



These shrouded women are seen registering to vote in Yemeni elections in April 1997. Even in the Yemeni Islamic culture, where strict limits exist on women's lives, they are forces for democracy and will have an impact on the choice of future leaders. These women are a testament to the spread of democratic ideals in the post-cold war world.

by themselves few significantly change world politics, but the sum of many smaller actions can and does make a difference. Do not consider politics a spectator sport. It is more important than that. Treat politics as a participant—even a contact-sport.

The World of Tomorrow: Two Roads Diverge

The imperative to be active is particularly important as the world approaches the beginning of a new millennium. It is not too strong to argue that we have arrived at a crucial junction in the paths by which we organize and conduct our global politics. Contemplation of that junction brings to mind Robert Frost and his famous 1916 poem, *The Road Not Taken* (1916). Frost concluded his poem with the thought that

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Like the works of Shakespeare, Frost's lines are timeless and challenge the reader's intellect and emotions. We can build on Frost's imagery of two roads, one the traditional, "more traveled by" road, the other an alternative, "less traveled by" road, to discuss two possible paths for the future. The traditional road is a continuation of the path that world politics has mostly



A FURTHER NOTE
Regular People
Who Make a
Difference

followed for at least five centuries. This route has been characterized by male-dominated, self-interested states struggling to secure their self-interests in a largely anarchistic international system.

The alternative direction entails significant changes in the way that politics is organized and conducted. Those who favor the alternative path argue that states need to abandon the pursuit of short-term self-interest and take a more cooperative, globalist approach. Some of those who advocate this road see, and even favor, a decline in the central role played by states in the international system (Camilleri, Jarvis, & Paolini, 1995). These analysts also see, and often favor, a rise of international institutions, such as the UN, as authoritative actors capable of constraining individual countries. At its extreme, this process would lead to regional governments or even to a global government.

Frost leaves his reader with the thought that choosing the less familiar road “made all the difference.” Was it a positive or a negative change, though? Frost wisely left that to the reader’s imagination and judgment. Similarly, a major challenge that this text presents to you is deciding which road you think the world should travel by.

Realism and Idealism: Some Travel Notes on Two Roads

To help you begin to make your choice, the following section describes and contrasts the two paths and discusses those who advocate each direction. Those who favor adhering to the traditional road are often associated with the philosophical approach to politics called realism. Those who favor charting a new course along the alternative road are frequently identified with the philosophical approach to politics called idealism.

Before we detail these two approaches, some comments on the terms are appropriate. First, realism and idealism are broad categories that necessarily ignore subtle variations in complex ideas. In reality, there are multitudinous views about the nature of politics and about what that portends for the future. One reflection of this complexity is that political scientists used disparate terms to describe the ideas. The traditional path is variously associated with words such as realist (realism, *realpolitik*), balance of power, national (nationalist), conservative, and state-centered (state-centric, state-based). The alternative approach is associated with such words as idealism (idealist), globalism, (new) world order, liberal, liberal institutionalism, and internationalist. You will also find the prefix “neo” sometimes attached to some of these words (as in neorealism or neoliberalism—a fashionable term for neoidealism) to designate recent variations on the more classic concepts (Beer & Harriman, 1996; Niou & Odershook, 1994a; Baldwin, 1993; Kegley, 1995).

Second, do not get fooled by the connotations of the designations realism and idealism. The terms are used here because they are the common names for their schools of thought in international relations theory. But the sobriquets are flawed. “Realists” are not necessarily those who see things as they “really” are.

Nor are “idealists” a bunch of fuzzy-headed dreamers. As you will see, perhaps a better name for realists would be “pessimists.” Conversely, “optimists” is probably a more enlightening, if not more precise, label for idealists. The point is not to prejudge books by covers or theories by labels (Snyder & Jervis, 1993).

Third, it is possible to consider realism and idealism from three perspectives: descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive. The descriptive approach is concerned with “what is.” Political scientists who follow this approach use empirical evidence to determine the degree to which realism or idealism influences policy (Fozouni, 1995; Griffiths, 1995; Frankel, 1994; Greico, Powell, & Snidal, 1993). The predictive approach tries to estimate “what will be.” If one’s theory is valid, then it should be possible not only to explain what has occurred, but also to predict what is likely to occur.

The prescriptive approach to realism and idealism asks the normative question, “What ought to be?” As you will see, a great deal of this book is organized to contrast descriptive analysis of the two—traditional (realist) and alternative (idealist)—roads. The discussion of security, for example, is divided into two chapters: traditional national security and its alternative, international security. Beyond this empirical analysis, there is a more important conundrum: Which road should we take: realism or idealism?

To help decide this question, the following sections compare realism and idealism according to their respective views about the fundamental nature of politics, the roles of power and justice in the conduct of political affairs, and the prospects for international competition and cooperation (Sterling-Folker, 1997; Rosenau & Durfee, 1995).

The Nature of Politics: Realism and Idealism

The disagreement between **realists** and **idealists** about the nature of politics is perhaps the most fundamental division in all of political discourse. At root, realists are pessimists about human nature; idealists are optimists about human nature.

Realism and the Nature of Politics

“Realism paints a rather grim picture of the world” (Mearsheimer, 1995:9). Realists believe that political struggle among humans is probably inevitable because people have an inherent dark side. Many realists would trace their intellectual heritage to such political philosophers as Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). He believed that humans possess an urge to dominate, “an *animus dominandi*, a natural, animal-like instinct to gain power as an end in itself” (Thompson, 1994:79). One of the leading realist scholars, Hans Morgenthau, wrote that an “ubiquity of evil in human actions” inevitably turns “churches into political organizations . . . revolutions into dictatorships . . . and love of country into imperialism” (Zakaria, 1993:22).

Morgenthau represents what might be called the classic realist school. That is joined in the realist camp by a more recent neorealist school of

thought. *Neorealists* focus on the anarchic nature of a world system based on competition among sovereign states, rather than on human nature, as the factor that shapes world politics. As one neorealist points out, the international system, with its sovereign actors (the states), which answer to no higher authority, is “anarchic, with no overarching authority providing security and order.” The result of such a self-help system is that “each state must rely on its own resources to survive and flourish.” But because “there is no authoritative, impartial method of settling these disputes—i.e. no world government—states are their own judges, juries, and hangmen, and often resort to force to achieve their security interests” (Zakaria, 1993:22).

What leaves neorealists firmly in the realist camp is that they doubt that there is any escape from the anarchistic world. One such scholar argues, for example, that international organizations do not promote cooperation. Instead, he says, “the most powerful states in the system create and shape [international] institutions so that [the states] can maintain their share of world power, or even increase it.” Therefore, he concludes gloomily, whatever cooperation does occur “takes place in a world that is competitive at its core—one where states have powerful incentives to take advantage of other states” (Mearsheimer, 1995:7, 12, 13).

Idealism and the Nature of Politics

Idealists reject the notion that all or most humans are inherently political predators. Instead, idealists are prone to believe that humans and their countries are capable of achieving more cooperative, less conflictive relations. In this sense, idealists might trace their intellectual lineage to political philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). He argued in *The Social Contract* (1762) that humans had joined together in civil societies because they “reached the point at which the obstacles [to bettering their existence were] greater than the resources at the disposal of each individual.” Like Rousseau, contemporary idealists not only believe that in the past people joined together in civil societies to better their existence; they are confident that now and in the future people can join together to build a cooperative and peaceful global society.

There is also a neoidealist school of thought (Mansbach, 1996). *Neo-idealists*, like neorealists, ascribe much of world conflict to the same cause: the anarchic world system based on competition among sovereign states.

While neorealists and neoidealists agree that the anarchic nature of the system is the cause of most international conflict, they disagree about what can get done. Like all idealists, neoidealists believe that humans can cooperate in order to achieve mutual benefits. Therefore, since neoidealists also hold that the anarchic system hinders cooperation, they further believe that the best path to cooperation is through building effective international organizations. This prescription is why neoidealists are often also called liberal institutionalists. Typically, two theorists of this school contend that “when states can jointly benefit from cooperation, . . . we expect governments to attempt to construct” international organizations to facilitate cooperation. The two scholars go on to argue that, in turn, international



Gary Markstein, *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Copley News Service

Realists generally believe that intervention in Bosnia is a bad idea. The fictitious U.S. senators pictured here are saying that fighting in Bosnia should be left to Bosnians and is not in the interest of the United States. Thus they want to “give war a chance.” Idealists, however, view intervention through the embargo of weapons and by the use of peacekeeping troops as serving the interests of humankind.

organizations then add to the growth of cooperation by providing various benefits to member states that “facilitate the operation of reciprocity” (Keohane & Martin, 1995:42).

The Roles of Power and Justice: Realism and Idealism

Realists and idealists also disagree in their descriptions of and, especially, their prescriptions about the roles of power and justice as standards of international conduct. Realists could be styled the “might makes right” school of thought. Idealists would contend that “right makes right.”

Realism: An Emphasis on Power

Realists believe that struggles between states to secure their frequently conflicting national interests are the main action on the world stage. Since realists also believe that power determines which country prevails, they hold that politics is aimed at increasing power, keeping power, or demonstrating power.

Given the view that the essence of politics is the struggle for power, realists maintain that countries and their leaders, if prudent, are virtually compelled to base their foreign policy on the existence, as the realists see it, of

a supposedly Darwinian, country-eat-country world in which power is the key to the national survival of the fittest. From this point of view, the national interest can be defined for the most part as whatever enhances or preserves the state's security, its influence, and its military and economic power. In the world that exists and probably has always existed, realists would argue, might makes right—or at least it makes success.

This does not mean that realists are amoral (Murray, 1996). Indeed, they argue that the highest moral duty of the state is to do good for its citizens. One scholar has summed up the realist rule for action with the maxim, "Do 'good' if the price is low." Contemplating intervention in Bosnia to stem the bloody conflict between Serbs and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia region, the scholar conceded that the carnage justified moral outrage. Yet he opposed intervening in Bosnia because doing so presented a "scenario from Hell" that would dearly cost the United States and other countries foolish enough to throw themselves into the fiery pit of "several-sided civil conflict wherein, in real terms, everyone will lose" (Gray, 1994:8).

Idealism: An Emphasis on Justice

Idealists do not believe that acquiring, preserving, and applying power must be the essence of international relations (Forde, 1995). One idealist scholar criticizes realists for their "tendency to discount both the normative aspirations of society and the normative potential of institutional arrangements that challenge the state system" (Falk, 1992:225).

Idealists argue that, instead of being based on power, foreign policy should be formulated according to cooperative and ethical standards. President Jimmy Carter was an idealist in his approach to international politics. As president, Carter (1979:2) declared himself "proud that our nation stands for more than military might or political might." Americans' "pursuit of human rights," Carter went on, "is part of a broad effort to use our great power and our tremendous influence in the service of creating a better world in which human beings can live in peace, in freedom, and with their basic needs met. Human rights is the soul of our foreign policy." President Clinton is also an idealist in terms of his basic philosophy. That was evident when he addressed the American people to ask their support for sending U.S. troops to Bosnia because "it is the right thing to do."⁸

The views of Carter, Clinton, and other idealists do not mean that they are out of touch with reality. Carter himself admitted that "seldom do circumstances permit me . . . to take actions that are wholly satisfactory," but he tried. Clinton, too, has had to temper his fundamental idealist predilections with the realpolitik demanded of presidents.

Idealists also dismiss the charge of some realists that pursuing ethical policy works against the national interest. One discussion of U.S. national interest contends that "a stable international order" is necessary in an "age of global interdependence" (Von Vorys, 1990:149). Therefore, Americans might redefine their concepts of interests to take into account the inextricable ties between the future of the United States and the global pattern of human development.

Prospects for Competition and Cooperation: Realism and Idealism

The previous two sections have examined how realists describe the nature of politics and the respective roles of power and justice. This section takes up an issue introduced in the last section: Should countries follow the dictates of *realpolitik* or strive to establish a new world based on greater international cooperation?

Realism and the Competitive Future

To reiterate a point, both classic realists and neorealists “generally accept the view that the international anarchic order is static—it has not and probably will not be changed” (Rosecrance & Stein, 1993:8). As such, they tend to dismiss the growing number of international organizations and other evidence of what idealists claim to be significant movement toward greater global order. One neorealist warns that in times of relative world calm, “the belief that power politics is ending tends to break out. . . . Once the [optimistic] bandwagon starts to roll, it collects bystanders” (Waltz, 1993:78). The reality of realism soon returns, Waltz says, as conflict reoccurs. As for the idealist bandwagon? “I would not bet on it,” he argues.

This view of a static, almost unchangeable, political world has many policy implications. Based on their views, realists advocate a relatively pragmatic approach to world politics, sometimes called *realpolitik*. One principle of *realpolitik* is to secure your own country’s interests first on the assumption that other countries will not help you unless it is in their own interest. This makes realists very wary of what is sometimes termed *idealpolitik*. Self-sacrificing policies are not just foolish but dangerous, according to Morgenthau’s (1986:38) view that countries that shun *realpolitik* will “simply fall victim to the power of others.”

A second tenet of *realpolitik* holds that countries should practice *balance-of-power* politics. This tenet counsels diplomats to strive to achieve an equilibrium of power in the world in order to prevent any other country or coalition of countries from dominating the system. This can be done through a variety of methods, including building up your own strength, allying yourself with others, or dividing your opponents.

A third realist policy prescription is that the best way to maintain the peace is to be powerful. Realists believe that it is necessary for a country to be armed because the world is dangerous. Idealists would reply that the world is dangerous because so many countries are so heavily armed.

It is important to say that this does not cast realists as warmongers. Instead, a fourth realist tenet is that you should neither waste power on peripheral goals nor pursue goals that you do not have the power to achieve. This frequently makes realists reluctant warriors. It is worth noting, for instance, that Morgenthau was an early critic of U.S. involvement in the war in Vietnam. He thought it was a waste of U.S. resources in a tangential area: the wrong war, with the wrong enemy, in the wrong place. Prudence, then, is a watchword for realists.

Idealism and the Cooperative Future

Idealists believe that humanity can and must successfully seek a new system of world order. They have never been comfortable with a world system based on sovereignty, but they now argue that it is imperative to find new organizational paths to cooperation. Idealists are convinced that the spread of nuclear weapons, the increase in economic interdependence among countries, the decline of world resources, the daunting gap between rich and poor, and the mounting damage to our ecosphere mean that humans must learn to cooperate more fully because they are in grave danger of suffering a catastrophe of unparalleled proportions.

Idealists are divided, however, in terms of how far the need for cooperation can and should go. Classic idealists believe that just as humans learned to form cooperative societies without giving up their individuality, so too can states learn to cooperate without surrendering their independence. These idealists believe that the growth of international economic interdependence or the spread of global culture will create a much greater spirit of cooperation among the world countries.

Neoidealists are more dubious about a world in which countries retain full sovereignty. These analysts believe that countries will have to surrender some of their sovereignty to international organizations in order to promote greater cooperation and, if necessary, to enforce good behavior. This point of view holds that humans have found advancement by being nonsovereign members of domestic societies governed through central authority.

The world has not become what idealists believe it could be, but they are encouraged by some trends in recent years. One of these is the growth of interdependence as favoring their goals. According to one study, "As the great powers come to share norms about economics and politics, the rationale for building arms and seeking allies among these major states is weakened, and the cost of pursuing these activities is increased" (Goldgeier & McFaul, 1992:491).

Idealists also support their case by pointing to the willingness of countries to surrender some of their sovereignty to improve themselves. The European Union (EU), for instance, now exercises considerable economic and even political authority over its member countries. They were not forced into the EU; they joined it freely. This and other diminutions of sovereignty will be discussed at length later in the text.

Idealists also condemn the practice of *realpolitik*. They charge that power politics leads to an unending cycle of conflict and misery, in which safety is temporary at best. They look at this century with its more than 130 million deaths resulting from two world wars and innumerable other conflicts and deride realists for suggesting that humanity should continue to rely on a self-help system that has so often and so cataclysmically failed to provide safety. Idealists further assert that the pursuit of power in the nuclear age may one day lead to ultimate destruction.

This does not mean that idealists are unwilling to use military force, economic sanctions, and other forms of coercion. They are not so naive as to think that the potential for conflict can be eliminated, at least in the

foreseeable future. Therefore most idealists are willing to use coercion when necessary to halt aggression or to end oppression. The use of might to restore right is especially acceptable to idealists if it is accomplished through cooperative efforts such as UN peacekeeping forces or sanctions. For some idealists even unilateral national action is acceptable. "If Bosnians were dolphins, would the world have allowed Croats and Serbs to slaughter them by the tens of thousands?" one analyst asked (Luttwak, 1993:27). The answer, he suggested, is that Bosnian Muslims would indeed have done better if they had been cousins of Flipper, and that the U.S. failure to intervene demonstrated that Americans have become "a nation supremely well-armed that has allowed the marginally armed to terrorize and kill the unarmed."

Assessing Reality: Realism and Idealism

Before we leave our discussion of realism and idealism, it is worth stopping briefly to ask which theory better explains how the world has operated and how it operates now. On balance, it is safe to say that throughout history competition rather than cooperation has dominated international relations. Even when countries were at peace, it was most often because they were not clashing rather than because they were positively cooperating.

To a lesser extent, *realpolitik* is still the order of the day, especially where important national interests are involved. Most political leaders tend toward realism in their policies, and even those who lean toward idealism often take the *realpolitik* road (Nolan, 1995). The idealist in President Bill Clinton prompted him as a presidential candidate to object to China's human rights policies and to charge that the unwillingness of President George Bush to punish China demonstrated that Bush had an "unconscionable" propensity to "coddle tyrants."⁹ Once he became president, though, Clinton changed his policy to a *realpolitik* policy toward China much like that of Bush. In part, Clinton had to give way to the important U.S. economic interests in China. As the *New York Times* wrote cogently, Clinton has responded to "the underlying shift evident in all the industrial democracies today: economic concerns have taken center stage in foreign affairs decision-making. This is the age of the Finance Minister. . . . The game of nations is now geo-Monopoly, and it is first and foremost about profits, not principles."¹⁰

The short answer to the "what is" question is almost certainly that both realism and idealism influence policy (Miller, 1995a; Wayman & Deihl, 1994). *Realpolitik* self-interest has been the dominant impulse of countries. Still, it is also true that countries can be cooperative and even altruistic at times. Moreover, it may well be that in a rapidly changing world the idealist approach is gaining ground as states recognize that competition and conflict are increasingly dangerous and destructive and that peaceful cooperation is in everyone's self-interest. It would be naive to argue that the world is anywhere near the point of concluding that self-interest and global interests are synonymous. But it is not fatuous to say that an increasing number of people have



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come to that conclusion and that the world system has moved down that path at least a little. Thus, while the question “what is” should engage our attention, the far more important questions are “what should be” and “what will be.” What should be is for you to decide after reading this book and consulting other sources of information. What will be is for all of us to see and experience.

How to Study World Politics

“Well, OK,” you may say, “international politics is important and it affects me. And, yes, there are important choices to make. So I’ll agree that I should know more about it and get active in the world drama. But where do I start?” Ah, we’re glad you asked!

The first thing you should do, if you have not already, is to read the preface. This will tell you how we have structured this text and will help you understand what follows. The next chapter will give you more help in establishing a base to understanding world politics by laying out a brief history of and the current trends in the world system.

Political Scientists and World Politics

Before getting to the chapter on global history and trends, it is important that you understand something about what political scientists are attempting to do and how they go about doing it. Evaluating the research of scholars may also help you construct and conduct your own studies of international relations or any other subject.

Why Political Scientists Study World Politics

Scholars study world politics with three goals in mind: description, prediction, and prescription. *Description* is the oldest and most fundamental goal of political science. This task sounds a whole lot easier than it is. Not only are events complex and information often difficult to obtain, but political science description should focus on patterns. One recent and illustrative area of political science research has been to try to prove or disprove the hypothesis, “Democracies do not fight each other” (Kacowicz, 1995). By studying history, many political scientists have concluded that, indeed, democracies tend not to go to war with one another.

Prediction is even more difficult than description because of the complexity of human nature. Nevertheless, political scientists can use careful research as a basis for “analytical forecasting [by which to] give a reasoned argument for what they expect to happen” (George, 1994:172). If, for instance, we believe the descriptive studies that conclude that democracies are peaceful toward one another, then it is possible to predict that a democratic Russia will be less likely to be antagonistic toward the United States and other democracies than was the nondemocratic Soviet Union.



Are democracies more peaceful in their foreign policies? Certainly much contemporary research answers "yes" to this question. But for these members of the victorious Congo rebel group, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo, who took power in May 1997, obtaining democracy involved a bloody struggle within their state. Maintenance of democracy is often difficult.

Prescription is a third goal. Some political scientists go beyond their objective studies and come to normative (what is right or wrong) conclusions and prescribe policy. Those who believe that democracies have not been (description) and, will not be (prediction) aggressive toward one another, may wish to advocate (prescription) policies that promote the adoption or preservation of democracy. Such advocates might, for example, urge extending massive economic aid to Russia in order to avoid the economic turmoil that is so often associated with a slide toward authoritarian government.

Political scientists, it can be added, do more than talk to students and write about their theories. Some political scientists enter directly into the policy-making realm. Among them is Madeleine K. Albright, current U.S. secretary of state. Other political scientists try to influence policy indirectly through such methods as serving in so-called think tanks dedicated to policy advocacy, writing op-ed pieces in newspapers, and testifying before legislatures.

How Political Scientists Conduct Research

The most fundamental thing that political scientists need to gather is evidence. They gather evidence by three basic methodologies: logic, traditional observation, and quantitative analysis. All research should apply logic, but valuable contributions can be made by relatively pure logical analysis. For example,

some of the best work on nuclear deterrence has been done by analysts who employ *deductive logic* (from the general to the specific) to reason from the general nature of nuclear weapons and fear to suggest specifically how nuclear deterrence works or could be improved.

A second methodology, traditional observation, uses a variety of techniques to study political phenomena. One method is historical analysis, using sources such as archives, interviews, and participant observation. Traditional observation is an old and still valuable methodology. There are many modern studies of why wars occur, but we can all still learn much by reading *The Peloponnesian War*, written by the Greek historian Thucydides in about 410 B.C. Realists, for instance, are persuaded by Thucydides' analysis that the struggle for power caused the Peloponnesian War (intermittently between 460 and 404 B.C.) between Athens and Sparta. "What made war inevitable," Thucydides wrote, "was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta" (Genest, 1994:71). What the historian did is called a case study, and many modern studies use this method to look at one or more events or other political phenomena in order to add to what we can say about international relations theory.

Quantitative analysis is a third methodology. Political scientists who use this method are interested in measurable phenomena and use mathematical techniques. The studies on war and democracy cited in chapter 6 are able to use quantitative methods because countries and wars are relatively measurable.

The Analytical Orientations of Political Scientists

The seemingly bewildering array of analytical orientations that political scientists have toward their subject often confuses beginning students of political science. At the risk of overly simplifying a diverse discipline, the view here is that these orientations, perhaps all political analysis, inevitably can trace its roots back to realism, where the norm of politics is conflict, and idealism, where the norm of politics can be cooperation.

This is not to say that realism and idealism are the only ways to think about international relations. Two other theoretical orientations deserve particular mention: feminist theory and political economy. These vary from general realism and idealism in part because they stress very specific units of analysis. For feminist theorists the unit of analysis is gender; for political economists the unit of analysis is wealth or at least the pursuit of wealth. The following list briefly describes each orientation, but more time will be spent on these ideas in later chapters.

Feminist theory is as diverse as classic realism and idealism. One scholar writes accurately that feminism has "many varied interpretations. . . . There is no monolithic, single-minded worldwide feminist movement and no one particular school of feminist thought" (Reardon 1990:136). Although there are aspects of feminism that are akin to realism, for the most part feminism theories are more closely related to idealism. Like idealists, feminists advocate change. All feminists believe that justice requires the elimination of gender discrimination. Just one element of this theory contends that an increased role

of women in political decision making will create a more peaceful world because the drive for power and dominance is psychosexually based. That is, aggression is associated with maleness.

Political economy encompasses a broad range of views about the nature and conduct of politics. Scholars who conduct their analysis from an **international political economy (IPE)** perspective believe that economic forces and conditions play the primary role in international relations. Even for those who focus on IPE, though, it is possible to discern a degree of realist-idealist split among IPE's three principal subdivisions: mercantilism, liberalism, and structuralism.

Mercantilism is an economic nationalist theory that maintains that world political relations are heavily influenced by the competition among countries for resources, wealth, and, thus, power (Blake & Walters, 1992).

Liberalism, the second IPE approach, resembles the idealist school of thought. Economic liberals believe that many of the world ills (conflict, poverty) result from economic protectionism and other political barriers to free trade and other forms of international economic interchange. Therefore, liberals advocate separating economic interchange from politics.

Structuralism is a third line of economic thought. Structuralists study political structure and process from the perspective of economic structure: that is, which economic class or type of countries controls economic resources.

What to Study: Levels of Analysis

Another major division among analytical approaches used by political scientists has to do with where to focus one's analysis. The essential question here is "what do we study?" One approach by political scientists has been to divide the study into **levels of analysis**. These refer to levels of the factors that affect international politics. Scholars have suggested a range from two to six in the number of levels at which world politics can be analyzed. The most widely used scheme utilizes three levels, and they will be employed herein (Waltz, 1959). These three levels are:

1. **System-level analysis**—a worldview that takes a "top-down" approach to analyzing global politics. This level theorizes that the world's social-economic-political structure and pattern of interaction (the international system) strongly influence the policies of states and other international actors.
2. **State-level analysis**—a view in which the concern is with the characteristics of an individual country and the impact of those traits on the country's behavior. This level theorizes that states (countries) are the key international actors.
3. **Individual-level analysis**—a view in which the focus is on people. This level argues that in the end people make policy.

Each level highlights particular aspects of international political relationships, but focus on one level of analysis does not mean exclusion of the others. Indeed, it would be best to think of the levels as occurring along a scale from the general (system-level analysis) to the specific (individual-level analysis). It is possible to focus on one level and yet still use elements of the others. In the following two chapters, we will examine extensively the implications of each of these levels. After chapter 2 and its discussion of the history of and current trends in the international system, chapter 3 examines all three levels and their implications for our understanding of international politics.

Chapter Summary

1. This book's primary message is captured by Shakespeare's line, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." This means that we are all part of the world drama and are affected by it. It also means that we should try to play a role in determining the course of the dramatic events that affect our lives.
2. Economics is one way that we are all affected. The word *intermestic* has been coined to symbolize the merging of *international* and *domestic* concerns, especially in the area of economics. Countries and their citizens have become increasingly interdependent.
3. Economically, trade both creates and causes the loss of jobs. International investment practices may affect your standard of living in such diverse ways as determining how much college tuition is, what income you have, what interest rate you pay for auto loans and mortgages, and how much you can look forward to in retirement. The global economy also supplies vital resources, such as oil. Exchange rates between different currencies affect the prices we pay for imported goods, the general rate of inflation, and our country's international trade balance.
4. Our country's role in the world also affects decisions about the allocation of budget funds. Some countries spend a great deal on military functions. Other countries spend relatively little on the military and devote almost all of their budget resources to domestic spending.
5. Your life may also be affected by world politics. You may be called on to serve in the military. Whether or not you are, war can kill you.
6. World politics also plays an important role in determining the condition of your living space. Politics has, for the most part, not created environmental degradation, but political cooperation will almost certainly be needed to halt and reverse the despoiling of the biosphere.
7. There are many things any one of us can do, individually or in cooperation with others, to play a part in shaping the future of our world. Think, vote, protest, support, write letters, join organizations, make speeches, run for office—do something!