

Summary of a book chapter

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Critical Issues in Contemporary International Relations Critical Issues in Contemporary International Relations Terrorism refers to unlawful or threatened use of violence against citizens to achieve political, religious or related objectives. On the other hand, International terrorism involves extremism against the territory or the citizens of more than one country. Notably, the 11 September 2001 attacks in New York, Washington, and later attacks in other places exhibit this issue. Several approaches provide useful insights towards the analysis of international terrorism. Specifically, these are religious, environmental, and New Patterns of War and Peace.

Religious Approach

Many scholars believe that the events of 11 September 2001 reflect a ‘revival of religion’ in international affairs. Precisely, this means that there is a ‘rising importance of religious beliefs, practices, and discourses in life,’ which has significant inferences for international relations (Thomas 2005: 26).

Religion and politics are profoundly intertwined in the ancient days, unlike the modern world where these elements stand as independent entities. Medieval authority spread among a chain of command of religious and political rulers. When the Thirty Years War in Europe (1618–48) was over, a new modern era presaged the liberation of European leaders from the religious–political authority of Christendom. Power and authority became concentrated at one point. Although religious beliefs were disgorged from the political life, religion still influences the political agenda in many countries.

Policy and issues approach seeks to prove that in an anarchist world ‘states

have a hierarchy of interests. Specifically, the pattern occurs with security at the top, followed by economic welfare, and then the ideological and humanitarian concerns at the lowest level (Desch 1998: 160).

Environment Approach

Some theorists believe human economic and social activity is taking place in a way that portends some form of deindustrialized society (Lee 1993). The anthropocentric and Judeo-Christians argue that man exploits nature in pursuit of human destiny and development. Notably, this is different from an eco-radical worldview that puts an equal value of humans and nature (Eckersley 1992; Goodin 1992). Eco-radicals contend that the state is the cause of the environmental crisis (Carter 1993). Nevertheless, there is no agreement about the role of the state or its alternative. Consequently, this brings the current debate on the scope and depth of necessary reforms for facing the environmental challenge.

New Patterns of War and Peace Approach

The New Patterns of War and Peace approach claims that armed conflict takes place within weak states that cannot provide security, order, freedom, justice, and welfare for their citizens. Elsewhere, in advanced countries there is peace, cooperation, and no risk of interstate war. The essential elements of liberal advancement, to which they point (i. e., Democratization and economic modernization) do not work very well in weak states. Postmodern statehood has produced problems; thus, liberals need to come to terms with the fact that change will not always be positive. Therefore, there is a need to think of other models of development, as expressed by some of the anti-globalization and global justice movements (Escobar 2004).

In summary, the nature of the theoretical challenge to IR modeled by the four issues depends on an individual's assessment of what is at stake.