

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

(2021)

(Q)

Define IR. Discuss its changing/evolving scope.

INTRODUCTION:

International relations is an interdisciplinary field which covers many subjects like economics, philosophy, politics etc. It saw its rise with the end of World War-I because it solely talked about **state-to-state relationship**. By the time World War-I started, states like Germany and Italy had hegemonic designs and the countries started to expand their territories while interacting with international society. Consequently, this time period saw the birth of international relations and since then, international relations has been evolving.

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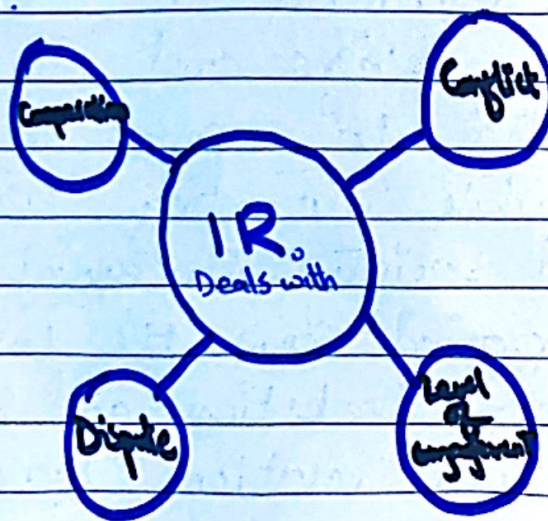
WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

According to Joseph Nye:

Joseph Nye has explained International relations as a field which deals with state-to-state interactions and a state's interaction with non-state actors as well.

Definition of IR by Robert Keohane:

A renowned scholar, Robert Keohane, has laid down the definition of IR. He has stated that IR involves interaction between states and cooperation, conflict, dispute and level of engagement between them.

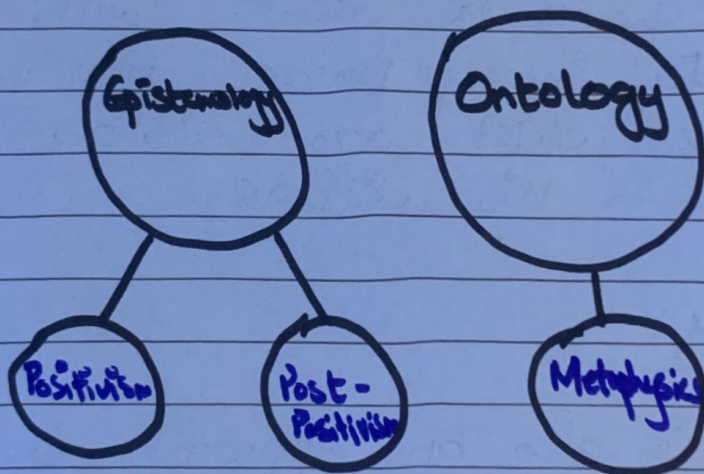


Foundation of IR:

Foundation of IR was set after World in 1919. According to Stephen Lawson's Book, "Theories of International Relations", IR birthed in United Kingdom at University of Aberystwith University of Wales.

Important Approaches in IR:

There are two most important approaches in IR:



Epistemology:

Epistemology consists of two approaches which are:

- Positivism.
- Post-Positivism.

Positivism:

According to this approach, there is a need to have objectivity in subjects of social sciences. **Stephen Mc Glinchey** says that in positivism, scholars tend to bring natural sciences in while dealing with state-to-state interactions.

Post-Positivism:

According to this approach, social science should be dealt with subjectivity. Every person has his own biases which are always reflected in his writings.

Ontology:

Ontology is also an approach used in IR. It is a branch of metaphysics which says there is no subjective reality. For instance, one cannot see number 8 or 9. They are only in one's head. Secondly, one cannot see international relations but can only see embassies, parliament, buildings etc.

CHANGING SCOPE OF IR:

IR has shown that it is not a static subject. Rather, it changes with the international order and brings in new theories.

World War-I is a landmark of IR:

Before World War-I, states relied on contracts like the **Concept of Europe**. John Baylis says in his book that World War-I set a precedent of state-to-state relations.

World War-II has also changed the scope of IR:

First, World War-II was the time period when US acquired nuclear weapons and gave rise to different theories. Second, a League of Nations failed in which was giving space to a bigger organization: **The United Nations**.

Cold War has helped in evolving the scope of IR:

Cold War was a time period when two powers emerged: Soviet Union and United States of America, giving rise to concepts like Bipolarity, multipolarity, unipolarity. Moreover, authors like Colin S. Grey have highlighted that Cold War gave rise to the Nuclear politics. With the emergence of nuclear politics, following theories came into being:

- Mutual Assured Destruction
- Security Dilemma.
- Theory of Deterrence

(now more types are there:

virtual deterrence, extended deterrence, intanglement of deterrence)

- First Strike Capability
- Second Strike Capability.

Post 9/11 World Order:

This time period marked great evolution in International relations.

In 2001, non-state actors: Al-Qaeda conducted 4 attacks in the US territory:

1) One attack on Pentagon

2) Two on World Trade Centre.

3) Three on a political building.

These attacks led to the evolution of IR as a field. Its scope has evolved by the emergence of non-state actors in the world which pose serious threat to national sovereignty.

Past COVID-19 ERA HAS EVOLVED

THE SCOPE OF IR:

In the contemporary era, technology is shaping the world. The emergence of Artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, quantum computing etc. Elon Musk has rightly said:

"Believe me, AI is far more lethal than nukes".

There are different weapons which are emerging and they have the ability to recognize faces and conduct attacks. These technologies have given rise to a theory like "Technological Determinism" as well.

CONCLUSION:

Therefore, IR is a vast field which has its sub branches. Moreover, the subject has been evolving since World War-I and it is still in a state of evolution. Time will decide which new inventions will once again set a precedent in the theories of international relations!
