

Chapter 10: Poststructuralism

- Poststructuralists raise questions about ontology and epistemology.
- Poststructuralism is critical of statism and of taking the anarchical system as fixed and timeless.
- Poststructuralism adopts a constitutive epistemology.
- What count as facts depends on the ontological and epistemological assumptions a theory makes.
- Four concepts from poststructuralist philosophy have been used to produce new knowledge about world politics: discourse, deconstruction, genealogy, and intertextuality.
- To look at world politics as discourse is to study the linguistic structures through which materiality is given meaning.
- Deconstruction argues that language is a system of unstable dichotomies where one term is valued as superior.
- Genealogy asks which political practices have formed the present and which alternative understandings and discourses have been marginalized and forgotten.
- Intertextuality holds that we can see world politics as made up of texts, and that all texts refer to other texts yet each is unique.
- State sovereignty is a practice that constitutes identity and authority in a particular manner.
- Poststructuralists deconstruct the distinction between the national and the international by showing that the two terms stabilize each other and depend on a long series of other dichotomies.
- The global is not a political category like the state, and therefore cannot replace it.
- Poststructuralists warn against the danger of universalist discourse because it is always defined from a particular position of power.
- In keeping with poststructuralism's non-foundationalist ontology, there are no natural or objective identities, only those that are produced in discourse.
- The terms 'subjectivities' or 'subject positions' underscore the fact that identity is not something that someone objectively has, but rather a position that one is constructed as having.
- The relationship between identity and foreign policy is performative and mutually constitutive.
- Poststructuralism asks 'Who are the subjects and how can they speak?' and 'What subjects are prevented from speaking?'.