

UNIT 1

MAIN CONCEPTS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



READING 1 KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS

to co-exist (par. 1) proximity (par. 1) competition (par. 1) intimidation (par. 1) a conquest (par. 1) belligerent (par. 1) collaboration (par. 1) recognition (par. 1, 5) an envoy (par. 1) (under a higher) political authority (par. 3) to be referred to as (par. 3)	common interests/values (par. 4) a core problem/value (par. 2, 4) an unsolicited interference (par. 4) (right of) self-determination/self-defence (par. 4) to date back as far as (par. 5) reciprocity (par. 5) hierarchical (par. 6) prevalent (par. 6, 7) a suzerain state (par. 6) to come into existence (par. 7)
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INTRODUCTORY PRACTICE

Exercise 1.

A. *Scan the text. Find and underline the key words and phrases. Highlight any unfamiliar words. Discuss their meaning with a partner and look them up in a dictionary.*

B. *Do you know the answers? If not, you will be able to find them in the following texts.*

- **What is the definition of ‘state’?**
- **When and where were borders invented?**
- **Are the relations between imperial provinces international?**
- **Are states the only diplomatic actors?**

READING 1

The evolution of international society

ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS

1. In order to understand the contemporary world and the significance of globalisation we need to consider the evolution of international society. The historical origin of international relations is impossible to define. But it was a time when people began to settle down on the land and form themselves into separate territorial political communities. Each group needed to **co-exist** with neighbouring groups whom they could not ignore or avoid because they were right there next door. Their geographical situation next to each other could have led to political **proximity** if not a border of some kind. (The formally demarcated boundaries are a much later invention of the modern European society of states.) The contacts must have involved activities such as **competition**, disputes, threats, **intimidation**, intervention, invasion, **conquest**, and other **belligerent** interactions. But it also must have involved dialogue, **collaboration**, exchange, communication, **recognition**, and similar

non-belligerent relations. There are recorded formal agreements among ancient city-states which date as far back as 2400 BC, alliances dating to 1390 BC, and **en-voys** as early as 653 BC.

2. These group relations on a horizontal plane could be considered as the **core** problem of international relations, which is built on a fundamental distinction between our collective selves and other collective selves in a territorial world of many such collective selves in contact with each other. If there was no horizontal territorial division between 'we' and 'they' there could still be human societies: perhaps isolated political communities, perhaps roaming groups, perhaps a vertical society such as an empire, possibly even a cosmopolitan world society of all humankind without an essential group differentiation. But there could not be international relations in the usual meaning of the term. In short, international relations are relations of territorially based and delimited political groups.

3. Therefore, a definition of 'international society' involves relations between politically organized human groups which occupy distinctive territories, enjoying certain independence from each other. International society can thus be understood as a society of political communities which are not under any higher **political authority**. In the language of international relations such communities **are referred to** as states. The usual concept of a state involves consisting of (1) a permanent population (2) occupying a defined territory (3) under a central government (4) which is independent of all other governments of a similar kind. The term, used for this constitutional or political independence, is state sovereignty. International relations start with the existence of states, or an independent political community, each of which possesses a government and is sovereign within its boundaries and over a segment of the human population.

4. International society has been defined as a society of states which exists when a group of states with certain **common interests and common values** form a society, bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another. They also work jointly in common institutions. International society is thus a pluralistic or 'liberal' political arrangement. The **core value** is

the political opportunity of people to enjoy a geographically separate group existence free from **unsolicited interference** from neighbouring groups and other outsiders. Independence is the **core value** in a cluster of important international values, including **self-determination**, non-intervention, and **right of self-defence**. The basic institutional arrangement which expresses those values is state sovereignty.

5. One of the most important arrangements between sovereign states is diplomacy which aims to facilitate their relations. Diplomatic arrangements have been in different form from one time or place to the next: diplomacy in ancient Greece was not the same as diplomacy in Renaissance Italy which was different again from the classical diplomacy of the eighteenth century or the global diplomacy of the twentieth century. Another arrangement is international law, which is a more recent innovation **dating back only as far as** the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the first international legal texts were written. They reflected the legal relations between the new entities known as sovereign states. Other arrangements include recognition, **reciprocity**, the laws of war, international conferences, and more. In the past century an increasingly important arrangement has been the large complex of

international organisations – universal, regional and functional.

6. In order to properly understand the idea of international society we should consider its historical context. Vertical or **hierarchical** relations between political groups are a historical phenomenon all over the world from the ancient history. Political empire is the **prevalent** form of group relations. Horizontal relations between political groups are comparatively rare. The ancient Greeks constructed an international society which survived for several centuries in a surrounding political environment of various hegemonic empires, including Persia, Macedonia, and the Roman Empire. At that time there were also great empires and **suzerain-state** systems not only in Europe and the Middle East. The Chinese empire was the greatest of them all and lasted for millennia.

7. Empires were the **prevalent** form of large-scale political group relations in Western Europe throughout the era of the Roman

Empire and that of its **successor**, medieval Christendom, which lasted until about the sixteenth century. In the late Middle Ages (1300-1500) the Renaissance Italians constructed a small regional international society based on the city states of northern and central Italy. The first modern international society based on large territorial states **came into existence** a little later in north-western Europe. It was the basis for the evolution of the contemporary global international society. But empires continued to exist in Europe and many other parts of the world till the 20th century. Eastern Europe was dominated by empires until the end of the First World War. Although Europeans created a society of states among themselves which was politically modern, at the same time they established vast empires to rule non-European political communities in the rest of the world. International society is thus uncommon in history even though it has become globalized in the 20th century and now prevails in every continent.

AFTER READING:

Exercise 2. Match the following titles to the appropriate paragraphs in Reading 1. Think of appropriate titles for the other 2 paragraphs.

A. The pre-history of international relations

B. The concept of 'state'

C. Independence: a set of values

D. Instruments of the international society

Exercise 3. A. Are the statements true or false?

1. Contacts between human groups in early history involved both positive and negative aspects.
2. Common language is one of the core characteristics of an independent state.
3. Legal relations between ancient city states had a formal expression in international law.
4. Sovereign states have been the dominant political arrangement throughout history.

B. Rewrite the false statements to make them true

C. Select the best option from A), B) or C).

1. The early human communities
 - A) had demarcated borders.
 - B) were involved in both competition and collaboration.
 - C) did not form alliances.
2. International relations as we understand them
 - A) are a necessary condition for the existence of human society.
 - B) will certainly exist in a future unified human society.
 - C) are based on territorial political groups.
3. State sovereignty
 - A) is basic for the existence of international relations.
 - B) is not related to independence.
 - C) allows for limited interference by neighbouring communities.
4. Diplomacy
 - A) makes international relations more complicated.
 - B) is a newer arrangement than international law.
 - C) has changed throughout different historical periods.

Exercise 4. *Match the concepts with their definitions.*

1. coexistence	A. a state's characteristic being politically independent of all other states
2. state sovereignty	B. a state which possesses both a home territory and foreign territories
3. suzerain state	C. the formal rules of conduct that states acknowledge or contract between themselves
4. empire	D. the doctrine of live and let live between political communities, or states
5. hegemony	E. the right of a political community or state to become a sovereign state
6. balance of power	F. power and control exercised by a leading state over other states
7. international law	G. a shared value and condition of stability and predictability in the relations of states
8. international order	H. a doctrine and an arrangement whereby the power of one state (or group of states) is checked by the countervailing power of other states
9. self-determination	I. a state which dominates and subordinates neighbouring states, without taking them over

VOCABULARY:**Exercise 5 A.** *Match the items a-h to items 1-8 to create a meaningful collocation.*

a. core	1. relations
b. Ancient	2. interests
c. independent	3. Greece
d. common	4. value
e. sovereign within	5. political authority
f. hierarchical	6. Italy
g. Renaissance	7. its boundaries
h. not under any higher	8. political community

B. *Use an appropriate collocation from A to fill in the blanks.*

1. Independence is the _____ among many important international values, including self-determination, non-intervention, and right of self-defence.