FOURTH EDITION

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

POWER AND PURPOSE IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

PAUL D'ANIERI

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Power and Purpose in Global Affairs

Paul D'Anieri

University of California, Riverside

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DEDICATION

To My Children
Jacey, Courtney, Zachary, Joe, and Lily

BRIEF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

LETTER TO INSTRUCTORS

Dear International Politics Instructor:

The mission for the course in international politics, as I see it, is to provide students with the analytical skills and conceptual apparatus to understand and analyze international politics. Although much has changed in international politics since I began teaching the course just after the end of the Cold War, this underlying goal has not. I continue to believe the biggest benefits our students get from the course are the concepts we teach and the habits of inquiry we instill. The course is not just a course on international politics or political science; it is a central component of a liberal education. Therefore, I continue to present many of the issues addressed in the text in terms of questions or puzzles, and to examine multiple answers. I also introduce concepts that have application beyond international politics, such as collective action problems, expected utility, social construction, and the distinctions between the five paradigms of international politics we discuss. In this edition, I explore different conceptions of power much more deeply.

The themes of **power and purpose** recur throughout the text. This scheme reflects one of the main debates in contemporary theorizing—the debate between rationalist and constructivist approaches. I also want to prompt students to inquire about these two concepts when thinking about world issues. Many discussions of contemporary problems focus on the desire to achieve a particular purpose (such as "development"), without giving sufficient attention to the limitations on actors' ability, or power, to bring about that end. Similarly, we need to think about how actors' goals are formed and how they change, and why some are controversial and others go unquestioned. The notions of power and purpose are explored in depth in Chapter 1, and then are reinforced throughout the text, with a discussion focused on power and purpose at the end of each chapter.

The **five paradigms** that dominate Chapters 3 and 4 (realism, liberalism, economic structuralism, constructivism, and feminism) recur throughout the text. They arise explicitly again in Chapter 10, when they are applied to international political economy, and in Chapter 14, when they are applied to international environmental politics.

A third recurring theme is that of **continuity and change**. Chapter 2 surveys the evolution of the contemporary system, and subsequent chapters address the historic roots of many of the phenomena that concern us today. An explicit goal is to ask whether traditional concepts are adequate to understand contemporary problems, and to identify what is so new that we may not yet have the concepts needed to understand it.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- This edition focuses on expanding and enriching the discussion of power, based on requests from previous users.
- Chapter 1 now includes a substantive discussion on different conceptions of power: coercion, institutional power, soft power, structural power, and collaborative power.
- Subsequent chapters point out, where appropriate, how some of these different conceptions of power apply to topics under discussion.

- The text is updated throughout to use recent examples wherever possible. Although this is not primarily a course about current events, recent examples help students to engage with the material.
- The discussion of economic structuralism in Chapter 4 now includes a brief discussion of Thomas Piketty's widely read book, *Capital in the 21st Century*.
- Chapter 9, on the use of force, has evolved to address the Islamic State, which appears to blend aspects of a terrorist group and a state. There is also a brief discussion of hybrid war, based on Russia's actions in Ukraine.
- The "Connection to You" box in Chapter 5 now addresses campus activism aimed at altering foreign policies.
- The "Policy Connection" box in Chapter 7 now addresses Britain's discussion about leaving the EU.

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Like many of my colleagues, I was inspired by talented and dedicated teachers. The best of them ignited my interest, sharpened my thinking, and raised my aspirations. As teachers, we cherish the moments we see a light bulb go on in a student's head or stand back and watch students engage in a thoughtful discussion. I have sought to provide a book that in content and style helps dedicated teachers inspire curious students.

Sincerely,

Riverside, California
August 2015
danieri@ucr.edu

LETTER TO STUDENTS

Dear Student:
Unanticipated crises in international politics seem to emerge on a weekly basis. In the past few years, we have witnessed a war between Russia and Ukraine, the emergence of the "Islamic State" from conflicts in Syria and Iraq, the collapse of global energy prices, an Ebola epidemic, and an international crisis over a comedy movie. At the same time, some features of international politics—war, poverty, and the struggle for influence—seem eternal. How are we to make sense of all this? International politics presents us with many puzzles, most of which have no clear solutions. And yet the stakes are very high—responding incorrectly to these crises and challenges can lead to war, pandemic, and poverty. The puzzling nature of international politics combined with the high stakes of the issues involved make it a dramatic subject.

The book is built around the theme of "power and purpose." What goals are actors seeking to attain, and who defines those goals? Are the goals complementary or competing with those of other actors? Those are questions of purpose. Power concerns how actors pursue those goals; what resources do they have: money, weapons, prestige? The concept of power has several meanings, and exploring these will help us understand international politics, and many other areas of politics and the social sciences.

FEATURES

- **Learning objectives** and **chapter outlines** for each chapter serve both to preview the key themes and help with review.
- "**Consider the Case"** boxes begin each chapter with a brief case study from recent or more distant history, to illustrate the real-world importance of the themes of each chapter. Each chapter then ends with a "Reconsider the Case" box that returns to the case in light of the discussion in the chapter.
- **"Policy Connection"** boxes discuss contemporary policy problems, showing how the concepts discussed in the text are applied by policy makers.
- **"History Connection"** boxes address the theme of continuity and change, tracing the origins of contemporary problems and showing how problems of today have reflections in historical cases.
- **"Geography Connection"** boxes use various kinds of maps to convey information and illustrate concepts. More broadly, these boxes help demonstrate the increasing role of geospatial tools in understanding contemporary politics.
- **"Connection to You"** boxes specifically address how the problems discussed in the text relate to today's university students. They illustrate that problems that sometimes seem very distant from our lives actually influence us considerably; and that we as individuals can seek to shape international politics in numerous ways.
-  **"Power and Purpose"** discussions, at the end of each chapter, summarize how the themes of power and purpose relate to that topic. These discussions help to illustrate the different dimensions of power, and their relationship to actors' goals.

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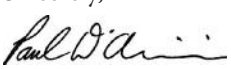
In the time since I took my first international politics course as an undergraduate, the world has been transformed dramatically, first by the end of the Cold War, then by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the wars that followed. It has been transformed as well by accelerating globalization, the information revolution, and the rise of China. Many of the facts I studied as an undergraduate are today irrelevant. But many of the concepts I learned—the tools for thinking about international politics—have not only remained relevant but have helped me and others make sense of the bewildering changes we have encountered in our lifetime. My aspiration for this book is that it provides you with a set of tools you can use to analyze a wide variety of new situations that you may encounter.

Sincerely,



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August 2015
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book owes its existence to wonderful teachers, students, family and friends.

Carolyn Merrill has been a wonderful friend and a supportive editor. She was instrumental in convincing me to write the first book a decade ago, and has been equally encouraging about this fourth edition. Laura Hildebrand offered persistent and positive help in thinking through this edition and bringing it to fruition. The rest of the team at Cengage has been efficient and helpful in putting the book together, including Corinna Dibble, Michelle Forbes, and Sarah Cole.

Many of the changes in this edition came from the suggestions of reviewers. In particular, they urged me to provide a more nuanced treatment of power, one of the central concepts in international politics and the book. Reviewers' advice led to many other improvements, though I did not heed all their suggestions, and the shortcomings that remain are my responsibility.

My students over the years have provided both inspiration and input. Their curiosity and optimism make teaching worthwhile, and they have offered a steady stream of suggestions about content and presentation. I am grateful as well to the University of California, Riverside, for providing a rich intellectual environment and enough time to focus on this project.

As I get older, I appreciate more than ever the teachers that I had many years ago. In particular, Michael Schechter at Michigan State and Peter Katzenstein at Cornell inspired me both with their research and their teaching. They demonstrated the impact that talented and dedicated teachers and mentors can have.

My wife Laura has always supported my scholarly endeavors, even when they take me away from home or occupy my weekends. She has been a great sounding board for my ideas about how to approach various topics, and never hesitates to point out the bad ones.

This book is dedicated to my children, Jacey, Courtney, Zachary, Joe, and Lily. As I write this, the youngest among them is leaving for college. She provided valuable feedback on the writing style of this edition. From the beginning I have been energized by the understanding that I was writing for students like them.

REVIEWERS

We would also like to thank the instructors who have contributed their valuable feedback through reviews of this text and their participation in focus groups:

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Linda Adams, Baylor University
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Paul D'Anieri is Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at the University of California Riverside, as well as Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor. His teaching and research focus on politics and foreign policy in the post-Soviet states. His books include *Economic Interdependence in Ukrainian-Russian Relations* and *Understanding Ukrainian Politics: Power, Politics, and Institutional Design*, and he has published numerous articles in academic journals. He is currently studying the transnational spread of methods of political control in new democracies. Prior to coming to UC Riverside, Professor D'Anieri taught at the University of Kansas and the University of Florida. He received his BA in International Relations from Michigan State University and his PhD in Government from Cornell University.

Syrian refugees protesting in Zaatari refugee camp, Jordan, March 2014.
Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

INTRODUCTION: PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Learning Objectives

1-1 Identify ways in which international politics are linked to everyday life.

1-2 Distinguish between explanatory and normative theory.

1-3 Identify the links between theory and policy.

1-4 Elaborate how theories are evaluated in political science.

1-5 Apply the concept of levels of analysis in international relations.

1

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Imagine you are president of the United States. It appears that Iran is acquiring nuclear weapons. How do you respond? Your advisers are divided. One group advocates a hard line: Threaten a military attack unless Iran proves it has stopped the program. Only the threat of a U.S. assault, these advisers contend, will persuade Iran to change course. Another group counsels a conciliatory policy: The longer we can contain the problem, they say, the more likely it is that the Iranian government will either be replaced or become less hostile. Both groups warn that if you do not take their advice, you may be responsible for prompting the use of nuclear weapons against the United States. Who is correct? How can we predict the consequences of each policy option?

Imagine you are the president of China. Other countries are increasingly insisting that you stop punishing those who speak out against corruption and human rights abuses. Your economic growth is based on huge trade surpluses with those countries, so it is important that the trade relationships be preserved. On the other hand, you fear that increasing freedom may destabilize your government, and you believe that may be the real goal of Western powers. You are not sure that those countries will ever really follow through on their implied threats. After all, their companies are desperate to sell goods to your booming market, and their governments rely on your lending to fund their deficit spending. Does participating fully in the global economy require becoming more like Western countries politically? Or is it possible to keep one's domestic political arrangements completely separate from one's international economic relations?

Imagine you are an average citizen in a democratic country voting in a national election. The candidates have similar positions on most issues but differ about how best to combat terrorism. One candidate argues that good intelligence gathering is the key to identifying terrorists before they strike and favors extensive monitoring of phone and Internet traffic. Another candidate argues that such surveillance provides relatively little benefit and constitutes an invasion of our privacy. Whom do you vote for? What are the sources of terrorism? What policies can reduce the threat?

Imagine you have joined a group devoted to alleviating poverty in Africa. A philanthropist has just given the group $1 billion to reduce poverty. How should your group spend the money? Should you focus your work on educating government decision makers to make better decisions? Should you invest in primary education to reduce the illiteracy rate? Should you spend the money on health care to reduce the drain of illness on the economy? What are the causes of global poverty? What are the cures?

These four scenarios cover a wide range of issues and views, but in each case you face difficult choices that can be made wisely only if you understand how international politics works. In each case, moreover, a bad decision will be costly. These examples illustrate an important point: International politics matters to everybody, in one way or another. It affects the daily lives even of people who know nothing or care nothing about it.

Each of these scenarios also illustrates why international politics is an interesting—even a dramatic—subject. International politics can be thought of as a set of vexing puzzles with very high stakes. Millions of lives are on the line when leaders try to avoid war or try to use war to accomplish their goals, or even when they choose policies on trade, developmental aid, or environmental collaboration. International politics involves ethical quandaries, such as whether the effort to reduce terrorism justifies torture or whether it is acceptable to stand aside in the face of famine or genocide. It involves the highest aspirations of humankind, such as the dreams of ending war and eliminating global poverty. And it involves the lowest depths to which individuals and societies sink—mass murder, terrorism, and famine.

This book seeks to help you understand the puzzles that comprise international politics today. These puzzles challenge our intellect, and the choices we make or do not make, as citizens and as societies, will have far-reaching consequences. Wise choices may help avert wars, starvation, and environmental collapse. Poor choices can lead to disaster. That combination—difficult dilemmas and high stakes—is what makes international politics an exciting subject. That we live in a rapidly changing world only increases the risks and the challenges.

PURPOSE: THE GOALS OF POLITICS

The scenarios in the previous section bring up questions of both *power* and *purpose*, two themes that run throughout this book. Power and purpose are central concepts in understanding political behavior, and are therefore at the center of the most widely

applied theories of international politics. Each approach has particular notions of what constitutes power and of what the most important goals are that actors are pursuing. It is useful to come back to these concepts again and again. Neither purpose nor power is always evident. Focusing on them prompts us to make the implicit explicit, and in doing so reveals vital characteristics of the international political process.

What are various actors trying to achieve? **Purpose** refers to the goals of political action. In this book, we consider a wide range of actors, including states, individuals, bureaucracies, firms, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and terrorist groups (see Figure 1.1). Regardless of the actors, we need to consider the purposes they are trying to achieve. To what extent do the actors on a given issue have shared or competing purposes? How do the purposes of states and of the international community change, and what happens when they do? These questions are central to the study of international politics.

purpose

The goals that actors pursue, including the notion of "national interest." Whether actors see themselves as having shared or competing goals is a central concern.

power

The ability of an actor to achieve its goals. Exactly what constitutes power and how to measure it are vexing problems in international relations.

THE PROBLEM OF POWER

Power is an essential concept in the study of politics, but how to define it, and how it works, are widely debated. For our purposes, it is sufficient to highlight five different meanings of the term *power*. These five concepts, taken together, provide some sense of the range of ways power works in political science, and the range of approaches one can take in studying it.

The simplest and most widely used meaning of the term *power* is the ability to compel another actor to do (or not to do) something. When one country uses military force or economic sanctions to compel another to surrender some disputed territory, we see power as coercion.

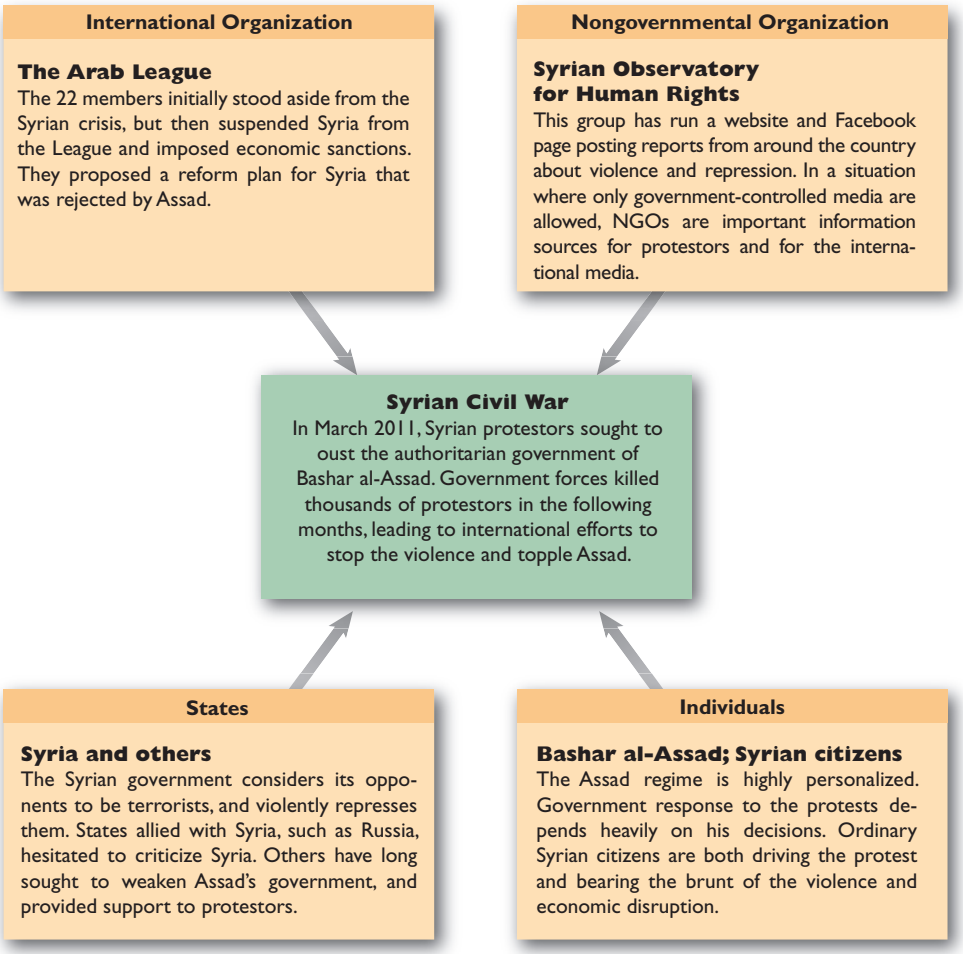
In many cases, institutions are given authority on certain issues, and the rules of those organizations convey power. This "institutional power" can be far reaching, but it depends on the underlying agreements on which the institution is based—which in some cases seem unquestionable and in others are fragile. In Chapter 7, we examine the United Nations (UN), which has been given authority over a variety of functions. The UN General Assembly operates according to a one-state/one-vote rule, but the Security Council allows five "great powers" to veto any resolution, assigning a different level of institutional power to those five.

Sometimes we can get others to do what we want without threatening or outvoting them. In Chapter 4, our discussion of constructivist theory examines how shared norms (values) shape behavior. To the extent that we can appeal to shared values, and to the extent we have prestige, our arguments may carry more weight. This prestige, and the ability to use it persuasively, is sometimes called "soft power." If others share our purpose, we do not need to compel them. In this conception, purpose and power begin to overlap.

AP Photo

A bomb near Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, tears apart a packed passenger train. The tactic of suicide bombing was developed by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. How has the advent of suicide bombing changed the kinds of questions we ask about international politics?

FIGURE 1.1 **Political actors in the Syrian Civil War.**



Some assert that the ultimate power is to have social relations arranged in such a way that others serve one's interest voluntarily, and without thinking about it. This is referred to as "structural power" because it resides in the very structure of social relations. To have one's interests accepted uncritically as natural, or as the only way things can be, is to have influence that is not even noticed and, therefore, cannot be easily challenged. For example, scholars critical of capitalism (Chapter 4) point out that in capitalism most everyone accepts as natural an arrangement in which the owners of corporations make vastly more than employees, who may work equally hard. In this view, capitalism gives structural power to those who own firms.

A very different view sees power not as directed *at* other actors but *with* other actors. Put differently, this view stresses *power to* rather than *power over*. Liberal theorists (Chapter 3) and feminist theorists (Chapter 4) point out that the ability to collaborate with others to accomplish what one cannot accomplish alone is a form of collaborative power.

These five different meanings of power (and we could identify more) are summarized below:

1. The ability to compel, or coercive power.
2. Compulsion according to rules, or institutional power.
3. Persuasion, or soft power.
4. The power of unquestioned beliefs, or structural power.
5. The power gained by working together, or collaborative power.

Theorists disagree about which forms of power are most important. Those in the realist school (Chapter 3) tend to find compulsion most fundamental because it does not rely on any underlying agreement on the value of money, voting rules, or social norms. Adherents of other schools of thought argue that compulsion is a very expensive way to get things done, and that a great number of goals cannot be gained with it. They find the various kinds of power that do not rely on compulsion to be more important, and argue that most of what goes on in international politics is driven by these other notions of power. Debating which kind of power is most important is less important than recognizing that there are very different ways to define it, and very different ways in which power and purpose are linked. In compulsion, there is a clear distinction between the goal and the power used to achieve it. In structural power, having others accept one's goal is itself a form of power.

PUZZLES WITH HIGH STAKES

International politics today is a series of puzzles with immense consequences. A great deal—including money and lives—depends on the answers and solutions we reach. Unfortunately, we are unable to answer many questions in international politics with certainty. The problem is not that we have no answers but rather that, for most important questions, we have two or more good answers, along with considerable debate concerning which is correct. A few of the questions that are most prominent today can be used to illustrate this point.

- **What are the sources of terrorism?** It seems that religion often plays an important role. But of all the religious people in the world, very few, even among the most devout, commit terrorism or support it. Therefore, some people argue that individual frustration and alienation cause specific individuals to become terrorists. Others point to the role of poverty. Ultimately, there is no simple explanation for why one person becomes a terrorist and another does not, or why one group seems to condone terrorism while another does not. Yet governments and individuals must make decisions every day on the basis of answers to these questions, even if those answers are tentative.

AP Photo/Tatan Syuflana

A polluted canal runs through Jakarta, Indonesia. Gaps between the richest and the poorest are increasing worldwide. What are the causes of poverty? Does the globalization of trade and finance help or hurt?

- **Are democracies more peaceful than countries with other forms of government?** It seems natural that they would be, and recent U.S. presidents of both parties have asserted that this is an important consideration in their policies. Although the relationship between democracy and war is complex and hotly debated, important actions such as the invasion of Iraq, intervention in the former Yugoslavia, and the provision of economic aid to Russia were justified in part by the belief that if outsiders help countries become democratic, these countries will be peaceful and war with them will be less likely. However, a pro-democratic revolution in Ukraine seems to have spurred conflict, not reduced it, and the revolution in Libya descended into civil war. What is the relationship between democracy—and democratization—and conflict?
- **What are the causes and consequences of poverty around the world?** Many people argue that global poverty is a result of the way the international economy works: Competition from advanced economies makes it impossible for poor countries to succeed. Many others, however, make the opposite argument: Competition, they say, increases efficiency and wealth. Poor countries would benefit from more international competition, not less. There is evidence for both arguments. For the lives of billions of people, making the right call on this issue is essential.
- **Should we, and could we, turn back globalization?** Is globalization a force to be feared or a force for good? Many people fear the consequences of globalization and argue that governments should take steps to limit it. Others disagree, arguing that globalization brings many benefits, including economic growth and better government. Still others argue that, whether we like it or not, globalization is an inevitable economic and social process and that those who try to fight it will be left behind.
- **Is the United States a declining power?** Is China's rise inevitable? What might slow or reverse the perceived decline of the United States or sidetrack China's rise? What are the forces that lead to the rise and decline of the power and influence of different countries? What might be the consequences when a new dominant power emerges? These questions have been applied to history as well as to contemporary cases. Leaders around the world are seeking to answer them, and to apply the answers successfully to their own states.
- **Is the international community obliged to intervene when a country's government is abusing the human rights of its own people?** Beliefs about the circumstances in which outsiders can, should, or must intervene are shifting. Traditionally, interference in others' "internal affairs" was generally prohibited, but that changed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened in Libya in 2011 to prevent Muammar Gaddafi from massacring opposition forces. In 2012, a similar situation arose in Syria. If intervention was permitted, was it *required*? The policies adopted in one case can create difficult precedents for others.

Often we cannot delay making a decision until we have arrived at a perfect understanding of the problem. We must learn to evaluate the different arguments on a pressing question and decide which we (as individuals or as a society) find most compelling. We base our policies on answers to questions, even when we are highly uncertain about those answers. In other words, we are forced to choose a side in key debates even when we would rather delay. Academic debates, therefore, have immense practical significance.

THE GOALS OF THE BOOK

This book aims to help you evaluate everyday arguments about international politics and foreign policy by connecting these everyday arguments to scholarly research in the field. Friends, parents, teachers, bloggers, and "experts" routinely make assertions—often with great confidence—about how international politics works and about what policies governments, groups, firms, and individuals should adopt.

Every argument about politics and policies is based on an identifiable series of assumptions. We can scrutinize those assumptions and decide whether we agree. Similarly, each argument is supported by at least some evidence. We can evaluate that evidence and identify its strengths and weaknesses. For each argument, there are competing arguments based on different assumptions and different evidence (or on a different interpretation of the same evidence). We want to be able to identify and explore the competing arguments. We want to understand where those different interpretations come from. This is the focus of the academic field of international politics.

In sum, we want to accomplish three basic goals.

- First, we want to better our own understanding of international politics. More than learning facts, this means learning how to ask the right questions and to evaluate evidence about possible answers. This will allow us to achieve our second goal.
- Second, we want to make informed evaluations about how the world works and about what choices should be made. We might use these evaluations to decide whom to vote for, where to invest, or where to volunteer.
- Third, we want to be able to engage in intelligent debate about important public policy issues. Whether the goal is to convince someone to vote for a particular candidate, to gain support for a particular policy, or simply to challenge our parents, we want to be able to bring theory and evidence together to create compelling arguments.

THE SCIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Some statements about international politics are very general, whereas others are quite specific. In either case, the goal of analysis is to decide whether to accept or to reject an assertion.

International politics is generally considered a part of the discipline of political science. The idea that there can be a science of politics is often regarded with skepticism. However, whether or not we admit it, we all behave as though we can discover patterns in politics. We form generalizations about what tends to happen in certain kinds of circumstances, and about what we might do to promote some outcomes and prevent others. Without some belief that we can explain and predict political behavior, our choices would be completely random. Political science cannot aspire to the same level of certainty as physics, but it has a crucial role to play in prompting us to make our beliefs about causes and consequences as explicit as possible, and then to subject them to scrutiny.

How do we do this? The branch of political science known as **methodology** studies how best to verify or reject different hypotheses (assertions) about politics. However, there is profound disagreement among political scientists about which methodological

methodology
The set of principles, strategies, and practical steps used to evaluate competing hypotheses.

THE GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

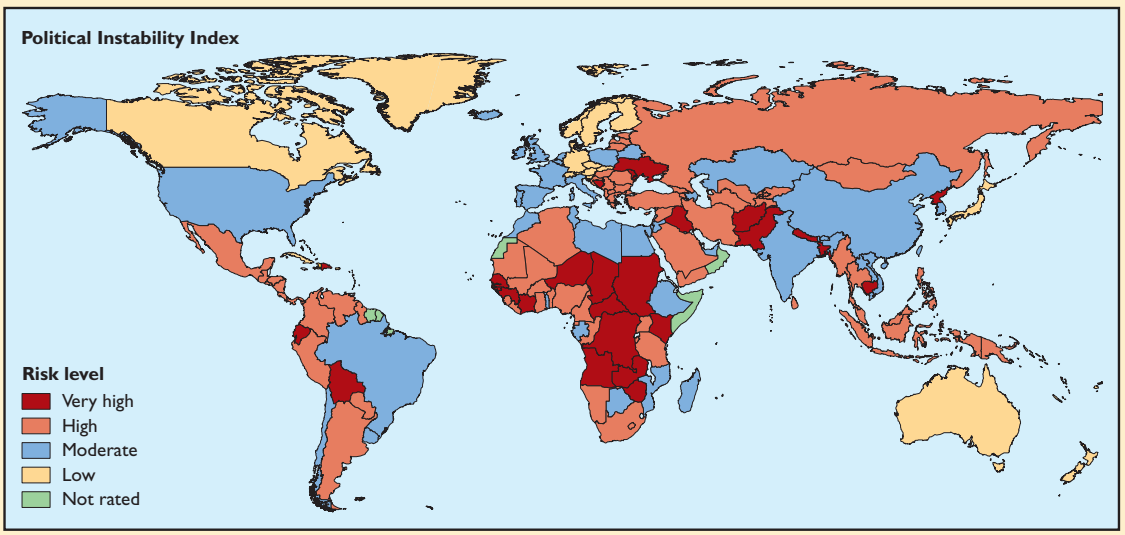
PREDICTING INSTABILITY

This map shows the "political instability index" of countries, as assessed by the Economist Intelligence Unit, part of the English newsmagazine *The Economist*. We want to judge instability in the world for any number of reasons: It could affect the value of investments, the flow of migrants, the supply of goods, the security of democracy, or the need to intervene militarily. But what do we mean by "stability"? And how do we measure it? These are the kinds of questions to which academics, investment bankers, intelligence services, and humanitarian organizations devote considerable energy. Predicting unrest is difficult, but success can help actors prepare for or even prevent the worst consequences.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How would you define "stability" in international affairs?
2. What things that can easily be measured do you think would be the best predictors?
3. How would you figure out whether your model was better than those of your classmates?

Political Instability Index



approaches are best. There is equally profound disagreement about the extent to which the study of politics can be or should aim to be *scientific* in the way that term is used in the natural sciences.

Natural scientists perform laboratory experiments in which they isolate and control the variables they are studying. Political scientists, in contrast, are unable to perform experiments on world leaders or on the effects of different policies. Having seen the

THE POLICY CONNECTION

ACADEMIC AND POLICY DEBATES

The study of international politics and the practice of foreign policy are tightly linked. People study international politics because they hope to make better decisions concerning the real world. Every foreign policy is based on some understanding of how the world works and of what the results of different policies would likely be. For every headline one reads about a foreign policy debate, there is a corresponding academic debate. Every policy argument, boiled down to its essentials, is a causal argument: "If we do X, the result will be Y." The obvious follow-up question is: "How do you know?" In the public debate, we are often not very rigorous about scrutinizing these propositions.

The job of the scholar, the student, and the citizen is to examine these claims more rigorously. This means understanding the assumptions and arguments behind a particular policy position and evaluating them critically. Chapter 9, for example, considers efforts to combat terrorism and fundamentalist insurgency. If policy makers believe that terrorism is caused by poverty, they will adopt a particular set of policies. If they believe that terrorism is caused by an absence of democracy, they will adopt a very different set of policies. Because resources are limited, it is important not to waste money and effort on policies that will not work.

Chapter 11 addresses international economic crises, including the one that began in 2008 and continues today in some countries. A central dilemma for governments has been whether to borrow and spend more to help economies grow, or whether to borrow and spend less to reduce national debts. Equally important for policy makers is how to coordinate policies with other governments so that states do not enact policies that negate each other. These debates lead us into macroeconomics. What is the danger that reduced government spending will push economies into deeper recession? Is it bigger or smaller than the danger of a debt crisis? A larger question is why traditionally strong economies (United States, Western Europe) were hit harder by this crisis than developing economies we used to associate with crisis. After years of economic preaching to the developing countries, do the "advanced" economies now need to take some of their own advice?

Chapter 14 addresses international environmental problems. In the debate over the scientific evidence for global warming, we see clearly the link between scholarship, politics, and policy making. We look at the political, rather than the scientific, questions. What are the barriers to a more effective global treaty to prevent climate change? What are the economic effects of different measures? These are widely debated, and even when there is agreement on the costs, there is no agreement on who should pay those costs. Most frightening, perhaps, what are the possible international political and economic effects if little is done and climate change begins to have dramatic consequences?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Identify a current debate (other than those mentioned here). What are the major causal arguments in favor of one policy or another?
2. Can you envision how one might design a study to assess the validity of these arguments?
3. What obstacles do you run into?

German reaction to the election of François Hollande as President of France in 2012, we cannot run another trial in which someone else wins and then measure the different reaction. We have only the data that we can collect and observe from the real world, and we struggle to find valid comparisons and to control for factors that may skew our results. Even within the social sciences, political science offers fewer clear-cut concepts, methods, and measurements than economics or psychology. We are not seeking "laws of nature" that have no exceptions, like the law of gravity, but rather generalizable tendencies in the patterns of international affairs.

This book uses a general model of political science represented by the following process.

1. Begin with a question, such as "What causes wars?" The question must be clearly defined. For example, the analysis should specify whether "wars" includes both civil wars and international wars, or just international wars.
2. Identify potential answers (hypotheses). These may come from history, from political theory, from conventional wisdom, or from some observed pattern. Two prominent hypotheses about the causes of international war are: (1) war results from an imbalance in military power, and (2) war results from the choices of aggressive leaders.
3. Determine what patterns we would observe if each hypothesis were true. What patterns would be evident if war resulted from an imbalance of power? Every time there was an imbalance of power, there would be war, and there would never be a war without an imbalance of power.
4. Decide how to define and measure the key factors. How is power defined? How is it measured? How much imbalance is supposed to matter? Issues of definition and measurement lead to a great deal of controversy about findings. Difficulty in defining and measuring power makes it difficult to definitively resolve the relationship between power and war.
5. Choose a research method. How will we link data to a hypothesis to reach a conclusion? We might look for a statistical pattern in a large number of cases: Is there a statistical correlation between the distribution of power and war? Alternatively, we might examine just a few cases in great depth to see if a link can be established between cause and effect. In this example, we might look closely at diplomatic records to see the role that an imbalance of power played in the thinking of key leaders. Or we might engage in a more interpretive approach. For example, to assess the role of aggressive leaders, we might analyze the rhetoric of national leaders and the ways in which they express aggression.
6. Evaluate the findings. In politics, researchers rarely find incontrovertible support for a hypothesis. Thus, instead of asking whether a hypothesis is true or false, political scientists ask whether it is a better or worse explanation than competing explanations. For example, if we find a war in which there was not an imbalance of power, do we reject that hypothesis? Not if it fits with the data better than any other hypothesis. In that case, we would accept that an imbalance of power is an important factor in causing wars and continue to look for other factors that might explain observed deviations from this pattern.

There are many variants on the research process in political science, ranging from sophisticated computational analyses of "big data" to equally sophisticated interpretations of a single case or of a pattern of discourse. The important point is that we first ask, "What is causing this phenomenon?" Then, when we have a tentative answer, we should ask, "Why is this answer more credible than another?" Skepticism about conclusions is

perhaps even more important in the social sciences than in the natural sciences. Sometimes the process is frustrating, because two contradictory ideas may seem to have nearly equally convincing support, or because it seems like every explanation for a phenomenon (such as war) has major shortcomings. This is what makes the study of politics difficult. It is also what makes it so dramatic and compelling.

In the natural sciences (and some social sciences), the ability to predict future events is the main criterion by which theories are judged. If a theory is valid, it ought to be able to predict future outcomes. In political science, and especially in international relations, consistently successful prediction is rare. Even reaching consensus on explanations of past patterns is elusive. Thus, the study of international relations is less about learning the accepted truths revealed by scientific inquiry than about understanding the ongoing debates among the most compelling theories. Progress is achieved more by eliminating explanations that seem plausible than by discovering scientific laws.

CHRISTOPHE SIMON/Getty Images

Brazilian presidential candidates Aécio Neves (L) and Dilma Rousseff at a televised debate, October 2014.

THE ROLE OF THEORY

On the surface, academic political scientists talk about international politics very differently than do policy makers or journalists. Whereas policy makers and journalists concentrate on *specific* problems and look for specific answers, political scientists ask *general* questions about how international politics works. Despite these apparent differences, specific answers to specific questions are almost always linked to general explanations of how international politics works. These general explanations are called *theories*. Sometimes policy makers scorn the academic theories of political scientists, viewing them as too abstract to be relevant to pressing world issues.[1] Yet this superficial distinction is misleading. Even though policy makers rarely talk about theory explicitly, they use theories of international relations constantly in evaluating problems, whether they recognize it or not.

Several examples will illustrate the underlying importance of international relations theory for policy making. What is the best way to convince aspiring nuclear weapons states, such as Iran and North Korea, to give up their nuclear weapons programs? Some people argue that raising the cost of such programs—through political and economic sanctions and, if necessary, military action—will persuade potential nuclear states that the cost is simply too high. Others contend that such threats only increase the perceived insecurity of the governments in question and, therefore, increase their determination to get nuclear weapons. Still others look to domestic politics within the potential nuclear states, arguing that as long as their leaders get domestic political benefits from standing up to outside powers, there

STR/AFP/Getty Images/Newscom

The village of Aslam in northern Yemen. Yemen has been a source of terrorism. Is poverty an important cause?

THE HISTORY CONNECTION

HOW HISTORY INFLUENCES CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

This book, like any study of international politics, makes frequent references to historical examples—ranging in time from last year to 2500 years ago. We might ask, therefore, what connection events from the distant past have with the study of international politics today, in an age of cell phones, the Internet, and global mass culture. World leaders as well as scholars constantly look back in history to try to gain insight into the current problems they are grappling with. For some, history is a source of lessons. For others, it is a source of data. Either way, history is the primary place to look in evaluating theories. The philosopher George Santayana asserted the importance of history for leaders in his frequently quoted warning: "Those who do not know history are condemned to repeat it."

History influences our thinking about international politics in three ways. First, it powerfully conditions notions of what is right and wrong, especially relating to questions of territory. For example, when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, Russian leaders pointed to history—large parts of Ukraine were at one time part of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union—to justify seizing Ukrainian territory. Israel and Palestinians can both point to different times in history to support the territorial arrangements they prefer. History can also provide a strong sense of grievance, as in the view that China was exploited for many decades and now must fight for its rightful place.

History also provides analogies and lessons that we use to understand—sometimes very poorly—contemporary events. Thus, many compared Russia's tactics in annexing Crimea to Hitler's in taking over Czechoslovakia in 1938. As Chapter 6 explores in more detail, the "lessons" taken from the rise of Hitler have been applied widely since then.

Finally, history provides data for various kinds of political science analyses of political phenomena. Statistical studies of all the wars since 1815 have been a major source of evidence for and against the democratic peace theory (Chapter 5), and case studies of the "July Crisis" that preceded World War I and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 have informed much scholarship on how to resolve such crises peacefully. Those two cases are so widely studied in part because of their intrinsic importance and in part because detailed diplomatic records are publicly available.

Each chapter of this book includes a discussion showing how events in the twenty-first century are not as historically unique or fundamentally new as some believe them to be. The text also looks at the ways in which contemporary scholars and policy makers have tried to apply the lessons of the past to the problems they face today.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Identify a current international issue. What historical examples seem most comparable?
2. Would other students in your class likely agree? Why or why not?
3. Do you think students in Canada, China, Germany, or Russia would identify with the same relevant examples? Why or why not?

Robert Kaplan, Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos (New York Random House, 2002).

is little that external actors can do to dissuade them. Each of these answers is based on a general explanation—a theory—of what factors drive state behavior.

Why did the United States, after World War II, spend billions of dollars building up its former enemies in Germany and Japan? Why did Western states contribute significant aid to their former enemies in the Soviet bloc after the Cold War? Why did the United States try to install a democratic rather than an authoritarian government in Iraq in 2003–2004? In each case, an underlying theory motivated these significant actions: the belief that democratic countries are much less likely to be aggressive and warlike. If this argument is true, money spent on democratization is a good investment because it will make unnecessary much larger military expenditures later.

Why did the United States fight a decade-long war in Vietnam? Many leaders believed in the "domino theory," which stated that if one state in the region became communist, others would likely follow, falling like dominoes. The theory was based partly on German aggression prior to World War II, and partly on Russian expansion into Eastern Europe after World War II.

These examples demonstrate that general notions, or theories, about causes and effects motivate all sorts of actions in international affairs. This is true whether or not policy makers recognize that their generalizations about the world can be called "theories" and whether or not those theories have been scrutinized and tested for validity. Some theories have worked out badly when applied. For example, a theory derived from the lessons of World War I, that confronting aggression could lead to unnecessary war, led to decisions that contributed to World War II.

Policy makers are concerned above all not with generalities but with specific problems at specific points in time. However, even in the context of a single case, theory is necessary for action. Without predicting the likely results of different choices, we cannot act intelligently. Thus, we theorize whether we want to or not, and any given policy can be "unpeeled" to uncover the theoretical assumptions behind it. The study of international politics aims to make those theories explicit and to subject them to scrutiny. The economist John Maynard Keynes put it bluntly: "Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist."[2]

WHAT IS A THEORY?

theory
A generalized explanation of a set of comparable phenomena.

In political science, the word *theory* is used fairly specifically: A **theory** is a generalized explanation of a set of essentially similar phenomena. Two things should be emphasized. First, a theory is an *explanation*. It answers the question, "Why?" A theory specifies a particular effect that is being explained and the causes of that effect. Second, a theory is *generalized*. It seeks to explain not a single event but a series of comparable events. Thus, political science does not advance a theory of World War I or a theory of the establishment the World Trade Organization. Rather, political scientists develop theories of how wars occur or of trade liberalization, but not of a single event. Instead, there are *descriptions* of single events. This specific usage of the word *theory* in social science differs slightly from the conventional usage, in which the term is sometimes used to label any conjecture about a single event, such as a "theory" of who killed John F. Kennedy or a "theory" of why a certain candidate won a certain election.

However, as this last example implies, there can often be a connection between a theory and an attempt to account for a particular event. To understand why a specific event occurred (such as the outcome of an election or the outbreak of a war), analysts almost always consider the factors that have been important in related cases. The question

of why World War I occurred is related to the question "What causes wars?" Similarly, understanding the sources of the World Trade Organization is related to understanding the general causes of trade liberalization.

Thus, theory is built on an underlying assumption that specific events are not unique and do not have unique causes. Rather, we assume that most important events are single instances of broader patterns. If we want to prevent wars, we need some notion of what causes them. This requires a supposition that different wars have something in common. When stated so starkly, this idea will appear problematical to many. For example, it might seem dubious to equate the causes of World War I with the causes of World War II. However, if the lessons of the past are to be applied to the problems of today, we must assume that events in the future are somehow related to those in the past. There is a big difference between assuming that similar events have something in common and assuming that they are identical. To develop a theory of wars, we need only assume that they have some causes in common.

Historically, there have been both successes and failures in the effort to apply theory to policy. Following World War I, the dominant theories of war focused on the absence of international law. Therefore, much effort was expended on developing the League of Nations and treaties outlawing war. The problems with this approach were demonstrated at the outbreak of World War II. After World War II, however, theories of international relations were more successfully applied with the formation of the Bretton Woods trade system, which was founded on the theory that free trade would increase prosperity, and that theory was borne out in the postwar economic boom among the members of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Today, some of the most pressing policy issues are prompting new efforts to advance theoretical understanding of international politics. While police and military forces work every day to intercept specific terrorist threats, scholars seek to better understand the underlying sources of terrorism. Is terrorism based primarily in religion? In poverty? In political frustration? Answering these questions requires looking for the commonalities across different terrorist movements, even while acknowledging that they are all unique in some ways.

Egyptian antigovernment protesters on their way to Cairo's central Tahrir Square. Cairo, February 1, 2011.

Mohamed Elsayyed/Shutterstock.com

THE USES OF THEORY

Theory has three related main purposes: explanation, prediction, and prescription. First, theory is used to explain the common causes shared by a group of related events (explanation). Second, theory is used to apply such explanations to future events, to predict what might result from existing conditions or from some new event or policy (prediction). Third, theory is used to help policy makers and citizens choose the most effective policies for a given goal (prescription). In all of these tasks, theory becomes a means to simplify a reality that is extremely complex.

In evaluating different theories, it is important to keep in mind that a theory deliberately abstracts from reality, leaving much detail aside. Theories identify which parts of a complex event deserve immediate attention and which are of secondary importance. Therefore, when a particular fact or a case apparently contradicts a theory, this does not mean that the theory has no utility. Rather, the theory must be evaluated on the basis of whether, overall, it provides more or less understanding than competing explanations of the same general phenomenon.

NORMATIVE THEORY: THE PURPOSE OF ACTION

Besides the type of theory that increases our ability to explain, predict, and prescribe, there is another kind of international relations theory with a very different goal: establishing what the purpose of political action should be. Such a theory is called a **normative theory**. Whereas explanatory theory asks, "How does the world work?" normative theory asks, "What goals should we pursue?" and "What are acceptable and unacceptable ways to behave?" Normative theory can address a wide range of moral and ethical concerns, and these will crop up repeatedly throughout this book. Many discussions assume that certain goals are worth pursuing; these normative assumptions are often taken as self-evident and therefore not discussed or debated. Sometimes these assumptions are noncontroversial, but at other times they warrant serious scrutiny.

normative theory
A theory that aims to establish the proper goals of political action.

For example, although much discussion in international politics centers on how to prevent wars, no theorist spends much time asserting that war is bad because this seems self-evident. Therefore, theorists can move on to asking how to prevent war. However, in practice, we often find ourselves agonizing over whether war, as bad as it is, is worse than other possibilities. In World War II, fighting a horrendous war with millions of casualties was seen as a lesser evil than allowing Nazi Germany to rule the world. In the 1990s, many people who generally thought of themselves as opposed to military force advocated strongly for the use of military force to prevent the "ethnic cleansing" taking place in the former Yugoslavia. Although they still believed war was bad, they believed genocide was worse. Thus, even normative arguments that seem self-evident often are not. Some theorists believe that unquestioned normative beliefs often serve the interests of the powerful and that a primary goal of research should be to investigate how some goals come to predominate over others.

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

This book considers a variety of explanations of how international politics works and how states behave. At times you may find the range of theories bewildering. Unfortunately, it is not easy to reduce the number of plausible explanations down to one or two. To envision how explanations relate to one another, it is useful to group them into different schools of thought.

ARPL HIP/The Image Works

Adolf Hitler speaks at a rally. Are the decisions of individual leaders responsible for different international outcomes? If so, the individual level of analysis is important.

An initial way to categorize theories is according to their **level of analysis**. Level of analysis identifies where the analysis focuses—where the most important variation occurs. Is the main actor in the model a single individual, a larger aggregation such as a bureaucracy, or an even larger aggregation such as the state? Every analysis focuses on one aggregation and holds the other aggregations constant for the purposes of analysis. In an influential study on the causes of war, Kenneth Waltz argues that one can explain wars at any of three levels of analysis.[3] Individual-level theories see the cause of war in individuals, either generally (for example, in human nature) or specifically (in the characteristics of specific leaders). State-level theories locate the cause of war in the nature of states. For example, some types of governments might be more prone to war than others, or some states might have profound grievances that cause them to seek redress through war. System-level theories, which Waltz prefers, see the causes of war in the characteristics of the international system. War, in this view, is caused by factors that extend beyond any single state, such as the distribution of power and the number of "great powers" in the system.

Other theorists have proposed four or even five levels of analysis because they break the state level down into more than one level.[4] This book also explores explanations at a fourth level, the "substate" level, between the state and individual levels. Analyses at the substate level examine the bureaucracies and small groups that make foreign policies, as well as the influence of interest groups and public opinion on those policies (see Chapters 5 and 6). Debating the "right" number of levels is less important than understanding the concept. Thinking about the level of analysis helps illuminate where different theories look for answers; it shows what they focus on and what they de-emphasize. More important, it helps explain why theories that are compelling sometimes tend to speak past one another. It is fairly easy, for example, for theorists who hold two different system-level theories to debate each other. It is more difficult for a theorist who prefers a system-level theory to debate one who prefers an individual-level theory, because the questions they ask and the evidence they look at are different.

level of analysis
The unit (individual, state, or system) that a theory focuses on in its general explanation.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 surveys the history of international politics. Chapters 3 and 4 investigate theories of international politics. With important exceptions, the main schools of thought covered in these chapters tend to seek explanations at the system level, bringing in theories at other levels where needed to add detail. Chapter 5 presents explanations primarily at the state level, examining the argument that democracies are more peaceful than other states, as well as the role of interest groups, public opinion, and the media. Chapter 6 presents explanations at the substate and individual levels. These include the various branches of government, bureaucracies, the small groups of advisers on whom leaders often rely, and the individual leaders themselves. Chapter 7 examines

THE CONNECTION TO YOU

HOW DOES INTERNATIONAL POLITICS INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE?

How does international politics influence your life? And how do you influence international politics? For many people, the subject may seem distant from everyday life. Here we consider the ways in which an average college student is connected to international politics.

Start with the clothes you are wearing. Were any of them made in the country you live in? Probably not if you live and shop in North America or Europe. What makes it possible for those clothes, and other consumer goods, to get from Asia, where most are made, to the rest of the world? Trade, of course. But international trade rests upon a dense web of international agreements and institutions. These include trade agreements that provide for the movement of goods and financial agreements that allow for the movement of money, as well as legal practices that facilitate fulfillment of contracts. Your grandparents did not consume vast amounts of consumer goods made in China, because until the 1970s China was isolated both diplomatically and economically from the rest of the world, much as North Korea is today. In sum, our access to cheap and plentiful consumer goods is a direct result of changes in international politics in recent decades.

Have you experienced war, either as a combatant or a bystander? Although much violence in the world today is rooted in civil conflicts, international war is still a prominent threat. The United States has been involved in Afghanistan since 2001, making this the longest period of warfare in the nation's history. Many other states have been involved in that conflict or in others. What have been the effects of these wars on combatants? What have been the effects on their families? What are the indirect economic effects?

How do you influence international politics? What is the economic and political impact of your consumption of goods produced in one country versus another? Each purchase has an infinitesimal influence on wages, exchange rates, and tax revenues in different countries.

Have you taken conscious steps to influence affairs in other countries? Have you undertaken a mission trip? Donated to an organization dedicated to aiding people in another country? "Liked" a Facebook post or forwarded a link on a foreign policy issue?

Have you sought to directly influence your country's foreign policy? How? In some cases, one might take foreign policy positions into account in voting for a candidate (or working on a campaign). One might also donate money to organizations promoting a particular policy or supporting a foreign country.

How would the answers to all of these questions change if you lived in a country very different from the one you live in? If you lived in Afghanistan, for example, how might you answer questions relating to buying cell phones, to experiencing war, or to international aid efforts?

In subsequent chapters, we continue to ask you to think about the connection to you.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How would your parents or grandparents have answered these questions when they were your age?
2. How do you think people will answer them twenty-five or fifty years from now?
3. Do most of your peers view themselves as participants in international affairs, as bystanders, or as completely disconnected?

transnational actors and international organizations, complementing the focus on domestic actors in Chapters 5 and 6. The book then turns to specific issues, including security (Chapters 8–9), international political economy (Chapters 10–12), international law and norms (Chapter 13), and international environmental issues (Chapter 14). The conclusion (Chapter 15) looks to the future in light of the theories introduced and the issues discussed.

By the end of the book, you will be able to see how the approaches developed in the early chapters can help address current and emerging issues. Although a goal of any such book is to teach a certain amount about what the world looks like today and about the main approaches to understanding it, these are means to a greater end. The ultimate goal is to be able to tackle new and unfamiliar problems and to become a critical participant, whether as citizen or as policy maker.

SUMMARY

- International politics is a subject about which we constantly debate what we know and how we know it. These are debates with high stakes because policy making requires acting on current knowledge, even when that knowledge is imperfect.
- Power and purpose are central concepts in understand political behavior, and are central to most major theories of international politics. Power is a concept that is extremely difficult to understand as what counts as power differs from situation to situation.
- Theories are used to explain, predict, and prescribe political behavior. Political scientists disagree about what is the best methodology to use to verify or reject hypotheses. Many approaches begin with a question, identify potential answers, determine patterns, decide how to define and measure key factors, choose a research method, and evaluate the findings. Normative theories establish what the purpose of political action should be. Theories of international politics are, therefore, not merely of academic interest. The study of international politics aims to make these theories explicit and to subject them to scrutiny so that they can help provide the best possible answers to the urgent questions facing governments, societies, and individuals.
- Levels of analyses are the unit (individual, substate, state, or system) that a theory focuses on to explain a political behavior.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. Purpose
2. Power
3. Methodology
4. Theory
5. Normative theory
6. Levels of analysis

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. A theory that aims to establish the proper goals of political action is
   a. a level of analysis
   b. an explanatory theory
   c. power
   d. a normative theory
2. The goals that actors pursue, including the notion of "national interest" is
   a. a purpose
   b. power
   c. an explanatory theory
   d. a methodology

3. Thinking scientifically about international politics requires assuming
   a. politics follows the same rigid laws as physics.
   b. international events can be compared scientifically even if they are not identical.
   c. testing hypotheses about international politics can reliably determine if they are true or false.
   d. None of the above.
4. Which of the following is an example of a theory?
   a. Nationalism causes wars.
   b. Economic distress caused the French Revolution.
   c. Power is the ability of an actor to achieve its goals.
   d. All of the above.
5. Which of the following represents the proper order of steps a political scientist would need to test a hypothesis?
   a. Ask a question, evaluate the findings, decide how to define and measure key factors, and choose a research method
   b. Determine patterns, ask a question, decide how to define and measure key factors, identify potential answers, and choose a research method
   c. Choose a research method, determine patterns, decide how to define and measure key factors, and evaluate the findings
   d. Ask a question, identify potential answers, determine patterns, decide how to define and measure key factors, choose a research method, and evaluate the findings
6. Which of the following is a level of analysis of international relations theories?
   a. individual
   b. state
   c. system
   d. All of the above.
7. What purposes do theories and normative theories serve?
8. What are the limitations of the "science" of international politics?
9. How do theories of international politics relate to the policies that various actors adopt?
10. How does the level of analysis we choose influence the kinds of answers we get?
11. In what ways can the study of international politics take a scientific approach?
12. What are the limitations of the "science" of international politics?
13. How do theories of international politics relate to the policies that various actors adopt?
14. What is a theory?
15. How does normative theory differ from explanatory theory?
16. How does the level of analysis we choose influence the kinds of answers we get?

[Correct answers: 1 d; 2 a; 3 b; 4 a; 5 d; 6 d]

END NOTES

1. Harvard professor turned member of the Canadian Parliament Michael Ignatieff is one who holds this view. See "Getting Iraq Wrong," *New York Times Magazine,* August 5, 2007, at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/magazine/05iraq-t.html.
2. John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2007 [1936]), p. 351.
3. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).
4. Arnold Wolfers, "The Actors in International Politics," in W. T. R. Fox, ed., *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), pp. 83–106; Robert Jervis, "Perception and the Level of Analysis Problem," in *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 13–31; and James Rosenau, "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," in J. Rosenau, ed., *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), pp. 95–151.

The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem. History has an enormous impact on contemporary international politics.

Peter Zaharov/Shutterstock.com

2

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Learning Objectives

2-1 Describe the major developments in the history of international politics.

2-2 Understand the evolution of the international system.

2-3 Explain the significance of the Westphalian system.

2-4 Interpret the role of colonialism in transforming the international system.

2-5 Summarize the causes and significance of World War I, World War II, and the Cold War.

2-6 Identify the major developments of the post–World War II system.

2-7 Discuss the extent to which the international system is characterized by continuity and change.

CONSIDER THE CASE

CHINA'S HISTORY AND FUTURE

The rise of China is one of the most important developments in recent years. In the context of recent decades, China is a new player on the world stage. But China has a remarkable history stretching back 5000 years. How did such an ancient civilization become a new player on the world stage? And how does that mix of old and new influence China's role in the world?

For many centuries, China's major external interactions were with nomads from the Central Asian steppes, against whom the Great Wall was built for protection. As Europe began expanding around the world in the sixteenth century, contact with China grew, and Portugal founded a colony at Macao in the 1560s. China remained relatively isolated, however, until the weakening of the Qing dynasty in the nineteenth century left China open to exploitation by Western colonial powers.

By the early nineteenth century, British merchants were buying increasing amounts of merchandise (much of it tea) from the Chinese for resale in Britain. Then, as today, China was a potentially lucrative market, and the British profited from selling opium produced in their colony in India to China. The Chinese sought to limit this trade because of its negative influence on their society and economy, but after defeat by the British Navy in the Opium War, the Chinese were compelled in 1842 to sign the treaty of Nanjing, which handed control of Hong Kong to Britain (which held it until 1997) and opened other port cities to unlimited British imports of opium and other goods. Other European powers and the United States then forced similar concessions, known as the "unequal treaties."

Internal division and external domination continued after the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. In the 1930s, large parts of China were colonized by Japan, which committed massive atrocities against civilians. Throughout the Japanese occupation, an internal battle continued between the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Zedong and the Nationalist (Koumintang) Party. When the Communists finally defeated the Koumintang in 1949, establishing the People's Republic of China, the Koumintang retreated to the offshore island of Taiwan and formed the independent Republic of China with Taipei as its capital.

The United Nations, dominated by the United States and its allies, refused to recognize the communist government in Beijing and instead recognized the government of Taiwan as the government of "China." Thus, China was completely isolated diplomatically. Mao's imposition of a totalitarian version of peasant communism impoverished the country, caused millions of deaths, and furthered China's international isolation. By the 1960s, China was as much at odds with the communist Soviet Union as with the capitalist United States. China's isolation began to ebb in 1972 when U.S. President Richard Nixon shocked the world by traveling to China to meet its leaders. In 1977, the United States recognized the government in Beijing as the government of China.

Even after this, however, the move toward global power started slowly. After Mao died in 1976, his successor Deng Xiaoping gradually allowed markets to take hold in China, but the Communist Party maintained control of the state and the economy. Western firms sought access to China's gigantic and cheap workforce and to the huge number of potential consumers there. China sought access to world markets and to investment but insisted on trading on terms that preserved China's sovereignty and the control of the Communist Party. China's admission to the World Trade Organization in 1995 further accelerated China's integration into the world economy.

In less than fifty years, China has gone from an impoverished and isolated country to a major global economic and political power. Yet it remains deeply cautious both about internal division and about exploitation from outside. Internally, China maintains a highly authoritarian political system and severely limits human rights. Externally, China guards its sovereignty closely. Consciously or unconsciously, understandings of history influence the way people view problems—the grievances they feel, the goals they set, and the policies they adopt to pursue those goals. An understanding of the historical context of international politics is, therefore, essential to comprehending today's issues.

WANG ZHAO/Getty Images

Construction cranes in Beijing, 2014. Beijing and other Chinese cities are rapidly being transformed.

Where did today's international system come from? Why is the system divided into nation-states, and why has Europe been dominant in recent centuries? In this chapter, we provide general answers to these questions along with a summary of the historical development of the international political system. The chapter does not attempt to provide a complete history of international politics—that would make for a very long book.[1] Nor does it provide equal treatment of all events or of all parts of the world. Instead, the goal is to provide a cursory overview of the evolution of the contemporary international system.

The evolution of the international system has been dominated by the emergence and spread of the sovereign state system. The system of sovereign states emerged in early modern Europe and spread over the next 500 years to the rest of the world through colonialism. By the end of the 1970s, the entire world was contained in a single system of sovereign states. Today that system is being challenged by the rise of international organizations and nonstate actors, and by the weakness of states around the world.

city-state

A state that centers on a single city, rather than a larger territory or a nation.

THE BIRTH OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Peloponnesian War

A war between Athens and Sparta from 431 BCE to 404 BCE. Thucydides's study of this war has been influential on later thinking about international relations.

Many histories of international politics begin with developments in the Greek **city-states** in the fifth century BCE. This Greek period is important because it is one of the earliest examples of what later came to be viewed as a system of independent states. Moreover, this period gave rise to one of the earliest known analyses of international politics: *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, by the Athenian general Thucydides.[2] His analysis was the first known attempt to advance a general understanding of how international politics works, and his fundamental assertions continue to be influential today.

In 431 BCE, Sparta and Athens, two Greek city-states, went to war. Although the details of the **Peloponnesian War** are not essential here, Thucydides's explanation of the

causes is. Thucydides asserted that the war was caused by the changing distribution of power between Athens and Sparta. As long as Sparta was considerably more powerful than Athens, there was no cause for war. However, as Athens' power approached that of Sparta, the Spartans feared that Athens would soon become strong enough to attack and defeat Sparta. To avoid that, Sparta attacked Athens first.

In this explanation of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides provided an embryonic theory of international politics that has persisted to this day. The key actors were states. The key factor in international politics was the distribution of power, upon which war and peace depended.

Thucydides also argued that discussions of justice had no place in international politics. Arguments about morality, he said, were simply disguises for the ambitions of states. He famously stated that "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must." For 2500 years, people have debated whether, as Thucydides said, international politics is beyond morality. One could cast discussions of many contemporary developments in terms Thucydides would find completely familiar.

FROM CITY-STATES TO NATION-STATES

Many histories of international politics begin in the seventeenth century CE. Why do they skip the preceding history? Between the fall of the Greek city-states and the rise of Western European sovereign states, two very different kinds of international system existed. First, for several centuries, the Roman Empire dominated much of what Europeans considered the known world. In that system, a single empire dominated international politics. This situation contrasts sharply with the system of multiple states that later arose, and it is seen as a fundamentally different kind of politics. By most accounts, the Roman Empire was not an international system at all.[3] Therefore, it is seen as having little relevance for understanding modern international politics.

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century CE, political power and authority in Europe were highly fragmented, and over time a **feudal system** emerged (Figure 2.1). In a feudal system, political authority was defined personally and religiously rather than territorially. A given territory was subject to several different rulers, depending on which inhabitants were being considered or what the issue was. Most notably, authority to rule was divided among three kinds of rulers: local nobles; kings, whose power had a wider geographic scope but whose local authority was limited; and the Roman Catholic Church, which claimed religious authority over all of Europe but whose practical power was limited. These different bases of power often clashed with one another as each actor tried to expand its own territorial control, political authority, and wealth. Despite the fragmentation of power, however, medieval Europeans shared the view that Europe *should* and *could* be a single political and religious entity. The only question was who would renew the role of the Roman Empire.

feudal system

A political system in which legal and political subservience is owed to multiple overlapping authorities, such as local nobles, emperors, and the Pope, rather than being defined territorially.

THE WESTPHALIAN SYSTEM

The modern sovereign state system is often called the **Westphalian system**, after the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648. The Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War, is seen as enshrining the status of sovereign states, though this sovereign state system actually emerged gradually.

Westphalian system

The system of sovereign states that was recognized by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

FIGURE 2.1 **Europe in 1100 CE.** For much of recorded history, global politics was not "international" politics in that it did not consist of relations between clearly delineated states. Empires were the rule, their borders were fluid, and they tended not to have extensive relations with anyone other than their closest neighbors.

Source: http://www.culturalresources.com/MP_Muir6.html, from Ramsay Muir, *Philips' New Historical Atlas for Students* (London: The London Geographical Institute, 1911).

The Thirty Years' War was motivated both by religious conflict and by a contest for political control over Europe. Catholic leaders sought to defeat Protestant states to restore the "true faith." States also battled to increase their power at the expense of their rivals. Both perspectives shared the prevailing assumption that Europe was naturally a single political and religious space.

The Thirty Years' War lasted much longer and was much more devastating than anyone expected. In central Europe, roughly one-third of the population died as a result of the war, a higher death rate than during World War I or World War II. Exhausted, the European powers gathered in Westphalia (in today's Germany) in 1648 to make peace (Figure 2.2).

FIGURE 2.2 **Europe in 1648.** At the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, a plurality of independent states existed in Europe. However, as this map shows, some were quite large and others were tiny. Over the ensuing centuries, borders continued to change, usually through warfare or the threat of it.

STATE SOVEREIGNTY

By recognizing the existence of sovereign states and clarifying their rights, the Treaty of Westphalia established principles that defined the system from then until now. The monarchs of Europe accepted that renewing the Roman Empire was impossible and that pursuing that goal would lead to continuous war. This meant acknowledging Europe as a system of multiple **states**. How would these states relate to one another? The principle of **sovereignty** answered this question. Sovereignty meant that each state had complete authority over its territory, at least in theory.

Sovereignty had both internal and external dimensions. Internally, it meant that no one within a state had the right to challenge the ruler's power. Any challenges that occurred were regarded as illegitimate. This principle gave kings authority over lesser nobles, recognizing a trend toward the consolidation of state power that had been under way for decades. Continuous warfare as well as advances in taxation and administration had slowly strengthened monarchs at the expense of lesser nobles. France under Louis XIV (ruled 1643–1715) was emblematic of the strengthening of the modern absolutist state.

states

An entity defined by a specific territory within which a single government has authority.

sovereignty

The principle that states have complete authority over their own territory.

THE CONNECTION TO YOU

WHERE DO WE GET OUR HISTORY?

People frequently invoke history to show why some policy will or will not work or to explain how we arrived at our current situation. It is worth asking, therefore, where we get our history, what the strengths and weaknesses in our historical knowledge are, and how our view of history might differ from that of others. Most people learn some history in school, but where else do we learn it?

Take, for example, the Napoleonic wars. Did you learn about them in history class in high school? Have you read Tolstoy's fictional account in *War and Peace*? Or is this period essentially new to you? If so, does it matter?

Now think about World War II. Do you have relatives who fought in World War II, or lived through it, and who have told you about their experiences? Have you watched television documentaries or dramatizations (such as *Band of Brothers* or *The Pacific*)? Have you seen any of the recent popular films about World War II? Here are some examples.

- *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006), Clint Eastwood's film on American soldiers at Iwo Jima
- *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006), Eastwood's film about the Japanese at Iwo Jima
- *Defiance* (2008), about Jewish partisans fighting the Nazis in occupied Poland
- *Miracle at St. Anna* (2008), about African American soldiers and a Nazi atrocity in Italy
- *Valkyrie* (2008), a dramatization of a plot to assassinate Hitler
- *Inglorious Basterds* (2009), about Jewish American soldiers trying to assassinate Nazis leaders
- *Red Tails* (2012), about the Tuskegee Airmen, a pioneering group of African American pilots
- *Unbroken* (2014), Angelina Jolie's film about a former American Olympian captured and tortured by the Japanese during World War II

Most of these films purport to portray real events. But all are fictionalize, sometimes leading to controversy. *Miracle at St. Anna* was denounced in Italy for contradicting the official Italian history of the massacre at Sant'Anna di Stazzema. *Red Tails* was criticized for its very loose treatment of the facts surrounding the Tuskegee Airmen. Does this matter in how your understanding of history is formed? Why do some events, such as World War II, continue to be popular subjects while others do not, and what impact does this have on our perceptions of history and politics?

The history of recent decades overlaps with memory. People who experienced events are still alive to talk about them, but memories can be painful and selective, and many issues remain personal and controversial. What role do your own memories of recent international events have for your understanding of them? Does hearing someone talk about his or her firsthand experience make an impression that a history book cannot?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Consider an important international event from decades ago, such as the Vietnam War. How much do you know about it, and where does that knowledge come from? How much of your "knowledge" comes from works of fiction?
2. Consider a more recent event, such as the war in Afghanistan. How much do you know about it, and where does your knowledge come from? How does your view of events you lived through differ from your view of events before you were born?
3. How would the history you know differ if you grew up in a different country?

The external dimension of sovereignty was that no one outside a territory had the right to say what should go on within that territory. This principle, often known as the *principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other states*, was especially important in religion. In particular, the Treaty of Westphalia reaffirmed the power of rulers to determine the religion of the people in their territory.

The treaty acknowledged the reality of political and religious **pluralism**. In political terms, pluralism meant accepting that Europe would not be a single empire based on a single religion. Instead, it would be divided territorially into states, with each state having immense authority within its territory and none outside of it. In religious terms, pluralism meant acceptance of more than one religion rather than an attempt to establish a single "true" religion. Religious authority would also be segmented territorially, with individual leaders determining the religions of their own states but recognizing the rights of other monarchs to impose different religions in their states. This was not exactly a recipe for religious tolerance; within individual states, persecution of minorities continued to be widespread and brutal.

pluralism
The presence of a number of competing actors or ideas.

It must be emphasized that sovereignty is a principle, not a statement of fact. Although there have been many violations of the principle over the years, the principle itself remains the underpinning of the international system today. Moreover, sovereignty is not an objective trait of states; rather, states are treated as sovereign only when other states officially recognize their sovereignty. **Recognition** is important in this system. Political entities that are recognized as sovereign by other sovereign entities have greater legitimacy, and hence a greater chance of surviving, than those that are not recognized.

recognition
The acceptance by the international community of a state's sovereignty over its territory.

THE BALANCE OF POWER SYSTEM: 1648–1800

The principles of the Westphalian system did not prevent states from pursuing their interests, and states often used war as a tool to achieve those interests. Nor did the principle that Europe would be a system of multiple states prevent periodic attempts by one state or another to assert total dominance over Europe.[4]

Sovereignty had important implications for international politics. If no higher power could tell states what to do, then no one could prevent states from attacking one another. Nor was there any international organization to compel or even persuade states to limit their aggression. A situation in which there is no central ruler or government above the separate actors is termed **anarchy**. Note that *anarchy* does not mean *chaos*, a term with which it is sometimes confused. A central issue in international politics is the possibility of establishing order within a system that is anarchic. This term is of central importance in understanding international politics and will be explored further in Chapter 3.

anarchy
A condition in which there is no central ruler.

In the situation of anarchy that followed Westphalia, larger states could and often did attack and absorb smaller states, so that the number of European states declined steadily over time. In this sense, the Westphalian system was perhaps little different from what preceded it, even if the principles had changed.

Thus, the history of Europe from 1648 until the beginning of the nineteenth century was characterized by what is sometimes called the *classic balance of power system*. There was little other than prudence to prevent states from waging war against each other. Yet warfare in this era was in many ways more limited than it had been during the Thirty Years' War that preceded it or the Napoleonic wars that followed. In part this was because of the distribution of power. A rough **balance of power** meant that no single state was sufficiently powerful to defeat the others. This balance of power was both a fact and a policy. No individual state could gain enough power to conquer all the others, and many states made the maintenance of a balance an explicit goal of policy.

balance of power
A system in which no single actor is dominant; also, the distribution of power in such a system, which is not necessarily equal.

Moreover, the nature of the states themselves placed important limitations on the size of armies. All of these states were monarchies, in which the vast majority of the population had no citizenship. There was little reason for peasants with no rights to fight for rulers of countries of which they were not citizens. Modern notions of nationalism and patriotism had not yet emerged. The only people with a "stake" in whether a territory was ruled by one king or another were the nobles, from whose ranks armed forces were drawn. Mercenaries were sometimes used, but this too had limiting effects. Mercenaries were expensive, and they tried very hard to avoid actual battle, where they might be killed. Furthermore, before modern manufacturing techniques were developed, armaments such as cannon and guns were extraordinarily expensive. In sum, the expense of building armies and armaments kept forces small and made leaders wary of risking them in battle.

law of war
A doctrine concerning when it is permissible to go to war and what means of conducting war are (and are not) permissible.

Finally, despite religious divisions in Europe, there existed a **law of war**, based on Christian doctrine, which raised moral objections to unlimited war, and particularly to the targeting of noncombatants (civilians).[5] These limitations, which did not apply to non-Christian groups such as the Turks, helped make war in Europe less lethal than it might otherwise have been.

EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

What was happening in the rest of the world while the modern state system was emerging in Europe? In China in the first millennium BCE, the system varied between an empire with a single dominant leader (roughly analogous to Rome during its heyday) and a pluralistic system roughly analogous to the Westphalian system. Normative debates over what system should prevail helped distinguish doctrines such as Taoism and Confucianism that continue to wield influence today. For most of the past 2000 years, China has existed as a single state, although the territorial extent and the strength of that state have varied. In some periods, China expanded its political and cultural influence into adjacent regions, including Xinjiang, Mongolia, Tibet, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. During other periods, Chinese territory was controlled by outsiders, as when the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan conquered China in the thirteenth century CE.

In the Middle East and North Africa, the rise of Islam beginning in the seventh century CE led to the establishment of the Caliphate—a unified political area governed by Islam—the geographic extent of which varied over time. Eventually, however, various groups such as the Berbers in North Africa and the Mamluks in Egypt broke away from the Caliphate. Here, as in medieval Europe, there was tension between the principle that political authority should be unified and the reality that it was fragmented among competing authorities. By the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire became the most powerful claimant to the authority of the Caliphate.

One marauding group, the Mongols, played a role in upending existing arrangements in three distinct regions: in China, where it ended the Song Dynasty; in the Middle East, where it ended the Abbasid Caliphate; and in Europe, where it conquered the nascent Russian state, with far-reaching effects.

In India, feudal systems dominated, and no mutual recognition of sovereignty emerged.[6] Most of what is today North and South America was sparsely populated, so relations between distinct polities—international politics—were not as pressing an issue as they were in more heavily populated regions. In Africa, a great diversity of empires rose, expanded, and fell in different places at different times, so that the consolidation of political authority into a small number of large entities did not occur.

THE POLICY CONNECTION

EXPLAINING THE RISE OF EUROPE AND LEARNING LESSONS FROM IT

In 1500, Europe was neither wealthier nor more powerful than any other part of the world, but by 1900, Europe and the United States had colonized nearly the entire planet. How? The sources of Europe's rise engender debate among academics in several disciplines. For policy makers seeking to bring the "recipe" of Europe's success to the rest of the world, the debate is equally relevant.

The German sociologist Max Weber attributed Europe's success to its values. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), Weber argued that the adoption of Protestant religious beliefs reshaped the relationship between religion and economics in a way that promoted capitalism.* In non-Protestant faiths, Weber argued, religious devotion was equated with a rejection of worldly goods; hence, one could not be both pious and wealthy. Protestantism supported the notion that success on earth was an indicator of the likelihood of being "saved" after death.

More recently, in *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, geographer Jared Diamond attributes Europe's success to environmental factors that gave it an advantage in competition with the rest of the world.† Diamond contends that species of animals and plants suitable for domestication and agriculture were more prevalent in Europe than elsewhere. Because Eurasia stretches mostly east–west and has a roughly similar climate across its expanse, agricultural successes in one place could be adapted elsewhere. Agricultural surplus allowed cities to develop and allowed labor to be diverted into other fields. Moreover, the concentration of population in cities helped the spread of disease, so that Europeans developed resistance to many diseases that were devastating elsewhere. Concentration of population also meant that the states of early modern Europe were constantly at war, which led them to develop the superior military technology and organizations with which they then conquered the world. Diamond claims to have produced an explanation of Europe's dominance that is not based on any notion of European cultural superiority.

The sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein argues that a very small economic advantage in economic development at the beginning of the modern era allowed England and France, and subsequently other European states, to get ever further ahead of other states.‡ He contends that in a world of capitalist exchange, each exchange provides greater benefit to the wealthier. As a result, the initially small gaps between Europe and other states inevitably grew over time. This view, inspired by Marxist economics (see Chapters 4 and 10), sees Europe's advance as inseparable from, and enabled by, the spread of poverty over the rest of the planet.

These competing perspectives motivate intense debate because they lead to competing implications for two very contemporary questions: Who is to blame? and What is to be done?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What different implications do the theories of Weber, Diamond, and Wallerstein have with regard to assessing blame for the relative poverty in much of the world?
2. To what extent can the sources of Europe's success cited by each theory be controlled by contemporary governments?
3. To what extent does each approach see one society gaining only at the expense of others?

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*Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner, 1976).

†Jared Diamond, Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

‡Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World-System 1: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

The emergence of the modern state in Europe coincided with increased European contact with the rest of the world, which accelerated dramatically after European contact with the Americas in 1492. Until then, different systems of international relations existed largely unconnected to one another. Over the next 400 years, Europe forcibly integrated the rest of the world into the modern state system, first as colonies of European states and then, after European powers surrendered their colonies, as sovereign states.[7]

How did this happen? Why were European countries able to dominate the rest of the world? Why didn't some other country or group or some other system of principles become dominant? Why was resistance to European imperialism generally unsuccessful? These questions are widely debated, and there are no definitive answers.[8] Several factors likely played a role. Europeans developed superior agricultural, industrial, and especially military technology. Some scholars contend that the constant warfare among European states in the early modern period strengthened European states to compete with the rest of the world. Others point to the development of capitalism as a key source of European domination. Capitalism may have provided both the means for expansion, in terms of surplus profit to invest in overseas business ventures, and the incentive, in terms of the lust for private wealth. Finally, some point to ideology. The varieties of Christianity that predominated in modern Europe provided justification for expansion for the purpose of converting non-Christians.

European domination did not just mean that European states dominated other societies. It meant that the European *system* of sovereign states and subservient colonies came to dominate, and that European principles, "rules of the game," and interpretations of history dominated. For this reason, the development of the modern state system in Europe receives disproportionate attention in the study of international relations; for better or for worse, this is the system that came to dominate international politics.

NAPOLEON AND NATIONAL WARFARE

nationalism
The doctrine that recognizes the nation as the primary unit of political allegiance.

national self-determination
The doctrine that each state should consist of a single nation and each distinct nation should have its own state.

democracy
The doctrine that the entire population of a nation, rather than a small elite or a single monarch, should control government.

By 1800, substantial changes had taken place in Europe that fundamentally altered the nature of international politics. These changes were embodied in the rise to power in France of Napoleon Bonaparte and in the wars he waged.[9] Napoleon sought to overthrow the Westphalian system in Europe by taking control of the entire continent. In this he failed. However, in the process, he overthrew many of the limitations on war that had characterized the classical balance of power era.

Two important developments in European politics made possible Napoleon's rise: nationalism and democracy. **Nationalism** is the doctrine that "nations"—large groups of people who perceive themselves to be fundamentally similar to each other and distinct from other groups—are and should be a basic unit of politics. Closely linked to nationalism is the principle of **national self-determination**, the idea that each state should consist of a single nation and each distinct nation should have its own state. **Democracy** is the doctrine that the entire population of a nation, rather than a small elite or a single monarch, should control government. All of these doctrines were fairly new at this point in European history.

The French Revolution of 1789 overthrew the French monarchy and replaced it with a regime that claimed to be democratic. The doctrines of nationalism and democracy gave, in theory, every French resident a stake in the welfare and in the glory of France. In revolutionary France, every adult male (women's rights were still limited) was considered a citizen, with a voice and an interest in government. Moreover, thanks to the doctrine of nationalism, every citizen of the French state was a "Frenchman." No longer were the masses cut off from government and from each other.

When Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in 1799, he harnessed democracy and nationalism for military purposes, and he sought to expand French influence across Europe and beyond. The crucial military innovation in revolutionary France was the institution of a draft, known as the **levée en masse**, which conscripted hundreds of thousands of ordinary French peasants into the French military. Whereas the armies of his more traditional monarchical neighbors were still based on feudal principles, Napoleon was able to harness the entire French nation—both its industry and its population—in support of his war effort. Peasants who in earlier generations had resisted fighting for kings were more willing to fight for a "fatherland" in which they were citizens. Napoleon's tactical innovation was to develop ways of dividing and recombining forces that made the huge numbers of troops manageable on the battlefield.

levée en masse

A draft, initiated by Napoleon following the French Revolution, that allowed France to vastly expand its army.

By 1812, Napoleon had conquered Austria and Prussia (one of the forerunners of modern Germany), the leading European powers of the day, and had reached Moscow, where he stabled his horses in the Kremlin. Ultimately, he failed to conquer Russia and was defeated so badly there that he was pushed all the way back to France. Napoleon was beaten partly because Russia and others began to adopt his strategies, using nationalism to mobilize masses of common people into the army. Russia's huge armies, coupled with its vast territory and frigid winters, were more than Napoleon's armies could conquer.

Napoleon's defeat, however, did not undo the revolution in international affairs he had initiated. Gone were the days of the small professional army and of the clear distinction between the military and mass society. After Napoleon, war became *national* war, which engaged entire populations against one another. This "democratization of war," coupled with industrialization, led to a massive increase in the size of armies, the scale of combat, and the number of casualties. The 1812 Battle of Borodino, near Moscow, involved more than 250,000 soldiers and caused 70,000 casualties.

Fine Art Images/Age Fotostock

Napoleon Bonaparte in Moscow, 1812. Napoleon sought to unify all of Europe under French rule. When he took Moscow, the Russians set the city alight, leaving Napoleon's troops without supplies in the cold Russian winter.

THE CONCERT OF EUROPE

The Napoleonic wars of the early nineteenth century changed not only how wars would be fought but also how peace would be sought. At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the victorious powers put into place a mechanism intended to prevent a country such as France from again seeking to dominate the continent. This agreement, known as the **Concert of Europe**, was the first of its kind in modern history and is in many ways the predecessor of the League of Nations, formed after World War I, and the United Nations (UN), formed after World War II.[10]

Concert of Europe
An agreement reached at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 in which major European powers pledged to cooperate to maintain peace and stability.

The Concert of Europe was based on an understanding that the inability of Austria, Prussia, Britain, and Russia to form an early alliance against Napoleon made it considerably easier for him to succeed both politically and militarily. To prevent any future recurrence, the four powers agreed to work together to preserve the status quo in European international politics and to confer periodically. In contrast to later efforts, there were no formal procedures or legal documents. Instead, the Concert of Europe was a statement of intentions, based on a shared understanding on the part of the major powers that peace could be better preserved if active collaboration supplemented traditional balance of power politics.

From a theoretical perspective, the Concert of Europe marks the first attempt to put into practice the emerging **liberal approach** to international affairs (explored in depth in Chapter 3). It is not coincidental that this first attempt occurred when it did; the American Revolution and the writings of European philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Jean Jacques Rousseau, in the last part of the eighteenth century, had advanced the notion that there was an alternative to anarchy other than domination by a single dominant power.

liberal approach
Political approach focusing on the ability of actors to govern themselves without surrendering their liberty. International liberal theory focuses on the ability of states to cooperate to solve problems.

There is considerable disagreement concerning the effects of the Concert of Europe. On one hand, the era following the establishment of the Concert was the most peaceful century in Europe's history. From 1815 to 1914, only relatively limited wars occurred, such as the Crimean War (in which Russia fought England, France, and Turkey from 1854 to 1856) and the Franco-Prussian War (in which Prussia fought France from 1870 to 1871). On the other hand, the mechanism of the Concert broke down quickly. The more authoritarian powers (Austria and Russia) wanted the Concert to preserve the domestic status quo (autocratic politics) as well as the international status quo, especially during the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. England objected to these efforts and did not participate. Skeptics assert that the Concert had little effect; the traditional balance of power and effective diplomacy, not the Concert, dissuaded potential aggressors and preserved peace.

NATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

The nineteenth century saw the dramatic rise of two phenomena that had originated earlier: nationalism and **imperialism**. Imperialism refers to a situation in which one country controls another country or territory. Imperial control was exercised either formally, through the establishment of colonies (territories that are governed from the imperial center rather than having their own government), or informally, using economic means or military threats to control the government of another country. Within Europe, the forces of nationalism unleashed a far-reaching revision of domestic and international politics. Beyond Europe, the competition inspired by nationalism helped justify the extension of European imperialism to cover nearly the entire globe.

imperialism
A situation in which one country controls another country or territory.

Nationalism led to a redrawing of the map of Europe. The notion that state boundaries should coincide with ethnic, linguistic, or national boundaries meant that many of the boundaries in the mid-nineteenth century seemed inappropriate or unjust. In the areas that today comprise Italy and Germany, there were a large number of small, distinct states

THE GEOGRAPHY CONNECTION

SHIFTING BORDERS, CHANGING POLITICS: EUROPE IN 1815 AND 1914

A map of the world generally shows us a static picture. But if we compare maps over time, we see that the map at any one time is just a snapshot of a changing reality. These two maps show the boundaries of Europe in 1815 and in 1914.

Europe in 1815

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/europe1815_1905.jpg, from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/history_europe.html. Courtesy of the University Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What were the causes of the differences between the two maps?
2. How has the map changed between 1914 and today, and what drove these changes?
3. How might we expect the map to change in the future, and what forces will drive those changes? Or have we reached an end to boundary changes?

Europe in 1914

Source: http://,.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd/europe_1911.jpg, from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/history_europe.html. Courtesy of the University Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

(such as Piedmont, Naples, and Veneto in Italy; and Pomerania, Bavaria, and Westphalia in Germany). The doctrine of nationalism convinced people in both regions that those smaller states should be combined into single, large, ethnically and linguistically defined states. The results fundamentally altered European international politics because a unified Germany, with great industrial power, seemed to have the capacity to take over the continent, a concern that dominated the period from 1900 to 1945.

In the multinational Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires, nationalism created pressure to break large states into smaller parts. Each of these empires encompassed

multiple nations that perceived themselves as deserving their own nation-states. In the Russian Empire, these included Poland, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, and Chechnya. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire they included territories that today comprise parts of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Ottoman (Turkish) Empire contained much of the modern Middle East (including Israel/Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon) as well as parts of southeastern Europe (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Albania).

The doctrines of nationalism, self-determination, and democracy had profound effects in the Americas as well. In the Caribbean and Latin America, nationalism led to the world's first wave of decolonization. In Haiti, a revolution overthrew slavery, instituted a democratic constitution, and declared independence from France in 1804. In South America, liberation movements led by Simón Bolivar and José de San Martín led to a series of declarations of independence between 1810 and 1825. Similarly, Mexico fought a successful war of independence ending in 1821, and Brazil declared independence from Portugal in 1822. Great Britain's colonies in Canada formed the Canadian Confederation and became autonomous in 1867. In sum, although several territories remained colonies until the twentieth century, nearly the entire Western Hemisphere became independent between the U.S. Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the Canadian Confederation in 1867.

Nationalism helped spur a new wave of **colonialism** in the second half of the nineteenth century, driven by the idea that soon all the territory would be taken and slow movers would be forever at a disadvantage.[11] Most of Africa and Asia were colonized during this period. In most cases, imperialism took the form of direct control of a territory, along the model the Spanish had implemented in South America and the British had established in India. In some cases, such as in the Belgian Congo, this model led to brutality toward indigenous populations on a horrendous scale. In other instances, imperialism was exercised through indirect control but still achieved the goal of harnessing the local economy for the benefit of external powers. Twice, in 1839 and again in 1856, European powers waged war on China to force its government to allow Europeans (and Americans) to sell their goods in China. The resulting "unequal treaties" created economic advantages in China for Western states without requiring them to take over the territory directly. The treaties are a source of Chinese resentment to this day.[12] Many people believe that the colonized countries have never fully recovered from the disadvantages forced on them during the colonial era.

colonialism
A type of imperialism in which the dominating state takes direct control of a territory.

Although this last onslaught of European colonialism was inspired partly by European nationalism, it also sowed the seeds for the nationalism that was to manifest itself in many of the colonies during the twentieth century. Just as the doctrine of national self-determination undermined Europe's multinational empires, it undermined Europe's overseas empires as well. Resentment among colonized societies over political domination and economic exploitation helped inspire their own national liberation movements. The struggles against colonial rule were, in many cases, long and brutal, as in the Vietnam War. Nationalism played an important role right up to the end of the twentieth century, spurring the disintegration of the Soviet Empire in 1989–1991, and the violent collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

THE ROAD TO WORLD WAR I

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the increased power and ambitions of the newly unified Germany made the existing state of affairs in Europe appear unsustainable. Increasingly, each major European power sought to tilt the very precarious balance of