ONE

Understanding world knowledge

1.1 Ontology and epistemology

1.2 Reflexivity

'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' This idea often justifies the historical bases of international studies. The Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana wrote the phrase in his *Life of Reason* in 1905. But his preceding sentence is now forgotten: 'when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual'.[1] Colonial ideologies still influence the Euro-American **worldviews** that dominate present-day international 'knowledge'.[2] We should also 'remember the past' through the histories of the world written by Arab, Chinese, Greek, Persian, Hindu, Slavic, Roman and other non-European scholars.

Knowledge comes from the intellectualization of facts or opinion, usually by comparison (C14.1). The first part of this chapter outlines how we question the existence of things that we take for granted – *ontology* – and then how we come to know about these things – *epistemology*. This is particularly important within international studies, because the scale of knowledge is very large, and this creates endless possibilities for grand claims based on nothing more than 'authority'. For the researcher, this questioning starts from a *reflexive* approach to all aspects of a study – an ongoing personal assessment of "where we are coming from", and how our own, and other, worldviews, may affect the objectivity of a study. Because the world is a big place, most world knowledge arrives through intermediaries, and that is a problem as al-Bīrūnī noted a thousand years ago (Figure 1.1).[3]

> The tradition regarding an event...will invariably depend for its character as true or false upon the character of the reporters, who are influenced by the divergency of interests and all kinds of animosities and antipathies between the various nations.
>
> Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī, *India* (circa 1030)

Figure 1.1   Reporters

1.1 Ontology and epistemology

Are we just avatars in a virtual reality game played by higher beings – just objects in a massive computer simulation? And if not, how can we prove it?4 **Ontology**[5] – the study of how we know that something exists – can help to explore questions like this. How did something (an *entity*) come into existence, how do we prove it *is*, in what way does it *be*, how do we know it is *real*, and how can we *categorize* it?

Ontological questions can be posed in simple forms – What makes this event **international**? Could 'international' situations occur without the political construction of **nations**? Is this phenomenon truly **universal**? How do we demonstrate **global** impacts? Questions can also be framed as a *null ontological hypothesis*, a default assumption that something does *not* exist until we can show that it *does* – that nothing is universal, global, international or human, until we explain why it is. Broadly, philosophers take a stance between accepting that anything that is a noun exists (**realism**), or arguing that existence comes from a subtle interplay of experiences and mental events (**nominalism**). Some argue that nothing exists (**nihilism**).

Philip Dick proposes a basic test of existence, 'Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away.'[6] And John Searle makes a useful distinction:

- some things are '*observer independent*' – 'brute facts' that 'exist independently of us' (earthquakes, tides, weather);
- others are '*observer-relative*' – 'institutional facts' that 'depend on us for their existence' (citizenship, laws, moral values).[7]

The Earth clearly exists 'independently', but nations only exist because of us. What about the 'world'? To decide, we first need to define 'world' – is it the physical planet drifting aimlessly in space, is it the planet with its peoples, places and systems, or is it a geopolitical region as delineated by the UN? (Figure 2.6)

As mentioned in the Introduction, Yuval Harari's lucid argument that 'sapiens' are the only animals that can create *imagined realities* – religions, financial systems, companies – is very significant when analysing the social world. Money is clearly an 'imagined reality' and this is very evident in currencies from cowry shells and paper dollar bills to *Bitcoin*. Around 97% of world money now only exists in cyberspace. Throughout this book, keep in mind that *people* exist objectively as a type of animal,

but when described in terms of 'nationality', 'race', 'religion' or 'ethnic group', these are imagined distinctions. *Places*, if described as a valley or sea exist objectively, but when a valley is a 'border', or seas become 'territorial waters', these are imagined places. The construction of these imagined things happens within social *systems* and related international institutions, which only exist in the human mind. These are constructed through the imagined knowledge in *documents* (C13), and now determine the future of the whole of our planet. Our Earth's climate, seas and ecosystems exist objectively, but their fate is now controlled by our imagined realities.[8]

Ontology can also help to address other fundamental questions: is something real or ideal (is or ought), actual or abstract, fact or opinion, empirical or reasoned, known or believed? What are the *relationships* (ties, causal chains, reasoned links – "if this then that") between *entities*, and what is the relationship and how do we know it exists?[9] How do we justify the existence of *categories*, which are often a European invention? Until the 19th century, East Asian countries had no direct equivalents for distinctions such as science, religion and philosophy.[10]

International discourse is often based on supposedly obvious facts that are very questionable and can fuel conflict.[11] Development theories assume that improved development can come into existence through external intervention. But how do we know that countries would not develop, perhaps better, without that intervention? Within environmental economics, the idea of 'green growth' assumes that environmental constraints can be reconciled with economic demands. But is green growth just an alliterative oxymoron – can growth continue infinitely or are there limits and, if limited, how do we know when the limits are reached? The word 'uncertainty' is commonly used to describe our *risk society* era. Technology may have created new risks, but does that mean that our certainty about risk has declined? Arguably science has made human knowledge considerably more certain about world risks than in any previous generation. Are we certain that uncertainty is now less (or should that be more) uncertain? Within international relations, many mainstream theories depend on the idea that humanity is intrinsically chaotic, and this must be prevented by strong laws and aggressive policy. But how can we prove this 'ontology of anarchy'?[12] Creating fear, without evidence, is an old political trick, but politicians with an academic background challenge it (Figure 1.2).

Cross-cultural ontology has distinct considerations,[13] such as the cross-cultural aspects of *relational* ontology?[14] Ontology is associated with the affirmation of identity through interpersonal communication, particularly when identity is in question, as among Palestinians.[15] International dimensions often demand a logical questioning of seemingly illogical claims. Logically, countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia must still have witches and sorcerers, because they have laws against witchcraft and sorcery, sometimes resulting in execution.[16] But to what degree is the ontology of witchcraft just being used for social control, as throughout Europe until recently? Similarly, sexuality is accompanied by ontological claims, which are contested cross-culturally.[17] When, in 2012, the Iranian president,

> The stated purpose [of the Immigration Bill] is to enhance the ability to deter people-smuggling to New Zealand...
>
> ...the Minister of Immigration was requested to provide the annual figures for the last 10 years showing the number of people listed in prosecutions confirmed to have been smuggled into New Zealand.
>
> The Minister replied that 'The department's prosecution records do not record the number of people confirmed to have been smuggled into New Zealand...'
>
> This bill rests on a fear based on complete ignorance of the facts. But whatever they might be, the numbers will have been minuscule, and so the only real significance of this bill has to be in its symbolism.
>
> Let us look at the symbolism. It is based on a misperceived fear, it succumbs to the temptation to dog whistle to certain segments of the population...
>
> Kennedy Graham MP, Green Party.
> Speech on the Immigration Amendment Bill.
> New Zealand Parliament, 17 April 2013

Figure 1.2   Challenging the ontology of anarchy

With permission: K. Graham

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, claimed, 'In Iran we don't have homosexuals like in your country...In Iran we do not have this phenomenon.' He was discounting the fact that Iranian law formally addresses homosexual acts by men (*lavat* – sodomy) and women (*mosahegheh*). His courts executed people for breaking these laws.[18] If there were no homosexuals in Iran, why would there be a need for laws and punishments to deal with homosexual behaviour?

Philosophers have now moved on from the age-old questions about whether gods exist independently of human existence, and whether the human mind exists independently of its body.[19] But the increasing global influence of violent religious or quasi-religious ideologies should prompt new discussions, because the problems are rooted in persuading people to believe that certain things exist, without objective evidence. Once people accept, on the basis of belief but not evidence, that a god and a heaven exist, it becomes easy to persuade them that this god wants them to kill non-believers and the reward will be anything they desire in another imagined world. Scriptures can be misused to support this. Evangelical churches teach that the Old Testament is the word of their God and is literally true. It therefore supports the killing and torture of animals and humans,[20] killing people who hold different views including family members who try to challenge religious views,[21] rewarding victorious soldiers with virgins from the defeated enemy to rape,[22] and the ethic that children can be punished for the sins of their grandparents.[23]

Quasi-religious ideologies are very similar. The idea that children can be punished for the sins of their parents pertains in North Korea, where the late Kim Il-sung now exists as the 'eternal president'. (Should new ambassadors therefore present their credentials to a corpse?) All ideologies are open to ontological questioning, including familiar grand world theories. Environmentalist Barbara Ward provides a realistic take on Marx's rhetoric:

> Karl Marx derives his critique entirely from Western ideas and sources...Dialectical materialism, the scientific secret of man's history,...has the grandeur and excitement of a great work of art – the somber force of a Verdi opera, the flashing vision of Goethe's *Faust*. But like them, it belongs to the world of imagination, not of fact...
>
> The Marxist vision of history, with its cosmic sweeps from slavery to feudalism to capitalism to communism, is not true in the sense that a scientific experiment or a plain record of dates and happenings is true. It cannot be tested. No predictions can be based on it. And it is contradicted by a large variety of facts.[24]

Comparing the ontological bases of religious doctrine and quasi-religious ideologies provides a way to question and challenge both.

Significant world issues arise within the 'ontology of nothing', which tries to establish whether nothing exists. In his book *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre explores nothing.[25] Nothing was the basis for many creationist ideologies, because the existence of nothing provided a void that needed a god to fill it. For many religious advocates, God was The Creator who made the world out of nothing, but this requires them to prove that nothing existed. Secular philosophers such as Jacques Lacan argue that nothing does not exist, and so a god as 'the creator' does not exist.[26] The deployment of nothing goes beyond creation myths and amusing arguments, and sometimes underpins major disputes.

thinking zone: what happens when nothing exists?

deploying nothing

The concept of nothing is very useful in political discourse, because it creates an impression that there is a gap that needs filling, which legitimates the actions of those who fill it. Consider:

- *Power vacuum* – an absence of political or other leadership.
- *Democratic deficit* – an absence of a Euro-American-style democratic government.
- *Terra nullius* – Roman law, 'Land belonging to no one' – Australian aboriginal history.
- *A land without a people for a people without a land.* – 'No other people, no other power, has ever created an independent state' in the land that is now Israel.*
- *Desert* – Latin *dēsertum* – 'an abandoned place' – The 'Great American Desert'.
- *Plains* – flat empty land. 'American Great plains', and home to the 'Plains Indians'.
- *Empty Quarter* (Rub' al Khali الربع الخالي) – the large oil rich desert in Saudi Arabia.
- *Namakwa* (Kalahari Desert, South Africa) – a 'kind of vast, empty place', with large diamond and mineral mines. Namaland was the home of the indigenous *Nama*.

(Continued)

(Continued)

- *Res nullius* – Roman law, 'Property belonging to no one'.
- *Void* – housing law: accommodation without an occupancy agreement. Hence, the 'Occupy' movement.
- *Failed/collapsed state* – a state that apparently has no, or an ineffective, government.
- *Frigid zones* – the Polar regions.
- *Space* – the place beyond Earth's atmosphere, containing everything except us.

[*See References for further information.[27]].

Because of the large scale of world events, and the increasing use of big data (C6.5; C9.4), understanding how we, or others, know something is especially important within world studies. *Epistemology* – the study of theories of knowledge[28] – asks questions such as:

- What is the *origin* of the knowledge?
- How did the *empirical research* (and other experience) and *reasoned arguments* contribute to creating the knowledge?
- How *certain* (valid and error free) is the knowledge?
- Was the knowledge created *critically* (sceptically)?
- How has, or might, the knowledge *change* as other knowledge and understandings change?
- To what degree would the knowledge be seen as *generally true* (as 'a theory')?[29]

An international perspective also raises questions about *cross-cultural* understandings of knowledge. Anthropologists would argue that 'traditional' or 'indigenous' knowledge might come more from practical experience, dreams and the spirit world, elders and other authorities.[30] Whose 'knowns' count most, and why?

thinking zone: how do we know the unknowns?

knowns

Former US Secretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld, concluded:

'There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know.'

so...

What are the significant 'known knowns', 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns' in: international relations, development studies, environmental politics, religion, war studies, human capabilities, international organizations?

information systems

Identify examples of *direct primary data* about states, i.e. the data does *not* reach you through indirect 'authorities'.

- From your personal perspective, are there any *certain* 'known knowns' about the examples you identify?
- Are there any *'unknowable* knowns' in the examples – seemingly factual claims which cannot be known because there are no methodologies to discover the truth about them?

archive

If we could set up a database of the misuse of 'unknowns' in international politics, what would be in that archive and who should maintain and fund it?

Because of the distance and scale of events, international knowledge is often based on an 'argument from *authority*',[31] such as a government or commercial expert. The credibility of expert views assumes that:

1. the expert is usually correct about the subject,
2. there is a professional consensus that the expert is usually correct, and therefore
3. any further opinion from the authority on this subject is likely to be correct.

But the views of international experts are susceptible to the *halo effect*.[32] We might judge an authority to be correct because the 'halo' of one particular above-average trait – wealth, tradition, position – can generate a perception that other qualities are above average – honesty, intelligence, diligence. These problems were recognized long ago by Arab historian Ibn Khaldūn. Like al-Bīrūnī, in 1377 he complained about unreliable authorities – 'Reliance upon transmitters' – and he recognized the 'halo' problem of 'authorities' (Figure 1.3).[33]

> People as a rule approach great and high-ranking persons with praise and encomiums [tributes]. They embellish conditions and spread their fame.
>
> Students often happen to accept and transmit absurd information that, in turn, is believed on their authority.
>
> Ibn Khaldūn (1377) *The Muqaddimah*
> (Bk 1: Preliminary Remarks)

Figure 1.3   The 'halo effect' (Ibn Khaldūn)

International knowledge is often created to deceive, in the form of *propaganda*.[34] From the 1950s to 1980s, Eisenhower, Nixon and other American leaders deployed

the *domino theory* to justify the Vietnam War – that if Vietnam became communist then other countries in South East Asia would also fall.[35] The claim had no evidence-base. More than 5 million Vietnamese died in a pointless war, which cost America around $165 billion. Misinformation is not just simple retrospective lies to cover up previous mistakes or misdeeds. It also comes in the form of *pre-emptive deceit* – political knowledge-creation that aims to get in first so that subsequent truth is less likely to be believed – as concerning Iraq in 2003.[36] This is explained further on the website.

Ontology and epistemology are often confused. Roy Bhaskar calls this the 'epistemic fallacy'.[37] But although they are not the same, they are linked, and should both be kept in mind throughout a whole study, particularly when data is being reported, to avoid repeating questionable discourse. Where did the idea of an 'axis of evil' and 'good and evil' come from? The source is probably the Persian prophet Mani (مانی) (circa 216–276AD).[38] So when, (then) US president G.W. Bush deployed his 'good and evil' rhetoric about the 'axis' of supposed US enemies, including Iran, he was repeating an Iranian ideology.

1.2 Reflexivity

When the two Wright brothers were developing their ideas for the first aeroplane, if they argued about something, at some point they would deliberately swap sides in the argument.[39] This is an ancient Greek technique called *Dissoi Logoi*. Philosophers analyse how false logic arises, and an awareness of this can help to avoid weaknesses in arguments. Material on the website explains the familiar problems.

There are many relevant approaches to *reflexive* or *reflective* thinking – turning our mental processes back upon themselves. When developing intelligence tests in 1904, Binet assessed 'auto-critique' – the critical understanding of oneself.[40] Bourdieu provides philosophical arguments for reflexivity in sociology,[41] and many writers develop the methodological implications.[42] Organizations or groups use *sense-making* or *mindfulness*.[43] But these ideas are not new. The *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance* (資治通鑑) by Ssu-ma Kuang (司馬光) (1018–1086), provided a history of China from 403BC to 959, and aimed to help subsequent rulers *reflect* (in the 'mirror' it provided) on the mistakes and success of their predecessors.[44]

Techniques for reflective thinking are not complicated. Using simple words – if, but, or – can expand thinking. Sociologists often talk of viewing events through different *lenses*. Materials to explore these techniques are on the website.

Arguably, complete *objectivity* is impossible,[45] so researchers should aim 'to understand the effects of [their] experiences rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate them'.[46] It is helpful to consider the strengths and weaknesses of *positionality*[47] – the *exogenous/etic* perspectives as an *outsider*, or the *endogenous/*

emic perspectives as an *insider*.[48] But assessing personal identity is not always straightforward, particularly for international students and scholars who return to a "home" country to do research.[49] Would a Pakistani student from a middle class family in Islamabad be an insider or outsider if she did research among the Taliban in North Eastern Pakistan?

Most reflexive methodology is not specific to international research but geographers provide useful insights about fieldwork, feminist perspectives[50] and researching elites.[51] Careful consideration of the implications of working across languages[52] and using translators[53] is clearly important for much international work, but is also increasingly relevant within multicultural countries. There is discussion concerning international collaboration in research,[54] and cross-cultural management studies,[55] but international relations has 'lacked a sociology of itself'[56] and is arguably less internationally reflexive in its approach to research than might be expected.[57]

Research diaries or ethnographic notes can provide a basis for reflexive thinking. Notes might be based on self-reflexive contextual impressions, which may later become data or help to explain data (Figure 1.4). Alternatively, they can be structured more formally as: *observational notes* (a purely factual account), *methodological notes* (what happened during data collection), *theoretical notes* (what might be the broader explanations) and *analytic memos* (initial comparisons of data, theory and literature).[58] Notes might also include how researchers and others are feeling – tired, angry, stressed – because later this might warn of unreliable data.

MAY 3 – First impressions: lots of concrete, beautiful mountains in the distance. The welcome is very warm, people are so polite and hospitable; it makes me feel very welcome.

MAY 4 – Outside of the home, things are a bit different. I had to change my shirt before going out as it is a little see through (I had never noticed that before!). So that put me on my guard. But people are very friendly. It is interesting seeing how people dress. Men can get away with more and many dress in 'Western' styles. Girls all wear hijab. Some women do wear clothes that reveal the outline of their body shape, but hair, arms and legs are always covered. There are both cultural and legal aspects to this. The head being covered draws you to their faces, and particularly the eyes. I never noticed so many different subtle shades of brown, green, blue before.

MAY 6. As a foreign man, you must be careful. There is no physical contact with a woman if you are not family. You can shake their hand if it is offered, otherwise you simply say Assalam o Alaikum. I bumped into a woman in a shopping mall, and quickly said 'sorry', reaching out in a reassuring way (something I would do at home). The woman looked shocked, and A. said that if I had touched her it would have been very offensive.

Figure 1.4 A self-reflexive contextual diary

(By a European man in a Muslim country)

More broadly, the UN concept of *international understanding* provides a framework for reflecting on world research.[59] A Deputy Director General of UNESCO, W.H.C. Lewis, provided a nuanced explanation:

International Understanding is the ability to observe critically and objectively and appraise the conduct of [people] everywhere to each other, irrespective of the nationality of culture to which they may belong. To do this one must be able to detach oneself from one's own particular cultural and national prejudices and to observe [people] of all nationalities, cultures and races as equally important varieties of human being inhabiting this earth.[60]

To transcend nationalistic and other divisive approaches, the concept of thinking and trying to act *without borders*, which derived from *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF), is now applied to over 60 world organizations including musicians, reporters, monks and clowns.[61] The idea reflects the formation of international organizations in the 19th century,[62] and the present-day movement is assisted by books such as *Activists Beyond Borders*,[63] initiatives like the *Reporters Without Borders* and the *Electronic Frontier Foundation*. But, as George Orwell reminds us, progress does not intrinsically lead to international understanding or a borderless world:

We were once told that the aeroplane had '*abolished frontiers*'; actually it is only since the aeroplane became a serious weapon that frontiers have become definitely impassable. The radio was once expected to promote international understanding and co-operation; it has turned out to be a means of insulating one nation from another.[64]

thinking zone: potatoes without borders

Potatoes are now grown in more than 100 countries around the world, but:

Belarus

- Belarusians eat the most potatoes – 335 kg per year. The world average is 33 kg.
- The average potato production in Belarus each year is 865 kg per person. In the USA – 69 kg per person.
- Belarus is the 10th largest potato producer in the world.
- Belarusians know more than 300 recipes for potatoes.
- There is a Belarusian national dance called *Bul'ba* – 'potatoes'.
- In the Soviet Union, Belarusians were sometimes called *bulbashi*.
- In January 2014, Russia accused Belarus of potato smuggling from the EU.

global potatoes

- Potatoes came originally from Peru and Bolivia, not Belarus. So how, and why, did the potato get to Belarus, and become so popular?
- Potatoes came to Spain from South America. Peter I brought a small sack of potatoes from Spain to Russia in the 18th century.

- Peter I wanted to grow them in Russia but farmers didn't know how. They ate potato tubers and died. The potato became known as the 'Devil's apple' and people refused to grow it.
- Belarus and Ukraine were under Russian domination at that time, and Belarusians grew them instead.

potato politics

- Potatoes are the world's fourth largest food crop, after rice, wheat and corn.
- The UN *International Year of the Potato* (2008) promoted the idea that the potato is crucial to avoid global food shortages.
- In Europe, only a quarter of potatoes are now eaten by humans. Half are fed to livestock. The rest is used to produce alcohol and starch used by food chemical and paper industries.
- *GMO-Compass.org* claims that 'extending the benefits of potato production depends on improvements in...potato varieties that have reduced water needs, greater resistance to pests and diseases, and resilience in the face of climate changes'.
- In 1998, Hungarian researcher Árpád Pusztai claimed on British TV that rats fed with GMO potatoes suffered damage to their intestines and immune systems. The next day he was suspended by his employer, the *Rowett Institute*, his research team was disbanded, and data seized. UK government officials, *Monsanto* and (then) heads of state Blair and Clinton were implicated in the actions.

Where, and what, next for the potato – what is its global future?

[See References for further information.[65]]

Note: Most online information about GM potatoes stems from the GM industries. *Genewatch.org* provides alternative views.
(Research: Belous Daria, Minsk State Linguistic University)

main ideas

The construction of **international knowledge** needs to consider:

- how we can prove that relevant things *exist* (ontology).
- how we *know* about things (epistemology).
- *cross-cultural* understandings of existence and knowledge.
- why the *authority* for any source of information is credible.
- how we detect *propaganda* and *pre-emptive deceit*.
- whether *definitions* and *assumptions* are clear and international.

A **reflexive** approach should aim to avoid:

- bias caused by ethnocentricity, nationalism, or worldviews.
- bias caused by human psychological traits.
- simplistic conclusions from complex data.

And should aim to achieve:

- an examination of the research design, data and analysis from *different perspectives* – self, others, mirrors, eyes, lenses.
- contributions to *international understanding*.
- researchers and readers who think *without borders*.

——————————— key reading ———————————

Audi, R. (1997) *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge.* London: Routledge.

Eagleton, M. (2009) 'Examining the case for reflexivity in international relations: insights from Bourdieu', *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, 1: 111–123.

Effingham, N. (2013) *An Introduction to Ontology.* Cambridge: Polity.

Keck, M.E. and Sikkink, K. (1998) *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Woolgar, S. (1988) *Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge.* London and Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

——————————— online resources ———————————

To access the resources – search on the name in italics or use the http.

International knowledge

Future of Humanity Institute – do we exist, and will we continue to exist? – existential-risk. org

Ontology.com – ongoing discussions from an American perspective

Epistemology for dummies – a good start – www.epistemologyexpress.com/efordummies. htm

Interdependence Movement. Citizens Without Borders

Electronic Frontier Foundation – protecting the freedom of electronic communication across borders

TWO
Theories and concepts in world research

A story from the Silk Road tells of an argument between *wine, tea* and *milk. Wine* claimed he was most important because he made people happy, *tea* claimed the same because tea made people calm, and *milk* argued that she was best as babies would not survive without her. But then *water* said, 'You are all wrong. I am the most important, because all drinks depend on me.' *Water* won the argument, with a theory.

This chapter outlines relevant theories (a system of ideas that helps to predict things, such as a proven hypothesis) and concepts (a general idea) under three headings – *peoples, places* and *systems* (see Figure 2.1). It does not (and could not!) provide an in-depth critical discussion of all world theories, and the synopses should be followed up through the references. Experts in particular fields should probably ignore the sections they are familiar with, and investigate the relevance of other

approaches. Good theories have *predictive* or *explanatory* power. Philosophers argue about whether theories represent truth[1] and the degree to which world theory emerges from, or helps to form, evidence.[2] Present-day world theories have a strong European-American bias, and are often ethnocentric.
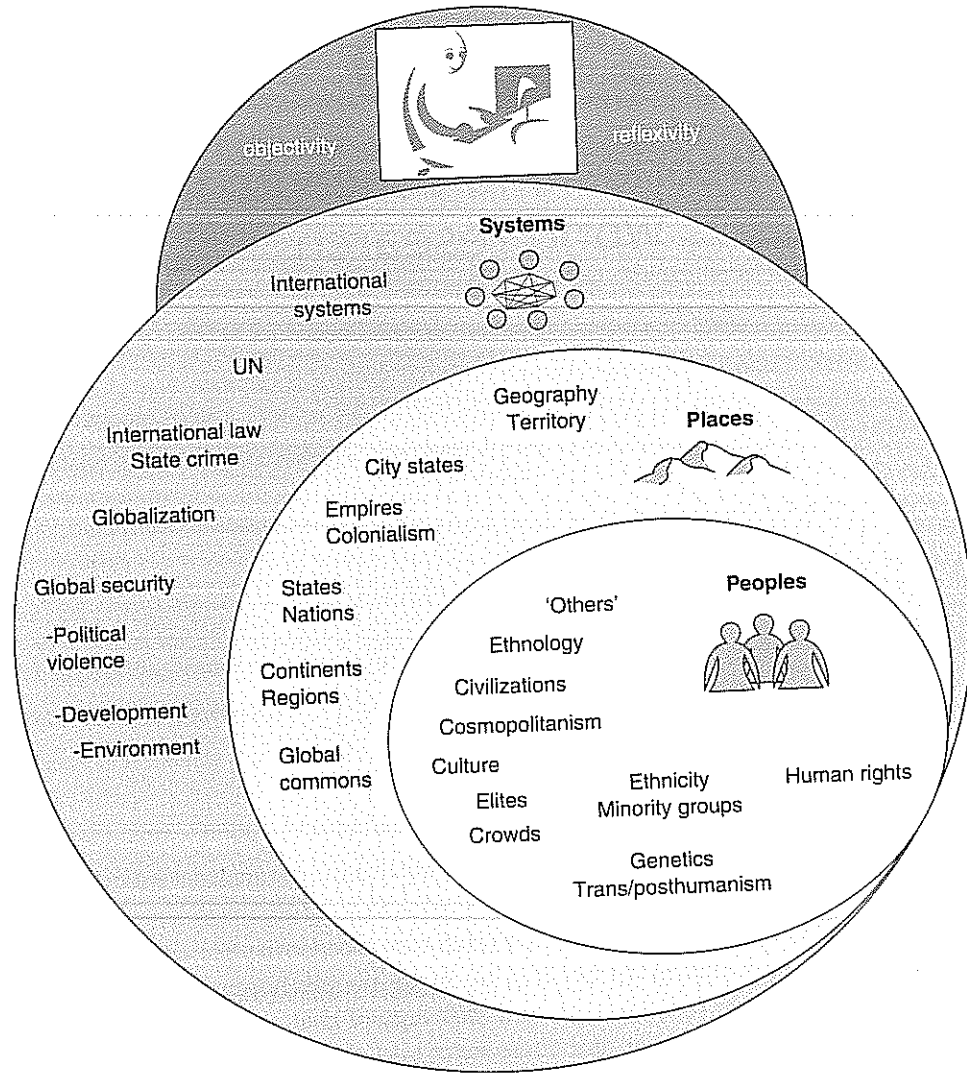

Figure 2.1 World theoretical frameworks

2.1 Peoples

'Peoples' may be the subjects of a ruler, a group to which individuals feel they belong (tribe, clan, racial group), or a group of citizens who legitimize power elites. But this

creates the notion of outsiders who do not belong, and world research has often generated worldviews of **others** as representing a threat because of appearance, race, religion, nationality, class, gender, civilization and similar perceived differences.[3] The study of different peoples has been central to:

- *religious studies*, which wanted to prove the content of religious texts, and that the peoples of some religions were better than other religions.
- *anthropology* and *ethnology*, which often constructed **others**, and rationalized colonial policies to demean and control.
- *scientific racism, ethnic nationalism* and *eugenics*, which tried to prove that peoples were different and some were inferior.
- *historical studies*, which tried to understand the rise and fall of *civilizations*, but also gave rise to *nationalistic* views.
- *cosmopolitism,* and the idea that everyone is a 'citizen of the world'.
- modern *ethnography*, which tries to understand different cultures, of many forms.
- *social stratification, elite* and *crowd* studies.
- *human rights*, which aim to protect all individuals equitably.
- *human biology*, which now proves the common genetic roots of all peoples, considers the future of the human race, and provides understandings of the 'global brain'.

Although many of the unethical approaches to world research seem to be part of past eras, understanding the failings of the past can help to avoid repeating past mistakes.

The understanding of **others** has a problematic history. Even Hippocrates used racial descriptors such as 'industrious' versus 'sluggish'.[4] The outcomes have been:

ethnocentric – promoting the centrality and paramount importance of one's own people,
xenophobic – creating a fear strangers or foreigners,
supremacist – claiming a right to rule "inferior" groups,
exceptionalist – believing that one's own group is different from, and better than, others.

The biological explanation is that hostility towards other groups seems to be a 'human universal'.[5] But this is made worse by social manipulation because human instincts can be exaggerated to reinforce political interests. For example, young children will tend to eat what their parents eat because that is an evolutionary mechanism to avoid being poisoned. But this can then be turned into a cultural food taboo and a life-long habit, which keeps the young within the group, and alienates others.[6]

Jacques Derrida provides a psychological explanation – if there is a perception of 'self', there must also be a perception of **others** to define that self.[7] But this may not always have been the case.[8] European exploration by ship emphasized difference – to sailors voyaging East from Lisbon, Japanese people would look suddenly different. But travellers on land, for example along the Silk Road, would see diverse similarities across the whole continent, from Tehran to Nara.[9] Silk Road researcher al-Bīrūnī was again progressive, and tried to understand how those he studied viewed others (Figure 2.2).[10]

...all [the Hindu] fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them – against all foreigners. They call them mleccha, i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby, they think, they would be polluted. They consider as impure anything which touches the fire and the water of a foreigner...They are not allowed to receive anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished it, or was inclined to their religion.

ابوريحان محمد بن احمد بيرونى

Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī, *India* (circa 1030)

Figure 2.2   Researching 'othering' (al-Bīrūnī)

Religious **ideologies** often underpinned hatred. Arab historian Ibn Khaldūn was vitriolic in 1377 (Figure 2.3).[11] Compte de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* promoted 'our white species'.[12] The South African *Dutch Reformed Church* (NHK) justified *apartheid* on Biblical grounds – that the non-Israelite Gibeonites were to be 'slaves, and hewers of wood and drawers of water'.[13] The old Jewish texts appear to justify many other evils against peoples. Moses condoned rape as a reward for victorious soldiers.[14] Deuteronomy justified *genocide* – 'Of these peoples...you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them',[15] and stoning on suspicion of adultery – 'the young woman because she was in a town and did not scream for help'.[16] The doctrine of present-day evangelical churches still supports these views. Paradoxically, Iran's penal code still maintains the Jewish ethic of stoning women,[17] as does Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates. Most UN codes now preclude racial discrimination; the UN *Genocide Convention* (1948) now covers acts that intend 'to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group...';[18] and sexual violence became a war crime in 2008.[19]

مقدمة ابن خلدون

To the south of this Nile, there is a Negro people called Lamlam. They are unbelievers...Beyond them to the south, there is no civilization in the proper sense. There are only humans who are closer to dumb animals than to rational beings. They live in thickets and caves and eat herbs and unprepared grain. They frequently eat each other. They cannot be considered human beings

Ibn Khaldūn (1377) *The Muqaddimah*
(Bk 1: Preliminary Remarks)

Figure 2.3   Theological 'othering' (Ibn Khaldūn)

Ethnology became the study of *races*, and the **comparative method** assumed that other races represented "living fossils" which Europeans could use to study their origins. Theories of **ethnic nationalism** legitimized nations,[20] and **scientific racism** conflated race, mental disability and animals using meticulous comparative methodology (Figure 2.4). **Eugenics** then aimed to improve the genetic make-up of European populations. Although associated with Nazi Germany, the ideology was expressed by many elites including Thomas Jefferson[21] and Winston Churchill.[22]

An "Asylum Mongol"
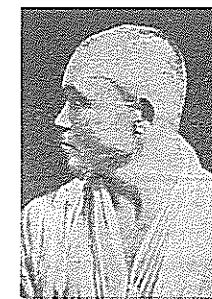
A Kirghiz man (Racial Mongol)
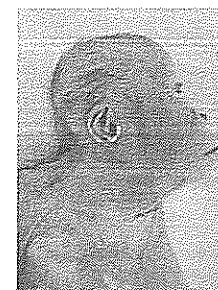
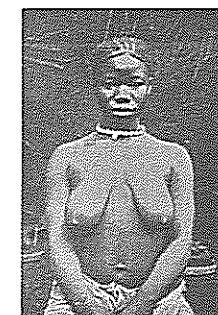A young Orang-utan
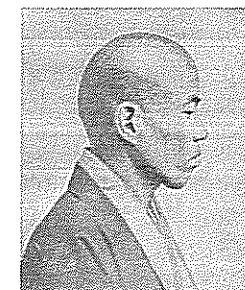
A Japanese priest

A "black" woman

A "yellow" woman (Chinese)

Hand-print of "Mongolian" imbecile

Hand-print of a Tonkinese sailor

Hand of an Orang-utan

Figure 2.4   Scientific racism

Full version on the website.
Crookshank, F.G. (1924) *The Mongol in Our Midst: A Study of Man and his Three Faces.*
Note: Please use these photographs responsibly. Do not send digital versions.

Ethnicity[23] traditionally meant national *identity*, and Amartya Sen argues that the construction of identity can fuel enmity and violence.[24] Ethnic theories continue in relation to IQ,[25] but the general conclusion among psychologists is that although certain tests may show differences between ethnic groups, this is because of the linguistic or cultural insensitivity of the tests, not racial differences.[26] But now 'ethnicity' usually implies a less specific ancestry or cultural heritage. The term *ethnic background* is often used in relation to **minority** groups ('minority' usually meaning power not size) and terminology is confusing. Chinese people in New York might be described as a *minority ethnic* group, but in the world Chinese people are clearly not an *ethnic minority*. Although racial distinctions have often been harmful, there are arguments that a 'denial of difference' can also be problematic.[27]

Within *historical studies*, the concept of **civilizations** is used to understand large groups of peoples, but is hard to define.[28] Studying the main legal traditions of the world can help.[29] Success and failure has been a common theme, since Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah* (1377).[30] In 1911, G.G. Rupert's *The Yellow Peril; or, the Orient vs. the Occident* promoted a fear that the Biblical 'Kings from the East'[31] – China, India, Japan, and Korea and Russia – would attack England and the United States, but Jesus would stop them.[32] The evidence for Rupert's rhetoric was the Bible, and he promoted a German worldview to construct American enmity, which prefaced the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Cold War against 'Russia', the 'axis of evil', and ongoing mistrust of 'Arabia', 'Persia' and 'Afghanistan'. Rupert's ideas and map seem a prototype for Huntington's *clash of civilizations*.[33]

thinking zone: are 'clashes' between or within civilizations?

'clashes'

Huntington warns of 'the clash of civilizations'. How do the following events fit that concept?

- World War I, within Europe.
- The 'troubles' between Catholic and Protestant Christians in Northern Ireland.
- Imperialism and enmity among states that share Confucian values – China, Japan, Korea.
- Disagreements and war within Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam.
- Conflicts between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, e.g. Iran and Iraq.

Since 1945, when has large-scale political violence occurred *between*:

- Asia and Europe?
- Asia and Africa?
- Africa and Europe?
- America and anywhere else?

Are wars between civilizations, or between powerful people who use ordinary people to fight their wars?

[See References for further information.[34]]

Nationalistic ideologies of "them and us" continue and research continues to study how different groups are represented, for example in films and video games,[35] and the government funding of film and video game research.[36] Games are often contrived to reinforce enmity between peoples. The US *Homefront* game is based on a fictional invasion of America by North Korea, and the theme was mirrored in the story of the film *Olympus is Fallen*, and *The Interview*. *Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising* presents the Chinese People's Liberation Army as hostile, and the Chinese *Glorious Mission*, which was originally created for military training, presents the enemy as American.

Present-day **ethnography** (C6.1) is often described as a study of **culture** – a 'design for living'.[37] *Cultural lag* proposes that social problems arise because culture does not keep pace with technological innovation.[38] *Cultural relativism* argues that there are no clear relationships between culture and race, nor absolute standards for judging different cultures. Many disciplines adopt cross-cultural approaches, including philosophers[39] and psychiatrists.[40] **Cultural imperialism**[41] has been a means to increase colonial and neocolonial power. But *cultural diplomacy*[42] builds on cultural exchanges to improve relationships between nations, and *political arts* is becoming an academic field of study.[43] *Cultural studies* (which is distinct from area studies) is an interdisciplinary approach using critical theory and literary criticism, which considers the political aspects of modern culture. It makes distinctions such as 'high cultural production' (film, literature, theatre, art, music, new media), and 'cultural identities' (ethnicity, gender, language, social organization), but not necessarily from the perspective of formal governmental politics.[44] Studies often combine ethnographic and other approaches, for example in relation to cross-national research about the politics of food.[45]

thinking zone: are MOOCs educational imperialism?

MOOCs

The *Massive Open Online Courses* (MOOCs) provide free or cheap access to American and other English language university courses.

why?

MOOCs are good advertisements for universities, and countries. But are they also a form of:

- cultural imperialism?
- cultural diplomacy?
- soft power?

What is the likely future of MOOCs, and how might other countries, and universities teaching in other languages, respond?

[See References for further information.[46]]

All peoples seem to give rise to **elites**.[47] Classical elite theory is rooted in the work of Italian sociologists Pareto (1848–1923) and Mosca (1858–1941), who argued that personal characteristics, such as organizational skill, create an inevitable distinction between select groups of powerful people and others. Traditional theorists often claimed that elites are morally and intellectually superior.[48] International perspectives include *The Comparative Study of Elites* (1952), which aimed to 'reveal the significance of the vast revolution that is reshaping our contemporary world', on the assumption that, 'by determining what is happening to the elites of societies around the globe...we can test the underlying hypothesis...that a world revolution is under way during our epoch'.[49] Future developments may include updates of national elite studies – including South America,[50] Russia,[51] Europe[52] and East Asia[53] – and studies of 'global elites'.[54]

Elites usually perceived **crowds** – the masses – as a threat. From the Greek notion of *ochlocracy* (mob rule), *majoritarianism* carried negative implications, as did the Roman word *demokratia* – rule of the people. J.S. Mill warned of the 'tyranny of the majority' in 1859,[55] and the idea was perpetuated in books such as *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*[56] and *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*.[57] Following World War I, the concern about crowds continued, for example a Spanish perspective in *The Revolt of the Masses*,[58] and a German view in *The Menace of the Herd*.[59] Theories evolved to represent polarized perspectives of bad crowds[60] and good crowds.[61] The advent of the internet revealed the potential of the crowd as a resource, and Surowiecki's *The Wisdom of Crowds* argued the value of crowd perspectives.[62] The word 'crowdsourcing' was coined by Jeff Howe, a writer for *Wired* magazine, in 2006, as analogous to outsourcing (2009),[63] and crowdsourcing is now becoming an exciting new research framework (C6.4).[64] But the fear of crowds has not disappeared, and is often manipulated to create a fear of crowds of **others**, based on race or nationality. The lesson from history is that, when it suits the interests of elites to present peoples as crowds that threaten security, they will always find supposed research that supports their views.

Social stratification, whether based on race or other factors, was not a European invention.[65] Jewish tradition delineates judges, kings, priests (*Kohen*) and prophets. Korea had five classes – intellectuals (*yang-bang*), professional and military (*jung-in*), farmers and commercial (*nong-sang-min*), untouchables (*chun-min*) and a slave class (*nobi*). The Indian caste system divided people into hereditary groups – Brahmins, *Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras*, and the alienated 'untouchables'. Stratification is still intrinsic within honorifics in languages such as Burmese, Korean and Japanese. Within European sociology, class systems evolve as societies change. In Britain, a 'technical middle class' and 'new affluent workers' have been added to traditional categorizations which reflect new forms of *cultural capital*.[66] Classes may now have greater international than intra-national affinities – the well-educated middle classes of India, China, Europe and the Americas may have more in common with one another than with the poor, rural or marginalized people in their own countries.

A **cosmopolitan**[67] perspective promotes an undivided view of humanity and power.[68] The cosmopolitan Greeks apparently considered themselves to be 'citizens of the world'. And the Stoics declared allegiance to universal ideas of justice rather than to the city state – 'we should regard all human beings as our fellow citizens and neighbours'.[69] This concept of *global citizens*[70] and *global ethics*[71] parallels ideas of *global justice* – a fair distribution of 'goods' and 'bads'.[72] Many cities celebrate their *diversity, multicultural*[73] populations, and *cross-border families*.[74] The term *social cohesion*[75] develops previous ideas of *cultural assimilation* and *melting pot*.[76] Many individuals see themselves as having multiple *identities*,[77] and Rumford talks of a 'strangeness' as globalization blurs community boundaries and identities.[78] Appadurai proposes viewing globalizing society in terms of relationships between 'public worlds' comprising *ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes* and *ideascapes*.[79]

When the UN *Charter* used the phrase, the 'peoples of the United Nations', it prefaced an era of codifying the **rights** of everyone, and formalized this in the UN *Declaration of Universal Human Rights* (1948). The website explains more. The first international agreement was probably the *Declaration of Geneva*, which affirmed children's rights and was accepted by the *League of Nations* in 1923. But rights are not a European invention. The *Code of Hamurabi* (circa 1790BC) limited the power of ruling elites, and the Persian *Cyrus Cylinder* (539BC), often called the world's first human rights code, gave religious freedoms and abolished slavery. (It seems that the Iranians abolished slavery 2293 years before the Americans discovered it.) A few Islamic countries objected to the 'universality' of what they saw as a European-American imposition of moral standards, and created the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* in 2000.

The concept of rights usually implies related **responsibilities**, fulfilled reciprocally by other people, or by states through public services or remedies for wrongdoing. But political leaders often fail to fulfil their responsibilities, and many try to avoid being bound by the same rules as the people.[80] Rights are sometimes restricted on the basis of an apparent inability to fulfil responsibilities. Full rights were often denied to indigenous groups, who were perceived as too "primitive" to understand their responsibilities. The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) now guides the UN *Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*, and introduces the concepts of collective rights and cultural rights, but the idea of group rights is often questioned.[81] Similar arguments delayed giving people with mental disabilities equal rights. The Christian church talked of the 'grave mistake of treating human-looking shapes as if they were human, although they lack the least vestige of human behavior or intellect'.[82] The Catholic Church only extended its right of Communion to disabled people who could not state their belief in the Eucharist, in 1983. Even the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons* (1971) talked of 'restriction' or 'denial' of rights 'whenever mentally retarded persons are unable...to exercise all their rights in a meaningful way' (Art. 7). This has practical implications, such as

the denial of justice to victims with disabilities.[83] The rights of the unborn child, in relation to toxic environmental impacts, have also been hard to establish, because they are hard to reconcile with a woman's right to have an abortion.[84] Paradoxically, the rights of future generations – *intergenerational rights*[85] – are also impeded by arguments that unborn people cannot fulfil any responsibilities, as are arguments against animal rights.[86] But distinctions are evolving. Philosopher John Gray reminds us that humans are just another form of animal.[87]

In parallel with these social constructs of humanity as a planetary whole, advances in science – **human biology**, psychology, evolutionary theory, archaeology – are increasing the understandings of humanity. Mithen's *Prehistory of the Mind* explores the common roots of art, religion and science.[88] Taylor provides convincing arguments that *Homo sapiens* evolved as *artificial apes*, all humans are intrinsically a technological species, and the use of simple technologies shaped the modern brain.[89] Bloom envisions the *Global Brain* as a 'complex adaptive system' of which all human endeavours, including the internet, are interrelated components.[90] There are now good understandings of why humans tend to be overoptimistic,[91] and why *positive illusions* cause military and political leaders to be overconfident.[92] Kahneman explains why it is useful to understand the difference between the 'fast, intuitive and emotional' and the 'slower, more deliberative and more logical' use of the mind.[93]

Practical insights for international research are also coming from *neuroscience*. Susan Greenfield addresses questions about how the pervasive use of recent technologies, principally IT, may change the way human minds work,[94] including our sense of identity.[95] Brain imaging shows not only that we share common thought processes, but researchers are starting to explain how our brain addresses world problems. Functional magnetic resonance imaging of the brain has been used 'to investigate the central problem of distributive justice: the trade off between equity and efficiency'.[96] The researchers examined brain responses while participants considered an aid scenario about distributing food equitably in a famine stricken region. The dilemma was, should they strive to be equitable and distribute food fairly even if it becomes rotten, or be efficient and distribute the food to those nearest to the distribution networks before it goes bad, but leaving some people to die? In the experiment, a similar scenario was about distributing money and food to children living in an orphanage in Uganda. The study found that two different regions of the brain respond to efficiency and inequity, but a third area 'encodes a unified measure of efficiency and inequity'. This experiment does not provide instant answers to the problems of global inequity, but it shows that human beings across the world, from government ministers to school children, have the same mental equipment to try to reconcile dilemmas like these.

Advances in science increase the understandings of humanity, and raise new questions. Will *human enhancement* create **transhuman** generations and then a **posthuman** condition in which humans cease to exist?[97] Would that amount to

neo-eugenics?[98] Could present-day genetics and neuroscience mutate into another unethical use of science for world research?[99] Might humans suffer *dysgenics* because of changed reproductive or survival behaviour,[100] or *regressive evolution* of the brain because of adaptation to environmental changes?[101] Is Cambridge cosmologist, Stephen Hawking, correct when he predicts that a biological virus, or the development of self-replicating artificial intelligence (AI), could mean the end of the human race? How, as he suggests, might exploration beyond Earth help to solve these problems? The *Institute for Interstellar Studies* considers how human societies would exist in space, and the *Centre for Astrobiology* works to understand 'life in extreme environments on the Earth and beyond', which may also answer the question: Is there life beyond Earth?

But the most pertinent outcome from recent science is to show that the genetic differences between "races" are marginal. Evolutionary theorists now conclude that all modern humans almost certainly have genetic roots in Africa.[102] Even culturally distinct peoples, such as Palestinians and Jews, share a genetic heritage.[103] Their conflicts are wars between imagined histories. Neuroscience shows not only that we share common thought processes, but that our brain addresses world problems in a common way.[104] Science is also underpinning an extension of human inclusiveness to animals?[105] A court ruling from Argentina, in 2014, concluded orangutans are 'non-human persons', and have basic rights to freedom. However although it seems that we share 98% of our genes with chimpanzees, Steve Jones provides a reality check – 'We also share about 50% of our DNA with bananas, and that doesn't make us half bananas.'[106]

2.2 Places

'Humanity is decidedly a territorial species...Territorial expansion and defence by tribes and their modern equivalents the nation states is a cultural universal', concludes biologist E.O. Wilson.[107] Theories of place (a specific space) consider: the creation of **territories**, the **legitimacy** of claims to land, **international organizations**, non-nation **global commons**. In practice, claims to territory reflect three justifications: historical, "It's ours because we've always lived here" – passive, "It's ours because we were given it" – or imperialist, "It's ours because we took it." A sense of territory is politicized by demonizing the peoples of other places.

Geography explores the physical and political characteristics of territories.[108] In Europe, geographical methods emerged in the 3rd century BC, and focused on physical aspects until the 19th century. Islands were probably the first places to develop a sense of *territory* on a large scale. Elsewhere, borders were marked by physical features such as rivers and mountains. Boundaries subsequently became political rather than physical constructs, and diverse 'geographies' have emerged.[109]

In continental regions, castles expanded into walled **city states** – Ur, Uruk, Canaan. Linked city states appeared around 400–500BC. From the 7th century BC, the Great Wall of China evolved apparently to enclose the emergent states of the Chinese Empire. Present-day city states include Monaco, Singapore, the Vatican,[110] and arguably Pyongyang. Walls remain significant in constructing cities and state territory.

City states often merged into **empires**. The Holy Roman Empire (which was not Holy, Roman or a true Empire) comprised a string of self-ruling, but loyal, 'Free Imperial Cities'. Powerful rulers controlled their domains by giving land to loyal subordinates – *fiefdoms* to warriors, *principalities* to family members and *bishoprics* to religious leaders. **Expansionism** entailed moving borders forward into other lands, as did China. The ancient Chinese name for the Roman Empire was *Dàqín* (大秦) – *Dà* suggesting that the Roman Empire was part of the extended 'greater' Qin state.[111]

But as maritime technology improved, strong navies appropriated distant **colonies**, as did Portugal, Spain, Holland and England. These were often populated by exporting surplus citizens. Britain was still exporting its unwanted children to its former colonies in the 1970s. But colonial theory was not an invention of the Renaissance Europeans. Plato's vision of a *Republic* and its *Laws* envisaged a state from which any 'surplus' person could simply be exported to the 'colonies' – albeit, 'with mutual goodwill between the emigrants and their mother-city'.[112]

Postcolonial writers explain how colonizers legitimized colonial rule,[113] including collusion with missionaries and anthropologists,[114] and abused indigenous peoples, particularly through *slavery*.[115] Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*[116] and Edward Said's *Orientalism* are seminal postcolonial texts.[117] Conversely, *Occidentalism* considers the view of 'the West'.[118] **Neocolonial** theories describe how former colonies used economic, commercial and political influences to prolong their power.[119] This continues in the form of *soft power*, by superpowers such as America and the EU,[120] and China's international activities provide a further dimension.[121] The concept of soft power was originally Chinese – *li* (soft) versus *fa* (hard).[122]

Early **nations** originally comprised people of the same ethnic group, but were not always confined within territorial borders.[123] But the concept of 'nation' is not precise. Companies, notably the *Dutch East India Company*, tried to claim the rights and power of nations, by making laws and signing treaties. Many national claims are 'invented',[124] or 'imagined',[125] and conflated with religion.[126] Muslims still talk of their 'nation' or *Ummah* (الأمة), as meaning the world community of Islamic peoples who are united by a common history. What is the legitimacy of the *Islamic State* (ISIL, ISIS)?

Large historical populations – Egypt, India, China – claim **sovereignty** on the basis of being **civilizational states**.[127] In Europe, the affirmation of the **sovereign state** is usually attributed to the *Treaties of Westphalia* (1648). These were largely symbolic,[128] but they provided the bases for the *Congress of Vienna* (*Wiener Kongress*) (1814–1815),

which tried to affirm borders following the Napoleonic and other wars, the *Concert of Europe*, and then the *League of Nations* (1919). (*Wikipedia* provides a *List of sovereign states*.) States were often constructed in relation to war, and *land rights* gave powerful people certain land.[129] *Land reform* requires the redistribution of land from powerful to less powerful people.[130] But in reality, the concept of *property* is arguably always based more on power than claims of ownership.[131] The *CIA World Factbook* maintains a list of territorial disputes.

State theory[132] argues that states should exist in fact (*de facto*), and in law (*de jure*). The *de jure* view[133] requires a *sovereign state* to have a *legal personality* – it should be accountable in courts such as the ICJ or ECHR. *Declarative* theory maintains that a state must have a defined territory, a permanent population, a government, and be able to have formal relations with other states. *Constitutive* theory argues that a state is a state if it is recognized as such by other states. State governments claim a *national interest* (*raison d'État* – reason of the State), reflecting the security and cultural aims of a state.[134] *Hegemony* explains how nations position themselves in relation to the power of other nations. *Pluralism* describes a mixed-actor model, and a less state-centric view of world systems. In the light of the rise of the BRICS and MINT countries, Kupchan talks of a 'global turn' creating a 'no one's world' in which there are no constant superpowers.[135] And what of the self-declared *micronations*?[136] The legitimacy of states is not as clear as it seems.

thinking zone: how is state status constructed?

Vatican

Vatican City was created by Mussolini and his fascist government though the 1929 *Lateran Treaties*. It claims state privileges about diplomatic relations, banking irregularities and child abuse. Yet it has no permanent, independent population. It is a non-member state of the UN *General Assembly*, which set a precedent for Palestine to gain the same status.
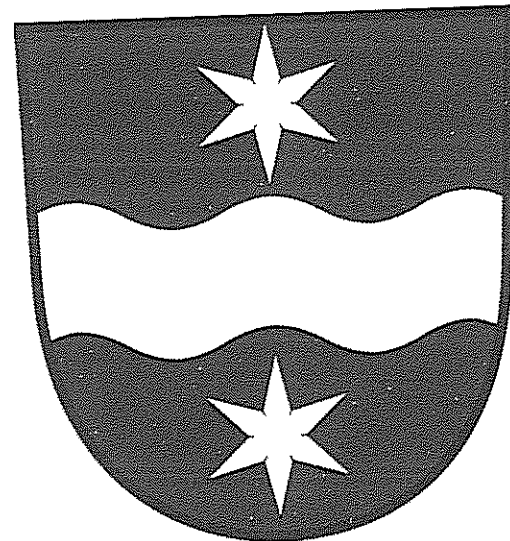
precedent

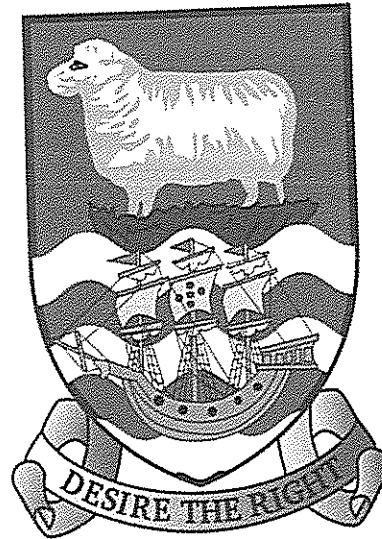How might the case of the Vatican create precedents, about the potential statehood, or city statehood, of:

- Kosovo
- Taiwan
- Kabul
- Jerusalem
- The *Gaesong* industrial region in Korea (the 'Hyundailand' territory inside North Korea, but run by South Korean industries)?
- Islamic State (ISIS, ISIN)

[See References for further information.[137]]

The **United Nations** (UN) recognizes around 193 'member' states, two 'observer' and 11 'other', but many are disputed. The territories of *discontiguous states* – Angola, Argentina, Palestine, Croatia and the USA – are divided by land claimed by other nations. Some regimes have been dubbed *collapsed states*,[138] *fragile states*,[139] or *failed states* but the last has no meaning in international law, and seems to have come from the *CIA State Failure Task Force*. The UN programme on *Small Island Developing States* (SIDS) is increasingly relevant in the context of sea level rise and other changes.[140] *Protectorates* are small countries that have political and military protection by larger countries, in return for political favours.[141] Attempts to legiti-mize these lands include spurious explorers and dubious coats of arms (Figure 2.5). *Wikipedia* provides *Lists of countries and territories* and a *List of national institutions and symbols*.

The creation of nation states also created **stateless peoples**, who have been rec-ognized by the UN since 1954.[142] Some are considered to be *refugees* under the UN *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951). *Environmental refugees* are a new aspect, which is not formalized.[143] Discussions also continue about unrecognized states – *non-nation states, non-self-governing territories* and *stateless nations* – ethnic groups with no territory which claim the status of 'nation'.[144] The *International Romani Union* represents 12 million people, talks of becoming a 'non-territorial nation' with its own government and court.

The **continents** are usually divided into Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe and Australia. But Europe and Asia are sometimes called Eurasia. **Region** can mean small local districts and prefectures, or large land masses embracing many countries. The BBC delineates – Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, the US and Canada. The UN M.49 codes comprise nine regions (including 'world'), and sub-regions, for administrative and statistical purposes (Figure 2.6).[145] UNSTATS also uses regional categorizations based on development – 'developed and developing regions', 'least developed countries', 'landlocked developing countries', 'small island developing states' and 'transition countries'.

Sir Francis Drake's arms, bestowed by Queen Elizabeth I in1582.

The "Falkland Islands" arms, created by the British government in 1948.

A sea captain of Queen Elizabeth I, John Davis, is said to have "discovered" the *Islas Malvinas* in 1592. But there is little evidence about his existence or voyage. The (British) Falklands' coat of arms reflects that of Francis Drake, but it was only created in 1948.

Calling the Falklands, a 'British Overseas Territory', strengthens the British claim to the nearby 'British Antarctic Territories'. But this is also disputed because the *Antarctic Treaty* (1959), signed by Britain, precludes sovereignty rights. The British government renamed the Antarctic region 'Queen Elizabeth Land' in 2012, after Queen Elizabeth II, and labelled it a 'British Overseas Territory' on government maps. These claims are therefore spurious.

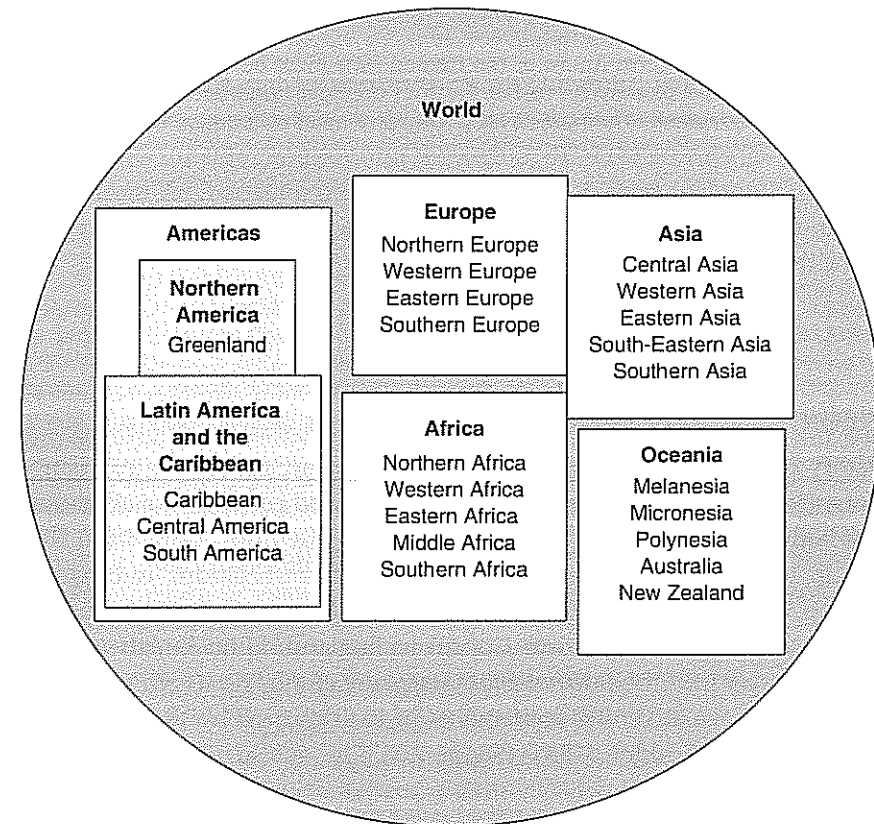**Figure 2.5**   Legitimizing overseas territories

Figure 2.6   The UN regions

Source: UNSTATS

Political regions comprise groups of nations with shared economic and political interests – the *European Union* (EU), *African Union* (AU), *Union of South American Nations* (UNASUR), *Andean Community of Nations* (CAN) and *Association of Southeast Asian Nations* (ASEAN). The *Commonwealth (of Nations)* is united by a common history of British colonial rule. Similarly, the *Commonwealth of Independent States* (CIS) (Содружество Независимых Государств, СНГ) comprises former Soviet Republics. Academics also use groupings based on shared culture – MENA (Middle East North Africa), WANA (West Asia and North Africa), NAWA (North Africa-West Asia). The innovative EC concept of *Euroregions* describes contiguous or non-contiguous areas, based on common interests – environmental problems, fishing stocks, or economic development.[146] *The United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies* (UNU – CRIS) develops regional analysis.[147]

The concept of **global commons** extends the tradition of common land to areas of the Earth and its biosphere (C10.5), as discussed by the *Coalition for the Global Commons*, and is acquiring meaning in international law.[148] Agreements about the use of cyberspace,[149] and the exploitation of minerals on asteroids[150] and other planets are becoming significant. A prognosis by cosmologist Stephen Hawking indicates how territorial claims may evolve in the future:

> I believe that the long-term future of the human race must be in space...It will be difficult enough to avoid disaster on planet Earth in the next hundred years, let alone the next thousand, or million. The human race shouldn't have all its eggs in one basket, or on one planet.[151]

Without knowing of Hawking, 'draw and tell' research showed this was already in the minds of Chinese children, in 2010.

2.3 Systems

The history of **international systems** is confusing, and significant innovations are often forgotten.[152] The idea of forming 'the virtuous and good men of all nations into a regular body, to be govern'd by suitable good and wise rules', came from Benjamin Franklin, in 1731.[153] Kant proposed a 'General Congress of Nations' in *Perpetual Peace* (1795). The *Vienna Summit* (1815) tried to establish permanent institutions across Europe.[154] A little-known American Consul to England, Elihu Burritt (the 'learned blacksmith'), organized the *International Conference of the Friends of Peace* in Brussels in 1848,[155] and spoke at similar conferences in Paris chaired by Victor Hugo (1849), Frankfurt (1850) and London (1851) (Figure 2.7). The website provides a brief history of international organizations.

> I present to this assembly a proposition [for]...a Congress and High Court of Nations for the regulation of the intercourse and for the adjustment of the difficulties which may arise between them, according to the principles of justice embodied in a well-defined code of international law...
>
> The measure proposed is not American, either in origin or argument. It had taken shape and form in the public mind before America was discovered as a world or born as a nation...The idea of international law ...has come down to us...through Egyptians and Persians, through Greeks and Romans...[Around 1650] a French author, in a work entitled "Le Nouveau Cygne"...proposed the convocation and establishment of a great International Senate, composed of a representative from every recognised kingdom or Government in this world – a body which would not only serve as a perpetual Court of Equity and Arbitration, but also as a standing convention or congress to project and propose great international works of improvement.
>
> Elihu Burritt, Speech at the *Peace Congress at Frankfurt*, 24 August 1850

Figure 2.7   Elihu Burritt and a Congress of Nations

Bartlett, E.S. (1897) 'Elihu Burritt – The learned Blacksmith', *New England Magazine*, June, XVI(4): 386.

Within the **United Nations** (UN),[156] organizations have differing status and abilities to create international agreements (Figure 2.8). The *Security Council* has the greatest power, but its legitimacy is questioned. The *General Assembly* deals more democratically with world issues, but its decisions are less binding. The UN *International Law Commission* is the main authority, the system is explained on the UN *International Law* site, and documents can be found through the UN *Documentation Research Guide*. The *International Bar Association* provides professional insights including press analysis.

International law[157] is not easy to define, and law internationalizes in different ways:

- *international court* charters and decisions at the *International Court of Justice* (ICJ), *International Criminal Court* (ICC) and *European Court of Human Rights* (ECHR).
- *multilateral* UN and sister organization (*jus gentium*) agreements among nations (treaties, conventions, trade rules).
- *bilateral* (*jus inter gentes*) agreements between nations (ODA, border agreements, extradition).
- *regional* human rights and law (EU, AU, CIS).
- *incorporation* of international agreements into national law (torture, corruption, human rights).
- *national law* that extends its jurisdiction to create international reach (international paedophiles, abuse of vulnerable people, pollution abroad, the US 1789 *Alien Tort Claims Act*[158]).

America argues that it creates *international doctrine* through *unilateral* acts such as the invasion of Iraq, the extra-judicial killing of Osama bin Laden and use of drones in other countries. Understanding the differing legal traditions helps to understand the arguments about differing cultural perspectives.[159]
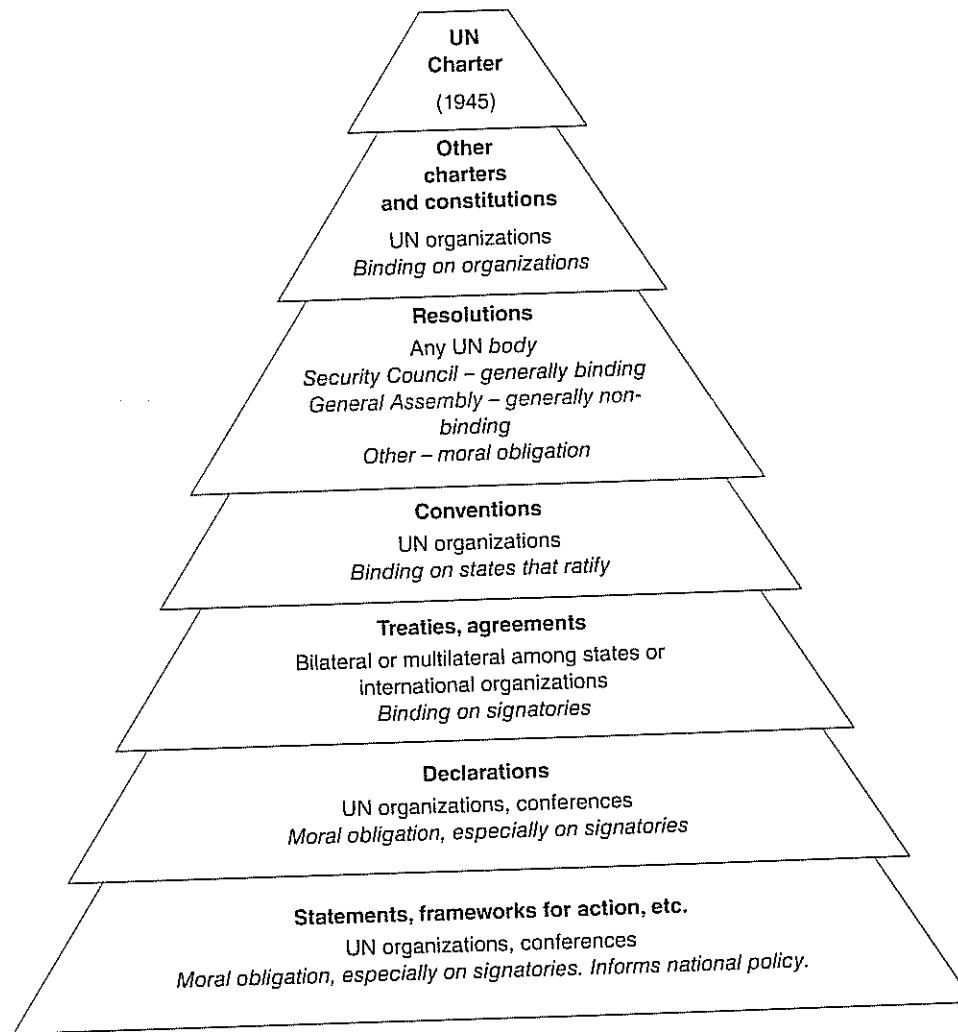
```
                    UN
                  Charter
                   (1945)
                    Other
                  charters
              and constitutions
              UN organizations
            Binding on organizations
                 Resolutions
                 Any UN body
      Security Council – generally binding
      General Assembly – generally non-
                    binding
           Other – moral obligation
                 Conventions
              UN organizations
           Binding on states that ratify
             Treaties, agreements
        Bilateral or multilateral among states or
             international organizations
              Binding on signatories
                 Declarations
         UN organizations, conferences
      Moral obligation, especially on signatories
        Statements, frameworks for action, etc.
         UN organizations, conferences
   Moral obligation, especially on signatories. Informs national policy.
```

Figure 2.8   The status of UN codes

The UN is only partially democratic, and its future form is not certain.[160] It is neither truly international nor global, and its decisions are limited by the national interests of the member states. It therefore has difficulty addressing many issues, such as **state crime**.[161] There are ongoing arguments for UN reform,[162] and the *Centre for UN Reform* provides information and a non-state view.

Theories of **globalization** describe systems that potentially affect the whole world, and seem to transcend national boundaries – communications, economic, trade, arts, politics.[163] But these systems usually only affect sectors of the world population (often the richest) and are usually legally based in nations. So far, there are no

global governments, banks, courts, or companies which completely transcend nations. Gordon Mathews argues that *low end globalization* – the trade in cheap, 'knock off goods', mainly from China – is the real driver of global change because the effect percolates into the masses in less wealthy countries.[164] Emerging **global governance**[165] arises from agreements about global problems such as climate change[166] and justice.[167] *International civil servants*[168] have a small but significant degree of autonomy. UN organizations demonstrate limited global powers independently of nations.[169] The INGOs,[170] social movements[171] and an 'international'[172] or 'global'[173] civil society[174] all contribute to developing *international ethics*[175] and *global ethics*.[176]

The *global* or *human security* framework provides a basis to study international systems and conceptualize the relationships between them, in terms of:[177]

- *political violence* – the use of *power*, through 'soft' influence or 'hard' military force, by nations.
- *development* – the creation of resources and services to sustain human wellbeing, including *humanitarian assistance* in response to emergencies.
- *environment* – the benefits and limits of natural resources.

Across which theories consider *human dimensions*, *agency* and *institutions*.[178]

This framework is reflected in international agreements. The *Helsinki Final Act*, among the 57 states of the *Organization for Security Co-operation* (OSCE), covers politico-military, economic and environmental, and human aspects of security, including 'arms control, confidence and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities'. This *new security* framework encourages analysis across relevant areas, for example understanding how water resources are constrained by environmental factors, and that if disputes are not resolved, violence may result.

2.3.1 Political violence

International relations (IR) constructs, describes and studies the *bilateral* and *multilateral* systems and their interactions across national borders, principally about peace and security, trade and cultural activities.[179] Although IR methods have traditionally been based on history, history is, as A.J.P. Taylor points out, just 'a version of events'.[180] At present the prevailing 'version' within IR is European-American, and asserted, as Wilkinson explains:

The main schools of general theory of international relations (IR) are not proven in any scientific sense: rather they constitute ways of perceiving international relations, metaphors or models which appeal to their adherents because that is the way they prefer to view the world.[181]

And the underlying problem is seen as methodological:

> There are many different scientifically valid ways to produce knowledge. The field of International Relations should pay closer attention to these methodological differences, and to their implications for concrete research on world politics.[182]

Much of the literature is based on an assumption that the purpose of IR theorization is to defend the "west against the rest".

The criticisms are that IR processes are rarely democratic,[183] are not fully based on international ethics,[184] do not recognize increasing cosmopolitanism,[185] do not include global issues such as health[186] and gender,[187] lack a self-critical reflexive perspective,[188] and it has been a *less* international approach than other fields of study.[189] Lewis Fry Richardson provided a rare example of a non-partisan empirical attempt to measure the causes of war and conditions of peace, through differential equations and probability theory.[190] IR theories need to be viewed critically and developed from an evidence-based *among* nations, rather than a defensive *between* nations, perspective. Methods are evolving.[191]

In traditional European-American discourse, there are two main approaches: **realism** (*classical-, neo-, offensive-, defensive-, neoclassical-*) and **idealism** (*rationalist, liberal, neoliberal*). Recent theories blur the distinction and merge ideas from both approaches, for example *liberal realism* (English School). In practice, IR is often based on expediency and 'muddle through' policy.

Realism (power politics) is associated with Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513) and Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651). But there are earlier examples from outside Europe. Within Hindu tradition, Chanakya (circa 350–283BC), a professor at Takshashila University and Prime Minister of the Mauri Empire (India), is attributed with compiling the *Arthashastra* ('The science of politics'), which represents a realist manual for autocrats.[192] The German term *realpolitik* originally meant well-focused policies that were likely to succeed, and the meaning was not intrinsically negative. *Structural realism* proposes that the dynamics of the world system, principally the relative power of states, more often determines political acts and policies.[193] *Neorealism* also sees security as paramount, but points to the changes in a globalizing world, and that states are no longer the sole, or most powerful, international actors. *Neoliberalist* writers argue, on the basis of methodologies such as *game theory*, that states should aim for absolute gains – a win-win among nations – not just relative gains to enhance one nation at the expense of others.[194]

The underlying **realist** assumptions are that other states are "guilty until proven innocent" of actions that are potentially hostile to the *national interests* of the "home" state, and that the world would become **anarchical** without forceful national stances.[195] Much of the realist debate depends on an 'ontology of **anarchy**',[196] (Figure 1.2) which reflects the old 'madness of crowds' ideologies (above), scaled up to apply to a global population. Do power elites maintain fear in order to maintain their control? The threats may change their persona – barbarians,[197] religions, nationalism,

cults, terrorism, cyber-war, environmental and other liberal concerns[198] – but public fear has often been deployed to make the masses easy to govern. *Military Keynesianism* argues that politicians use wars to pump money into their faltering economies,[199] and into their own pockets. Is *perpetual war*, in some form, necessary to all forms of world order? George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* provides the most famous exposé,[200] but in earlier writings he questioned the concept of anarchy, and invented the term 'cold war':

> ...looking at the world as a whole, the drift for many decades has been not towards anarchy but towards the reimposition of slavery. We may be heading not for general breakdown but for an epoch as horribly stable as the slave empires of antiquity... [T]hat is, the kind of world-view, the kind of beliefs, and the social structure that would probably prevail in a state which was at once unconquerable and in a permanent state of 'cold war' with its neighbors.[201]

Idealism (utopianism) is based more on moral values and international law, and is reflected in ideas such as *ethical foreign policy*. Realist critiques argue that the idealist approach ignores "what was and is" (the *positivist* view), and emphasizes "what ought to be" (the *normative* view). *Functionalist* perspectives arose mid-20th century, and saw the common interests of states and non-state entities as of increasing importance.[202] *Neofunctionalism* returned towards a realist view, and argued for integration, rather than unification, within international systems.[203] *Neo-Gramscian* analyses examine power relations more historically, in terms of agency and structure, which circumvents the realist versus stalemate.[204] Nation states are significant, but so are many other non-state actors, particularly economic institutions and INGOs, and *regime theory* argues that cooperation between non-state entities influences how states operate.[205] *Neoliberalism* provides a more inclusive approach which builds on, and questions, the traditional realist–idealist dichotomy.[206]

Diplomacy should enable 'states to secure the objectives of their foreign policies without resort to force, propaganda, or law'.[207] The continued use of the term 'foreign policy', and not 'international policy', by nations reflects the ongoing adversarial ethos of diplomacy. Theories of state diplomacy are also being used by others who work internationally and cross-culturally within states – INGOs, financiers, tourist companies, commercial negotiators. Skills include: negotiation, conflict resolution and cross-cultural communication, which are used for pre-negotiations (talks about talks), around the table discussion, maintaining diplomatic momentum, packaging agreements and following up. Techniques such as *constructive ambiguity* avoid contentious specifics until there is broad agreement about aims. *Mediation* among nations is increasingly important, and also between governments and non-state actors.[208] *Strategic moral diplomacy* moves forward from the traditional adversarial style and encourages diplomats to acknowledge the 'moral universe' that underpins the vital interests of others, which is especially relevant when religion and similar ideologies are factors.[209] *Public diplomacy*, through a range of social networking, is of increasing importance, as is *cultural diplomacy* (above). China's *resource diplomacy* provides new dimensions.[210]

Diplomacy often involves trade-offs ("if you do this, we'll do that"), but also tries to find *coincidences of interest*. Water shortages in West Asia and North Africa, which are more important than minor ethnic disagreements, can provide a basis for agreements and systems around which other issues can also be resolved. But alliances can be surprising. In 2013, a declaration proposed by the UN *Commission on the Status of Women*, to end violence against women and girls, was opposed by Vatican City, Iran, Russia and Egypt. A year earlier, when Germany proposed banning circumcision on the grounds of child abuse, Muslims and Jews joined together to object. The old quip that diplomats are "sent to lie abroad for their country" has taken on renewed meaning in the light of *Wikileaks*,[211] and the *Independent Diplomat* site provides interesting insights.

Regional **collective defence** agreements are based on the idea that an attack on one country would be treated as an attack on all. The *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO) is probably the most active, and the NGO *Nato Watch* provides critical perspectives. The *Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance* (*Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Recíproca* – TIAR) is based on a 'hemispheric defence' doctrine across the Americas. The *Collective Security Treaty Organization* (CSTO) (Организация Договора о Коллективной Безопасности Organizatsiya Dogovora o Kollektivnoy Bezopasnosti) has similar aims for Central Asia, and the *Shanghai Cooperation Organization* (SCO) (上海合作组织) links China and Central Asia, and also fosters economic and cultural interaction. The *Community of the Sahel-Sahara States* (CEN-SAD) demonstrates that collective security now includes environmental threats, such as desertification.

The idea of a **security regime** may be agreed by non-allied countries, such as the US and USSR during the Cold War.[212] The *League of Nations* (above) formalized the idea of international collective defence, and the UN *Charter* provides for *collective military action*, if agreed by the *Security Council*. Difficulties arise when a nation is in more than one organization. When Argentina tried to liberate the Falklands (1982), should the US have assisted its NATO ally, Britain, or its TIAR ally, Argentina? But perhaps the untidy *plurality* of regional defence alliances prevents a major war between power blocs. The significant hypothetical question is, would any form of attack lead to an agreement about collective action from the whole world? What if hostile aliens landed?

Traditional *conflict resolution* methods assume symmetry in the type of violence used in international aggression, but **asymmetrical** relations and conflicts can be much harder to conceptualize and resolve. This was foreseen by George Orwell in 1945:

> A complex weapon makes the strong stronger, while a simple weapon – so long as there is no answer to it – gives claws to the weak…But [recently] every development in military technique has favoured the State as against the individual, and the industrialised country as against the backward one…
>
> The one thing that might reverse it is the discovery of a weapon – or, to put it more broadly, of a method of fighting – not dependent on huge concentrations of industrial plant.[213]

Digital power groups, such as *Luiz Security* and *Syria Electronic Army*, challenge state systems and other digital power elites through hacking and disrupting organizations such as the CIA.[214] *Cyber-war* could include attacks on hospitals, water supplies and other vulnerable entities of the high-tech nations. But it could also be a progressive revultionary force against tyrannical regimes which, from some perspectives, might include the US. Nye explores the changing role of technology in state power.[215] Novel robotic weaponry[216] – *Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles* (UCAV) 'Drones' – may cause new dilemmas, particularly *Lethal Autonomous Robots* (LAU). These could 'track and recognize non-cooperative targets (people of interest) in urban or rural environments',[217] through 'Future Attribute Screening Technology' which could detect 'mal-intent' such as terrorist activities.[218]

thinking zone: would killer robots start a war?

killer robots

Smart weapons are now able to take autonomous decisions to kill human beings, without any control by a human being. Some can "eat" bio matter to provide energy to power themselves.

war law

Killer robots could also be programmed to obey the international agreements about war.

so...

- would killer robots ever *start* a war?
- would their autonomous decisions be better or worse than decisions made by humans?
- might they decide to wipe out all humans on the basis of 'pre-emptive action', because we threaten to destroy the planet? If so, would that be ethical?

[Search: Nobel Women's Initiative. Jody Williams. Killer robots.]
[See: film, *WALL-E*, 2008.]

2.3.2 Development

Short-term humanitarian assistance[219] follows wars, disasters and emergencies, which interrupt or impede development. This reflects the work of the *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC) since 1863. The concept of neutrality has been central to the ability of the *Red Cross* to provide assistance quickly and equitably during wars and other disasters.[220] There was an assumption that assistance should cease as soon as possible to avoid disrupting local economies and cultural systems. The UN *Office*

for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) now coordinates international humanitarian responses to avoid duplication of effort or significant gaps in assistance.

The term *complex emergencies* describes the compounding factors of natural and human-made threats and vulnerabilities,[221] such as the damage to a nuclear power station by a tsunami at Fukushima (Japan) in 2011, and the cross-border nature of disasters.[222] There are no finite definitions of what constitutes an emergency or disaster – should it be above a certain size, speed or complexity? Consequently, the level, or absence, of responses is often political rather than needs-based.[223] Individual and collective resilience is often stressed to redress the impression that people are simply helpless victims of emergencies.[224] Words such as *rehabilitation, reconstruction* and *restoration* are also common. But these stem from the postwar reconstruction in Europe (see below) where the aim was clearly to return nations to their former condition. In present-day emergencies, basing a response on a return to a former condition is often less straightforward.[225] Arguably, many humanitarian organizations now function as businesses.[226] The *Humanitarian Futures Programme* provides wide-ranging discussion of developments.

Longer term economic **development assistance**, to reduce poverty, was initially conceived to reconstruct Europe after World War II. The Marshall Plan was quickly successful, and the concept was then applied to the so-called Third World countries, mainly the former European colonies. Early theories reflected a modernization view of development, which was often inappropriate elsewhere, and did not question the assumption that the development of non-industrialized countries could be achieved in the same way as the reconstruction of industrial European countries. The *ethics* of *Overseas Development Assistance* (ODA) has to balance helping others in other countries, and helping people at home. Peter Singer framed the argument in 1972:

> ...there is a conditional duty "to prevent what is bad, and to promote what is good...[but] only when we can do it without sacrificing anything that is, from the moral point of view, comparably important". This ethic should take "no account of proximity or distance". It is therefore a duty to prevent people starving in another country, but not if our "immediate group" – family and friends – starves as a consequence.[227]

But that does not consider the complicated ethics of the relationship between donor and recipient.

Bilateral aid – ODA from wealthy to less wealthy countries – became a tool of the Cold War powers to gain allies around the world. Aid was usually *conditional* and *tied* through agreements to buy goods and services from the donor countries. *Dependency* theories argued that the less powerful countries were being made reliant on the powerful nations, but a few countries, including Tanzania and North Korea, proposed that *self-reliance* was important. Often funds were wasted or usurped by corrupt politicians.[228] **Multilateral** agencies, such as the *World Bank*, only started to insist on accountability for the money they were spending at the end of the Cold War after 1989.[229] *Structural adjustment* programmes then aimed to create stricter controls and better governance, but often made the daily lives of poor people worse.

The differing **donor** rationales for aid are rooted in national interests. Harry S. Truman set the ethos of European-American ODA in 1949.[230] Less is known about Soviet motivation, for example in Afghanistan.[231] But by 1994, Soviet premier Boris Yeltsin was planning a *Russian Agency for International Cooperation and Development*, and Russian ideas became more tangible in 2007 in the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* paper 'Russia's participation in international development assistance'.[232] Other BRICS countries are evolving similar plans. China's large-scale assistance is not in the form of traditional ODA, and Euro-American writers often conclude that the Chinese government provides finance in return for promises to support China in UN discussions about Taiwan and other contested claims, the long-term lease of agricultural land, and access to mines and other resources.[233] In 2011, the Chinese government explained its own perspective.[234] Whatever the rhetoric, it is clear that in ODA, "there is no such thing as a free lunch".

Assessments of donor *contributions* are also problematic,[235] and politicized. It is often unclear whether or not military aid is included, and aid is increasingly used to remedy the impacts of military interventions, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, or to achieve NATO security goals, as in Pakistan. Levels of ODA are compiled by the *Development Assistance Committee* (DAC) of the OECD.[236] This index only includes official government donations which promote economic development and welfare, or loans on reduced terms, for DAC members. Private donations are excluded, and in 2009 the top donor countries, in absolute amounts, were: the USA, France, Germany, the UK, Japan and Spain. But if calculated as a percentage of Gross National Income, this becomes: Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark, the Netherlands and Spain. And if figures from *Global Humanitarian Assistance* (2010) are used, which includes countries outside the DAC, the top six are: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Russia, India and South Korea.[237]

Many *UN organizations* contribute to development, and there is considerable overlap among them. Development concerns reflect the usual *public services* of any country, and there are many common cross-cutting issues such as gender[238] and disability.[239] The justifications for *Education for All* (EFA) include economic-based *human capital* theories, which see universal education and skills training as the key to poverty reduction. The EFA *Global Monitoring Report* provides assessments. But is the purpose of education only to improve employability, or is it a basic *human right* because employment outcomes depend more on economic contexts than individual achievement, or is it essential to ensure *positive survival* and *human security*?[240] How do schools create and redress *conflict*,[241] including *extremism*?[242] *Perpetration theory* argues that many schools do children physical and mental harm.[243] The *World Health Organization* (WHO) assesses and prioritizes *international health* demands[244] – the spread of infectious diseases, resistance to antibiotics, cheap generic drugs for HIV/AIDS, the environmental health impacts of war – which often requires complicated international agreements. *Global health*[245] and *global public health*[246] consider world pandemics such as lifestyle diseases (obesity, diabetes, alcoholism), genetics[247] and health impacts from environmental change.[248] The UN and *World Intellectual Property*

Organization (WIPO) and the *World Trade Organization* (WTO) work to get agreements about the development implications of intellectual property,[249] including pharmaceuticals,[250] and the patenting of traditional knowledge and resources by powerful organizations.[251] Demographic and lifestyle changes increase the need to consider energy and resource security – including oil,[252] land[253] and food[254] – in relation to demand, concentrated production, new producers, new interdependencies, new consumers, short-term flashpoints, policy choice matters and long-term instabilities. The *UN-Industrial Development Organization* (UNIDO) assesses mined resources and utilities,[255] which are often overlooked within development studies. The *Resources Futures* website provides visual data,[256] and the *BBC Global Resources Stock Check* an overview.

Since, 1990, European and American donors have emphasized improving **democracy** and **governance** through *capacity building* in ministries, including *anti-corruption* and *accountability* systems.[257] But this often means the imposition of western-style voting and other systems, and does not account for the fact that 'democracy' simply means 'government by the people', not necessarily a European-style voting system. This can be achieved in many ways, for example, in Japan, by consensus – *goi* means a 'putting' + 'together' of 'opinions'.[258] What would happen if a 'democratic' country agreed to be undemocratic through democratic processes? Of young people in Pakistan, a 2013 study found that 29% believed in democracy as the best political system, 32% preferred military rule, and 38% Sharia law.[259] Many aspects of imposed governance are not truly democratic, for example the creation of constitutions. In contrast, in 2012, Iceland became the first country to 'crowdsource' its new constitution through *Twitter* and *Facebook* (C6.4).

Small countries often provide interesting models. Iceland claims the oldest parliament in the world, and the Isle of Man's *Tynwald* is the world's oldest continuous parliament, existing since 979AD. The *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* has excellent materials about differing democratic systems across the world. China's recent involvement in international development questions the idea of intervention in the governance of countries (above), and this new resource diplomacy does not fit the prevailing European-American models.[260]

Traditional models for ***delivering aid*** reflect polarized top-down versus bottom-up approaches.[261] Prescriptive policies argue for a staged approach based on the history of Euro-American progress, moving through agricultural development, industrial and technological improvement, to modernity.[262] This entails involving governments, and research about *capacity building* in ministries to ensure there is ability to 'absorb' aid efficiently.[263] Conversely, perspectives that advocate channelling aid to local people and NGO projects, and avoiding government interference, are usually based on participatory needs assessment research about the micro-problems of poor people.[264] Strategies such as microfinance – notably the *Grameen Bank* – aim to empower poor people. Encouraging local initiatives is becoming more significant, for example within the context of atrocities,[265] and the *Global Entrepreneurship*

and Development Index provides ways to assess local business endeavours.[266] Put more simply by a British official from *UKAID* the broad decision is 'whether to give all the money to governments and later wondering where the money has gone, or to fly a helicopter over poor villages throwing dollar notes out of the back, and later wondering where the money has gone'.

Assessing the ***impact*** and ***effectiveness*** of aid depends on whether the criteria are humanitarian aims – alleviating poverty, improving justice, ensuring gender participation – or political aims – gaining allies, improving trade, power over raw materials. Unsurprisingly, some analysts conclude that development theories have been flawed,[267] and ODA is ineffective or harmful.[268] The *OECD Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005) and the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008) provide a framework for the former, and many related approaches, such as the *Development Progress* project, are intrinsically optimistic. *Counterfactual* methodologies ask, would this outcome have happened had the intervention not been made? Amartya Sen talks of improving *capabilities* – equitably distributed, 'substantive freedoms' such as political participation, and living a full and healthy life. Poverty is measured by the degree to which less wealthy communities can convert natural resources (rubber, minerals, crops) into necessary activities, goods and services (medicines and hospitals, books and schools).[269] The *Human Development Index* provides the relevant indicators, which try to accommodate *social development*, such as gender equity. The UN *Millennium Development Goals* (MDG) aimed to set an international political agenda for poverty reduction,[270] but assessments find that economic growth does not intrinsically reduce poverty.[271] The goals will be reframed as *Sustainable Development Goals* in 2015. The *MDG Indicators Dashboard* provides ongoing MDG data.

Development studies comprise many, often conflicting, theories.[272] The *World Bank, Development Studies Internet Resources* and *British Library for Development Studies* (BLDS) provide access to documentation. The concept of development is still mainly associated with less wealthy nations. But, of course, development happens, in different forms, within all nations. The focus on less wealthy nations means that much research has studied failure rather than success. That approach can be useful, but there is also much to be learnt from wealthy countries which demonstrate successful development outcomes, such South Korea, which was the world's second poorest country in 1946. The development of China[273] should be a major interest, not least because China now deploys the lessons from that experience within its own form of ODA (above).[274] The international concern should be that certain problems of development are currently more urgent in some places than in others, and that this is not only about economic issues. Arguably, the future conceptualization should be global development.[275]

International economics concerns trade, investment and the monetary system,[276] and the study of legal[277] and political[278] aspects such as centrally planned economies and economic collapse. Indicators used to measure and compare national economies reflect the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. But this

is problematic, and technological change provides challenges for traditional economics. The distinction between goods and services is increasingly clouded, for example by investment in software or systems design which does not show up as 'production' in standard assessments. Macroeconomic measures, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross World Product (GWP), do not show whether wealth is spread evenly among that population. These indicators calculate the measurable market value of transactions, and count the same cash many times. Microeconomic theorists argue that these measures ignore significant economic exchanges such as barter transactions, and feminist theorists point out that non-cash labour, such as housework and caring for children and elders, is not valued.[279]

Environmental economists argue similarly that the negative costs of environmental impacts are deemed externalities and ignored (below). The standard indicators measure flows of money but not whether that money adds true value, is wasted, or simply pays to correct avoidable mistakes. In 1850 Bastiat proposed his *broken window fallacy*,[280] which argued that smashing windows could be seen as good for the economy, because of the wealth theoretically 'created' to mend them. Industrial pollution, conflicts and car crashes can all increase GDP as money flows around for pollution, conflicts and car crashes can all increase GDP as money flows around for medical costs, legal fees and cleaning up environmental toxins (below). Similarly, *military Keynesianism* explains how war can be good for economies (above).

International *financial systems* are managed by the UN 'sister' (*Bretton Woods*) organizations. The *World Bank* was originally financing development projects through loans or grants, initially to foster American and European Cold War allies, but soon after 1989 it changed its emphasis towards being a 'knowledge bank' providing expertise, advice and resources to improve development. The *Asia Development Bank* (ADB) and *African Development Bank* are similar. The *International Monetary Fund* (IMF) pools money from wealthier countries, so that countries with financial problems can take short-term loans, but assessing why countries takes loans, and the outcomes of conditionality and austerity programmes, is complicated.[281] The more recent *World Trade Organization* works to liberalize international trade, and replaced the old *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade* (GATT). It is based on five principles – non-discrimination, reciprocity, binding and enforceable commitments, transparency and 'safety valves' – and has been a focus for activists and protesters, notably at the 'Battle of Seattle' in 1999.[282] World systems currently tend towards a *neoliberalist* perspective which promotes reducing the public sector and increasing the private sector, through privatization and deregulation, and free trade and open markets across the world.[283]

Perceptions of *global capitalism* scale up state-based concepts,[284] and discuss differing versions such as *state capitalism* in China,[285] and why capitalism seems to work best in 'western' countries.[286] Economists seem to understand global *markets* convincingly, but not the whole capitalist system. In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Fukuyama erroneously predicted the 'the end of history' which would culminate in capitalist liberal democracy across the whole world.[287] Mulgan argues that the balance of *predatory* and *creative* mechanisms must be maintained or the former

dominates through illusory financial mechanisms that do not create genuine wealth, and also make financial risk assessment very difficult. He cites Estonia, Iceland and Brazil as examples of a return to people-based economic systems which reaffirm human values and genuine productivity, and hold wayward politicians and commercial leaders to account. Sao Paulo has banned public advertising, and 1% of its GDP is ring-fenced for innovation that benefits the public.[288]

The idea of cognitive capitalism[289] considers how highly intelligent physicists[290] and mathematicians are employed within the financial sector to devise algorithms and IT systems that play the financial markets, using large sums of money to make significant profits in seconds. The experts are content because they enjoy playing an intellectual game on a world scale, and the managers are happy because they make a lot of money. The problem is that neither group understands what the other is doing. The result of High Frequency Trading ('algorithmic trading') is inexplicable financial crashes. During the '2010 Flash Crash', the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell around 1000 points (9%), and recovered, within a few minutes, because of erratic computer behaviour. The reasons are still not fully understood.[291]

Global *financial crises*[292] have inspired innovative critiques of traditional economics and financial systems.[293] *Forecasting* is very unreliable. An IMF study found that there was a 97% failure among economists to predict 60 national recessions in the 1990s, and the other 3% underestimated the severity.[294] Yet philosopher John Gray's *False Dawn* foresaw the problems underlying the crashes of the new millennium, in 1998.[295] Amato and Fantacci predict *The End of Finance*.[296] Acemoglu and Robinson assess *Why Nations Fail* and compare exploitative extractive institutions within which elites appropriate resources from the population, with *inclusive institutions* that are equitable and law abiding.[297] (Other definitions of 'extractive economies' describe countries with a 'substantial non-renewable mineral and energy resource extraction activity', which can be related to national development and poverty.[298]) Keen asks why private debt is ignored by traditional economists.[299] The global chief economist at HSBC warns that 'western' growth is a 'historical anomaly', and that the failure of current financial systems could lead to social upheaval.[300] A fundamental question is posed by the NGO, *Positive Money*, where does money come from? It seems that even the *Bank of England* cannot answer the question. More importantly, where does money go, in the fog of 'inflation'? In the UK, in the years 2010–2013, inflation amounted to a 'stealth tax' on the whole population of 11%.[301] About 97% of the world's cash now exists solely in cyberspace,[302] which seems no more secure than *Local Exchange Trading Systems* (LETS), or *Bitcoin* and other global e-money systems.[303]

Although economic success has been predicted on the idea of infinite economic *growth*, many authors question the assumptions.[304] In 1972 the *Club of Rome* warned of the *Limits to Growth*,[305] and the argument has been continuously repeated and refined.[306] There has been an assumption that the improved wealth of a nation equates with improved *wellbeing*. But in *The Spirit Level*, Wilkinson and Pickett provide convincing evidence that human wellbeing is correlated with the income *inequality*[307]

between the richest and poorest people in a nation, not the gross wealth of the nation. Therefore the child wellbeing in countries like America and Britain is lower than in some less wealthy but more equitable nations, such as Portugal.[308] Stiglitz assesses the causes and economic impacts of inequality.[309] The worldwide protests of the *Occupy Movement* operationalized public concerns about wealth inequity.[310]

Economic theories are clearly in need of fresh thinking, and linking with real-world value in relation to environmental resources. In 1981, Nico Colchester provided an example when he argued that *Mars* bars would be a better *unit of account* ('gold standard'), for assessing and comparing economies over long time periods,[311] than currency which changes value because of inflation, or gold. In 2013, gold fell around 22% in value, which put it in the category of 'bear market'. As the *Mars* bar comprises a number of staple commodities – cocoa, vegetable fats, milk solids, sugar – the real-world value was more consistent and genuine than that of currency or gold bars. The theory could be applied to international convertibility, transatlantic arbitrage, and how consumption limits money supply. Colchester showed that, although a young ICI employee would have earned £275 in 1940 and £5700 in 1980, that is not an impressive increase. In *Mars* bars the increase would only have been from MB33,000 to MB38,000. *The Economist Big Mac Index* assesses purchasing power parity, and similar indexes are based on baked beans, popcorn, lipstick and dating agencies. The logic is fun, but also thought provoking.

thinking zone: should water be the "gold standard"?

value

Water is finite and chemically irreplaceable. Without fresh water (2.5%), there would be no life, and we would be dead within a week. Without sea water (96.5%), the Earth's life support systems would collapse. Water is also vital for industrial processes and hygiene.

price

The price of fresh water as a 'commodity' relates to its availability to a particular population, and is affected by factors such as pollution, desalination technology, temperature, infrastructure costs.

the "LFW"

If an Australian earned AUD$100,000 in 2008, and the same in 2013, and the cost of fresh water doubled in that period, at an 'exchange rate' of AUD$0.003 per litre, what is the change in the value of that salary in "Litre of Fresh Water" (LFW) currency?

[Answer: LFW333.333 to 166.66]

Are there any faults with this argument?

[See References for further information.[312]]

2.3.3 Environment

Meteorology provided the bases for understanding what we now call 'the environment'. The foundations were not only scientific, but based on the international systems of weather observation and UN *World Meteorological Organization* (WMO). The relationship between weather and climate became significant following Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's orbit around the Earth in 1961, and the spaceship to Venus in 1969, as humans started to realize the fragility of their planet. Soviet innovation created the race for Cold War space supremacy, and the resultant US moon landing in 1969, which inspired the international environmental movement.

NGOs took the lead – the *World Wildlife Fund* (1961) in Switzerland, *Club of Rome* (1968) in Italy, *Friends of the Earth* (1969) in America and Britain, and Greenpeace in Canada (1970–1972).[313] Adlai Stevenson used the term 'spaceship earth' at a UN conference in 1965, and Barbara Ward produced a book of the same name a year later.[314] The US *Environmental Protection Agency* (EPA) was founded by President Richard Nixon in 1970, Ward wrote *Only One Earth* with René Dubos following the UN *Conference on the Human Environment* (Stockholm Conference) in 1971,[315] and in the same year the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* ran a 'radio symposium on the environmental crisis', *Balance and Biosphere*.[316] In 1972, the *Club of Rome* produced its report, *Limits to Growth*, on 'The Predicament of Mankind'.[317] As a result of the Stockholm Conference, the *UN Environment Programme* (UNEP) was founded in 1972, and the EC (later EU) created its first *Environmental Action Programme* in 1973.

After 10,000 years of warring human civilizations, the peoples of the United Nations had started to agree how to formalize the protection of their collective territory, within the short period of a decade. The concept of international **environmentalism** was born. Early conceptualizations were mainly *Malthusian* – that there were limits on the number of people that the Earth's resources could support. But subsequent theoretical frameworks were innovative, cogent and comprehensive. Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962) argued the dangers of DDT, and the unknown risks of environmental pollution.[318] Lifton's *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima* (1967) warned of the hideous outcomes of nuclear war,[319] Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* (1973)[320] provided the basis for *environmental economics*, and James Lovelock's *Gaia* (1979)[321] inspired a holistic *Earth system science*. In the late 1970s *Green Parties* in Belgium and Germany gained parliamentary seats.

But the originators of **environmental activism** were Japanese. Polluted wastewater, including mercury, had been dumped in Minamata Bay by the *Chisso Company* between 1908 and 1968.[322] The response was activist fishermen's alliances and cooperatives, and large-scale protests winning compensation in 1926, 1943, 1958, and the movement is ongoing. This predated American and European environmental activism, and contributed to the democratization of Japan.[323] But little was known of this outside Japan. Language was a barrier, the postwar world did not provide the right context for perceiving Japanese people as 'victims', and

postwar geopolitics dictated that everything progressive should be seen an originating in America.

The collaboration between NGOs and the UN in the 1970s had taken national governments by surprise and, as industrialists realized that this movement was likely to reduce their revenues, pressure was put on governments to reassert *national interests* and subvert *summit* conferences about environmental threats.[324] In 1987 the UN *World Commission on Environment and Development* (WCED) introduced the pragmatic concept of *sustainable development*, and the need to balance development needs with environmental limitations was affirmed in the *Brundtland Report, Our Common Future*. But this was often interpreted to equate 'development' with unhindered industrial and economic growth. The UN *Earth Summit* (1992) produced the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, the *Forrest Principles*[325] and *Agenda 21* which could be implemented locally, and the *Convention on Biological Diversity* was opened for signature. The South Africa follow-up in 2002 created agreement about fisheries,[326] but the virtual boycott by the US frustrated efforts to move forward. The 2012 follow-up in Qatar seemed to achieve very little, except to formalize the idea that *environmental services* should be incorporated into economic measures. Only seven agreements started, 'We commit', whereas 50 used 'We encourage'.[327]

In parallel, the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) and subsequent *Kyoto Protocol* (1997–2005) created binding obligations on countries to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.[328] It was supported by all major countries except the US, which usually signs but rarely ratifies international agreements.[329] In 2011, Canada, Japan and Russia withdrew. Although Canada had shown a lead in environmental awareness in the 1970s, it might, like Russia, gain access to new resources if the climate warmed and ice melted. Although radical change to the agreement was arguably needed,[330] the efforts to amend and renew the agreement in 2012 were fraught. The *Alliance for Climate Protection* and *Wiki Portal Global Warning* provides ongoing data.

The outcomes of these conferences in terms of international *environmental law* are complex,[331] but the main international principles include *sustainability, polluter pays, precautionary principle, transparency and freedom of information* and *intergenerational justice*.[332] Mechanisms include *quotas, tradable emissions permits* and *taxes* on pollution. A practical problem, from an international perspective, has been how to extend principles and practice across borders, regionally and globally,[333] for example about *transboundary* pollution. Areas of domestic law are internationalizing by extending common law on homicide and injury, health and safety and damage.[334] But victim nations, which suffer cross-border impacts such as acid rain and radioactive fallout, are reticent to seek redress, because they might set precedents that are later used against them. Nation-based law cannot create internationally equitable environmental law. There is a need for a legal mechanism that can, when necessary, supersede *national interests*, and reflect a 'common', global or *planetary interest*.[335]

In America, the idea of *environmental justice* started in the 1980s. Initially it related to activist groups, but later became an academic field of study,[336] assessing issues such as market mechanisms.[337] The US EPA formally recognizes the movement. In parallel, the concept of *green criminology*,[338] and discussions of *environmental victims* analyse the human outcomes of events such as the Union Carbide poisoning in Bhopal, oil pollution in the Niger Delta and the Chisso mercury poisoning at Minamata Bay (C10.9).[339] Distinct problems include establishing causation, the legal status of the unborn child, victim syndrome and environmental blackmail. Justice systems are not well prepared to address these novel types of victimization.[340]

Environmental economics assesses the effects of policy and human behaviour on the environment, which challenges traditional ideas.[341] Since 2000, China has discussed theories of a *circular economy*, based on recycling.[342] *Population* increase demands new economic theories.[343] *Environmental impact assessments* (EIA) predict negative and positive outcomes of projects, on people and place, hopefully before they are implemented.[344] *Valuations* of the environment can be assessed in terms of *natural resources* and *ecosystem services*,[345] and the degree to which these are *global/ public goods* which are non-excludable and non-rivalrous. Traditional economics, based on measures such as GDP (above), has often discounted the environment as an *externality*.[346] Arguably measures of wealth creation should include concomitant irreversible 'loss costs',[347] and the idea that less wealthy countries should receive aid for 'loss and damage from climate change' gained legal meaning for the first time at the 2012 *Climate Change Conference* in Qatar.[348] *Ecological economics* builds on *ecological ethics*.[349] It reverses the basis of traditional economics, and puts the ecosystem central and economics as a human *subsystem*,[350] which makes *environmental services, biodiversity* and *species* loss more significant.

The *ecological footprint* is an ambitious measure of human demand on the Earth's ecosystems.[351] Usage is compared with *biocapacity* – the ability of land and sea to produce and dispose of human-made resources. The 'overshoot', by 2007, indicated that humans needed 1.51 planets to sustain their existence. The *National Footprint Accounts* relate to 200 countries, but international trade makes conclusions difficult. If China manufactures American electronics, which then are bought in Europe, which country footprint should be debited with the environmental costs?[352] Ongoing debates are managed through organizations such as the *Association of Environmental and Resource Economists* (AERE), *International Society for Ecological Economics* (ISEE) and *Institute for Green Economics*.

Ulrich Beck's vision of the risk society[353] extends to global environmental aspects,[354] particularly to *uncertain* concerns such as *genetically modified organisms* (GMOs). Many of the risks represent what Prins terms, 'threats without enemies' – new security problems which demand military scale responses, but radically different ideas such as the need to counter 'lock-in' and 'linear thinking'.[355] The concepts of creeping disasters, slow emergencies, or long wave events[356] describe problems that humans do not recognize because they are too slow or too vast, such as loss of biodiversity, air

pollution and marine degradation. Our evolutionary mind[357] is attuned to hazards such as fire, but 'brain lag' means we do not readily perceive new threats such as UV radiation.[358]

Philosophers now consider the 'threats to humanity's future' in terms of existential risk and prevention[359] and *Cambridge University* runs a *Project for Existential Risk*. The *Club of Budapest* argues for the creation of a holistic multidisciplinary international approach to survival studies, which links new understandings from brain science, ecology, economics, governance and ethics.[360] Some theories seem counter-intuitive, for example that increasing diversity can increase risk, because there are more things to go wrong.[361] Framing environmental risk in terms of security has the potential to create a problem-led, or solution-oriented, approach which precludes simplistic mono-disciplinary approaches. The problem, as Prins (above) points out, is that 'You can't shoot an ozone hole.'

The goal of preventing environmental harm has shifted to *mitigating* the worst impacts. This has culminated in literature that is *apocalyptic*,[362] again reflected in book titles. The authors are leading scientists, academics, politicians, from a wide range of disciplines, not sensationalist amateurs. Canadian philosopher John Leslie's *The End of the World: The Science and Ethics of Human Extinction* (1996)[363] was followed by biologist E.O. Wilson's warning about species extinction in *The Future of Life* (2002),[364] and *Our Final Century: Will Civilisation Survive the Twenty-First Century?* (2003) from British Astronomer Royal and President of the *Royal Society*, Martin Rees.[365] Australian philosopher Clive Hamilton explains, 'why it is now too late' in *Requiem for a Species: Why We Resist the Truth about Climate Change* (2010).[366] James Lovelock returned with a pessimistic postscript in *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning* (2009).[367] The idea that the planet had entered a new historical period was reflected in Paul Dukes' *Minutes to Midnight: History and the Anthropocene Era from 1763*, which took as its starting point the *Doomsday Clock* created by the Manhattan Project physicists in 1947,[368] a sentiment also reflected in the *Doomsday Handbook*.[369] *Existential risks* include climate change, infectious diseases, nuclear war and vulnerable e-based systems. But might apocalyptic information create a *self-fulfilling prophecy* as people either give up and live selfish short-term lives, or go into denial about environmental problems?[370]

Contrasting perspectives came from 'deniers', who were often organized by the oil industry and other interest groups.[371] Bjørn Lomborg's *The Skeptical Environmentalist* (2001) questioned the whole environmental movement.[372] A belief that there are technological solutions was demonstrated by Mark Lynus in *The God Species: Saving the Planet in the Age of Humans* (2011),[373] which advocated the potential of nuclear power and genetic engineering. *Geoengineering* aims to mitigate global warming through reducing solar radiation, with technology such as space mirrors, and removing carbon dioxide with techniques including ocean iron fertilization.[374] The proponents are often from industries that would benefit from developing the systems. In *Earth Masters: Playing God with the Climate*, Clive Hamilton raises the obvious concern – engineering on this scale cannot be tested before irreversible application, and the amount of technology and

energy to remove carbon would need to equal that which produces the carbon, which will itself produce more carbon.[375] Philosopher John Gray argues the need for caution:

> Late modern cultures are haunted by the dream that new technologies will conjure away the immemorial evils of human life...[But there] is no power in the world that can ensure that technology is only used for benign purposes. Partly that is because we cannot agree on what those purposes are. Partly it is because even when enough people are agreed there is no power that can enforce the consensus. The institution which we would have to rely on for such enforcement – the modern state – is not up to the job.[376]

The start of international awareness about environmental problems was optimistic and human-centred, but has ended in pessimism and advocating techno-fixes. In 1962, Thomas Kuhn famously argued that knowledge and research do not proceed in a neutral manner following their own internal logic and laws, but instead reflect *scientific paradigms* – widely accepted sets of ideas 'that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners'.[377] 'Paradigms' are often shaped by socio-economic demands and intellectual fashion. It is interesting to consider how he would have assessed the environmental literature.

Innovative ethics emerged in 2008 when Ecuador's new Constitution declared that 'nature...has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution'.[378] The concept of *ecocide*,[379] suggests that the planet Earth has rights, and raises the question, are all humans guilty of this crime? Whatever the disagreements, the recent realization is that the territory of the peoples of Earth is finite and entropic. We now know that sometime, the planet will die. The *real politick* questions for international research are how might we hasten or defer that end, how can we mitigate harmful effects on the species, and how do we respond to that inevitable decline fairly across the entire planetary population without violence? Alternatively, we can take the advice of English philosopher Bertrand Russell: 'The universe is unjust. The secret to happiness is to face the fact that the world is horrible, horrible, *horrible*.'[380]

---

thinking zone: what is your water footprint?

industry

Industrial water use comprises:

- World: 22% of total water use.
- High-income countries: 59%.
- Low-income countries: 8%.

Annual usage will rise from 752 km³/year in 1995 to around 1,170 km³/year in 2025.
Source: UNESCO *World Water Portal - World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)*

(Continued)

footprint

'A water footprint, or virtual water, is the amount of water used in the entire production and/or growth of a specific product. For example, 1 kilogram (2.2 lbs) of beef has a water footprint of 16,000 liters (4,226.8 gallons); one sheet of paper has a water footprint of 10 liters (2.6 gallons); one cup of tea has a water footprint of 35 liters (9.2 gallons); and one microchip has a water footprint of 32 liters (8.5 gallons).'
Source: *Circle of Blue* (2013) '10 things you should know about water'.

"throwing money down the drain"

It costs 5 litres of Fresh Water (FW) to make a 1 litre plastic water bottle. So the FW cost of a bottle of water is FW6 litres.

In $FW, that is like paying $6 to buy $1. (And in many countries the same water is virtually free, from the tap.)

How can other arguments like this help us to save water?

------ main ideas ------

When using **international theories and concepts** consider the European-American *bias*, and unsubstantiated assertions and rhetoric.
Theories about **peoples** have often been used to promote:

- the demeaning of 'others' – *ethnocentric, xenophobic, supremacist, exceptionalist,* racist and eugenicist ideas.
- *cultural imperialism* to impose colonial culture on others.

But other approaches have increased *understanding* through:

- historical assessments of why *civilizations* come and go.
- *ethnographic* methods that create accurate perceptions of different cultures.
- developing concepts of *human rights* and *global justice.*
- explaining *cosmopolitan* views of humanity.
- evidence-based *science* which shows our common genetic roots, and can help to predict future changes.

Theories of **place** are based on *geography* and territory, and consider:

- the *legitimacy* of claims to land, including *nations* and *regions.*
- *empires* and *colonialism.*
- the governance of *global commons.*

Theories of international **systems**:

- reflect the work of the *United Nations,* and international law.
- consider the possibility of *global governance.*

- should, but rarely, consider major *changes.*
- can be based on the *global/human/'new' security* framework – *political violence, development* and *environment.*

------ key reading ------

Appiah, K.A. (2006) *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Hough, P. (2013) *Understanding Global Security.* London: Routledge.

Laszlo, E. and Seidel, P. (eds) (2006) *Global Survival.* New York: Select Books.

Malesevic, S. (2013) *Nation-States and Nationalisms.* Cambridge: Polity.

Seth, S. (ed.) (2012) *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction.* London: Routledge.

Weiss, T.G. (2012) *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It.* Cambridge: Polity.

------ online resources ------

To access the resources – search on the name in italics, use the http, or search on the generic term in 'quote marks'.

Methods for assessing civilizations – www.ianmorris.org/docs/social-development.pdf

NASA Landsat. Google Earth. National Geographic – satellite maps

Dymaxion Map – the Buckminster Fuller projection showing the continents as a near-contiguous land mass

Globaia – cartography of the anthropocene – maps of the human impact on the world – http://globaia.org/en/anthropocene/

UN structure and organization – explanations and links to most of the UN system

UN International Law site – www.un.org/en/law/index.shtml

UN Rule of Law – www.unrol.org

International Bar Association – professional legal perspectives

UN Documentation Research Guide – www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/index.html

CIA World Factbook

Wikileaks – open access to confidential and other government documents

Independent Diplomat – a dynamic non-state perspective – www.independentdiplomat. org/

MDG Indicators Dashboard – ongoing *Millennium Development Goals* data – http://esl. jrc.ec.europa.eu/dc/mdg_unsd/index.htm