

The Main IR Theories

Political Science

Four lenses on the same events, each seeing something different.

Theory and its core claim.

Theory	Drives behaviour	Key concept
Realism	Power and survival under anarchy	Security dilemma
Liberalism	Institutions, trade and domestic politics	Interdependence
Constructivism	Shared ideas and identities	Norms
Marxist and critical	Economic structures and class	Core and periphery

Educational reference. The theories are not mutually exclusive in practice; each highlights factors the others underweight.