

THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE FLUIDITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

The international political system continues to undergo varying degrees of permutation which often beckon the need to (re)appraise, contest, revise and reposition hitherto existing theories of international relations with a view to achieving relative precision in the analysis of global events. Recent developments in the international political system resonate and validate the fluidity and evolving nature of theories of international relations as tools required to describe, explain, analyse and predict global trends. This study underscores the place and role of prevailing global forces in shaping the nature, direction and character of theories of international relations. It demonstrated ways in which centripetal and centrifugal subtleties of the international system orchestrate new political thoughts and search for more apposite theoretical frameworks necessary to capture the exigencies of emerging world realities. Secondary data and descriptive method of analyses were used in the study. The study showed that regardless of the usefulness of theories of international relations in creating relevant links necessary to explain observable scenarios in the global arena, their importance resides largely in their capacity to reasonably account for global actions, behaviours and events irrespective of differences in historical time boundaries as well as variations in geographies. In conclusion, the study stressed the susceptibility of theories of international relations to vagaries of an ever-evolving international system majorly characterized by trends in peace and war, cooperation and conflicts, conflictual national foreign policy objectives as well as general interest of states and non-state actors.

Keywords: Theories, International Political System, Cooperation and Conflict, States and Non-State Actors

Introduction

The use of theory is fundamental to understanding social and behavioural issues in international relations. Theory gives insight into any phenomenon selected for investigation and also enhances efforts towards organizing observable ideas and realities. Generally, theories gain relevance and

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prominence if they are able to make generalizations, provide operational framework that serves as necessary toolboxes required to explain international practices and predict possible outcomes of global events. There are many theories of international relations and none can be said to contain all integral ingredients adequate enough to present a single and globally endorsed standard approach to interpreting world events. Instead, what obtains is that existing theories of international relations are often interconnected or built into various compartments in a bid to providing general answers to questions bordering on actions and inactions of international actors and practices. By extension, there is no one total or perfect theory of international relations. The emergence and broader acceptance of any social science theory depends largely on the capability of the theory to prevail in debates with other contending and alternative models seeking attention. Theories usually derive strength from widespread or long practiced systems of thought and beliefs (Burchill, et. al., 2005).

Knowledge of theories of international relations empowers us to understand operations and events that occur in the international system and subsequently helps us to imagine, explain and also predict the world we live in. Awareness of existing theories of international relations helps to unbundle the trajectories and complexities of the world political system and without much difficulty simplify what appears to be a complicated global arena engulfed in crises, conflicts and wars. By implication, theories of international relations provide road maps that guide our quest to seek and make interpretations of the complex network of events that take place in international politics and relations (Mcglinchey, et. al., 2017).

Some of the major ingredients and tools required to operationalize and organize theories of international relations include variables such as states, human population, national governments, organizations, ideas and societal norms, peoples' history, gender issues and relations, economic conditions of states, national territories, geographies, and so on. It is expected that theorists and social scientists would utilize these available tools to create or design a simplified, understandable and workable generalizations upon which it would become easier to read, analyse and interpret global scenarios. In other words, theories of international relations provide us with methodological approaches, tools of analyses and paradigms necessary to explain and even predict occurrences that unfold as nations engage in diverse forms of interaction of both cooperation and conflicts.

In the next section, the study made effort to define and explain theory as well as theory of international relations. It also illuminated the importance

of theories of international relations and the various intersections between theories of international relations and the empirical international system. Furthermore, attention was given to the nature of the international political system. Here, the alternation and constancy of cooperation, anarchy and conflict as basic features of the world system were stressed. Contrasting postulations of realism and liberalism (two dominant theories of international relations) were also highlighted. In the section that followed, the study x-rayed the evolving nature of theories of international relations as a concomitant to the fluid international political system. Extant case studies illustrating ways in which the evolving international system propels the rethinking and recasting of old theories of international relations were explained. Afterwards, the study examined Evolving Theories and New States in the Post-Cold War Era. Specific scenarios depicting the responsiveness of international theories to major alterations to previously held belief systems, analytical frameworks and models in the international system were explored. The study also looked at the dilemma of accession of small states into an international system driven by power struggles and interests of great powers as a major phenomenon in the development of theories of international relations. This was followed by the conclusion.

Understanding Theories of International Relations

Theory can be described as a ‘body of interrelated proposition, statement and concepts subjected to empirical verification’ (Rengasamy, 2016: 121). It can also be understood as a set of ideas based on general principles arranged to harmonize thoughts, explain and justify a situation (Abumere, 2017). The importance of theory in social sciences manifest in its ability to proffer better perspectives to handling social practices and improving social behaviours. Theories provide relatively comprehensive conceptual clarifications to complex circumstances through an organized framework of hypotheses developed to provide verifiable contexts on critical situations. Broadly speaking, theories of international relations refer to ‘traditions of speculation about relations between states which focus on the struggle for power, the nature of international society and the possibility of a world community’ (Burchill, et. al., 2005: 12). According to Donnelly, ‘Theory is artful abstraction. ... Theories are beacons, lenses or filters that direct us to what, according to the theory, is essential for understanding some part of the world’ (2005: 30). In another path, we can think of theories of international relations as ‘the body of general propositions that are advanced in relation to political relations between states in world politics (Jurgensen, 2021). Theories of international relations embody harmonized assumptions that help to build useable frameworks within which analytical

perspectives necessary to facilitate the study, interpretation, understanding, description and prediction of events taking place on the world stage are developed.

Theories of international relations can be seen as social models, paradigm and schools of thought which reflect a description of how the international system ought to be conceptualized and also expositions on preferable methods to explaining and predicting international activities. Theories create vital bridges and platforms that smoothen academic intersections that facilitate linking up existing hypotheses with emerging empirical scenarios. With theories it is easier to socio-scientifically test and measure the international practices as well as behaviours of states (sovereign nation-states) and non-state actors (transnational corporations, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations, global social movements) and subsequently periscope the likelihood of future occurrences. Theories of international relations attempt to sieve and glean abstractions extracted from the interaction of actors and dynamic forces that appear to dominate and drive the direction of international politics, international economy and international law.

Emergence of Theories of International Relations

The history of theories of international relations is often linked to narratives of Western political thought and more closely to the European states' system characterized by increasing spate of interdependence and interstate relations occasioned largely by the onset of the industrial revolution. According to Spindler (2013), inter-state theoretical assumptions arose upon the need to provide scientific tools of analysis required to describe and explain intersections between the international relations of states and organized hypothetical works on motivations, dynamics and logics underlying the behaviours of international actors. The rise of states and the emergence of states' system (international society) are at the core of the history of political thought and theories of international relations. Rising prominence of inter-state relations induced the quest for the exploration of theoretical assumptions that could meaningfully incorporate and project the social relevance of interdependency among states.

Attempt to formulate a theory of interstate relations began during the early modern age and was driven mainly by trajectories of the Italian system of states. During the early sixteen century, political thinkers like Niccolo Machiavelli wrote concerning how a state could survive and cope with external threats, pointing towards states' behaviour in international

relations. By the mid-seventeenth century, the principle of state sovereignty which was an aftermath of the end of the 1618-1648 (Thirty Years) war – the Peace of Westphalia – had been established. Around 1651, Thomas Hobbes' work on the Leviathan had gained global attention and specifically stoked discussions on the inter-state relations of sovereign states in the international system as a replica of the type of relations observable among individuals prior to the organization of state systems. Hobbes' perception of a state of war and egoistic politics later became foundational to the formulation of international relations theories beginning with Realism. Thomas Hobbes was the first modern political philosopher to describe international relations as anarchical. His description of the international system as one in a "state of nature" impacted heavily on future development of theories of international relations (Griffiths and O'Callaghan, 2002).

From the mid-seventeenth onward to the nineteenth century, a survey on the European states system showed increased interstate relations and diplomatic activities including the summoning of the Congress of Vienna where the various European states (Concert of Europe) upheld the idea of balance of power in the aftermaths of the Napoleonic wars. The Concert of Europe's balance of power helped to maintain international peace and security for about a hundred years (1815-1914) as it collapsed only after the outbreak of World War I. Beyond political, security and diplomatic contacts during times of war in Europe, increasing interdependence of states in areas of economic exchange grew in importance. Adam Smith's work on *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) and David Ricardo's study on *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* also provided useful theoretical insights to learning and understanding the concept and gains of international division of labour in inter-state relations and further integration of national markets.

Signs and threats of war became more noticeable at the period of increased interdependence of inter-state activities. Little wonder that the 19th century which witnessed massive expansion in industrialization activities coincided with the emergence of international peace movements after the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and later in the United States. Peace movements comprising a collection of private citizens drawn from different social classes and groups were formed with the major objectives of downgrading predatory foreign policy tendencies of states in the international system. Discouraging expansionist military behaviours in the interaction of state and promoting equality of opportunity and freedom of international relations were among the goals of Peace Societies that emerged. 'Foundations such as the US's Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the World Peace

Foundation, both founded in 1910, were powerful actors that contributed to the establishment of International Relations as an academic discipline after World War I' (Spindler, 2013: 20).

Unfortunately, hopes for cordial relations in inter-state relations failed following the outbreak of the 1914 World War I and marked the end of a century of organized peace societies as well as the need to set up international institutions with capacity for peaceful resolution of conflicts among states in the international system. One great lesson of World War I was the convergence of thoughts and conclusion that no more should matters of war and peace be left to politicians and diplomats. Instead, a systematic study of the causes of war and conditions necessary for peace became a vital ingredient to helping politics pursue global peace. In all, it is important to view the rise of international relations theory within the parameters of two crucial developments. One was the historical process of state formation and processes of centralization of power in a Sovereign. Transformation of political organizations from what they were during Middle Ages to becoming modern states was essential in rooting the theoretical basis of international relations theories. Second was the development of states system in Europe. As soon as centralized sovereign states surfaced, the need to ensure the security and welfare of national citizens in an emerging inter-state network became more pronounced just as it was for increased economic gains from an interdependent states system. Intensifying global trade, transportation, security and other new external contacts rose almost simultaneously with growth in more systematic visions, political thoughts and theoretical reflections in international relations.

Nature of the International System

This section discusses the nature of the international system. It describes the character of world actors – state and non-state actors – that are engaged in various activities in the international system. The existence and regularity of cooperation and conflict in a world system that is generally characterized as anarchical and without a central governing agency and institution is elaborated. There are sovereign states which control internal affairs in their various territorial jurisdictions and seek to maximize their national interests from the global setting. Realism, liberalism and other theoretical traditions have been developed to describe and interpret reasons behind the motivations and behaviours of actors in the international system. However, regardless of the chaotic nature of the international system, the section remarks that there are essential structures like the United Nations and other international organizations as well as treaties that essentially

bind world actors towards ensuring cooperation and harmony in the international system.

A system refers to a set of components linked together with special relations and functions in which each structural unit functions in collaboration with others to pursue and achieve common goals. Expectedly, various components combine in harmony of function and purpose to enable a system exist as a whole and under the condition that the integral elements are balanced since a loss of balance would result to a collapse or disintegration of the system. The international political system comprises actors – state and non-state actors whose operations are believed to be linked (Krejci, 2006).

The international political system comprises actors who interact in a world environment that lacks any one central authority superior to the various component units. It is generally considered as anarchical and this connotes disorderliness, chaos and lawlessness in the world system. Thomas Hobbes' description of what he referred to as the 'international state of nature' has had profound impact on the trajectories of cooperation and conflict in international relations. In his analogy of the state of nature from a domestic prism, Hobbes argued on reasons why rational persons should desire to live or cohabit under a recognized supreme authority rather than exist in a world void of order. Without order, there is chaos, tension, uncertainty and insecurity.

The state of nature is one of misery in which human communities live in perpetual fear and constant struggle for survival and yet they are incapable of providing for their own security. Under such precarious security atmosphere, life is nasty, brutish and short because time and energy is enormously expended on unhealthy intergroup rivalry, violence and unending clashes. During the period of the state of nature – time when state systems had not evolved – the war of all against all and the law of the jungle were characteristic. The best way out, in Hobbes calculation, would be for rational individuals to accept to give up their natural freedom and private rights to an absolute ruler – the Leviathan – in anticipation for collective security, protection and order (Griffiths and O'Callaghan 2002). In spite of relative peace and signs of cooperation in some regions of the world, violence is endemic and remains a constant feature of global politics and international relations. According to Rummel (1979), the international society has two faces: one is that of conflict, struggles and dialectic of power while the other is best described in terms of equilibrium

sustained by societal norms and structures. The international system is riven, disorderly and also bound together by violent conflicts. It is pictured as a complex of overlapping and nested structures replete with issues of conflict, power balancing, change and transformation. The international society is a place of changing configurations of interests, power and balancing.

Debating the Nature of the International System: between Realists and Liberals

The world is believed, especially in the theoretical tradition of realists, to be anarchical following the absence of any recognized supreme leader, power or institution saddled with the task of making and enforcing international laws. Thus, describing the international political system as anarchical evokes the idea that the global frame is without a ruler, governing rules and central authority. Of course, the international society is void of any recognizable central authority empowered with constitutional responsibilities or saddled with the task of maintaining peace and order in the interest of all humanity. The global system is full of sovereign states, and heterogeneous national groups which are autonomous and not bound together by any supranational power.

Sovereign states within the international society exercise legitimate control over their territories. They can make, enforce and interpret their own laws depending on the nature of their own constitutions and are not answerable to any extra-territorial person, higher authority or external institution. Because international relations lack a central government with a monopoly of power, the component states feel insecure. Owing to the individual responsibility of sovereign states to providing for the security and welfare of their national populations, it becomes easier to understand why each state must do everything possible to survive in a porous and self-help global environment (Griffiths and O'Callaghan 2002). Their protection depends on themselves and to some extent on alliances they are able to form. States are supposed to choose alliances to enhance their security and do so at a minimum cost to their own autonomy (Ansell and Weber, 1999: 81). Each state will on its own discretion and decision move to correct or right any perceived injustice meted out on it. Incidentally, the reliance on self-help, which resonates the popular security dilemma confronting each individual state, reinforces the choice and disposition towards resorting to violence and maximum force and sometimes outright war in a bid get what is considered desirable.

Liberalists have been able to challenge the long-held realists' tradition of description and interpretation of the outcome of the anarchical international political system. Though, liberals acknowledge the anarchical nature of the international society, they decry realists' notion of what they perceive as overt exaggeration of the effects of such anarchy on the behaviour, actions and inactions of state actors. As highlighted earlier, the international system is a space of changing configuration of powers and continuous accession into new alliances and pursuit of balance of power. State and non-state actors on world stage act within existing structures of expectations undergirded by previously established equilibrium and power balancing. Some of the structures exist in diverse forms, some forms are intuitive and even unknowingly practiced by international actors (Rummel, 1979).

Nevertheless, in international relations, many of the structures are known and formalized with some involving written agreements and signing of treaties. International organizations like the United Nations constitute a notable structure helping to formulate international laws, define the rights and obligations of members and set in motion a description of a preferred global order. With the nestling of existing structures within the global order, the world system acquires the image of an international space where the formalization and balancing of varied interests and capabilities also take place. Though anarchical in some sense, the quest for a global order is visible in the continuation of international relations of states and non-state actors. International relations depict the existence of an exchange society replete with negotiation and bargaining between and among nations, international trade, commercial treaties, tourism, capital flows student-study migrations, lending and borrowing and all manner of exchanges.

Contrary to arguments emphasizing the anarchical nature of the international system, liberals insist the world system is not so disorderly. For example, states are recognized by international law which acknowledges the rights to sovereignty, independence and equality of states – a major factor which itself is also limiting the chances of achieving a world government. The structure of the international political system reflects a model of states' arrangement made up of uneven power potential (Krejci, 2006). In an international society championed by models of libertarians, the United Nations with its executive and legislative organs and the international court of justice standing (the judiciary) is looked upon to represent and give direction to a world order. International organizations like the World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization function as the administrative structures of global governance. Peace keeping and enforcement operations are authorized by the United

Nations Security Council to strengthen efforts towards boosting world peace and security. A number of international military interventions have been made in the Middle East and African regions (Rummel, 1979).

The study is not intended to obliterate the existence and place of threat of force, structural violence and use of coercion in the international system. Many times, we find the use of economic tools such as foreign aid, trade wars and economic sanctions, debt cancellation and forgiveness in compelling unwilling states to comply with certain trends and behaviours. Beyond the recent example of pressing and far-reaching economic sanctions mounted on Russia by the United States and its Western allies owing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there are multiple scenarios depicting penchant to utilizing coercion or threats in order to extract obedience from other states in the international system. The use of state power by the Oil Producing Exporting Countries to establish a monopolistic cartel with enormous powers to determine and raise oil prices is also common knowledge.

On a more critical assessment, one could opine that, as with incidents of violent conflicts and wars, the unpredictability and anarchical nature of the international system straddle only specific areas of international relations and over a given period of time. On the other hand, much of international relations encompasses observable pattern and therefore susceptible to predictions and expectations. There are diplomatic rules and regulations which guide the interactions of states and ambassadors make representation based on established diplomatic codes. International treaties are signed and both states and non-state actors operate within agreed limits. Global trade flourishes because trends in world commercial markets are forecast. Inter-state travels are organized except in situations where illegal migrants sidestep state immigration laws. Of course, even when states engage in activities capable of inducing wars, such behaviours are also predictable. In fact, international relations and activities in the global arena are not really more disorderly, anarchical and unpredictable than situations of normlessness, chaos and insecurity that obtain in the internal affairs of many of the sovereign states themselves (Rummel, 1979).

Regardless of the divergences that appear in the above analyses and exposition of the nature and/or organization of the international political system, it is at the discretion of a student of political science and international relations to examine and determine the actual picture of the global society as well as the character of relations noticeable among international actors. Thus, while Mr. A could successfully describe the international political system as anarchical and chaotic, Mr. B could successfully argue otherwise.

There are opinions stressing that international relations comprise majorly a world system of interaction of states and non-state actors in which the operation of a limited government serves to guarantee the protection of international law and the security of the comity of states. The international system is made up of independent actors who are, largely for reasons abundance and scarcity of human and material resource, drawn to each other for purposes of exchange.

Evolving Nature of Theories of International Relations

Since theory is a result of hypothesis, it goes to say that theory is falsifiable regardless of its corroboration with observations made at any given time. Implicitly, 'when the hypothesis is falsified then it is an erroneous theory or it does not even qualify to be a theory at all in the first place. In other words, theories are products of conjectures, and are only viable if or when the conjectures are confirmed' (Abumere, 2017: 16). A new theory could emerge for the sole purpose of replacing an old theory that is no longer relevant or authentic. The international political system which theories of international relations are birthed to synchronize and explain is never constant but evolves with actions and inactions of its component actors and players.

As the complexity of the international system and intricacy of activities of states grow, the greater the need to review, adjust and advance more international relations theories in order to produce corresponding paradigm, models and approaches necessary to situate and explain the growing density of states' behaviours and major innovations across the globe. From reliance on the use of philosophical traditions and historical illustrations to scientific approaches, international relations experts have always made efforts to provide methodological frameworks for the analyses of international events as well as answers fundamental to generalizing perceived patterns of activities in the international system. Thus, since the 1960s, there has been a remarkable growth in the number of scientific methodologies introduced to enhance and build new theories of international relations and develop higher levels of predictive accuracy in the reading and forecasting of global phenomena (Burchill, et. al., 2005). The 1960s and 70s saw the development and proliferation of newer theories and approaches to the study of international relations in an era preoccupied with tremendous global security threats, nuclear threats of war and arms race. Rising military tension of the period paved way for the rise of subfields like strategic studies as well as widening in the scope of predictive state behaviours and foreign policy analyses.

Going back memory lane, we may look at a few examples. Some centuries ago, humanity was made to accept that planet earth was flat in shape. This theory which held sway for a long period of time has been proven unreliable and thus substituted as creativity in science and technology has enhanced human understanding of the earth geography. Similarly, the hitherto popular Malthusian Theory regarding the adverse implications of rising human population and diminishing food supply have largely been countered as some states (Western countries in particular) have proven their capacity to increase food and resource supply while successfully managing growth in human population. Back in the days of Malthus, the Malthusian population theory drew a huge attention and became a reference text for many nations and scholars including great thinkers like Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace whose prominent theses on the mechanics of natural selection gathered much inspiration from Malthus' work (Shermer, 2016). However, Malthus' theory has widely been reviewed and criticized particularly to the extent of its failure to decipher human creative capacity to overcoming the challenge of rising population and dwindling resource-supply. It is largely within the premise of improvements in the development and use of science and technology that the fading relevance of the Malthus theory of population has grown stronger (Rahman, 2018). On the advantage of science and technology, there are now wide possibilities for correlations between population growth and rising food production.

The human and material costs of World War I were colossal and thus generated much contention in which old speculations and ideas of power politics were challenged and massively discredited. Thereafter, the search for the replacement of some previously accepted theories gained momentum. For example, there was the thought that war could be prevented and peace ensured if the realists' emphasis on the importance of balance of power were swapped with more progressive options like the establishment of a system of collective security and the strengthening of international laws. Upon such arguments and several others which leveraged mainly on the 19th century revolutionary enlightenment that boosted the believe that human beings are creative, reasonable and could therefore make progress by developing common goals capable of satisfying shared interests, liberalism rapidly drew a huge global attention.

In the same way, after some decades of dominance, liberalism was confronted with a myriad of criticisms. Foremost in the list of criticisms against liberals is their imaging as idealists and utopians. Some assessments pictured liberalism and its basic assumptions as overtly too simplistic (Burchill, et. al., 2005). Recent security and political developments in Eastern Europe

and Far East Asia also call for attention especially in view of the ecstasies and jubilation that caught up with the Western world following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The blustering and vociferous actions of countries like Russia and China in their expansionist territorial ambitions over Ukraine and Taiwan, respectively, reverberate the evidence that the end of the Cold War did not effectively produce a unipolar world, although the United States was hastily perceived as such. Crimea was annexed in 2014 and the entire Ukraine invaded in 2022. China has repeatedly demonstrated its preparedness to annex Taiwan. In spite of few military threats and subtle security actions from the United States and its Western allies in their attempts to respond to and stand up against Russia and China, certain notions about the Post-Cold War international political system are fast fading. These new global security asymmetries invite new models of analysis to capture rising permutations sketching the international security architecture.

Theories of International Relations and New States in the Post-Cold War Era

One significant development in the trajectory of international relations theory-making relates to the emergence and place of small and less powerful states in relation to their co-option into the global arena. Though the end of the Cold War brought some relief from the dominance of the two superpower rivals, the accession of small states into an international system driven largely by power politics and national interest was a challenge especially in the area of foreign policy choices and preferences. With the end of the Cold War rivalry, there was a major shift from material to non-material dimensions of power usage in the international system. Abdelraouf Mostafa Galal notes that:

‘the number of small states has increased after the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991. The countries have adopted an effective foreign policy by using non-material dimensions in a way that contradicts the theory of realism in international relations. ... small states cannot formulate a policy outside their borders because they do not possess the material power, especially the military one. ... realism sees that the best behavior of small states is to be satellite states to the great powers. This resulted in insufficient studies in the field of international relations on the foreign policies of small developing countries’ (Galal, 2020: 38-39).

Alterations brought to bear on the international system on the occasion of non-material-based nature of foreign policies of small states are part

of the unforeseen theorizations of both classical realists and neo-realists scholars. Foreign policy lexicon has since the end of the Cold War welcomed new terminologies like soft power, smart power and virtual power. The magnitude of these alternative power-sources in foreign policy formulation and relations cannot be underestimated as they further demonstrate the evolving nature of theories of international relations in providing accompaniment to both centrifugal and centripetal forces of the international system. Soft power entails that states can also maximize gains in the international system using intangible resources such as attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or threats of physical force. On the other hand, smart power implies the ability of global actors to utilize both hard and soft power in the pursuit of foreign policy goals. These new terminologies appeared following the rise in international relations of new phenomena that were hitherto not fathomed by previous models of analysis including theoretical postulations of realism and liberalism.

Conclusion

Whenever there arises a significant shift from what was previously known, acceptable and practiced in international politics, the need to review existing theories and develop novel models of analyses of international events become expedient. In today's world, there are phenomena in the economic, political, cultural, environmental, technological, religious and security fields eliciting further reviews of the activities of states and non-state actors with a view to capturing and reflecting evolving scenarios, events, changes and actions taking place in the international system. Some of the current political, economic, environmental, military and security challenges plaguing the international system particularly the present East-West security crises and military threats concerning Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and China's territorial pronouncements over Taiwan beckon further theoretical investigations.

Regardless of challenges that accompany the emergence of new and sometimes competing theories of international relations which often evokes disinterestedness among students who may prefer direct study of global events (empiricism) without the theories, it is important to emphasize that theories are a prerequisite for a better understanding and interpretation of international events. Armed with sufficient theories of international relations, a student stands a better chance to make constructive arguments and contextualized them with relevant case studies. Theories are the fundamental toolkits required for effective analyses of international relations and reliable forecasting of future global occurrences. Notwithstanding, we

must remark that, in spite of high degree of importance attached to theories of international relations, their relevance, functionality and utility remain within the prism of estimations, speculations, possibilities and inferences.

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