notion of theory can be and have provided a list of definitions from eminent scholars of IR:⁶

³Political Theory and International Politics by Chris Brown, <http://asrudiancenter.wordpress.com/2010/04/05/political-theory-and-international-relations/> (Accessed on 22.12.2011)

⁴International Relations: New Horizons and Changing Equations. Biswaranjan Mohanty: Vol I (Atlantic, New Delhi, 2010), p62

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Scott Burchill-"Introduction" in Scott Burchill et al- "Theories of International Relations" (Palgrave, 2005), p8

- theories explain laws which identify invariant or probable associations(Waltz)
- to abstract, generalize and to connect(Hollis and Smith)
- a tradition of speculation about relations between states(Wright)
- using observation to test hypotheses about the world(empirical theory)
- a representation of the way the world ought to be(normative theory)
- ideological critique of the present which opens up alternative future paths to change, freedom and human autonomy(critical theory)
- reflections upon the process of theorizing, including questions of epistemology and ontology(constitutive theory)
- images and philosophical traditions; and for the sake of convenience he prefers to use the term 'theoretical traditions'.

There are as many approaches to the study of IR as there are theories. Burchill prefers to label these approaches as perspectives, paradigms,, discourses, schools of thoughts, images and philosophical traditions; and for the sake of convenience he prefers to use the term, 'theoretical traditions'.⁷

Theories differ on various counts.⁸ The first is the object of analysis and the scope of the enquiry. The debate centres on the level of analysis as well as on the subject matter of the analysis. Which actors or phenomena should be studied in IR-nation-states, war, international organizations, class, transnational organizations, bureaucracies, the environment or foreign policy makers? What characteristics of global political processes should theorists be concerned with- power, international system management, the exclusion of women, social norms, diplomatic culture, class-exploitation or the dependency among states? Besides, what kind of outcomes are favoured –preservation of the existing state-system, greater levels of interdependency between individuals across the world, new forms of political community or the

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *Ibid* pp 16-21