

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

## THIRD EDITION

Oliver Daddow



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# PART I

## INTRODUCTION TO YOUR COURSE IN IR THEORY

It is sheer craziness to dare to understand world affairs. (Rosenau and Durfee 1995: 1)

This book guides you through the general field of IRT in whatever form you encounter it at university. It aims to explain the big questions that have animated so many writers over the years to try to make sense of the ‘craziness’ of international relations. It is useful to try and think about the key points of dispute and debate between scholars working in the same discipline, and that is in effect what I am trying to do in this book. First, because it helps you appreciate the debates that have driven forward the discipline over the years. Second, it equips you with the weaponry to critique scholarly ideas and opinions on their own terms rather than with the benefit of hindsight. Reading this book will encourage you to develop both these skills: understanding academic theories and critiquing them.

This part of the book is organized around underlying disciplinary debates about IRT. In Chapter 1 we survey the field of IR as an academic pursuit: what is that we are studying when we say we are studying IR? In Chapter 2 we add in the contested issue of theory: what is a theoretical approach to IR and why is it beneficial? Chapter 3 prioritises theoretical debates in IR, in particular those stemming from the foundational problem of ‘anarchy’ in the **international system**. We then cover the ‘story’ of the discipline and especially how we map theories, how we evaluate theories and the possibility of building an IR ‘super theory’. The chapter draws to a close with a few tips on how to think

like an IR theorist. By the end of the chapter we have raised a whole host of uncertainties and questions about IRT. This is a field of study in which no one can really agree either on the appropriate subject matter, or on how best to study it. If you can grasp the reasons for these disputes and offer up convincing evidence that you have taken a position on them, you are likely to succeed at your course because you will have been engaging actively with each theory at quite a sophisticated level. As Chapter 3 suggests, learning to think like an IR theorist is the surest route to success.

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# 1

## WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

Even by those who have authored them, the emergence of theories cannot be described in other than uncertain and impressionistic ways. Elements of theories can, however, be identified. (Waltz 2010: 10)

It is demanding to build a theory in any field of academic endeavour. Whether it be a social science like IR or a natural science like physics, biology or chemistry, theories by their nature are simplified versions of a deeply complex reality. As Kenneth Waltz goes on to argue in the passage quoted above from his path-breaking *Theory of International Politics* (originally published in 1979), it is a giant leap to go from causal speculation based on empirical testing to the construction of theoretical formulations that enable one to arrange newly observed facts through a theoretical lens. ‘To cope with the difficulty, simplification is required’ (Waltz 2010: 10).

In the process of theory development, we are trying to comprehend the complexity of relations between, say, State X and State Y by breaking down into manageable chunks the elements of their interrelationships that most intrigue us. Necessarily, theories fall prey to criticisms about their coverage, their depth and their relevance to the ‘real world’ they are trying to explain. It is worth remembering, therefore, that all theories come with a health warning: no theory can explain everything about the world and nor should we expect it to. Even the most ardent supporter of theory has to admit the limitations of theory: ‘in order to have a theory, you’ll have to have a subject matter, because you can’t have a theory about everything. There’s no such thing as a theory about everything’ (Waltz, quoted in Kreisler 2003). In other words, a theory about everything is a theory about nothing – a futile exercise from which nothing useful can be gleaned.

Theoretical disputes are common even in disciplines where scholars are trying to theorize the same event or set of events which they agree are happening, or have happened, in the ‘real world’. What, then, if scholars disagree on the essence of the ‘reality’ they are trying to explain? What if they can’t come to a basic consensus on what makes the world go around, or why humans behave the way they do, or why states might choose war over peace? What then for supposedly comprehensive theories that enable us to make predictions about what might happen in the future on the basis of our existing theoretical knowledge about the world?

Engaging with underlying concerns about the construction, function and value of theory will help you appreciate the nature of the scholarly enterprise in IRT because:

- It helps you see the problem through the eyes of the authors you study.
- It enhances your ability to critique each theory.
- It helps you ‘think’ like an IR theorist.

On your IRT course you may well have the chance to study these kinds of **metatheoretical** issues in some detail. I hear you ask, What is metatheory? ‘Metatheories take other theories as their subject’ (Reus-Smit 2012: 530). Metatheory is theory about theory. IR metatheory, therefore, is theory about IRT. For example, you may have lectures and seminars on the constituent elements of theoretical work at the start and end of your course. To back that up, seminars will doubtless incorporate discussion not only about the substance of each theory that has been developed about IR, but also the assumptions theorists make about how the world works. You might also delve into why theorists in one tradition end up disagreeing with other groups of theorists from other traditions, especially if they put forward competing visions of what it is important to explain in international affairs.

Certainly many of the textbooks you read will, usually in the introductory and concluding chapters, engage with metatheoretical issues in some detail (for instance, Dunne et al. 2016; Jackson and Sørensen 2015). Hence, being aware of **metatheory** – what it is and how it helps you understand IRT – will help you begin to think like an IR theorist.

Metatheory ‘quite simply means theoretical reflections *on* theory’ (Jørgensen 2010: 15, original emphasis). Metatheory considers the nature, role and practice of theorizing. Metatheorists look upon all the competing theories about a certain topic and try to understand how all the theorists they study are making sense of their subject. This then helps them come to a considered assessment on the nature and significance of theoretical contributions in a given field. Benno Teschke explains it perfectly – metatheory is a reflexive enterprise, ‘not simply thinking with a theory, but rather thinking about the nature of theory’ (Teschke and Cemgil 2014: 606).

In this chapter I try and answer three big questions that have motivated scholars to theorize IR over the years. First, what is ‘the world’ of international relations that we are studying? Second, what is International Relations as a structured discipline of academic study? Third, who or what are the major actors we need to study in IR? Answering these questions helps us understand more about the role of theory in studying a subject like IR, and we cover that in the next chapter after this disciplinary scene setter.

## WHAT IS THE WORLD OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

Accurate and reliable measurements are of little value unless they measure the proper variables; and, unfortunately, our speculations about changing global structures involve variables that are not readily observed. (Rosenau 1976: 8)

Every academic discipline requires a subject that practitioners agree will be the focus for study: no subject matter means no discipline. This statement might seem obvious or trite. Yet it has many intriguing ramifications for social or ‘soft’ science subjects, such as Politics, International Relations, History, Media and Communications and Sociology, because looking across these endeavours we do not find much agreement on what the ‘core’ of each discipline is, or should be. So when I ask ‘what is the world of international relations?’, I am trying to alert you to what I call the problem of the subject matter of IR: what are we actually looking at and attempting to theorize in this discipline? As A.K. Ramakrishnan rightly points out, ‘Generating knowledge requires the knower to identify and speak about an object’ (1999: 132). In IR this proves contentious because, as R.B.J. Walker (1995: 314) has astutely observed, most of the debates we engage in ‘arise far more from disagreements about what it is that scholars think they are studying than from disagreements about how to study it’.

To explore this further, we can take a cue from literature on the philosophy of social science by comparing the study of the social (or behavioural) sciences on the one hand with the study of the natural (or physical) sciences on the other (see Scriven 1994). This will enable us, first, to draw some preliminary conclusions about the problematic nature of the subject matter of IR and, second, to gain insights into the reasons why theoretical disputes recur in the discipline, helping to drive forward the search for knowledge about contemporary global politics.

If you have friends at university studying in different departments (social or natural sciences) try asking them about their respective disciplines: what do they study and how? Is the subject matter of their discipline and how to study it generally well recognized, or is it contested? Who decides these things? Compare their experiences to your experience of studying International Relations.

Let us start with simple, dictionary-style definitions of the principal natural sciences:

- Biology – the study of living organisms.
- Chemistry – the study of the composition, properties and reactions of substances.
- Physics – the study of the properties of matter and energy.

These disciplines are clearly not monolithic. That is to say, they are divided into communities of scholars working in component sub-disciplines, each with their own scope for inquiry. For instance, physics breaks down into astrophysics, nuclear physics, quantum physics and others. Chemistry is divided between organic and inorganic, physical, analytical and biochemistry; biologists can do genetics, anatomy, physiology, biotechnology and others. Nor are the natural sciences immune from some pretty fevered debates about disciplinary development and cohesion. These are especially marked around novel findings or approaches that challenge existing **paradigms** and claim the status of ‘mature’ research to sit alongside more established ways of tackling a subject. For example, in a different major discipline, engineering, Allen Cheng and Timothy Lu (2012) have studied the

emergence of ‘synthetic biology’, which challenges entrenched disciplinary boundaries by reaching out to biology, offering a quite different perspective on what it means to ‘do’ both biology and engineering.

So, we have established the argument that the natural sciences are fragmented and have different ‘wings’ to them, representing their interdisciplinary specialisms. Nevertheless, there is usually quite a robust consensus among biologists, chemists, physicists and engineers on essential aspects of their work: on their object of study (the problem to be solved by a given wing of the discipline), on how to study that problem (the methods of experimentation), on what qualifies as vouchsafe evidence, and on when theories or explanations for a given phenomenon have become obsolete. Martin Hollis and Steve Smith describe this model of ‘doing’ natural science as follows: ‘the broad idea is that events are governed by laws of nature which apply whenever similar events occur in similar conditions. Science progresses by learning which similarities are key to which sequences’ (Hollis and Smith 1991: 3). Nicholas Onuf likewise insinuates that the idea of modern science is ‘institutionalized through general acceptance of the procedural rules (*the scientific method*) for checking theoretical models (*models stipulating causal relations*) against evidence (*the findings from different experiments*) taken to represent some feature of “the real world” and refining these models accordingly’ (Onuf 2009: 187, my emphasis).

This process of disciplinary development is shown in Figure 1, which assumes that the wheels of a discipline turn when scholars come to agree on: (1) the object/phenomenon/event/process to be studied; (2) how to study the object/phenomenon/event/process; (3) what qualifies as evidence about the object/phenomenon/event/process; and (4) when theories about the object/phenomenon/event/process have been disproved, or proven so untenable that new theories are needed to provide more adequate explanations.

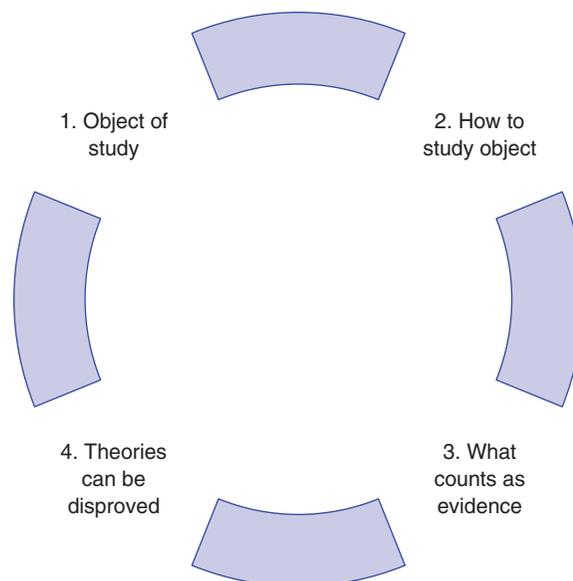


Figure 1 How the wheels of a scientific discipline turn

Having established what the disciplinary wheel looks like for natural scientists, the question for students of IR is: can, we replicate this approach for disciplines in the social sciences? I am not sure we can, for the very simple reason that the subject matter of IR is **essentially contested** – there is no agreement on what constitutes the basic subject matter of IR. From this vexed issue, many other problems flow.

As you progress through your IRT course make a list of all the essentially contested concepts, objects and ideas you come across. Why are they essentially contested? What has that contestation meant for how we study them in IR?

In the natural sciences, the objects we study tend to be physical things we can pick up, pin down, observe and measure, either with our own eyes or with the help of measuring devices such as blood pressure gauges for medics or speedometers for automotive engineers. A chemist can don a pair of safety goggles and drop a chunk of potassium into a basin of water to observe the furious reaction. A physicist can monitor the impact of temperature on solids by heating a strip of metal and watching the atoms vibrate faster and faster under a microscope. A biologist can test the impact of light on plant growth by measuring the relative speed of growth of the same plant in lighter and darker conditions. A medical doctor in an Emergency Room can hold up an X-ray to the light to see whether or not a bone is broken. Hence, as Kal Holsti rightly observes (1985: 7), ‘To develop theory, before we can discuss technique, there must be some consensus on what we want to examine.’

In the natural sciences the tangibility of the subject matter helps researchers agree on the problem or object to be studied, on how to study it, on what counts as evidence and, finally, to agree on when theories have become flawed or obsolete. The disciplinary wheel turns smoothly without too much friction that might be generated by in-depth speculation on metatheoretical questions about ontology, epistemology and **methodology**. Natural scientists can put things that interest them under a microscope and study their properties and behaviour in order to generate theories. If they are unable to ‘see’ what interests them at first hand (the speed of light, for example) they have developed instruments that can measure them accurately in the absence of the visual evidence itself.

Importantly, all such measures come to be validated over time through consensus building in the scientific community. Experiments can be replicated by other scientists who can confirm the accuracy of the results and share ideas on what to study next. This process of **falsification** relies on each scientist’s work being constantly tested and challenged by other scientists. This process is made easier by the existence of the physical objects that form the basis for experimentation in the natural sciences in different laboratories around the globe. We could say in very simple terms, therefore, that natural scientists generate knowledge the **empiricist** way. Like David Attenborough studying the behaviour of tree frogs in the Amazonian rainforest, natural scientists rely on having direct access to a ‘real world’ which they move through with the help of scientific instruments that help them see, measure and interpret the world around them.

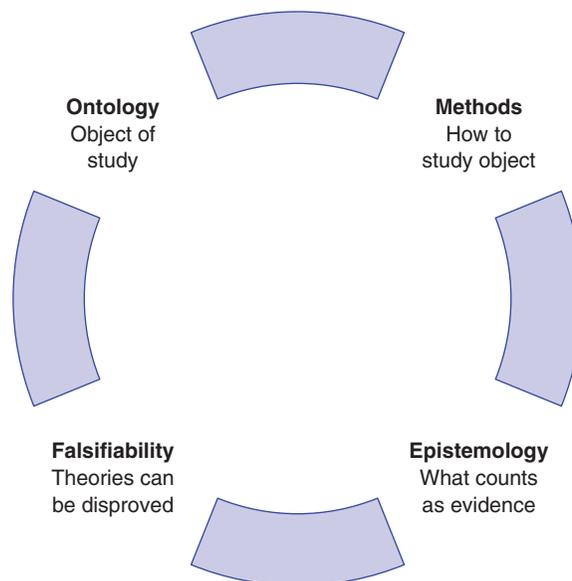
To put it in formal terms, knowledge in the natural sciences is held to be accurate and reliable when it:

- has a grounded ontology – theory connected with the things, properties and events that exist in the world; what is held to be ‘out there’ and in need of investigation.
- is rooted in empiricist epistemology – theory about how we know things and what is regarded as valid/reliable/legitimate knowledge in a given discipline.
- flows from a robust methodology – rules and guidelines on how to set up experiments and interpret and record the data collected.
- is subject to falsification – a statement, theory or explanation might never be proved undoubtedly true but should be rejected when predictions derived from it turn out to be false.

Empirical scientific investigation tends to be the benchmark by which our claim to produce hard and fast knowledge about the world is judged. Do you think it is fair to judge social scientific knowledge production in this way? Studying IRT will give you lots of ground on which to come to a judgement.

We can now add these formal labels to the disciplinary wheel in Figure 2.

By now you will have twigged why I asked the question ‘what is the world of international relations?’ It is because the discipline of IR is centrally concerned with investigating relationships between events and processes in the world, yet there is no agreement amongst theorists on what precisely it is that the discipline should study, on how to study it, on what qualifies as evidence, and on when theories have been proved false. This is why



**Figure 2** The disciplinary wheel revisited

courses in IRT cover so many theories. None of their authors ever admit they are wrong because evidence can always be found to support a rejigged version of the theory, or supposedly established historical facts can be put through new interpretive lenses to generate new insights.

Think about the differences between disciplines that study ‘tangible’ things and those that study ‘intangible’ ones. What does this imply for the reliability of the theories developed in each field, and what steps do you think we can take to develop more accurate methods for explaining the relationships between intangible things?

Unlike in the natural sciences where we can pick things up, put them down, throw them up in the air and see what happens, how can we possibly do this with ‘the world’, which is what scholars of IR necessarily try to do? In the following section we will start to see how this problem of the subject plays out in the study of IRT by exploring competing definitions of ‘international relations’.

## WHAT ARE ‘INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS’?

At the start of his book *Understanding International Relations*, Chris Brown (2001: 1) explains why it is important to identify the scope of the field:

The reason definitions matter in this way is because ‘international relations’ do not have some kind of essential existence in the real world of the sort that could define an academic discipline. Instead, there is a continual interplay between the ‘real world’ and the world of knowledge.

Brown adopts the same approach to the problem of the subject in IR that we did in the last section. His logic goes as follows:

- The development of academic disciplines is predicated upon there being a well-defined subject matter which organizes and focuses enquiry – for scholars researching it and students learning about it (maybe in time to become scholars themselves).
- IR theorists engage with a subject matter that does not necessarily exist in the ‘real world’ of observable (physical) things. We cannot pick ‘states’ up and slide them under a microscope to see how they interact. Nor do many of us get to ‘see’ states doing **diplomacy** at first hand because of the restricted access to policy communities.
- The subject matter of IR is made doubly hard to pin down because it is so bound up with contemporary developments in global politics and the *study* of global affairs.
- To put it another way: the world which scholars of IR are studying is constantly in a state of flux.
- Therefore, the subject matter of IR is in dispute.

### COMMON PITFALL

In essays and exams, you will be expected to be able to summarize key ideas in the field of IR. Too often students do not show the patience to explain the interpretations that writers arrive at, or why. Introducing scholars as ‘renowned Professor of IR’ is irrelevant. Telling readers how they interpret IR is the crux. Note in the above how we have taken Brown’s argument apart step by step by examining his assumptions and the conclusions he derives from them.

Brown (2001: 1) goes on to suggest that the field of IR encompasses the study of some or all of the following:

1. Diplomatic-strategic relations between **nation-states** – with a focus on war and peace, conflict and cooperation. This was the ‘classical’ subject matter of the discipline, also well described by Holsti (1985: 10): ‘the consequence of a world made up of states, each possessing the capacity to make war against each other. Alan James is another person who equates IR with the study of ‘inter-state relations’, saying that we should only account for the influence of non-state actors as and when they impinge on what goes on between states (James 1993: 270).
2. Cross-border transactions of all kinds – meaning the whole gamut of political, economic and social exchanges between states.
3. Globalization – of economies, communications, transport and financial systems, **multinational corporations** and so on.

You can see from this all-embracing definition that, when looking at international relations, we are potentially looking at anything and everything that happens anywhere in the world. It is as difficult nailing down the subject matter of IR as it is nailing jelly to a wall: ‘more keenly in some periods than others, almost every aspect of the study of international politics has been contested’ (Burchill and Linklater 2013: 5).

As you progress through your course reading, think carefully about the particular focus of the texts you read because this will help you understand the way authors approach the ‘problem of the subject’ in IR.

Burchill and Linklater’s inclusive approach is now quite common. To take another example, in their *Handbook of International Relations*, Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (2012) split their work into three parts. Part I is on ‘historical, philosophical and theoretical issues’. Part II is on ‘concepts and context’, including chapters on state **sovereignty**, power, diplomacy, bargaining and negotiation, **interdependence** and the interactivity between domestic politics and international relations. Part III is on the substantive issues Brown majors on and which Burchill and Linklater incorporate into their list of themes and issues in IR.

The upshot of all this is that there is no agreement on what constitutes either the subject area of IR, or how to study this subject. Potentially, it ‘encompasses all phases of human experience because its scope is global and its foci as diverse as the values, pre-occupations, and practices of people everywhere’ (Rosenau 2002: 545). Grayson Kirk’s 1947 comment on the state of the discipline is as relevant now as it was then (quoted in Schmidt 2006: 3):

the study of international relations is still in a condition of considerable confusion. The scope of the field, the methods of analysis and synthesis to be followed, the proper administrative arrangements to be made in college curricula, the organization of research – all these are matters of continuing controversy.



## TAKING IT FURTHER

### International Relations or World Politics?

In their textbook *The Globalization of World Politics*, John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens (2014a: 2–3) begin by outlining why they use the term ‘World Politics’ rather than ‘International Politics’ or ‘International Relations’ in their book title (see also Viotti and Kauppi 2014: 1).

‘World Politics’, they say, suggests something ‘more inclusive than either of the alternative terms. It is meant to signal the fact that our interest is in the politics and political patterns in the world and not only those between nation-states (as the terms international relations or international politics imply)’ (Baylis et al. 2008: 2). Their choice of title shows the power of language and labels, and why it is important for us to take both seriously when studying at university level. Let us break down their argument into its constituent parts:

- ‘International Relations’ implies the study of relations between nation-states. For greater accuracy we might rewrite it ‘Inter-national Relations’.
- ‘International Politics’ is similarly limited: ‘Inter-national Politics’.
- Neither signifier does justice to what Baylis, Smith and Owens consider to be the essence of the field, which is both wider and deeper than the relations between nation-states.
- IR for Baylis, Smith and Owens is about the study of *politics* and *political patterns* in the world. They are interested in explaining the web of connections and *relationships* between *all* actors in the world.
- Nation-states undoubtedly retain an immensely important place in the study of IR, but they do not play the only or even the most decisive part in global politics today. ‘World politics’ is more comprehensive and a more apt description of the realities of contemporary global political interactions, which involve states, institutions, international organizations, trans-national actors such as terrorist networks, regional actors and **sub-national actors**.

Other textbooks that opt for ‘World Politics’ indicate the stretch in meaning the term implies. For example, Jeffrey Haynes et al.’s (2011) *World Politics* begins with theories

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and moves on to a number of themes and issues in IR such as democratization, 'new wars' and terrorism. Karen Mingst and Jack Snyder's (2011) *Essential Readings in World Politics* includes some specifically theoretical interventions but many more which talk to the 'themes and issues' agenda. Shawn Smallman and Kimberley Brown's (2011) *Introduction to International and Global Studies* is broader still. Theory is conspicuous by its absence with the emphasis firmly on the origins and evolution of contemporary global problems such as war, energy security and global underdevelopment. As with the Baylis, Smith and Owens book, nation-states are nowhere near as central to the presentation of IR in these books. The emerging consensus is well put by Peter Sutch and Juanita Elias (2007: 2) who write that the study of international relations 'does not tell us very much about our subject' because 'the agents of international relations that make up the political landscape of our subject area, are not nations at all'. You pay your money, you take your chances!

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## SOME GOOD NEWS FOR IRT STUDENTS EVERYWHERE

Happily, to succeed at a course in IRT you do not need to become a fervent historian of the discipline. Nor do you have to develop a particularly expert knowledge of the ways in which writers and teachers carve up the discipline for their students. However, it is useful for you to be aware of debates arising from the 'problem of the subject' because they will shape the theories you encounter on your course and how those theories generate and apply knowledge about the 'real world'. Ask yourself why it is that some actors and methods have conventionally been 'held largely silent' by the discipline, while others have flourished and come to dominate the agenda (Watson 2006: 237). Forming an opinion on this question will help you in three ways. First of all, it will help you understand the theories you do cover. Second, it will help you analyse the strengths and weaknesses of these theories' claims to produce hard and fast knowledge about the world of international relations. Third, it will help you make sense of the way in which IR has dealt with state-centric theories on the one hand, and those theories on the other hand that deal with the host of non-state actors that operate above, below and across state borders (a good example being Davis 2009).

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

### 'Can social scientists claim to produce the same kind of knowledge as natural scientists? Should they try?'

The first thing to do with this question is to consider definitional issues: how do we define 'natural' and 'social' sciences? Give examples of fields or disciplines you consider to belong in each category. Maybe even include a small two-column table listing 'social' or 'soft' sciences on the left and 'natural' sciences on the right. Think about defining the

'kind of knowledge' produced by each set of scholars: what are the similarities and differences? Is one more 'grounded', more certain, more reliable than the other, and if so why? A simple way to introduce the differences would be to use ideas about the 'problem of the subject' in IR and the 'tangible/intangible' divide explored in this chapter. If we can't pick up a piece of evidence up and throw it against a wall to test its properties, then it is probably not amenable to methods of investigation used by natural scientists. Ideas, practices and behaviours all fall into the latter category.

Your second task is to come up with some way of judging the implications of what you say in the first part. Assuming social sciences do produce different forms of knowledge, do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing – and what do you mean by 'good' and 'bad'? Do you think the social sciences should try to emulate the natural sciences at all? Certainly many social scientists would claim to produce 'objective' and non-biased knowledge – is that the same as being 'scientific', and how do they validate their approaches? The better students might throw into doubt the whole idea of the natural sciences being a paragon of virtue as far as scientific knowledge production is concerned.

#### COMMON PITFALL

When a question has two parts to it, students sometimes forget to answer the second part, especially when under pressure in exams. In the above, the second question 'should they try?' invites you to consider the knock-on (ethical) implications of your answer to the first part. Not bothering with the evaluative element of the question component will severely limit the mark you obtain, however good your answer to the first part. It's the second part of this question where most of the marks for being 'critical' (analytical) are to be gained.

#### 'Why is the subject matter of IR essentially contested?'

This is slightly harder to structure than the first answer because it is open ended, inviting you to consider any and every reason why writers disagree about the most appropriate focus for IR. You have to be absolutely focused on narrowing your essay to just a few points, framed at the outset by the use of a simple, clear argument that outlines what you go on to say in the rest of the answer. Given that you are inevitably working to a time limit (in an exam) or a word limit (in an essay), one useful approach is to list all the reasons you can think of and then concentrate on, say, the three or four that you consider the most compelling. You can then structure your answer around each of the points in turn. A possible list might include:

- Labels: 'Inter-national Relations' (narrower remit) or 'World Politics' (wider remit)?
- Which actors?
- What is 'the world' in which these actors operate – which theme in IR are you explaining?
- The subject is ever-changing because the world is constantly changing.
- Events or issues seen as important in one era will not necessarily seem so in another.

## REFERENCES TO MORE INFORMATION

Generally, on the problems of studying Politics and IR:

Shimko, K.L. (2011) *International Relations: Perspectives, Controversies and Readings*, 4th edn. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

A good introductory text which shows you where theory fits into the wider study of IR.

Bleiker, R. (1997) 'Forget IR Theory', *Alternatives*, 22(1): 57–85.

Critical evaluation of the methods, practices and limitations of orthodox IR.

Halliday, F. (1995) 'International Relations: Is there a New Agenda?', *Millennium*, 20(1): 57–72.

Examines the interplay between the global political agenda and how developments in the 'real world' of international relations affect the academic study of IR.

Walt, S.M. (1998) 'International Relations: One World, Many Theories', *Foreign Policy*, 110, Special Edition: Frontiers of Knowledge: 29–46.

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Goodwin, G.L. and Linklater, A. (1975) 'Introduction', in G.L. Goodwin and A. Linklater (eds) *New Dimensions of World Politics*. London: Croom Helm.

Has some useful words at the start on the distinction between 'International Relations' and 'World Politics'.

Jackson, N. and Tansey, S.D. (2015) *Politics: The Basics*, 5th edn. Abingdon: Routledge.

More advanced texts on the nature and role of theory:

Hollis, M. and Smith, S. (1991) *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Very good on **empiricism** and its implications for theoretical development.

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A series of excerpts from key writings in the field. Particularly recommended are Chapter 6 by Scriven, Chapter 9 by McIntyre, Chapter 18 by Lukes and Chapter 27 by Durkheim.

Herrman, R.K. (2006) 'Linking Theory to Evidence in International Relations', in W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse and B.A. Simmons (eds) *Handbook of International Relations*. London: Sage, pp. 119–36.

A defence of positivist thinking in IR together with a consideration of other approaches to connecting theory with evidence.

More general issues raised in this chapter:

Becher, T. and Trowler, P.R. (2001) *Academic Tribes and Territories*, 2nd edn. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

See Chapter 3 for an account of how academics from across disciplines view their work and how this helps us define the concept of a 'discipline'.

Kuhn, T.S. (1996) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd edn. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Ostensibly about the natural sciences, this path-breaking book boasts a wealth of information about the positioned foundations of all academic knowledge – good for the second 'Question to Ponder' above.

Neuman, W.L. (2013) *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 3rd edn. Harlow: Pearson Education.

In Chapter 1, Neuman argues that knowledge generated by 'scientific' research is more reliable than knowledge gained by other means.

Barnett, M. and Duvall, R. (2005) 'Power in International Politics', *International Organization*, 59(1): 39–75.

Gives you an idea of how to map disagreements between different IR traditions and explains the causes of some of their disputes.

