

GML STUDY NOTES: KENNO

Theories of Global Politics

1. Concept Explanation

Global politics studies **how states, institutions, corporations, and societies interact in international affairs.**

Earlier international relations focused mainly on **state-to-state diplomacy**, but globalization has expanded politics to include:

- multinational corporations
- international organizations
- NGOs
- global media networks

Different **theories of global politics** try to explain how international relations work.

Key theoretical frameworks include:

Realism

- States act to protect **national interests and security**
- International system has **no global government (anarchy)**
- Military and economic power determine influence

Liberalism

- Cooperation between states is possible
- Trade, diplomacy, and international institutions reduce conflict
- Democracies are less likely to fight each other

Marxism / Political Economy

- Global politics shaped by **capitalism and economic inequality**
- Focus on exploitation of the **Global South by Global North**

Constructivism

- Global politics shaped by **ideas, identity, culture, and narratives**
 - Media and ideology influence how states perceive threats
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2. Key Ideas from the Readings

According to Andrew Heywood:

- Global politics involves **both state and non-state actors**
- Cultural identity and religion increasingly shape global conflicts
- Economic globalization has increased interdependence between countries
- New perspectives include:
 - feminist international relations
 - postcolonial theory
 - environmental politics

These approaches challenge the traditional **state-centric model of international politics**.

3. Important Terms / Concepts

Anarchy

Absence of a world government controlling states.

State Sovereignty

Authority of a state to govern itself.

Globalization

Increasing economic, political, and cultural interconnectedness.

Non-State Actors

Actors other than governments influencing global politics (NGOs, corporations, terrorist groups).

4. Real-World Media Examples

Russia–Ukraine War

- Western media frame conflict as **defense of democracy**
- Russian media frame it as **NATO aggression**

Israel–Palestine Conflict

- Media narratives differ across Western, Middle Eastern, and Asian outlets.
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5. Critical Insights (What Professors Look For)

High-quality answers should show that:

- Global politics is **not only about military power**

- Economic structures and media narratives influence international relations
 - Non-state actors increasingly shape global politics
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6. How to Use This in an Exam Answer

Structure a 10-mark answer as:

1. Define global politics
 2. Explain two major theories
 3. Give a real-world example
 4. Conclude by evaluating which theory best explains modern global politics
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Power and the 21st-Century World Order

1. Concept Explanation

Power in global politics refers to **the ability to influence the behaviour of other states or actors**.

Power can take different forms:

Hard Power

- Military force
- Economic sanctions

Soft Power

- Culture
- diplomacy
- media influence

Structural Power

- ability to shape global economic and political systems
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2. Key Ideas from the Readings

In the modern world order:

Cold War period → **bipolar system** (USA vs USSR)

Post-Cold War → **unipolar system dominated by USA**

Today → emerging **multipolar world**

Rising powers include:

- China
- India
- Brazil
- Russia

These countries challenge Western dominance.

3. Important Terms

Hegemony

Dominance of one powerful state in the global system.

Multipolarity

Power distributed among multiple global powers.

Balance of Power

States forming alliances to prevent dominance by one country.

4. Real-World Media Examples

Rise of China

- Western media: China as **strategic threat**
- Chinese media: China as **peaceful global partner**

US Foreign Policy

- Western media: global leadership
 - Global South media: interventionism
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5. Critical Insights

Modern power operates through **economic institutions, media narratives, and technological control**, not just military strength.

Control over global finance, technology, and information networks increasingly determines influence.

6. Exam Usage

Good answers should:

- Define power
- Explain Cold War vs modern world order
- Use examples such as China's rise
- Evaluate stability of multipolar world

Regionalism and Global Politics

1. Concept Explanation

Regionalism refers to **countries in a specific geographical region cooperating politically or economically**.

This cooperation helps countries:

- improve trade
- increase political stability
- strengthen regional identity

Examples include:

- European Union
- African Union
- ASEAN

2. Key Ideas from the Readings

Regional organizations help states respond to:

- globalization
- economic competition
- security challenges

The European Union is the **most advanced regional organization**, but regional cooperation is expanding globally.

3. Important Terms

Regional Integration

Countries integrating economies and policies.

Trade Bloc

Group of countries with preferential trade agreements.

Supranational Authority

Institution with power above individual states.

4. Real-World Examples

European Union single market

African Union peacekeeping

ASEAN economic cooperation

5. Critical Insights

Regionalism can:

- strengthen globalization
or
 - act as protection against globalization
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6. Exam Usage

Explain:

1. Meaning of regionalism
 2. Reasons for formation
 3. Case study example (EU or ASEAN)
 4. Advantages and limitations
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4. ASEAN and Southeast Asian Politics

1. Concept Explanation

Association of Southeast Asian Nations was formed in **1967**.

Purpose:

- promote regional stability
 - strengthen economic cooperation
 - reduce conflict in Southeast Asia
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2. Key Ideas from the Readings

ASEAN emerged during the **Cold War period**.

Reasons for formation:

- fear of communist expansion
- economic development needs
- desire for regional cooperation

Over time ASEAN expanded its influence through:

- ASEAN Regional Forum
 - ASEAN+3 cooperation with major Asian economies
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3. Important Terms

ASEAN+3

ASEAN cooperation with China, Japan, and South Korea.

ARF

ASEAN Regional Forum focusing on regional security.

4. Media Examples

South China Sea disputes

- Western media: Chinese aggression
 - Chinese media: historical territorial rights
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5. Critical Insights

ASEAN demonstrates how **smaller countries can increase influence through collective regional cooperation**.

6. Exam Usage

Discuss:

- historical formation
 - geopolitical importance
 - ASEAN's role balancing major powers
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Political Economy of Media

1. Concept Explanation

Political economy of media studies **how economic and political power influences media systems and content.**

Media organizations operate as **both information institutions and businesses.**

2. Key Ideas from the Readings

Media ownership affects:

- news selection
- narrative framing
- political agendas

Global media networks are concentrated among a small number of corporations.

This influences global information flows.

3. Important Terms

Media Ownership

Control of media outlets by corporations or governments.

Information Power

Ability to shape public perception through communication.

Agenda Setting

Media determining which issues receive attention.

4. Real-World Examples

Coverage of global conflicts often reflects **national political interests**.

Example:

South China Sea disputes framed differently by Western and Chinese media.

5. Critical Insights

Media is not neutral.

Political and economic structures influence which narratives dominate international news.

6. Exam Usage

In answers:

- link media ownership to geopolitical narratives
 - show how media shapes public opinion in international politics
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Global Environmental Issues

1. Concept Explanation

Environmental politics deals with **global cooperation to address environmental problems**.

Major issues include:

- climate change
 - biodiversity loss
 - deforestation
 - water scarcity
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2. Key Ideas from the Readings

Environmental problems require **international cooperation**, because ecological systems cross national borders.

Global environmental governance includes treaties, institutions, and international agreements.

3. Important Terms

Sustainable Development

Economic development without harming future generations.

Global Commons

Resources shared by all nations (oceans, atmosphere).

4. Real-World Examples

Climate change negotiations

Amazon deforestation

Global carbon emission debates

5. Critical Insights

Environmental policies often conflict with **economic development priorities**, especially in developing countries.

6. Exam Usage

Explain:

- importance of global cooperation
 - environmental agreements
 - challenges in enforcement
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7. Ramsar Convention

1. Concept Explanation

Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for **wetland conservation**.

Signed in **1971 in Ramsar, Iran**.

2. Key Ideas from the Readings

Goals of the convention:

- conserve wetlands globally
- promote sustainable use of wetlands
- protect biodiversity

Countries joining the convention must:

- designate protected wetlands
 - promote conservation policies
 - monitor ecological changes
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3. Important Terms

Wetlands

Ecosystems such as marshes, lakes, mangroves, and swamps.

Ramsar Sites

Wetlands recognized as internationally important.

4. Real-World Examples

India's environmental issues:

- mangrove destruction in Mumbai
 - ecological challenges in Sundarbans
 - Western Ghats mining
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5. Critical Insights

Environmental agreements often face difficulties due to:

- economic pressures
 - weak enforcement
 - political priorities
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6. Exam Usage

Discuss:

- importance of wetland protection
- Ramsar treaty goals
- implementation challenges

8. India's Relations with Neighbouring Countries

Source: Handbook of India's International Relations

India–Pakistan Relations

Key issues:

- Kashmir conflict
- cross-border terrorism
- nuclear rivalry

Relations are often tense but include periods of diplomatic engagement.

India–Bangladesh Relations

Key areas:

- trade cooperation
- migration issues
- water sharing disputes

Recent years show improving relations through economic cooperation.

India–Sri Lanka Relations

Relations shaped by:

- Tamil ethnic issue
- economic cooperation
- maritime security concerns

China's investment in Sri Lanka also affects India's strategic interests.

India and the Indian Ocean

India views the Indian Ocean as strategically vital for:

- maritime trade routes
- energy security
- naval influence

SPECIAL SECTION

Global Media and the 2026 USA–Iran Conflict

Background

The conflict intensified due to:

- tensions over Iran’s nuclear program
- military incidents in the Persian Gulf
- economic sanctions and diplomatic disputes

The **Strait of Hormuz**, a critical oil trade route, became a major geopolitical flashpoint.

Media Coverage

Western media coverage:

- focus on nuclear proliferation threats
- emphasis on Iranian regional influence

Middle Eastern media coverage:

- emphasis on US military interventions
 - focus on economic sanctions affecting civilians
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Differences in Coverage

| Western Media | Middle Eastern Media |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Iran as nuclear threat | US as interventionist power |
| Focus on security | Focus on sovereignty |
| Military escalation | Economic sanctions impact |

Role of Media Framing

Media narratives influenced:

- international public opinion
- diplomatic relations
- economic policies

Competing narratives became part of **information warfare**.

Link to Global Media Landscape Concepts

The conflict illustrates:

- power politics in global order
 - media framing and agenda setting
 - role of information in international conflicts
 - influence of political economy of media on narratives
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Quick Revision Checklist

Focus heavily on:

1. Global politics theories
2. Power and world order
3. Regionalism and ASEAN
4. Political economy of media
5. Global environmental governance
6. Ramsar convention
7. India's relations with neighbours
8. Media framing of global conflicts