

Chapter 15: International and global security

- Security is a 'contested concept'.
- The meaning of security has been broadened beyond military considerations to include political, economic, societal, and environmental aspects.
- Differing arguments exist about the tension between national and international security.
- Different views have also emerged about the significance of globalization for the future of international security.
- Realists and neorealists emphasize the perennial problem of insecurity.
- Some writers see the 'security dilemma' as the essential source of conflict among states.
- Neorealists reject the significance of international institutions in helping many states to achieve peace and security.
- In contrast, contemporary politicians and academics who write under the label of liberal institutionalism or neoliberalism see institutions as an important mechanism for achieving international security.
- Liberal institutionalists accept many of realism's assumptions about the continuing importance of military power in international relations but argue that institutions can provide a framework for cooperation that can help to mitigate the dangers of security competition among states.
- Constructivist thinkers base their ideas on two main assumptions: (1) that the fundamental structures of international politics are socially constructed; and (2) that changing the way we think about international relations can help to bring about greater international security.
- Some constructivist thinkers accept many of the assumptions of neorealism, but they reject the view that 'structure' consists only of material capabilities. They stress the importance of social structures, defined in terms of shared knowledge and identities as well as material capabilities.
- Critical security theorists contend that most approaches put too much emphasis on the state.
- Feminist writers argue that gender tends to be left out of the literature on international security, despite the fact that war impacts men and women differently.
- Poststructuralist writers believe that the nature of international politics can be changed by altering the way we think and talk about security.