2012-2013 EDITION

WORLD POLITICS

Trend and Transformation

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2012–2013 Edition

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Part 1

Trend and Transformation in World Politics

NASA Images

A WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS As viewed from outer space, planet Earth looks as if it has continents without borders. Reflecting on his space shuttle experience, astronaut Sultan bin Salman Al-Saud remarked that "the first day or so we all pointed to our countries. The third or fourth day we were pointing to our continents. By the fifth day, we were aware of only one Earth." As viewed from newspaper headlines, however, world politics looks much different.

These are turbulent times, inspiring both anxiety and hope. What lies ahead for the world? What are we to think about the global future? Part 1 of this book introduces you to the study of world politics in a period of rapid change. It opens a window on the many unfolding trends, some of them moving in contrary directions.

Chapter 1 explains our perceptions of global events and realities can lead to distorted understandings, and suggests how to move beyond the limited scope of those views. Your journey continues in Chapter 2 with an overview of the realist, liberal, and constructivist theoretical traditions that scholars and policy makers use most often to interpret world politics. The chapter also considers the feminist and Marxist critiques of these mainstream traditions. Your understanding of world politics is further strengthened in Chapter 3, which introduces three ways of looking at international decision-making processes by all transnational actors.

Chapter 1
EXPLORING WORLD POLITICS

The world is at a critical juncture, and so are you . . . Go ahead and make your plans . . . and don't stop learning. But be open to the detours that lead to new discoveries.

—Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General

Yasuyoshi Chiba/AFP/Getty Images

WHAT FUTURE FOR HUMANKIND? Many global trends are sweeping across a transforming planet. Among those are popular movements calling for greater political representation and improved human security for some of the world's 7 billion people. Pictured here, a Sudanese protestor raises his hand during a demonstration in favor of separation from the north—one raised hand symbolized support for separation, while two clasped hands signaled support for unity. According to the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission, in a referendum held on January 9, 2011, nearly 99 percent of the voters supported independence for South Sudan (which took effect six months later on July 9, 2011).

Imagine yourself returning home from a two-week vacation on a tropical island where you had no access to the news. The trip gave you a well-deserved break before starting a new school term. But now you are curious about what has happened while you were away. As you glance at a newspaper, the headlines catch your eye. Violent protests rage across the Middle East and North Africa. Demonstrations

have taken place in Syria, Bahrain, Sudan, and southern Yemen, claiming the lives of citizens as the military in each country cracks down on dissent. These outbreaks of popular protest and violent state reprisal follow similar events earlier in the year in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Oman, and Jordan. Despite concerns from Russia, NATO continues its aerial bombing operations in Libya, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant for the arrest of Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi for crimes against humanity. There is speculation that these developments could hasten Qaddafi's departure from power. As you ride home from the airport, you hear a radio broadcast that the situation in Greece is dire, as it confronts austerity measures to address rampant debt and poor public finance. Fighting persists in Afghanistan, though there is debate over the U.S. military presence in that conflict and calls for rapid downsizing, particularly in light of the death of the Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. In China, as the Communist Party celebrates its ninetieth anniversary, economic growth continues with Chinese exports outpacing world trade. Reports indicate that over the past year the government has allowed a slow appreciation of the yuan against the U.S. dollar, though the U.S. trade deficit with China increased by $3.5 billion. You wonder if this will have any effect on the price of the new laptop that you want to buy. Shortly after arriving home, you connect to the Internet and find that, in the aftermath of the sexual assault scandal involving the International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief, a new director—and the first female to hold the position—has been appointed to replace him. Finally, while listening to CNN later that evening, you hear several other reports: There are concerns over efforts by Pakistan and India to enhance their nuclear capabilities, and fears of further nuclear tests by North Korea. There are signs that the economic decline in the United States is leveling off, and you hope that conditions improve before you graduate and go on the job market. In addition, there is coverage of the violence by drug cartels in Mexico, and you worry about whether this will affect your plans for a study abroad tour over the winter break.

The scenario just described is not hypothetical. The events identified record what actually occurred during the month of June 2011. Undoubtedly, many individuals experienced fear and confusion during this turbulent period. But it is, uncomfortably, not so different from other eras. Putting this information about unfolding events together, you cannot help but be reminded that the world matters and changes in it powerfully affect your circumstances and future. The "news" you received is not really new, because it echoes many old stories from the past about the growing sea of turmoil sweeping contemporary world circumstances. Nevertheless, the temptation to wish that this depressing, chaotic world would just go away is overwhelming. If only the unstable world would stand still long enough for a sense of predictability and order to prevail. Alas, that does not appear likely. You cannot escape the world or control its turbulence, and you cannot single-handedly alter its character.

We are all a part of this world. If we are to live adaptively amid the fierce winds of global change, then we must face the challenge of discovering the dynamic properties of ***world politics***. Because world events increasingly influence every person, all can

world politics
the study of how global actors' activities entail the exercise of influence to achieve and defend their goals and ideals, and how it affects the world at large.

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benefit by investigating how the global system works and how changes are remaking our political and economic lives. Only through learning how our own decisions and behavior, as well as those of powerful state governments and nonstate transnational actors, contribute to the global condition, and how all people and groups in turn are heavily conditioned by changes in world politics, can we address what former U.S. President Bill Clinton defined as "the question of our time—whether we can make change our friend and not our enemy."

> *We had best look at our times and lands searchingly, like some physician diagnosing some deep disease.*
>
> —Walt Whitman, *American poet*

THE CHALLENGE OF INVESTIGATING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

It is critical that we perceive our times accurately in order to best understand the political convulsions that confront the globe's 7 billion people. Yet interpreting the world in which we now live and anticipating what lies ahead for the globe's future—and yours—presents formidable challenges. Indeed, it could be the most difficult task you will ever face. Why? In part because the study of international relations requires taking into account every factor that influences human behavior. This is a task that, as the seminal scientist Albert Einstein believed, is extremely challenging. He once hinted at how big the challenge of explaining world politics was when he was asked, "Why is it that when the mind of man has stretched so far as to discover the structure of the atom we have been unable to devise the political means to keep the atom from destroying us?" He replied, "This is simple, my friend; it is because politics is more difficult than physics."

Another part of the challenge stems from our constant bombardment with a bewildering amount of new information and new developments, and the tendency of people to resist new information and ideas that undermine their habitual ways of thinking about world affairs. We know from repeated studies that people do not want to accept ideas that do not conform to their prior beliefs. A purpose of this book is to help you question your preexisting beliefs about world affairs and about the world stage's many actors. To that end, we will ask you to evaluate rival perspectives on global issues, even if they differ from your current images. Indeed, we will expose you to prevailing schools of thought that you may find unconvincing, and possibly repugnant.

Why are they included? Because many other people make these views the bedrock of their interpretations, and these viewpoints accordingly enjoy a popular following. For this reason, the text describes some visions of world politics with which even your authors may not agree, so that you may weigh the wisdom or foolishness of contending perspectives. The interpretive challenge, then, is to observe unfolding global realities objectively, in order to describe and explain them accurately.

To appreciate how our images of reality shape our expectations, we begin with a brief introduction to the role that subjective images play in understanding world politics. This will be followed by a set of analytic tools that this book uses to help you overcome perceptual obstacles to understanding world politics, and to empower you to more capably interpret the forces of change and continuity that affect our world.

HOW PERCEPTIONS INFLUENCE IMAGES OF GLOBAL REALITY

Although you may not have attempted to explicitly define your perceptions about the world in your subconscious, we all hold mental images of world politics. But whatever our levels of self-awareness, these images perform the same function: they simplify "reality" by exaggerating some features of the real world while ignoring others. Thus, we live in a world defined by our images.

Many of our images of the world's political realities may be built on illusions and misconceptions. They cannot fully capture the complexity and configurations of even physical objects, such as the globe itself (see Controversy: Should We Believe What We See?). Even images that are now accurate can easily become outdated if we fail to recognize changes in the world. Indeed, the world's future will be determined not only by changes in the "objective" facts of world politics but also by the meaning that people ascribe to those facts, the assumptions on which they base their interpretations, and the actions that flow from these assumptions and interpretations—however accurate or inaccurate they might be.

The Nature and Sources of Images

The effort to simplify one's view of the world is inevitable and even necessary. Just as cartographers' projections simplify complex geophysical space so that we can better understand the world, each of us inevitably creates a "mental map"—a habitual way of organizing information—to make sense of a confusing abundance of information. These mental maps are neither inherently right nor wrong, and they are important because we tend to react according to the way the world appears to us rather than the way it is.

How we view the world (not what it is really like) determines our attitudes, our beliefs, and our behavior. Most of us—political leaders included—look for information that reinforces our preexisting beliefs about the world, assimilate new data into familiar images, mistakenly equate what we believe with what we know, and ignore information that contradicts our expectations. We also rely on our intuitions without thinking and emotionally make snap judgments (Ariely, 2010; Walker et al., 2011). Reflecting upon this tendency, political scientist Richard Ned Lebow (1981, p. 277) warns that, just like the rest of us, "Policymakers are prone to distort reality in accord with their needs even in situations that appear . . . relatively unambiguous."

CONTROVERSY:

SHOULD WE BELIEVE WHAT WE SEE?

Without questioning whether the ways they have organized their perceptions are accurate, many people simply assume seeing is believing. But is there more to seeing than meets the eye? Students of perceptual psychology think so. They maintain that seeing is not a strictly passive act: What we observe is partially influenced by our preexisting values and expectations (and by the visual habits reinforced by the constructions society has inculcated in us about how to view objects). Students of perception argue that what you see is what you get, and that two observers looking at the same object might easily see different realities.

This principle has great importance for investigation of international relations, where, depending on one's perspective, people can vary greatly on how they will view international events, actors, and issues. Intense disagreements often arise from competing images.

To appreciate the controversies that can result when different people (with different perspectives) see different realities, even though they are looking at the same thing, consider something as basic as objectively viewing the location and size of the world's continents. All maps of the globe are distorted because it is impossible to perfectly represent the three-dimensional globe on a two-dimensional piece of paper. The difficulty cartographers face can be appreciated by trying to flatten an orange peel. You can only flatten it by separating pieces of the peel that were joined when it was spherical.

Cartographers who try to flatten the globe on paper, without ripping it into separate pieces, face the same problem. Although there are a variety of ways to represent the three-dimensional object on paper, all of them involve some kind of distortion. Thus cartographers must choose among the imperfect ways of representing the globe by selecting those aspects of the world's geography they consider most important to describe accurately, while making adjustments to other parts.

There exists a long-standing controversy among cartographers about the "right" way to map the globe, that is, how to make an accurate projection. Cartographers' ideas of what is most important in world geography have varied according to their own global perspectives. In turn, the accuracy of their rival maps matters politically because they shape how people view what is important.

Consider these four maps (Maps 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4). Each depicts the distribution of the Earth's land surfaces and territory, but portrays a different image. Each is a model of reality, an abstraction that highlights some features of the globe while ignoring others.

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MAP 1.1

MERCATOR PROJECTION This Mercator projection, named for the Flemish cartographer Gerard Mercator, was popular in sixteenth-century Europe and presents a classic Eurocentric view of the world. It mapped the Earth without distorting direction, making it useful for navigators. However, distances were deceptive, placing Europe at the center of the world and exaggerating the continent's importance relative to other landmasses.

SHOULD WE BELIEVE WHAT WE SEE? (Continued)
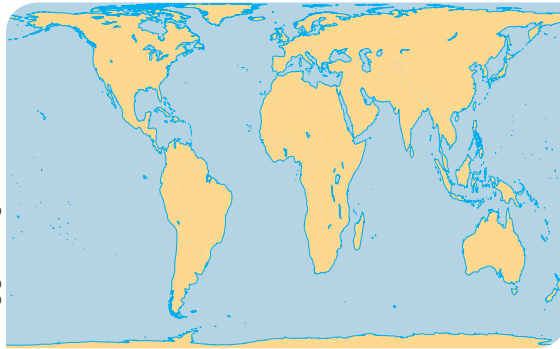
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MAP 1.2

PETER'S PROJECTION In the Peter's projection, each landmass appears in correct proportion in relation to all others, but it distorts the shape and position of the Earth's landmasses. In contrast with most geographic representations, it draws attention to the less developed countries of the Global South, where more than three-quarters of the world's population lives today.

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MAP 1.4

"UPSIDE DOWN" PROJECTION This projection gives a different perspective on the world by depicting it upside down, with the Global South positioned above the Global North. The map challenges the modern "Eurocentric" conceptualization of the positions of the globe's countries and peoples by putting the Global South "on top."

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MAP 1.3

ORTHOGRAPHIC PROJECTION The orthographic projection, centering on the mid-Atlantic, conveys some sense of the curvature of the Earth by using rounded edges. The sizes and shapes of continents toward the outer edges of the circle are distorted to give a sense of spherical perspective.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- What are some of the policy implications associated with the image of the world as depicted in each of the respective projections?

- Why are some features of the map distorted? Consider the role that history, culture, and racism, among others, might play. Can you think of any ways modern cartographers might modify any of these world projections?

- In thinking about images and the important role they play in foreign policy, should a consensus be made as to the world projection that is "least" distorted? Would it be better for everyone to use one map, or to use many different types of projections? Why?

In addition, we rely on learned habits for viewing new information and making judgments, because these "schema" guide our perceptions and help us organize information. Research in cognitive psychology shows that human beings are "categorizers" who match what they see with images in their memories of prototypical events and people when attempting to understand the world by *schematic reasoning*. The absentminded professor, the shady lawyer, and the kindly grandmother are examples of "stock" images that many of us have created about certain types of people. Although the professors, lawyers, and grandmothers that we meet may bear only a superficial resemblance to these stereotypical images, when we know little about someone, our expectations will be shaped by presumed similarities to these characters.

schematic reasoning
the process of reasoning by which new information is interpreted according to a memory structure, a schema, which contains a network of generic scripts, metaphors, and simplified characterizations of observed objects and phenomena.

Many factors shape our images, including how we were socialized as children, traumatic events we experience that shape our personalities and psychological needs, exposure to the ideas of people whose expertise we respect, and the opinions about world affairs expressed by our frequent associates such as close friends and coworkers. Once we have acquired an image, it seems self-evident. Accordingly, we try to keep that image consistent with other beliefs and, through a psychological process known as *cognitive dissonance* (Festingner, 1957), reject information that contradicts that image of the world. In short, our minds select, screen, and filter information; consequently, our perceptions depend not only on what happens in daily life but also on how we interpret and internalize those events.

cognitive dissonance
the general psychological tendency to deny discrepancies between one's preexisting beliefs (cognitions) and new information.

The Impact of Perceptions on World Politics

We must be careful not to assume automatically that what applies to individuals applies to entire countries, and we should not equate the beliefs of leaders, such as heads of states, with the beliefs of the people under their authority. Still, leaders have extraordinary influence, and their images of historical circumstances often predispose them to behave in particular ways toward others, regardless of "objective" facts. For instance, the loss of 26 million Soviet lives in the "Great Patriotic War" (as the Russians refer to World War II) reinforced a long-standing fear of foreign invasion, which caused a generation of Soviet policy makers to perceive U.S. defensive moves with suspicion and often alarm.

Similarly, the founders of the United States viewed eighteenth-century European power politics and its repetitive wars as corrupt, contributing to two seemingly contradictory tendencies later evident in U.S. foreign policy. The first is America's impulse to isolate itself (its disposition to withdraw from world affairs), and the other is its determination to reform the world in its own image whenever global circumstances become highly threatening. The former led the country to reject membership in the League of Nations after World War I; the latter gave rise to the U.S. globalist foreign policy since World War II, which committed the country to active involvement nearly everywhere on nearly every issue. Most Americans, thinking of their country as virtuous, have difficulty understanding why others sometimes regard such far-reaching

international activism as arrogant or threatening; instead, they see only good intentions in active U.S. interventionism.

Because leaders and citizens are prone to ignore or reinterpret information that runs counter to their beliefs and values, mutual misperceptions often fuel discord in world politics, especially when relations between countries are hostile. Distrust and suspicion arise as conflicting parties view each other in the same negative light—that is, as *mirror images* develop. This occurred in Moscow and Washington during the Cold War. Each side saw its own actions as constructive but its adversary's responses as hostile, and both sides erroneously assumed that their counterparts would misinterpret the intentions of their own policy initiatives. When psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1961) traveled to Moscow, for example, he was amazed to hear Russians describing the United States in terms that were strikingly similar to the way Americans described the Soviet Union: Each side saw itself as virtuous and peace-loving, whereas the other was seen as untrustworthy, aggressive, and ruled by a corrupt government.

mirror images
the tendency of states and people in competitive interaction to perceive each other similarly—to see others the same hostile way others see them.

Mirror-imaging is a property of nearly all *enduring rivalries*—long-lasting contests between opposing groups. For example, in rivalries such as Christianity's with Islam during the Crusades in the Middle Ages, Israel's and Palestine's since the birth of the sovereign state of Israel in 1948, and the United States' with Al Qaeda today, both sides demonize the image of their adversary while perceiving themselves as virtuous. Self-righteousness often leads one party to view its own actions as constructive but its adversary's responses as negative and hostile.

enduring rivalries
prolonged competition fueled by deep-seated mutual hatred that leads opposed actors to feud and fight over a long period of time without resolution of their conflict.

When this occurs, conflict resolution is extraordinarily difficult. Not only do the opposing sides have different preferences for certain outcomes over others, but they do not see the underlying issues in the same light. Further complicating matters, the mirror images held by rivals tend to be self-confirming. When one side expects the other to be hostile, it may treat its opponent in a manner that leads the opponent to take counteractions that confirm the original expectation, therein creating a vicious circle of deepening hostilities that reduce the prospects for peace (Sen, 2006). Clearing up mutual misperceptions can facilitate negotiations between the parties, but fostering peace is not simply a matter of expanding trade and other forms of transnational contact, or even of bringing political leaders together in international summits. Rather, it is a matter of changing deeply entrenched beliefs.

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Although our constructed images of world politics are resistant to change, change is possible. Overcoming old thinking habits sometimes occurs when we experience punishment or discomfort as a result of clinging to false assumptions. As Benjamin Franklin once observed, "The things that hurt, instruct." Dramatic events in particular can alter international images, sometimes drastically. The Vietnam War caused many Americans to reject their previous images about using military force in world politics. The defeat of the Third Reich and revelations of Nazi atrocities committed before and during World War II caused the German people to confront their past as they prepared for a democratic future imposed by the victorious Allies. More recently, the

A CLOSER LOOK:

PERCEPTIONS, FREEDOM, AND DIGNITY

The French legislature overwhelmingly passed a law banning the burqa (a full-body covering with mesh over the face) and other Islamic full-facial veils in public places, which took effect in the spring of 2011. Since then, the French Constitutional Council has determined the law does not prevent the free exercise of religion in a place of worship and is therefore constitutional. In addition to security concerns, the French government reflected widespread sentiment in its declaration that such coverings undermine community, the dignity of individuals, equality between sexes, and are "a new form of enslavement that the republic cannot accept on its soil." A majority of French citizens support the new law, with public opinion polls showing that 82 percent approves of the ban.

Yet perceptions vary on whether such coverings are repressive or liberating, and whether legislation banning the clothing is a victory for democracy or a blow for individual freedom. Some women say they choose to wear the concealing garments to protect their femininity and express their devotion to God. Some argue that such coverings enable them to move about in public anonymously, shielded from sexual pressure, and so actually allow considerable personal freedom. Others, such as Socialist MP Jean Glavany, argue that ultimately the ban is a product of "nothing more than the fear of those who are different, who come from abroad, who aren't like us, who don't share our values."

Mehdi Fedouach/AFP/Getty Images

Pictured here is a woman in a Niqab during a symbolic protest in front of the French National Assembly in Paris on April 20, 2011.

Watch the Video:

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"Who Cares What You Wear on Your Head?"

You Decide:

1. How do our perceptions shape how we view the burqa?

2. How is clothing an expression of a society's collective awareness?

3. Does wearing the burqa inhibit or promote women's freedom and dignity?

4. Would you support a similar ban in your country? Why?

human and financial costs of the prolonged U.S. war in Iraq led many policy makers and political commentators to reexamine their assumptions about the meaning of "victory" and the potential implications as U.S. engagement moved beyond initial combat to address issues of governance and stability.

Often, such jolting experiences encourage us to construct new mental maps, perceptual filters, and criteria through which we interpret later events and define situations. As we shape and reshape our images of world politics and its future, we need to think critically about the foundations on which our perceptions rest. Are they accurate? Are they informed? Should they be modified to gain greater understanding of others? Questioning our images is one of the major challenges we all face in confronting contemporary world politics.

Video: Determining Foreign Policy

KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING WORLD POLITICS

If we exaggerate the accuracy of our perceptions and seek information that confirms what we believe, how can we escape the biases created by our preconceptions? How can we avoid overlooking or dismissing evidence that runs counter to our intuition?

There are no sure-fire solutions to ensure accurate observations, no ways to guarantee that we have constructed an impartial view of international relations. However, there are a number of tools available that can improve our ability to interpret world politics. As you undertake an intellectual journey of discovery, a set of intellectual roadmaps will provide guidance for your interpretation and understanding of past, present, and future world politics. To arm you for your quest, *World Politics: Trend and Transformation* advances four keys to aid you in your inquiry.

> *The belief that one's own view of reality is the only reality is the most dangerous of all delusions.*
>
> —Paul Watzlawick, Austrian psychologist

Introducing Terminology

A primary goal of this text is to introduce you to the vocabulary used by scholars, policy makers, and the "attentive public" who routinely look at international developments. You will need to be literate and informed about the shared meaning of common words used worldwide to discuss and debate world politics and foreign policy. Some of this language has been in use since antiquity, and some of it has only recently become part of the terminology employed in diplomatic circles, scholarly research, and the media—television, newspapers, and the Internet. These words are the kind of vocabulary you are likely to encounter long after your formal collegiate education (and the course in which you are reading *World Politics*) has ended. It is also the terminology your future employers and educated neighbors will expect you to know. Some of these words are already likely to be part of your working vocabulary, but others

may look new, esoteric, pedantic, and overly sophisticated. Nonetheless, you need to know their meaning—immediately and forever. Your use of them will facilitate your ability to analyze and discuss world affairs and mark you hereafter as a knowledgeable, educated person. So take advantage of this "high definition" feature of *World Politics*. Learn these words and use them for the rest of your life—not to impress others, but to understand and communicate intelligently.

To guide you in identifying these terms, as you may already have noticed, certain words are printed in boldface in the text, and a broad definition is provided in the margins. In cases when a word is used again in a different chapter, it will be high-lighted at least once in *italics*, although the marginal definition will not be repeated. In all cases, the primary definition will appear in the Glossary at the end of book.

Distinguishing the Primary Transnational Actors

The globe is a stage, and the players in the drama are many. It is important to identify and classify the major categories of actors (sometimes called agents) who take part in international activities. The actions of each transnational *actor*, individually and collectively at various degrees of influence, shape the trends that are transforming world politics. But how do scholars conventionally break the types of actors into categories and structure thinking about the classes of players?

actor
an individual, group, state, or organization that plays a major role in world politics.

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The essential building-block units, of course, are individual people—all 7 billion of us. Every day, whether each of us chooses to litter, light a cigarette, or parent a child, we affect some small measure of how trends in the world will unfold. Humans, however, also join in various groups. All of these groups combine people and their choices in various collectivities and thereby aggregate the *power* of each group. Such groups often compete with one another because they frequently have divergent interests and goals.

power
the factors that enable one actor to change another actor's behavior against its preferences.

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For most periods of world history, the prime actors were groupings of religions, tribes whose members shared ethnic origins, and empires or expansionist centers of power. When they came into contact, they sometimes collaborated with each other for mutual benefit; more often they competed for and fought over valued resources. The more than 8000 years of recorded international relations history between and among these groups provided the precedent for the formation of today's system of interactions.

As a network of relationships among independent territorial units, the modern state system was not born until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) in Europe. Thereafter, rulers refused to recognize the secular authority of the Roman Catholic Church, replacing the system of papal governance in the Middle Ages with geographically and politically separate states that recognized no superior authority. The newly independent states all gave to rulers the same legal rights: territory under their sole control, unrestricted control of their domestic affairs, and the freedom to conduct foreign relations and negotiate treaties with

other states. The concept of *state sovereignty*—that no other actor is above the state—still captures these legal rights and identifies the state as the primary actor today.

The Westphalian system continues to color every dimension of world politics and provides the terminology used to describe the primary units in international affairs. Although the term *nation-state* is often used interchangeably with *state* and *nation*, technically the three are different. A *state* is a legal entity that enjoys a permanent population, a well-defined territory, and a government capable of exercising sovereignty. A *nation* is a collection of people who, on the basis of ethnic, linguistic, or cultural commonality, so construct their reality as to primarily perceive themselves to be members of the same group, which defines their identity. Thus, the term nation-state implies a convergence between territorial states and the psychological identification of people within them (Steward, Gvosdev, and Andelman, 2008).

However, in employing this familiar terminology, we should exercise caution because this condition is relatively rare; there are few independent states comprising a single nationality. Most states today are populated by many nations, and some nations are not states. These "nonstate nations" are *ethnic groups*—such as Native Americans in the United States, Sikhs in India, Basques in Spain, or Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria—composed of people without sovereign power over the territory in which they live.

The history of world politics since 1648 has largely been a chronicle of interactions among states, which remain the dominant political organizations in the world. However, the supremacy of the state has been severely challenged in recent years by nonstate actors. Increasingly, global affairs are influenced by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Intergovernmental organizations, which transcend national boundaries and whose members are states, carry out independent foreign policies and therefore can be considered global actors in their own right. Purposively created by states to solve shared problems, IGOs include global organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and derive their authority from the will of their membership. IGOs are characterized by permanence and institutional organization, and vary widely in their size and purpose.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), whose members are private individuals and groups, are another principal type of nonstate actor. NGOs are diverse in scope and purpose, and seek to push their own agendas and exert global influence on an array of issues, such as environmental protection, disarmament, and human rights. For example, Amnesty International, the World Wildlife Federation, and Doctors Without Borders are all NGOs that work to bring about change in the world and influence international decision making. Yet although many NGOs are seen in a positive light, others, such as terrorist groups and international drug cartels, are seen as ominous nonstate actors.

In thinking about world politics and its future, we shall probe all of these "units" or categories of actors. The emphasis and coverage will vary, depending on the topics

state sovereignty
a state's supreme authority to manage internal affairs and foreign relations.

state
an independent legal entity with a government exercising exclusive control over the territory and population it governs.

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nation
a collectivity whose people see themselves as members of the same group because they share the same ethnicity, culture, or language.

ethnic groups
people whose identity is primarily defined by their sense of sharing a common ancestral nationality, language, cultural heritage, and kinship.

intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)
institutions created and joined by states' governments, which give them authority to make collective decisions to manage particular problems on the global agenda.

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levels of analysis the different aspects of and agents in international affairs that may be stressed in interpreting and explaining global phenomena, depending on whether the analyst chooses to focus on "wholes" (the complete global system and large collectivities) or on "parts" (individual states or people).

individual level of analysis an analytical approach that emphasizes the psychological and perceptual variables motivating people, such as those who make foreign policy decisions on behalf of states and other global actors.

under examination in each chapter. But you should keep in mind that all actors (individuals, states, and nonstate organizations) are simultaneously active today, and their importance and power depend on the trend or issue under consideration. So continuously ask yourself the question, now and in the future: which actors are most active, most influential, on which issues, and under what conditions? That probing should cast doubt on outdated images of international relations.

Distinguishing Levels of Analysis

When we describe international phenomena, we answer a "what" question. What is happening? What is changing? When we move from description to explanation, we face the more difficult task of answering a "why" question. Why did event X happen? Why is global warming occurring? Why is the gap between rich and poor widening?

One useful key for addressing such puzzles is to visualize an event or trend as part of the end result of some unknown process. This encourages us to think about the causes that might have produced the phenomenon we are trying to explain. Most events and developments in world politics are undoubtedly influenced simultaneously by many determinants, each connected to the rest in a complex web of causal linkages.

World Politics provides an analytic set of categories to help make interpretive sense of the multiple causes that explain why international events and circumstances occur. This analytic distinction conforms to a widespread scholarly consensus that international events or developments can best be analyzed and understood by first separating the multiple pieces of the puzzle into different categories, or levels. Most conventionally, investigators focus on one (or more) of three levels. Known as *levels of analysis*, as shown in Figure 1.1, this classification distinguishes individual influences, state or internal influences, and global influences for the system as a whole.

To predict which forces will dominate the future, we also must recognize that many influences are operating at the same time. No trend or trouble stands alone; all interact simultaneously. The future is influenced by many determinants, each connected to the rest in a complex web of linkages. Collectively, these may produce stability by limiting the impact of any single disruptive force. If interacting forces converge, however, their combined effects can accelerate the pace of change in world politics, moving it in directions not possible otherwise.

The *individual level of analysis* refers to the personal characteristics of humans, including those responsible for making important decisions on behalf of state and nonstate actors, as well as ordinary citizens whose behavior has important political consequences. At this level, for example, we may properly locate the impact of individuals' perceptions on their political attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. We may also explore the questions of why each person is a crucial part of the global drama and why the study of world politics is relevant to our lives and future.

The *state level of analysis* consists of the authoritative decision-making units that govern states' foreign policy processes and the internal attributes of those states (e.g., their type of government, level of economic and military power, and number of nationality groups), which both shape and constrain leaders' foreign policy choices. The processes by which states make decisions regarding war and peace and their capabilities for carrying out those decisions, for instance, fall within the state level of analysis.

The *global level of analysis* refers to the interactions of states and nonstate actors on the global stage whose behaviors ultimately shape the international political system and the levels of conflict and cooperation that characterize world politics. The capacity of rich states to dictate the choices of poor states falls properly within the global level of analysis. So does the capacity (or incapacity) of the UN to maintain peace.

Examples abound of the diverse ways in which global trends and issues are the product of influences at each level of analysis. Protectionist trade policies by an importing country increase the costs to consumers of clothing and cars and reduce the standard of living of citizens in the manufacturing states. Such policies are initiated by a state government (national level), but they diminish the quality of life of people living both within the protectionist country and those living abroad (individual level) and reduce the level of global trade while threatening to precipitate retaliatory trade wars (global level). Of course, for some developments and issues, factors and forces emanating primarily from one or two particular levels provide more analytical leverage than do those from the other level(s). Accordingly, as we confront specific global issues in subsequent chapters, we emphasize those levels of analysis that provide the most informative lens for viewing them.

FIGURE 1.1

THREE LEVELS OF INFLUENCE: MAJOR FACTORS SHAPING FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS The factors that affect states' foreign policies and the decisions of all other global actors can be categorized at three basic levels. At the global level are those structural features of the international system such as the prevalence of civil wars and the extent of trade interdependence. At the state level are internal or domestic influences such as the state's type of government or the opinions of its citizens. At the individual level are the characteristics of leaders—their personal beliefs, values, and personality. All three levels simultaneously affect decisions, but their relative weight usually depends on the issues and circumstances at the time of decision.

Distinguishing Change, Continuities, and Cycles

Once we have identified factors from different levels of analysis that may combine to produce some outcome, it is useful to place them in a chronological sequence. Anyone who owns a combination lock knows that the correct numbers must be entered in their proper order to open the lock. Similarly, to explain why something happened in world

state level of analysis an analytical approach that emphasizes how the internal attributes of states influence their foreign policy behaviors.
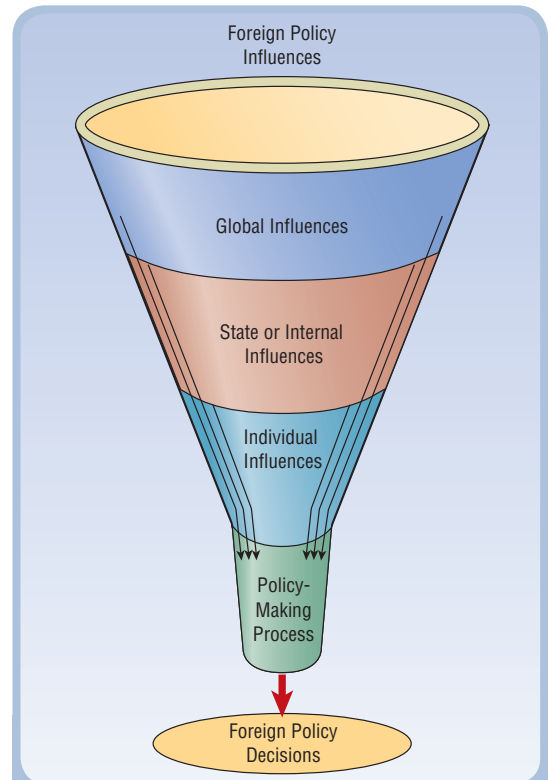
global level of analysis
an analytical approach that emphasizes the impact of worldwide conditions on foreign policy behavior and human welfare.

politics, we must determine how various factors at the individual, state, and global system levels fit together in a configuration that unfolds over time.

One key to anticipating probable human destiny is to look beyond the confines of our immediate time. It is important to appreciate the impact of previous ideas and events on current realities. As philosopher George Santayana cautioned, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Similarly, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill advised, "The farther backward you look, the farther forward you are likely to see." Thus, to understand the dramatic changes in world politics today and to predict how they will shape the future, it is important to view them in the context of a long-term perspective that examines how transnational patterns of interaction have changed and how some of their fundamental characteristics have resisted change. What do evolving diplomatic practices suggest about the current state of world politics? Are the episodic shock waves throughout the world clearing the way for a truly new twenty-first-century world order? Or will many of today's dramatic disruptions ultimately prove temporary, mere spikes on the seismograph of history?

We invite you to explore these questions with us. To begin our search, we discuss how the differences between continuities, changes, and cycles in world history can help you orient your interpretation.

Every historical period is marked to some extent by change. Now, however, the pace of change seems more rapid and its consequences more profound than ever. To many observers, the cascade of events today implies a revolutionary restructuring of world politics. Numerous integrative trends point to that possibility. The countries of the world are drawing closer together in communications and trade, producing a globalized market. Yet at the same time, disintegrative trends paint a less promising picture. Weapons proliferation, global environmental deterioration, and the resurgence of ethnic conflict all portend a restructuring fraught with disorder.

To predict which forces will dominate the future, we must recognize that no trend stands alone, and that different trends may produce stability by limiting the impact of any one disruptive force. It is also possible for converging trends to accelerate the pace of change, moving world politics in directions not possible otherwise.

It appears that world politics is now going through a transition period. The opposing forces of integration and disintegration point toward the probable advent on the horizon of a ***transformation***, but distinguishing true historical watersheds from temporary change is difficult. The moment of transformation from one system to another is not immediately obvious. Nevertheless, another useful key for students of world history is to recognize that certain times are especially likely candidates.

transformation
a change in the characteristic pattern of interaction among the most active participants in world politics of such magnitude that it appears that one "global system" has replaced another.

In the past, major turning points in world politics usually have occurred at the conclusion of wars with many participants, which typically disrupt or destroy preexisting

international arrangements. In the twentieth century, World Wars I and II and the Cold War caused fundamental breaks with the past and set in motion major transformations, providing countries with incentives to rethink the premises underlying their interests, purposes, and priorities. Similarly, many people concluded that the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9/11), produced a fundamental transformation in world affairs. Indeed, 9/11 seemed to change everything: in former U.S. President George W. Bush's words, "Night fell on a different world."

To analyze change in world politics, it is equally important to look also for the possibility of continuity amidst apparent transformation. Consider how, despite all that may appear radically different since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, much also may remain the same. As William Dobson (2006) wrote on the eve of the fifth anniversary of 9/11, "what is remarkable is how little the world has changed." "The massive forces of international trade and globalization were largely unaffected by the attacks," notes historian Juan Cole (2006, p. 26) in a similar vein. Decades-old flash points remain, including the conflicts between India and Pakistan, North Korea and the United States, and Israel and militants in southern Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. "For all their visibility and drama," concludes Cole (2006, p. 26), "the 9/11 attacks left untouched many of the underlying forces and persistent tensions that shape international politics."

We often expect the future to bring changes automatically, and later are surprised to discover that certain patterns from the past have reappeared. Headlines are not trend lines, and a trend does not necessarily signal transformation. Given the enduring continuities that persist even alongside rapid changes, it is dangerous to assume that a major transformation in world politics is under way.

So, what criteria can help determine when an existing pattern of relationships gives way to a completely new global system? Stanley Hoffmann (1961) argues that we can identify a new *global system* when we have a new answer to one of the following three questions. Following this line of argument, we might conclude that a new system has now emerged.

Case Studies: The End of History or the Clash of Civilizations and Terrorism?

1 What are the system's basic units for global governance?   Although states remain a fixture of the international system, supranational institutions and nongovernmental actors are increasingly prominent. New trade partnerships have been forged in Europe, the cone of South America, North America, and the Pacific Rim, and these trading blocs may behave as unitary, or independent, nonstate actors as they compete with one another. Moreover, international organizations such as the European Union (EU) now flex their political muscles in contests with individual states, and transnational religious movements such as Islamic extremist groups challenge the global system itself.

2 What are the predominant foreign policy goals that these units seek with respect to one another?   Territorial conquest is no longer states' predominant foreign policy goal. Instead, their emphasis has shifted from traditionally military methods of exercising influence to economic means. Meanwhile, the

global system
the predominant patterns of behaviors and beliefs that prevail internationally to define the major worldwide conditions that heavily influence human and national activities.

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ideological contest between democratic capitalism and the Marxist-Leninist communism of the Cold War era no longer comprises the primary cleavage in international politics, and a major new axis has yet to become clear.

3 **What can these units do to one another with their military and economic capabilities?** The proliferation of weapons technology has profoundly altered the damage enemies can inflict on one another. *Great powers* alone no longer control the world's most lethal weapons. Increasingly, however, the great powers' prosperity depends on economic circumstances throughout the globe, reducing their ability to engineer growth.

The profound changes in recent years of the types of actors (units), goals, and capabilities have dramatically altered the hierarchical power ranking of states, but the hierarchies themselves endure. The economic hierarchy that divides the rich from the poor, the political hierarchy that separates the rulers from the ruled, the resource hierarchy that makes some suppliers and others dependents, and the military asymmetries that pit the strong against the weak—all still shape the relations among states, as they have in the past. Similarly, the perpetuation of international *anarchy*, in the absence of institutions to govern the globe, and continuing national insecurity still encourage preparations for war and the use of force without international mandate. Thus, change and continuity coexist, with both forces simultaneously shaping contemporary world politics.

The interaction of constancy and change will determine future relations among global actors. This perhaps explains why *cycles*, periodic sequences of events that resemble patterns in earlier periods, so often appear to characterize world politics: because the emergent global system shares many characteristics with earlier periods, historically minded observers may experience déjà vu—the illusion of having already experienced something actually being experienced for the first time.

Preparing for Your Journey into World Politics

Because world politics is complex and our images of it are often dissimilar, scholars differ in their approaches to understanding world politics. Some view the world through a macropolitical lens, meaning they look at world politics from a "bird's eye view" and explain the behavior

AP Photo/Carmen Taylor

WAS 9/11 A GLOBAL TRANSFORMING EVENT? The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center's Twin Towers on 9/11 is widely regarded as a revolutionary date in world history, producing a sea of change in world politics. Time will tell whether this event will rank alongside the birth of the nuclear age on August 6, 1945, when the United States bombed Hiroshima, or the November 1989 dismantling of the Berlin Wall, which signaled the end of the Cold War, as events that truly changed the world.

of world actors based on their relative position within the global system. Other scholars adopt a micropolitical perspective that looks at world politics from the "ground-up," meaning the individual is the unit of analysis from which aggregate behavior is extrapolated. Both approaches make important contributions to understanding world politics: the former reveals how the global environment sets limits on political choice; the latter draws attention to how every transnational actor's preferences, capabilities, and strategic calculations influence global conditions. By looking at world politics from a macropolitical perspective, we can see why actors that are similarly situated within the system may behave alike, despite their internal differences. By taking a micropolitical perspective, we can appreciate why some actors are very different or behave differently, despite their similar placement within the global system (see Waltz, 2000).

IT'S A SMALL WORLD As you begin your journey of discovery to extend your knowledge of world politics, it is important to be aware of the images that you hold and be open to new experiences and interpretations of the world around you. Take full advantage of all of your opportunities to study and learn about the global community. Shown here are U.S. students from the University of Memphis enjoying their study abroad program in Segovia, Spain.

Image Provided by Shannon Blanton

From this analytic point of departure, *World Politics* will accordingly inspect (1) the major macro trends in world politics that set the boundaries for action; (2) the values, interests, and capabilities of the individual actors affected by these global trends; and (3) the ways these actors interact in their individual and collective efforts to modify existing global circumstances and how these interactions shape the ultimate trajectories of global trends.

cycles
the periodic reemergence of conditions similar to those that existed previously.

This analytic approach looks at the dynamic interplay of actors and their environment as well as how the actors respond and seek to influence each others' behavior.

The approach outlined here can open a window for you not only to understand contemporary world politics but also to predict the likely global future. The approach has the advantage of taking into account the interplay of proximate and remote explanatory factors at the individual, state, and global levels of analysis while avoiding dwelling on particular countries, individuals, or transitory events whose long-term significance is likely to decrease. Instead, *World Politics* attempts to identify behaviors that cohere into general patterns that measurably affect global living conditions. Thus, you will explore the nature of world politics from a perspective that places historical and contemporary events into a larger, lasting theoretical context, to provide you with the conceptual tools that will enable you to interpret subsequent developments later in your lifetime.

The ability to learn how to learn will be the only security you have.

—Thomas L. Friedman, political journalist

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Key Terms

world politics
schematic reasoning
cognitive dissonance
mirror images
enduring rivalries
actor
power
state sovereignty

state
nation
ethnic groups
intergovernmental organizations
nongovernmental organizations
levels of analysis
individual level of analysis

state level of analysis
global level of analysis
transformation
global system
great powers
anarchy
cycles

Suggested Readings

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Additional Video Resources

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Vocke, William. "Targeting Enemies in War."

Vocke, William. "Dealing with Dictators: North Korea."

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