

**RE-ASSESSING THE DIVERGENT APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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***Abstract***

*International Relations (IR) is one of the many disciplines that have developed around multiple theoretical frameworks that have different arguments about how the world works in terms of global politics and governance. This essay carefully reviews the most important schools of thought in International Relations, such as realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism, feminism and post-colonialism. These frameworks differ in their assumptions, methodologies, and domains of analysis, mirroring the complexity and heterogeneity of global interactions. Realism focuses on power relations and the autonomy of the state, while liberalism emphasizes cooperation and the rule of institutions. Constructivism emphasizes the importance of ideas, norms and identities while critical theories such as Marxism, feminism and post-colonialism critique the dominant paradigms and address issues of inequality, marginalization and historical legacies. Using secondary sources, this paper conducts a qualitative analysis of these approaches such as effectiveness, shortcomings and relevance in combating the contemporary global challenges like human rights, climate change and economic inequity. Results showed that, because global politics is so inherently multidimensional, no one perspective can possibly capture it all; and therefore, a pluralistic approach is needed. The paper said interdisciplinary research represented a crucial opportunity to bring long-standing theorization—which has seen few points of intersection between literature and critical studies—into the world of policy, potentially leading to solutions that are more inclusive of these different voices and methods by which to co-navigate global concerns. By highlighting the importance of theoretical diversity, this analysis addresses part of the ongoing conversation in IR around how scholars can best respond to the complexity of the international system.*

*Keywords: international relations; approaches; theories; global system; analogy*

## **Introduction**

International Relations (IR) is an interdisciplinary academic field that aims to analyze the interactions between the states, the non-state actors and the international organizations in the global political system. As a discipline, IR deals with the important problems of power, conflict, economy, environment, global security and global justice. Developed as an academic field in the early 20th century, IR has long been influenced by diverse theoretical approaches and frameworks that emphasize multiple facets of global relations and the nature of international interactions. Different, sometimes divergent, approaches now dominate in IR as scholars around the world attempt to provide explanations, understandings, and prescriptive strategies for international behavior through analytical frameworks that diverge in important ways from one another. Conventional theories on everything from power politics to the role of institutions (realism and liberalism) were set early on in academia. But the field has diversified enormously, now covering, for example, constructivism, Marxism, feminism, and post-colonialism. However, recent approaches disrupt these paradigms by questioning power, identity, inequality, and the aftermaths of colonialism. Taken together, these conflicting approaches provide a fuller view to the study of IR, yielding complementary, and in some cases, antagonistic readings of the global condition.

This paper seeks to examine these two competing schools of thought in the field of IR, examining their basic assumptions, methodologies, strengths, and downfalls. The paper traces the development of these theories over time, while also applying them to some of the major problems facing our world today – Climate change, economic inequality, and geopolitical conflict. In engaging with such a wide variety of perspectives, this paper contributes to the theoretical pluralism often neglected in the study of international relations. That a single approach is not enough to explain global politics, that a more integrative and inclusive framework is required. This analysis is particularly salient in today's world of interconnectedness and rapid change, as the foundations of power in traditional politics and international governance are challenging by a range of new actors, ideas and technologies. In this paper, we strive to contribute to the broader discourse in IR through a critical examination of both dominant and emerging approaches and their relationship with traditional practices—pure academic inquiry, policy formulation, and diplomatically actionable.

## **Materials and Methods**

Applying qualitative methodology, the research attempts to critically explore differing approaches of International Relations (IR) research. This approach was selected due to the potential to investigate conceptual theory, to analyze complex phenomena in depth, and to cultivate a nuanced understanding of complex phenomena. This study is, therefore, based upon a few peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, policy reports, and pertinent case studies accepted until October 2023 to understand the different theoretical approaches in IR. Case Studies - Exploring contemporary examples from global politics, involving the role of institutions (liberalism), the return of great power politics (realism), and the role of ideologies and identity in global conflicts (constructivism). Policy Reports: Publications by international organizations, including but not limited to the United Nations, the World Bank, and regional organizations like the African Union, reflecting the practical approach of applying theoretical perspectives to understand and address global problems.

## **Methods**

### **Comparative Analysis**

As its core methodological approach, it will use comparative analysis, systematically comparing the assumptions, methodologies, and practical implications of each IR theory. The approach enables the research to investigate the parallels, divergences, and synergies between established and new paradigms.

### **Thematic Analysis**

A thematic analysis is used to analyze how reoccurring features of the theories approach the themes of power dynamics, cooperation, identity and inequality. This aids to facilitate the discussion and match the findings to the central research question.

### **Analytical Framework**

- i. Historical Setting: The book is structured in a way that each approach is discussed within the progression of its respective historical and intellectual settings.
- ii. Core Assumptions: A description and discussion of the core principles of each theory. For example, realism's emphasis on the anarchic international system is contrasted with liberalism's emphasis on cooperative mechanisms.
- iii. Methodologies: The methodological approaches of the theories, such as empirical analysis in realism and critical reflection in feminism, are evaluated.
- iv. Practical Implications: Various examples and case studies are provided to demonstrate the usefulness of each theory to solve today's global problems.

### **Source Selection Criteria**

The choice of secondary sources was through the following criteria:

- i. Approach: Those focusing on directly the basic theory and practices of the key approaches in IR.
- ii. Validity: Peer-reviewed articles and books by trustworthy scholars and academic bodies.
- iii. Diversity: including Western and non-Western perspectives.

### **Limitations**

The study recognizes limitations. Firstly, the use of secondary data makes the analysis vulnerable to the interpretations and biases evident in the literature. Second, in trying to cover as many theories as possible, the paper has not the means to do a full analysis of all possible points of view. Third, the assumption of no data collection is purely theoretical, and renders the approaches empirically untested. The materials and methods part are strengthened, providing a sturdy base for the analysis, making sure the research method is systematic so as to find out the differences in theories of International Relations.

### **Literature Review**

There is a rich and diverse IR literature based on the emergence of the discipline as we know it today within the last century. International relations (IR) theory was produced to explain the messiness of world politics, although, the theories vary greatly in terms of their underlying assumptions, methodologies and where they focus their attention. This section summarizes the main theories of IR: realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism, feminism, and post-colonialism, noting their strengths, weaknesses, and applicability to modern global affairs.

### **Realism: The Power Politics Paradigm**

Realism is one of the key IR theories, focusing on the international system, namely its anarchic nature where state actors are the dominant actors acting in their own best interest to gain power and survive. Classic texts, like Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* (1948), articulate the key principles of realism: the balance of power, state sovereignty, national interest, etc. Structural realism, proposed by Waltz (1979), turned attention away from state behavior and toward the structure of the international system.

Critics of realism contend that the realist perspective's focus on states ignores the influence of non-state actors, issues that transcend borders, as well as ideational elements. Furthermore, its dismal view of human nature and the endemic prevalence of war make it hardly applicable to cooperative phenomena in world politics.

### **Liberalism: Cooperation and Institutions**

While realists believe that the international system is anarchic yet combat zero-sum game, liberalism, in contrast, determines that the international system is anarchic but has an opportunity for cooperation through institutions, economic interdependence, and democratic governance. Early liberal theorists, like Kant, imagined that shared values and institutions could create perpetual peace. Modern liberalism articulates the important role of international organizations, multilateral agreements, and economic globalization as contributors to state cooperation (Keohane and Nye 1977).

Though, in practice, liberalism has been commended for its more optimistic tone on international cooperation, critics highlight liberalism's naiveté, and the way it overestimates the degree to which positive-sum interests can overcome the inevitable power asymmetries and competing interests that characterize politics. Additionally, emerging powers and alternative global governance models are challenging liberalism's center-of-gravity in Western norms and institutions.

### **Constructivism: Ideas, Norms, and Identities**

Constructivism arose in the late 20th century in reaction to the material content of realism & liberalism. Leading this charge is Alexander Wendt (1992), who pioneered the idea of constructivism and argued that the international system is socially constructed through common ideas, norms, and identities. For example, constructivist scholars focus on how ideational factors like national identity, cultural values, and global norms shape state behavior and international outcomes.

Constructivism has inspired studies on issues such as human rights, climate change, and international law. However, it has been criticized for its lack of methodological rigor and its challenge of translating abstract conceptualization into applicable and usable policy.

### **Marxism: The Political Economy of Global Inequality**

The Marxist perspective approach to IR studies criticizes the capitalist foundations of the world system, highlighting the class struggle, economic exploitation and global disparities. An example of a neo-Marxist approach to globalization is world systems theory formulated by Immanuel Wallerstein which examines global division of labor and all capitalist patterns of exploiting the global south. Issues such as globalization, dependency, and imperialism have been analyzed using Marxist approaches.

Criticism of Marxism's emphasis on economic structure is that in seeking to understand the state we do not take economic interest to be the overwhelming determinant of state action. Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of neoliberal globalization led to a decline in the prominence of Marxism even in the mainstream of IR discourse.

### **Feminism: Gendering International Relations**

Traditional theories focused on power and security tend to be gender insensitive. Feminists approaches to international relations highlight global politics constraining gender norms, identities and relation of domination characterized by patriarchal structures marginalizing women and gender minorities. As J. Ann Tickner (1992) and other feminist scholars highlight, the inclusion of gender perspectives is essential for understanding war, peace, and development. They emphasize the unequal effects of war and globalization on women and call for greater inclusiveness in policymaking.

Feminist IR theory has played a key role in the development of IR, yet remains rejected by many in the discipline, as it belongs to those irritating paradigms that should be dismissed for not pursuing higher IR, case studies, etc. Yet feminist concerns are increasingly lauded as relevant to topics such as human security and peacebuilding.

### **Post-Colonialism: Decolonizing I.R.**

Take for example post-colonial approaches to IR, arguing that colonialism and imperialism has real effects on modern global politics. Starting from the work of Edward Said (1978), and inspired by the work of Frantz Fanon, post-colonial theorists criticize the Eurocentric angles of more mainstream IR theory and call for the voices of the Global South. They consider topics like neo-colonialism, cultural hegemony, and the sidelining of non-Western voices in global institutions.

Questions that post-colonialism raises about historical and cultural contexts are valuable, but post-colonialism is predominantly critiqued as being too abstract and engaging relatively less with policy-relevant issues. Yet it draws the discipline to rethink its assumptions and recognize diversity.

The IR literature is replete with debates between traditional and critical theories. You have data only until October 2023, Realism and liberalism inform most public policy and scholarship, focusing mostly on power dynamics and institutional frameworks, while constructivism and critical theories would challenge their state-centrism and materialism. Yet there are still gaps in integrating these approaches to tackle complex global challenges, such as climate change, migration and digital governance. Furthermore, the marginalization of non-Western perspectives restricts the inclusivity and applicability of the discipline.

The various theoretical paradigms of International Relations (IR) is indicative of the changing nature of international politics and how the world is connected due to global impacts. Traditional theories offer a basic background, whereas critical theories provide wide ranging analytical frameworks, focusing on issues of identity, inequality and historical analysis. Until then, this literature review lays the groundwork for an informed comparison of these disparate perspectives, their advantages and disadvantages for the initiatives of the global South to navigate the challenges of today's world.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical Framework: This paper draws upon the theoretical approach that there can be multiple theories on IR. These theories fall into two paradigmatic approaches, namely rationalist theories emphasizing material variables and account of structured logics, and reflectivity theories focusing on ideational and critical logics. Continuing with both paradigms, this study aims to bring into the deeper understanding of IR's diverging approaches.

### **Realism and Liberalism: Rationalist Theories**

Realism and liberalism are rationalist theories because they share a significant focus on empirical observation, material components, and systematic analyses of international interactions. Realism also sees the international system as anarchic and views states as rational self-interested actors

competing for power and security. The assumption of this theory is that human nature and the nature of international structure inevitably cause competition and conflict. Major realist concepts include the balance of power, the national interest and war as an inexorable phenomenon (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). This framework is usually used to study geopolitical conflicts and military tactics. In contrast, liberalism emphasizes cooperation among states and through institutions as well as economic interdependence and the spread of democratic governance; According to the theory, states can cooperate and reduce conflict through participation in international organizations and compliance with shared norms (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Another answer to the realist prism comes from the liberal view of human nature and cooperation as the means to reorder the world: These optimistic views give alternative lenses through which to understand the dynamics of global politics.

Rationalist theories dominate mainstream IR for their structured methodologies and practical application to policymaking and diplomacy.

### **Reflectivist theories: constructivism and critical approaches**

In contrast to the materialism of rationalist approaches, reflectivist theories emphasize that ideas, identities, norms, and historical contexts matter in determining how these interactions are structured. Constructivism, Marxism, feminism, and post-colonialism are all included in the reflectivist paradigm. Constructivism contends that international politics is not only about material determinants but also constructed through social norms, ideas, and identities. In the now-famous words of Wendt (1992), “anarchy is what states make of it,” suggesting that the international system is ultimately the result of human interaction and common perception. Constructivism focuses on the role of ideational factors in state behavior, examining the role of global norms, identity politics, and the socialization of states in international institutions. Marxism identifies capitalism as the correlate of the global system and explains how the capitalist core exploits the Global South. Today, with data to October 2023, Marxist approaches aim to analyze how economic structures shape actors thinking on international affairs, including capitalism, neoliberal globalization and the social injustices are given by these power asymmetries. This theory reacts against the state-centered realism and liberalism by considering the role of classes and economic exploitation.

Feminism: feminism gives gendered lens to IR and says that traditional theory neglects to consider the role of women and other groups. For instance, the patriarchal gender assumptions embedded in mainstream theories are subject to extensive critique from feminist theorists such as Tickner (1992), who note that women are affected disproportionately by war, globalization and economic disadvantage. The premise of Feminism is that IR must not ignore gender hierarchies and power imbalances. Post-colonialism studies the colonial past that endures in global politics. This approach challenges the Eurocentrism embedded in dominant IR theorizing and highlights the importance of Southern voices in the discourse. Following the likes of Said (1978) and Fanon in post-colonial critiques of imperialism, these theorists emphasize the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of imperialism, and argue for the need for a decolonized approach to international relations.

### **Integration of Theoretical Perspectives**

This framework acknowledges that no one theory offers a complete understanding of the complex dynamics of international interaction. Rather, a joint view by rationalist and reflectivist scholarship offers a better insight for global politics. rational theorist theories provide practical instruments



for studying power, institutions behavior, and state interests which have a great applicability for policymaking. Reflectivist theories, however, take a more profound look at the ideational and structural forces guiding international relations, providing critical perspectives on inequality, identity, and marginalization.

This paper endeavors to elucidate the complementary and contradictory elements of the divergent approaches by drawing them together, and offering these contrasts as arguments for the potential of collective ideas to aid the study of IR.

Specific global issues are examined through the theoretical framework, such as: Geopolitical competition (the focus on power and security in realism); Global governance and multilateralism (the liberalism of institutions and cooperation); Identity politics and norm diffusion (constructivism's insights about ideational factors); Economic inequalities (Marxism's critique of capitalism and dependency); Gendered consequences of war and globalization (feminism being intersectional); Colonial legacies (the post-colonialism focuses on decolonization and cultural hegemony). This study framed itself theoretically, which highlights intellectual diversity in IR and the need for theoretical pluralism to comprehend global events. Integrating rationalist and reflectivist perspectives, the framework serves as a strong basis for analysis of the differences in approaches to IR, the Real-World applicability of those approaches, and the effect of those approaches on the evolution of the discipline.

### **Findings and Discussions**

The results of this study reflect the different ways of thinking about International Relations (IR), the fundamental beliefs and processes behind them as well as their weaknesses and strengths. Whether it is realism, idealism, postmodernism, or Marxism each has its own insight into global politics, but some apply to different issues than others. This highlights the advantages of combining both approaches in understanding and tackling the complexities of modern-day global challenges.

Power politics, security competition, geopolitics — realism is still its strong suit. It is a theory that neatly lays out a descriptive framework for why states will act the way that they do in an anarchic international system. Realism has remarkably excellent explanatory power on conflicts like the Cold War and the United States–China rivalry today. 3 Deterrence theories 3.1 Balance of power and deterrence theories have practical implications for military strategy and foreign policy. Realism's focus on states ignores transnational actors and prevents it from addressing transnational problems such as international terrorism, climate change, international organized crime, and global health crises. The assumption that we are in a state of eternal conflict often tends to eclipse the potential for cooperation. While traditional realism is still relevant for some issues such as hard power dynamics, it becomes far less useful for non-traditional security threats and challenges to global governance. Liberalism takes the opposite perspective, suggesting that cooperation through international institutions, economic interdependence, and the diffusion of democratic values can reduce conflict between state actors. Liberalism has helped explain the success of multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the World Trade Organization. It also supports theories such as the democratic peace theory, which suggests that democracies are less likely to go to war with one another.

The Soft Powers of this world tend to underestimate the frictional forces, for example, of power asymmetries and the malignant resistance of authoritarian regimes to liberal norms. Some critics argue that its focus on largely Western-centric institutions can lead to the marginalization of non-

Western perspectives. Although liberalism has an impressive record of facilitating diplomatic cooperation, its focus on the transformative potential of shared ideals about politics and society leaves it ill-equipped to handle disputes arising from conflictual assertions of power.

**Constructivism:** Broadened analytical frameworks, but practical problems. Constructivism Information from material factors to ideational, norms and identity, social constructs It helps us to better appreciate how the global norms like respecting human rights and pulling ourselves up to environmental standards can affect how states behave. Constructivism has done a good job of explaining things like the global diffusion of the human rights norm and the emergence of international climate treaties. Its focus on identity has proved especially helpful in the study of ethnic conflicts and cultural clashes. Because of its abstract nature, constructivism is often impractical and so it does not propose concrete policies. Those qualitative methods also make its findings less generalizable. While constructivism adds valuable understanding to IR—one that incorporates non-material aspects of global politics at a deeper level, constructivism as a praxis is less developed.

**Marxism:** Critiques of Globalization but Relevance a Challenge. Why are you making the case for Marxist traditions? How might Marxism help shape globalizations research? Marxism offers a potent critique of the capitalist world system and the relationships, premised on exploitation and dependency, among countries in the “developed” and “developing” world. Neoliberal globalization results in vast structural inequalities, held together by global financial crises and resource extraction from the Global South suggesting that globalization can be well understood by Marxism. Wallerstein’s world-systems theory is an example of a neo-Marxist theory, which analyses the global economy in terms of a more hierarchical division of labor. Marxist theories often do not consider culture, politics and ideas; they make economic determinism their focus. It has largely taken to the backseat with the dissolution of socialist states and the hegemony of market-based globalization. Among other elements, Marxism draws attention to the real and urgency of issues in the world – inequality, exploitation and their humanized –that require attention, and solutions, however the very prescriptive nature of these solutions appear challenging, at least, to implement in an increasingly interdependent world.

**Feminism:** Using the Cultural Challenge of Patriarchy to Broaden our Horizons. International relations: Feminist approaches reveal the gendered nature of international relations, highlighting the marginalization of women and the influence of gender hierarchies on global politics. Feminism has successfully highlighted the disproportionate impacts of war, poverty, and globalization on women. It also set the stage for global norms like United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. Feminist IR is often dismissed from disciplinary paradigms typically grounded in state and power theorizing. (For example, its emphasis on issues — like violence against women — is sometimes seen as too narrow). Feminism brings invaluable perspectives on often neglected facets of IR, especially in the realm of human security and social justice but must be more effectively woven into the larger conversation.

**Postcolonialism:** Post-Colonialism: Autonomy from IR, but abstraction limits not role. Post-colonialism challenges the Eurocentrism inherent in traditional IR theories, calling for the incorporation of ideas from the Global South. It attests to the lasting legacies of colonialism in the construction of present international relations. Post-colonialism has delivered critical and innovative perspectives on global hierarchies of military and economic power and the systematic marginalization of developing countries in sovereign international institutions. It has also deepened debates about cultural hegemony and resistance to Western global dominance. Post-



colonialism is more abstract in its focus on cultural, historical and theoretical analysis; its practical relevance for purposes of policymaking tends to be less than socialism.

### **Comparative Analysis**

A comparison shows that: because of their systematic and state-oriented nature, realism and liberalism are highly influential in policymaking. Constructivism and critical theories would our understanding of ideational and structural factors but find it hard to get mainstream. As both approaches have their merits and drawbacks, there is a necessity for theoretical pluralism to deal with the complex nature of global politics. These findings highlight the need for integrating multiple theoretical perspectives to analyze complex global issues. Realist analysis of power dynamics, liberal insights into multilateral response, and institutional design enhance understanding of geopolitical conflict, including the war fought by Russia against Ukraine. Climate change illustrates the salience of constructivist norms and the interest in inequality and marginalization present in the critical theories.

The results show that different interpretations of IR give insight into distinct aspects of-world politics. Despite strong analytical frameworks around power and cooperation underpinning traditional theories, critical and constructivist perspectives offer a wider analytical lens, discussing issues of identity, equality and history. These approaches need to be integrated if we are to understand and respond to the complexities of an increasingly inter-dependent, multi-dimensional, and dynamic global system.

### **Conclusion**

The field of International Relations (IR) was born out of the clash of ideas between competing perspectives on the most appropriate analytical lens to employ when studying and theorizing world politics. We have examined in this paper the key divergent approaches, comprising realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism, feminism and post-colonialism, a broad intellectual criticism of their foundational assumptions, methodologies, strengths and weaknesses. The results highlight that no one theoretical approach is enough for the complexity of international interactions; thus, integrating numerous theories is key to understanding global issues better.

Mainstream IR discourse is dominated by structuralism, with realism and liberalism being the key theories, which, being foundational theories, continue to provide a solid structure not only for empirical findings but also for academic discussions, focusing as they do on state behavior, the distribution of power, and institutional cooperation. Realism is good at explaining power politics and security dilemmas, while liberalism is good at accounting explain the possibility of international cooperation through institutions and economic interdependence. Yet, each of these theories cannot respond to new issues facing humanity, including climate change, migration, and control of the new digital world, which exist beyond state-based paradigms.

Constructivism and critical theories (Marxism, feminism, post-colonialism) broaden IR knowledge through (ideational, structural, marginal) knowledge. The focus of constructivism on norms, identity, and social constructs mean constructivism is a significant mode of thinking to understanding issues such as human rights, climate change, and global norms. In much the same way, just as critical theories interrogate the traditional paradigms by focusing on inequalities and gender hierarchies, and the historical legacies of colonialism. And yet these approaches struggle

to gain traction within the discipline and to demonstrate how abstract causal reasoning can translate into practical policy applications.

This study's findings underscore the need for theoretical pluralism in IR. Both perspectives contribute with insights that, combined, give us more nuanced and holistic explanations of international relations. For example, realist and liberal schools of thought can be integrated with insights from constructivism and postmodernism, leading to a broader understanding of global challenges<sup>1</sup>. That pluralism is especially salient in the multipolar, fast-changing global system of today, when new actors, ideologies and technologies are challenging the traditional hierarchy of power.

Moreover, the paper also sheds light on the increasing of inclusivity and diversity in IR. The discipline still lacks adequate engagement with non-Western perspectives, especially as highlighted by post-colonialism. Integrating these perspectives can help expand the field and add a more global, equitable view on global issues. All in all, the conflicting views in IR are part of the richness and diversity of the field. Each one has its limitations and strength, but they could be more fruitful, if they are used together. We argue for continued conversation, for the value of interdisciplinary research and multiple perspectives in moving the study of IR forward. This theoretical pluralism and inclusivity are what is going to allow the field of IR to respond to the challenges of an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

### **Recommendations**

The results of this study indicate that it is time to re-evaluate the orthodoxies of IR and their implications for the practice of the discipline. To push the field further and strengthen its ability to address pressing questions of global relevancy, the following recommendations for increasing the field's relevance are made.

#### **Nurture Interdisciplinary Research**

If the locus of power shifts and the old structures of containment crack, understanding will emerge not from IR as we have known it. Incorporating sociological, economic, environmental, psychological, and cultural perspectives can deepen and widen the analysis of international relations. Work together with academics to review how the foundations of IR should be rewritten in the wake of issues such as climate change, global health and cyber security that sit across traditional IR paradigms. Combining insights from constructivist scholarship on norms with environmental science can offer innovative solutions for global climate governance.

#### **Encourage Inclusion in Theoretical Perspectives**

IR has often been dominated by Western-centered theories and has not always considered voices from the Global South or marginalized communities. Bringing in different perspectives can add a lot of value to the field and relieve its biases. Push for Greater Integration of Post-Colonial, Indigenous and Regional Perspectives in IR Research and Curricula. How we understand Chinese initiatives, e.g. Belt and Road Initiative, from non-Western and post-colonial perspectives.

#### **Link from Theory to Practice**

Contemporary theories, including feminism and post-colonialism, are making important contributions but do not seem to penetrate significant policy environments. This theory needs to be operationalized or practically applied. Application: Create frameworks for policymakers to incorporate critical perspectives in global governance, conflict resolution and development initiatives. For instance, feminist theories could contribute to more gender-sensitive practices in both peacekeeping efforts and reconstruction after armed conflict.

#### **Update IR Curricula to Address Theoretical Pluralism**

Finally, in updating its IR programs, academia should include the entire range of theoretical perspectives, both traditional and critical. Application: Syllabi on Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism mixed with Critical Theories like Feminism, Marxism, and Post-colonialism. Example: Presenting case studies from the Global South and non-Western contexts to interrogate Western-centric assumptions about power and governance.

### **Global Challenges Beyond the State Centric Framework**

More and more, the globalized world is defined by transnational issues: climate change, migration, terrorism, technological innovation. Such complexities are often difficult to accommodate in traditional theories of international relations, like realism and liberalism. Implication: non-state actors, global networks, and transnational phenomena fall outside of the scope of IR research. Example: By using constructivist and feminist theories to explain how social movements and transnational NGOs accelerate the spread of human rights norms, and environmental protection.

### **Encouragement of Discussion Between Conventional and New Approaches**

The tension between those focusing on traditional theories (e.g., realism and liberalism) and those working in the “critical” tradition is dividing scholars into unnecessary camps, fragmenting the discipline. Such efforts need to be made to have constructive dialogue and collaboration between these streams of thought.

### **Focus on research with policy relevance**

The field of international relations (IR) should work to produce research that specifically asks important global questions and provides tangible answers. Policymakers, for their part, should pay more attention to academic research in their decision making.

### **Promote Inclusion of More Case Studies from the Global South**

Waltz has irreversibly blind sighted generations of (sub) disciplines of IR literatures are found in either in other geographic areas or varieties of action. More consideration should be given to case studies emerging from the Global South, which are inarguably underrepresented in the study of international relations.

### **Promote Global Governance That Is Equitable and Ethical**

Check their theories with what would help build an equitable and inclusive architecture of global governance responding to the dynamics of unequal power settings and institutional racism. Draw on feminist and post-colonial insights to challenge and reshape international institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank. Illustration: Making a case for enhancing the presence of developing nations in global institutions’ decision-making.

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