

Mohamed Boudiaf University - M'Sila
Faculty of Law and Political Science
Department of Political Science and International Relations

Dr. Mohamed Tahar Adila

Theories of International Relations

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Introduction

The "International Relations Theory" is considered one of the most important courses taught to second-year students of political science and international relations, as it constitutes the main tributary for all other courses taught in subsequent years in international relations branches, especially Foreign policy analysis, International Conflict Analysis, International Integration, Security and Strategic Studies. This is due to the basis of theoretical concepts and approaches it provides that are used to understand and analyze the various topics presented by these courses. This requires that each student have a comprehensive understanding and good comprehension of all the theories he deals with without exception.

This publication allows you to explore the world of theory in the field of international relations, and it also helps you overcome many of the difficulties that you may encounter in studying and understanding the general logic on which the process of theorizing international relations is based in general, and in knowing and understanding what each theory proposes individually. However, this publication cannot, in any way, replace the need to refer to reference books in this field, whether those related to academic books directed primarily for learning, or those that belong to pioneers and theorists in this field. This is in order to encompass and control more of all the topics presented, or to obtain in-depth and detailed knowledge about a particular research point, or in order to know and follow the history of the theory and the general development it has known, etc.

Conceptual Introduction

It is not possible to list all the concepts that a student of international relations encounters during his study of various theories. However, we will try through this introduction to give a brief overview of some concepts that are important and directly related to the theorizing process, and what each theory proposes. We point out and draw the student's attention to the fact that there is no general agreement within the social and human sciences, in general, and within political science and international relations, in particular, about a single and unified content and meaning for any of the concepts proposed. Consequently, there is always the possibility of multiple contents of a single concept, reflected by the controversial nature of the concepts themselves, the multiplicity of perspectives, and the difference in the intellectual, ideological and doctrinal references of researchers, etc. However, this does not mean diluting these concepts and losing them among different understandings, but rather means in fact the necessity of paying attention to the differences and intersections that occur between different theories when dealing with and using these concepts.

1- What is the theory of "international relations"?

The concept of theory does not raise much controversy from a linguistic point of view, as it is more stable compared to its technical meaning. Researchers trace the word "theory" back to its Latin origin (Theoria) from which it was translated, and its equivalent in French is (Théorie), and in English is (Theory). Its meanings revolve around: to look, to look, to look, so he is looking at something, i.e. he saw it and contemplated it with his own eyes. Muhammad

Nasr Arif points out that the concept of theory reflects the meaning of the Latin verb (*Theorein*) which means "to see", and thus theory means vision or insight, and sometimes it is used to mean something intellectually higher or abstract. The linguistic meaning also links theory to the verbs of looking, contemplating, meditating, using the mind, abstract thinking, etc. The closest definition to this meaning is that provided by Chris Brown when he considered that theory in its best sense is reflective thought. We engage in theorizing when we think deeply and abstractly about something, and we turn to theory when the answer to an important question for us is unclear for one reason or another.

From a technical standpoint, we find a number of different and sometimes contradictory definitions about what is meant by international relations theory. Adel Fathi Thabet states that the word theory in its general technical meaning means "a set of mutually consistent hypotheses", and "political" theory means "a set of logically consistent hypotheses that appear to its owner to represent the truth of a certain political reality". Ole Holsti believes that international relations theory in terms of content includes the study of actors and the field and environment of international relations, within certain limits of this field, and within a model for conceptualizing international relations. Theory according to Jean-Baptiste Duroselle is "a set consisting of a description, classification, and a comprehensive interpretation or explanation". According to Stanley Hoffman, theory is "a systematic study of observed phenomena, designed to uncover underlying variables, to explain behavior, and to identify the distinctive forms of relationships among units." Both Richard Mansbach and Christine Rafferty consider theory to be "abstractions, simplifications, and general propositions to answer questions such as how and why. Theory is involved in the effort to explain and predict the behavior of actors in world politics." Kenneth Waltz defines theory as "a set of laws relating to the behavior of a particular phenomenon," and then goes on to state that "theories differ qualitatively from

laws, in that laws identify relationships and connections, while theories show why those relationships and connections prevail.”

Fred Chernoff claims that according to most philosophers of science, natural scientists, and social scientists, a theory is:

- 1- An organized set of propositions that seek to explain a specific part of the world.
- 2- It includes general principles surrounding the most important factors or variables that help researchers organize their observations.
- 3- It clarifies the patterns or regularities contained in the generalizations.
- 4- It generates expectations, which can be probabilistic or inevitable.

It can be clearly noted that there is a difference and multiplicity in the definitions provided about the theory of international relations, and this difference is reflected in turn in the patterns of the theory, its roles and functions, etc.

2- Why do we theorize international relations?

The process of theorizing international relations aims to reach generalizations about the phenomena studied¹. These generalizations become an expression of the rules and principles that govern various international phenomena. While in the field of physical sciences they are called "law", in the field of social and human sciences, in general, we call them "theory". These generalizations (theory) can later be used and employed in analyzing and understanding various similar phenomena.

¹ When we talk about the process of theorizing international relations, we often talk about it within the framework of the positivist concept of science.

3- Can we look at international relations?

The possibility of theorizing international relations (with the aim of arriving at a general theory) is available only when we adopt a "positivist epistemology"² in our view of how to study international relations. That is, if we consider the social phenomenon like the natural phenomenon, in that it has a material existence independent of the human self, and is governed by relatively fixed laws and regularities, and is repeated according to a single pattern...etc. Thus, we can discover the objective laws that govern the phenomena of international relations, and then generalize and formulate them in the form of a general theory. However, if we adopt a "post-positivist epistemology"³, this possibility is negated, so that the goal of studying the phenomena of

² **Epistemology:** A branch of philosophy. Also called the "theory of knowledge", it revolves around the possibility of knowing the world around us. It is expressed by two basic questions: How do we know what we know? And how do we know that what we know is true? **Positivism:** A philosophical movement led by Auguste Comte and later Emile Durkheim. It called for the necessity of applying the methods of natural sciences when studying social and human phenomena. Positivism is based on the following assumptions:

- 1- The belief in the unity of science.
- 2- There is a distinction between facts and values, so with facts we can be neutral in judging competing theories.
- 3- Social phenomena, like natural phenomena, are governed by regularities and laws, and the latter can be discovered by our theories in the same way that a natural scientist works to discover the laws of nature.

³ **Post-Positivism:** A philosophical counter-movement that has completely rejected most of the basic concepts and principles on which positivism was based. Post-positivists reject the existence of an absolute, objective, and final truth. According to them, the world cannot be subject to periodic regularities and fixed laws, and the world is not of a purely material nature. Therefore, it is not possible to imagine the existence of a single and unique way or method for perceiving and knowing it, as the positivists argue, and no one can claim complete knowledge of the truth.

international relations becomes understanding those phenomena for themselves, not for the purpose of generalizing the results drawn about them. The reason is that post-positivism establishes a sharp distinction between the nature of the social phenomenon and its counterpart, the natural phenomenon, so they often focus on the case study method.

4- Why are there multiple theories of international relations?

Stephen Walt, one of the prominent theorists in the field of international relations, titled one of his articles published in the magazine (Foreign Policy) in 1998 as "International Relations: One World, Multiple Theories". This title raises astonishment, how can theories be multiple and differ in their study of the same world? The answer to this question is found (as a direct reason) in the difference in philosophical, epistemological, **ontological**⁴, and methodological references adopted by each theory.

5- What are the types of international relations theories?

The process of classifying (Typology) theories of international relations is a difficult process, and the problem lies in the absence of a reference standard (Standard Criteria) on the basis of which the classification process can be carried out. Therefore, the student of international relations faces a number of

⁴ **Ontology:** It is a branch of philosophy, and it is the science of existence as it exists. The ontology of international relations is concerned with answering questions such as: What is the nature of the world (material or ideal)? What does it consist of? Who are the main actors in it? ..etc. Ontology is related to epistemology in terms of influence and being influenced, and it is also divided along the same lines of epistemological division, such that there is a positive ontology and a post-positivist ontology.

different and varied classifications, each of which reflects a specific criterion for classification. We note that the classifications may differ despite their sharing the same criterion. James Dougherty and Robert Baltzgraf classified them as follows:

- 1- Historical-descriptive theory, which seeks realistic generalizations about the past and current reality.
- 2- Scientific-predictive theory, which uses mathematical relationships and attempts to predict the future probabilistically.
- 3- Normative-predictive theory, which attempts in a deductive way to answer the question: How can or should things be improved.

Ismail Sabry Muqalled presented a three-tier classification of theory based on the scope and range of the phenomena it studies, represented in:

- 1- The level of large or comprehensive theories (Grand Theories), It aims to reach generalizations that can cover all the international phenomena it works on.
- 2- The level of middle-range theories, these are theories that aim to explain narrower phenomena than comprehensive theories, and within a relatively limited number of variables.
- 3- The level of partial theories (Micro-Theories), which are the narrowest in scope, focus on a specific dimension that enters into the composition of a large phenomenon, and tries to reach a specific result or hypothesis through its analysis.

Based on the function performed by the theory, Chris Brown classified it into:

- 1- Explanatory theories, they try to explain the reason and circumstances of the emergence of a phenomenon.
- 2- Normative or guiding theories, they try to tell us what our position should be on this phenomenon.

3- Interpretive theories, they try to interpret events and give them meaning.

Based on the methodology used in the study, research and analysis of phenomena, Richard Mansbach and Christine Rafferty presented two types of theory:

- 1- Empirical theory: It deals with the question of what happened? And why? That is, it seeks to describe the behaviors of actors and explain the results of their behaviors. It tries to build knowledge based on experience and expertise.
- 2- Normative theory: It is concerned with explaining what is right and wrong, or what is moral and what is immoral. It seeks to present preferences and claims that cannot be proven and verified, because they are based on beliefs, logic and values.

Kenneth Waltz distinguished between "systemic" and "reductionist" theories, based on their relationship to "levels of analysis"⁵. Theories that rely on

⁵ **Level of analysis** means the source of interpretation that the researcher relies on when dealing with his research topic, and there is no agreement among researchers about these sources or their number. Emile Durkheim raised the "problem of levels of analysis" when he raised the debate about the priority of society or the individual in analyzing and studying social phenomena. In the field of international relations, Kenneth Waltz raised it through his book "Man, the State, and War" (1959) when he spoke about three images of interpreting war: the first is based on considerations related to rulers, the second is related to the nature of political systems, and the third image is based on understanding and analyzing what is happening at the international level. After Waltz, this problem was raised by David Singer when he published an article entitled "The Problem of Levels of Analysis in International Relations" (1961), in which he spoke about the existence of three levels: the individual, the state, and the international system. Barry Buzan made a wide contribution in this field, and added two other levels: between the individual and the state (the bureaucratic level), and between the state and the international system (the regional level). This debate was renewed in the nineties with the "structure-agent problem" proposed by Alexander Went, according to which the analysis could either be structuralist or holistic (starting from the international system), or individualistic (starting from the individual or the state).

the level of analysis of the individual or state are partial or reductionist theories. Theories that start from the level of the international system are systemic theories. Steve Smith distinguished between "interpretive" and "formative" theories based on their role and position on reality. The theory that studies "reality as it is" is interpretive, and the theory that seeks to change and reshape it is formative. There is a distinction between "philosophical" theory and "scientific theory"; the former is contemplative and deductive, based on intuition, based on axioms and axioms, and investigates what should be, while the latter is empirical and inductive, based on sense, based on hypotheses, and investigates what is.

6- Do theories perform the same functions?

Just as there is no general agreement on the concept of theory, nor on its types, there is also no agreement on its functions. While it is widely circulated in the literature of international relations that theory has three functions, the difference lies around the fourth. The agreement is on the functions of description, analysis and interpretation, while the difference lies on the function of prediction. There are those who argue that the primary function of international relations theory is to provide convincing explanations and interpretations of events that occur, not to predict and know what will happen in the future. The credibility of theories - according to them, headed by realists - is linked to their ability and sufficiency in explaining and understanding what happened, not what will happen. However, there are those who make the function/ability of prediction a condition for the effectiveness and success of theories. A theory that can understand the past and comprehend the present must anticipate the future. Muhammad Nasr Arif defines the functions of the theory as follows: defining the field of study, determining its dimensions and its constituent units (i.e., defining the ontology of the field in terms of its nature,

being and existence), as well as defining key concepts and repositioning them within the framework of what is known as “conceptual geography.” The interpretive theory sees its primary function as reaching the discovery and explanation of the rules and laws that govern international phenomena without interfering in changing or reshaping them, while the formative theory sees its primary function as not accepting the existing reality and the necessity of rebuilding it anew according to certain desires and requirements.

7- How can the validity of theories be verified?

The matter differs according to the type of theorizing followed. As for theories of a philosophical nature, it cannot be claimed that there is a way to finally verify their validity, since they (i.e. the philosophical theory) are governed - mostly - by value preferences, loaded with subjective convictions and ideological orientations, and linked to moral goals, etc. However, in general, the following is taken into account when evaluating a philosophical theory: the principle of consistency, solidity and internal coherence, its commitment to the rules of the **Deductive method**⁶, and the absence of contradiction between its basic propositions, or conflict with the known rules of logic. As for theories of a scientific nature, the method followed - by most researchers - is to confront them with experience or reality, and if its propositions agree with empirical or experimental evidence, the theory is considered correct. The method used to verify scientific theories is called "experimental verification", where we subject the theory to the rules of the scientific method (observation, experimentation, analysis and conclusions, then generalization), and if the causes always lead to the same results through repeated experiments, then we adopt the theory. There

⁶ **Deduction:** means judging a part based on judging the whole. Or it is accepting the validity of partial propositions based on extracting them from general propositions whose validity was initially accepted.

are those who object to the "verification" method because it is based on the logic of "**induction**"⁷ that is not logically justified, and therefore generalization can never be made. This idea is defended by the philosopher of science Karl Popper, who believes that verifying the validity of a theory is only done through the principle of falsification⁸.

8- How can we compare different theories?

Some people argue that it is not possible to compare different theories, because there is no neutral rule for comparing them (**Anti-foundationalist principle**)⁹. Every theory is correct in relation to its premises and its commitment to the rules of the methodology it followed. Pareto considers that

⁷ **Induction:** means judging the whole based on judging the part. Or it is accepting the validity of general propositions based on the validity of their partial propositions through the principle of generalization.

⁸ Falsification or Refutation means that instead of moving towards proving the validity of a theory, we do the opposite. That is, we seek to prove its error. Proving error is easier and simpler than proving correctness, as we do not need more than conducting one experiment or finding one empirical evidence that contradicts what the theory goes to in order to judge its error. If we fail to do that, the theory remains relatively correct. Proving correctness, on the other hand, requires an infinite number of experiments and evidence, which is practically and logically impossible.

⁹ To understand the anti-foundationalist principle, we must first understand the foundationalist principle: the possibility of the existence of a reference standard, or an independent, neutral and objective reference, to which competing theoretical claims about the truth of something can be referred. Recognition of this principle generates the belief that the truth can be reached, and that researchers must only improve their methods in order to reach it. It also generates the belief that there is a single truth, which requires accepting the validity of one theory and the error of all other theories. The anti-foundationalist principle is in stark contrast to the above, as there is no reference standard to which competing theoretical claims about the truth can be referred. Therefore, it is not possible to compare different theories.

all theories are good as long as they are useful and perform their functions in explanation and interpretation. Thomas Kohn (the well-known philosopher of science, author of the book: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*) believes that competing theories in a specific field of knowledge represent projects for possible paradigms¹⁰, and in normal or standard science, one paradigm dominates or dominates the field of knowledge at a certain stage, and therefore it is not possible to compare or differentiate between successive paradigms. Imre Lakatos (philosopher of science, author of the book: *Scientific Research Programs*) believes that in every specific field of knowledge, different theories take the form of competing **research programs**¹¹, each of which develops independently of the rest of the programs. There are evolutionary or progressive research programs that always improve their analytical and interpretive capabilities and their predictions are more accurate, and there are regressive

¹⁰ The concept of paradigm as introduced by Kuhn refers to a coherent and consistent set of beliefs, values, theories, laws, tools, techniques and applications, shared by members of a particular scientific community, and represents a large research tradition or way of thinking and practice, and a guide or guide that guides researchers in a particular field of knowledge. In the field of international relations, it can be said that the cognitive model represents a prevailing vision at a certain stage about the nature of the international phenomenon as perceived and described by most theorists at each stage of the development of international relations. It indicates the existence of a kind of agreement about the characteristics of the international phenomenon and its basic dimensions, about the questions it raises, and about how to study and research it.

¹¹ The concept of the research program proposed by Lakatos consists of: a solid core that represents the basis of the basic assumptions and statements of the program, which must not be modified or changed, because they represent the essence of the program. A protective belt represented by auxiliary hypotheses, which can be modified or changed according to the requirements of experience or changes in reality. A negative scout, which is a strategy followed by scientists to maintain the solid core against all problems that the program may face in its development. And a positive scout, which works to direct scientists towards exploring the problems facing the program and trying to overcome them in order for the program to continue.

research programs, the opposite of the first. However, there are those who argue for the possibility of comparing different theories, especially within the framework of positivism, as different theories can be distinguished by their adherence to the rules of the accepted scientific method, their ability to explain the largest number of events with the smallest number of variables, their flexibility and adaptability to new facts, their internal consistency and coherence, the lack of contradiction in their statements, the simplicity and clarity of their concepts, etc.

Positivist theories in international relations.

What we mean by positivist theories are those theories that adopt the principles of positivist philosophy in their approach, analysis and interpretation of the phenomena of international relations. That is, they accept their existence (i.e. the phenomena) as material, independent, regular, and subject to objective laws that can be reached by following the rules of the scientific method. They seek to develop general and comprehensive theories through which/and in light of their propositions, all phenomena of international relations can be explained. We point out that these theories are not all on the same level of commitment to the principles of positivism, and we may find differences in the degree of commitment within a single theory. We also point out the lack of agreement on the classification of these theories in terms of precedence and emergence. While some argue that the "idealism" of liberals is the first to appear considering the emergence of the field of international relations after the end of World War I (1919), others go to present "realism" over other theories, considering its intellectual roots that go back to the era of Greece (Thucydides). There is another problem that we face when classifying these theories (and others) when attributing them to their thinkers and pioneers, especially ancient thinkers and philosophers, where it is difficult to accurately determine their intellectual orientations and place them in a specific theoretical category, considering the encyclopedic and comprehensive nature of the thought they produced.

Liberalism

Liberalism includes a wide range of theoretical approaches that converge on many ideas and assumptions that form the core of liberal thought in international relations.

The ideas on which liberal thought is generally based can be traced as follows: individualism, freedom, natural law, spontaneous order, rule of law, limited intervention of state.

Both Zacher and Mathew argue that liberalism in international relations contains progressive, cooperative and modern elements. They are:

- 1- Progressive: Because liberals believe that when their ideas prevail, international relations will gradually shift towards encouraging and promoting human rights, by creating conditions for peace, prosperity and justice.
- 2- Cooperative: Because achieving the greatest degree of human freedom increases the possibility of cooperation between states and other international actors. Without cooperation, the benefits of interaction, interdependence and opportunities for achieving peace, prosperity and justice cannot be achieved.
- 3- Modernism: Because liberals believe that international relations have been transformed by many factors that have modernized the world, such as: liberal democracy, interdependence between states, cognitive (scientific) progress, international institutions, and international social integration (between individuals and groups).

Tim Dunne presented the most important foundations of liberal thinking about international relations as follows: peace between democratic states, the positive relationship between free trade and peace, the existence of harmony of interests between individuals, the importance of creating international

institutions for some (idealists) and even a world government, the peaceful effects of the processes of international integration and interdependence.

For his part, Kegley summarized the basic assumptions of liberal theory as follows:

- 1- Human nature is essentially good, and individuals have the ability to help each other and coexist together.
- 2- Human concern for the welfare of others makes progress possible.
- 3- Bad human behavior is not an innate or natural trait in man, but rather a product of bad institutions and conditions that push man to act selfishly and harm others.
- 4- War is not inevitable, and its recurrence can be prevented by eliminating the conditions that created it.
- 5- Wars and inequality are international problems that require collective and multilateral efforts to eliminate them.
- 6- International institutions can contribute effectively to reducing the negative effects (the possibility of wars) left by the state of "chaos" in the international community.

According to Andrew Moravcsik, the basic assumptions of the liberal theory of international relations are:

- 1- The priority and precedence of social actors over other actors. The basic actors in international politics are individuals and private groups, which are rational entities that organize exchange and collective action to achieve various interests under the constraints imposed by: scarcity of resources, conflicting values, and various social influences.
- 2- Representation and state preferences. States (or other political institutions) are in fact represented by officials who act on their behalf and defend their interests. Therefore, they are the ones who determine

the state's preferences and work to achieve them in the field of international politics.

- 3- Interdependence and the international system. The order of priorities and preferences of interdependent states determines the behavior of these states.

As mentioned above, the different perspectives of liberalism converge on these ideas and assumptions in many or few of them, but they do not unify on all of them. This is what makes them different from each other. We emphasize that the liberal theory of international relations came in its entirety to reduce conflicts and wars, and to create a world of peace, security, prosperity and progress. The different theoretical versions unify around this goal, but their mechanisms and means of achieving this made them differ from each other. Their difference also came in line with the continuous changes in international reality, and the necessity for theory to keep pace with it (theory as a reflection and expression of reality). And as an expression of the various reviews (practice of self-criticism) that occur within international liberal thought. And as an attempt to challenge and go beyond what realism puts forward after its emergence as a dominant theory in the field of international relations in the fifties of the twentieth century.

There is no agreement on the number of theoretical approaches that adopt liberal theses, nor even on their names. But returning to academic and theoretical books in the field, we find that they speak more about: international liberalism in the mid-eighteenth century, idealism between the wars, institutional liberalism (functionalism and neo-functionalism) in the fifties and sixties, pluralism and interdependence (world order) in the seventies, neoliberalism in the late eighties, and democratic peace theory in the nineties.

1- International Liberalism

International liberalism represents the first contribution of liberals to the search for ways out of the state of violence and conflicts that have characterized relations between countries for long periods of time. It was even searching for a final solution to the problem of war, based on a deep optimism in the ability of humanity (individuals and groups) to overcome all forms of differences and conflict, through understanding and coexistence within frameworks and rules that provide opportunities for survival, advancement and prosperity for all. International liberalism is based on two basic assumptions, if they are achieved (one or both of them), then world peace will replace conflicts and wars. The first, of an economic nature, is based on the idea of "freedom of trade between countries". The second, of a legal and political nature, is based on the idea of "federalism".

The assumption of "the link between freedom of international trade and the possibility of establishing permanent peace between nations" is found in many prominent thinkers and philosophers. So:

- **David Hume** (1711-1776), He believed that principles such as international division of labor, a system of self-correcting balance of trade, (economic) harmony of interests between nations, and the reciprocity of trade and welfare, if applied at the international level, would make international trade a non-zero-sum game. That is, everyone benefits from it, albeit to varying degrees. What nations can achieve through invasion and war (with its high costs), they can achieve through international trade, and therefore nations (as rational entities) will engage in broad cooperative and peaceful relations.

- **Richard Cobden** (1804-1865), He called for freedom of trade and for "non-interventionist policies" for nations, as he believed that free trade is good

diplomacy, and there is no other sure or guaranteed way to unite people around peace.

- **John Stuart Mill** (1806-1873), He linked the idea of progress and the increasing integration of the human race with the principle of free trade, saying: The greatest degree and the most rapid increase in international trade is the primary guarantee of peace in the world, it is the most permanent security for the continuous development of ideas, institutions, and characteristics or features of the human race.

- **Charles Montesquieu** (1689-1755), He says "The natural result of trade is the achievement of peace."

Therefore, freedom of international trade, according to them, allows for the peaceful accumulation of wealth and the benefit of all countries from it, enhances mutual understanding and develops relations of cooperation and rapprochement, and stimulates international interest in maintaining peace.

The second assumption links "the establishment of permanent international peace with the idea of establishing a global federation that brings together all countries." The foundations of this assumption were laid by Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) through his book "Introduction to Public Morals", and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) through his book "Towards Perpetual Peace". They strongly opposed the prevailing reality of international relations. Kant, for example, described it as "a state of barbarity that is not subject to any law".

- **Immanuel Kant**, Kant argues that achieving permanent peace inevitably requires transforming individual consciousness into collective consciousness, adopting "republican" constitutions, and a "federal contract" between countries that serves as the framework and broader political organization within which countries live. Kant included in his philosophy for achieving permanent peace a set of principles and conditions that must be respected¹².

¹² These principles and conditions are divided into negative and positive. The negative ones are:

- **Jeremy Bentham**, He called for building a global federal state, similar to the German Diet (DIET), the American Confederation, and the Swiss Confederation. These federations have been able to contain internal conflicts and struggles, and have been able to create peaceful and stable societies, by replacing old interests, identities and loyalties with new ones based on the idea of coexistence.

Timothy Dunne believes that the ideas of Kant and Bentham are nothing more than an extension of the idea of the social contract between individuals within a single state or society to states within the international community. That is, subjecting states to a system of rights and duties.

This liberal perspective has been criticized by many, both by liberals themselves and by other theoretical approaches. These include:

- 1- International peace does not emerge automatically by simply liberalizing and strengthening international trade, but rather requires institutions that sponsor and ensure it.

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- 1- Any peace treaty is not considered a treaty if the intention of its contracting parties is something that would provoke war in the future.
 - 2- Any independent state may not be owned by another state in any way.
 - 3- Standing armies must be completely abolished over time.
 - 4- States must not contract loans for their external disputes.
 - 5- No state may interfere by force in the system of another state or in its method of government.
 - 6- No state has the right during war to allow itself to commit hostile acts that would, upon the return of peace, make trust between the two states impossible.

As for the positive ones, they are:

- 1- The constitution of each state must be a republican constitution.
- 2- The law of peoples must be based on a federal system between free states.
- 3- The right of a foreign guest in terms of international legislation to honor his hospitality.

- 2- Freedom of international trade does not necessarily lead to the creation of peaceful relations, as conflictual relations may prevail even in the context of large trade exchanges at the international level.
- 3- Freedom of international trade - in practice - has not prevented the outbreak of many wars.
- 4- The idea of federalism is based on the idea of overcoming the principle of sovereignty, which is something that countries will not accept.

2- Idealism

Idealism¹³, which emerged between the two wars, represents an intellectual and political movement at the same time. It is an intellectual movement that worked to overcome the shortcomings of international liberalism, and to provide a theoretical prescription that would eliminate wars and conflicts between countries, based on two basic ideas: world government, and the principle of collective security. As a political movement, it worked to translate its theoretical intellectual orientations into reality, through: the Fourteen Points called for by former US President Woodrow Wilson in order to achieve international peace, the establishment of the League of Nations, and various political treaties and legal agreements to ensure international peace and security. It came as a reaction to the consequences of World War I. It called for the necessity of studying international relations scientifically. It also revolted against the secret treaties, balance of power policies, and alliances practiced by

¹³ An idealistic name given by realists to the efforts of liberal theorists in the interwar period. It expresses a sarcastic criticism of the idealists' views and analysis of international relations, and of the ways and means of achieving international peace. They consider them naive and detached from the reality of international reality. According to realists, they speak of a world completely different from what exists. It is a "utopia," in the expression used by Edward Hallett Carr.

the great European powers until the beginning of the twentieth century, as these, according to them, were among the direct causes of wars. Idealists opposed the idea that peace and prosperity are parts of the natural order, as claimed by international liberalism, and that they emerge automatically as a result of the liberalization and expansion of international trade. They argued, in contrast, that peace must be made, and this can only be secured through an international institution (a world government) that puts an end to Disorder.

Idealists relied extensively on the study of international law, and benefited from it in arriving at a form of international organization that eliminates conflicts and wars and enhances international security and peace. They encouraged the study and establishment of international organizations and working to spread them in various fields, due to their major role in bringing peoples, cultures and governments closer together.

2-1- World Government.

The idea of a world government is not a new idea, but rather an old one, and books of political thought talk about similar ideas advocated by thinkers and philosophers throughout the ages. For example, the Stoics, led by Cicero, advocated the idea of a world city, which finds its justification in the fact that: natural law, justice, and human brotherhood are universal concepts and are not specific to a nation or state. Some Christian philosophers, led by Augustine, called for the divine city or the city of God, which is the opposite and contradictory to the earthly city or the kingdom of Satan and sin. In Islamic political thought, we find the idea of the caliphate, which theoretically extends with the extension of the Islamic faith on earth. In modern times, we find Kant and Bentham calling for the establishment of a federation that includes all countries. After the disaster of the First World War, idealists realized the necessity of establishing international institutions that would undertake the task of making and maintaining world peace. They called for supporting these

institutions, engaging in them, and providing them with the powers and capabilities necessary to carry out their assigned role, in comparison with what happens within countries, where we find democratic and elected governments at their head, equipped with all the powers to impose public security. The same should be the case for the international community, which must have a system of governance that includes democratic procedures to address conflicts, and an international force that can be mobilized in the event of failure of negotiations or peaceful settlement of these conflicts. The idea of a world government is an expansion of the idea of a social contract to include the international community. Just as in the state there is a single authority that monopolizes the tools of coercion and violence, and ensures public security and protects the rights of individuals, the world government does the same for countries (the embodiment of a world government means moving from the state of nature¹⁴ "Anarchy" to the state of order "the state").

But the question that arises is: Has the idea of a world government been embodied on the ground? Some consider that the United Nations represents the embodiment of the idea of a world government, as it played a major role in the development of the current international organization, in establishing international peace, and in maintaining security in many parts of the world. It also pushed international cooperation in all fields to unprecedented levels, contributed to the spread of education, culture, democracy and human rights, contributed to the independence of many countries that were colonized, and

¹⁴ The state of nature or Anarchy is a central concept for Neo-realists. It was first proposed by Thomas Hobbes, and later employed by Kenneth Waltz, who made it the cornerstone (under the name chaos) in building his theory of international politics. The "state of nature" (which is a hypothetical state) means the nature of the first existence of man, completely liberated from the constraints of any authority, and thus he is subject only to himself, and equal to others. Anarchy, as presented by Waltz, means the absence of a higher authority above the authorities of states (due to the existence of the principle of sovereignty).

oversees peacekeeping operations in many parts of the world, and has the ability to intervene militarily in the most tense and turbulent regions of the world, etc. An organization that possesses all this influence and impact on international politics can only be a world government. There are those who object and consider that a world government has never been and will never be embodied on the ground, due to considerations of the principle of sovereignty.

2-2- Collective security

Collective security, as stated by Timothy Dunn, refers to a measure whereby "each state accepts the principle that the security of one state is the concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to aggression." This means the ultimate solidarity and mutual support among states, as any attack on one state is considered an attack on all, and the task of protecting the attacked state and repelling the attack becomes the task of all. According to Martin Griffiths and Terry O'Callaghan, the concept of collective security means "a set of mechanisms with a legal basis, designed to prevent aggression by one state against another, or to suppress such aggression if it occurs." These mechanisms, according to them, are represented by diplomatic boycotts, imposing sanctions, and even carrying out military actions and interventions.

Collective security is based on the idea of collective punishment against the aggressor, by mobilizing and using a very large force to deter him. Therefore, every country should think carefully about the consequences of aggression before carrying it out. If we follow the logic of collective security and its requirements, we arrive at the following conclusion: No country, no matter how powerful it is, will think about aggression, no matter how beneficial it is, because then it will face the rest of the world's countries together, and since countries are rational beings, they will follow peaceful policies with each other.

The League of Nations adopted the principle of collective security as an alternative to the principle of balance of power, and this was evident in Articles 10, 11, and 16 of the Charter.

The principle of collective security has been subject to many criticisms, including:

- Difficulty in achieving its universality and comprehensiveness, as its effectiveness and results are linked to the extent of involvement of all countries in it, including the powerful ones.
- If the powerful countries are outside the collective security system, the rest of the other countries will not be able to rely on this system to protect themselves from the powerful countries.
- Maintains the status quo. Since there are always countries that maintain the status quo and others that seek to change it, the conflict between these two wills is what ultimately leads to the outbreak of conflicts and wars.
- In practice, this principle did not prevent the outbreak of many wars, most notably World War II.

The criticisms of idealists, as well as the changing events of international reality, and the emergence of realism after the end of World War II, constituted a strong incentive and impetus towards the beginning of a new theoretical work for liberals, through which they tried to overcome all previous failures on the one hand, and on the other hand to keep pace with the requirements of the new international reality. This version was called institutional liberalism, or functionalism and neo-functionalism.

3- Functionalism and Neo Functionalism

Functionalism is considered one of the basic theoretical approaches to international integration, along with constitutional approaches (federalism and confederation). They appeared in a general context characterized by the decline in the credibility and attractiveness of idealist theorizing, especially after the outbreak of World War II, in contrast to the emergence and dominance of realistic theorizing of international relations. Therefore, functionalists had to find a theory that could competently analyze and explain the reality of international relations on the one hand, and on the other hand, could create and secure international peace and security in a way other than that taken by idealists.

3-1- Functionalism

It emerged in the 1950s, as a reaction to the state-centered approaches to peace, represented by the theses of the federalists and the idealists after them. David Mitrany, its main theorist, noted that conflict and war are inevitable results of dividing the world into separate and warring national units, and that these units (nation-states) are unable, in terms of potential, to achieve peace or improve the social and economic level of their citizens. He also noted that the escalating international problems have become too great for a specific state or states to confront, but rather require new efforts and frameworks to contain them.

In contrast to the theses of the federalists and the idealists after them, who tried to establish a world state or government based on the idea of forced dismantling of state sovereignty, i.e. the necessity of states relinquishing their sovereignty and joining the new political form, so that if we go beyond dividing the world into sovereign states towards a single world state, peace will be achieved, on the basis that "function follows form." Mitrani goes for the opposite

rule: “form follows function,” so that we work on the soft dismantling of state sovereignty, that is, we focus on establishing an integrative process between states starting from the fields and sectors that do not directly affect state sovereignty, and which are primarily related to the economic sectors.

The basic principle that drives the integration process according to Mitrani is ramification. This means that the integration process begins from the sector or field in which countries share potential, importance and expected benefits, and the success of the cooperation process in this sector will encourage countries to expand it to other sectors. Thus, countries engage in broad cooperation and integration processes until they reach a degree of close interconnection between the economies of countries (complex interdependence) at which retreating from the integration process becomes impossible (it becomes very costly and an irrational option).

The increase in economic cooperation between countries requires regulatory, institutional and human frameworks to sponsor and manage it. This can be provided by the international institutions that are being established, as well as the internationally qualified technical hand (technocrats and international experts). So that these institutions have an increasing role in international "economic" relations, and even withdraw the management of economic activity from the hands of countries. Then these institutions have an influential role in making international policy with the economic decision-making power they possess.

On the basis that form follows function, and that the economic function determines the political function of the state, it becomes easy to transform the form and structure of international politics (independent sovereign states) into a form that is compatible with the universal or global character of international economic institutions. Thus, we can speak here of political integration between

states, whereby the latter abandon their traditional form and merge into the form of a single world government.

Mitrani's functionalism faced widespread criticism from the liberals themselves, who pointed out the impossibility of separating economic activity from politics, the difficulty of moving from economic integration to political integration, and the connection of the integration process to the will of the political parties more than its connection to the economic function.

3-2- Neo-Functionalism

Neo-functionalism emerged as an attempt to overcome all previous criticisms, and as a new vision of how to achieve international integration. Its most prominent pioneers include: Karl Deutsch, Amitai Etzioni, and Ernst Haas.

The new functionalism is based on the idea of not separating politics and economics in the integration process, as the latter is not an automatic or mechanical process, but rather a voluntary one subject to the political wills of states. Instead of excluding politicians from it, the duty was to involve them after convincing them of the feasibility of economic cooperation and the expected benefits from it, on the assumption that states are rational, pragmatic beings seeking profit without consideration of values or ideology. The goal of integration is primarily a material, utilitarian goal, after which come other considerations.

The success of technical and economic integration in its early stages leads to the conviction of political governments and encourages them to engage more in the integration process that moves forward towards its ultimate goal of integration¹⁵. However, unlike traditional functionalists who make international

¹⁵ When we search for the equivalent of the term Integration in the Arabic language, we find two terms: integration and amalgamation. Some people are satisfied with using one of them, considering them synonymous. There are those who use both terms at the same time, considering them to refer respectively to the process and the result of the process. Integration refers to the multiplicity of parties

integration happen all at once and on a global scale, new functionalists see the necessity of a regional integration stage (occurring on a regional scale) that precedes the stage of comprehensive international integration. Through regional or provincial integration we create new regional political entities, large in size and small in number, after which the integration process between these new entities is facilitated.

Just as Mitrani introduced the concept of diffusion as a mechanism for integration, Ernst Haas introduced a similar concept, “spillover,” where success in one dimension of economic cooperation will enhance the interests of political elites and government institutions in generalizing this success, launching new cooperation initiatives in other areas, and so on.

The European Union experience represents a suitable climate for testing the validity of the ideas of the new functionalists, as it provides the necessary conditions for the success of the integration process. At the same time, it represents a source of inspiration for them, so that they modify their ideas in light of what this experience produces.

The new functionalism has also been subject to many criticisms. Two-stage integration takes too long, and there are risks of backtracking, both in the first and second stages. Its connection to an integration experiment that has not yet ended makes it difficult to judge the validity and validity of its theoretical assumptions. Empirically, European integration faces serious difficulties that threaten its disintegration, as we are still far from an economic European unity, and very far from a political European unity.

that complement each other through the processes of cooperation and exchange that occur between them, while amalgamation refers to the melting and fusion of all parties into a single entity (integration is the highest stage of integration).

4- Pluralism and Interdependence

In the 1970s, liberals, led by Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane, called for the need to pay attention to profound changes that had affected the structure and interactions of international politics. It was no longer acceptable to talk about **State Centrism**¹⁶ in international relations, whether in practice or in theory, in light of the rise and growth of the role of non-state international actors, which had a significant and increasing influence even on the policies of states themselves, in contrast to the decline in the status and roles of the latter. Accordingly, this new situation revealed the need to shift from the idea of state centrality in analysis and interpretation to focusing on the idea of the plurality of actors, and to using the term world politics instead of international politics.

On the other hand, they pointed out that security and military issues are no longer a priority on the international relations agenda, but have receded in favor of economic issues and matters, most notably **Interdependence**¹⁷. Consequently, there is a shift in the nature of international politics that must be taken into account when analyzing and theorizing international relations.

Proponents of multilateralism bet on the hypothesis of a strong link between growing interdependence and increasing opportunities for achieving global peace and security. Growing interdependence is in fact based on increasing cooperation and trade exchange between countries, and increasing the volume of mutual benefits and advantages resulting from it, which leads to the

¹⁶ The concept of state centrality, strongly embraced by realists, refers to the consideration of the state as the primary actor in international relations, both in practice and in theory.

¹⁷ The concept of interdependence refers to a relationship of influence and being influenced between two or more parties. Or it is a two-way reciprocal relationship (the opposite of dependence, which is one-way dependence). Its drivers are purely economic, as it describes a state of international politics characterized by the decline of security and military dimensions in favor of economic dimensions, and behind them the social dimensions.

intertwining and complexity of interests between them, to the point where thinking about retreating from it becomes a costly and completely irrational option. Consequently, countries realize and learn to resolve their conflicts and disputes through peaceful means, and to the same extent they stay away from means of war.

5- New-liberalism

The emergence of neorealism by Kenneth Waltz and its theoretical arguments based on the idea of "international anarchy" led the pluralists who supported interdependence - led by Keohane and Nye - to become liberals or neo-institutionalists, who this time accepted that some of the sources of explanation for the behavior of states lie outside them, that is, in the nature of the international system.

Neoliberals have accepted the "anarchic" nature of the international system and that the state is the primary actor in international relations. However, it should be noted that "international anarchy" is not as severe as neorealists assume, but can be mitigated and mitigated by international institutions, which are important actors and have a major role in influencing international politics, just like states.

Neoliberals embraced the **theory of rational choice**¹⁸, in light of which they saw that state behavior is subject to the logic of expected cost-benefit calculations. The state accepts behaviors that maximize its economic interests (not just military ones, as neorealists say), and refrains from those that

¹⁸ Rational choice theory is a pure economic theory (microeconomics) that seeks to explain the logic of behavior followed by economic agents (firms) in the market. It is based on the idea that a rational being (whatever its type) always accepts the action or behavior that maximizes benefits and minimizes losses, and refrains from behavior whose cost is greater than its benefits.

minimize them. The behavior of states is a function of the variables of power and economic benefit. The state is also a unitary actor accordingly, as the behavior of states is determined by the logic of its rational calculations regardless of who is in a position of power.

Neoliberals believe in the possibility of international cooperation in the face of chaos, and they bet on the role of international institutions to achieve this. How? They acknowledge the anarchy of the international system, which makes the process of cooperation between states extremely difficult. This is because chaos makes the behavior of the state always tainted with doubt and suspicion, and uncertainty or uncertainty about the intentions and behaviors of other states towards it. Consequently, the state is more cautious and less involved in cooperative relations with other states, as cooperation requires a certain degree of mutual trust between its parties. This trust is the basic guarantee (along with other factors) for states to engage in sustainable cooperative relations. The issue of the absence of trust was raised as the most important dilemma facing states in building peaceful cooperative relations among themselves. While neorealists bet on the inability of states to overcome this problem, considering that the state of chaos pushes each state to rely on itself to secure its interests, neoliberals sought to find mechanisms that would be a means of creating trust between states, a tool for measuring and verifying each other's intentions, and a framework for interaction and cooperation among them. These mechanisms were represented in what were called international "organizations" or "institutions."

The second issue that can hinder the process of international cooperation is the expected gains from it for each party. While the neorealists focused on the concept and logic of relative gains, the neoliberals adopted the concept and logic of absolute gains. For the realists, states do not enter into a process of cooperation with other states unless their gains from it are greater than the gains

of others, because in the end it is a matter of the balance of power. As for the liberals, states focus in the process of international cooperation on what they can gain, regardless of what others gain. Since cooperation brings benefits and gains to everyone, states will engage in it widely, and will learn how to avoid other means of gaining (war or invasion).

6- Democratic Peace Theory

This theory was put forward in the wake of the end of the Cold War, as an expression of/and exploitation of a "new international reality" characterized by the ideological victory of capitalism economically and liberal democracy politically. It is an extension of the thought of international liberals, especially Kant's ideas about the conditions of permanent peace, which include the idea of establishing republican and liberal political systems, because liberal states, according to him, do not fight each other. This theory was represented by Michael Doyle, James Lee Ray, and Bruce Russett, who re-introduced the hypothesis of the link between states' adoption of democracy and the achievement of international peace, and provided a set of empirical evidence and proof for that.

The adoption of democratic political systems by countries means that their external behavior becomes restricted by internal rules and laws that work to limit their drive to declare war as a means to achieve political or economic gains. It also makes the external political decision subject to the supervision and participation of various internal forces and actors, which prevents the rulers from making fateful decisions alone, such as the decision to go to war, for example. In addition, the adoption of the same principles (democracy) by countries increases the chances of understanding, coexistence and cooperation, and reduces the possibility of resorting to the use of force among them, as

democracies do not fight among themselves, and this increases the chances of achieving world peace and prolonging its duration.

This theory has been criticized for many reasons. The hypothesis of the link between democracy and peace cannot be confirmed empirically. It is also blatant in its normativity when it explicitly calls for the adoption of democracy. There are also many questions that the theory has not answered, such as: Why do democratic countries fight other non-democratic countries? Why do their people vote to wage war against some non-democratic countries? Who said that decision-making (in fact) within established or major democratic countries is done according to democratic rules and the wishes of their people? On the other hand, isn't the spread and generalization of democracy a pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of countries? In some cases, force was used to achieve this, which resulted in the destruction of countries and the spread of chaos and instability in other countries, etc.

Realism

Since its emergence in the 1950s, realism has occupied a distinguished position among the most influential theories in international relations, both in theory and practice. Its presence has overshadowed other competing theories, most notably liberalism.

Throughout history and through the various efforts they have made, realists have been preoccupied with a fundamental question that has defined the general line of their intellectual and theoretical orientation in the field of international relations, which is: Why do wars occur between states? They have tried to answer this question by building a scientific and general theory that focuses on the idea of power and its equations as a fundamental determinant of state behavior. Their various concepts and assumptions were related to and expressive of this idea.

1- Concepts and Assumptions of Realism

Realists agree on a set of concepts and assumptions that form the core of realist theorizing of international relations. However, they differ on some details that make them multiple viewpoints within realist theory. Among the concepts that realists focus on are: power¹⁹, balance of power²⁰, national interest²¹, survival²², security²³, statism²⁴, anarchy²⁵, and self-help²⁶.

¹⁹ **Power**, for realists, is the main driver and determinant of human and international behavior, and all outcomes of international politics revolve around it. All external behavior of states is interpreted in light of considerations related to power. Realists do not agree among themselves on the concept, content, and components of power. Some include material elements (such as land, wealth, weapons, etc.) and non-material elements (history, nationalism, ideology, etc.), and others limit it to its material elements, specifically the military (as do the new realists). There are those who see power as a relational concept, such that it is defined in light of the relationship of influence between one party

and another, and therefore it is a relative concept. Some link power to influence, others to control, others to ability, etc. What is noted about this concept, which is considered essential to realists, is that it is not precisely defined, and that it cannot be completely quantified.

²⁰ **Balance of power** is a principle or system that necessarily results from the presence of power, and it is an expression of the prevailing pattern of relations between the various powers in the international system in a given era. It arises automatically and takes a certain pattern, after which it is subject to the will and capabilities of the powers to change it or maintain it. If one power dominates and extends its hegemony and influence over the rest of the other powers, then we are talking here about unilateralism in the international system or about a position of hegemony (a single balance of power). However, if hegemony over the international system is shared by more than one power, then we are talking here about a (pluralistic balance of power) or a balance of power. Realists differ on: which patterns of balance of power achieve international stability? Some see it as a position of "hegemony", and there are those who go to the position of the "dual" balance of power, while there are those who defend the position of the "pluralistic" balance of power (three powers or more). If stability results from one of the previous patterns, then logic dictates that violating it will lead to instability, and thus the possibility of wars and conflicts.

²¹ **National interest** is a concept that suffers from great ambiguity and lack of control among realists. Its meaning is usually directed to the state's goals and ambitions, whether military, economic, political, etc., and whether on the domestic or foreign level. Some limit it to the possession of power, others link it to survival, and others make it synonymous with security, ..

²² For realists, Survival true to the principle of sovereignty means ensuring that the state does not lose its sovereignty under any threat. It is the minimum that cannot be reduced or negotiated in the equation of the state's national interests. It is the guarantee for achieving the rest of the other national interests.

²³ New realists presented the concept of security as more comprehensive and broader than the concept of survival presented by classical realists. States do not only bet on ensuring their existence and (material) survival, but also seek to secure it against all types of tangible and intangible, immediate and future threats.

²⁴ This concept indicates that the state is the primary actor in international relations. The state is the official and legitimate representative of individuals and societies, and it is the mediator in all interactions and activities that occur at the international level. Simply because it is the only one that enjoys the element of sovereignty.

²⁵ The concept of anarchy refers to the absence of a higher authority above the authorities of states. That is, the absence of a global rule or a global government in the traditional sense.

The most important assumptions on which realists base their analysis of international politics are:

- 1- Individuals do not confront each other individually, but rather as members of political groups that organize their loyalty. The state here is the general and only framework in which individuals and groups interact (at the international level, the state is considered the main actor and the sole representative of peoples and societies).
- 2- Anarchy is the governing principle of international relations. That is, the anarchy of the international system has a significant impact on the behaviors and actions of states.
- 3- Power is the main factor in international relations, and it is the main means of achieving the goals of states. Regardless of the realistic debate about considering power as a goal (among the classicists) or considering it as a means of achieving security (among the new ones), power is considered the essential subject in the realistic vision and analysis of international politics.
- 4- The nature of international relations is essentially conflictual relations, and without conflict the world loses its justification for existence.
- 5- Humans cannot reduce the intensity of international conflicts through reason and logic as liberals assume, but only through the balance of power.
- 6- Power has no moral functions. According to realists, ethics are a product of power and not the other way around, and therefore ethics and politics must be separated when analyzing the behavior of states.

²⁶ The concept of self-help assumes that each state depends on itself to ensure its survival and maintain its security, due to the absence of a world government that plays this role for all states.

- 7- The needs and necessities of states prevail over their ethics when there is a conflict between them, as states - unlike individuals - do not sacrifice their interests for the sake of principles they believe in.
- 8- The state as an international actor is a single, indivisible unit (unitary actor). This means looking at the state as a single bloc when analyzing and interpreting its behavior toward other states.
- 9- The state is a fundamentally rational actor, and its rationality always drives it to adopt decisions and behaviors in which the scale of profit is more inclined than the scale of loss.

2- Realism Perspectives

Like liberalism, realism offers multiple perspectives, imposed by developments in international reality on the one hand, and various self-critical reviews on the other. There is no agreement among researchers in the field about the number of these perspectives or about their names. But academic and educational books generally speak of two basic versions: Classical Realism and Neo-realism²⁷.

2-1- Classical Realism

Hans Morgenthau is the most prominent theorist among a series of thinkers who have made significant contributions to this trend. These include, but are not limited to: Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Ronald Niebuhr, and Edward Hallett Carr.

²⁷ There are those who speak of a third perspective, which is Neo-classical Realism, which combines the level of state analysis with the level of the international system in analyzing and interpreting the behavior of states. The chaotic environment of the international system plays an important role in determining external behavior, but the nature of the state and its internal determinants also play an important role in determining its external behavior.

These people agree on a fundamental idea that the main driver of international politics is the desire and constant pursuit of more power, as the basic guarantee of the existence and survival of states. This desire finds its roots in human nature, which is fixed on evil. Evil human nature is what drives man to enter into conflict with others, and here war becomes inevitable and an unavoidable evil.

Classical realists focus on the state as a level and unit of analysis, which is the primary actor in international relations, and they are rational beings that always seek to achieve their national interest represented by seeking to possess power, threatening to use it, or boasting about it, as Morgenthau says. Relations between states revolve around the axis of power and its equations, and international conflict is the distinctive feature of international politics.

Unlike the idealist liberals, the realists focused on studying international politics as it exists, without intervening to reshape or direct it, and tried to find out the objective laws that govern it. Morgenthau claims to have discovered these laws, and he formulated them as follows:

- 1- Political relations are governed by objective rules that are rooted in the depths of human nature, and any attempt to challenge or ignore these rules under any pretext will only result in failure.
- 2- The political leader thinks and acts according to the concept of national interest known as power.
- 3- In a world where all countries seek to possess power, the interest of each country becomes linked to ensuring its survival as a minimum goal.
- 4- The state, in its quest to achieve its national interest, is governed by values that differ from the values of individuals in their personal relationships, and the political results of a particular policy are in fact the criterion for judging this policy.

- 5- Political realism does not match the moral aspirations of a particular country with the moral laws that govern the world.
- 6- Emphasizing the independence of the political phenomenon, meaning that political behavior must be judged by political standards... The economist asks: How does a policy affect the well-being of society or a sector of it? ... The lawyer asks: Is this policy consistent with the rules of law? The moralist asks: Is this policy consistent with moral principles? ...and the realistic politician asks: How does this policy affect the power of the state?

2-2- Neo-realism

It came as an extension of classical realism and as a rejection of it at the same time. The extension was manifested in its adoption of most of the concepts and assumptions presented by classical realism, and the rejection was represented in the method and level of analysis that must be adopted during the study and analysis of international politics.

Kenneth Waltz is considered the main theorist of this trend through his reference book "Theory of International Politics" (1979), in which he shows the impossibility of building a scientific theory of international relations based on human nature, as the latter cannot be proven or empirically verified for the validity of the various claims regarding it, and therefore it was necessary to search for other components of international politics from which to start in building a scientific theory of international relations.

Waltz, through his book "Man, the State and War" (1959), concluded that the interpretation of wars finds its source in the nature of the international system, not in the nature of the state or in human nature, and therefore theorizing international relations must be structural (i.e. based on analyzing the structure to understand the behavior of its constituent units). Benefiting from the writings and ideas of Hobbes (the idea of the state of nature), Waltz decided

that the essential feature of the international system is "anarchy", meaning that what distinguishes international relations is the absence of a higher authority and reference to which states are subject, and thus the anarchy of the international system is what governs and determines the external behavior of states, and at its level lies analysis and interpretation. How so?

Waltz returns to benefit from what microeconomic theories provide, as he likens the international system completely to the market system. The market as a chaotic structure is what determines the behavior of units (economic companies), the latter having identical functions and goals, so that they all seek to achieve profit, according to a rational logic of choice (the rational identity of the company). In the field of international relations, we have the international system that has a chaotic structure, and the units are states that seek to achieve the same goal of security, and they are rational entities. But what explains the difference in behavior between states if they have identical functions and goals? Waltz answers us by saying: The distribution of relative capabilities (specifically military material) of states in the international system is what makes the difference in their foreign policies, as strong states impose their logic and interests on weak states, and they influence the international system more than they are influenced by it, and vice versa.

Waltz defines the international system by the number of major powers in it, if there is one, the international system is unilateral, and if there are more than that, the system is pluralistic, and here we are dealing with a process of balancing power²⁸ that ensures stability in the international system. Stability,

²⁸ Waltz believes that a bipolar system is better able to ensure international stability. Competition in multipolar systems is more complex than in bipolar systems, because the degree of uncertainty about the comparative capabilities of states is greater. And because expectations about the cohesion and strength of alliances become very difficult. Moreover, the Cold War period is a good example of this claim.

according to neo-realists, means the absence of war only between states or major powers. Conversely, there may be devastating wars between small states, but this does not affect stability, because these wars and the small states behind them cannot change the structure and composition of the international system.

Neorealists agree that the security dilemma or predicament does not result from the nature of states that push them to possess power and threaten to use it (as the classicists assume), but rather results from a structural reason related to the "chaotic" structure of the international system. Chaos is what raises fear, suspicion, and distrust of states in each other, and thus each state relies on itself (increasing its power) to secure its survival. Since the goals are similar, the clash and the possibility of war become inevitable. Therefore, security becomes the top priority of all states. But to what extent can security be provided in the international system or in international relations?

Neorealists differed on this issue into two groups:

Defensive realism

Its supporters, led by Waltz, argue that states - as rational actors - will follow defensive policies towards other states, because the costs of war have become expensive and far exceed the expected benefits from it, and the possibility of states overcoming each other has become small (especially in light of the terrible development witnessed in the field of weapons and nuclear weapons), and thus the possibility of wars is declining in favor of increasing and providing security. States seek security, but at its lowest cost.

Offensive realism

Its supporters, led by John Mearsheimer, believe that security in international politics is a very precious and very rare commodity, and this situation was imposed by the structure of the international system characterized by "chaos", as the latter results in a very small place for trust between states, and therefore it is the responsibility of each state to protect its security itself, and

this requires it to be fully vigilant and always keen to reach the rank of "superior". Mearsheimer sees the "tragedy" of the great powers as an eternal struggle for power and dominance. The stronger a state is, the less likely it is to be attacked by another state. Accordingly, states tend to pursue security policies that increase their capabilities and weaken the capabilities of their enemies, which makes the task of providing security extremely difficult.

While most neo-realists focus on the factor of power in its military dimensions in analyzing international politics and explaining state behavior, there are some of them (most notably Robert Gilpin) who focus on the role of economic factors in determining the outcomes of international politics. This theoretical trend has been called liberal realism or the theory of stability by hegemony.

Hegemonic Stability Theory

Robert Gilpin acknowledges the basic assumptions of neorealism, but he believes that the interaction between the units of the system (i.e. states) has been able to cause important changes in international politics, including that the economic factor has become the basis for changes in the distribution of capabilities within the international system. According to him, these international changes did not change the chaotic nature of the international system, but rather changed the factor or dimension that determines it. That is, the transition from an international system based on the element and concept of "military" power to an international system based on the element and concept of "economic" power.

Gilpin tried to identify the mechanisms controlling the process of international stability, through a foundational theoretical proposal that links the stability of the international system to the stability of the international economic system, and the latter can only be achieved by an economically and militarily

dominant power²⁹. In light of the Anarchism witnessed by international politics, it can be said that there is a kind of control over the behavior of states (different in nature and extent from that exercised by society over individuals) that makes international relations highly organized. To achieve and maintain international stability, the world needs a single dominant state that sets and implements the rules governing the international economy.

Realism has been criticized in its various perspectives, including that its concepts are not precise and accurate, such as: power, national interest, security, etc. Its focus on one aspect of international relations represented by conflict and military power and its neglect of other aspects such as cooperation, trade and economic exchange. Maintaining the status quo (which serves certain states) by focusing on what exists and not interfering in reshaping it. The levels of analysis vary between its different theoretical versions. Its stagnation and failure to keep pace with international reality, which has witnessed a fundamental change in its actors, components and nature. Its failure to predict the end of the Cold War. The emergence of new issues and questions in international relations of a value-based, cultural and civilizational nature that realism, with its concepts and assumptions, cannot deal with. And many other criticisms that have prompted researchers in the field of international relations to think seriously about developing new theoretical approaches (or developing existing theoretical approaches) that can overcome what realism has failed to do (or neglected) in analyzing and interpreting international politics.

²⁹ To be a hegemonic state, a state must have the capacity and the will to ensure and monitor the application of the rules of the system.

Marxism

Stalin summarized the essence of Marxism by writing: "Marxism is the science that studies the laws of development of nature and society, the science that studies the revolution of the oppressed and exploited classes, the science that describes the victory of socialism in all countries, and finally the science that teaches us to build a communist society."

Marxism as a philosophy is attributed to its pioneer Karl Marx (1818-1883), who focused all his efforts and research on criticizing capitalism and revealing its internal contradictions, both at the level of thought and at the level of practice. Marx believed that the political, social and cultural reality of societies and peoples (superstructure) is a reflection of their material economic reality that is governed and determined by the means and patterns of production (infrastructure). Accordingly, the interpretation of political, legal, social and cultural events and phenomena is done in terms of economics³⁰. If the superstructure is a reflection of the infrastructure and an expression of it, then this is done according to the method and laws of **material dialectics**³¹ according

³⁰ Marxists are credited with using economics to analyze and explain political phenomena and international relations. They contributed to the emergence of independent scientific branches such as political economy, international political economy, etc.

³¹ The concept of "dialectic" or "dialectic" is attributed to the German philosopher Georg Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), who based the idea of dialectic on the principle of "internal contradiction" or "struggle of opposites" that exists within things, and on the principle of "negation of the negation", where the existence of a thing leads to the existence of what contradicts it, and the interaction that occurs between them ends in a complex that surpasses the defects of each of them, and this complex in turn leads to the existence of what contradicts it, and the interaction that occurs between them ends in a new complex that surpasses them, and so on. The series of transgressions that occur according to the principle of "negation of the negation" is what creates movement and progress forward in a linear path that does not end theoretically and logically. Hegel applied this dialectic to the study of the history of human thought and ended up saying that history ended with the idea of the "state". Marx turned the

to Marx. Where matter expresses internal contradictions that surround it (conflict), which pushes it towards a series of qualitative changes and transformations that end in new, more advanced and refined forms, and the series continues until reaching a form to which the rules of material dialectics do not apply, which is Communism.

Marx, using the rules of the dialectical method, attempted to provide a comprehensive explanation of human history (historical materialism), and from it to extract the general and objective laws that govern the course and development of social phenomena. He concluded by saying that human history is the history of struggle, and that material struggle (in all the forms in which it can be manifested) is the determinant of all other forms of social struggle, and that at the heart of material struggle lie the contradictions of capitalism.

The contradictions of capitalism, according to Marx, resulted from the principle of individual ownership, on the basis of which society was divided into two basic classes: the class of those who own and the class of those who do not own³², and in the political sphere: the class of rulers and the class of the ruled, and in the social sphere: the class of masters and the class of slaves, etc. After the capitalist system was established in Europe on the ruins of the feudal system that had prevailed before, two basic classes were formed: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Because of the former's exploitation of the latter, a natural and inevitable conflict (a conflict of existence) would arise between them, such that the bourgeoisie class or stratum would use all available tools and methods to impose its hegemony and exploitation of the other classes of society, and would

Hegelian intellectual dialectic into a material dialectic to explain the development of human history, and he also ended up putting an end to the linearity and inevitability of historical development with the idea of "communism".

³² Note here that the principle and starting point of differentiation according to Marx is of an economic nature.

not hesitate to even use the **state**³³ institution. Thus, the class struggle would be the determinant and primary driver of the development of societies and peoples.

Marx argues that the development of human societies has passed through stages: communal, primitive, feudal, and capitalist. But according to the laws of the dialectical materialist method, there is a final stage in the development of humanity, which is the stage of communism, which requires a revolution by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, ending with the elimination of the capitalist system and its various official institutions, headed by the state.

Although Marx focused all his efforts on studying the analysis and how to undermine capitalism locally (at the level of countries), he had some indications regarding the extension of capitalism at the international level. Ironically, we find him supporting the idea of colonialism, considering that the latter would transfer the patterns of capitalist production to the colonized countries, and thus move these countries to a stage of capitalism that they had not yet witnessed, to ultimately hasten the global revolution (Workers of the World Unite) against global capitalism, and the establishment of a communist society. Ironically, we find that Marx calls for the elimination of the idea of the state as a framework for the political organization of societies, and with it the abolition of the idea of establishing something called relations between countries or international relations. Perhaps this partly explains Marx's lack of sufficient interest in international relations. However, some of the concepts he presented had the greatest impact on the writings of Marxist thinkers and theorists who came after him.

³³ Marx and Friedrich Engels consider the state to be a non-neutral institution in the class struggle, as those who represent the state and hold the highest positions in it are only taxpayers, and they are inevitably from the bourgeoisie class, and thus they will use it to achieve their interests at the expense of the interests of other classes. Therefore, the state must disappear as private property disappears to achieve a society of complete justice and equality (communism).

Like both liberalism and realism, Marxism does not offer a single, coherent theory to explain and interpret international politics. Many researchers even do not consider it a theory at all, as they consider it to be merely an ideology that has wrapped its propositions and assumptions in the guise of science. We can talk about several attempts made by Marxist theorists in successive eras to analyze and explain what they see as the essence of international politics, and although there is no specific and final classification of these theoretical orientations, most academic books indicate the existence of four versions of Marxist theorizing of international relations: imperialism, dependency, world-system, and cultural hegemony.

1- Imperialism

Theorists of this trend, led by John Hobson³⁴ and Vladimir Lenin, were interested in researching and understanding the causes of international wars and conflicts. They criticized classical realism, which held that human nature (evil and selfish) is what drives people to enter into conflicts with others. At the same time, they argued that international wars and conflicts occur as a result of the continuous search by "capitalist countries" for new resources for their industries and economies, as well as the search for new markets to sell their products and invest their financial surpluses, which is what drives them to the idea of "colonization". When the number of capitalist countries that see colonialism and "colonies" as an outlet to meet their needs and develop their economies increases, conflicts arise between them over the division of these markets and colonies, and if these countries do not agree on a peaceful mechanism capable of controlling

³⁴ He is an English economist who is credited with being the first to develop a Marxist theory of imperialism, although he was not a Marxist in thought or belief.

the competition and collision that will occur between them, the decision will be military through wars.

Hobson argues that the phenomenon of imperialism in international relations occurs as a result of the imbalance and lack of harmony or balance that occurs within the capitalist system, as the bourgeois minority monopolizes all the wealth and components of economic production at the expense of the rest of the other classes of society that cannot absorb the surplus of industrial production, and thus the imbalance between demand and supply occurs in favor of the latter, and here capitalist societies enter the dilemma of "overproduction and underconsumption." Instead of adopting internal economic and social policies to support the broad classes of society in order to dispose of the surplus production internally and reinvest capital internally, capitalists will search for external markets for their goods and investments, and this is what drives them to the idea of colonialism or imperialism.

Hobson acknowledges that imperialism is not a strategic choice followed by capitalist countries to achieve their interests and goals, but rather a means to achieve the interests of special groups within these countries, specifically capitalists whose wealth grows enormously as a result of invasion and wars.

For his part, Lenin, author of *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, considers imperialism to be "inevitable" for capitalist countries, because the development of **Monopoly Capitalism**³⁵ will lead them to this fate.

³⁵ Monopoly capitalism is a stage in the development of the capitalist system that follows the stage of competition (where there was freedom and open competition in the field of economic practices and activities) that prevailed in Western European countries and in the United States of America until the late nineteenth century, when huge monopolies and multinational corporations began to appear (especially oil, electricity and mineral monopolies in the United States of America), and accordingly the global economy came under the guardianship and dominance of these companies. It can be said that monopoly capitalism represented the basic nucleus for the formation of the modern global economic system that stabilized after World War II.

He says in this regard, "Imperialism is capitalism at a stage of development in which finance capital and monopolies are the dominant forces, in which the export of capital becomes extremely important and the division of the world among **trusts**³⁶ is completed, in which the division of all the lands of the world among the major capitalist powers is completed".

For Lenin, imperialism is the best way for capitalist countries to avoid the economic crises that beset them. How so?

Lenin says that capitalist countries export surplus goods and capital to their colonies, and in return obtain raw materials at cheap prices, and thus these countries benefit from two aspects: the first is to get rid of economic stagnation and suppress the potential internal revolution, and the second is to develop and grow their economies due to the difference in the cost of raw materials obtained from the colonies. This pushes the economic system based on capitalism to further expand externally, and this expansion is the reason for the destruction of the international capitalist system in the end, as the internal crises of capitalist countries always push them to search for colonies as outlets for relief, and their competition with each other makes them divide these colonies according to their relative strength, and thus the most advanced and largest economies are the ones that control and possess the most areas of influence, while the growth and rise of other capitalist powers will accelerate the reconsideration of the existing division, and from it the outbreak of conflicts and wars. According to this analytical logic, World War I was the result of the conflict between the declining Great Britain and the other emerging capitalist powers over the re-division of the colonies.

At the end of his analysis, Lenin arrives at the conclusion that the international system will never know stability (due to the wars of partition and

³⁶ A trust is a group of companies or institutions that give up their legal personality and financial independence to operate in the economy as a single entity.

colonial redivision), except in the case of a rebellion by the colonies and the working class in the capitalist state against the capitalist economic system and its overthrow.

Several criticisms have been directed at the imperialist trend. One of them is that it cannot be asserted that capitalism inevitably leads to the phenomenon of imperialism, as reality shows that not all capitalist countries were imperialist, and not all imperialist countries were capitalist. Likewise, the increase in the number of capitalist countries and the prosperity of their economies does not necessarily lead to the outbreak of wars and conflicts between them at the international level (for markets and raw materials), as history bears witness to many examples of close economic and military cooperation between advanced industrial countries, and from this it cannot be asserted with certainty that capitalism leads to conflicts and wars between countries.

2- Dependency

Dependency³⁷ is considered the most important trend in Marxist theorizing of international relations. It is also called "neo-Marxism". It appeared in Latin America in the early 1960s. Its field of analysis is very specific and specific, as it seeks to explain the reasons for the backwardness of Third World countries. Among its most important pioneers are: Raul Prebisch, Fernando

³⁷ There is no specific and final definition of the term dependency. However, most researchers in the field believe that what is meant by dependency is economic dependency, which means the existence of an unequal relationship between the economies of two or more countries, such that the economy of one country (or group of countries) expands at the expense of the economies of the other countries, and the economies of the latter are dependent in their development and operation on the economies of the first. Economic dependency is the source of the remaining other types of dependency (political, cultural, etc.).

Cardoso, dos Santos from Latin America, André Gunder Frank from North America, in addition to Samir Amin from Africa.

Dependency theorists rely on a structural analytical level to explain the phenomenon of underdevelopment. Unlike the liberal modernization school, which sees the phenomenon of underdevelopment as a result of internal factors related to the underdeveloped country itself (economic, political, social, cultural, educational, etc.), and that getting out of this situation requires adopting capitalist production patterns and liberal political culture; dependency theorists see that the causes of underdevelopment lie in the external environment, specifically in the structure of the global economic system of a capitalist nature, the process of establishing and consolidating its foundations took place in the absence of underdeveloped countries that were colonized at the time, such that Western European countries and the United States of America controlled its main joints (financial and monetary institutions, division of labor, trade rules and customs tariff system, etc.). Accordingly, advanced capitalist countries specialized in producing and exporting manufactured goods, while underdeveloped countries specialized in exporting raw materials and re-importing them in the form of manufactured goods. In light of this division and specialization, capitalist countries became more advanced and wealthy, and underdeveloped countries became more backward, poor, and dependent.

Underdevelopment, as the proponents of dependency argue, was not an original state in which the economies of the Third World existed before they were subjected to European colonialism. Rather, it arose and developed at a single historical moment with the emergence and development of progress in the advanced capitalist centers. That is, underdevelopment and progress are two sides of a single historical process that began with the birth of the global capitalist system since the sixteenth century. Therefore, the theorists of dependency believe that the state of underdevelopment in which the countries of

the Third World fell is related to purely external factors, and not to internal causes as the proponents of the liberal "modernization school" assume. The emergence of the phenomenon of underdevelopment coincided exactly with the phenomenon of progress in Western capitalist countries, and the latter took off economically thanks to what they gained from colonialism, which is the essential reason for the former colonies remaining underdeveloped. Therefore, economic backwardness and economic progress are only two sides of the same coin, as assumed by Gunder Frank.

Dependency theorists believe that international conflict is in fact a conflict between the **Central**³⁸ and **Peripheral**³⁹ countries, or between the northern and southern countries. It was produced by historical circumstances represented mainly by the phenomenon of colonialism. Despite the "political" independence of most southern countries since the beginning of the 1950s, the phenomenon of dependency is increasing and becoming more complex, because advanced capitalist countries control and exploit other countries through the rules and mechanisms of the global capitalist economic system that establishes unequal international economic relations, in which the southern countries represent a source of raw materials and a market for goods and commodities coming from the northern countries. To escape this situation, dependency theorists bet on breaking the link between the global capitalist economy and the local economies of the peripheral countries, by changing the existing political systems (which in their view are agents, subordinates and servants of the global metropole) with

³⁸ The center is the small, advanced, rich (capitalist) countries of the North, which control more than three-quarters of the global economy and have historically benefited from the wealth of the countries that colonized them.

³⁹ The periphery is represented by the countries of the South (non-capitalist), which are numerous, backward, poor, and have, for the most part, been subjected to the phenomenon of colonialism.

"national" ones that work to achieve real economic and social development. The way to do this is to adopt and replace capitalism with socialism.

Dependency theory has been criticized in many ways. One of them is that it confuses the concepts of dependency and underdevelopment. Dependency - as a condition that describes the relationship between states - is a general phenomenon that characterizes all relations between states without exception. There is no state that is completely independent of others, but the difference lies in the degree of dependency of states on others. Accordingly, states can be developed and dependent at the same time, such as Canada, for example. This is generally true of small, economically advanced states. Major capitalist states also suffer from dependency in the field of raw materials needed for their industries, such as oil. On the other hand, there is much empirical evidence that has refuted the assumptions of dependency theorists regarding the responsibility of the global capitalist system for the underdevelopment of Third World countries. The experiences of some countries in Latin America (Brazil, Argentina) and East Asia (South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore) have proven that these countries have been able to achieve an economic leap and significant integration into the global economy.

3- Cultural Hegemony⁴⁰

This perspective is attributed to the Italian socialist thinker Antonio Gramsci, who posed a fundamental question: Why did the revolution not occur

⁴⁰ This perspective is not, in fact, a theoretical trend in itself. It did not seek to develop a theory that analyses and explains the different types of relations between states, but rather came to address a very specific issue related to the failure of traditional Marxism to analyse and predict the outcomes of capitalist societies, and its strength in withstanding and pre-emptively adapting to the potential revolution by the proletariat as a result of the continuation of inequality and class exploitation.

in the more mature capitalist societies as Marx had predicted? And what were the reasons that prevented the transition to socialism in Western European societies?

Gramsci's answer to this question is represented by the concept of **Hegemony**⁴¹. If traditional Marxism argues that the control and domination of the bourgeoisie over the rest of the other classes of society in capitalist countries is based on the repressive power of the state authority, then according to Gramsci, this domination is due more to the control of the bourgeoisie over civil society organizations, and its use of political and ideological discourses that call for and work to convince the various classes of society of the principles and values of liberalism and promote them, whether on the political, economic or social levels, so that its existence becomes acceptable and palatable.

While traditional Marxists believe that the “liberation” of capitalist societies from the grip and domination of the bourgeoisie is achieved through a “military” revolution that overthrows the state machine and its oppressive authority, to establish the desired communist society, Gramsci argues that liberation from the domination and control of the bourgeoisie first requires liberation from the domination of capitalism intellectually, culturally, politically, etc., after which comes the stage of undermining the state and replacing it with the socialist organization model as a necessary step towards communism.

Gramsci's ideas were not spared from criticism. They were stripped of their scientific and objective nature, and placed in the category of Marxist

⁴¹The concept of hegemony refers to the description of the most powerful and influential state in the international system as a whole, or in a specific regional area, such that this state works to enforce its decisions, pass its policies, and achieve its interests, relying in this on its possession of material military power capabilities in the first place (physical coercion). It is clear that hegemony in this understanding reflects a purely realistic perception. However, Gramsci adds to this understanding an intellectual and cultural component (moral coercion), such that the hegemonic state also dominates using ideology, discourse, political culture, civil society organizations, etc.

ideology that opposes and contradicts everything capitalist. They also ignored the facts of the political and social reality of capitalist countries, where the latter witnessed great development in the field of rights, freedoms, political and media practice, and the independence of civil society organizations... so that it is difficult to say that the state exercises cultural, political, and social hegemony over society through intermediary institutions.

Despite the criticisms directed at Marxist thought as a whole (its excessive idealism, its distance from reality, its blatant ideology, ...), it drew attention to an important angle in the analysis of human activity, societies and countries, which is the angle of economic analysis. It also balanced the idea of intellectual dialectics (matter is a reflection and manifestation of what afflicts idea) with the idea of material dialectics (idea is a reflection and manifestation of what afflicts matter). Marxist thought is considered a source and inspiration for intellectual movements that came later, most notably critical theory, as we will see later.

Post-positivist theories in international relations

These are theories that adopt the philosophy of "post-positivism" in its ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions as a frame of reference for scientific research and practice. They agree with each other on rejecting the axioms and propositions of positivist theories (most notably realism). However, they differ significantly among themselves regarding their theoretical alternative. Most of them emerged in the nineties as a result of the transformations or changes that the world witnessed on the one hand, and on the other hand, in keeping pace with the development of the social and human sciences, especially the reviews that occurred in the philosophy of science, which provided an opportunity for new or alternative theories to have an audible voice.

There is no agreement among researchers in the field about the number of these theories, their classification, or even their names. However, a review of academic books in this field indicates the existence of four basic theoretical approaches that represent the post-positivist philosophy in the study, analysis, and theorization of international relations: postmodernism, critical thinking, feminism, and constructivism⁴².

1- Post-Modernism

There is no general agreement on what we mean by the term "postmodernism". This is because researchers, thinkers, and even critics have used the term according to their understanding of the word (Modern) and the

⁴² Not all of these theories are equally committed to the principles of post-positivism, nor are the sub-trends within each theory, which makes it very difficult to classify them. For example, there is modern constructivism and post-modernism, which share ontological (idealistic) premises, but they differ in terms of epistemology.

Latin syllable (Post) "after", and thus raised controversy about what adding the syllable to the word means. Does it mean a break from "modernism" or a continuation of it? In other words, is "postmodernism" a continuation of "modernism" or a break with it? Although there are thinkers who believe that it is a continuation of it, in that it called for criticizing modernism, reforming it, correcting the deviations it fell into, and overcoming all its shortcomings, many of them believe that postmodernism constituted a complete break with everything that modernism adopted philosophically, scientifically, morally, and ethically.

If we adopt the idea of rupture, postmodernism claims to represent a new stage and horizon for all humanity, it calls for adopting universality and humanity, and for devoting a culture of pluralism and diversity, and for respecting and preserving the freedom, values, customs and traditions of others, it calls for coexistence, tolerance and peace...etc.

Philosophically and epistemologically, postmodernism rejects and questions any description of human or social life that claims to directly reach the truth, i.e. the claim to know the essence and truth of things. In their view, truth is relative and not absolute, as it is never possible to know anything with certainty and decisiveness, and therefore there are no clear and evident facts or facts that are taken for granted, as what is right or wrong differs from one individual to another and from one society to another. Truth is subjective, not objective, as there is no external truth independent of our opinions and the language we use to express these opinions, because language is not an objective given, but only reflects the version of reality that the speaker is talking about. Language is a social given, and therefore words and concepts have no value outside the social context in which they are known and used. As a result, there is no objective reality or world. Every truth is temporary and not final, because it is not something fixed and complete that we only seek to discover, but rather is

linked to our awareness, perception, and points of view, and is a reflection of them at the same time. In our search for truth, we create our own truths, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Postmodernists conclude this analysis by saying that there is no objective, universal and final truth, and by rejecting and doubting every (scientific) theory that claims to have reached or can reach such a truth. But does this mean that postmodernism rejects the existence of truth or the claim to possess truth in absolute terms?

Postmodernists do not provide a specific answer to this question. The extremists among them believe that truth is just an illusion and a mirage, and we should not waste our time and effort searching for it, because we can simply never reach something that does not exist in the first place. As for the moderates among them, they see the possibility of obtaining partial, separate, temporary, relative, and contextual truths. In their opinion, postmodern philosophy rejects the principle or philosophy of monism in thought, opinion, theory, perception, and judgments... which characterized the philosophy of **Modernity**⁴³, and instead

⁴³ Postmodern thinkers argue that modern philosophy has ended up being a closed and exclusionary philosophy. Its closure was represented in its complete submission to certain intellectual and theoretical systems (narratives or major theories) that claim to possess the truth of what is happening in social life with all its components and fields (political, economic, social, cultural, ..). Its exclusion was represented in its belief that it monopolizes knowledge of the truth, and thus rejected every point of view, opinion, statement or theory .. that does not proceed from within its axioms. The reason for this, in fact, is the philosophical concept that modernists hold about truth itself, as they see it as material, objective, absolute, fixed, and final, and that it is a single unit that is indivisible and non-multiple. Everything in existence has one and only one truth, and thus cognitive claims about it cannot be multiple. Logic dictates that if there is one truth, there is one theory that expresses it truthfully or is consistent with it, and if there is more than one theory claiming to possess the truth, then one of them is right and the rest are wrong. Thus, every theory that claims to possess the truth in any of the scientific branches will work to exclude and not recognize the legitimacy of the existence of other theories alongside it.

believes in the possibility of multiple cognitive and scientific claims about truth, without this necessarily leading to contradiction or exclusion. Truth can be multiple and diverse, and thus there is always the possibility of multiple judgments, theories, perceptions, and opinions about it. Also, every judgment about truth is subject to a certain context (historical, social, political, spatial, temporal, etc.), and thus the judgments (theories or statements...) that we reach about a certain truth can never be generalized.

This philosophical-epistemological orientation of postmodernism imposed on it the adoption of appropriate methodological options as an alternative to what the positivists impose regarding the necessity of strictly adopting the rules of the experimental scientific method. Since the characteristics of the social and human phenomenon differ radically from the characteristics of the natural phenomenon, this requires the innovation of new and diverse approaches and methods that are compatible with what the nature of the social phenomenon itself imposes, and respond to the necessities of the qualitative approach in study and analysis, and are freed from the restrictions of **quantitative**⁴⁴ approaches. These approaches and methods were represented in history, language, discourse,

⁴⁴ Quantification is a fundamental principle on which sciences and experimental research are based. It is concerned with transforming or expressing data, information and facts in terms of numbers, statistics, equations, tables, etc., in order to advance research and studies to higher levels of accuracy and discipline. Positivists assume certain susceptibility and conditions in the phenomena studied in order to be subject to this principle (material, objective, regularly occurring in a certain pattern, etc.), and what does not have these characteristics is excluded from the field of scientific studies and referred to the field of philosophical studies. Postmodernists (and post-positivists in general) reject this principle, claiming that it cannot be applied to social and human phenomena, such that if we apply it, it will lead to a lot of misleading and falsehood on the one hand, and on the other hand, to the collapse of many sciences and the removal of most of the topics studied from the scientific sphere. Therefore, these people call for the necessity of following qualitative methodological approaches in study and analysis, because man is the focus of these phenomena and topics, and he is ultimately a set of motives, intentions, feelings, etc.

content analysis, case studies, phenomenology, interpretation or harmony, genealogy, deconstruction, intertextuality, etc.

Ontologically, postmodernists do not believe in the materiality of the world or social reality, nor in its objectivity and independence. Rather, they see it as being of an ideal nature and socially constructed. Social reality exists only through the representations and perceptions in our minds, and is formed only through the interactions that occur between different selves (inter-subjective), **language and discourse**⁴⁵ play the most prominent and decisive role in this. The (relative) social truth that postmodernists seek can only be included in the different discourses that researchers and thinkers market about a phenomenon. Accordingly, discourses become the basic unit of analysis.

In the field of international relations, postmodernism emerged in the 1990s as an attempt to challenge and overcome the dominance and exclusion of the rationalist trend represented by the neo-neo synthesis, through a comprehensive review process (philosophical, epistemological, ontological, methodological, and even value-based) of all the concepts, assumptions, and results proposed by rationalists related to understanding, analyzing, and practicing international politics. Considering that it is relatively new to the field of international relations, and because it is based on the idea of demolishing everything that exists in order to embark on a new and different construction, it is still in the early stages of its "huge" project, as it works on intensive criticism, undermining and demolition, and trying to establish the new construction, which of course requires a great deal of effort and time. Therefore, their contributions

⁴⁵ Language and discourse cannot be objective and neutral. Ideas, words and language are not mirrors that reflect or give an exact copy of the real or objective world as positivism portrays it, but rather they are tools by which we form and make our world. Since language is a non-neutral social given, it in fact reflects certain values and intellectual and ideological orientations embedded in scientific discourses.

to the field so far are modest, scattered, and often obscure and difficult to understand.

Among its most important thinkers are James Der Darian, Robert Walker, and Richard Ashley. They argued that the basic concepts in the field of international relations, such as the state, sovereignty, power, and balance of power, were formed and developed under certain historical circumstances, specifically under the dominance of European states over the world. Accordingly, contemporary international relations - theory and practice - reflect a purely European experience. Therefore, the task of postmodern analysis is to deconstruct the basic concepts of the field and replace them with other facts and concepts that reflect the idea of multiplicity and difference.

For example, postmodernists reject the idea of the objectivity of international relations theory, i.e. the separation of theory from practice. They argue, instead, that theory is part of practice. The academic world (the theoretical field of international relations) is part of the real world (international politics), and therefore there is a struggle over academic and cognitive discourse, which is part of the struggle over hegemony within the international community. Therefore, it is not only necessary to examine the discourse of leaders and political organizations, but also to examine, study, and analyze the discourses of international relations scholars and theorists.

If we do this, we will remove from neorealism, for example, the aura that gave it the quality of objectivity, neutrality, and the general and grand theory that has the historical extension and intellectual depth that makes it the undisputed dominant theory in the field, and we will look at it as part and a tool of the practice of international politics, employed by some powers to achieve their interests, and to justify and legitimize their actions and behaviors towards other powers. This in fact reflects what Michel Foucault went for, that knowledge is linked to power and cannot be separated from it, as power needs

knowledge to justify and legitimize it, knowledge also needs power to support it and prove its existence and survival in the academic field.

Postmodernists believe that their criticism of the prevailing theories in the field works to reveal the value and normative aspect of them, expose their biases and their adoption of certain trends, and thus work to overthrow the concept of major theories that monopolize truth or knowledge (which made it a closed and unilateral field), and make room for other theories that necessarily reflect diverse and different values, ideas and cultures, which makes the field of international relations a pluralistic and global field.

Therefore, postmodernists strongly advocate the necessity of the field's openness to theoretical, philosophical, epistemological and methodological pluralism, and the necessity of reflecting the reality of the diversity existing in the reality of human societies and in their historical experiences and expertise, as well as paying attention to the different dimensions that govern human life as a whole, especially the value-based and moral ones, and keeping pace with the new international circumstances after the end of the Cold War and after the events of September 11, 2001, which alerted researchers in international relations to the existence of different doctrinal systems and subjective factors in international politics, which made many of the basic assumptions in Western sociology questionable, especially those that believe in the rationality of human action and the linearity of its social development.

Despite the validity of many of the claims of postmodernists about the nature of knowledge, about the nature of man and society, and about the nature of international political life. Despite the ambitions and hopes that they pinned on dismantling and rebuilding the field of international relations, in a way that responds to the idea of difference and theoretical pluralism and reconnecting politics with ethics, the self with the subject, values with facts, etc., they failed to achieve this. Where it was met with strong resistance and criticism from

mainstream theories. Steve Smith justifies this by saying that it overemphasized the theoretical aspect and did not care enough about the "real" world, despite the postmodernists' assertion that there is no such thing as the real world in the social world.

There are those who criticize the postmodernist movement for its lack of a unified reference, and its falling into the trap of excessive pluralism, which makes the world sought by postmodernists a disintegrated world, in which all cognitive, moral and collective systems fall, and the destination and purpose or intentionality are absent, i.e. a world without landmarks. Also, postmodernism's reliance on the idea of undermining and demolition made it not offer humans a realistic and practical alternative.

2- Criticism

Critical Theory⁴⁶ as a name raises a wide controversy among researchers and thinkers about what is meant by it. While some have argued that the term applies to those theories or intellectual approaches to global politics that adopt philosophical, epistemological and methodological perspectives that are alternatives to those offered by mainstream or rational theories, and thus "critical" becomes a family of theories that includes postmodernists, constructivists, neo-Marxists and feminists in addition to others, such that what

⁴⁶ Linguistically, the term "critical" is very broad and loose, and cannot be neutral as a description. It cannot be used to describe judgments of reality, but rather to describe judgments of value. It expresses the subjectivity and preferences of the describer, and thus the content of the term "critical" is subject to the context of a certain meaning according to the employment and use, and it is not without a political, social, cultural dimension, etc. Accordingly, what one theorist considers to be criticism may be considered by another to be dogmatic, which makes it practically useless and unhelpful in distinguishing theories from one another.

unites them and distinguishes them at the same time from other international theories is their interest in the issue of the social construction of global politics. Others emphasize that what is meant by critical theory is those ideas, theses and assumptions that find their origins in Marxist thought specifically, such that its thinkers have tried to develop a theory with Marxist intellectual foundations that can confront the dominance of realism and provide an alternative to it intellectually and theoretically, and from a practical point of view aims to change the reality of global politics dominated by capitalism.

Research into the concept and roots of critical theory takes us directly to the Frankfurt School and its early pioneers such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and later Jürgen Habermas. As well as to the contributions of the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci on the idea of hegemony through civil society organizations. In the field of international relations, we find the most prominent representatives of this intellectual trend, Robert Cox and Andrew Linklater.

Intellectually and philosophically, critical theory is seen as a renewal and revival of the Marxist project aimed at liberating contemporary Western societies from the constraints imposed by liberalism (economically capitalist and politically democratic). This is done by adopting a philosophy that contradicts everything that liberal philosophy offers or calls for, and by using innovative and alternative analytical concepts and tools, through which critical theory reflects the general orientation of postmodern theories epistemologically and methodologically.

Herbert Marcuse attacked positivism's persistent pursuit of scientific knowledge based on the consideration of truth as something given, objective and independent of subjects, capable of being perceived and known only through the scientific method. In his book *Reason and Revolution*, published in 1941, he called for a dialectical social theory that contradicted positivist social science. Robert Cox strongly emphasized that knowledge is relative, and that knowledge

itself is part of the social struggle and the struggle between projects of domination and counter-domination, saying, "Theory follows reality, but at the same time theory precedes and refines reality." Cox raised questions about the social construction of knowledge, and wanted to challenge the assumption that the social scientist can truly study the world objectively in a way that does not involve his own self-interest. Thus, he argues that positivism is neither neutral nor a guaranteed path to truth, but rather reflects a set of assumptions about politics, power, human nature, and knowledge. It is itself subject to the historical condition, that is, it is linked to and expresses a specific historical context.

Jürgen Habermas tells us that there are three forms of theory, all of which are necessary for human development. These three forms correspond to and reflect **three cognitive interests**⁴⁷, as follows:

- 1- The technical interest represented in controlling and exploiting natural processes leads to the emergence of what is called analytical experimental knowledge or positive sciences.
- 2- The practical interest based on human interaction in which language plays a pivotal role leads to the emergence of what is called interpretive knowledge.
- 3- The interest of emancipation and liberation associated with language in that it seeks to rid interaction and communication of the elements that distort it leads to the emergence of what is called critical knowledge.

Habermas argues that critical knowledge came as a reaction to the first type of interests and knowledge or theory that represents it, that is, it came to

⁴⁷ What Habermas means by cognitive interests is that we always develop knowledge for a particular purpose, and the realization of that purpose is the basis of our interest in that knowledge. Here we note that Habermas precedes Cox (who famously said that theory is always for someone, and for a particular purpose) in pointing out the connection between interest and knowledge.

criticize and oppose interpretive positivist theories. The latter is called by Robert Cox "problem-solving theory", as it is concerned with studying the world as it exists, in order to know the ways in which institutions and social and political relations operate. While critical theory aims to be independent of the world studied, and at the same time asks how this world came into being. It does not accept the world as it exists, but rather attempts to reach knowledge of the various institutions and social relations, how they came to be? And how they are transformed? In the words of Fred Chernoff, critical theory attempts to provide a general critique of both society and traditional theories about society.

Methodologically, critics adopt the dialectic approach and mix it with a Gramscian touch. They see social and human reality as a dialectical process or process that includes a number of conflicting elements or opposites, and reflects the state of material contradiction that society experiences, which is later manifested in those contradictions that surface on the surface of the superstructures. Since reason and reality or thought and matter are intimately linked to each other - that is, thought or theory is a direct reflection of reality, but is later exploited to justify and legitimize reality - the goal of critical theory becomes directed towards investigating and revealing the dialectically linked opposites that govern and determine the nature of society, and clarifying the mechanisms of their operation and the forms they take, in order to dismantle them and rebuild the desired society. This is true at the local level as well as the global level.

In the field of international relations, critics believe that international politics is not immune to the influence and tensions of different political interests, and the same is true for the sciences, knowledge and theories that express them. Therefore, no theory, no matter how neutral and objective it claims to be, can prevent the normative (value) orientation in its selection of data and in its interpretation of it. The theory reflects and is formulated through

the existing social, cultural and ideological influences and structures, and therefore (critical) theory must be directed towards criticizing and exposing these structures, and contributing to changing them towards an alternative reality that transcends all their disadvantages.

Robert Cox argues that through critical theory we can ask many fundamental and crucial questions that traditional theories have overlooked, and answering them represents the path to solving many of the problems facing human societies. These questions include: How did the current global political arrangements come into being? How do they function and how do they persist? What agendas and ideologies do they serve? And how can they be changed? Theory is not content to be a mirror reflecting reality as it is, but rather undertakes the task of changing it for the better.

The work of the critics focused on criticizing and refuting the theses of the new realists. They began by refuting the claim of reaching a scientific and neutral theory of international relations, because this is not possible for the social sciences, which differ in nature from the natural sciences. They refuted the idea of the "ahistorical" theory, because international economic and political structures are not eternal and certain historical facts, but rather came about through a complex interaction between many actors that include, in addition to states, other actors below and above the state. They attacked the concept of the state and the pattern of its relationship with other states in light of the anarchy of the international system as assumed by the realists, since the state and the international system are historical constructions within the framework of global and internal social relations, resulting from an intersubjective process between the establishment of the state and the international system⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ In this regard, Cox argues that the meaning given to the concept of anarchy highlights certain points of view and interests and excludes others. It works to establish and justify a prevailing situation characterized by the dominance of major capitalist powers through their economic and military

Critical theory does not limit itself to criticizing and questioning the existing international reality, but rather presents a political project through which it seeks to establish a new political organization for the world, which is more comprehensive in terms of the number of parties that constitute it, and more just, fair and equal among these parties. This is done through two main axes:

- 1- Restructuring modern states and the state system, to allow for the development of higher levels of globalism, by working to strip the state of the powers that monopolize it, and replacing the system of sovereign states with a structure of global governance.
- 2- Working to increase respect for cultural differences at the global level, so that the conflict between the duties of the citizen as a citizen and his duties as a human being is removed in the first place, by moving towards other forms of political community.

In this regard, Andrew Linklater believes that liberation in the world of international relations must be within the framework of the concepts of expansion and the moral limits of the political community. That is, the process of liberation necessarily requires the process of state sovereignty losing its moral and ethical importance, and moving towards broader political and social frameworks. This will not happen except by completely transforming from current institutions and governments to global community institutions. In the same context, Mark Hoffman calls for the establishment of a post-sovereign society. He considers critical social movements to be a key actor in changing existing political borders and challenging exclusionary paths (constructed by

superiority. Rather than talking about the nature of international anarchy that constrains and determines the behavior of states, Cox focuses on the system of global political economy, the forms of domination and control that exist within it, and the ways to liberate oneself from them.

existing systems). In other words, he relies on the dynamism of civil society and its ability and effectiveness to bring about this change.

Linklater identified the achievements of critical theory of international relations as follows:

- 1- It showed that knowledge is always linked to pre-existing social goals and interests. In the context of theorizing international relations, this argument led to strong criticisms of rational choice theory (adopted by both neorealism and neoliberalism).
- 2- Critical theory opposes claims that existing structures in the social world are fixed and unchangeable. Instead, it examines opportunities for greater freedom in social relations.
- 3- Critical theory learned from/overcame the weaknesses of Marxism, emphasizing forms of social learning. Benefiting from Habermas's effort to restructure and build historical materialism, it opened up new possibilities for building a historical sociology with emancipatory and liberatory goals.
- 4- Critical theory judges social arrangements by their ability to foster open dialogue with others, and to offer new forms of political community that are incompatible with unjustified exclusion.

Critical theory has fallen into the trap of criticism directed at theory in general, when it linked knowledge and theory to interest. Consequently, it is also biased and serves certain orientations and agendas, under the cover of liberation and emancipation from the dominance of prevailing theories.

3- Feminism

It is considered one of the most important contemplative theories that gained wide acceptance and spread in academic and scientific circles interested in studying international relations in the nineties of the twentieth century. It came as a reaction to the marginalization, exclusion and poor situation that women suffer from (in all aspects) in various parts of the world, and as a reaction to the blatant male bias practiced against them in intellectual and scientific aspects. Considering that more than half of the world's population are women, and that women are present and exist and contribute effectively to various humanitarian and social activities in various fields, feminism works to change the existing conditions and replace them with others that allow women rights and freedoms that reflect their true position in society.

If we want to define what we mean by feminism, we are faced with a large number of definitions, including: the Hachette dictionary defines feminism as "an intellectual or behavioral system that defends the interests of women and calls for expanding their rights." The Webster dictionary defines it as "the theory that calls for gender equality politically, economically, and socially, and seeks as a political movement to achieve women's rights and interests and to eliminate the sexual discrimination that women suffer from." Sara Gamble, in her book "Feminism and Post-Feminism," described it as "a movement that sought to change attitudes towards women as women before changing existing conditions and the injustice that women are exposed to as citizens at the legal and rights levels in work, science, and participation in political and civil power." Louise Tzban adopts a revolutionary movement concept of feminism, as she sees it as "the extraction of individual awareness at first and then collective awareness followed by a revolution against the balance of sexual power and the complete marginalization of women at certain historical moments." Karven J Vogel sees

them as philosophical theories, political visions, and analytical approaches that aim at social justice and fair treatment of women, or in other words, they aim to understand, challenge, and change the association of women's roles with men.

These definitions reveal two basic elements around which feminism revolves. The first relates to the movement and struggle aspect led by women in order to secure more rights and freedoms and seize the status they deserve in society. The second relates to the intellectual and cognitive aspect that calls for the necessity of making room for women to express their ideas, concepts and theses about politics, culture, society, etc. Some call the first aspect “feminism”, to distinguish it from the term feminism, which is concerned with the intellectual and theoretical aspect of what women can contribute to the field of politics and international relations.

Feminists⁴⁹ believe that the world of knowledge has been biased in many ways and forms. The roles and activities of women, which had a great impact on the movement of human activity and destiny as a whole, were ignored, and women were excluded as researchers and thinkers from scientific and cognitive activity, based on assumptions about **sex**⁵⁰ differences that are not justified by any empirical foundations or evidence. Accordingly, the first goal of feminists was to prove that women, like men, can produce science and knowledge, and

⁴⁹ The term “feminists” is not limited to female researchers only, but also includes many male researchers who believe in the principles and ideas advocated by feminist thought.

⁵⁰ Feminists distinguish between the terms “sex” and “gender”. The first refers to the biological differences between the sexes as natural, congenital, and psychological predispositions inherent in humans that are difficult to change, and on the basis of which we distinguish “male” from “female.” The second refers to the social differences between the sexes as acquired characteristics through social interaction. Accordingly, they are social constructs that can be changed, and on the basis of which we can distinguish between “man” and “woman.” From here we understand why feminists bet on the concept of gender as a basic tool in analyzing and reshaping human knowledge, and then building a new social reality that restores consideration to women as the actual partner of men.

that they are no less important than men, and there are no objective or biological reasons that prevent this, only social and historical considerations that have traditionally classified women as being of a lower status than men. This goal is achieved by working on two levels:

- 1- Reviewing the intellectual, philosophical, and epistemological foundations as well as the methodology on which modern Western thought is based, and revealing the sources of bias against women, and the excuses and reasons that were presented to justify this.
- 2- It is related to presenting an alternative to male science, provided that it is not female science. This is the most difficult and challenging task for feminists.

Philosophically, feminists have focused on criticizing Western philosophical thought, which was based on a binary opposition that always gave superiority and control to everything that is masculine, and refused to consider women as fully rational beings like men. This is clearly observed in the history of Western philosophy, starting with Plato, who believed that only the mind of men is capable of knowing the truth, through the religious heritage of both Judaism and Christianity, which consider women to be the origin of sin, because they tempted Adam to eat from the tree, and therefore God condemned them to the final dominance of men over them, and arriving at Sigmund Freud, who believed that women are an incomplete gender, and cannot reach the status of men or be close to them. The task of feminists here is, on the one hand, to expose, strip and disgrace Western philosophy, which they believe is a "masculine philosophy" in its content, form, concepts and interests. On the other hand, to correct the image that was drawn about women, and replace it with the image of women who can do everything that men do.

Epistemologically, L. Code published an article in *Meta-philosophy* in 1981 in which she posed the following question: Does the gender of the knower

matter epistemologically? The traditional answer, as offered by positivism, is a categorical no, because we can achieve objectivity, which requires that the world under study has an existence external to and independent of the scientist who studies it. However, L. Code questions the positivists' claims, and argues that the knower is responsible for what he knows, that is, there is a link between the gender of the knower and the object of knowledge. The knowledge produced by males is a clear reflection of the prevailing practices of science, which are practices based on masculine methodological foundations, and therefore can in no way be claimed as absolute truth. The production of knowledge is subject to social conditions, which constitute an intermediate element between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. The knowing subject is an integral part of its social perspective. It follows that the practices of male knowledge production can only be understood in terms of their conditions and requirements as practices of a class with its own perspective. From this standpoint, if women are given the opportunity, we will obtain research results that are completely different from those achieved by men, and many of the concepts, assumptions, and assumptions upon which "male" sciences are based will be reconsidered.

Feminists acknowledge the difficulty of separating values from facts. There is no absolute truth or truth separate from value. Truth is also a social construct like value. They intersect with many philosophies and intellectual movements that have embraced postmodern principles in relying on the concepts of "contextualization", which means that any interpretation, explanation, or knowledge occurs within a specific framework or context, and "perspectivism", which means that knowledge can only be obtained through a specific perspective and vision. This makes "relativity" an essential characteristic of human knowledge.

Methodologically, they use different research methods, including but not limited to: ethnography, statistical research, survey research, discourse analysis, case study.

In the field of international relations, the goals, interests and work of feminists focused on two main aspects:

- Giving women the position they deserve in managing international affairs with its various structures, institutions and organizations, and in all political, economic and cultural fields, etc. Women have always been present at the international level through all their work, activities and roles they have played, whether in times of peace or in times of war, and therefore they are no less important or competent than men in undertaking these responsibilities and tasks.
- It is represented in opening the cognitive and academic field to the activity and contribution of feminist researchers and thinkers. Women have their own perspectives that inevitably differ from men's perspectives regarding the study, analysis and theorization of international relations, as they believe that the field of study (theoretical) international relations is dominated by men through the prevailing ideas, concepts, interests, assumptions and sayings in the field, which reflect clear male bias and dominance. The task of feminists here is to expose and lay bare the existing male biases through intensive criticism of all intellectual and theoretical production that has taken place in the field of international relations at a first level, and at a second level, to try to present an alternative to it from a women's point of view.

To achieve this goal, feminists base their views on a central concept that has been neglected or ignored in the social and human sciences as a whole under the influence of positivism and the principles it calls for, most notably objectivity

and neutrality. This concept is represented by "gender", which we explained previously. Feminists believe that social life with all its components is gendered or subject to the influence of gender, and international relations are no exception to this rule. The concepts and assumptions that realists⁵¹ market as neutral and objective, such as power, security, sovereignty, the state, the international system, anarchy, the inevitability of conflict and war, are all gendered, meaning that they reflect men's point of view and their perceptions of the nature of man, the state, international relations, etc. These perceptions are not without the influence and intervention of subjective factors related to the nature of men and their psychological, emotional and social makeup, given that the gender of the knower affects the nature of the knowledge reached. If we look at these concepts from a feminist perspective, their meaning, content and even their nature will change. For realists, security is of a material military nature and is primarily linked to the state, but feminists expand it to other non-military fields and dimensions, diversify its sources of threat, and link it more to the individual. For realists, the state is a rational actor that always seeks to maximize the interest represented in power and security, but for feminists, the state does not always follow rational considerations in thinking and acting. There are moral and ethical considerations that govern the behavior of states. The nature of international politics for realists is an ongoing struggle for power, influence and control over others, because that (according to classical realism) is inherent in the human nature of man. But feminists ask: Which human being are we talking about? The whole human being, or the human being in their imagination and perception? They argue, on the other hand, that man is governed by moral and ethical considerations more

⁵¹ Feminists argue that one of the clear indications of the blatant male bias in the field of international relations is that there is no female name among the prominent pioneers and theorists of international relations. This is not due, of course, to a lack of mental or intellectual capabilities among women, but rather to the exclusion and marginalization practiced against women by men.

than by purely material considerations and inevitabilities, and therefore there is always the possibility of changing and modifying his behavior if the conditions for that are met. Regarding the actors of international relations that realists limit to states (which are considered the sole legitimate, official and official representatives of peoples and societies), feminists see this view as limited, exclusionary and biased, as it does not care about what happens within states or the consequences arising from that on the international level. The state is not a neutral concept that truly expresses the general public (women and men), but rather it is a gendered concept that reflects purely masculine characteristics, and there is no better evidence of this than the exclusion of women from responsibilities and decision-making institutions.

Feminism does not represent a single theory, nor even a homogeneous and coherent intellectual trend, but rather a wide spectrum of intellectual and theoretical positions that converge on the necessity of women attaining the status they deserve in all intellectual and practical fields, and differ or diverge on the mechanisms for embodying and achieving this. Despite the lack of agreement on a specific classification of it, a number of academic references present it (not in the same form) as follows:

- 1- **Liberal feminism:** whose supporters work to demand women's equality with men in terms of enjoying political and civil rights and managing public affairs, whether related to domestic or international politics. It actually reflects the interests of women living in Western European countries and the United States in particular, whose status, goals and ambitions differ from women in other countries.
- 2- **Marxist/Socialist Feminism:** Marxist feminists believe that the reason for women's inequality with men is rooted in the nature of existing capitalist systems, including the global system. To change this situation, capitalism must be overthrown and eliminated. While the

socialists among them believe that the marginalization, exclusion, and inequality suffered by women in capitalist systems has continued even in the new systems that have adopted socialism, and the reason for this is due to the patriarchal system in both systems. Accordingly, liberating women from the restrictions of the patriarchal system is what will ensure that they achieve an equal status with men.

- 3- **The feminist point of view:** Unlike the two previous patterns, the proponents of this trend do not start from the general status of women and how to change it, but rather their interests focus on studying and explaining how visions, ideas, and judgments based on the gender factor are what determined the social differences between the sexes, and placed women in a position and rank below men. Accordingly, looking at global politics from this point of view will radically change our understanding of the world, and with it the actual reality of women will change.
- 4- **Postmodern feminism:** It opposes the positivist orientations of both liberal feminism and Marxist/socialist feminism, and rejects the major theories that dominate the field and claim universality, because they actually represent the culture of the white man. It does not believe in the possibility of neutrality in judgment and analysis even if we start from gender or sex, and therefore we cannot rely on them to reach a decisive and final understanding of the problem of women's inequality with men.
- 5- **Postcolonial feminism:** Its proponents see the problem of women in countries that were subjected to colonization as part of the general problem suffered by the societies of these countries, men and women. Therefore, the main goal is to liberate themselves from the

consequences of colonialism according to a comprehensive view that integrates women alongside men in this liberation process.

Feminism has been criticized for many reasons. One of them is that it does not present a coherent and unified theory, which weakens its theoretical position, due to its fragmentation between a number of intellectual and methodological orientations that sometimes contradict each other. It also ignores the facts of nature, history, and society when some of its thinkers called for complete equality between men and women, to the point that some considered it a kind of idealism and utopia. In addition, working to liberate itself from male domination and centrality may lead it to fall into the trap of falling into female centrality. After the postmodern feminists (extremists), they fell into the trap of nihilism and absurdity when they called for the overthrow and demolition of all existing social structures and relations, without offering an alternative to them.

4- Social Constructivism

Constructivism emerged as a promising theoretical project for international relations starting in the 1990s by a group of thinkers: Nicholas Onuf, Frederic Kratochwil, and Alexander Wend. As a reaction and an attempt to overcome the deep theoretical crisis that the field witnessed, following the debate and major division that occurred between rationalists and contemplatives (or between positivists and post-positivists) about the philosophical, ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations on which the science of international relations should be built, which (i.e. the division) made the possibility of dialogue or communication between them impossible and non-existent, due to the lack of any common ground on which to base the discussion.

Therefore, the constructivists' project⁵² was specifically represented in an attempt to find The Middle Ground through which the gap of disagreement between them could be bridged and a new theoretical map could be established that both parties would adopt together.

The constructivists' endeavor in this regard, headed by Alexander Wendt, is to highlight the importance and centrality of the ontological dimension in the study of international relations, by reconsidering the issue of arranging priority or precedence between the epistemological question (how do we know?) and the ontological question (what do we know?), and which of them determines the other. Do we determine the content and subject of what we study and then decide in light of it how to study it? Or is it the method, curricula and methods of study that determine for us what we study and what we do not study?

Positivists argue that science is defined by its method, not its subject matter. Science has no specific subject matter, whether in the field of physics or in the field of sociology. Science is science regardless of who practices it? Or what it practices? But science has a method, which are the rules of the scientific method that are commonly known, and **its requirements**⁵³ are what determine for us the set of subjects that can be studied. While constructivists decide that this view is limited, exclusionary, and misleading at the same time, since if we adhere to this materialistic, positivist understanding of the world and the science that studies it, we will exclude a large portion of subjects from scientific study, including physics. For example, nothing compels us to study the molecular

⁵² What we mean here are the modern constructivists who adopt a positivist epistemology and a post-positivist ontology, and believe in the possibility of finding common ground to revive the debate between rationalists and contemplatives. Post-modern constructivists, however, do not believe in this possibility at all.

⁵³ Science, according to positivists, studies everything that is material, tangible and perceptible, that can be measured, quantified, expressed mathematically, etc., and whatever is not subject to these conditions falls within the realm of philosophy, art, etc.

structure in physics on the grounds that it cannot be observed. However, molecules, atoms, and nuclei are essential subjects in any scientific, physical study. The same is true for many social phenomena, including international relations. The structure of international politics is not one of the observable things, yet its existence cannot be denied on the grounds that it cannot be observed. Constructivists reach the conclusion that starting from the epistemological question has greatly harmed the ontological question, and therefore the priority between them should be re-arranged, so that starting from ontology will allow us to study the essential and fundamental topics in any field of study without exclusion or exclusion on the one hand, and on the other hand it will give us the ability and opportunity to invent new research methods and tools that can deal with these topics.

Starting from ontology in the study of social phenomena means initially defining its essence, nature, components, etc. If the positivist rationalists look at social reality from a purely material perspective, that is, it is a priori given, as part of nature, subject to objective, material, and inevitable laws that can only be discovered by following the rules of the experimental scientific method; the constructivists look at social reality from a social formative perspective, that is, it is socially constructed and not given, so its existence is an ideal (i.e. moral) existence and not a purely material existence, since the social structures, frameworks, functions, relationships, and behaviors are all constructed subjectively or between different human selves (inter-subjectivity), as the interaction between individuals through ideas, values, standards, and identities is what establishes something called reality or social phenomenon, as it is, unlike the natural phenomenon, a voluntary phenomenon subject to the will of individuals in its formation, progress, and becoming, and therefore it is not inevitable and immune to attempts at change. But does this deny that social reality has a material existence that can be perceived?

Postmodern constructivists deny the material existence of social reality in an absolute manner, as it exists only through perception, meanings, language, discourse, etc., and therefore the methods and approaches to studying it differ completely from what the positivists believe, and therefore we can never talk about a convergence or agreement between rationalists and contemplatives. While the **modernists**⁵⁴ among them go to acknowledge the existence of a material basis for any social reality, social structures have an actual existence even though they cannot be observed directly, and this can be verified through the influence they exert on individuals, the restrictions they impose on them, etc., and therefore they can be studied in an objective manner, taking into account the necessity of openness to the rest of the other approaches that are compatible with the idea that in addition to the material meaning of the phenomenon, there are moral, intellectual and value meanings that affect its perception and understanding, and without them, material perception is deficient.

Constructivists, through their critique of the ontological orientation of positivist rationalists, conclude that the reality of international politics is intersubjective in nature, and is the product of social interaction and communication that allows for the sharing of beliefs, values, and ideas. Material or social reality exists as a result of the meaning and functions that actors give it, and collective perception or understanding is what gives material things a meaning that helps to form reality. Wundt's famous example of the gun sums up the constructivists' starting points in analyzing the phenomena of international relations, as he says, "A gun in the hands of a friend does not have the same meaning as if it were in the hands of an enemy, because hostility is a social relationship, not a material one."

⁵⁴ Here we notice the first steps of rapprochement with the rationalists, which is the recognition of the material existence of social reality alongside its ideal or moral existence.

Epistemologically and methodologically, modern constructivists believe in the possibility of scientific study of international politics, i.e. the possibility of having objective theories that can be verified or refuted in the face of empirical evidence and proof. Their assumption is due to their acceptance that social reality has a material existence that governs it. However, there are some reservations that they make about this. Wendt argues that despite the material and independent existence of international political reality, it cannot be known in a direct sensory way. Rather, we need media that play the role of defining this reality, namely ideas, values, standards, and shared (collective) identities. Without them, it is never possible to deal with this reality that is originally constructed. Perceiving and knowing reality occurs through these media that give actions, behaviors, and social structures their meanings and implications. Wendt also rejects the concept of science (in its positivist version) based on perceiving and knowing reality through inevitable mechanical causal relationships according to the logic and principle of interpretation, and replaces it with a concept of science in which intentional and teleological understanding, along with interpretation, play an important role in perceiving and knowing reality.

In terms of levels of analysis or sources of explanation of the social behavior of actors, Wendt argues that the analysis of international politics must be **holistic or structural**⁵⁵, that is, it should start from analyzing and understanding the nature of the existing international system in order to understand and explain the external behavior of states, just as the neorealists do.

⁵⁵ Not all modern constructivists adopt the level of the international system in analyzing and explaining the external behavior of states. For example, both Kratochwil and John Raky start from the idea of combining the level of the international system and the level of the state to understand the external behavior of the latter, because there is a reciprocal formative relationship between the state and the international system linked to the historical circumstances in which they emerged.

But Waltz differs from them on the issue of the relationship of influence and impact that occurs between the international system and states, or what is known as the “structure-actor problem,” as he sees—unlike the neorealists who believe that the international system is a structure independent of its constituent units, and thus affects them and is not affected by them—that it is a relationship in both directions, that is, there is a reciprocal formation between the structure and the actor, as the international system exerts its influence in determining and shaping the behaviors of states (and their identities and interests), and at the same time it is affected by the changes that occur at the level of the interests, identities, and perceptions of states that also have internal determinants. How so? Constructivists point out that neorealists have fallen into a methodological dilemma when they adopted the structural analysis approach in explaining the external behavior of states, since in order to understand and explain the behavior of actors (states), they return to the structure of the international system, but in order to determine the nature of these actors, their identities and interests, they neglect this structure and assume that this nature is predetermined (rational material beings). Thus, they accept that the structure of the international system shapes the behavior of states, but they reject the idea that it also shapes their identities and interests. To get out of this dilemma, constructivists propose the idea of mutual shaping between the structure and the actor, since just as the structure shapes the actor and determines his identity and interests, the actors, through their social interaction, work to reshape the structure.

Methodologically, constructivists adopt a wide range of methodological options that are compatible with their ideal ontological orientations, as dealing with international politics as a social (non-material) structure consisting of values, ideas, norms, and identities, forces researchers to resort to qualitative approaches such as: interpretation or harmonization, discourse analysis, content study, etc.

In the field of international relations, constructivists have tried to overcome the failures of rational theories in explaining and understanding the external behavior of states, and in explaining and understanding the change that occurs at the level of the international system. This is done by presenting a social theory that does not claim to predict in advance the behaviors and actions of states, but rather provides an analytical framework through which these behaviors and actions can be explained and understood, just as rational choice theory does. It tells us how states will behave in certain situations and conditions, but it does not tell us the content and substance of this behavior. In this regard, constructivists claim that their theory is comprehensive and can be applied in many other scientific branches.

Like the neoliberals, Wendt has tried to start from some of the neorealist assumptions (with some modifications) to reach different conclusions regarding understanding and analyzing the external behavior of states. How so?

- 1- Wendt believes that the international system is anarchic in nature, but not in the sense that the neorealists went for when they imagined it in a conflictual nature in the "Hobbesian" manner and with some inevitability. Wendt claims that there is no logic to anarchy that is inherent in itself and independent of what states desire or believe. Anarchy is what states have made of it, in his words, and therefore it has more than one logic. Anarchy in itself is an empty vessel that has no real innate logic. Anarchies acquire more than one logic as a result of the type of structure that we imagine within them. The condition that Wendt sets for the possibility of multiple meanings of "anarchy" is that we imagine the structure conceptually in social language and not in material language as the neorealists or their neoliberal counterparts do. This means that we resort to defining the nature of the political culture of the existing international system if we want to define the nature and content of its anarchic

structure. For example, the nature of the chaos resulting from states perceiving each other as friends differs from that in which states view each other with hostility. In the former, the structure of friendship prevails, with the cooperation that follows it, while in the latter, hostility prevails, with the conflicts and wars that follow it. Both situations are possible. Accordingly, the diversity of social structures in the shadow of chaos is possible and depends on the will and perceptions of the states themselves.

2- Wendt agrees with the new realists that states are the main actors in international politics, but he disagrees with them regarding the definition of the nature of their **identity**⁵⁶ and **interest**⁵⁷, and regarding the order of priority and precedence between them. If the realists assume that the interests of states are something given in advance and predetermined, as states always seek to maximize their interests represented in security in the first place, due to the chaotic international environment in which they live, and thus this interest is what makes the state a rational being (identity); then Wendt argues that the identity and interests of states are not a natural given but rather a social given, and that identities exist prior to interests⁵⁸, since the actor cannot know what he wants? Until he knows

⁵⁶ Identity is an important element in social interaction in general. It serves as a means of identification in society. It tells you and others who you are. It tells you who others are. In other words, identity is the image that the actor (the state here) holds of himself and deals with others on the basis of it, and at the same time the image that others hold of him and deal with him on the basis of it. It is also not fixed, but rather variable according to internal determinants related to the actor himself and others related to the external environment as well as the process of interaction that occurs between them.

⁵⁷ Interest refers to what social actors want. It means the needs and desires they seek to satisfy.

⁵⁸ Wendt acknowledges that this precedence is theoretical, but scientifically they are inseparable. "Without interests, identities have no driving force, and without identities, interests have no direction," Went says.

who he is? Because the identity of the actor is what leads him to accurately define his choices and desires, and works to provide him with the necessary motivation to achieve them.

3- Wendt disagrees with the Neo-realists on the issue of the relationship between structure and actor. While Waltz argues that it is the structure (the international system) that determines and shapes the behavior of states rather than their identities and interests, which are predetermined, and thus the behavior of states becomes a function of an independent variable, which is the international system. Wendt argues that it is impossible for the international system to play a full role in determining the behavior of states without the intervention of factors related to the characteristics of the states themselves, and the interactions that occur between them (between the structure and the actor). Just as the structure (the international system) plays an important role in shaping the identities, interests, and behaviors of actors (states), so too do the actors that work to shape and reshape structures through their social interactions. Accordingly, as Wundt believes, the process of shaping is reciprocal between structures and actors⁵⁹, which explains the possibility of change occurring in both the structure and nature of the international system, and in the identities, preferences, and interests of states.

⁵⁹ Wentz justifies his position by saying that the nature of the mutual formation between structures and agents is required by two reasons:

- 1- The belief that humans are agents who are aware of their intentions and their actions lead to changing and reproducing the society in which they live.
- 2- The acceptance that society is composed of social relations that arrange and structure the interaction between these humans. We live in a world that has a pre-existing, organized and structured existence that directly affects our behaviors and actions. However, we are agents with independent intentions and identities in this world and we work in return to shape and reshape it on an ongoing basis.

What did constructivism add to the understanding and analysis of international relations?

Ted Hopf believes that constructivism has been able to provide alternative solutions and concepts to a number of problems and issues raised by mainstream theorists, both neorealists and neoliberals, such as the balance of threat, the security dilemma, neoliberal institutional concepts of cooperation in anarchy, and the liberal theory of democratic peace. The details are as follows:

- 1- **The balance of threat:** Neo-realists traditionally assume that states ally against the stronger force or party. Stephen Walt adds to this assumption by saying that it is empirically wrong, as states actually ally against threats. States do not ally against force, but against a specific and particular type of force. Here, constructivists intervene to point out the missing element in the realist theory of the balance of threat as presented by Walt, which is threat perception. Acknowledging that states ally against threat means the necessity of accepting that threat is a cognitive process of an ideal nature, and hence the necessity of returning to understanding and analyzing the identities, perceptions, and awareness of actors of themselves and others in the field of international politics.
- 2- **The security dilemma:** According to neorealists, it results from the factor of uncertainty. States are not certain of the intentions and purposes of other states due to their insufficient knowledge and trust in others. Therefore, there is a great possibility for states to engage in conflictual behavior against each other. But constructivists question the validity of this assumption and analysis for countries that are members of a single alliance, or for members of a single economic institution, or for two peaceful countries, or between neutral countries, and so on. Constructivists believe that the "uncertainty factor" in international politics can be a major cause of threat as a variable but not as a constant element,

in addition to the fact that "identities" work to reduce the risk of uncertainty, as countries perceive other countries differently and distinctly, for example, the nuclear capabilities of France and the Russian Federation have a different perception and understanding for the British decision-maker.

3- Neoliberal cooperation: Neoliberals set a basic condition for achieving cooperation between countries represented by the principle of "transparency of action", and this can only be achieved, according to them, through international institutions that increase the factor of trust between countries, i.e. they become a "monitoring mechanism" that allows countries to see what other countries are doing, and they also create rules and procedures for monitoring and punishment, which pushes countries to commit to the process of international cooperation. Although constructivists share with neoliberals the idea of the possibility of international cooperation in the face of chaos, they differ with them on how this happens. Neoliberals start from the axiom of states' desire (a predetermined interest) to achieve international cooperation, but they clash with the external environmental factor. Accordingly, they work on how to make this environment (an external factor) stimulating and incubating for the cooperation process, while constructivists start from the internal factor related to the state's identity in assessing and understanding its interests in a specific region or field. Thus, the distribution of competing identities and interests is what helps explain the possibility of cooperation between states.

4- Democratic Peace Theory: The traditional hypothesis advanced by neoliberals that democracies do not fight each other is related to the nature and paths of decision-making regarding war and peace within the systems of these states, in which the media plays a major role. However,

constructivists provide another explanation. If democracies do not fight each other, this is because each of them perceives the others, considering that the identities and interests of states are shaped by social norms and practices. Democratic states act peacefully towards states that perceive and understand that they are democratic. Constructivists also add that they can explain periods of peace or the absence of war among countries that are not governed by any objective indicators of democracy in Latin America and Africa, for example, based on how these countries view themselves and others socially.

Like other theories of international relations, constructivism has been subject to many criticisms. One of them is the inability of constructivists to control the concepts and terms they use in analyzing international politics. For example, there is no clear agreement on what we mean by identity. How can scholars reasonably define what a state's identity is? What kind of salient identities can exist in international politics at any given historical moment? etc. Constructivists also fail to analyze and answer the question: How were norms or ideals formed in the first place? And how do norms change over time in interaction with particular agents?

From an empirical perspective, Ahmed Abu Zaid points out that constructivism suffers from a clear weakness, as it relies on observing phenomena and things that cannot be observed, because they are simply not of a material nature but rather ideal. This in fact affects the value and credibility of constructivist theory from a positivist perspective, as it is not possible to verify and verify in the field the validity of the ideas and assumptions it presents.

Abu Zaid argues that the assumptions of constructivism in understanding and analyzing state behavior do not hold up to international reality events, as they are unable to explain the situation in which conflict can arise between states and groups that share common identities, values, ideas, and prevailing norms.

For example, how does constructivism explain Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 despite the fact that they are both Arab states? How does constructivism explain the conflict and contradiction between the claims of "nationalism"/"regionalism" and "nationalism"/"unity" between Arab states and others? How does it explain the continued rejection by the Gulf Cooperation Council states of both Yemen and Iraq for membership in the Gulf Cooperation Council despite the similarity of values and identities? Abu Zaid ultimately concludes that constructivism is a theory that says too much in explaining too little about international relations.

Marcel Valéry asserts that constructivism generally suffers from the problem of epistemological incompatibility, as the divergence and difference in the agendas of constructivists among themselves reveals their reservations and reluctance to build a comprehensive paradigm for global politics. It is difficult to combine and reconcile modern constructivist trends with those that adopt postmodernist trends.

This problem actually represents the gateway to the basic criticism that justifies or excuses some people's mockery of the constructivists' project that aspires to bridge the gap between rationalism and contemplation, as constructivists should first and foremost resolve the epistemological dispute between them. Constructivists have fallen into the same (epistemological) impasse that the debate between positivists and post-positivists fell into in the late eighties, as this impasse represented the main fault line between modern constructivists and their post-modern counterparts, and instead of inviting and convincing rationalists and contemplatives to sit at the same discussion table, this invitation has become directed to the constructivist movements themselves. Accordingly, the rest of the other theoretical approaches will take the position of spectators and observers of what the constructivists' attempts to bridge the gap between them will lead to. Here we can say that constructivists are the first and

most in need of a middle ground between them before proposing it to rationalists and contemplatives.

Conclusion

For researchers and students alike, theory is an indispensable tool for understanding, comprehending, analyzing, interpreting, and perhaps predicting what is happening in international politics. Since there is no single theory that can do all of the above, choosing the appropriate theory for a research topic is more than necessary. This is because each theory attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of what it believes to be the essence of international politics. Accordingly, the difference that occurs between the various theories that abound in the field is primarily related to the difference in defining this essence, its nature and composition, the possibility of knowing and studying it, the methods and approaches to studying it, etc. The theory does not suffice with studying international reality and providing objective explanations about it (scientific theory), but the theory may become an important tool in changing an existing international reality towards another desired reality (normative theory), and here the theory itself becomes part of international politics, and thus it is also subject to study, analysis, and evaluation.

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