**Key concepts**

**Anarchy:** a system operating in the absence of any central government. Does not imply chaos, but in Realist theory the absence of political authority.

**Balance of Power** (BoP): in Realist theory, refers to an equilibrium between states. It is a doctrine and arrangement whereby the power of one state (or group of states) is checked by the countervailing power of other states.

**Global Governance**: the evolving system of (formal and informal) political coordination—across multiple levels from the local to the global—among pubic authorities (states and intergovernmental organizations) and private agencies (NGOs and corporate actors) seeking to realize common purposes or resolve collective problems through the making and implementing of global or transnational norms, rules, programmes, and policies. The loose framework of global regulation, both institutional and normative, that constrains conduct. It has many elements: international organizations and law, transnational organizations and frameworks, elements of global civil society, and shared normative principles.

**Humanitarian intervention:** activity undertaken by a state, a group within a state, a group of states or an international organization which interferes coercively in the domestic affairs of another state. It is a discrete event having a beginning and an end, and it is aimed at the authority structure of the target state. It is not necessarily lawful or unlawful, but it does break a conventional pattern of international relations.

**Identity**: the understanding of the self in relationship to an “other”. Identities are social and thus are always formed in relationship to others. Constructivists generally hold that identities shape interests; we cannot know what we want unless we know what we are. But because identities are social and are produced through interactions, identities change.

**International society:** a society of states (or *international society*) exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their elations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions.

**Normative structure:** IR theory traditionally defines structure in material terms, such as the distribution of power, and then treats structure as a constraint on actors. By identifying a normative structure, Constructivists are noting how structures also are defined by collectively held ideas such as knowledge, rules, beliefs, and norms that are not only constrain actors, but also construct categories of meaning, constitute their identities and interests, and define standards of appropriate conduct. Critical here is the concept of a **norm**, a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity. Actors adhere to norms not only because of benefits and costs for doing so but also because they are related to a sense of self.

**Rational choice:** an approach that emphasizes how actors attempt to maximize their interests, how they attempt to select the most efficient means to achieve those interests, and attempts to explain collective outcomes by virtue of the attempt by actors to maximize their presences under a set of constraints. Deriving largely from economic theorizing, the rational choice to politic and international relations has been immensely influential and applied to a range of issues.

**Rationality**: reflected in the ability of individuals to place their preferences in rank order and choose the best available preference.

**Regime**: these are sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations. They are social institutions that are based on agreed rules, norms, principles, and decision-making procedures. These govern the interaction of various state and non-state actors in issue-areas such as the environment or human rights. The global market in coffee, for example, is governed by a variety of treaties, trade agreements, scientific and research protocols, market protocols, and the interests of the producers, consumers, and distributors. States organize these interests and consider the practices, rules, and procedures to create a governing arrangement or regime that controls the production of coffee, monitors its distribution, and ultimately determines the price for consumers.

**Relative gains:** one of the factors that Realists argue constrain the willingness of states to cooperate. States are less concerned about whether everyone benefits (absolute gains) and more concerned about whether someone may benefit more than someone else.

**State:** a legal territorial entity composed of a stable population and a government; it possesses a monopoly over the legitimate use of force; its sovereignty is recognized by other states in the international system. This one word is used to refer to there distinct concepts: 1. In international law, a state is an entity that is recognized to exist when a government is in control of a community of people within a defined territory. It is comparable to the idea in domestic law of a company being a legal person. 2. In the study of international politics, each state is a country. It is a community of people who interact in the same political system and who have some common values. 3. In philosophy and sociology, the state consists of the apparatus of government, in its broadest sense, covering the executive, the legislature, the administration, the judiciary, the armed forces, and the police.

**Security dilemma:** according to realists, in a self-help environment like the anarchical international system, states are faced with an “unresolvable uncertainty” about the military preparations made by other states. States are therefore likely to remain mistrustful of each other. In turn, if mistrust is mutual, insecurity will breed further insecurity, with the ever-present potential for war breaking out.

**Sovereignty:** the condition of a state being freefrom any higher legal authority. It is related to, but distinct from, the condition of a government being free from any external political constraints. It is the rightful entitlement to exclusive, unqualified, and supreme rule within a delimited territory. The state has supreme authority domestically and independence internationally.

**Structure**: in the philosophy of the social sciences a structure is something that exists independently of the actor (e.g. social class) but is an important determinant in the nature of the action (e.g. revolution). For contemporary structural realists, the number of Great Powers in the international system constitutes the structure.

**Terrorism**: the use of illegitimate violence by sub-state groups to inspire fear, by attacking civilians and/or symbolic targets. This is done for purposes such as drawing widespread attention to a grievance, provoking a severe response, or wearing down their opponent’s moral resolve, to affect political change. Determining when the use of violence is legitimate, which is based on contextual morality of the act, as opposed to its effects, is the source of disagreement over what constitutes act of terrorism.