

# International Relations Introduction

## ***Basics***

International relations (IR): the term was adopted when the nation identified with the state. In reality, it analyses the relations between states.

Now, however, it can also involve the relations between International Organizations and their relations with states. Therefore, it includes both high politics and low politics. It is broader than the term International politics, which concerns relations of power, i.e. political relations.

The science of IR is an evolution of Political Science and not of Law. Also, it is not relevant to International Law. The science of IR observes international phenomena and seeks to draw conclusions and, if possible, to discover the "natural" laws which govern them. It is concerned with the "why" question and not the "must" one.

The science of IR was methodologically and professionally organised after World War II. It was then that schools of thought started appearing along with the development of its literature and the introduction of IR in the syllabuses of universities.

## ***The science***

The term "science" derives from the Latin "scientia", meaning knowledge. The greek word for science, "επιστήμη", deriving from the verb "επίσταμαι" signifies a deep comprehension of something. Science denotes systematic, disciplined and objective observation of phenomena. Scientific truth can be checked empirically using careful observation and measurement with experiments.

In the strict sense of the term science, IR cannot be characterized as such because it lacks the tool of experiments for apparent reasons. Nevertheless, it is a quasi-science since in IR, there are "laws" that rule the international political phenomenon, and they can be discovered through systematic, disciplined and objective observation.

The researchers of IR are interested in power, control and authority, and their division at the international level. Of course, simple descriptions of phenomena in the relations between political entities do not constitute a science.

## ***Theorists***

The first-ever scientific approach to IR was made by Thucydides, who analysed the Peloponnesian War and is considered the father of IR. He does not describe, but he analyses keeping austere methodological rules in the collection and the verification of the information he uses.

Thucydides believed in the periodicity of human behaviour. "this work has been written as a forever study and not as a temporary reading". He adopts the theory of antagonism and uneven

growth of power as an analytical tool. "the root cause of the war was that the increase in the Athenians' power, forces the Lacedaemonians to fight".

The next major work of international politics was that of Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

***Books about politics that offer the bases for IR:***

- *Leviathan*- Thomas Hobbes
- *Two Treatises of Government*-John Locke
- *The Social Contract*- Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- *Capital*- Karl Marx
- *On Liberty*- John Stuart Mill

***Scientific books of IR War Theory***

- Carl von Clausewitz
- Alfred Mahan
- Halford Mackinder

***Scientific books of IR***

- *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* - Vladimir Lenin
- *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939* H. Car
- *Peace & War* Raymond Aron
- *International theory*- Martin Wight
- *Politics Among Nations*- Hans Morgenthau
- *The Anarchical Society* Hedley Bull
- *Man, state and war* Kenneth Waltz
- *Theory of international relations* - Kenneth Waltz
- *Power and interdependence* Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye
- *War and change in world politics* Robert Gilpin

***Sources:***

Ilias Kouskouvelis (2004) *Εισαγωγή στις Διεθνείς Σχέσεις*