
Figures *and* Tables

The International Relations *of* Middle-earth

LEARNING FROM
The Lord of the Rings

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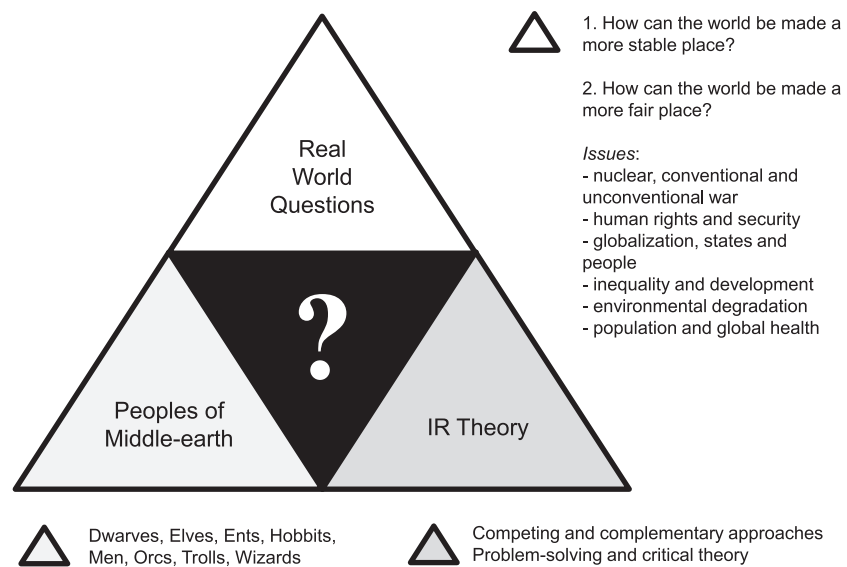


Fig. 1. Triangulating International Relations

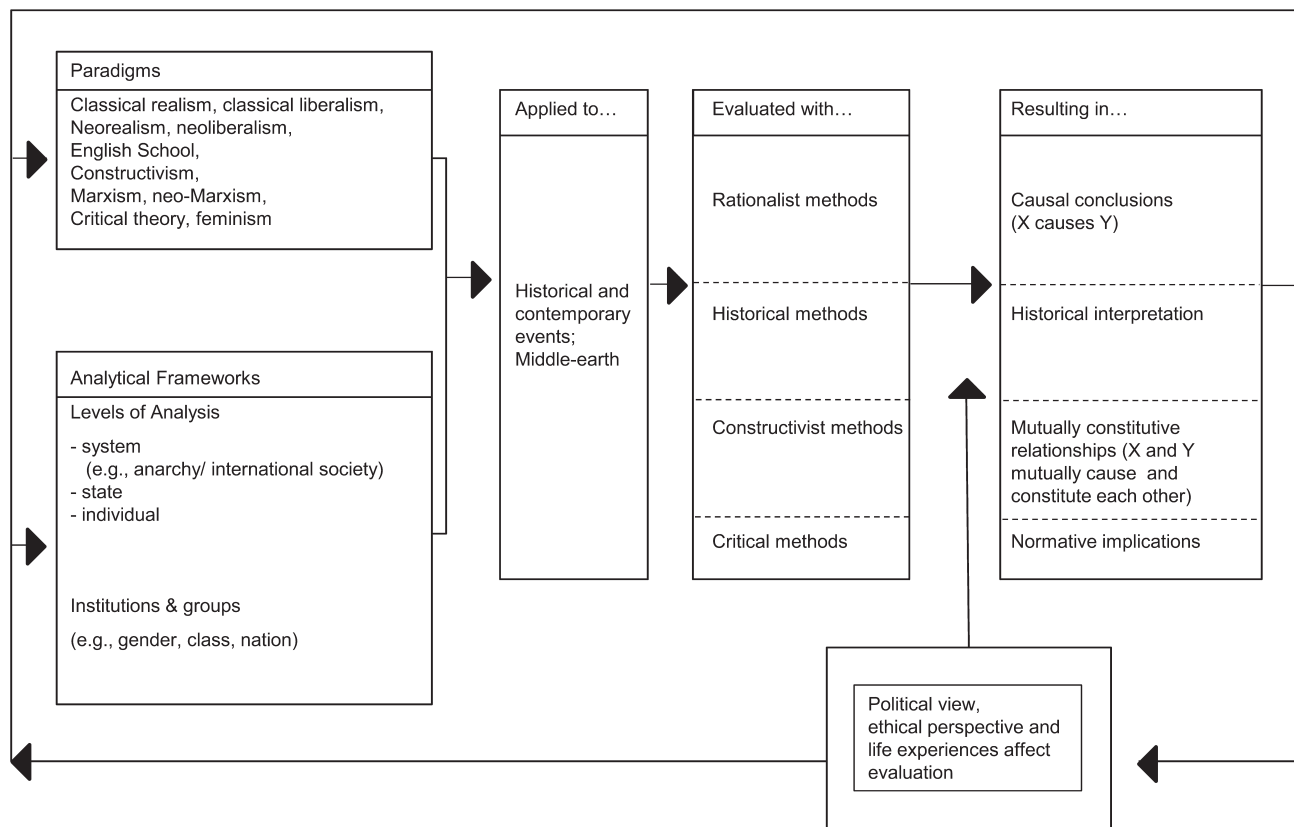


Fig. 2. Thinking about IR. (Adapted from Nau 2009, 5.)

TABLE 1. Approaches to International Relations from World War I Onward and Illustrative Characters from *LOTR*

| Great Debate | IR Theory | Race | Character |
|--|--|----------|--------------------------|
| 1. Vision of future (pessimistic/hopeful): 1920s/1930s | Classical realism | Orc | Uglúk, led by Saruman |
| | Classical liberalism | Elf | Elrond |
| 2. Method (history/science): 1950s/1980s | Marxism | Huorns | Old Man Willow |
| | Rational choice | Wizard | |
| | • bounded | | Gandalf |
| | • unbounded | | Saruman |
| | Neorealism | Men | |
| | • defensive | | Boromir |
| | • offensive | | Ringwraith leader |
| | Neoliberal institutionalism | Dwarf | Gimli |
| | English School (international society theory) | Elf | Legolas |
| | World Systems Theory | Wild Men | Ghân-buri-Ghân |
| 3. Knowledge (positivism/postpositivism): 1980s/1990s | Postcolonialism | Hobbit | Sméagol/Gollum |
| | Positivism (see Rational choice, above) | | |
| | Constructivism | Hobbit | Frodo Baggins |
| | Frankfurt School Critical Theory | Ent | Treebeard |
| | Postmodernism | Wizard | Saruman |

TABLE 2. International Relations: A Rainbow of Theoretical Approaches

| Theoretical Approach | Definition |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Classical realism | Classical realism is an approach to International Relations that holds that interstate conflict is rooted in (bad) human nature. |
| Classical liberalism | Classical liberalism is an approach to International Relations that holds that international cooperation is possible if (good) human nature is effectively harnessed by international institutions. |
| Marxism | Marxism is an approach to International Relations that holds that class conflict is rooted in capitalist economic relations. |
| Rational choice | Rational choice is an approach to International Relations that holds that international relations involve rational actors. For the unbounded rationality approach, this means that actors attempt to achieve their preferred outcome, choose the best of all possible options, and believe that others think the same way. For the bounded rationality approach, actors are regarded as seeking their preferred outcomes but make the best choice that they can under constraints such as limited information and thus accept that they may not be fully aware of how and why choices are being made by others. |
| Neorealism | Neorealism is an approach to International Relations that holds that interstate conflict is rooted in conditions of international anarchy, or lack of overarching world government. |
| Neoliberal institutionalism | Neoliberal institutionalism is an approach to International Relations that holds that international cooperation is possible despite conditions of international anarchy through international institutions. |
| English School | The English School, or international society school, is an approach to International Relations that holds that international cooperation is possible because we live in an international society of states that recognizes community through dialogue and consent. |
| World Systems Theory | World Systems Theory is a neo-Marxist approach to International Relations that holds that capitalist global economic relations in the current world system as a whole create a division of labor that benefits states in the core at the expense of states in the periphery and semi-periphery. |
| Postcolonialism | Postcolonialism is an approach to International Relations that holds that colonialism and neocolonialism are supported by cultural chauvinism and the construction of racial, gender, and class differences. |
| Constructivism | Constructivism is an approach to International Relations that holds that opportunities for international conflict and cooperation depend on how relationships between and among participants in global politics are interpreted or “constructed” rather than any totally “objective” measures. |
| Frankfurt School Critical Theory | Frankfurt School Critical Theory is an approach to International Relations that investigates the social conditions that enable social justice and societal self-determination and explores alternatives to dominant instrumental rationality. |
| Postmodernism | Postmodernism analyzes language to uncover how power imbues truth; it highlights how political action involves being incredulous of—rather than taking for granted—the progressive stories of modernity. |

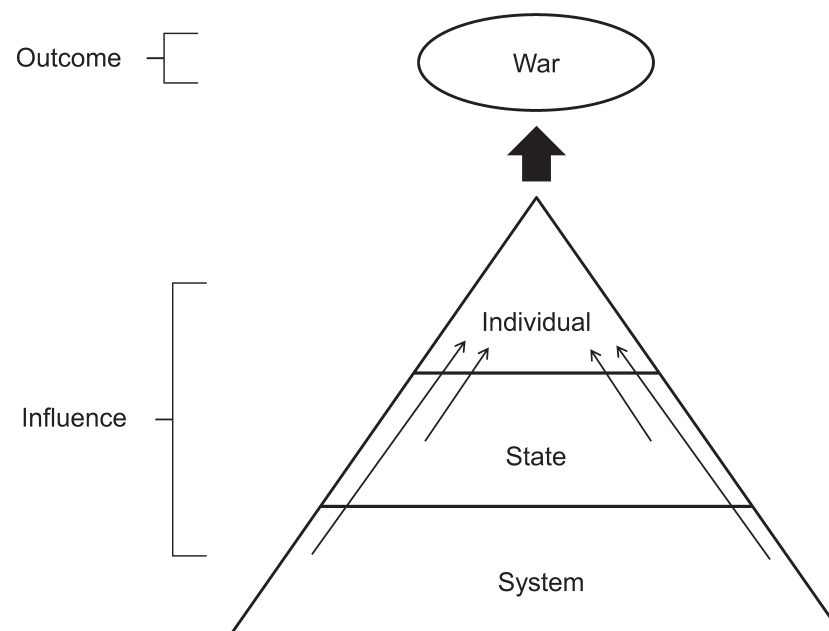


Fig. 3. Levels of analysis and the causes of war. (Adapted from Kegley and Blanton 2010, 16.)

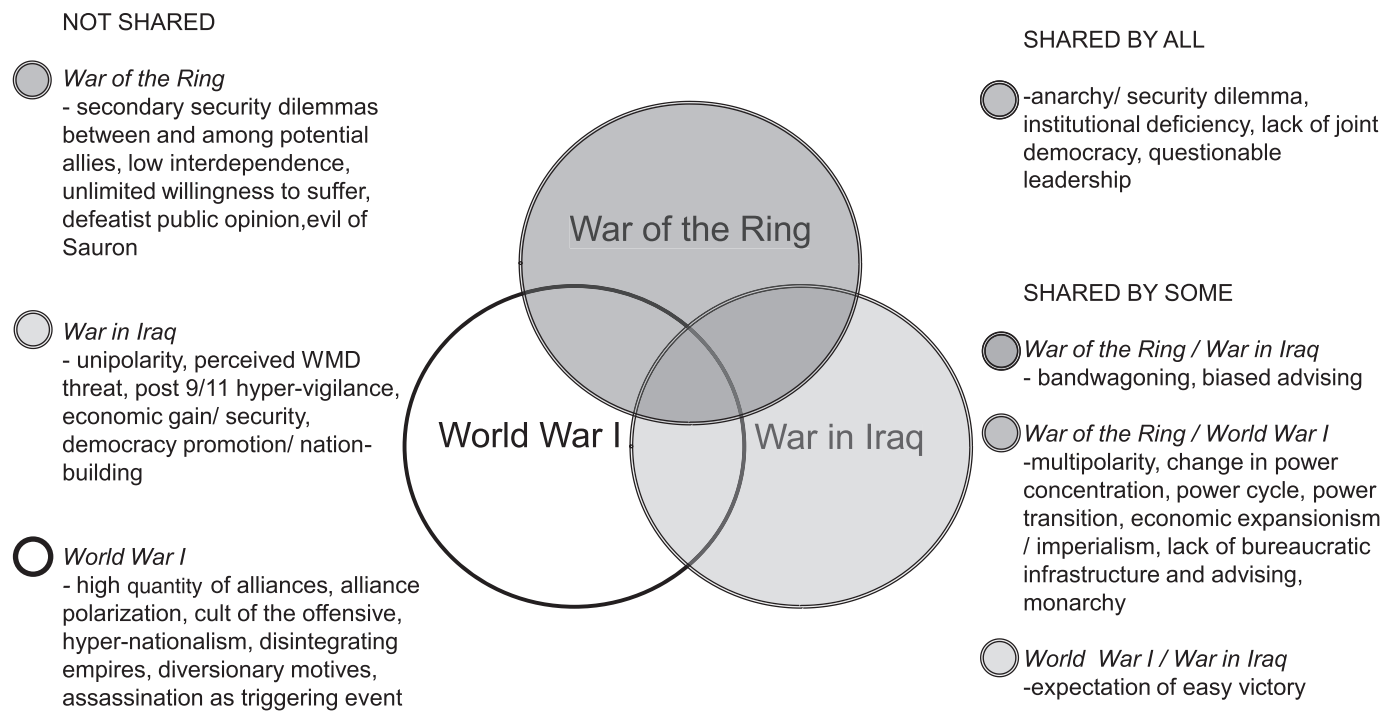


Fig. 4. World War I, the War in Iraq, and the War of the Ring

TABLE 3. Feminist IR and Assumptions about What Exists (Ontology)

| Feminist Approach | Understanding of "Gender" | View of People | View of Politics: The Example of "Civilian Immunity" |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Rationalist feminism | Gender is essentially linked to biology (essentialist). | All women are feminine and all men are masculine. | Translating "civilian immunity" in war as immunity for women and children is <i>politically appropriate</i> ; e.g., it indicates that the "civilians" in need of immunity are almost exclusively women and children. |
| Standpoint feminism | Gender is mediated through social constructions of masculinity and femininity (constructivist). | Women tend to be defined in feminine terms and men in masculine ones. (Biology and language are intertwined.) | Translating "civilian immunity" in war as immunity for women and children is <i>politically meaningful</i> ; e.g., it indicates that men will fight to protect "vulnerable" women during wartime. |
| Postmodern feminism | Gender is defined through language (discursive). | Women and men are not born (resulting from biology) but made (resulting from language). | Translating "civilian immunity" in war as immunity for women and children is <i>politically constraining</i> ; e.g., it indicates that protector/ victim dichotomies involved in "civilian immunity" discourse empower (masculinized) soldiers, marginalize (feminized) civilians, and contribute to defining the politics of war. |

Source: Hansen 2010: 25; Sjoberg and Peet 2011; Tickner 2011.

TABLE 4. Feminist IR and Assumptions about What We Know and How We Should Learn (Epistemology and Methodology)

| Feminist Approach | Basis for Useful Knowledge (epistemology) | Illustration (methodology) |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Rationalist feminism | More accurate and less gender-biased scientific knowledge (“positivist” or “empiricist”) | Using sex-disaggregated statistical methodologies to document those killed and wounded in war |
| Standpoint feminism | The experience of marginalized people (“standpoint”) | Using interviews with civilians in conflict in order to highlight alternative forms of experience and create a stronger basis for “objectivity” |
| Postmodern feminism | Discourse evidencing meaningful gender norms in language (“discursive” or “postmodern”) | Using interviews with civilians in conflict in order to suggest alternative kinds of “war stories” and highlight how existing forms of domination are enabled by and influence traditional stories |

Source: Hansen 2010, 25; Sjöberg and Peet 2011; Tickner 2011.

TABLE 5. Waves of Feminist Approaches and Illustrative Characters

| IR Feminist Approach | Feminist Political Approach | Ontology | Epistemology | Race | Female Character |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| Rationalist IR feminism | Liberal feminism | Rationalist/essentialist | Positivist/empiricist | Men | Éowyn |
| | Radical (cultural) feminism | Constructivist | Standpoint | Ent | Wandlimb |
| Standpoint IR feminism | Postcolonial feminism | Constructivist | Standpoint | Dwarf | Dís |
| | Socialist feminism | Constructivist | Standpoint | Hobbit | Lobelia Sackville-Baggins |
| Postmodern IR feminism | Postmodern feminism | Postmodern/poststructuralist | Discursive | Elf | Galadriel |

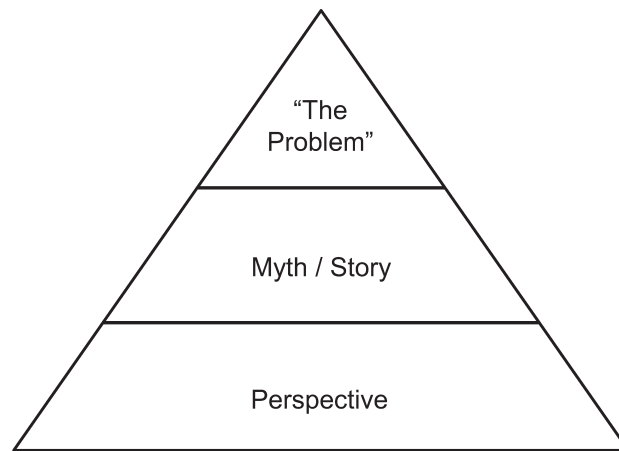


Fig. 5. How perspective influences definition of "the problem"

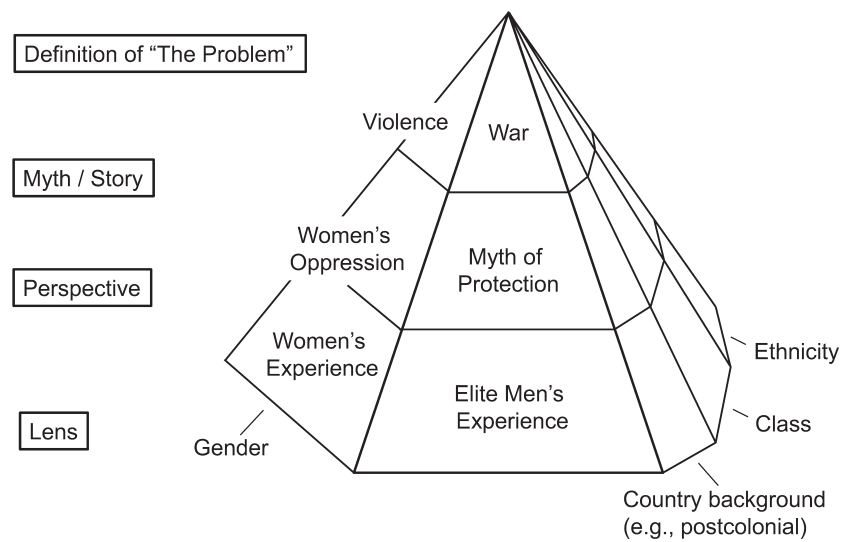


Fig. 6. Different lenses highlight different sides of "the problem"

TABLE 6. Quasi Relationships of Similarity (+) or Dissimilarity (–) between Approaches Based on the Race Their Associated Characters Share in *LOTR*

| Race | Male Character | IR Approach | Female Character | Feminist Approach | Relationship between IR and Feminist approach |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| <i>Wizard</i> | Gandalf | Rational choice | (Galadriel) | (emotional intelligence [EQ]) | –: Autonomous/relational view of actors (IQ/EQ) |
| | Saruman | Postmodernism | Galadriel | Postmodern feminism (3rd wave: antiessentialist, i.e., gendered oppression manifests in diverse ways) | +: (Ungendered/gendered) “truth” is imbued with power |
| <i>Elf</i> | Elrond | Classical liberalism (1st debate: positive future) | Galadriel | Postmodern feminism (3rd wave: antiessentialist) | –: Actors are/are not inherently similar (good/oppressed in similar ways) |
| | Legolas | English School (2nd debate: historical) | | | |
| <i>Orc</i> | Uglúk, led by Saruman | Classical realism (1st debate: negative future) | — ^a (Shelob) | (Non-existent [not critical: Iron Ladies]) | No relationship (no progressive version) |
| <i>Men</i> | Boromir / Ringwraith leader | Neorealism (2nd debate: scientific method) | Éowyn | Liberal feminism (1st wave: de jure, i.e., legal inequality) | +: The system (anarchy/legal inequality) is the problem |
| <i>Wild Men</i> | Ghân-buri-Ghân | World Systems Theory | — ^a | | |
| <i>Hobbit</i> | Frodo Baggins | Constructivism (3rd debate: problem-solving and critical versions) | Lobelia Sackville-Baggins | Socialist feminism (2nd wave: de facto i.e., substantive inequality) | +: Assumptions (perceptions / reliance on reproductive for productive labor) are the problem |
| | Smeagol/Gollum ^b | Postcolonialism | — ^a | | |
| <i>Dwarf</i> | Gimli | Neoliberal Institutionalism (2nd debate: scientific method) | Dís | Postcolonial feminism (3rd wave: antiessentialist) | –: The problem is the same/different for everyone (need increased institutionalization everywhere/need particularized solutions) |
| <i>Ent</i> | Treebeard | Frankfurt School Critical Theory (Marxist roots) (3rd debate: postpositivist) | Wandlimb | Radical (cultural) feminism (2nd wave: de facto inequality) | +: Assumptions (focus on states and order/dominance of masculinity) are the problem |
| <i>Huorn</i> | Old Man Willow | Marxism (1st debate: positive future) | — ^a | | |

^aNo female character named in *LOTR*.

^bOf a people related to Hobbits.

TABLE 7. Examples of Concerns about Order and Justice by Issue Area according to Various IR Paradigms

| Issue Area | Order (stability) | Justice (fairness) |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Foreign policy decision-making | Short-term views about the impact of foreign policy decisions on social stability are often different from long-term views | Foreign policy decisions which appear to be just in the short term may appear to be unjust in the long term |
| Global health | Formal and informal institutions provide care and support global health (↑ Stability) Informalization of public health institutions strains households, communities, and “human capital” (↓ Stability) | Informalization of public health institutions skews the burden of care between formal and informal care providers and reduces standards of living for providers and recipients of care (↓ Justice) |
| State and human security | Militarized state security is meant to protect a population’s human security (Military industrial complex: ↑ Stability) Militarized state security can reduce women’s and others’ human security (↓ Stability) | Militarized state security can reduce women’s and others’ human security (↓ Justice) |
| Learning and institutions | Increased institutionalization may reduce the recurrence of war (↑ Stability) | Without moderating institutions, the international system may be guided strictly by (realist) assumptions of “might makes right” (↓ Justice) |
| Mercy | Showing mercy to villains may encourage popular support of the mercy-granting actor (↑ Stability) or risk encouraging more villainous or chaotic behavior (↓ Stability) | Showing mercy to villains may contribute to future greater “good” (↑ utilitarian Justice) or greater “evil” (↓ utilitarian Justice) Creative solutions can mercifully try to do something about both the pain of villains and their victims (↑ “ethics of care” Justice) |

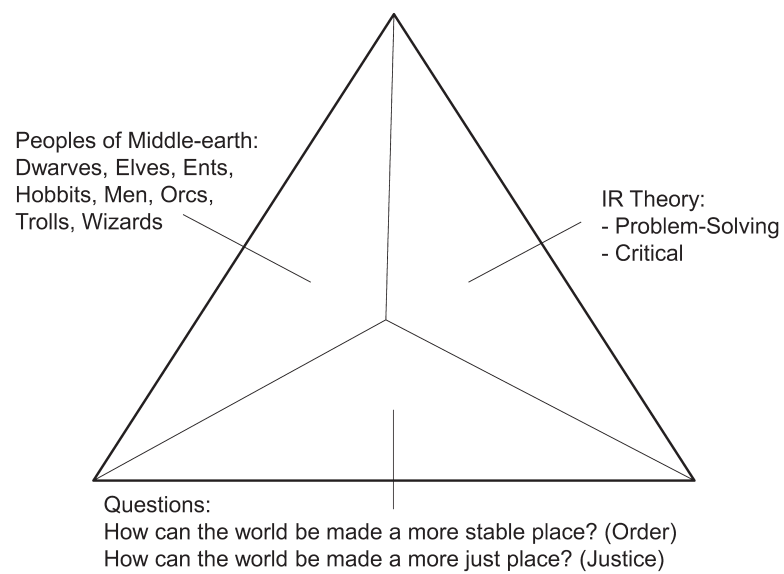


Fig. 7. Considering multiple dimensions of International Relations:
Taking a broader view