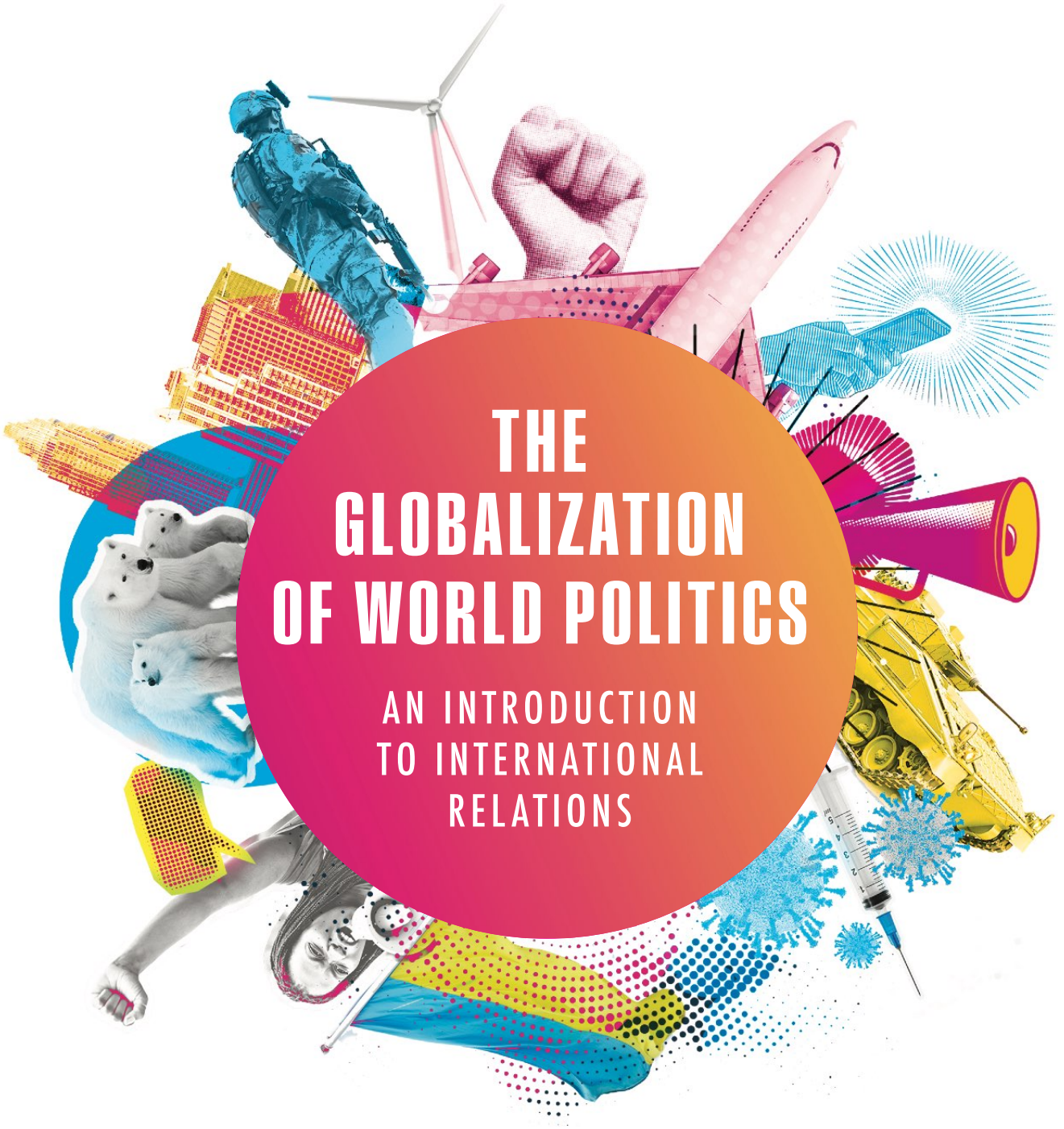
JOHN **BAYLIS** | STEVE **SMITH** | PATRICIA **OWENS**



THE GLOBALIZATION OF WORLD POLITICS

AN INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

9th edition

OXFORD
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THE GLOBALIZATION OF WORLD POLITICS

AN INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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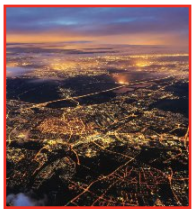

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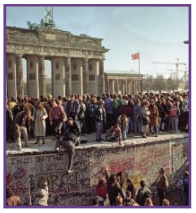

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Preface

In this new edition of *The Globalization of World Politics* we have followed a similar format and structure to previous editions, but we have added one new chapter and one chapter has been completely rewritten by a new author. We believe these additions make this already popular and successful book even better. A new chapter on global health by Sophie Harman has been included because of the contemporary importance of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on international relations. The chapter on realism by Or Rosenboim provides a new perspective on this important theoretical approach to the subject. All the other chapters have been updated to reflect the feedback we have received from students around the world, comments from teachers and scholars of International Relations, and the extremely detailed reviews of the eighth edition commissioned by Oxford University Press. Together, all these comments have helped us to identify additional areas that should be covered. We have also updated the learning features, including dozens of brand new case studies and many new suggestions for further reading.

Praise for *The Globalization of World Politics*

'The new chapter 25 on Health *is a timely, comprehensive introduction to a complex issue of highest importance, well-written and with impressive empirical evidence'*

(Associate Professor Jens Ladefoged Mortenson, University of Copenhagen, Denmark)

'After several decades, this textbook is still the most relevant and essential undergraduate textbook there is in International Relations globally. I consider it to be an organic and constantly evolving source of knowledge and reflection about and within globalization simultaneously. It is simply the pillar stone of the IR undergraduate classroom globally today'

(Senior Lecturer Erika Svedberg, Malmo University)

'A comprehensive, well-written, up-to-date introduction to IR and the historical and theoretical approaches that shape our world'

(Teacher Anna-Karin Eriksson, Linnaeus University, Sweden)

'The Bible of International Relations'

(Lecturer Maria Panayiotou, London Metropolitan University, UK)

'The best book for teaching IR to undergraduate students, whether they are total newcomers to the subject or have a good level of prior knowledge'

(Programme Director Ian Finlayson, European School of Economics, UK)

'An excellent introductory and foundational text for understanding IR in a global era. It is well-structured, comprehensive, and written in an accessible manner'

(Visiting Lecturer Annapurna Menon, University of Westminster, UK)

Acknowledgements

Producing an edited book is always a collective enterprise. But it is not only the editors and authors who make it happen. We make substantial revisions to every new edition of this book based on the numerous reviews we receive on the previous one. We are extremely grateful to all those who sent to us or Oxford University Press their comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the eighth edition and our plans for this ninth edition of the book. Very many of the changes are the result of reviewers' recommendations. Once again, we would also like to thank our excellent contributors for being so willing to respond to our detailed requests for revisions, and sometimes major rewrites, to their chapters. Many of these authors have been involved with this book since the very first edition, and we are extremely grateful for their continued commitment and dedication to International Relations pedagogy.

Here we would also like to make a special acknowledgement and extend our greatest thanks to our editorial assistant on this edition, Dr Danielle Cohen. With efficiency, deep conscientiousness, patience, and humour, as in the past, she has done an excellent job working with the contributors and the editors to ensure deadlines were met and all tasks completed on time. The book is much better because of her hard work.

The editors would also like to thank the editorial and production team at Oxford University Press, especially Katie Staal and Sarah Iles, who have provided us with encouragement and enormous patience in guiding us through the production process. They have been a pleasure to work with.

John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens

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New to this edition

The ninth edition has been rigorously updated following extensive reviewer feedback. Key changes include:

- New Chapter 9 on realism by Or Rosenboim
- New Chapter 25 on global health by Sophie Harman
- Expanded coverage of non-Western approaches, particularly perspectives from the Global South, is woven throughout the chapters to ensure you appreciate the importance of viewing international relations from representative and varied perspectives
- Updated International Relations theory chapters reflect a more contextualized and historical perspective, allowing you to gain a thorough, nuanced understanding of the historical and political context in which these approaches emerged

Guide to using this book

The ninth edition of *The Globalization of World Politics* provides a rich multimedia experience in which the text's unrivalled coverage is supplemented by features and resources that help you to navigate the text and contextualize your understanding, supporting development of the essential knowledge and skills you need to underpin your International Relations (IR) studies.

Outlined here are the key features and resources in the book and its online resources to help you understand international relations.

www.oup.com/he/baylis-globalization9e

Consolidate your understanding

Self-test questions, mapped to each section of the book, provide extensive opportunities to check your understanding. Each chapter's flashcard glossary and concluding review questions offer further ways to test your knowledge. Lists of Key Points throughout the text sum up the most important arguments, acting as a useful revision tool, and provide an at-a-glance overview of the issues raised in each chapter. Watch the online author videos to see top scholars analysing current issues and exploring IR theories and concepts in more depth.

Develop critical thinking skills

Each chapter opens with provocative framing questions to stimulate thought and debate on the subject area. In each chapter you will find an opposing opinions feature with accompanying questions, which will help you evaluate theory and facilitate critical and reflective debate on contemporary policy challenges, from campaigns to decolonize the curriculum to debates over whether global health security aims to protect powerful states or people. Access the online resources to discover pointers to help you tackle the questions. An online interactive timeline accompanies the IR theory chapters to help you fully understand how the discipline has developed.

Connect IR theory and practice

Two engaging and relevant case studies in every chapter illustrate how ideas, concepts, and issues are manifested in the real world. Each case study is followed by questions to encourage you to apply theory to current and evolving global events. In addition, you will also find, in the online resources, extended IR case studies, which encourage you to apply theories to current and evolving global events.

Finally, develop your negotiation and problem-solving skills, and apply IR theory to practice, by exploring the online international relations simulations.

- IR Simulation: Keeping the Peace
- IR Simulation: Negotiating the Lisbon Protocol
- IR Simulation: Negotiating with China
- IR Simulation: Stopping an Epidemic

Read more widely

Annotated recommendations for further reading at the end of each chapter help you familiarize yourself with the key academic literature and suggest how you can explore your interest in a particular aspect of IR. Web links are provided to deepen your understanding of key topics and allow you to explore different voices and opinions.

Resources for lecturers

www.oup.com/he/baylis-globalization9e

Adopting lecturers can access the following online resources:

- Additional case studies to use in class discussions to contextualize and deepen theoretical understanding
- Customizable PowerPoint® slides, arranged by chapter, for use in lectures or as handouts to support efficient, effective teaching preparation
- A fully customizable test bank containing ready-made assessments with which to test your students' understanding of key concepts
- Question bank of short-answer and essay questions encourages critical reflection on core issues and themes in each chapter
- All author videos for you to share with your students
- All figures and tables from the book available to download

List of case studies

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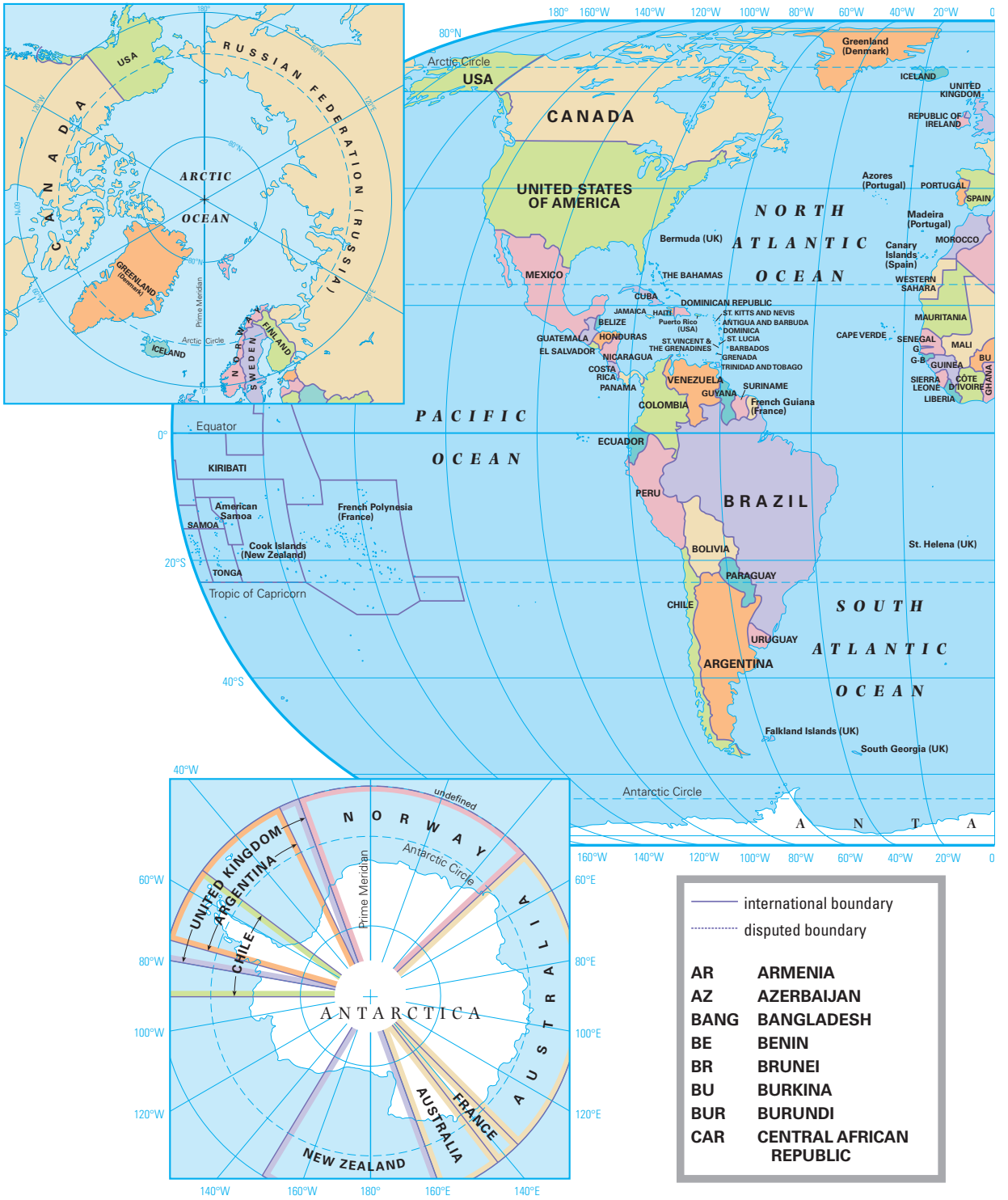
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SPAIN
Madeira (Portugal)
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
Bermuda (UK)
MOROCCO
Canary Islands (Spain)
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THE BAHAMAS
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Q	QATAR
R	RWANDA
T	TAJIKISTAN
TU	TURKMENISTAN
U	UGANDA
UAE	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
ZIM	ZIMBABWE

Part One

International relations in a global era

In this part of the book, we introduce you to how this book makes sense of international relations in a global era. We have two main goals in this part.

First, we want to provide you with a context in which to read the different chapters that follow. We do this by explaining why the main title of this book refers to 'world politics' rather than 'international politics'; giving you a short history of the study and discipline of International Relations; and providing a very brief introduction to the main theoretical approaches to the study of International Relations, including how each conceives of globalization.

Second, we go into much more detail on the dynamics, complexities, and contradictions of contemporary globalization. What is globalization, and what are its main engines and drivers? How should we understand the contemporary crisis of globalization and its implications for the current world order? Are we entering a world of 'deglobalization' or 'reglobalization'? Making sense of these questions is essential to understanding world politics in the twenty-first century. We hope that these two chapters provide a powerful entry point into what follows in the rest of the book.

dennisvdw/Getty Images

Chapter 1

Introduction: from international politics to world politics

PATRICIA OWENS · JOHN BAYLIS · STEVE SMITH

Reader's Guide

This book provides a comprehensive overview of world politics in a global era. The term most often used to explain world politics in the contemporary period—'globalization'—is controversial. There is considerable dispute over what it means to talk of 'globalization', whether this implies that the main features of contemporary world politics are different from those of the past, and whether much of the world is experiencing a backlash against 'neoliberal globalization'. The concept can be most simply used to refer to the process of increasing interconnectedness among societies such that events in one part of the world increasingly have effects on peoples and societies far away. On this view, a globalized world is one in which political, economic, cultural, and social events become more and more interconnected, and also one in which they have more impact. For others, 'globalization' is the ideology associated with the current phase of the world economy—neoliberal capitalism—which has most shaped world politics since the late 1970s. In this introduction we explain how we propose to deal with the concept of globalization in this book, and we offer some arguments both for and against seeing it as an important new development in world politics.

We will begin by discussing the various terms used to describe world politics and the academic discipline—International Relations (IR)—that has led the way in thinking about world politics. We then look at the main ways in which global politics has been explained. Our aim is not to put forward one view of how to think about world politics somehow agreed by the editors, let alone by all the contributors to this book. There is no such agreement. Rather, we want to provide a context in which to read the chapters that follow. This means offering a variety of views. For example, the main theoretical accounts of world politics all see globalization differently. Some treat it as a temporary phase in human history; others see it as the latest manifestation of the growth of global **capitalism**; yet others see it as representing a fundamental transformation of world politics that requires new ways of understanding. The different editors and contributors to this book hold no single agreed view; they represent all the views just mentioned. Thus, they would each have a different take, for example, on why powerful **states** cannot agree on how to tackle global climate change, why wealthy states hoarded vaccines during the Covid-19 pandemic, why a majority of British people voted to leave the European Union, the significance of the 2007–8 global financial crisis, whether the Western-led world order is in terminal

decline, why Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, or the causes and significance of economic, gendered, and racialized inequality in world politics.

There are three main aims of this book:

- to offer an overview of world politics in a global era;
- to summarize the main approaches to understanding contemporary world politics; and
- to provide the material necessary to develop a concrete understanding of the main **structures** and issues defining world politics today.

In Part Two we will examine the very important historical background to the contemporary world, including: the rise of the modern international order; the major crises of international relations that defined the twentieth century; more recent developments that define the twenty-first century; and the significance of the rise of non-Western powers in contemporary world politics after a period of Western dominance. Part Three gives a detailed account of each of the main theories of world politics—**liberal internationalism**, **realism**, **Marxism**, **constructivism**, **poststructuralism**, **postcolonial** and **decolonial** approaches, and **feminism**. In Part Four we look at the main structures and processes that do most to shape the central contours of contemporary world politics, such as global political economy, international security, war, gender, and racial hierarchy. Then in Part Five of the book we deal with some of the main policy issues in the globalized world, such as global health, poverty, human rights, refugees, and the environmental crisis.

1.1 From international politics to world politics

Why does the main title of this book refer to 'world politics' rather than 'international politics' or 'international relations'? These are the traditional terms used to describe the kinds of structures and processes covered in this book, such as the causes of war and peace or the global economy and its inequalities. Indeed, the discipline that studies these issues is nearly always called International Relations. We will say more about this discipline shortly. The point here is that we believe the phrase 'world politics' is more inclusive than either of the alternative terms 'international relations' or 'international politics'. It is meant to signal that in this book we are interested in a very wide set of actors and political relations in the world, and not only those among **nation-states** (as implied by 'international relations' or 'international politics'). It is not that relations between states are unimportant; far from it. They are fundamental to contemporary world politics. But we are also interested in relations among institutions and organizations that may or may not be states. For example, this book will introduce you to the significance of **multinational corporations**, **transnational** terrorist groups, social classes, and **non-governmental organizations** (NGOs) such as human rights groups. We also think that relations among **multinational** corporations, **governments**, or **international organizations** can be as important as what states and other political actors do. Hence, we prefer to use the more expansive term 'world politics', with the important proviso that we do not want you to define 'politics' too narrowly. Many contributors to this volume also understand politics very broadly.

Consider, for example, the distinction between 'politics' and 'economics'. Clearly, a great deal of power accrues to the group that can persuade others that the existing distribution of wealth and resources is 'simply' an economic or 'private' question rather than a political or 'public' issue. Indeed, the very distinction between 'politics' and 'economics' has a history and is open to dispute. According to Oxfam, 82 per cent of the world's global wealth is held by 1 per cent of its population; the world's richest 27 people possess the same wealth as its poorest 50 per cent—3.8 billion people. And the global wealth gap increases every year. The world's ten richest men doubled their wealth during the pandemic. The point here is that we want you to think about politics very broadly because many of the chapters in this book will describe as 'political' features of the contemporary world that you may not have previously thought of in that way. Our focus is on the political and **power** relations, broadly defined, that characterize the contemporary world. Many will be between states, but many—and perhaps most—will not.

1.2 The study of International Relations

As you will discover in reading this book, International Relations (IR) is an incredibly exciting and diverse field of study. It is exciting because it addresses the most pressing problems shaping the lives of everyone on the planet: the global environmental catastrophe, pandemics, matters of war and peace, the organization of the global economy, the causes and consequences of global inequality, to name just a few of the most obvious. The key concepts that organize debate in the field are also some of the most contentious: power, violence, **sovereignty**, states, **empire**, genocide, intervention, inequality, justice, and democracy.

The field is highly diverse, organized into various subfields and specialisms, including international history, international security, international political economy, international law, and international organizations. Scholars of International Relations also often work with regional specialisms, focusing on Latin America, East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, or North America.

International Relations is also highly interdisciplinary, drawing on theoretical and methodological traditions from fields as diverse as History, Law, Political Science, Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Gender Studies, and Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies. In Britain, historians were most influential in the earliest decades of the organized study of international relations (Hall 2012). In more recent years, especially after the end of the Second World War, and especially in the United States, Political Science has tended to have the greatest influence on the discipline of International Relations. This tended to narrow the range of acceptable approaches to the study of IR, and also led to an excessive focus on US foreign policy, to the detriment of non-Western history and theories of world politics. However, both inside and outside the United States, scholars have started to pay much more attention to how and why IR has neglected non-Western histories and experiences, and have begun to rectify this (Tickner and Wæver 2009). In doing so, they have increasingly moved the field away from Eurocentric approaches to world politics, and begun to take seriously the project of developing a Global IR (Acharya 2014*b*).

Watch the video on the online resources to see the author explain the move away from a Eurocentric approach to world politics.

People have tried to make sense of world politics for centuries. However, the formation of the academic discipline of International Relations is relatively recent. This history also partly accounts for some of the issues just described. Consider how the history of the discipline of IR is itself contested. One of the most influential accounts of its history is that the academic discipline was formed in 1919 when the Department of International Politics was established at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth (now Aberystwyth University). The emphasis in this version of the story is that the Department of International Politics was founded after the horrors of the First World War to help prevent a future war. If scholars could find the causes of war, then they could put forward solutions to help politicians prevent wars from breaking out. According to this view, the discipline of IR was—or should be—marked by such a commitment to changing the world; the task of academic study should be one of making the world a better place.

Others have challenged this story as a foundation myth for a field with a much darker history, situating the emergence of IR somewhat earlier in the history of colonial administration and the study of imperialism (Long and Schmidt 2005; Vitalis 2015). For example, the first journal in the field was called the *Journal of Race Development*, first published in 1910, and which is now the influential US-based publication known as *Foreign Affairs*. The beginning of the twentieth century was not only a period of world war, but also one of empire, theft of land, and belief in racial supremacy—that is, maintaining and justifying white supremacy in world politics. In the United States, African-American scholars interested in studying race and world politics were systematically marginalized from the emerging discipline of IR (Vitalis 2015). However, situating the history of the field in this context gives a very different gloss to the role of academic International Relations today, which exists in a context of **international hierarchy** and the continuing significance of race and racism in world politics, as discussed later in this book. Indeed, even more recently scholars have started to decentre the origin story of International Relations, pointing to its multiple origins around the world (Davis, Thakur, and Vale 2020; Thakur and Smith 2021).

The point to note here is that there are important debates about how academic knowledge is produced, the global political contexts in which academic disciplines are formed, and some of the enduring legacies of this history. Another important example is how

histories of international thought and the discipline of International Relations almost entirely exclude women thinkers and founders of the discipline (for an exception, see Ashworth 2014). Women in the past thought and wrote a great deal about international politics (Sluga and James 2016), but this work has yet to be fully recovered and analysed (but see Owens and Rietzler 2021; Owens et al. 2022). Knowledge about world politics—and the academic subjects that you study at university—also has a history and a politics. This history is relevant for the identity of the academic field of International Relations and for how we should think about world politics today. Indeed, you should keep in mind that the main theories of world politics did not arise from nowhere. They were developed by intellectuals and practitioners in specific circumstances for very concrete and political reasons. International theories have histories too (Knutsen 1997; Keene 2005; Ashworth 2014).

Watch the video on the online resources to see the author discuss why women have been excluded from the discipline of IR.

1.3 Theories of world politics

The basic problem facing anyone who tries to understand contemporary world politics is that there is so much material to look at that it is difficult to know which things matter and which do not. Where on earth would you start if you wanted to explain the most important political processes? How, for example, would you explain the failures of climate change negotiations, the struggles over poor countries' access to vaccines, 'Brexit' from the EU, or the **9/11** attacks? Why are thousands of migrants from North Africa seeking to make the extremely dangerous voyage across the Mediterranean Sea to the European Union? Why does the United States support Israel in its conflict with Palestinians in the occupied territories? As you will learn, there are very different responses to these questions, and there seems no easy way of arriving at definitive answers to them.

Whether you are aware of it or not, whenever you are faced with questions like these you have to turn not only to the study of history, though that is absolutely essential, but also to theories. Theory is a kind of simplifying device that allows you to decide which historical or contemporary facts and events matter more than others when trying to develop an understanding of the world. A good analogy is using sunglasses with different-coloured lenses: put on the red pair and the world looks red; put on the yellow pair and it looks yellow. The world is not any different; it just looks different. So it is with theories. Shortly, we will summarize the main theoretical views that have dominated the study of world politics so that you will get an idea of which 'colours' they paint world politics. But before we do, please note that we do not think theory is an option: you cannot say that you do not want to bother with theory, all you want to do is to look at the 'facts'. This is impossible, since the only way you can decide which of the millions of possible facts matter is by adhering to some simplifying device. Theory is such a device. Note also that you may not be aware of your theory. It may just be the view of or even ideology about the world that you inherited from your family, social class, peer groups, or the media. It may just seem common sense to you and not at all complicated. But in such a case your theoretical assumptions are just implicit rather than explicit. We prefer to try to be as explicit as possible when thinking about world politics.

Of course, many proponents of particular theories also claim to see the world the way it 'really is'. Consider the International Relations theory known as 'realism'. The 'real' world as seen by realists is not a very pleasant place. According to their view, human beings are at best selfish and domineering, and probably much worse. Liberal notions about the perfectibility of human beings and the possibility of a fundamental transformation of world politics away from conflict and towards peace are far-fetched from a realist perspective. Indeed, realists have often had the upper hand in debates about the nature of world politics because their views *seem* to accord more with common sense. We will say more about realism in a moment. The point here is to question whether such a realist view is as neutral as it seems commonsensical. After all, if we teach world politics to generations of students and tell them that people are selfish, then does this not become common sense? And when they go to work in the media, universities, for governments, international organizations, or the military, do they not simply repeat what they have been taught and act accordingly? Might realism simply be the ideology of powerful states, interested in protecting the status quo? What is the history of realism and

what does this history tell us about its claims about how the world 'really is'? For now, we would like to keep the issue open and simply point out that we are not convinced that realism is as objective, timeless, or non-**normative** as it is often portrayed.

What is certainly true is that realism has been one of the dominant ways in the West of explaining world politics over the last 150 years. But it is not the only theory of international relations, nor the one most closely associated with the earliest academic study of international relations. We will now summarize the principal assumptions underlying the main rivals as theories of world politics: **liberal internationalism**, realism, **Marxism**, **constructivism**, **poststructuralism**, **postcolonial** and **decolonial** approaches, and **feminism**. These theories will be discussed in much more detail in Part Three of this book; although we do not go into much depth about them here, we want to give you a flavour of their main themes as we also want to say something about how each thinks about globalization.

Watch the video on the online resources to see the author explain how and why IR theory is valuable.

1.3.1 Liberal internationalism

Liberal internationalism developed after the First World War, in a period defined by competing but unstable empires, class conflict, women's suffrage, and experiments in international organization (Sluga and Clavin 2017). As you will later learn, there are many kinds of 'liberalism'. But the main themes that run through liberal thought are that human beings and societies can be improved, that **capitalism** is the best way of organizing the economy, that representative democracy is necessary for liberal improvement, and that ideas—not just material power—matter. Behind all this lies a belief in progress, modelled on the achievements of liberal capitalist societies in the West. Hence, liberals reject the realist notion that war is the natural condition of world politics. They also question the idea that the state is the main actor on the world political stage, although they do not deny that it is important. They see individuals, multinational corporations, **transnational actors**, and international organizations as central actors in some issue-areas of world politics. Liberals tend to think of the state not as a unitary or united actor, but as made up of individuals and their collective societal preferences and interests. They also think of the state as comprised of a set of bureaucracies, each with its own interests. Therefore, there can be no such thing as one '**national interest**' since it merely represents the result of whatever societal preferences or bureaucratic organizations dominate the domestic decision-making process. In relations among states, liberals stress the possibilities for **cooperation**; the key issue becomes devising **international institutions** in which economic and political cooperation can be best achieved.

The picture of world politics that arises from the liberal view is of a complex system of bargaining among many different types of actors. Military force is still important, but the liberal agenda is not as restricted as the realist one of relations between great powers. Liberals see national interests in more than just military terms, and stress the importance of economic, environmental, and technological issues. Order in world politics emerges from the interactions among many layers of governing arrangements, comprising laws, agreed **norms**, **international regimes**, and institutional **rules** to manage the global capitalist economy. Fundamentally, liberals do not think that sovereignty is as important in practice as realists believe. States may be legally sovereign, but in practice they have to negotiate with all sorts of other public and private actors, with the result that their freedom to act as they might wish is seriously curtailed. **Interdependence** between states is a critically important feature of world politics.

1.3.2 Realism

Realists have a different view of world politics and, like liberals, claim a long tradition. However, it is highly contested whether realists can actually claim a lineage all the way back to ancient Greece, or whether realism is an invented intellectual tradition for cold war American foreign policy needs. Either way, there are many variants of something called 'realism'. But in general, for realists, the main actors on the world stage are the most powerful states, which are legally sovereign actors. Sovereignty means that there is no actor above the state that can compel it to act in specific ways. According to this view, other actors such as multinational corporations or international organizations have to work within the framework of inter-state relations set by the most powerful states. As for what propels states to act as they do, many realists see human nature as centrally important, and they view human nature as rather selfish. As a result, world politics (or, more accurately for realists, international politics) represents a struggle for power among states, with each trying to

maximize its national interest. Such order as exists in world politics is the result of the workings of a mechanism known as the **balance of power**, whereby states act so as to prevent any one state from dominating. Thus, world politics is all about bargaining and alliances, with **diplomacy** a key mechanism for balancing various national interests. But finally, the most important tool available for implementing states' foreign policies is military force. Ultimately, since there is no sovereign body above the states that make up the international political system, world politics is a **self-help** system in which states must rely on their own military resources to achieve their ends. Often these ends can be achieved through cooperation, but the potential for conflict is ever-present.

Since the 1980s, an important variant of realism has developed, known as **neorealism**. This approach stresses the importance of the structure of the **international system** in affecting the behaviour of all states. Thus, during the cold war two main powers dominated the international system, and this gave rise to certain rules of behaviour; now that the cold war has ended, the structure of world politics is said to be moving towards **multipolarity** (after a phase of **unipolarity**), which for neorealists will involve very different rules of the game.

1.3.3 Social constructivism

Social constructivism is a relatively new approach in International Relations, one that developed in the United States in the late 1980s and has been becoming increasingly influential since the mid-1990s. The approach arose out of a set of events in world politics, notably the disintegration of the Soviet empire, as symbolized most dramatically by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. These events indicated that human agency had a much greater potential role in world politics than implied by realism or liberalism. But the theoretical underpinnings of social constructivism are much older; they relate to a series of social-scientific and philosophical works that dispute the notion that the 'social world' is external to the people who live in it, and is not easily changed. To different degrees, realism and liberalism stress the regularities and 'certainties' of political life (although liberalism is somewhat less adamant).

By contrast, constructivism argues that we make and remake the social world so there is much more of a role for human agency than realism and liberalism allow. These approaches underestimate the possibilities for human progress and for the betterment of people's lives. To this degree, social constructivism strongly overlaps with liberalism and can even be seen as providing the social theory underpinnings of liberal political theories of world politics. In the words of one of the most influential constructivist theorists, Alexander Wendt, even the self-help international system portrayed by realists is something that we make and remake: '**anarchy** is what states make of it' (Wendt 1992). Therefore, the world that realists portray as 'natural' or 'given' is in fact far more open to change, and constructivists think that self-help is only one possible response to the anarchical structure of world politics. Indeed, not only is the structure of world politics amenable to change, but so also are the identities and interests that neorealism or neoliberalism take as given. The seemingly 'natural' structures, processes, identities, and interests of world politics could in fact be different from what they currently are. Note, however, that social constructivism is not a theory of world politics in itself. It is an approach to the philosophy of social science with implications for the kinds of arguments that can be made about world politics. Constructivists need to marry their approach to another political theory of world politics, such as realism, feminism, but usually liberalism, to actually make substantive claims.

Realism, liberalism, and social constructivism are the dominant approaches in the most influential location for IR scholarship, which is currently the United States. But by no means should realism, liberalism, and social constructivism be considered the only compelling theories or the only approaches with large numbers of adherents. On the contrary, outside the United States these theories are often considered to be far too narrow and thus unconvincing. We now turn to some other approaches that are highly critical of these three approaches and move beyond them in quite far-reaching ways.

1.3.4 Marxist theories

The fourth main theoretical position we want to mention is Marxism, also known as historical materialism, which immediately gives you a clue as to its main assumptions. But first we want to point out a paradox about Marxism. On the one hand, Marxist theory has been incredibly influential historically, inspiring socialist revolutions around the world, including during the process of decolonization, and also in the recent global uprisings in response to the 2007 global financial crisis. On the other hand, it has been less influential in the discipline of IR

than either realism or liberalism, and has less in common with either realism or liberalism than they do with each other. Indeed, from a Marxist perspective, both realism and liberalism serve the class and imperial interests of the most powerful actors in world politics to the detriment of most of the rest of the world.

For Marxist theory, the most important feature of world politics is that it takes place in a highly unequal capitalist world economy. In this world economy the most important actors are not states but classes, and the behaviour of all other actors is ultimately explicable by class forces. Thus states, multinational corporations, and even international organizations represent the dominant class interest in the world economic system. Marxist theorists differ over how much leeway actors such as states have, but all Marxists agree that the world economy severely constrains states' freedom of manoeuvre, especially that of poorer and weaker states. Rather than an arena of conflict among national interests or with many different issue-areas, Marxist theorists conceive of world politics as the setting in which class conflicts are played out. In the branch of Marxism known as world systems theory, the key feature of the international economy is the division of the world into a wealthy capitalist core, a semi-periphery, and an exploited periphery integrated into the economy in its provision of natural resources and labour made cheap. Of course, in the semi-periphery and even the periphery there exist wealthy pockets that are tied into the capitalist world economy, while even in the core area there are exploited economic areas. But what matters is the dominance of the power not of states but of global capitalism, and it is capitalist forces, including capitalist crises, that ultimately determine the main political patterns in world politics. Sovereignty is not nearly as important for Marxist theorists as for realists since it refers to political and legal matters, whereas the most important feature of world politics for Marxist theorists is the degree of economic autonomy, and here they see all states as having to play by the rules of the international capitalist economy.

1.3.5 Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism has been a particularly influential theoretical development throughout the humanities and social sciences in the last 30 years. It reached international theory in the mid-1980s, but it can only be said to have really arrived in the last few years of the twentieth century. Indeed, for a time poststructuralism was probably as popular a theoretical approach as any discussed in this book, and it overlaps with several of them. Part of the difficulty, however, is precisely defining poststructuralism, which is also sometimes referred to as postmodernism. This is in addition to the fact, of course, that there are substantial theoretical differences within its various strands. One useful definition is by Jean-François Lyotard (1984: xxiv): 'Simplifying to the extreme, I define post-modern as incredulity towards metanarratives'. 'Incredulity' simply means scepticism; 'metanarrative' means any theory that asserts it has clear foundations for making knowledge claims and involves a **foundational epistemology**. You do not need to worry too much about what this means right now. It is explained in more detail in the chapter on poststructuralism (**see Ch. 12**), and we say a little more about these meta-theory questions in **Section 1.3.8**. Put simply, to have a foundational epistemology is to think that all truth claims about the world can be judged true or false (epistemology is how we can claim to know something).

Poststructuralism is essentially concerned with distrusting and exposing any account of human life that claims to have direct access to 'the truth'. Thus realism, liberalism, social constructivism, and Marxism are all suspect from a poststructuralist perspective because they claim to have uncovered some fundamental truth about the world. Michel Foucault, an important influence on poststructuralists, was opposed to the notion that knowledge is immune from the workings of power. Instead, and in common with Marxism, he argued that power produces knowledge. All power requires knowledge and all knowledge relies on and reinforces existing power relations. Thus there is no such thing as 'truth' existing outside of power. Truth is not something external to social settings, but is instead part of them. Poststructuralist international theorists have used this insight to examine the 'truths' of International Relations theory, to see how the concepts that dominate the discipline are in fact highly contingent on specific power relations. Poststructuralism takes apart the very concepts and methods of our thinking, examining the conditions under which we are able to theorize about world politics in the first place.

1.3.6 Postcolonial and decolonial approaches

Postcolonialism has been an important approach in cultural studies, literary theory, and anthropology for some time, and has a long and distinguished pedigree.

In recent years, more and more scholars studying international politics are drawing on ideas from other disciplines, including postcolonialism, especially those that expose the Eurocentric character of IR. It is noteworthy that all the major theories we have discussed so far—realism, liberalism, Marxism, social constructivism, and poststructuralism—emerged in Europe in response to specific European problems, including imperialism. They are all 'Eurocentric'. Postcolonial scholars question whether Eurocentric theories can really purport to explain *world* politics, its historical relation to empire and colonialism, or world politics as it relates to the lives of most people on the planet. It is more likely that these Eurocentric approaches help to continue and justify the military and economic subordination of the Global South by powerful Western interests. This process is known as 'neocolonialism'.

Postcolonialism has also become more popular in IR since the 9/11 attacks, which encouraged people to try to understand how the histories of the West and the Global South have always been intertwined. For example, the identities of the colonized and colonizers are constantly in flux and mutually constituted. Postcolonial scholars argue that the dominant theories, especially realism and liberalism, are not neutral in terms of race, gender, and class, but have helped secure the domination of the Western world over the Global South. At the same time, traditional Marxism did not pay sufficient attention to the way that racial and gendered identities and power relations were central to upholding class power. Decolonial scholarship, which comes out of and is closely linked to postcolonialism, then proceeds to think about how to 'decolonize' the dominant theories and ways of knowing. Thus, an important claim of postcolonial and decolonial approaches is that global hierarchies of subordination and control, past and present, are made possible through the historical construction and combination of racial, gendered, class, and national differences and hierarchies. As other chapters in this volume suggest, IR has been slightly more comfortable with issues of class and gender. But the issue of race was almost entirely ignored from the end of the Second World War until quite recently. This occurred even though at the turn of the twentieth century international relations explicitly meant 'race relations' since a large proportion of international relations research focused on the administration of colonies (Vitalis 2015). As shown in **Chapter 18**, race and racism continue to shape the contemporary theory and practice of world politics in far-reaching ways. In 1903, W. E. B. DuBois famously argued that the problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of the 'colour-line'. How will transnational racism continue to shape global politics in the twenty-first century?

1.3.7 Feminism

Feminists were among the earliest and most influential writers on international politics in the period during which the academic discipline of International Relations emerged (Ashworth 2011; Owens et al. 2022). But, as noted earlier, this tradition of international theory was marginalized from the discipline of International Relations after the Second World War until the 1980s. The first and most important thing to note about feminism itself is that there is no one feminist theory: there are many kinds of feminisms. However, the different approaches are united by their focus on the construction of differences between 'women' and 'men' in the context of hierarchy and power and the highly contingent understandings of masculinity and femininity that these power relations produce. Indeed, the very categories of 'women' and 'men', and the concepts of masculinity and femininity, are highly contested in much feminist research. Some feminist theories assume natural and biological (i.e. sex) differences between men and women. Some do not. However, all the most interesting work in this field analyses how gender both affects world politics and is an effect of world politics; in other words, how different concepts (such as the state, war, or sovereignty) are gendered and, in turn, how this gendering of concepts can have differential consequences for 'men' and 'women'.

Some feminists look at the ways in which women are excluded from power and prevented from playing a full part in political activity. They examine how women have been restricted to roles critically important for the functioning of things (such as reproductive economies) but that are not usually deemed to be important for theories of world politics. Other feminists argue that the cause of women's inequality is in the capitalist system – that overthrowing capitalism is the necessary route for the achievement of the equal treatment of women. 'Standpoint feminists' identify how women, as a particular class by virtue of their sex rather than economic standing (although the two are related), possess a unique perspective—or standpoint—on world politics as a result of their subordination. For example, in an important essay, J. Ann Tickner (1988) reformulated

the famous 'six principles of political realism' developed by the 'godfather' of realism, Hans J. Morgenthau. Tickner showed how the seemingly 'objective' rules of realism reflect hegemonic 'masculine' values and definitions of reality. As a riposte, she reformulated these same rules taking women's experiences as the starting point.

Postcolonial and decolonial feminists work at the intersection of class, race, and gender on a global scale, and especially analyse the gendered effects of transnational culture and the unequal division of labour in the global political economy. From this perspective, it is not good enough to simply demand (as some liberal feminists do) that men and women should have equal rights in a Western-style democracy. Such a move ignores the way in which poor women of colour in the Global South remain subordinated by the global economic system—a system that liberal feminists were too slow to challenge in a systematic way.

1.3.8 Some meta-theoretical questions

For most of the twentieth century, realism, liberalism, and Marxism tended to be the main theories used to understand world politics, with constructivism, feminism, and poststructuralism becoming increasingly influential from the mid-1990s and postcolonialism gaining some influence since the 2000s.

While it is clear that each of these theories focuses on different aspects of world politics, each is saying more than this. Each view is claiming that it is picking out the most important features of world politics and that it offers a better account than rival theories. Thus, the different approaches are really in competition with one another. While you can certainly choose among them and combine some aspects of some of the theories (see, for example, Marxism, feminism, and postcolonialism), it is not always so easy to add bits from one to the others. For example, if you are a Marxist then you think that state behaviour is ultimately determined by class forces. But realists and liberals do not think that class affects state behaviour in any significant way. In other words, these theories are really competing versions of what world politics is like rather than partial pictures of it. They do not agree on what the 'it' is.

One way to think about this is in relation to meta-theoretical questions (questions above any particular theory). Such terms can be a little unsettling, but they are merely convenient words for discussing fairly straightforward ideas. First consider the distinction between **explanatory** and **constitutive** theories. An explanatory theory is one that sees the world as something external to our theories of it. In contrast, a constitutive theory is one that thinks our theories actually help construct the world. In a very obvious way our theories about the world shape how we act, and thereby make those theories self-confirming. For example, if we think individuals are naturally aggressive then we are likely to adopt a different posture towards them than if we think they are naturally peaceful. However, you should not regard this claim as self-evidently true, since it assumes that our ability to think and reason makes us able to determine our choices (i.e. that we have free will rather than having our 'choices' predetermined). What if our human nature is such that we desire certain things 'naturally', and that our language and seemingly 'free choices' are simply rationalizations for our needs? The point is that there is a genuine debate between those who think of the social world as like the natural world, and those theories that see our language and concepts as helping to create that reality. Theories claiming the natural and social worlds are the same are known as naturalist (Hollis and Smith 1990).

In IR, realist and liberal theories tend to be explanatory, with the task of theory being to report on a world that is external to our theories. Their concern is to uncover regularities in human behaviour and thereby explain the social world in much the same way as a natural scientist might explain the physical world. By contrast, nearly all the approaches developed in the last 30 years or so tend to be constitutive theories. Here theory is not external to the things it is trying to explain, and instead may construct how we think about the world. Or, to put it another way, our theories define what we see as the external world. Thus, the very concepts we use to think about the world help to make that world what it is.

The foundational/**anti-foundational** distinction refers to the simple-sounding issue of whether our beliefs about the world can be tested or evaluated against any neutral or objective procedures. This is a distinction central to the branch of the philosophy of social science known as epistemology (the study of how we can claim to know something). A foundationalist position is one that thinks that all truth claims (about some feature of the world) can be judged true or false. An anti-foundationalist thinks that truth claims cannot be judged in this way, since there are never neutral grounds for doing so. Instead each theory will define what counts as the facts, and so there will be no neutral

position available to adjudicate between rival claims. Think, for example, of a Marxist and a liberal arguing about the 'true' state of the economy. Foundationalists look for 'meta-theoretical' (above any particular theory) grounds for choosing between truth claims. In contrast, anti-foundationalists think that there are no such positions available; the belief itself is simply a reflection of an adherence to a particular view of epistemology.

Most of the contemporary approaches to international theory are much less wedded to foundationalism than were the traditional theories. Thus, **poststructuralism**, **postcolonialism**, and some **feminist theory** would tend towards anti-foundationalism, whereas **neorealism** and neoliberalism would tend towards foundationalism. Interestingly, **social constructivism** wishes to portray itself as occupying the middle ground. On the whole, and as a rough guide, explanatory theories tend to be foundational while constitutive theories tend to be anti-foundational. The point at this stage is not to construct some checklist, nor to get you thinking yet about the epistemological differences among these theories. Rather we want to draw your attention to the important impact of these assumptions about the nature of knowledge on the theories you will be learning about. The last 30 years have seen these underlying assumptions brought more into the open. The most important effect of this has been to undermine realism's and liberalism's claims to be delivering *the* truth.

We have offered a very rough representation of how various International Relations theories can be categorized. This is misleading in some respects since there are quite different versions of the main theories and some of these are less foundationalist than others. So the classifications are broadly illustrative of the theoretical landscape and are best considered a useful starting point for thinking about the differences among theories.

1.4 Theories and globalization

No International Relations theory has all the answers when it comes to explaining world politics in a global era. In fact, each sees 'globalization' differently. We do not want to tell you which theory seems best, since the purpose of this book is to give you a variety of lenses through which to look at world politics. All we will do is say a few words about how each theory responds to the debate about 'globalization'. We will then say something about the possible rise of globalization and offer some ideas on its strengths and weaknesses as a description of contemporary world politics.

- For liberals, globalization is the end product of a long-running, progressive transformation of world politics. Liberals are particularly interested in the revolution in economy, technology, and communications represented by globalization. This increased interconnectedness among societies, which is economically and technologically led, results in a very different pattern of world political relations from that which came before. States are no longer such central actors. In their place are numerous actors of differing importance depending on the issue concerned. The world looks more like a cobweb of relations than like the state model of realism or the class model of Marxist theory. For example, from this perspective, the British vote to exit from the EU was a foolish and very expensive decision to reject political and economic integration.
- For realists, the picture looks very different. For them, globalization—however its advocates define it—does not alter the most significant feature of world politics, namely the territorial division of the world into nation-states. While the increased interconnectedness among economies and societies might make them more dependent on one another, the same cannot be said about the state system. Here, powerful states retain sovereignty, and globalization does not render obsolete the struggle for political power among those states. Nor does it undermine the importance of the threat of the use of force or the importance of the balance of power. Globalization may affect our social, economic, and cultural lives, but it does not transcend the international political system of states. For example, we might think of the decision of the British people to leave the European Union, or the way wealthy states hoarded Covid-19 vaccines, as a demonstration of the enduring significance of national sovereignty.
- For constructivist theorists, globalization tends to be presented as an external force acting on states, which leaders often argue is a reality that they cannot challenge. For constructivists, this is a very political act, since it underestimates the ability of changing social norms and the identity of actors to challenge and shape globalization, and instead allows leaders to duck responsibility by blaming 'the way the world is'. Instead, constructivists think that we can mould globalization in a variety

of ways, notably because it offers us very real chances, for example, to create cross-national human rights and **social movements** aided by modern technological forms of communication such as the internet.

- For Marxists, globalization is a sham, and the recent backlash against 'globalization' is evidence of this. From a historical perspective, it is nothing particularly new, and is really only the latest stage in the development of international capitalism: neoliberalism. It does not mark a qualitative shift in world politics, nor does it render all our existing theories and concepts redundant. Above all, globalization is a Western-led capitalist phenomenon that simply furthers the development of global capitalism, in a neoliberal vein. Neoliberalism is less a variant of liberal internationalism, though there are links, than the effort to deregulate global capitalism for the benefit of the rich. Rather than make the world more alike, neoliberal globalization further deepens the existing divides between the core, the semi-periphery, and the periphery.
- For poststructuralists, 'globalization' does not exist out there in the world. It is a discourse. Poststructuralists are sceptical of the grand claims made by realists, liberals, and Marxists about the nature of globalization, and they argue that any claims about the meaning of so-called 'globalization' make sense only in the context of a specific discourse that itself is a product of power. These various regimes of truth about globalization reflect the ways in which both power and truth develop together in a mutually sustaining relationship throughout history. The way to uncover the workings of power behind the discourse of 'globalization' is to undertake a detailed historical analysis of how the practices and statements about globalization are 'true' only within specific discourses.
- Postcolonial and decolonial scholarship on globalization is similar to much Marxist thought in that it highlights the important degree of continuity and persistence of colonial forms of power in the globalized world. For example, the level of economic and military control of Western interests in the Global South is in many ways greater now than it was under direct colonial control—a form of 'neo'-colonialism that is compatible with neoliberal capitalism. So, although the era of formal colonial imposition by force of arms is largely over, an important starting point for postcolonial scholarship is the issue of vast inequality on a global scale, the forms of globalizing power that make this systematic inequality possible, and the continued domination of subaltern peoples, those classes dominated under hegemony such as poor rural women in the Global South.
- Each of the different branches of feminist scholarship responds differently to the question of globalization, but they all address and debate the effects it has on gendered forms of power. Liberal feminists, as is to be expected, are most positive and hopeful about globalization, viewing it as a way to incorporate more women into the liberal capitalist political and economic system that has benefited many women in the West. Others are much more sceptical, pointing to the negative effects of neoliberalism and economic globalization on the global wealth gap, which has a disproportionately negative effect on women of colour. From a feminist perspective, to really assess the significance, causes, and effects of globalization requires concrete analysis of the lived experiences of men and women, showing how seemingly gender-neutral issues are highly gendered, reinforcing relations of power and other forms of gender injustice.

By the end of the book, we hope you will work out which of these approaches (if any) best explain not only 'globalization', but world politics in general. The central point here is that the main theories see globalization differently because they have a prior view of what is most important in world politics.

1.5 Globalization: myth or reality?

This book offers an overview of world politics in a global era. But what does it mean to speak of a 'global era'? Societies today are affected both more extensively and more deeply by events in other societies. The world seems to be 'shrinking', and people are increasingly aware of this. The internet is one very graphic example since it allows us to sit at home and have instant communication with people around the world, including during the Covid-19 pandemic. Email and social media such as TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter have also transformed communications and hence how we come to know about world politics.

But these are only the most obvious examples. Others would include: pandemics such as Covid-19, pollution and climate change, global supply chains and global newspapers, international social movements such as Black Lives Matter, Amnesty International, or Greenpeace, global franchises such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Apple. Have these developments really changed the nature of world politics? The debate about globalization is not just the claim that the world has changed, but whether the changes are qualitative and not merely quantitative. Has a 'new' world political system really emerged as a result of these processes?

Our final task in this introduction is to offer you a summary of the main arguments for and against globalization as a distinct new phase in world politics. We do not expect you to decide where you stand on the issue at this stage, but we think we should give you some of the main arguments to keep in mind as you read the rest of this book. Because the arguments for globalization as a new phase of world politics are most effectively summarized in **Chapter 2**, we will spend more time on the criticisms. The main arguments in favour are:

- The pace of economic transformation is so great that it has created a new world politics. States are less and less like closed units and they cannot control their own economies under global capitalism. The world economy is more interdependent than ever, with cross-border trade and financial flows ever expanding.
- Communications have fundamentally revolutionized the way we deal with the rest of the world. We now live in a world where events in one location can be immediately observed on the other side of the world. Electronic communications alter our notions of the social groups we live in.
- A risk culture is emerging, with people realizing both that the main risks they face are global (pollution and climate change, Covid-19, HIV/AIDS) and that individual states are unable to deal with these problems. Time and space seem to be collapsing. Our old ideas of geographical space and of chronological time are undermined by the speed of modern communications and media, as well as by new infectious diseases.
- There is now, more than ever before, a global culture, so that most urban areas resemble one another. Much of the urban world shares a common culture, a good deal of it emanating from Hollywood.
- A global polity is emerging, with transnational social and political movements and the beginnings of a transfer of allegiance from the state to sub-state, transnational, and international bodies.
- A cosmopolitan culture is developing, especially around the issue of climate change. People are beginning to 'think globally and act locally'.

However, just as there are powerful reasons for seeing globalization as a new stage in world politics, often allied to the view that globalization is progressive—that it improves people's lives—there are also arguments that suggest the opposite. Some of the main ones are:

- Globalization is merely a buzzword to denote the latest phase of global capitalism: neoliberalism. In a very powerful critique of globalization theory, Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson (1996) argue that one effect of the globalization thesis is that it makes it appear as if national governments are powerless in the face of global economic trends. This paralyses government attempts to subject global economic forces to control and regulation. Arguing that most globalization theory lacks historical depth, Hirst and Thompson suggest that it paints the current juncture as more unusual, and also as more firmly entrenched, than it is. Current trends may well be reversible and the more extreme versions of globalization are 'a myth'. Hirst and Thompson support this claim with five main conclusions from their study of the contemporary world economy (Hirst and Thompson 1996: 2–3). First, the present internationalized economy is not unique in history. In some respects, it is less open than the international economy between 1870 and 1914. Second, 'genuinely' transnational companies are relatively rare; most are national companies trading internationally. Third, there is no shift of finance and capital from the richest to the poorest countries. Overseas direct investment continues to be highly concentrated in the richest states. Fourth, the world economy is not global; rather trade, investment, and financial flows are concentrated in and among different blocs—Europe, North America, China, and Japan. Finally, if they coordinated policies, this group of blocs could regulate global economic markets and forces. Hirst and Thompson offer a very powerful critique of one of the main planks of the globalization thesis: that the global economy is something beyond our

control. This view both misleads us and prevents us from developing policies to control national economies. All too often we are told that our economy must obey 'the global market', with enormous consequences for social spending and social justice. Is this a myth?

- Another obvious objection is that globalization is very uneven in its effects. At times it sounds very much like a Western theory applicable only to a small part of humankind. If 40 per cent of the world's population is not connected to the internet, then we are in danger of overestimating both the extent and the depth of globalization. Some have argued that we are now in a period of so-called 'deglobalization', of diminishing support for greater interdependence, as witnessed with Brexit, the US election of Donald Trump, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and rising populist parties in Europe and the United States.

Watch the video on the online resources to see the author discuss if we are now in a period of 'deglobalization'.

- A related objection is that globalization may well be simply the latest stage of Western imperialism. It is the old modernization theory in a new guise. The forces that are being globalized are conveniently those found in the Western world. What about non-Western experiences and values? Where do they fit into this emerging global world? The worry is that they do not fit in at all, and what is being celebrated in globalization is the triumph of a Western worldview, at the expense of others.
- There are very many losers as the world becomes more 'globalized'. Globalization only represents the supposed 'success' of neoliberal capitalism in an economically divided world. Perhaps one outcome is that neoliberal globalization allows the more efficient exploitation of poorer nations, and segments of richer ones, all in the name of economic 'openness'. The technologies accompanying globalization are technologies that benefit the richest economies in the world, and allow their interests to override those of local communities. Not only is globalization imperialist, it is also exploitative.
- Not all globalized forces are necessarily 'good'. Globalization makes it easier for drug cartels and terrorists to operate, and the internet's anarchy raises crucial questions of censorship and preventing access to certain kinds of material, including those trading in the sexual exploitation of children.
- Turning to so-called **global governance**, the main worry here is about responsibility. To whom are the transnational social movements responsible and democratically accountable? If IBM or Shell becomes more and more powerful in the world, then this raises the issues of accountability and democratic control. One of the arguments for 'Brexit' was that EU decision-making is undemocratic and unaccountable. Most of the emerging powerful actors in a globalized world are not accountable to democratic publics. This argument also applies to seemingly 'good' global actors such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace.

We hope that these arguments for and against the dominant way of representing globalization will cause you to think deeply about the utility of the concept of globalization. The chapters that follow do not take a common stance for or against. We end by posing some questions that we would like you to keep in mind as you read the remaining chapters:

- Is globalization a new phenomenon in world politics?
- Which International Relations theory best explains globalization?
- Is globalization a positive or a negative development?
- Is neoliberal globalization merely the latest stage of capitalist development?
- Does globalization make the state obsolete?
- Does globalization make the world more or less democratic?
- Is globalization merely Western imperialism in a new guise?
- Does globalization make war more or less likely?
- In what ways is war a globalizing force in itself?
- Do you think that the vote for Brexit or the spread of Covid-19 represent a major new challenge to globalization?

We hope that this introduction and the chapters that follow help you to answer these questions, and that this book provides you with a good overview of the politics of the contemporary world. Whether or not you conclude that globalization is a new phase in world politics, whether you think it is a positive or a negative development, or that it does not really exist at all, we leave to you to decide. But we think it is important to conclude this chapter by stressing

that how we think about politics in the global era will reflect not merely the theories we accept, but also our own positions in the world. In this sense, how we respond to world events may itself be ultimately dependent on the social, cultural, gendered, racialized, economic, and political spaces we occupy. World politics suddenly becomes very personal: how does your economic position, your ethnicity, race, gender, culture, or religion determine what globalization means to you?

Further Reading

On the history of the academic field of International Relations, see **L. M. Ashworth** (2014), *A History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations* (London: Routledge); **R. Vitalis** (2015), *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press); **A. Acharya and B. Buzan** (2019), *The Making of Global International Relations: Origins and Evolution of IR at its Centenary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); **A. E. Davis, V. Thakur, and P. C. J. Vale** (2020), *The Imperial Discipline: Race and the Founding of International Relations* (London: Pluto Press).

On the history of international political thought and international theories more generally, see **E. Keene** (2005), *International Political Thought: An Historical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity); **D. Armitage** (2013), *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); and **P. Owens and K. Rietzler** (2021), *Women's International Thought: A New History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

There are several good introductory guides to the globalization debate. On the intellectual origins of 'globalism', see **O. Rosenboim** (2017), *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). Comprehensive discussions are found in **A. McGrew and D. Held** (2007), *Globalization Theory: Approaches and Controversies* (Cambridge: Polity Press) and **F. J. Lechner and J. Boli** (eds) (2014), *The Globalization Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell). Also see **C. el-Ojeili and P. Hayden** (2006), *Critical Theories of Globalization* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

C. Enloe (2016), *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*, 2nd edn (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield) is a good analysis from a leading feminist of the connections between globalization and various forms of violence.

We also point you to other books in the Rowman & Littlefield series on globalization edited by M. B. Steger and T. Carver, in particular **J. Agnew** (2017), *Globalization and Sovereignty: Beyond the Territorial Trap*, 2nd edn; **V. M. Moghadam** (2020), *Globalization and Social Movements*, 3rd edn; and **M. E. Hawkesworth** (2018), *Globalization and Feminist Activism*, 2nd edn.

Excellent critiques of the globalization thesis are **J. Rosenberg** (2002), *The Follies of Globalization Theory* (London: Verso); **D. Held and A. McGrew** (2007), *Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press); **B. K. Gills** (ed.) (2002), *Globalization and the Politics of Resistance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan); **B. K. Gills and W. R. Thompson** (eds) (2006), *Globalization and Global History* (London: Routledge); **J. E. Stiglitz** (2017), *Globalization and its Discontents Revisited: The Era of Trump* (London: Penguin); **L. Weiss** (1998), *The Myth of the Powerless State* (Cambridge: Polity Press); and **P. Hirst and G. Thompson** (1999), *Globalization in Question*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press).

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Chapter 2

Globalization and global politics

ANTHONY MCGREW

Framing Questions

- What is globalization?
- Does globalization still matter?
- What does globalization add to our understanding of contemporary world politics?

Reader's Guide

Globalization is a concept which refers to the widening, deepening, and acceleration of worldwide connectivity or **interconnectedness**. Popular metaphors portray it in vivid terms as a 'shrinking world', a 'networked world', or a 'global village'. Indeed, both the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change are indicative of just how deeply enmeshed the fate of communities and societies across the world has become, not to mention how globalization simultaneously unifies and divides the world. Globalization is a complex and contradictory process, so not surprisingly has always been the subject of great controversy. One of the most debated issues of our times is whether globalization is in retreat ('deglobalization') or undergoing a renaissance ('reglobalization'). Either way, globalization will continue to matter profoundly to the study and practice of twenty-first century world politics. This chapter explores the complexities and contradictions of contemporary globalization and considers why it is essential to comprehending and explaining world politics.

2.1 Introduction

Globalization, as with **war**, has been central to the formation of the modern world system and world politics (Bayly 2004, 2018; Osterhammel 2014). Although a recent concept, it represents neither a novel nor a solely Western phenomenon: global connectivity has a long history and diverse origins, from the Great Silk Road and 'ancient globalization' to 'oriental globalization' (globalization from the East) (Bayly 2018; Hobson 2021) (**see Box 2.1**).

This chapter is organized into three parts. **Section 2.2** is concerned with making sense of globalization by addressing several primary questions: What is globalization? What are its dominant features? How is it best conceptualized and defined? **Section 2.3** examines the current predicament of globalization (often referred to as the 'crisis of globalization') and its implications for world order and world politics. **Section 2.4** considers the contributions of globalization scholarship to advancing a critical understanding of twenty-first-century global affairs. **Section 2.5** concludes with brief reflections on the three core framing questions.

Box 2.1 Histories of globalization

Many histories of globalization reflect a Western-centric perspective eliding globalization with the rise of the West to global domination. The history of globalization is thus often described in terms of successive waves of Western expansion: beginning with the so-called 'age of discovery' (1450–1850), continuing to the late nineteenth century Belle Epoque (1850–1914) or Pax Britannica, then to Pax Americana (1945–89), and finally reaching the most recent phase of post-cold war neoliberal globalization (1990–2008).

However, new global histories seek to correct this partiality by drawing upon a global analysis (**see Chs 3 and 11**). They draw attention to the 'multicultural origins' of globalization, explaining how it has always been a multicentric rather than a Western-centric process, thus critiquing the 'rise of the West' narrative (Conrad 2016; Hobson 2021; Pieterse 2012; Sharman 2019).

2.2 Making sense of globalization

In the first two decades of the twenty-first century the world experienced major global crises, namely the 2008 **global financial crisis** (GFC), the Covid-19 pandemic, and, latterly, the war in Ukraine. These have had consequences worldwide revealing the unprecedented scale and depth of global integration since the end of the cold war. Indeed, globalization is integral to the functioning of modern economies, societies, and their institutions. Universities, for instance, are literally global institutions, from the recruitment of students to the dissemination of academic research.

2.2.1 Mapping globalization

In today's global economy, the fate and fortunes of entire **nations**, communities, and households across the world are bound together through complex webs of global trade, finance, digital, and production networks. Such is the integration of the world economy that no national economy can insulate itself from the workings of global markets, as the GFC demonstrated to such disastrous effect (**see Ch. 16**). A global crash was only averted through coordinated action by the world's major economies at the 2009 G20 summit prompting (at the time) the ironic headline: '(Communist) China comes to the "rescue of global capitalism"'.

Before the eruption of the GFC, economic globalization (measured by global flows of capital, trade, and production) reached historic levels. At its peak in 2007, global flows of capital, goods, and services were estimated at a staggering 53 per cent of world economic activity (GDP) (McKinsey Global Institute 2016). Global economic integration had intensified and expanded to embrace most of the world's population as the emerging economies of China, Brazil, India, and others were incorporated into a 24-hour global capitalist economy. Following the GFC, the pace of economic globalization slowed dramatically, prompting much commentary about the end of globalization or '**deglobalization**'. Although global economic flows partially recovered, the period since the GFC has been one of economic 'slowbalization': well below peak 2007 levels (as a share of world GDP), though for the most part at levels similar to or above those at the beginning of this century (Altman and Bastian 2021; WTO 2021*b*; Lund et al. 2019). Subsequently, the Covid-19 pandemic had a hugely disruptive economic impact, with global trade only beginning from late 2021 to recover

to pre-Covid-19 levels, while global financial flows remain subdued (WTO 2021*a*; UNCTAD 2021*c*)—a partial recovery, however, which appeared to lose much momentum following Russia's invasion of Ukraine (Ruta 2022).

Every single working day, turnover on the world's money markets averages a startling $6.5 trillion, slightly more than the combined annual (2021) GDP of the UK and France. Few governments today have the resources to resist global market speculation against their national currency without significant domestic economic consequences (**see Ch. 28**). Moreover, many transnational corporations have turnovers which exceed the GDP of many countries. Collectively they account for over 33 per cent of world output, control global production networks which account for 30 per cent of world trade, and are primary sources of international investment in manufacturing and services (UNCTAD 2018). They have enormous influence over the location and distribution of productive, economic, and technological power, not to mention where they declare their profits and pay their tax. Indeed, they confound the traditional distinction between the international and the domestic economy: the German automotive company BMW is the top exporter of automobiles from the US. BMW's largest manufacturing plant is in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and, together with other German-owned car plants located in the US, accounts for the majority of American car exports to China.

Contemporary globalization is intimately associated with the revolutions in modern transport and communication technologies, from jet transport and containerization to mobile phones and the internet (**see Box 2.2**). Digitalization is revolutionizing worldwide communications through relatively cheap, instantaneous, round-the-clock global communication and information flows. Moreover, it is transforming all aspects of globalization and has accelerated because of the Covid-19 pandemic (**see Box 2.3**) (UNCTAD 2021*a*). Global data flows are increasing exponentially, while the digital population has expanded from over 1 billion users to 4.66 billion (59.5 per cent of the world's population), with the majority in Asia (Statista 2021*a*).

Although simultaneously widening the global digital divide (UNCTAD 2021*a*), global communication infrastructures have made it possible to manage not only just-in-time production networks across continents, but also to organize and mobilize like-minded people across the globe in virtual real time

Box 2.2 The engines of globalization

Explanations of globalization tend to focus on three interrelated factors: technics (technological change and social organization); economics (markets and capitalism); and politics (power, interests, and institutions).

- **Technics**—central to any account of globalization, since an integrated global system depends upon an advanced communications and transport infrastructure.
- **Economics**—crucial as technology is, so too is globalization's specifically economic logic. Capitalism's insatiable demand for new markets and profits leads inevitably to the globalization of economic activity.
- **Politics**—shorthand for ideologies, interests, and power, politics constitutes the third logic of globalization. If technology provides the physical infrastructure of globalization, politics provides its normative and regulatory infrastructure.

Box 2.3 Digital globalization

Digital technologies are transforming globalization, with profound consequences in all domains from the cultural to the military. But it is in the economy that its impact is so visible. The fusing of robotics, artificial intelligence, supercomputing, and advanced communications technologies (the fourth Industrial Revolution) is disrupting the services sector which is now the dominant sector in many economies. Work, rather than production, is being globalized. Just as in the 1990s, when production was outsourced across the globe, in the 2020s, services work, from marketing to engineering design to telemedicine and accountancy, can be globalized as it can be done from anywhere by workers with the relevant skills. This teleworking or 'virtual offshoring' is now big business and growing rapidly with major implications for employment. This 'globotics upheaval', as Richard Baldwin labels it, is driving a new phase of economic globalization with major implications for developing economies.

Digital technologies are also transforming global trade. Consider the case of SpeedOutfitters in Elkhart, Indiana. Run by motorcycle enthusiast Travis Baird, it started as a traditional retail store named Baird Motorcycles, before expanding to include online sales. Some 41 per cent of SpeedOutfitters' total sales are now outside the United States in 131 different countries. This business is not unique; 97 per cent of eBay sellers export. Global e-commerce is growing rapidly and is worth well over $1 trillion. This is more decentred—more the preserve of small companies, rather than huge corporations. In 2020, partly because of the Covid-19 pandemic, small UK companies on Amazon Marketplace exported a record £3.5 billion of merchandise, a 20 per cent increase compared to 2019.

Sources: Baldwin 2019; McKinsey Global Institute 2019; UNCTAD 2021a; van der Marel 2021

(**see Case Study 2.1**). The Black Lives Matter movement became a spontaneous global phenomenon in 2020, mobilizing people across borders to advocate for racial justice. Paradoxically, even the current wave of nationalist **populism** has acquired a global reach through transnational networking across Europe, the US, and Latin America between like-minded political parties and ideological factions (Wajner 2022; Moffitt 2017). People organize across borders—both virtually and physically—on a remarkable scale, such that in 2019, 38,000 international **non-governmental organizations** (NGOs),

Case Study 2.1 Global food security: ceding sovereignty

UN Food Systems Summit September 2021 NYC

On 23 September 2021, the UN convened the world's first global Food Systems Summit (FSS) to 'awaken the world to the fact that we all must work together to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food' (UN Secretary-General 2021). The current system routinely fails to deliver effective food security—access to essential food to meet people's dietary requirements—for a staggering 2.37 billion people (**see Ch. 27**). The FSS took place in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in a 'hunger pandemic' with 270 million people thrust into starvation. The purpose of the FSS was to agree on reforms to this 'broken global food system' to deliver on UN Sustainable Development Goal 2: abolishing hunger by 2030.

Among the most critical issues at the FSS was the most essential element of food production: the 'humble seed'. For, whoever controls seed production effectively has significant control over the entire global food production system (Kloppenburg 2010). Over recent decades, seed ownership and new seed technologies have increasingly become a battleground in the global politics of food security. At issue is the emergence of a 'new global seed order' which promotes the liberalization and global harmonization of seed laws that commodify and commercialize seeds to expand globally the industrial model of agricultural production as a solution to global food insecurity. This is generally supported by global agribusiness, such as Bayer-Monsanto and Corteva; multilateral agencies, such as the **International Monetary Fund** (IMF) and **World Bank**; as well as global philanthropic agencies which advocate agricultural modernization, such as the Gates Foundation. Contesting what they conceive as a 'corporate takeover' are fluid global coalitions of governments from the Global South, indigenous peoples, and small farmers organizations from every continent, such as Via Campesina and Farm Workers of Florida; hundreds of local and international civil society organizations, from the International Indian Treaty Council to the African Alliance for Food Sovereignty; alongside many global justice, expert, and environmental organizations. What unites them is a desire to protect and promote local 'seed sovereignty' and thus control over local food production, which they argue is both more environmentally sustainable and the sole livelihood for rural communities across the globe. In short, they seek to resist and reform this 'new global seed order' which is perceived as eroding 'seed sovereignty'. Indeed, an alternative virtual Global People's Summit on Food Systems was organized in parallel with the official FSS following a boycott by key civil society groups such as La Via Campesina.

The global politics of seeds is indicative of how globalization both creates winners and losers and reflects stark inequalities of power. Global agribusiness has enormous structural power since four major transnational corporations control almost 67 per cent of the global seed market. Moreover, the multilateral development agencies and global philanthropic organizations (such as the Rockefeller Foundation and Gates Foundation) have significant institutional power to influence government policy in ways which align with their priorities. Governments are also constrained by global intellectual property rights law, which includes seed patents, ownership, and usage, alongside their commitments (under the World Trade Organization Agreement on Agriculture) to liberalize agricultural trade. Not surprisingly, many governments in the Global South have harmonized their national seed laws with this 'new global seed regime' or, as critics perceive it, by ceding their sovereignty to it. However, since the FSS failed to resolve the seed sovereignty question, for the foreseeable future seeds will remain a controversial issue in the global politics of food security. Thus, quite literally the food on our plates is a manifestation of globalization and highly contentious global food politics.

Sources: Clapp 2022; Kloppenburg 2010; O'Grady-Walshe 2019; UN Secretary-General 2021.

Question 1: What does this case illustrate about globalization and global politics?

Question 2: What are the ethical and normative issues raised by this case?

from Amnesty International to Women Working Worldwide, operated across 167 countries (**see Ch. 22**). Alongside these global **civil society** NGOs, digital and mobility infrastructures facilitate the illicit activities of transnational organized criminal and terrorist networks, from the Yakuza to Al Shabab, human trafficking to money laundering. This illicit globalization has expanded considerably over the last two decades, contributing to a more disorderly, violent, and insecure world. Globalization is therefore a source of unprecedented risks, societal vulnerabilities, and conflict.

As Goldin and Mariathasan (2014) observe, the scale and intensity of global connectivity today has created a complex world of systemic interdependencies not just between countries, but also between global systems, from finance to the environment (**see Chs 15, 24, 25, 28, 29 and 30**). This complexity generates potentially catastrophic **global systemic risks** such that a highly infectious pathogen first detected in Wuhan, China was a source of the Covid-19 pandemic which led to the shutdown of the global economy and millions of fatalities (Tooze 2021). From pandemics to the proliferation of technologies of mass destruction, cyberattacks on critical societal infrastructures to the climate emergency, globalization is associated with a **world risk society** in which national borders provide little protection from distant dangers or the consequences of systemic failures—e.g. war in Ukraine precipitated food shortages from Africa to Asia. Preventing and managing these systemic risks has contributed to the expanding jurisdiction of global and regional institutions (**see Chs 19, 20, 21, and 23**).

Over the last four decades, there has been a dramatic growth in transnational and global forms of governance, rule-making, and regulation, from formal G20 summits to the 2021 Glasgow Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Treaty, alongside many private global regulatory bodies (such as the International Accounting Standards Board). Today there are over 292 permanent intergovernmental organizations constituting a system of **global governance**, with the United Nations at its institutional core (**see Chs 20 and 21**). While in no sense a **world government**, this system of multilateral governance has been critical to both the promotion and regulation of globalization, from the **World Trade Organization's (WTO)** policies to liberalize world trade to the International Labour Organization's role in promoting workers' rights. For much of the world's population, more significant are the humanitarian functions of this system, which are vital to the human security of the most vulnerable, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) COVAX programme to expand access to Covid-19 vaccines in the Global South.

With the expanding jurisdiction of global governance has come its deepening reach into the domestic affairs of states, as global standards, norms, and legal rules are incorporated into domestic law or public policy and political discourse. National and local government bureaucracies are increasingly regionally and globally networked as are the world's major cities. These **transgovernmental networks** enable government officials to share information and collaborate with colleagues abroad on matters from agricultural policy to human trafficking, from the Financial Action Task Force (which brings together government experts on money laundering from major OECD countries) to the **BRICS** National Security Advisors network (which connects senior national security officials from the BRICS governments). Just as national economies have been globalized, so, to varying degrees, have politics and governance.

While capital freely circulates the globe, the same is not the case for people: borders and national controls continue to matter as in the almost complete shutdown of global travel during much of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, people—along with their cultures—have been on the move for centuries. Though most migration is still within countries, patterns of global migration have significantly altered in recent years: from the world's South to North and from East to West (IOM 2021). The scale of migration is contributing to public perceptions, especially in the West, of a migrant crisis, despite evidence to the contrary (**see Chs 14 and 26**). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the global migrant population (those resident outside the country of their birth) increased to 280 million (3.6 per cent of the world population), but border closures significantly disrupted migration flows (which are unlikely to return to pre-2019 levels), although war in the Ukraine precipitated a humanitarian crisis as 6.3 million people fled the conflict seeking refuge across Europe (IOM 2021; UNCHR 2022). In contrast, before the pandemic the world's expanding middle classes toured the globe with a record 1.5 billion tourist visits (2019), spending some $1.47 trillion in an industry employing 10.6 per cent of the global workforce (Statista 2021*b*; WTTC 2021). Tourism temporarily collapsed during the pandemic, but has rebounded. Significantly, the trajectories of migration and tourism illustrate how globalization reproduces existing global inequalities.

Migration has become a contentious global issue since it highlights cultural difference, which for some may be perceived as a threat to traditional ethnic and national identities—what Kwame Anthony Appiah (2018) refers to as the 'lies that bind'. It is an especially conspicuous illustration of how globalization both unites and divides neighbourhoods, communities, nations, and the world. Indeed, in this digitally hyper-connected world there is little evidence of significant cultural convergence, irrespective, for instance, of Netflix's 137 million subscribers across 190 countries streaming the same programmes, or the 4.3 billion global viewings of K-pop video 'Gangnam Style'. Rather than bridging cultural divisions, some argue the world wide web reinforces heightened awareness of irreconcilable cultural or religious differences (**see Chs 17, 18, and 31**). However, this overlooks the growing significance of the mixing or hybridization of cultures expressed in everything from cuisine to hyphenated identities (Japanese-Brazilian, Greek-Australian). If anything, cultural globalization is associated with a world of increasing cultural complexity in which, for instance, the youth of northeast India revere 'Hallyu' (a global wave of Korean popular culture) while Ibeyi (a French-Cuban twins' musical duo) performs in Yoruba, English, French, and Spanish.

2.2.2 Analysing globalization

Globalization is a process characterized by:

- the *stretching* of social, political, cultural, and economic activities across national frontiers such that events, decisions, and actions in one part of the world have the potential to impact directly and indirectly on individuals, communities, and countries in distant regions of the globe, e.g. climate change;
- the *intensification*, or the growing magnitude, of interconnectedness in almost every sphere of modern life, from the economic to the ecological;
- the *accelerating* pace of global flows and processes as the velocity with which ideas, news, goods, information, capital, and technology circulate the world increases, e.g. the pandemic-induced global stock market crash of 20 February 2020;
- the *deepening* enmeshment of the local and global, e.g. war in the Ukraine produces grain shortages which contribute to famine in villages across Southern Sudan;
- a *developing* (subjective) awareness among people and organizations of being embedded in a global system or community (i.e., *global imaginaries* (Steger 2008)), e.g. global climate justice or world religions (**see Box 2.4**).

Box 2.4 Approaches to conceptualizing globalization as a:

- **Process**: The most common approach conceives of globalization as a material and virtual process of increasing worldwide connectivity which is open to empirical and historical methods of enquiry.
- **Narrative**: Globalization is conceived in ideational or subjective terms. The 'reality' of globalization is subject to interpretation (i.e., socially constructed) such that there are many competing narratives or discourses of globalization which influence both how people and organizations comprehend it and their responses to it, e.g., globalization as Westernization (Roberts and Lamp 2021) (**see Chs 11, 12, and 13**).
- **Project**: Globalization is conceived as a political, economic, and ideological project advanced by the most powerful (states and elites) to fashion a world order according to their interests, e.g., the neoliberal globalization of the **Washington Consensus** (**see Ch. 16**).

This chapter draws on all these approaches.

Globalization is indicative of an unfolding structural change in the scale of human social and economic organization. Human affairs are no longer organized solely on a local or national territorial scale, but increasingly organized on transnational, regional, and global scales. Examples include Samsung's global production networks and the year-long (2011–12) worldwide protests of the **Occupy** movement in 951 cities across 82 countries in the wake of the GFC. This significant shift is manifest in every sphere from the economy to security, connecting and transcending all continents—what Jan Aart Scholte (2005: ch. 2) refers to as 'transworld' or 'supraterritorial' (as opposed to international) relations. In this respect, globalization is associated with a process of relative **deterritorialization**: as social, political, or economic activities are organized at the global or transnational levels, they are effectively detached from their place or locale. For instance, the very notion of a national economy as coterminous with national territory is a simplification since corporate ownership and production transcends borders. Many of the UK's largest companies have their headquarters in India, Japan, and Germany, while many small enterprises outsource their production to East Asian countries.

However, this structural shift is not experienced uniformly across the world for globalization is marked by highly differential patterns of inclusion, giving it what Manuel Castells (2000) calls a 'variable geometry'. Western countries are much more comprehensively globalized than are the poorest sub-Saharan African states

(**see Chs 16 and 27**). Even within countries, globalization is differentially experienced, varying significantly between cities and rural areas, sectors of the economy, and even between households in the same neighbourhood. Thus, in both Western and sub-Saharan African states, elites are enmeshed in global networks, while the poorest find themselves largely excluded. Globalization has significant distributional consequences, creating winners and losers not just among countries but also within them. Indeed, it is associated with a growing global polarization of wealth, income, and life chances (Milanovic 2018; World Inequality Lab 2021). For the most affluent, it may very well translate into 'one world', but for much of humanity it is associated with a world marked by inequality and exclusion.

How globalization is experienced also gives rise to very different interpretations or narratives of what it means and how to respond to it. In the Global South, globalization is frequently understood as Westernization or Americanization, or a new form of **imperialism**, provoking resistance and contestation. Thus, globalization, contrary to the liberal narrative (**see Ch. 7**), does not produce a more harmonious world society but rather is a significant source of conflict.

Although geography and distance very much do still matter, the concept of globalization is associated with a process of **time–space compression**. New technologies of mobility and communication effectively 'shrink' geographical space and time. From live global coverage of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics to the global supply chains which daily put fresh fruit harvested thousands of miles away on supermarket shelves, the world appears to be literally shrinking, at least for some but not all. In this 'shrinking world', sites of power and the subjects of power quite literally are often continents apart. During the GFC, the principal decision-makers, whether in Washington, Beijing, New York, or London, were oceans apart from local communities directly impacted by their decisions. In this respect, the concept of globalization highlights the ways in which power is organized and exercised (or increasingly has the potential to be) at a distance. This, combined with the complexity of a networked world, makes the exercise of power enormously opaque, such that identifying responsible and accountable agencies may be almost impossible, a situation dramatically illustrated by the GFC (Tooze 2018). Such complexity and opacity have very significant implications for all states since it creates a public perception that they are subject to external forces over which they can exert little control: a significant factor in the widespread appeal of narratives of anti-**globalism** in the wake of the GFC (Moffitt 2017).

To summarize: the concept of globalization can be differentiated from that of **internationalization** or international **interdependence**. Internationalization refers to growing connections between sovereign independent **nation-states**; international interdependence refers to mutual dependence between sovereign states such that each is sensitive or vulnerable to the actions of the other. By contrast, the concept of globalization refers to an uneven process of the widening, deepening, intensification and acceleration of trans-world connectivity which transcends states and societies. It dissolves the distinction between domestic and international affairs and is differentially experienced, giving rise to competing globalization narratives or global imaginaries. Globalization can be defined as:

> a historical process involving a fundamental shift or transformation in the spatial scale of human social organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across regions and continents.

2.2.3 Debating globalization

Globalization is a contentious issue in the study of world politics. Disagreement concerns its descriptive and explanatory value: whether it is a 'conceptual folly' or alternatively a new paradigm for understanding world politics. Although the controversy is far more nuanced, two broad clusters of arguments can be identified in this great globalization debate: the sceptical and the globalist.

The sceptical argument contends that globalization is highly exaggerated and a superficial phenomenon—a myth or 'conceptual folly' that distracts attention from the 'real' forces which determine world politics: state power, geopolitics, nationalism, capitalism, and imperialism (Hirst and Thompson 1999; Rosenberg 2000; Gilpin 2002). Those of a realist persuasion argue that geopolitics and the anarchical structure of the state system are the principal determinants of world politics (Gilpin 2001; Mearsheimer 2018) (**see Ch. 9**). Globalization, or more accurately internationalization, is a product of hegemonic power. It is dependent entirely on the most powerful state(s) creating and policing a world order (the Pax Americana of the post-war era) aligned with their core interests. Globalization is therefore contingent, its fortunes entirely tied to those of its hegemonic sponsor(s). As such, globalization, or rather internationalization, is both a product and instrument of hegemonic power(s)

graphically illustrated by the US imposition of comprehensive economic and financial sanctions on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. While realist sceptics acknowledge growing international connectivity, they argue it is neither historically novel nor altering the centrality of states and state power in world politics.

Marxist sceptics are equally unconvinced by the idea of globalization, though on substantively different (historical materialist) grounds than realists (**see Ch. 8**). They argue that globalization has its origins in the inevitable expansionary logic of capitalism, sharing much in common with the imperialisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Harvey 2003, 2010). Globalization is nothing more than a new label for an old phenomenon so has little explanatory value. It is a myth or 'conceptual folly' which conceals the principal forces shaping world politics, namely imperialism or uneven capitalist development (Rosenberg 2000; Rosenberg 2021). Sceptics therefore conclude that globalization is **epiphenomenal**: a derivative of more primary forces, either geopolitics or capitalism, or both.

In contrast, globalists reject these arguments affirming both the actuality of globalization and its significance as a fundamental source of disruptive change in world politics. Castells (2009), for instance, links globalization to a transformation in the form of modern capitalism, which he argues is best conceived as a new epoch of 'global informational capitalism'. Other neo-Marxist accounts explore how this new epoch of global capitalism is reshaping world politics, despite the GFC and the Covid-19 pandemic (W. Robinson 2014, 2020*a*). Liberal accounts, by comparison, emphasize how globalization is creating a 'flat world' or an 'emerging global network civilization' overlaying the inter-state system (T. Friedman 2011; Khanna 2017: xvii). Finally, critical globalization scholarship explores how globalization from below is associated with new forms of transnational politics: expressions of **alter-globalizations** advocating for global justice (**see Chs 10, 11, 12, and 22**).

For some globalists—referred to in the literature as **transformationalists**—this disruptive change is associated with significant transformations in world politics, creating a profoundly more complex and unpredictable world. This is evident not just in historic power shifts—from West to East and from state to non-state actors—but also in the reconfiguration of sovereign statehood, capitalism, societies, identities, and even warfare (Arquilla 2021; McNamara and Newman 2020; Steger and James 2020). They therefore conclude that globalization requires a corresponding radical conceptual shift in the study of international relations. Although transformationalists emphasize that globalization is neither inevitable nor irreversible, they argue it is deeply embedded in the everyday functioning of societies. For transformationalists, the epoch of contemporary globalization is not only historically distinct but is also associated with a fundamental reconfiguration of how power is organized, distributed, exercised, and reproduced (Held et al. 1999; Keohane and Nye 2003; Castells 2009; Khanna 2017). But they also recognize that it has taken quite different historical forms from empire to post-cold war neoliberal globalization.

However, deepening geopolitical rivalry, rising nationalism, the disruptive consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, and Russia's war on Ukraine have coalesced into a 'perfect storm' which threatens to reverse globalization. This 'crisis of globalization' is the focus of **Section 2.3**.

Key Points

- Globalization refers to the widening, deepening, intensification, and acceleration of worldwide interconnectedness.
- Globalization is experienced and interpreted in radically different ways through competing narratives or global imaginaries.
- Globalization is associated with a dramatic growth in transnational and global forms of governance, rule-making, and policy coordination through which it is simultaneously promoted and regulated.
- Contemporary globalization is a highly uneven process unifying and dividing communities with major distributional consequences in terms of winners and losers.
- Globalization is associated with a process of time–space compression and linked to the relative deterritorialization of power.
- Sceptical accounts consider globalization to be a conceptual folly and argue that hegemony or imperialism remain essential to explaining world politics. By contrast, globalist accounts conceive of globalization as a process associated with significant disruptive change in world politics. Some globalists—the transformationalists—argue that globalization is transforming world politics and requires a corresponding conceptual shift.

2.3 The crisis of globalization and the liberal world order

If the GFC was 'the first crisis of globalization', the second undoubtedly is the Covid-19 pandemic (G. Brown 2011). Both have had catastrophic consequences for communities and societies across the globe and, in both cases, globalization reversed with alarming speed and ferocity. Moreover, if the GFC and the great recession which followed it gave momentum to an already resurgent 'globalization backlash', the Covid-19 pandemic reinforced it (Mansfield, Milner, and Rudra 2021; Tooze 2018, 2021). This backlash took many forms, but nationalist populism, buoyed on initially by **Brexit** and Trump's successful 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) presidential campaign, has become its dominant expression. This powerful backlash not only contests globalization but also the liberal world order—'globalism'—which nurtures and sustains it. Compounded by Russia's war on Ukraine many consider today's 'grave new world' heralds, if not deglobalization, certainly an unprecedented 'crisis of globalization' (King 2017).

This crisis of globalization arguably reflects an unravelling of the tacit international consensus which promoted and sustained globalization, or more accurately the neoliberal model of globalization, since the end of the cold war. Three developments have coalesced which many argue are disrupting not only globalization but also the post-war Western liberal world order itself (Acharya 2014*a*; Kagan 2017; Haass 2018; Layne 2018). These three interlocking developments comprise: the global populist revolt; the return of great power rivalry; and the growing securitization of global connectivity.

The dominant form of populism today is that of nationalist populism or radical right populism (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018). It has assimilated into mainstream politics across Europe, the Americas, and beyond: from Hungary and the Philippines to Brazil and Australia. Although the GFC accelerated its rise in the West, it is by no means simply a movement of the 'left behind' or 'the forgotten people' (Mansfield, Milner, and Rudra 2021). It has built on festering public distrust with mainstream politics that predates the GFC, reinforced by growing public aversion to multiculturalism, the social impact of widening inequality, and divisive national culture wars (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018). Nationalist populism contributes not only to the erosion of the Western international political consensus which sustains globalization, but also to declining domestic support for the liberal world order (Stokes 2018; Paul 2021). This was expressed in dramatic shifts in US policy under the Trump administration's 'America First' agenda, captured in the aphorism, 'Americanism not **globalism** will be our credo'. Despite the Biden administration's liberal rhetoric, the US has not completely abandoned unilateralism (evident from its unilateral withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021), while it rejects the neoliberal globalization project of the 'Washington Consensus' era. In these respects, the most significant threats to globalization and the liberal world order now emanate from within the West, as Brexit illustrates (Kagan 2018).

The resurgence of great power rivalry is the second significant factor (**see Ch. 5**). Since the turn of the twenty-first century the world has experienced a historic redistribution of power with the rise of new powers, such as China, Brazil, and India. This power transition represents a profound shift from a unipolar world (the US as sole superpower) to a system of many great powers—a multipolar world (**see Ch. 6**). Already by 2010, China had become the second largest economy in the world, displacing Japan, and on some measures has become the world's largest economy, with India the third largest, after the US (IMF 2017; 2021). This power shift has resulted in intensifying strategic competition between the US, China, India, and Russia threatening to undermine global stability, and with it the tacit consensus which, for many decades, sustained the liberal world order and thus globalization (Ikenberry 2018*a*). Russia's war in Ukraine represents a dramatic escalation of this rivalry, with potentially profound consequences for globalization and the liberal world order, e.g. the Russia–China 'strategic partnership'. Moreover, it has compounded deepening Sino–US rivalry, reinforcing a tendency towards a bipolar world of parallel (although overlapping) systems of globalization and world order (Owen 2021) (**see Case Study 2.2**): what Yan Xuetong refers to as a system of 'uneasy peace' (Yan 2020*a*).

Finally, global connectivity is becoming increasingly securitized. Three factors in particular have contributed to this: geo-economic competition, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the fallout from unprecedented Western economic sanctions imposed on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. As geo-economic

Case Study 2.2 Multicentric globalization

The signing of the memorandum of understanding on China's Belt and Road Initiative
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On 1 January 2018, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn officially declared open the Addis Abba to Djibouti railway. Following years of construction, the successful completion of the 720 km project marked a significant milestone for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Africa. Initiated in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, BRI is an ambitious global infrastructure investment programme covering 144 countries on all continents, 32 international organizations, 206 international cooperation agreements, 1,590 projects, and a $1 trillion budget. BRI 'aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road . . . and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries' (PRC State Council 2015).

In effect, BRI is a global version of the ancient Silk Road, on land, across oceans, and, increasingly, in cyberspace: a form of infrastructural globalization on a historic scale in every sector from transport to health. It involves the financing and construction of projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Central Asia, from hospitals in Iran to the Pan-Asia railway to digital connectivity projects in Laos and Central Asia. In Pakistan alone, there are infrastructure projects to the value of $60 billion. Supporting BRI are China-initiated international development institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS Development Bank, which provide project finance. Oliver Stuenkel (2016) conceives of these institutions as a manifestation of an emerging parallel system of global governance. Not surprisingly, BRI has attracted considerable global interest but also much criticism as a 'high speed empire'. BRI is frequently referred to as 'globalization with Chinese characteristics', with historical parallels with an earlier epoch of 'oriental globalization'.

BRI is central to China's strategy of 'inclusive globalization' or 'growbalization', which emphasizes development through deepening connectivity across the Global South. Moreover, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, China's advocacy of globalization has strengthened: as President Xi Jinping remarked at the 2022 World Economic Forum, 'economic globalization has never and will never veer off course' (World Economic Forum 2022). BRI exemplifies an emergent **multicentric globalization**.

However, multicentric globalization also raises some fundamental questions. While it may be more inclusive, it may simultaneously be a source of greater global friction and competition. Indeed, in the context of intensifying strategic rivalry between China and the US it harbours the potential for a 'clash of globalizations' (**see Ch. 18**) and a more bipolar world. Evidence for this exists already: US and EU projects to 'build back better' after the pandemic are in direct competition with BRI, while the world wide web is arguably becoming increasingly fragmented, creating a 'splinternet' (e.g., China's Great Firewall and the US Clean Network global initiative). Furthermore, a deepening 'strategic partnership' between Russia and China (formalized at a bilateral summit during the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games)—especially following Russia's invasion of Ukraine—have arguably reinforced tendencies towards a more bipolar world and a 'clash of globalizations'.

Sources: Arase 2020; PRC State Council 2015; Owen 2021; Pieterse 2017; World Economic Forum 2022; Yan 2020*a*; Zhang, Alon, and Lattemann 2018.

Question 1: How is BRI evidence of multicentric globalization?

Question 2: What do you understand by the 'clash of globalizations'?

competition has intensified, the world's major economic powers, including the EU, have sought to protect their industrial and technological bases both by strategic decoupling from global networks and by restricting foreign ownership and investment in strategic sectors, particularly that from China. The classic case of this is the US campaign to persuade its allies and many other governments to block Huawei, the Chinese telecommunications giant, from participation in the rollout of their 5G mobile networks on security grounds. Underlying this case is a major policy shift in treating globalization increasingly as a national security issue. The Covid-19 pandemic reinforced this securitization logic by dramatically exposing the vulnerabilities of economies to global supply chain disruption. Moreover, unprecedented Western financial and economic sanctions on Russia (following its invasion of Ukraine) and European dependence on Russian energy supplies have highlighted how global connectivity can also be weaponized by states. Increasingly authorities, from the EU to India, Germany to China, are implementing strategies of 'strategic autonomy' or 'atmanirbhar bharat', 'strategische autonomie', or 'zili gengsheng', to reduce their potential vulnerabilities.

This securitization of globalization is arguably creating the conditions for a 'new age of *autarky*' or deglobalization (Malcomson 2021).

Combined, these three developments constitute a significant '**conjuncture**' or turning point in world politics. Whether it necessarily portends deglobalization and the demise of the liberal world order, as some conclude, is a matter of substantial disagreement (Abdal and Ferreira 2021; Cha 2020).

Sceptical interpretations emphasize that this conjuncture is symptomatic of the underlying (relative) decline of US power. As US hegemony is eroded, so too are the foundations of the post-war liberal order and the neoliberal globalization it fostered (**see Ch. 16**). Such crises are inevitable since they reflect the historical cycle of the rise and decline of great powers and the differential (uneven) economic development between countries associated with capitalism. However, although some realists fear the consequences of the demise of the liberal world order, for others it will not be mourned (Kagan 2018; Mearsheimer 2018). Marxist sceptics consider that the liberal world order and neoliberal globalization simply conceal the harsh reality of US hegemony and imperialism. Accordingly, among sceptics, the crises of the liberal world order and of globalization are principally associated with the decline of Western liberal hegemony and the implosion of the neoliberal globalization project in the aftermath of the GFC. Historically significant as this dangerous conjuncture is, it does not automatically threaten a new world disorder, nor a grave new world, but rather exemplifies the competition for power and wealth which defines world politics (Mearsheimer 2018).

Globalist interpretations of this conjuncture divide into two broad kinds: liberal accounts and transformationalist accounts. Liberal accounts emphasize that it prefigures a return to a dystopian world absent a rules-based order, in which might is right. Advocates of the liberal world order and globalization therefore argue that the only effective response is to strengthen and defend the existing order through more assertive US and Western leadership: a coalition of democracies (World Economic Forum 2016; Paul 2021).

By contrast, transformationalist accounts are not persuaded by either such nostalgic prescriptions, nor the deep pessimism concerning the liberal world order and future of globalization. They argue that the crisis of globalization and the liberal world order have been exaggerated (Ikenberry 2018*b*; Deudney and Ikenberry 2018) in two senses: first, the liberal world order has never been entirely liberal, nor universal, nor orderly, and has always been contested; and second, global trends are more indicative of reglobalization than deglobalization (Bishop and Payne 2021; James 2021; Bordo 2017; Lund et al. 2019).

Transformationalist accounts assert the current conjuncture discloses a historic transition involving not only a global power shift, but also the emergence of a post-Western global order associated with a more multicentric form of globalization (Acharya 2018*a*, 2018*b*, 2021; Pieterse 2017). Amitav Acharya argues that this emerging post-Western global order is not simply a more inclusive liberal order (**see Box 2.5**). Rather, it is a far more diverse and pluralistic order defined by the coexistence and overlap between elements of the old liberal order alongside the parallel orders of emerging powers. It is therefore a post-hegemonic order confirming, as Robert Keohane concluded in his classic study of the liberal world order, that hegemony is not a necessary condition for international orders to function effectively (Keohane 1984). Contrary to those who fear the passing of the liberal world order, this post-Western global order is

Box 2.5 The multiplex order

Amitav Acharya describes the emerging global order as a '**multiplex order**'. This is a global order which is:

1. *decentred*: there is no global hegemon or Western hegemony, but instead multiple powers (i.e. a multipolar order);
2. *diverse*: it is more global in scope and inclusive than the liberal world order, thus less US- and Western-centric;
3. *complex*: there are multiple and overlapping levels of governance, from local to global, while the world is highly interconnected and interdependent;
4. *pluralistic*: there are many actors or agents, not just states, while power, ideas, and influence are widely diffused.

Acharya's metaphor for this order is the multiplex cinema: multiple theatres with different films all showing simultaneously but all 'under one complex . . . sharing a common architecture'. It is an order 'in which actors, state and non-state, established and new powers from the North and the South, interact in an interdependent manner to produce an order based on a plurality of ideas and approaches' (Acharya 2018*a*: 10–11). This form of order historically has many parallels with the international order of medieval Europe or the Indian Ocean from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (Bull 1977; Phillips and Sharman 2015; Acharya 2018*a*, 2018*b*).

not an anti-Western order, but rather a non-Western order: an inclusive order of neither confrontation nor chaos (Stuenkel 2016).

Globalization too has proved much more resilient than its critics have assumed. Despite the global shutdown during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, globalization is experiencing a reset or reboot. A new form of globalization is emerging (Steger and James 2020). This reglobalization is being shaped by three developments. First, digital technologies and digital capitalism are powering this new phase of globalization across every sector from the economic, cultural, defence, and political to the environmental (Altman and Bastian 2021; Robinson 2020*b*; Steger and James 2020; Lund and Tyson 2018). Second, since the GFC, China increasingly has become a principal force for globalization, as the world's largest exporter, the dominant source of global economic growth, a major financial power, the largest provider of bilateral development assistance in the Global South, and, by 2025, home to 230 of the world's 500 largest multinational corporations (McKinsey Global Institute 2017). Moreover, as neoliberal globalization has faltered, China has continued to expand and intensify its Belt and Road Initiative as a parallel model of 'inclusive globalization' (Zhang, Alon, and Lattemann 2018) (**see Case Study 2.2**). Third, as Acharya concludes, the Covid-19 pandemic 'will not be the end of globalization' because the mobilization of state power to combat it and the political imperatives to repair and rebuild economies and societies have created the conditions for 'a new dynamic of globalization' (Acharya 2021)—a new dynamic which historically has generally followed from previous episodes of 'slowbalization', and one which has acquired a greater imperative in the wake of the war in Ukraine and intensifying geo-economic rivalry (James 2021, 2022). This reglobalization reflects a significant 'move away from the simple market dogmas' of neoliberal globalization so discredited by the GFC while also, as Achayra notes, being far less Western-centric: in short 'the end of globalization as we have known it' (Abdal and Ferreira 2021; Acharya 2021; Rugitsky 2020; UNCTAD 2021*b*).

In conclusion, both the liberal world order and globalization are adapting to the changing circumstances of global power and capitalism in the twenty-first century. Globalization therefore continues to matter.

Key Points

- A prevalent discourse in the West concerns the crisis of globalization and the liberal world order.
- Three developments are central to this discourse: the rise of nationalist populism, the revival of great power rivalry, and the securitization of global connectivity.
- Sceptical accounts consider the crisis to be symptomatic of declining Western hegemony and the restructuring of Western capitalism in the wake of the GFC.
- Globalist accounts are of two kinds: liberal and transformationalist.
- Liberal accounts stress the existential threats to the liberal world order and globalization, and the profound consequences for global security and prosperity of their inevitable breakdown.
- Transformationalist accounts contend that the intersecting crises of the liberal world order and globalization are associated with the emergence of a post-Western global order alongside a reconfiguration of globalization or 'reglobalization'.

2.4 Globalization and the transformation of world politics

Globalization matters academically in that it presents several related challenges to traditional approaches to the study of world politics. First, in focusing attention on global connectivity it invites a conceptual shift from a state-centric imaginary to a decidedly geocentric or **global imaginary** (Steger 2008). This demands a holistic global systems (economic, political, social) perspective, rather than one principally focused on the state system (Albert 2016). Second, the focus on the global reveals the deeply Western-centric assumptions of the discipline of International Relations (IR), challenging it to be more reflective and inclusive in respect of how IR is studied and practiced (Behera 2021; Mahbubani 2018; Reus-Smit 2021). Third, much globalization scholarship focuses on issues of transformational change in world politics, compared with those traditional approaches which emphasize its essential continuities. Drawing on this transformationalist scholarship, this final section will discuss briefly several significant transformations associated with

globalization which are essential to understanding contemporary world politics.

2.4.1 From international politics to planetary politics

Just as nineteenth-century Europe witnessed the nationalization of politics, a noticeable trend has been towards the globalization of politics. 'Global politics' is a term which acknowledges that the scale of political life has been transformed: politics is not confined within territorial boundaries. Decisions and actions taken in one locale affect the security and prosperity of communities in distant parts of the globe, and vice versa, such that local politics is globalized, and world politics becomes 'localized'. The substantive issues of political life consistently escape the artificial foreign/domestic divide. Accordingly, the study of global politics involves more than geopolitics or inter-state politics, vital as these remain. Even twenty-first century geopolitics is being transformed by thickening webs of global connectivity (Bew 2016; Grevi 2009).

2.4.2 From the liberal world order to a post-Western global order

Globalization is associated with a historic power shift in world politics propelling China, India, and Brazil to the rank of major twenty-first-century powers (**see Chs 5 and 6**). This power transition is eroding several centuries of Western dominance of the global order and transforming the political and normative foundations of the liberal world order. These new powers, alongside Russia as an established power, are increasingly assertive about refashioning the rules and institutions of world order to reflect their transformed status and power (**see Ch. 6**) (Stuenkel 2016). Whether this transition towards a post-Western world order is essentially peaceful or conflictual is among the most critical questions in contemporary world politics, especially in the context of the return of war in Europe.

2.4.3 From intergovernmentalism to global governance

Since the UN's creation in 1945, a vast nexus of global and regional institutions has evolved, in tandem with globalization, into what Michael Zürn (2018) refers to as a global governance system. Although by no means historically unique, its scale, jurisdictional scope, and authority undoubtedly is (Zürn 2018). This transformation from primarily intergovernmentalism—cooperation between sovereign states—to global governance is associated with globalization.

While world government remains a fanciful idea, this shift has significant implications for the state (**see Opposing Opinions 2.1**). Far from globalization leading to 'the end of the state', it engenders, as during the Covid-19 pandemic, a more activist state. In a radically interconnected world, states engage in extensive multilateral **collaboration** and cooperation simply to achieve their domestic objectives. States confront a political dilemma: in return for more effective domestic policy and delivering on their citizens' demands, their capacity for self-governance—**state autonomy**—is often compromised. All governments confront a trade-off between effective governance and self-governance which has significant implications for sovereign statehood (**see Chs 3 and 19**). The effective sovereign power and authority of states—the practice of sovereignty—is being reconfigured or transformed, although sovereignty remains the principal juridical attribute of statehood. This is a condition best described as 'organized hypocrisy' (Krasner 1999).

2.4.4 From national security to a world risk society

Contemporary world politics is marked by a proliferation of enormously diverse 'transboundary issues', from climate change to pandemics to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which are directly or indirectly a product of globalization (**see Chs 24, 25, 27, 29, and 30**). Ulrich Beck refers to this as the emergence of a 'world risk society' in which the prevention and management of such risks, such as the climate emergency, is a structural feature of world politics (Beck 2006).

2.4.5 From hegemonic power to diffused power

Globalization is associated with the reconfiguration of power in world politics in at least three senses: the redistribution of power in the state's system; the diffusion of power; and new forms and instruments of power (**see Ch. 5**). Globalization has been a major contributory factor in the ongoing historic power shift from West to East. Moreover, power in the global

Opposing Opinions 2.1 Globalization erodes the power of the state

For

States are impotent in the face of global capitalism. This is particularly true for financial markets, as illustrated by Western financial sanctions imposed on Russia at the outset of the Ukraine war which precipitated the collapse of the rouble. Moreover, national economic policies are severely constrained by global market disciplines, as evidenced by the austerity policies 'forced on' many indebted countries in the wake of the GFC.

States are ceding power in many key areas to unelected global and regional institutions, from the EU to the WTO. States are bound by global rules, such as cutting CO_2 emissions. This erodes both their **sovereignty** and their autonomy to manage their own affairs.

States are increasingly vulnerable to external disruption or events abroad. As both the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine demonstrate, global connectivity potentially brings with it major societal risks to human and national security.

Democratic states are experiencing an erosion of their democratic credentials. Growing inequalities resulting from economic globalization undermine trust in democratic institutions while unelected international bureaucracies determine the global rules. Both reinforce the belief that global capital and international institutions trump the democratic will of the people. Such concerns have been crystallized in the recent revival of nationalist populism.

Border control is central to the practice of sovereign statehood and domestic security, but globalized systems increasingly evade it. The very same infrastructures which facilitate globalization enable a global illicit economy, from people smuggling to money laundering. The expanding scope and scale of illicit global flows increasingly has major consequences for the domestic security and social stability of states.

Against

State power in general is not being eroded, as the responses to the Covid-19 pandemic signally demonstrate. Indeed, many states used extensive powers to combat the pandemic, including national lockdowns and directing the production of vaccines. But, as the example of seed sovereignty illustrates (**see Case Study 2.1**), weak states experience greater constraints on their choices than more powerful states.

States are not ceding power or sovereignty to unelected international bureaucracies. On the contrary, by acting multilaterally they increase their power to act effectively in world politics. Although global agencies may require states to trade some of their national autonomy for a greater chance of realizing their national interests, it does not diminish national sovereignty, understood as their absolute legal right to rule within their own territory.

Globalization is part of the solution to states' growing vulnerabilities. Although states are increasingly vulnerable to distant threats, multilateral cooperation offers increased global surveillance capacity and cooperation, as with WHO during the pandemic, to address national vulnerabilities, so enhancing, rather than undermining, national security.

Democratic states are indeed experiencing challenges to democracy; however, these are primarily a result of domestic factors, not globalization. The tensions or contradiction between capitalism and democracy is not new: it is structural. Globalization simply makes it more visible. Moreover, it is a fallacy to argue that globalization prevents governments from addressing domestic challenges such as inequality, as evidenced by strong redistributive welfare states, as in Scandinavia.

State control of borders (or, at the least, the capacity to control) has never been greater, as the Covid-19 pandemic shows. Digital surveillance technologies and systems of monitoring and control of (embodied and virtual) cross-border flows are more extensive and intensive than even a few decades ago. Moreover, international intelligence and policing cooperation to stem illicit flows has expanded in scope and scale, as has states' capacity to deter and intercept them. Domestic security may be compromised by illicit flows, but is not fundamentally undermined.

1. Why do you think the issue of state power and sovereignty is so politically controversial?

2. Are you more persuaded by the 'for' or 'against' position? If so, why? If neither, what other arguments or evidence might be relevant?

3. What political values and normative beliefs underlie your judgement in respect of this proposition?

Visit the online resources to discover pointers to help you tackle these questions.

political system is no longer the monopoly of states, but is also diffused, with important consequences for who gets what, how, when, and where. This is manifest in the growing power of non-state actors from transnational organized crime to global corporations and NGOs. Finally, globalization enables state and non-state actors to leverage new forms and instruments of power: from soft power to the weaponization of global connectivity, in effect, coercion and 'warfare' by new means, e.g. comprehensive Western economic sanctions on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine; cyberattacks and cyberwarfare (Farrell and Newman 2019). In this respect, globalization is associated with new instrumentalities of power in the form of (non-military) 'weapons of mass disruption' or coercion blurring the distinctions between peace and war, diplomacy and coercion, conflict and competition (Leonard 2021) (**see Ch. 14**).

2.4.6 From liberal peace to structural conflict

Although liberal theory tends to associate globalization with the conditions for peace and prosperity, it is also simultaneously a significant source of conflict in world politics since it reproduces structural inequalities of power and wealth, exclusion and inclusion. This gives rise to a deeply contentious **global politics**: a politics of domination, competition, and resistance among and between powerful states and transnational non-state forces. Conflict is thus endemic to globalization, from the neighbourhood to the global level. It is not necessarily violent, though, as George Modelski (1972) reminds us, the history of globalization is defined by extraordinary 'arrogance and violence' (Robinson 2020*b*).

Key Points

- Globalization scholarship presents significant challenges to traditional approaches to the study of world politics.
- Globalization is associated with structural transformations in world politics, from governance to power and world order.
- Globalization requires a conceptual shift in thinking about world politics, from a principally state-centric and Western-centric perspective to the perspective of global politics—the politics of planetary relations.
- Globalization is a significant source of conflict, as well as cooperation, systemic risks, and power shifts.
- Globalization is not leading to the demise of the sovereign state, but is transforming the practice of sovereign statehood.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to clarify the concept of globalization and to explain why, despite recent history, it matters to the study of contemporary world politics. It began by examining critically the concept of globalization and exploring differing theoretical interpretations, notably the sceptical and globalist accounts (**see Section 2.2**). Globalization is a contentious subject in the study of international relations because there is still fundamental theoretical disagreement with respect to its descriptive and explanatory power. Similarly, it is a highly contentious and divisive issue in political life since it begets winners and losers, conflict and cooperation.

The chapter also analysed three major sources of the current crisis of globalization and why it is implicated in a wider crisis of the liberal world order (**see Section 2.3**). Rather than deglobalization, it concluded that a process of reglobalization is under way. Globalization therefore continues to matter to both the study and practice of world politics. Moreover, the alleged demise of the liberal world order is confused with the emergence of a post-Western global order.

Section 2.4 addressed the question of what globalization contributes to the study of world politics. It identified and briefly examined significant transformations in world politics associated with globalization which are essential to comprehending and explaining twenty-first-century global politics.

Profound normative and political disagreement exists as to whether globalization is a benign or malign force in world politics (**see Ch. 6**). Indeed, among the most contentious and unresolved questions in world politics today is how globalization might best be governed for the benefit of both humanity and the planet: a struggle, played out across the globe every day, from the village square to the citadels of global power (**see Chs 5 and 22**).

Questions

1. Distinguish the concept of globalization from those of internationalization and international interdependence.
2. Critically review the major transformations in world politics associated with globalization.
3. Why is globalization associated with conflict in world politics?
4. Compare globalist and sceptical accounts of globalization.
5. What are the sources of the current crisis of globalization? Is the world entering a period of deglobalization?
6. What is meant by the term 'liberal world order'?
7. What is meant by the term 'global governance system'?
8. Distinguish the concept of global politics from those of geopolitics and international (inter-state) politics.
9. Critically assess some of the key arguments of the transformationalists.
10. Why do some argue the world is witnessing the emergence of a post-Western global order?

Visit the online resources to test your understanding by trying the self-test questions.

Further Reading

Freeman, D. (2020), *Can Globalization Succeed?* (London: Thames and Hudson). A very accessible introduction to current academic and political debates about globalization.

Goldin, I., and **Mariathasan, M.** (2014), *The Butterfly Defect: How Globalization Creates Systemic Risks, and What to Do About It* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). An accessible and comprehensive examination of the worldwide systemic risks associated with globalization, with particular emphasis on the economic, financial, and technological.

Khanna, P. (2017), *Connectography: Mapping the Global Network Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson). An accessible introduction to the new phase of globalization.

Mahbubani, K. (2013), *The Great Convergence: Asia, the West, and the Logic of One World* (New York: PublicAffairs). Argues that globalization is creating the conditions for a global convergence in which the rising powers of Asia will shape the future of globalization and global politics.

Pieterse, J. N. (2017), *Multipolar Globalization: Emerging Economies and Development* (London: Routledge). An examination of the economic dimension of multicentric globalization.

Roberts, A., and **Lamp, N.** (2021), *Six Faces of Globalization: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why it Matters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). Compares and contrasts the dominant narratives (or global imaginaries) which shape the politics of economic globalization.

Singer, P. (2016), *One World Now: The Ethics of Globalization*, 3rd edn (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press). A superb examination of the normative and ethical issues posed by globalization.

Steger, M. (2020), *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, 5th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press). This is a brief but very informative account of globalization and the controversies to which it gives rise.

Steger, M., and **James, P.** (2019), *Globalization Matters: Engaging the Global in Unsettled Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). A comprehensive analysis of why globalization is still central to the study of the social sciences and how it is changing.

Stuenkel, O. (2016), *Post-Western World* (Cambridge: Polity Press). A comprehensive examination from a non-Western perspective of the transformations under way in the global political economy.

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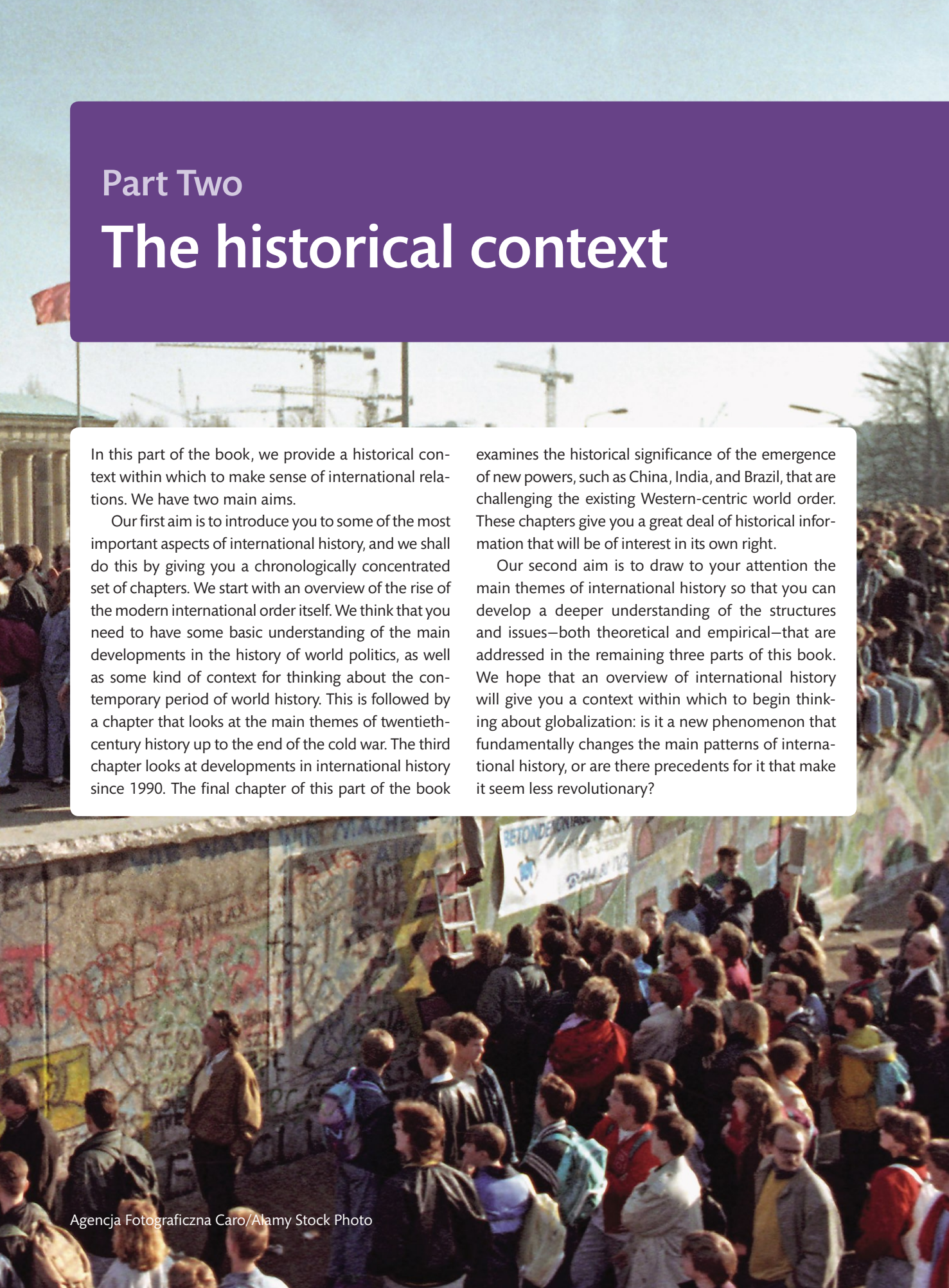
Part Two

The historical context

In this part of the book, we provide a historical context within which to make sense of international relations. We have two main aims.

Our first aim is to introduce you to some of the most important aspects of international history, and we shall do this by giving you a chronologically concentrated set of chapters. We start with an overview of the rise of the modern international order itself. We think that you need to have some basic understanding of the main developments in the history of world politics, as well as some kind of context for thinking about the contemporary period of world history. This is followed by a chapter that looks at the main themes of twentieth-century history up to the end of the cold war. The third chapter looks at developments in international history since 1990. The final chapter of this part of the book examines the historical significance of the emergence of new powers, such as China, India, and Brazil, that are challenging the existing Western-centric world order. These chapters give you a great deal of historical information that will be of interest in its own right.

Our second aim is to draw to your attention the main themes of international history so that you can develop a deeper understanding of the structures and issues—both theoretical and empirical—that are addressed in the remaining three parts of this book. We hope that an overview of international history will give you a context within which to begin thinking about globalization: is it a new phenomenon that fundamentally changes the main patterns of international history, or are there precedents for it that make it seem less revolutionary?



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Chapter 3

The rise of modern international order

GEORGE LAWSON

Framing Questions

- **When did modern international order emerge?**
- **To what extent was the emergence of modern international order shaped by the experience of the West?**
- **Is history important to understanding contemporary world politics?**

Reader's Guide

This chapter explores the rise of modern international order. It begins by surveying international orders before the modern period, examining how trade and infrastructure helped to tie together diverse parts of the world. The chapter then examines debates about the 1648 **Peace of Westphalia**, which is often said to mark the origins of modern international order. Next it turns to nineteenth-century developments, ranging from industrialization to imperialism, which played a major role in the formation of modern international order. Particular attention is paid to the main ideas that underpinned modern international order, the 'shrinking of the planet' that arose from the advent of new technologies, and the emergence of a radically unequal international order. The chapter closes by assessing the significance of nineteenth-century developments for twentieth- and twenty-first-century international relations.

3.1 Introduction

All **international orders** are made up of multiple political units. Whether these units are empires, city-states, or nation-states, the key feature that distinguishes international from domestic politics is that, in the international sphere, political units are forced to coexist in the absence of an overarching authority. This means that the discipline of International Relations is fundamentally concerned with the issue of 'political multiplicity' (Rosenberg and Kurki 2021). Its guiding question is how order can be generated in an environment that is fragmented rather than unified.

Political multiplicity, though, is only part of the story. Although international relations is a fragmented space, this does not stop political units from interacting with each other. These interactions are what make up **international orders**: regularized practices of exchange between political units. These patterns of exchange vary greatly: they can be sparse (limited to diplomatic protocols) or intensive (involving high levels of trade, shared legal codes, common security arrangements, extensive cultural exchanges, and more); hierarchical (as in empires) or purportedly 'equal' (as in the contemporary states system); formal (as in the constitutional structure of the European Union) or informal (as in the notion of a 'sphere of influence'). International orders have existed ever since political units began to interact with each other on a regular basis, whether through trade, diplomacy, or the exchange of ideas. In this sense, world history has seen a great many *regional* international orders. However, it is only over the past two centuries or so that we can speak of a distinctly modern international order in the sense of the construction of a *global* economy, a *global* system of states, and the *global* circulation of ideas. This chapter explores both historical international orders and the emergence of the modern, global international order to show how world politics has become marked by increasingly deep exchanges between peoples and political units.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the contemporary international order is the dominance of 'Western' ideas and institutions. 'The West' is usually taken to mean Europe (with particular emphasis on the northern and western parts of the continent) and the Americas (with particular emphasis on the United States). The West looms large in the functioning of the global political economy—just think of the importance of London and New York as financial centres. The West is also central to global governance—the main home of the United Nations (UN) is in New York, while both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are headquartered in Washington, DC. Western ideas (such as human rights) and Western culture (particularly music) are well known around the world. But *why* is this the case? Some people argue that Western power has arisen because of its innate strengths: liberal ideas, democratic practices, and free markets (Landes 1998). These people tend to see Western power as both natural and enduring. Others see Western domination as rooted in specific historical circumstances, many of them the product of practices of colonial exploitation and subjugation (W. E. B. Du Bois (1994) [1903]; see also Hobson 2021). For these people, Western power in the contemporary world is unusual and likely to be temporary. This debate is discussed in **Opposing Opinions 3.1**.

For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to note two preliminary points. First, the 'rise of the West' has occurred only relatively recently: over the past two or three centuries. Second, many aspects of its rise can be traced to *international* processes, such as imperialism and the global expansion of capitalism. These international dynamics allowed a small number of mostly Western states to project their power around the world. As they did so, they generated a range of new actors that subsequently became leading participants in international affairs: nation-states, transnational corporations, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (IGOs and NGOs). They also helped to bind the globe together through new forms of transport (such as the steamship) and technologies (such as the telegraph). This chapter explores these dynamics and explains how they helped to shape contemporary world politics.

3.2 Historical international orders

When should we start thinking about the emergence of 'international orders'? Although the term 'international order' is a relatively recent innovation, some accounts trace the historical origins of international orders to the period when nomadic groups first settled and became sedentary communities (Buzan and Little

Opposing Opinions 3.1 The rise of the West was the result of its own strengths

For

The West alone had inclusive political institutions. Representative institutions promoted negotiation among elites and heightened links between elites and publics.

The Enlightenment promoted new forms of scientific thinking. These ideas fostered an independence of thought and an experimental tradition that, in turn, led to advances in engineering and the sciences.

The West pioneered a range of new economic practices. Double entry bookkeeping and comparable innovations allowed for a clear evaluation of profit, thereby enabling companies to provide credit in depersonalized form—the hallmark of commercial capitalism.

The West enjoyed unusually beneficial geographical circumstances. For example, British industrialization was aided greatly by the unusual co-location of coal and iron.

Against

Very few, if any, of the materials that were fundamental to the rise of the West originated from within Western societies. Most notably, cotton is not indigenous to England. Similarly, Europe's pre-industrial trade with Asia was largely underpinned by gold and silver mined in Africa and the Americas.

For many centuries, Asian powers were held in respect, even awe, in many parts of Europe. The West interacted with Asian powers sometimes as political equals, and at other times as supplicants. Between 1600 and 1800, India and China were so dominant in manufacturing and many areas of technology that the rise of the West is sometimes linked to its relative 'backwardness' in comparison to major Asian empires.

European success was based on imperialism. Between 1815 and 1865, Britain alone conquered new territories at an average rate of 100,000 square miles per year. Many of the resources that enabled the rise of the West originated from imperialism: Indian textiles, Chinese porcelain, African slaves, and colonial labour.

European power was premised on multiple forms of inequality. Particularly crucial was the restructuring of economies into a primary producing 'periphery' and a secondary producing 'core'. Western powers established a global economy in which they eroded local economic practices and imposed their own price and production systems. This allowed Western states to turn an age-old, and more or less balanced, system of trade in elite goods into a global market sustained by mass trade and marked by inequality.

1. Did the 'rise of the West' stem from its own distinct institutions and ideas?

2. To what extent was Western power forged through its encounters with non-Western states?

3. What are the implications of the history of the 'rise of the West' for the West's contemporary relations with the rest of the world?

Visit the online resources to discover pointers to help you tackle these questions.

2000). The earliest recorded examples of this process took place around 5,000–6,000 years ago in Sumer—modern day Iraq. Sedentary communities in Sumer accumulated agricultural surpluses that allowed for year-round **subsistence**. These surpluses generated two dynamics: first, they fostered trade between groups; and second, they put groups at risk of attack. The response of sedentary communities was to increase their capabilities: they got bigger, they developed specializations (such as dividing people into distinct ranks of soldiers and cultivators), and they developed political hierarchies, establishing order through the command of a leader or group of leaders (Buzan and Little 2000). These leaders increasingly interacted with their counterparts in other groups, establishing rituals that we now know as diplomacy. In the process, these communities generated regularized practices of exchange between political units—the definition of international orders.

Beyond ancient Sumer can be found a great many historical international orders. Indeed, if we take world history as our canvas, every region in the world has been home to regular, widely shared practices of commerce, war, diplomacy, and law. Many of these historical international orders developed through encounters with other parts of the world: the extensive interactions between the Byzantine and Ottoman

empires is one example; a second is the early modern international order centred on the Indian Ocean that incorporated actors from Asia, Africa, and Europe; a third is the Eurasian international order between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, spanning from Europe to China, which sustained deep interactions between diverse political orders and, in the process, helped to forge notions of **sovereignty** and world order (Zarakol 2022).

Most accounts of international order, however, begin not in thirteenth century Eurasia or early modern South Asia, but in seventeenth century Europe. The majority of accounts date the birth of 'modern' international order to a specific date—the 1648 **Peace of Westphalia**, which marked the end of the wars of religion in Europe (e.g. Philpott 2001). Westphalia is seen as important because it instituted the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* ('whose realm, their religion'). This principle, it is argued, acted as a brake on the reasons by which states could go to war. After Westphalia, so the story goes, European states could no longer intervene in other states on the basis of religious belief. In other words, states assumed **sovereignty** over their own territories—first in terms of their right of confession, and later over other spheres of activity, such as the ways in which they organized their governance and economies. In this sense, Westphalia is seen as important because it established the principle of 'sovereign territoriality' (a claim to political authority over a particular geographical space).

A number of criticisms of the Westphalian narrative have emerged in recent years. Three of these are worth particular consideration. First, Westphalia was not a European-wide agreement, but a local affair—its main concerns were to safeguard the internal affairs of the Holy Roman Empire and to reward the victors of the Wars of Religion (France and Sweden). The impact of Westphalia on European international relations, let alone *global* affairs, was not as great as is often imagined (Teschke 2003). Second, even within this limited space, the gains of Westphalia were relatively slight. Although German principalities assumed more control over their own affairs after 1648, this was within a dual constitutional structure that stressed loyalty to the Empire and that was sustained by a court system in which imperial courts adjudicated over both inter-state disputes and internal affairs (a bit like the modern-day European Union). Third, Westphalia actually set limits to the principle of sovereignty established at the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, for example by retracting the rights of polities to choose their own religion. Westphalia decreed that each territory would retain the religion it held on 1 January 1624. For the most part, after 1648, European international order remained a patchwork of marriage, inheritance, and hereditary claims. Imperial rivalries, hereditary succession, and religious conflicts remained at the heart of European wars for several centuries after Westphalia.

Although Westphalia is usually considered to be the basis for 'modern' international order, it is not the only starting point for thinking about these issues. In part, the choice of *when* to date the emergence of modern international order depends on what people consider to be the most important components of international order. In **Section 3.1**, international orders were described as: 'regularized practices of exchange between political units'. But what form do these 'regularized practices of exchange' take?

One type of pattern emerges through economic interactions. Here we might stress the importance of long-distance trade routes in silks, cotton, sugar, tea, linen, porcelain, and spices that connected places as diversely situated as Malacca, Samarkand, Hangzhou, Genoa, Acapulco, Manila, and the Malabar Coast for many centuries before Westphalia (Goldstone 2002). Another example is systems of infrastructure, transport, and communication. Here, we could highlight the European 'voyages of discovery' during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which opened up sea lanes around Africa and across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. As discussed earlier, when Europeans moved into the Indian Ocean, they found a well-developed international order in place. India's huge coastline, skilled artisans, and plentiful traders had long made it a central node in the trans-Eurasian exchange of goods, ideas, and institutions. Further east could be found an equally well-developed regional international order, mainly thanks to Chinese advances in ocean-going shipbuilding and navigation techniques, which were in many respects more advanced than those of the Europeans (Hobson 2021).

It is also possible to combine economic and infrastructural interactions, highlighting dynamics such as the trafficking of African slaves, which constructed a 'triangular trade' in which the demand for sugar in London fostered the plantation system in the Caribbean, which was supplied by African slaves and North American provisions (Blackburn 1997). This vile feature of international order was linked both to increasing trade and to advances in transport technologies; it helped to forge

the Atlantic into a regional international order. Also important to this process was the increasing number of ecological transfers between the Americas and Europe: maize, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, and tobacco were imported from the 'New World', while horses, cattle, pigs, chickens, sheep, mules, oxen, vines, wheat, rice, and coffee travelled in the opposite direction. Even more important was the transatlantic transfer of diseases: smallpox, measles, influenza, and yellow fever killed two-thirds of the population of the Americas by the middle of the sixteenth century (Crosby 2004). These examples help to illustrate the ways in which, over time, regularized exchanges between political units can generate forms of **interdependence** in which events in one place have a major effect on others. One of the consequences of the increasingly dense interactions that have characterized international orders over recent centuries has been heightened levels of interdependence, from productive circuits to pandemics.

Despite the plentiful examples of regional international orders in world history, before the last two centuries or so, the ties of interdependence that bound international orders were relatively limited in scope. For example, until the nineteenth century the vast majority of economic activities did not take place over large distances, but in 'microeconomies' with a 20-mile circumference (Schwartz 2000: 14). Those activities that went beyond the micro-scale, such as the long-distance trading corridors noted earlier in this section, were usually lightly connected. A journey halfway around the world would have taken a year or more in the sixteenth century, five months in 1812, and one month in 1912. In the contemporary world, it takes less than a day. In general, the pace of change during the period before the nineteenth century was much slower than the rapid, incessant change that has become a feature of the past two centuries. In this sense, although we can speak of many *regional* international orders before the nineteenth century, we should locate the emergence of a distinctly *modern* international order only in the last two centuries.

What makes the last two centuries such a strong candidate for thinking about the emergence of modern international order? As noted in the previous paragraph, during this period, multiple regional international orders were linked in a global order in which all parts of the world were closely connected. This period is sometimes known as the 'global transformation': a term used to denote the shift from a world of multiple *regional* international systems to one characterized by a *global* international order (Buzan and Lawson 2015). The global transformation brought to an end a long period in which human history was mainly local and contact among peoples fairly light. It replaced this with an era in which human history was increasingly global and contact among far-flung peoples intense. For better or worse, and often both together, the nineteenth century saw the transformation of the daily condition of peoples nearly everywhere on the planet (Hobsbawm 1962; Bayly 2004; Osterhammel 2014).

Key Points

- International orders are regularized practices of exchange between political units. They may be sparse or intensive, hierarchical or egalitarian, formal or informal.
- It is possible to speak of multiple international orders in world history, perhaps even as far back as ancient Sumer.
- In International Relations, the 1648 Peace of Westphalia is often considered to be the foundational date from which 'modern' international order emerged.
- More recently, scholars have viewed the emergence of modern international order as the product of the last two centuries, as this is when various regional orders were forged into a deeply interdependent, *global* international order.

3.3 How did modern international order emerge?

Up until around 1800, there were few major differences in living standards among the most developed parts of world: in the late eighteenth century, **gross domestic product** (GDP) per capita levels in the Yangtze River Delta of China were around 10 per cent lower than the wealthiest parts of Europe, less than the differences today between most of the European Union (EU) and the US. Major sites of production and consumption such as Hokkaido, Malacca, Hangzhou, and Samarkand enjoyed relative parity with their European counterparts across a range of economic indicators, and were technologically equal or superior in many areas of production (Pomeranz 2000).

A century later, the most advanced areas of Europe and the United States had levels of GDP per capita between tenfold and twelvefold greater than their Asian

equivalents. In 1820, Asian powers produced 60.7 per cent of the world's GDP, and 'the West' (defined as Europe and the United States) only 34.2 per cent; by 1913, the West produced 68.3 per cent of global GDP and Asia only 24.5 per cent. Between 1800 and 1900, China's share of global production dropped from 33 per cent to 6 per cent and India's from 20 per cent to 2 per cent (Maddison 2001). The rapid turnaround during the nineteenth century represents a major shift in global power (**see Box 3.1**).

What generated this shift in global power? There are a number of explanations for what is sometimes called the 'great divergence' between East and West (Pomeranz 2000). Some accounts concentrate on innovations such as the capacity of liberal constitutions in the West to restrict levels of domestic conflict. Others, in contrast, focus on the frequency of European inter-state wars: European powers were involved in inter-state wars in nearly 75 per cent of the years between 1494 and 1975 (Mann 2012: 24). The frequency of European inter-state wars, it is argued, led to technological and tactical advances, the development of standing armies, and the expansion of permanent bureaucracies. In this way, nineteenth-century European states combined their need for taxation (in order to fight increasingly costly wars) with support for financial institutions that could, in turn, deliver the funds required for investment in armaments. A third set of explanations highlights the role of ideas in producing the great divergence, most notably the scientific advances associated with the European Enlightenment. A fourth set of approaches concentrate on the geographical and demographic advantages enjoyed by the West: a temperate climate that was inhospitable to parasites, and later marriage habits, which led to lower fertility rates and, in turn, lower population densities. Finally, some accounts stress the role of capitalism in generating Western 'take-off', whether this is seen as emerging from favourable access to credit and bills of exchange, or through the ways in which private property regimes enabled capital to be released for investment in manufacturing and finance (Buzan and Lawson 2015).

Relatively few of these accounts stress the international dimensions of the global transformation. Yet these were significant (**see Box 3.2**). First, European success was predicated on imperialism (Sharman 2019). Between 1878 and 1913, Western states claimed 8.6 million square miles of overseas territory, amounting to one-sixth of the Earth's land surface (Abernathy 2000: 81). By the outbreak of the First World War, 80 per cent of the world's land surface, not including uninhabited Antarctica, was under the control of Western powers, and one state—Britain—claimed nearly a quarter of the world's territory. Germany's colonies in East Africa were forced into producing cotton for export, just as Dutch Indonesia became a vehicle for the production

Box 3.1 The importance of the nineteenth century

The nineteenth century saw the birth of international relations as we know it today.

(Osterhammel 2014: 393)

During the nineteenth century, 'social relations were assembled, dismantled and reassembled'.

(Wolf 1997: 391)

Nothing, it seemed, could stand in the way of a few western gunboats or regiments bringing with them trade and bibles.

(Hobsbawm 1962: 365)

Box 3.2 Key dates in the emergence of modern international order

- 1789/1791: The French and Haitian revolutions begin a long 'wave' of 'Atlantic Revolutions' that lasts until the 1820s. These revolutions introduced new ideas such as republicanism and popular sovereignty, and challenged the central place of slavery in the Atlantic international order.
- 1842: in the First Opium War the British defeat China, perhaps the greatest classical Asian power.
- 1857: the Indian Revolt prompts Britain to assume formal control of the Indian subcontinent, while serving as a forerunner to later anti-colonial movements.
- 1862: the British Companies Act marks a shift to limited liability firms, opening the way to the formation of transnational corporations as significant international actors.
- 1865: the International Telecommunications Union becomes the first standing intergovernmental organization, symbolizing the rise of permanent institutions of global governance.
- 1866: the opening of the first transatlantic telegraph cable begins the wiring together of the planet with instantaneous communication.
- 1884: the Prime Meridian Conference establishes world standard time, easing the integration of trade, diplomacy, and communication.
- 1905: Japan defeats Russia in the Russo-Japanese War, establishing itself as the first non-Western, non-white Great Power.

of sugar, tobacco, and later rubber. In a similar vein, after the British East India Company was ceded the right to administer and raise taxes in Bengal, they made the cultivation of opium obligatory, subsequently exporting it to China in a trading system propped up by force of arms. Through imperialism, European powers exchanged raw materials for manufactured goods and used violence to ensure low production prices. Although the gains from these circuits are difficult to measure precisely, many of them were highly profitable. The Atlantic slave trade, for example, returned profits to British investors at an average rate of 9.5 per cent at the turn of the nineteenth century (Blackburn 1997: 510).

Second, European powers assumed control, often coercively, over the trade of commodities as diverse as sandalwood, tea, otter skins, and sea cucumbers, as well as silver, cotton, and opium. Europeans used silver from the Americas and opium from India to buy entry into regional trading systems. This led to radically unequal patterns of trade: while Britain provided 50 per cent of Argentina's imports and exports, and virtually all of its capital investment in 1900, Argentina provided just 10 per cent of Britain's imports and exports (Mann 2012: 39). European control of trade also led to radically unequal patterns of growth: whereas India's GDP grew at an average of 0.2 per cent per year in the century before independence, Britain's grew at ten times this rate (Silver and Arrighi 2003: 338). India provided a colonial tribute to Britain that saw its budget surpluses expatriated to London so that they could be used to reduce British trade deficits. The inequality that marks modern international order is discussed in **Section 3.4**.

Third, Western advances arose from the emulation and fusion of non-Western ideas and technologies. Technologies used in the cotton industry, for example, drew heavily on earlier Asian advances (Hobson 2021). These ideas and technologies were carried, in part, via migration. Up to 37 million labourers left India, China, Malaya, and Java during the nineteenth century and the early twentieth, many of them to work as bonded labour in imperial territories. Over 50 million Europeans also emigrated between 1800 and 1914, most of them to the United States. By 1914, half of the population of the US was foreign-born. Six million Europeans emigrated to Argentina between 1857 and 1930; at the onset of the First World War, one-third of Argentinians, and half the population of Buenos Aires, had been born outside the country (Crosby 2004: 301).

The great divergence was therefore fuelled by a global intensification in the circulation of people, ideas, and resources—what was described in **Section 3.2** as interdependence. More precisely, it can be linked to three main dynamics: industrialization, the emergence of 'rational' states, and imperialism.

3.3.1 Industrialization

Industrialization took place in two main waves. The first (mainly British) wave occurred in the early part of the nineteenth century and was centred on cotton, coal, and iron. Here the crucial advance was the capture of inanimate sources of energy, particularly the advent of steam power, an innovation that enabled the biggest increase in the availability of power sources for several thousand years. Also crucial was the application of engineering to blockages in production, such as the development of machinery to pump water efficiently out of mineshafts. Engineering and technology combined to generate substantial gains in productivity: whereas a British spinner at the end of the eighteenth century took 300 hours to produce 100 pounds of cotton, by 1830 the same task took only 135 hours; by 1850, 18 million Britons used as much fuel energy as 300 million inhabitants of Qing China (Goldstone 2002: 364).

The second (mainly German and American) wave of industrialization took place in the last quarter of the century and was centred on advances in chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and electronics. Once again, new sources of energy were crucial, with oil and electricity emerging alongside coal, and internal combustion engines replacing steam piston engines. The oil industry took off in Russia, Canada, and the US from the middle of the nineteenth century, initially to provide kerosene for lighting. Before the century's end, pipelines and tankers were bringing oil to a global market, and further advances in distillation and mechanical engineering were opening up its use as a fuel. During the 1880s, electricity began to be generated and distributed from hydroelectric and steam-powered stations. Advances in light metals and electrics, allied to the use of oil products for fuel, provided an impetus to the development of cars, planes, and ships.

These two waves of industrialization helped to produce a dramatic expansion of the world market. After several centuries in which the volume of world trade had increased by an annual average of less than 1 per cent, trade rose by over 4 per cent annually in the half century after 1820 (Osterhammel 2014: 726). By the

early years of the twentieth century, world trade was increasing at a rate of 10 per cent per year, increasing levels of interdependence and heightening practices of exchange. The expansion of the market brought new opportunities for accumulating power, particularly because of the close relationship between industrialization in the West and deindustrialization elsewhere. For example, Indian textiles were either banned from Britain or levied with high tariffs—the British government tripled duties on Indian goods during the 1790s and raised them by a factor of nine in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. In contrast, British manufacturing products were forcibly imported into India without duty. Between 1814 and 1828, British cloth exports to India rose from 800,000 yards to over 40 million yards; during the same period, Indian cloth exports to Britain halved. For many centuries before 'the global transformation', India's merchant class had produced the garments that 'clothed the world' (Parthasarathi 2011: 22). By 1850, the English county of Lancashire was the new centre of a global textiles industry.

3.3.2 Rational states

The extension of the market was accompanied by important changes in how states were organized. During the nineteenth century, states began to assume greater control over the use of force within their territory. This was not as straightforward as it might seem when viewed from the vantage point of the contemporary world and its nearly 200 nation-states (**see Ch. 31**). In the eighteenth century, institutions such as the Dutch East India Company held a constitutional warrant to 'make war, conclude treaties, acquire territory and build fortresses' (Phillips and Sharman 2020). These companies remained influential throughout the nineteenth century: the British parliament provided a concession of several million acres of land to the British North Borneo Company as late as 1881, while the Imperial British East Africa Company and the British South Africa Company also held state-like powers of governance.

In general, though, during the course of the nineteenth century, armies and navies became more distinctly national, increasingly coming under the direct control of the state. Although nation-states coexisted with other political units—and most Western polities were imperial nation-states in that they were both empires and nations simultaneously—there was a general 'caging' of authority within states (Mann 2012). Most notably, states became staffed by permanent bureaucracies, selected by merit and formalized through new legal codes. State personnel in the last quarter of the century grew from 67,000 to 535,000 in Britain and from 55,000 to over a million in Prussia/Germany. During the same period, state military personnel tripled in Britain and quadrupled in Prussia/Germany. The term 'rational state' refers to the ways in which states become organized less through interpersonal relations and family ties, and more by abstract bureaucracies such as a civil service and a nationally organized military.

Once again, there was a distinctly international dimension to this process: many aspects of the modern, professional civil service were formed in India before being exported to Britain; cartographic techniques used to map colonial spaces were reimported into Europe to serve as the basis for territorial claims; and imperial armies acted as the frontline troops in conflicts around the world. Britain deployed Indian police officers, bureaucrats, and orderlies in China, Africa, and the Middle East, and Indian troops fought in 15 British colonial wars. Other Western states also made extensive use of colonial forces: 70 per cent of the Dutch army deployed in the Dutch East Indies were colonial forces, while 80 per cent of the French expeditionary forces that fought in North and East Africa were colonial conscripts (MacDonald 2014: 39–40). These imperial wars increased the coercive capacities of European states, while requiring states to raise extra revenues, which they often achieved through taxation. This, in turn, fuelled further state development.

3.3.3 Imperialism

Until the nineteenth century, nearly three-quarters of the world's population lived in large, fragmented, ethnically mixed agrarian empires. During the nineteenth century, these empires were swamped by mono-racial Western powers. The bulk of European imperialism took place during the 'scramble for Africa', which saw European powers assume direct control of large parts of the continent. But experiences of imperialism went much further than this. Between 1810 and 1870, the US carried out 71 territorial annexations and military interventions (Go 2011: 39). The US first became a continental empire, seizing territory from Native Americans, the Spanish, and Mexicans. It then built an overseas empire, extending its authority over Cuba,

Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, Samoa, and the Virgin Islands. Other settler states also became colonial powers in their own right, including Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific.

Imperialism took many forms. In the case of the British, their imperial web included direct-rule colonies (e.g. India after 1857), settler colonies (e.g. Australia), protectorates (e.g. Brunei), bases (e.g. Gibraltar), treaty ports (e.g. Shanghai), and spheres of influence (e.g. Argentina). The image of a late nineteenth-century map of the world in which imperial territories are represented by a single colour is, therefore, highly misleading. British India included several hundred 'Princely States' that retained a degree of 'quasi-sovereignty', as did nearly 300 'native states' in Dutch East Asia. Where imperialism was successful, it relied on establishing partnerships with local power brokers: the Straits Chinese, the Krio of West Africa, the 'teak-wallahs' of Burma, and others (Darwin 2012: 178). Two hundred Dutch officials and a much larger number of Indonesian intermediaries ran a cultivation system that incorporated 2 million agricultural workers. A little over 75,000 French administrators were responsible for 60 million colonial subjects (Mann 2012: 47).

Imperialism was deeply destructive. At times, this destruction took the form of ecocide. Manchuria was deforested by the Japanese in the interests of its mining and lumber companies, while 'wild lands' in India were cleared by the British so that nomadic pastoralists could be turned into tax-paying cultivators. At other times, destruction took the form of genocide. Belgian imperialists were responsible for the deaths of up to 10 million Congolese during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth. In the opening years of the twentieth century, Germany carried out a systematic genocide against the Nama and Herero peoples in its South West African territories, reducing their population by 80 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. Similar stories could be told about the conduct of the Americans in the Philippines, the Spanish in Cuba, the Japanese in China, the British in Kenya, the French in Algeria, and the Australians in Tasmania. Overall, the casualty list of imperialism numbered tens of millions (Osterhammel 2014: 124–7).

Key Points

- After 1800, there was a 'great divergence' between some Western imperial nation-states and much of the rest of the world.
- There were three main sources of the 'great divergence': industrialization, the 'rational' state, and imperialism.
- These three dynamics served as the mutually reinforcing foundations of modern international order.
- These dynamics were deeply intertwined with international processes, most notably industrialization with deindustrialization, and rational states with imperialism.

3.4 The consequences of the global transformation

Section 3.3 examined the main dynamics that underpinned the global transformation. This section explores three of its main consequences: the 'shrinking' of the planet (**see Section 3.4.1**), the emergence of international organizations and non-governmental organizations (**see Section 3.4.2**), and the development of an unequal international order (**see Section 3.4.3**).

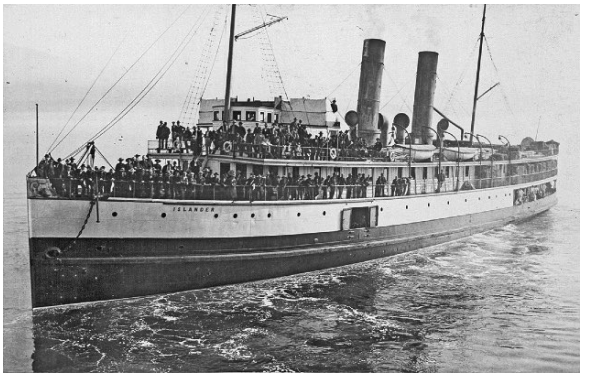
3.4.1 Shrinking the planet

A thin global trading system existed for many centuries before 'the global transformation'. Lightweight luxury goods such as silk, porcelain, spices, precious metals, and gems moved across Eurasia and other transnational trading circuits for millennia, although generally at a slow pace. During the eighteenth century, it took three years for a caravan to make the round trip from Moscow to Peking. This meant that, until the nineteenth century, international orders tended to be somewhat limited in scale. Two thousand years ago, imperial Rome and Han China knew of each other, and had a significant trade in luxury goods. But their armies never met, they had no diplomatic relations, and the trade between them was indirect rather than direct, taking the form of a relay through a range of intermediaries.

The infrastructural gains prompted by the global transformation generated major efficiency savings: communication times between Britain and India dropped from a standard of around six months in the 1830s (via sailing ship), to just over one month in the 1850s (via rail and steamship), to the same day in the 1870s (via telegraph) (Curtin 1984: 251–2). There were three main sources that lay behind these efficiency savings: steamships, railways, and the telegraph.

During the nineteenth century, as steam engines became smaller, more powerful, and more fuel-efficient, they began to be installed in ships, initially driving paddle wheels, and later the more efficient screw propeller. As a result of these improvements, ocean freight rates dropped by 80 per cent during the century as a whole, with a corresponding expansion in the volume of trade. One million tons of goods were shipped worldwide in 1800; by 1840, ships carried 20 million tons of tradable goods; by 1870, they carried 80 million tons (Belich 2009: 107). By 1913, steam tonnage accounted for 97.7 per cent of global shipping. Steam engines both freed ships from dependence on wind (although at the cost of dependence on coal or oil) and tripled their average speed. Because steamships were not dependent on weather or season, they provided predictable, regular services to replace sporadic and irregular links by sail.

Equally important was the arrival of railways. Widespread railway building began in Britain during the 1820s, spreading to the United States, France, and Germany during the 1830s. By 1840 there were 4,500 miles of track worldwide, expanding to 23,500 miles by 1850 and 130,000 miles by 1870; by the end of the century, there were half a million miles of track worldwide (Hobsbawm 1962: 61). As with steamships, the expansion of the railway had a major effect on trade. By the 1880s the cost of transportation by rail in Britain was less than half of that by canals, and a sixth of transport by road. The figures for the US were even more dramatic, with late nineteenth-century railways between 30 and 70 times cheaper than trade via road in 1800. Investment in railways served to internationalize capital: France invested heavily in Russian railways, while British investors provided the capital for railways in continental Europe, the Americas, and Asia. By 1913, 41 per cent of Britain's direct overseas investments were in railways (Topik and Wells 2012: 644).



A steam ship in the nineteenth century

Railways had two further effects on international order. First, they prompted the emergence of timetables and, in turn, pressed states to regularize time. World standard time was pioneered at the Prime Meridian Conference in Washington in 1884, and the universal day of 24 time zones was consolidated at the 1912 Paris International Conference on Time (Ogle 2015). Second, as railways spread, they became pipelines from continental interiors to coastal ports, linking with steamships to provide a global transportation system. Railways linked Argentinian food products to the port of Buenos Aires, Australian wool to the port of Sydney, and South African diamonds and gold to the port of Cape Town. This allowed Western states to import products in a way that had not been possible before, and they could establish mass industries that depended on raw materials grown in other parts of the world. The combination of railways and steamships underpinned the division of labour between an industrial 'core' and a commodity-producing 'periphery' that first emerged as a defining feature of the global political economy during the nineteenth century.

The final breakthrough technology was the telegraph. During the 1840s, telegraph networks spread throughout Europe and North America, increasing from 2,000 miles in 1849 to 111,000 miles by 1869. By 1870, a submarine telegraph system linked the UK and India. By 1887, over 200,000 km of underwater cable connected (mainly imperial) nodes in the world economy. And by 1903, there was a global network in place consisting of over 400,000 km of submarine cabling (Osterhammel 2014: 719). Use of the telegraph was widespread, if uneven. At the end of the nineteenth century, two-thirds of the world's telegraph lines were British owned. In 1913, Europeans sent 329 million telegraphs, while Americans sent 150 million, Asians 60 million, and Africans 17 million (Topik and Wells 2012: 663).

The impact of the telegraph on the speed of communications was dramatic: a letter sent from Paris to St Petersburg took 20 days in 1800, 30 hours in 1900, and 30 minutes in 1914. This, in turn, had a major impact on key features of international relations, from war and diplomacy to trade and consumption. Governments could learn about political and military developments almost as they happened, while financiers and traders had faster access to information about supply, prices, and market movements. One consequence of this was

the formation of command structures over long distances. With instant communication, ambassadors, admirals, and generals were not granted as much independence of action, and firms kept tighter control over their distant subsidiaries.

Steamships, railways, and the telegraph provided the core infrastructure of modern international order, adding greatly to levels of interdependence and prompting far deeper patterns of exchange. In combination, they helped to construct a global economy and a single space of political–military interactions. They also ratcheted up cultural encounters, enabling (and often requiring) people to interact on a previously unprecedented scale. Increasingly, the human population knew itself as a single entity for the first time.

3.4.2 Intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations

Technological changes created demands for international coordination and standardization. This resulted in the emergence of **intergovernmental organizations** (IGOs) as permanent features of international order. The link between these dynamics is made clear by the functions of most early IGOs: the International Telecommunications Union (1865), the Universal Postal Union (UPU) (1874), the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (1875), and the International Conference for Promoting Technical Unification on the Railways (1882). The UPU, for example, responded to the need for inter-operability among diverse postal systems that was created by new forms of transportation.

As they developed, IGOs and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) covered a wide range of issue-areas, from religion and politics to sport and the environment. By the 1830s, transnational associations were taking part in vigorous public debates on issues as varied as trade policy and population growth. Several prominent INGOs, including the International Red Cross, were formed in the 1850s and 1860s, as were issue-based groups such as those seeking to improve animal welfare, promote the arts, and formalize academic subjects ranging from botany to anthropology. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw a further growth in INGO activity with the emergence of a number of groups formed in response to the inequities of industrialization and, in the last part of the century, the first industrial-era depression. An organized labour movement emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. A further tranche of INGOs put pressure on states to enact faster, deeper processes of democratization. A transnational movement for women's suffrage emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century; by the early years of the twentieth century, the membership of the International Council of Women counted up to 5 million women around the world (Osterhammel 2014: 507).

3.4.3 Inequality

As **Section 3.3** explored, the global transformation generated a deeply unequal international order. This inequality did not go unchallenged, whether through attempts at reform or revolution. **Case Study 3.1** illustrates this push-and-pull between inequality and challenge through the example of international law (Pitts 2018). The rest of this section explores global inequality through two further issue-areas: racism (**see Section 3.4.3.1**) and economic exploitation (**see Section 3.4.3.2**).

3.4.3.1 Racism

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a new form of racism emerged. **'Scientific' racism** was based on a radically unequal view of world politics (**see Ch. 18**). Its proponents argued that it was possible—and desirable—to establish a political hierarchy based on biological markers, either visible (as in skin colour) or according to bloodline (as in who counts as Jewish, Black, or Chinese). Broadly speaking, for 'scientific' racists, lighter-skinned peoples inhabited the highest rung on the evolutionary ladder and darker-skinned peoples were situated at the bottom. These ideas allowed Europeans to racially demarcate zones within imperial territories, as well as to homogenize diverse indigenous peoples, such as Native Americans, into a single category of 'Indians'. The result was the formation of an international order premised in large measure on a 'global colour line' (Du Bois 1994 [1903]]; Lake and Reynolds 2008).

The global colour line was strengthened by mass emigration from Britain to Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. These emigrations created 'settler states' ruled by white elites who saw themselves as inherently superior to the indigenous peoples. The scale of this enterprise is striking: white settlers in Australia increased from 12,000 in 1810 to 1.25 million in 1860; one million white British emigrated to Canada between 1815 and 1865, multiplying the country's population by a factor

Case Study 3.1: The dual character of international law

During the nineteenth century, international law assumed a dual character: first, as an enabler of inequality; and second, as a possible route to equality. Two key legal concepts, 'occupation' and 'universality', illustrate how this worked.

On the one hand, 'occupation', the notion that something belonging to nobody becomes the property of the first person to take it, was central to European imperialism in the Americas, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. As it developed, the law of occupation was tied to notions of progress, and frequently put to work in agreements, alliances, treaties, contracts, and land purchases. The key innovation was to associate occupation with economic development, first in terms of the supposed superiority of European agricultural society and second in terms of the right to trade, which was seen as the hallmark of 'advanced' commercial societies. In this way, 'occupation' sustained a range of legal practices: unequal treaties for those left nominally independent (like the Ottoman Empire, Japan, and China); partial takeovers, such as protectorates, in which most local government was allowed to continue, but finance, defence, and foreign policy were handled by a Western power (as in the case of Sudan); formal colonization, resulting in elimination as an independent entity (as in India after the 1857 uprising); and indigenous displacement (as in many parts of the Americas, Australia, and southwest Africa).

On the other hand, opponents of European imperialism used the notion of 'universality' to claim that their territories were already occupied. For many colonized peoples, 'universality' was a means of contesting Western claims to unequal legal rights. Some Latin American lawyers, for example, argued that the imperial histories of the region, best represented by the Aztecs and Incas, provided them with a history and status that merited their equal inclusion in international society. Increasingly, though, jurists in what is today called the Global South made their case not on the basis of their own civilizational capabilities, but on the basis that imperialism was the mark of uncivilized powers, and that the universal right to self-determination was a legal shelter against this incivility.

These debates remain live in the contemporary world. Even after overcoming imperialism, post-colonial states often combined *de jure* political independence with de facto economic dependence. Britain, for example, repackaged many of its former colonies as 'overseas territories', acknowledging the right to political self-determination as long as the overarching relationship remained one of economic dependence and exploitation. At the same time, arguments about the rights of 'occupation' can be found in contemporary debates about the status of the two poles, the indigenous peoples of the Torres Straits and West Papua, the proposed annexation of the West Bank, and more. As in many other spheres of international relations, nineteenth-century debates about international law are crucial to unravelling key issues in contemporary world politics.

Question 1: How was international law used in the nineteenth century to both sustain and challenge imperialism?

Question 2: What is the relevance of 'occupation' and 'universality' to contemporary world politics?

of seven. In 1831, the white population of New Zealand was little more than 1,000; 50 years later, it was 500,000 (Belich 2009: 83). The cumulative effect of these repopulations was significant. Whereas at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the white English-speaking 'Anglosphere' was made up of 12 million (mostly poor) people, by 1930 it constituted 200 million (mostly rich) people. When added to the growing power of the United States, the 'Anglosphere' became an increasingly prominent actor in world affairs, a status that—to some extent—it retains today (Bell 2020).

The racism fostered by white emigration forged what W. E. B. Du Bois (1994 [1903]: 61) called 'the new religion of whiteness'. Settler colonists became a racial caste united by fear of rebellion by the indigenous population and by a sense of their own cultural and racial superiority. As white Westerners became a 'global people', settlers helped to racialize international politics, making the colour bar a globally recognized tool of discrimination.

3.4.3.2 Economic exploitation

Industrialization and associated processes, such as the commercialization of agriculture, were global in form. As profits from these processes could only be achieved through higher productivity, lower wages, or the establishment of new markets, capitalist expansion was constant, leading to the development of both new areas of production (such as southeastern Russia and central parts of the United States) and new products (such as potatoes). In 1900, Malaya had around 5,000 acres of rubber production; by 1913, it contained 1.25 million acres (Wolf 1997: 325). Deindustrialization was equally rapid. As discussed in **Section 3.3.1**, after 1800, the British government ensured that British products undercut Indian goods and charged prohibitive tariffs on Indian textiles. Within a generation or two, the deindustrialization of India meant that centuries-old skills in industries such as cloth dyeing, shipbuilding, metallurgy, and gun making had been lost (Parthasarathi 2011; Hobson 2021).

The profits from capitalist expansion helped to forge an unequal global economy. In the cultivation system operated by the Netherlands in Indonesia, Dutch settlers enjoyed 50 times the level of per capita income as indigenous Indonesians. Around half of the revenue collected by the Indonesian government under the cultivation system was remitted to the Netherlands, constituting 20 per cent of the state's net revenue (Osterhammel 2014: 443). This is just one example of the ways in which imperial powers adapted global production to their needs, setting up the modern hierarchy between providers of primary and secondary products. While colonized countries could be the main producers of primary products, as India was with tea, Burma with jute, Malaya with rubber, Nigeria with palm oil, Bolivia with tin, and Brazil with coffee, imperial powers maintained an advantage in high-value exports and finance. This division of labour, with its accompanying upheavals, was first established in the nineteenth century; it came to dominate the global political economy in the twentieth century. **Case Study 3.2** illustrates how these dynamics worked.

Key Points

- A major consequence of the global transformation was the 'shrinking of the planet' via steamships, railways, and the telegraph.
- These technologies deepened the 'regularized exchanges' that serve as the foundations of international order.
- These exchanges were increasingly managed by IGOs and INGOs.
- The modern international order that emerged during the nineteenth century was profoundly unequal. The sources of this inequality included racism and economic exploitation.

Case Study 3.2 Imperialism in China

American cartoon, *c.*1900

At the heart of imperialism was a claim about the material, cultural, and moral superiority of the West. As **Case Study 3.1** illustrated, Western powers exacted vastly unequal terms of exchange with those they dominated, even if these polities had once been great empires, as was the case with China. Indeed, the decline of China helps to illustrate the ways in which imperialism served to transform international order in the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century, Western powers pressed China to open up to higher levels of trade. This was particularly important for the British, for whom the (illegal) opium trade was extremely lucrative: by the 1830s, the British were exporting 30,000 chests of opium from India to China each year, each of which carried 150 pounds of opium extract. It was little surprise when, in 1840, Britain used the pretext of a minor incident involving the seizure of opium stocks by Chinese officials to instigate conflict with China (the 'First Opium War'), which it won easily.

The Treaty of Nanjing that followed the war required China to cede Hong Kong to the British, pay an indemnity for starting the conflict, and open up five new treaty ports. The treaty also legalized the opium trade. After defeat in the Second Opium War of 1856–60, which included the sacking of the Summer Palace in Beijing by British and French forces, China signed a further series of unequal treaties, including some that guaranteed low tariffs on European imports.

If these treaties weakened China, so too did domestic unrest. During the 1850s, a rebellion originating among the Hakka minority in Guangxi spread to the Yangtze region and the imperial capital of Nanjing. The rebellion was oriented around a strain of apocalyptic Christianity, blended with elements of Manchu and Confucian thought. Over the next decade, the 'Taiping Rebellion' mobilized over a million combatants and spread to an area the size of France and Germany combined. The conflict severely diminished imperial control. It also destroyed both land and livelihoods, and between 1850 and 1873, over 20 million people were killed. War and related dynamics, including starvation, saw China's population as a whole drop from 410 million to 350 million during this period.

The Taiping Rebellion was not the only uprising experienced by China during this period. In 1898, a series of 'modernizing' reforms by the 17 year-old Guangxu Emperor prompted a coup by the Empress Dowager Cixi. Cixi fanned a wave of assertive nationalism, including a movement—the Boxer Rebellion—that sought to overturn the unequal rights held by Westerners. The defeat of the Boxers by a coalition of Western forces led to the stationing of foreign troops in China, as well as a range of new concessions. Key aspects of public finances were handed over to outsiders, most notably the Maritime Customs Services, which was used to collect taxes, regulate tariffs, and finance the substantial indemnity demanded by Western powers.

All in all, China's experience of Western imperialism was deeply destructive. During this period, Chinese per capita income dropped from 90 per cent to 20 per cent of the world average, while the country's share of global GDP fell from around a third to just 5 per cent. China lost wars with Japan, Britain, and France. It saw large parts of its territory handed over to foreign powers and suffered the ignominy of being forced to sign a number of unequal treaties. China went through two major rebellions, including one (the Taiping Rebellion) that produced more casualties than any other conflict during the nineteenth century. No wonder that this period is known in China as the 'Century of Humiliation'.

Question 1: What were the main features of China's 'Century of Humiliation'?

Question 2: How has China's experience of imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries impacted its contemporary foreign policy?

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter defined international order as 'regularized practices of exchange between political units'. There have been many international orders in world history, and these have taken many forms: sparse and intensive, hierarchical and more purportedly egalitarian, formal and informal. However, it is only over the past two centuries that an international order has emerged that is global in scale and deeply interdependent politically, economically, and culturally. Not everything has changed over the past two centuries. But the world has undergone a major transformation enabled by imperialism, the emergence of industrialization, and rational states. These dynamics have prompted far-reaching changes to how international order has been organized and understood. And they have deepened degrees of both interdependence and inequality to levels that are unprecedented in world history.

The legacies of this period are profound: a global economy, a global system of states, global communication and transportation systems, a huge number of IGOs and INGOs, and more. Even the basic terminology used to describe much of the contemporary world has nineteenth-century origins, from the idea of 'the West' to framings such as 'the Middle East' and 'Latin America' (Osterhammel 2014: 73–86). Equally important are the legacies of imperialism, racism, and economic exploitation that continue to generate resentment in many parts of the world. The West ignores these sentiments at its peril. Although the world continues to be based largely on Western terms, this is changing (**see Ch. 6**). The 'modernizing mission' first undertaken by nineteenth-century Japan (**see Box 3.3**) has now been undertaken in various forms by many of the world's states. Understanding how we got here is crucial to assessing both the shape of contemporary international order and the challenges it faces.

Box 3.3 Japan's 'modernizing mission'

The most spectacular example of a nineteenth-century 'modernizing mission' outside the West was that of Japan. Following the shock caused by the appearance of American gunboats in Tokyo Bay in 1853 and the subsequent signing of unequal treaties, Japan sent over a hundred representatives on a mission to 11 European countries and the United States in order to negotiate revisions to these treaties and learn from Western practices. The Iwakura Mission subsequently borrowed extensively from the practices of Western states.

The result was a restructuring of domestic society through rapid 'modernization' and a reorientation of foreign policy towards imperialism: Japan invaded Taiwan in 1874 (annexing it formally in 1895), fought wars for overseas territory with both China (1894–5) and Russia (1904–5), and annexed Korea (1910). Becoming a 'civilized' member of international society meant not just abiding by European law and diplomacy; it also meant becoming an imperial power. At home, the result was a radical programme known as the Meiji Restoration. The Charter Oath of the Meiji Restoration made frequent references to Confucianism. However, it did so in the context of the need to revive Japanese thought and practices within a new, 'modern' context. Under the slogan *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong military), the Meiji oligarchy sought to erode feudal forms of governance, abolish the Shogunate, and replace the Samurai (who numbered over 5 per cent of the population) with a conscript army.

The Meiji pioneered the idea of the developmental state. They imported industrial technologies (often through 'international experts'), increased military spending (which climbed from 15 per cent of government spending in the 1880s to around 30 per cent in the 1890s, and nearly 50 per cent in the 1900s), and mobilized the population through an ideology of (sometimes chauvinistic) nationalism. A private property regime was introduced alongside new systems of taxation, banking, and insurance. The Meiji state built cotton mills, cement works, glass factories, and mines, and maintained a leading interest in arms: between 1873 and 1913, Japan constructed one of the largest navies in the world.

During the Meiji period as a whole, the state was responsible for 40 per cent of the capital investment in the country. This was state-led development with a vengeance. And it served as a model for later such projects around the world.

Questions

1. What are the main components of 'international order'?
2. How important was the Peace of Westphalia to the formation of modern international order?
3. What were the international dynamics that helped Western powers become so powerful during the nineteenth century?
4. What was the significance of industrialization to Western ascendancy?
5. What ideas sustained the 'global transformation'?
6. How significant was the 'standard of civilization' to the formation of global inequality?
7. What have been the consequences of the 'shrinking of the planet'?
8. Why did IGOs and INGOs emerge in the nineteenth century?
9. In what ways did imperialism impact the construction of modern international order?
10. What have been the main consequences of the global transformation?

Visit the online resources to test your understanding by trying the self-test questions.

Further Reading

Bayly, C. A. (2004), *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell). This is the best place to start for those interested in the global origins of modern international order.

Benton, L., and **Ford, L.** (2016), *Rage for Order* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). Makes the case that the origins of modern international law can be found in nineteenth-century imperial practices.

Burbank, J., and **Cooper, F.** (2010), *Empires in World History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). The best available global history of empires and their role in the formation of modern international order.

Buzan, B., and **Lawson, G.** (2015), *The Global Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Blends International Relations and global history in order to show how nineteenth-century dynamics have impacted contemporary world politics.

Getachew, A. (2019), *Worldmaking After Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). Explores the ways in which anti-colonial thinkers imagined, and attempted to enact, various forms of international order.

Goswami, M. (2004), *Producing India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). An account that stresses the global features of the transformation from colonialism to the nation-state in India, with particular emphasis on issues of political economy.

Hobson, J. (2020), *Multicultural Origins of the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Argues that the emergence of capitalism can be found in global encounters rather than dynamics internal to the West.

Osterhammel, J. (2014), *The Transformation of the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). The definitive global history of the nineteenth century. A long book, but written in bite-sized chapters that allow readers to pick and choose which topics they are interested in.

Pomeranz, K. (2000), *The Great Divergence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press). A breakthrough book making the case that Western powers became more powerful than their Asian counterparts only after 1800.

Zarakol, A. (2022), *Before the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Charts the ways in which Eurasian ideas of world order between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries served as the basis for a range of modern practices, most notably sovereignty.

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Chapter 4

International history of the twentieth century

LEN SCOTT

Framing Questions

- **Why do you think decolonization in the twentieth century took so long?**
- **Do you agree that 'we all lost the cold war'?**
- **How do you believe nuclear weapons shaped the twentieth century?**

Reader's Guide

This chapter examines some of the principal developments in world politics from 1900 to 1999: the advent of total war, the demise of European imperialism, the development of nuclear weapons, and the onset of cold war. Confrontation between the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) became the key dynamic in world affairs, replacing the dominance of—and conflict among—European states in the first half of the twentieth century. The cold war encompassed the ideological, political, and military interests of the two states (and their allies) and extended around the globe. To what extent, and in what ways, the cold war promoted or prevented confrontation are central questions. Similarly, how decolonization became entangled with East–West conflicts is crucial to understanding many struggles in the 'Third World'. Finally, how dangerous was the nuclear confrontation between East and West? This chapter explores the role of nuclear weapons in specific phases of the cold war, notably détente during the 1960s and 1970s, and then during the deterioration of Soviet–American relations in the 1980s.

4.1 Introduction

The First World War (also known as the Great War) began among European states on European battlefields, and then extended across the globe. It was the first modern, industrialized **total war**, as the belligerents mobilized their populations and economies as well as their armies, and as they endured immense casualties. The Second World War was yet more total in nature and global in scope, and fundamentally changed world politics. Before 1939, Europe was the arbiter of world affairs, when both the USSR and the US remained, for different reasons, primarily preoccupied with internal development. The Second World War brought the Soviets and Americans militarily and politically deep into Europe and transformed their relationship from allies to antagonists. This transformation was reflected in their relations outside Europe, where various confrontations developed. Like the First and Second World Wars, the cold war had its origins in Europe, but quickly spread, with enormous global consequences.

The First World War led to the collapse of four European empires: Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman (in Turkey). After 1945, European power was in decline. The economic plight of the wartime belligerents, including victors, was increasingly apparent, as was growing realization of the military and economic potential of the US and the USSR. Both emerged as 'superpowers', combining global political ambition with military capabilities that included weapons of mass destruction. European political, economic, and military weakness contrasted with the appearance of Soviet strength and growing Western perception of malign Soviet intent. The cold war in Europe marked the collapse of the wartime alliance between the UK, the USSR, and the US. The most ominous legacy of the Second World War was the atomic bomb, built at enormous cost, and driven by fear that Nazi Germany might win this first nuclear arms race. After 1945, nuclear weapons posed unprecedented challenges to world politics and to leaders responsible for conducting post-war diplomacy. The cold war provided both context and pretext for the growth of nuclear arsenals that threatened the very existence of humankind, and which have continued to spread well after the end of the East–West confrontation (**see Ch. 30**).

Since 1900, world politics has been transformed in multiple ways, reflecting political, technological, and ideological developments, of which three are examined in this chapter: (1) the transition from crises in European power politics to total war; (2) the end of empire and withdrawal of European states from their imperial acquisitions; and (3) the cold war: the political, military, and nuclear confrontation between East and West. There have, of course, been other important changes, and indeed equally important continuities, which other chapters in this volume address. Nevertheless, these three principal developments provide a framework for exploring events and trends that have shaped world politics during the twentieth century.

4.2 Modern total war

The origins of the First World War have long been debated. For the victorious allies, the issue of how war began became a question of how far Germany and its allies should be held responsible. At Versailles, the victors imposed a statement of German war guilt in the final settlement, primarily to justify the reparations they demanded. Debates among historians about the war's origins focus on political, military, and systemic factors. Some suggest that responsibility for the war was diffuse, as its origins lay in the complex dynamics and imperatives of the respective alliances. In 1967, however, the West German historian Fritz Fischer argued in his influential book, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, that German aggression, motivated by the internal political needs of an autocratic elite, was responsible for the war. Whatever the causes, the pattern of events is clear. A Serbian nationalist's assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, triggered Austro-Hungary's declaration of war against Serbia. Russia's alliance with Serbia, and Germany's alliance with Austro-Hungary, then became catalysts for European-wide conflict. Germany feared war on two fronts against France and Russia, and attacked France in search of a speedy victory. This not only failed, but British treaty obligations to Belgium brought the UK into the war.

However complex or contested the origins of the Great War, the motivations of those who fought were

more explicable. The peoples of the belligerent nations shared nationalist beliefs and patriotic values. As they marched off to fight, most thought war would be short, victorious, and, in many cases, glorious. The reality of the European battlefield quickly proved otherwise. Defensive military technologies, symbolized by the machine gun and trench warfare, triumphed over the tactics and strategy of attrition. It was not until November 1918 that the allied offensive finally achieved rapid advances that helped end the fighting. War was total in that whole societies and economies were mobilized: men were conscripted into armies and women into factories. Germany's western and eastern fronts remained the crucibles of combat, although conflict spread to other parts of the globe, as when Japan went to war in 1914 as an ally of Britain. Most importantly, the United States entered the war in 1917 under President Woodrow Wilson, whose vision of international society, articulated in his **Fourteen Points**, later drove the agenda of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The overthrow of the Tsar and seizure of power by Lenin's Bolsheviks in November 1917 quickly led Russia (soon to become the USSR) to seek peace. Germany no longer fought on two fronts but faced a new threat as America mobilized. With the failure of its last great western offensive in 1918, and an increasingly effective British naval blockade, Berlin agreed to an armistice.

The **Treaty of Versailles** in 1919 promised a new framework for European security and a new international order. Neither was achieved. There were crucial differences among the victorious powers over policies towards Germany and over principles governing international order. Moreover, the treaty failed to tackle, what was for some, the central problem of European security after 1870—a united and frustrated Germany. Moreover, it further encouraged German revanchism by creating new states and contested borders. Economic factors were also crucial. The effects of the **Great Depression**, triggered in part by the Wall Street Crash of 1929, weakened liberal democracy in many countries and strengthened the appeal of communist, fascist, and Nazi parties. The economic impact on German society was particularly damaging. While all European states suffered mass unemployment, Germany experienced hyperinflation. The value of the German currency plummeted as more and more money was printed and the cost of living rose dramatically. Economic and political instability provided the ground in which support for the Nazis took root. In 1933, Adolf Hitler gained power, and transformation of the German state began. Debate remains about the extent to which Hitler's ambitions were carefully thought through and to what extent expansion was opportunistic. A. J. P. Taylor provided a controversial analysis in his 1961 book, *The Origins of the Second World War*, in which he argued that Hitler was no different from other German political leaders. What was different was the philosophy of Nazism and the combination of racial supremacy with territorial aggression. British and French attempts to negotiate with Hitler culminated in the Munich Agreement of 1938. Hitler's territorial claims on the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia were accepted as the price for peace, but within months Germany had seized the rest of Czechoslovakia and was preparing for war on Poland. Recent debates about **appeasement** have focused on whether, given the lack of allied military preparedness, there were realistic alternatives to negotiation.

In 1939, the defensive military technologies of the First World War were overwhelmed by armoured warfare and air power, as the German blitzkrieg brought speedy victories against Poland and in Western Europe. Hitler was also drawn into the Balkans and North Africa in support of his Italian ally, Benito Mussolini. With the invasion of the USSR in June 1941, the scale of fighting and the scope of Hitler's aims were apparent. Massive early victories gave way to winter stalemate and the mobilization of the Soviet people and military. German treatment of civilian populations and Soviet prisoners of war reflected Nazi ideas of racial supremacy and caused the deaths of millions. Nazi anti-Semitism and the development of concentration camps gained new momentum after a decision on the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question' in 1942. The term **Holocaust** entered the political lexicon of the twentieth century as the Nazis attempted the genocide of the Jewish people and other minorities, such as the Roma.

4.2.1 The rise and fall of Japan

After 1919, attempts to provide collective security were pursued through the League of Nations. The US Senate prevented American participation in the League, however, and Japanese aggression against Manchuria in 1931, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia