

Model Details	
Subject Name	Political Science
Paper Name	Theories of International Relations
Module Id Name/Title	Evolution of Internatioanal Relations
Module Id	1
Pre-requisites	International Law, World History,
Objectives	This module will analyze various stages of evolution of International Relations. It was the part of political science before Ist World war. It comprises the various stages of development as a independent discipline.
Keywords	Nation-state, world history, international law, world war, peace, international relations
Structure of Module/Syllabus of a Module	
Evolution of the Discipline	Emergence of modern nation-state; Effects of the two World Wars'; Need for specialized analysis of inter-state relations; Evolution of IR as a multidisciplinary subject

Role	Name	Affiliation
Principle Investigator		
Paper Coordinator		
Language Editor(LE)		

## Summary

International Relation is one of the youngest social science disciplines to have emerged in Britain following the First World War in 1919. An account of the evolution of the discipline of International Relations (IR) is closely related with the history of state-system. Since the Westphalia Treaty of 1648, modern nation-states emerged and have been the basis of the evolution of IR as an autonomous area of study. Evolution of IR have passed through several stages – the pre Westphalia Treaty, the pre-World War period, the Cold war period, the post-Cold war period. The analytical frame for IR in these phases was the changing nature of nation-state system and consequent remapping of the international system. The central thematic change that went along with these phases was that IR became more and more interdisciplinary as a subject. In the process of evolution the scope and subject matter of IR got manifold and presently the debate is about changing the nomenclature from international relations to world politics for making the subject look more encompassing and inclusive of events across the world.

## 2.2 Introduction

In the previous module we have discussed in detail the nature of IR theory with special emphasis on the boundary problem. Now we have a sufficient understanding about the overlaps that may take place between international relations and comparative politics. This module will specifically focus thematically on the evolution of IR as an autonomous subject from the days of Greek-city states to the contemporary period. In the course of discussion the module will elaborate on the ideas of statecraft, international law and world history and its intertwining with the subject matter of international relations. The scope of the study of international relations is much wider than simple inter-state relations encompassing economic, social, cultural interactions between the nation-states and between nation-states and international organizations. The single most important issue that International Relations as a subject deal with is the issue of war and peace. The entire evolution of the subject was prima facie an attempt to unearth the reasons for emergence of war and the ways and means to ensure peace in the world. In the process of evolution, international relations acquired a set of concepts and theories that analyses threadbare its subject matter.

## 2.3 Historical Background

### 2.3.1 Period of Greek City-states

As a political activity, international relations dates back to the time of Greek city states and the work of Thucydides, the Greek historian (460-395 BC) who is famous for his work titled *The History of Peloponnesian War*. The Greek city-states were facing the intractable problem of managing conflicts between them – a problem central to the later understanding of international relations. The conflict between Athens and Sparta, the former being a weak city-state in comparison to the later, reflected another important issue of international relations –the issue of power and powerful. It was on the basis of index of power that Roman Empire later prevailed over the Greek city-states. According to Barry Buzan and Richard Little, the interaction of ancient Sumerian city-states starting in 3500 BC can be considered as the first fully fledged international system.<sup>1</sup> The original point in the evolution of international relations must be traced to the period of Greek city-states because of the presence of conflict and small-scale wars among the Greek citystates for the purpose of domination. The entire period from Greek city-state to that of the Roman Empire is beset with the theme of war, annexation and domination – the themes central to formulation of international relations as a subject. This is also the period when discourses on inter-state relations were discussed in ancient India. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was a treatise on conduct of inter-state relations.

### 2.3.2 Treaty of Westphalia and its Consequences

The state system took its modern form since 1648 when the Treaty of Westphalia was concluded. By 1648, England, France and Spain had already developed into nation states. The Holy Roman Empire became non-functioning. The claim of the Pope for temporal sovereignty

was a thing of the past. Holland and Switzerland were recognized as Republics. France and Sweden were territorially expanding and so was the Kingdom of Prussia. As of 1648, England, France, Spain and Sweden were considered great powers. Small powers included Denmark, Holland, Portugal and Switzerland. Although the modern nation-states still retains its original pattern, yet it has been affected greatly by several developments since the Treaty of Westphalia like Industrial Revolution, representative government, growth of international organizations, growth of economic interdependence, revolution in the means of communication and transport, the advent of nuclear weapons, etc.

The period from Treaty of Westphalia(1648) to the Treaty of Utrecht(1713) was dominated by Louis XIV's ambition and by rivalry of Britain, France, Holland and Spain for colonial supremacy in the western Hemisphere. Britain played the role of a balancer during this period. After the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 no European state could act with reckoning with the others. Sweden, Russia and Poland were involved in every issue of the West. The Treaty highlighted alliances and balance of power as the basic features of the international system. It also gave impetus to the unification of Prussia.

The period from Treaty of Utrecht(1713) to the Congress of Vienna(1815) no state could permanently establish political hegemony over Europe. In 1756 the Seven Years war began. The defeat of Austria, France and Spain in this war together with the exhaustion of Prussia left no state dominant in Europe. The French Revolution of 1789 added to the idea that not princes or an oligarchy, but the citizenry of a state, defined as the nation, should be defined as sovereign. Such a state in which the nation is sovereign came to be seen as the nation-state (as opposed to a monarchy or a religious state). Then there was the rise of Napoleon. In spite of violent disturbances the period from Westphalia to the rise of Napoleon was relatively stable and peaceful. Diplomats in Vienna sought again to re-establish the old system. At this time eight states were considered as first rate powers Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, France, Sweden, Portugal and Spain. Though France was a defeated power, she reemerged as a major power mostly through the maneuvers of the able diplomat, Talleyrand. Between Utrecht and Vienna, one old state passed out from the scene –Poland, but a new state –United States of America was born. England, Prussia, Russia, Austria and France remained major powers while Holland, Spain, Portugal and Sweden became lesser ones.

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1 Barry Buzan and Richard Little(2000): International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations, Oxford University Press, p.10

The period from Congress of Vienna to World War I, i.e. from 1815 to 1914, the Crimean War (1854-1856) between Russia on one hand and Britain and France on the other, and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) were important events resulting in the replacement of France by a unified Germany as the leading power. The rise of Germany was because of the brilliant

diplomacy of Bismarck. His policy of blood and iron brought about the unification of Germany and the German empire was officially proclaimed. The decline in power of France and Austria led to the addition of two new major powers to the European state-system – Italy and Germany. During this time Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Dante's *De Monarchia* illustrated classic studies on inter-state relations.

### 2.3.3 World War I and its Aftermath

Down to 1914, the conduct of international relations was the concern of persons professionally engaged in it. War was regarded as the business of soldiers and the corollary of this was that international politics were the business of diplomats. The World War I of 1914-18 made an end of the view that war is a matter which affects only professional soldiers and, in so doing, dissipated the corresponding impression that international politics could safely be left in the hands of professional diplomats. The campaign for the popularisation of international politics began in the English-speaking countries in the form of an agitation against secret treaties, which were attacked, on insufficient evidence, as one of the causes of the war. The blame for the secret treaties should have been imputed, not to the wickedness of the governments, but to the indifference of the peoples. Everybody knew that such treaties were concluded. But before the war of 1914 few people felt any curiosity about them or thought them objectionable. Before the World War I although discussions and reflections on inter-state relations were present, no systematic development was noticed in the study of International Relations. That war affected the life and property of millions during World War I made ordinary people take interest about the causes of war and ways for peace across the world. World War I started the process of abolition of distinction between the combatants and non-combatants. All are likely to be involved or affected by such a war. This arose consciousness of the people and there was public demand for discussion and accountability of the formulators and executioners of foreign policy. This public awareness was culminated in the development of international relations as a specific subject in social science

### 2.4 International Relations as a Subject

The study of International Relations as a separate intellectual discipline flourished during the entire 20th century following the World War I. One of the most baffling and interesting feature of the study of International Relations is its close relationship with some collateral discipline which sustains as well as procreates the controversy about its autonomous position in the field of social science. States can hardly exist without relations with each other. Such relations may take diverse forms. Relations do not remain confined to the official level. They may develop as well through groups or associations as through international institutions. The study of International Relations covers all such areas and is defined as the study of certain aspects of human behavior in the international arena interacting with considerable frequency according to some more or less regularized processes.

#### 2.4.1 The Initial Phase

International Relations as a distinct field of academic discipline began in Britain with the founding of the first IR professorship: the Woodrow Wilson Chair at Aberystwyth, University of Wales in 1919. Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service is the oldest international relations study centre in the United States of America also founded in 1919. In the early 1920s the Department of International Relations at London School of Economics was founded. Very soon various Universities in United States of America, Geneva and Switzerland introduced the department of International Relations. The creation of posts of Montague Burton Professor of International Relations at London School of Economics and Oxford gave impetus to the development of International Relations as an academic discipline. In the initial phases of the development of the discipline, general history, diplomatic history and International Law became the three cornerstones of the study of International Relations. The capitalization of 'I' and 'R' in International Relations was introduced to distinguish the subject from the international politics. The basic aim of International Relations was to promote peace and international cooperation by the demonstration of League of Nations. Thus the initial phase of the study was dominated by the desire for peace. The Great Depression of 1929 and the rise of Hitler in 1933 started to break the rigid distinctions between the domestic and foreign policies and a new vista was opened for International Relations. Following these two events, there was a series of international complications which culminated in a more brutal World War II which showed the futility of the existing attempts for designing world peace.

#### 2.4.2 The Cold War Period

The impact of World War I and World War II and its aftermath on the study and teaching of International Relations was tremendous. After the World War II it was felt that military science should be given some place in the study of IR. Importance of psychology in inter-state relations was also emphasized because IR began to think why the nation-states behaved the way they did. This political realism laid the foundation of the science of International Relations. International Relations has always oscillated between idealism and realism and the balance between the two invariably depend on the tone and texture of the contemporary events. The changes that took place during the Cold war period from 1945 affected the study of International Relations. Firstly the nation-state system has become further institutionalized. Today it has been global embracing nations of all continents. Before the World War II, barring a few states, the whole of Africa and Asia consisted of colonial countries. During the Cold war period from 1945 the same regions are bursting with a large number of nation-states. Secondly, with the internationalization of state system and the shifting of the centre of international politics from Europe to Third World, the balance of power and collective security system undergone significant changes. Thirdly, the institutions of world politics like foreign policy, diplomacy, war, etc have undergone increasing democratization in the sense that people are being associated with the working as well as results of these institutions. Fourthly, the development of nuclear weapons has made war very dangerous and suicidal. People everywhere are clamoring for peace,

disarmament and the promotion of international organizations. Fifthly, the establishment of the United Nations Organisations provided the necessary incentive for the study of IR. The entire Cold war period was an important phase in the evolution of IR as an academic discipline because new concepts (détente, ideological war, containment, military blocs, aid) and theories (neo-realism, pluralism, neo-liberalism) entered into the existing body of literature of IR.

#### 2.4.3 The Post-Cold War Period

In the post-cold war period from 1989 the Soviet Union, one of the two super-powers in the post-World War II period collapsed and a few new states have emerged which have formed CIS(Commonwealth of Independent States), two Germany's have unified and the world has become unipolar. In spite of rapid globalization, the nation-state system has remained the basic unit of analysis of IR. The international organization like UNO, regional organizations like European Union and multilateral organization like BRICS(Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) are working in a new style so that the nation-state system can be refashioned. The basic design of the state-system – coexistence of a large number of states is still the same with all states subscribing to the theory of sovereignty and all impelled to develop national power as the mainstay of their national sovereignty. The post-cold war period also saw one of the brutal terrorist attacks in human history in the form of 9/11 attack on World Trade Organisation office in United States of America. This contemporary phase in the evolution of IR as an academic discipline is important because of advent of new issues like globalization, terrorism, climate change, multipolarity and new post-positivist theories like neo-classical realism, social constructivism, feminism, etc. This phase has further broadened the nature and scope of IR as an academic discipline.

#### 2.5 International Relations as an Autonomous Discipline

The evolution of the discipline of International Relations is informed by the determination present the subject in a scientific form. The general view is to borrow more and more from collateral discipline to better understand and explain international political reality and then present the subject in the form of a science. In spite of the enormous development of the IR discipline over the past few decades there is a considerable debate whether it is to be seen as part of political science or treated as an autonomous discipline. As the nation-state remains the central actor so IR cannot be separated from the subject matter of political science. Participating in the debate, scholar like C. Dale-fuller argues that a discipline implies a body of data systematized by distinctive analytical method and capable of permitting predictions with exactitude. Morton Kaplan mentions that a discipline implies a set of skills and techniques, a set of theory and propositions and a subject-matter. On the basis of these arguments it can be said that IR has several theories but no general theory to be scientific. Moreover IR is lacking in respect of development of skills and techniques. IR experts Palmer and Perkins candidly observed that IR lacks clear-cut conceptual framework and a general applicable theory and depends often and for the most part on better organized disciplines. In sharp contrast to such

negative imagery of IR as an autonomous discipline, scholars like Stanley Hoffman proclaims that as IR can be intellectually distinguished, so it is an autonomous discipline. Further Hoffman asserts that the knowledge applicable to IR is no longer borrowed from political science but from all social sciences and hence IR is multidisciplinary in nature. Equally important is the argument of Hoffman that the architectonic role that Aristotle once attributed to the science of polis now safely belongs to IR. Even being the youngest of all social science disciplines, IR has gained worldwide recognition. IR is now given the status of a near exact science and of a separate subject in various Universities across the world. The scientific approaches to the study of IR have generated methodological revolution and introduced many new theories in the field of the study. In that sense the discipline of IR is concerned with the factors and activities which affect the external policies and the power of the basic unit into which the world is divided. IR has become such an intimate part of modern liberal education that it can be safely asserted that the study has now become an important component of every citizen who want to appreciate the structure and technique of the world in order to live fearlessly in time of tensions. Thus presently IR has evolved as an autonomous academic discipline and there is scope for its growth in the future as the subject is evolving day by day. IR is best described to support the pluralistic and architectonic view of IR as a synthetic and autonomous discipline. 2.6 Subject Matter of International Relations

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In the process of evolution of the discipline of IR, the subject matter of the discipline has broadened. Grayson Kirk identified in 1947 five essential subject-matter of IR- the nature and operation of state-system; factors that affect power of a nation-state; the international position and foreign policy of Great Powers; the history of recent international relations; the building of a more stable world order. The scope of the subject-matter of IR came up for discussion in 1948 at the Paris Conference of International Political Science Association and it was decided that subject—matter of IR must include – international politics, international organization and administration; and international law. In the mid 1970 Vincent Barker in a survey conducted under the Carnegie Endowment for international peace identified seven elements as fundamental subject-matter of IR – nature and principle forces of international politics; political, social and economic organization of international life; elements of national power; instruments available for promotion of national interests; limitation and control of national power; foreign policy of one or more major powers and occasionally of a small state; history of recent international events. In 1985 Karl Deutsch twelve elements of IR subject-matter which are as follows: nation and world; transnational process and international interdependence; war and peace; power and weakness; international politics and society; world population versus food resources and environment; prosperity and poverty; freedom and oppression; perception and illusion; activity and apathy; revolution and stability; identity and transformation. In the 21st century the subject matter of IR has broadened manifold. Theodore Coulombus and James Wolfe included following issues within the scope of IR – analytical approach to IR; theories of IR; nation-states and nationalism;

national power; national interest; foreign policies of nation-states; diplomacy; war; balance of power; international law; international organizations; new actors within international system. During 1997 John Baylis and Steve Smith in a magnum opus entitled *Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* pointed out that in the context of globalization many new issues have been included within the subject-matter of IR like Human Rights, Environmental issues and Gender issues. It is really very difficult to finalise the subject-matter of IR once and for all. The dynamic nature of politics and fast-changing international environment render the task risky. The subject-matter of IR in the contemporary era remains within the broad framework of proper establishment of relationship between national interests and international obligations for each and every nation-state. In order to encompass the multi-dimensional issues beyond the simple inter-state relationship, scholars like John Baylis and Steve Smith propagates the use of the term world politics in place of international relations to make the subject-matter of IR look more inclusive.

The evolution of IR as an autonomous discipline in the 21st century encountered a milieu of post-cold war period of war on terrorism. Thus war remains the key issue in the domain of IR and as such the subject-matter of international relations includes more of cooperative issue-areas through multilateral institutional frameworks striving for world peace or at least to prevent a new world war.