

Anarchy

CORE QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

- What is the main characteristic of the international system?
- To what extent is anarchy a given, or can it be altered?
- What are the consequences of anarchy for state identity and behaviour?

2. DEFINITIONS

The concept of anarchy at its core simply means that there is no superior power within a system that would be able to enforce rules. It was after the First World War that G. Lowes Dickinson (1926) introduced the idea of an 'international anarchy', which, like his contemporary Norman Angell (1910; de Wilde 1991: 64), he saw as the main cause of war, as there is no higher authority that would set limits to hostilities between states (see Schmidt 1998: 444). This does not mean that anarchy always results in chaos and the unrestricted use of violence, since there are other ways through which one may prevent the widespread use of violence than imposing a central form of authority – in the international system, this may be done for instance through (→) international regimes, (→) balance of power or different forms of (→) hegemony. One may question whether under such circumstances, especially in the case of hegemony, we can still speak of an anarchical system, but we suggest treating these instances as mitigations of anarchy rather than as situations in which anarchy has been overcome. After all, in neither regime, balance of power nor hegemony, is there a formal authorization of superior power to an actor above the state.

Indeed, as the neorealist scholar Kenneth N. Waltz has pointed out (→ *Theory Concept: Realism and Neorealism*), effective governments have 'a monopoly on the *legitimate* use of force, and legitimate here means that public agents are organised to prevent and to counter the private use of force' (Waltz 1979: 104, emphasis in original). In anarchical systems, there is no such monopoly on the legitimate use of force. This means that there may well be actors who use force, but apart from very narrowly defined exceptions, for instance in the case of self-defence, such use is not seen as legitimate. The flipside however is that there is no central

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agency that would ensure peace, uphold order or provide a common infrastructure. The units within an anarchical system have to perform these tasks on their own. This means that an anarchical system is a 'self-help' system (Waltz 1979: 105–7), which results in coordination problems and the (→) security dilemma: 'in anarchy,' to say the least, 'there is no automatic harmony' (Waltz 1959: 182). This does not mean that there is no hierarchy in anarchical systems (see Donnelly 2006), but as we have already argued, such hierarchy does not constitute the formal authorization to use force legitimately. Historically, there has always been some form of hierarchy within the international system, although the degree of hierarchy has varied between what Adam Watson has identified as the poles of 'independence' and 'empire' (Watson 1992: 23–8).

3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The concept of anarchy is, as already indicated, particularly important to neorealism. In their emphasis on the systemic level, neorealists such as Waltz see anarchy as the basic structural characteristic of the system of states, or the international system. 'International politics,' Waltz (1979: 113) thus concluded, 'is the realm of power, of struggle, and of accommodation'. In the view of neorealists, there is no escape from this basic structure of the international system – it induces a struggle for survival amongst states as the constitutive units of the international system and thus decreases the prospects for cooperation and durable peace.

While anarchy on the one hand is therefore closely linked to neorealism, on the other hand many other theories have accepted the idea that the international system is anarchical. They differ from neorealists in their view about the exact consequences of anarchy for the behaviour of states, and the degree to which they think a modification of anarchy is possible.

Neoliberal authors (→ *Theory Concept: Liberalism and Neoliberalism*) thus accept that states are the main actors of the international system, and that this system is anarchical, but they argue that this does not rule out lasting cooperation between states if states see the benefits of such cooperation (Keohane 1984; → *International Regimes*). They further see anarchy as only one basic feature of the international system, which to them is equally characterized by interdependence, so that states are not mere 'billiard balls' with no ties between them (Wolfers 1962), but are interlinked in a web of dependencies (Keohane and Nye 1977).

English School writers such as Hedley Bull also accept anarchy as a central feature of the international system, but in line with their argument that there is not only an international system but an (→) international society, they see anarchy complemented by societal aspects, which is why Bull (1977) titled his main work *The Anarchical Society*. To Bull, anarchy and society are therefore not opposites, to a large extent because he thinks that states cannot be treated analytically as individuals, and that therefore the society of states is different from domestic societies (Bull 1977: 46–7). Thus, the absence of world government does not mean the absence of common norms, interests, and institutions among states. In fact, some of the core norms of international society, such as (→) sovereignty and non-intervention, are at the same time the foundational features of anarchy, and the function of international institutions is to protect and further develop these very institutions.

Just like Bull, Alexander Wendt, from a social constructivist perspective (→ *Theory Concept: Social Constructivism*), considers anarchy to be more than the structure of a system. Instead, he speaks of ‘cultures’ of anarchy, and identifies three such cultures, with different underlying norms (Wendt 1999: 246–312): a Hobbesian one, in which enmity persists and which resembles a ‘realist’ version of anarchy; a Lockean one, in which states act in ‘rivalry’ but accept the constraints of international law in their actions (close to the ‘neoliberal’ version of anarchy); and a Kantian one, in which ‘friendship’ persists between states and in which they form a ‘pluralistic security community’ (Deutsch et al. 1957; Adler and Barnett 1998; see Wendt 1999: 299). Such a pluralistic (→) security community is still anarchical in the sense that there is no centralized rule enforcer akin to a government, but it is maintained by a web of rules and shared values that marks it out as a particularly strong international society, in Bull’s terms. In a similar way, Barry Buzan (1991: 177) has envisaged the development of ‘mature anarchies’ in which anarchy was tamed by an increasing degree of ordered relations between states.

Wendt is also responsible for contributing to International Relations one of the most widely used catchphrases, ‘anarchy is what states make of it’ (Wendt 1992). In his seminal article with that title, he argued that anarchy is not, as neorealists would maintain, an immutable structure, but that it rather shapes the behaviour of states as much as states can shape anarchy. This formulation of the problem of anarchy has become one of the core examples of the interplay of structure and agency as discussed in social constructivism. In a similar argument, Barry Buzan,

Charles Jones and Richard Little (1993) argued that while anarchy is a 'deep structure' of the international system, it is differentiated according to functional sectors, and varies over time according to the characteristics of states as its constitutive units as well as their interaction capacity.

A final perspective on anarchy is offered by poststructuralism (→ *Theory Concept: Postmodernism and poststructuralism*). In line with the view that there is no objective way of knowing, poststructuralists have argued that anarchy is therefore not a mere description, but a discursive construction of reality. This discursive construction works on the basis of inserting an essential differentiation between the 'orderly' inside and the 'dangerous', 'chaotic' outside (Walker 1993). Working with the notion of the 'anarchy problematique', Richard Ashley (1988) showed how this depiction of the international sphere as dangerous and threatening sustains the identity and power of the sovereign state, and how sovereignty and anarchy need to be seen as two sides of the same coin in order to make sense. The pervasive construction of anarchy therefore impoverishes the imagination of political alternatives to the state, which is becoming increasingly problematic in the light of the rise of transnational problems.

4. EMPIRICAL PROBLEMS

The most pressing empirical challenge at least to the realist conception of anarchy comes from (→) globalization and (→) global governance. If there is an increasing web of transnational flows; if there is an increasing number of transnational problems, environmental, economic, or otherwise; and if there is an increasing number of international and sometimes even supranational institutions, often involving non-governmental actors in the decision-making processes – are we then really still living under conditions of anarchy? And if not, which structure replaces anarchy?

The problem as such is not new; in a sense, the concept of complex interdependence suggested by Keohane and Nye (1977) already struggled with a similar challenge. Waltz (1979: 104) himself saw interdependence as an effect of the increasing specialization of states, making them more dependent on the provision of goods by others, and thus also more vulnerable if the supply of goods is interrupted. However, he did not consider this to undermine the basic anarchical logic of the system, as interdependence did not lead to closer bonds between states or the emergence of a hierarchical form of government beyond states. In the case of what was then the European Community with its nine member

states, he argued that the choice was between 'slowly becoming one state', in which case a number of small states would simply be replaced with a bigger one in the international system, 'or stubbornly remaining nine' (Waltz 1979: 116). This matches Hedley Bull's view of European integration (Bull 1982).

For many, then, the basic anarchical structure of the international system is astonishingly resilient. It may be adjusted here and there, but in effect its core logic remains (e.g. Buzan 2004: 235). Anarchy, one may say in analogy to Stephen Krasner's treatment of sovereignty, has always been compromised (Krasner 1995), but it none the less remains a core feature of the international system. This view stands in contrast to those authors who emphasize globalizing tendencies, as well as those who think that some form of hierarchical governing structure on a global scale is inevitable (Wendt 2003). From a poststructuralist angle, meanwhile, the emphasis on the resilience of anarchy may well simply be another discursive move to maintain the power of states.

5. CORE READING

Bull, Hedley (1977) *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan). Bull's focus is on order more than on anarchy, but he provides an excellent statement on why anarchy is not without order.

Waltz, Kenneth N. (1979) *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House). Chapter 6 on 'Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power' provides a foundational elaboration of the neorealist conceptualization of anarchy.

Wendt, Alexander (1992) 'Anarchy Is What States Make of It', *International Organization* 46 (3), 391–425. A classic social constructivist piece: the title says it all!

6. USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.theory-talks.org/search/label/Anarchy>. Interview of the Theory Talks series with Barry Buzan.

<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people3/Waltz/waltz-con0.html>. Interview with Kenneth Waltz on theory and international politics in Berkeley's Conversations with History series.

Balance of Power

1. CORE QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

- Why do states balance?
- What are the varieties of balancing behaviour in international politics?
- What is the difference between a realist and a neorealist conception of the balance of power?

2. DEFINITIONS

The balance of power is among the most persistent and most widely cited concepts in International Relations. It is essentially about the idea that hegemonic (→ *Hegemony*) (→) power will always be counterbalanced by a strategic alliance of rivals in order to secure their own survival and (→) sovereignty. Whether the concept goes back to theoretical assumptions made with regard to Italian city-states in the Machiavellian time, or whether it has ancient roots in the considerations of Hellenic and Roman politicians during the Peloponnesian and Punic Wars, is contested within literature (see for instance Haslam 2002; Butterfield 1966). The concept has become particularly relevant to the study of world politics after the Second World War and is widely associated with the (→) realist or neorealist theory of International Relations. To these scholars, the balance of power is 'an intrinsic feature of international politics' (Little 2007: 91).

The concept was introduced to International Relations by Hans J. Morgenthau in his *Politics among Nations* in 1948. He conceptualized the balance of power as an 'actual state of affairs in which power is distributed among several nations with approximate equality' (Morgenthau 1961: 167 n. 1). According to Morgenthau, the balance of power is a natural social principle or 'universal concept' operating throughout history and on the group, national and international levels, aiming to establish, as the name of the concept already suggests, an equilibrium or a balance between components. Further considerations regarding the concept's relevance to the study of world politics have been made by neorealists such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, but also by 'English School' (of international relations) authors such as Hedley Bull (→ *International Society*).

In neorealism, the balance of power is understood as theory, claiming to 'explain the results of states' actions, under given conditions and

those results may not be foreshadowed in any of the actors' motives or be contained as objectives in their policies' (Waltz 1979: 118). According to Waltz, balance of power theory explains the effects of the anarchical self-help system on the behaviour of states, operating whenever a single state seeks preponderance over the others. In this case the threatened states can either try to counterbalance the rising hegemon by an increase of their national capabilities (internal balancing) or by the establishment of informal or formal alliances (external balancing) (Grieco 1997: 170).

According to English School theorist Hedley Bull, the balance of power can be defined as 'a state of affairs such that no one power is in a position where it is preponderant and can lay down the law to others' (Bull 1979: 101). For Bull, the balance of power is one of five core institutions that maintain order in international society. He distinguishes between balances of power on four accounts. Firstly, he differentiates between a simple and complex balance of power, describing the former as a balance of power made up of only two actors while consequently the latter consists of three or more great powers involved. Secondly, he distinguishes between a general and a local balance of power: the former is conceptualized as the absence of one dominant power in the international system, such as Cold War bipolarity. The latter describes a regional balance of power constellation – Bull exemplarily refers here to the Middle East. Thirdly, he argues that there is a difference between a subjectively and an objectively existing balance of power: 'It is one thing to say that it is generally believed that a state of affairs exists in which no one state is preponderant in military strength; it is another to say that no one state is in fact preponderant' (Bull 1977: 103). Finally, he makes a differentiation between a fortuitous balance of power, resulting in a sudden moment of deadlock within an active conflict, and a contrived balance of power, established according to rational calculations of the actors involved (Bull 1977: 101–5).

3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In the classical realist approach exemplified by Hans J. Morgenthau, the balance of power is a central concept of world politics. Since in realism world politics is always power politics and states as principal actors seek to survive, the struggle towards an equilibrium between great powers comes as a 'natural and inevitable outgrowth of the struggle for power' (Morgenthau 1961: 187): 'Whenever the equilibrium is disturbed either

by an outside force or by a change in one or the other elements composing the system, the system shows a tendency to re-establish either the original or a new equilibrium' (Morgenthau 1961: 168). The consequences of this underlying principle should be considered carefully by statesmen, as it aims to avoid that one of the individual actors can become powerful enough to threaten the survival and the independence of the other actors. Keeping the balance of power in mind, it becomes evident, according to Morgenthau, that statesmen have to be aware of the distribution of power in the international system as well as to get involved in the difficult attempt to measure power (Little 2007: 97).

In neorealism, scholars such as Kenneth Waltz have linked the balance of power directly to the concept of (→) anarchy. In this logic, the balance of power is not a natural principle, but structurally induced by the anarchical system. Since neorealism conceptualizes states as rational unitary actors seeking to maintain their position in the international system, balancing against a rising power becomes inevitable rather than optional. Nevertheless, balancing is a defensive strategy in structural neorealism aiming primarily to secure the survival and independence of states; it is not regarded as a strategy towards outstanding power capacities (Grieco 1997: 170). However, an addition was made by other neorealists, such as Stephen M. Walt, who doubted the assumption of balancing as structural automatism. Walt reached the conclusion that it might be more attractive for weaker states to bandwagon, thus enjoying benefits like protection or preferential trade agreements, than opposing the hegemon directly through balancing. Walt stressed that the decision to balance against a rival depended heavily upon the level of political threat. In particular cases, the strategy of bandwagoning, the neorealist antonym of balancing, might be more conducive.

In the English School, as we have already mentioned, the concept of balance of power is regarded as a fundamental institution to preserve international order (Bull 1977: 107). According to Bull, the balance of power has been constraining the rise of a world hegemon or universal (→) empire and thus 'providing the conditions in which other institutions on which international order depends (diplomacy, war, international law, great power management) have been able to operate' (Bull 1977: 107).

4. EMPIRICAL PROBLEMS

Following the explanatory importance of balance of power in neorealism, the empirical question of 'how to count poles and measure power'

has to be answered (Waltz 1979: 129). As mentioned above, the majority of neorealist scholars started thinking about the distribution of power in the international system in terms of measurable capabilities, such as military capacities and annual military expenditure or rates of economic growth ('power over resources'). In addition, power has been conceptualized as the ability to induce certain outcomes ('power as control over outcomes'). After the end of the Cold War, the concept of balance of power and thus the neorealist claims about the prospects for temporary peace based upon the stability of a bipolar system have been challenged. Opposing neorealists proclaiming a 'unipolar moment' in world history, authors such as Mearsheimer (2001), argued that the preponderance of the United States after the 1990s cannot be preserved, since the balance of power concept would automatically produce counterbalancing activities. He and other authors, such as John Ikenberry (2008), engaged in the analysis of other regional powers, such as China, India or Brazil, and in particular of the prospects of a peaceful rise of China.

In the English School, the most interesting empirical observation made by Hedley Bull is that although the preservation of international law relies heavily upon the balance of power, the re-establishment of such a power often makes a violation of these principles necessary. According to Bull, a rising power can only be counterbalanced by the threat or the use of force and violence, such as for instance through military interventions, thereby violating existing legal principles, such as non-intervention. In situations like this, the 'requirements of order treated as prior to those of law, as they are treated also as prior . . . to the keeping of peace' (Bull 1977: 109).

5. CORE READING

Little, Richard (2007) *The Balance of Power in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), provides an analysis of the balance of power concepts used by Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, Hedley Bull and John Mearsheimer.

Morgenthau, Hans (1961) *Politics among Nations* (New York: Alfred Knopf), 3rd rev. edn. Introduces the balance of power to the study of world politics.

Waltz, Kenneth N. (1979) *Theory of International Relations* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley). Elaborates the concept further for neorealist analysis.

Conflict Resolution

1. CORE QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

- How can the relationship between conflict and war be conceptualized?
- How can international conflict be approached and resolved?
- What distinguishes conflict resolution from conflict management?

2. DEFINITIONS

Conflict has always been an inherent feature of human existence and social development. From a sociological perspective, conflict is conceptualized as a situation in which two or more actors, such as individuals, groups or societies, pursue incompatible goals, including dissent about the distribution, appropriateness and legitimacy of a specific object (Kriesberg 2007: 2; Rittberger and Zürn 1990: 14). Handled appropriately, conflict can induce social dynamics leading to transformations and improvements of existing deficiencies in social relations and institutions. Unfortunately, whenever conflict results in aggression and violence, its consequences for societies can be destructive. In general, we refer to violent conflicts as war when at least one of the conflict parties is a government or aims to assume a governmental role. In addition, many scholars try to distinguish war from other forms of physical violence by specifying a certain number of killed people as a threshold (→ *Peace and War*).

Conflict resolution, on the one hand, refers to an interdisciplinary academic field aiming to analyse the causes and developments of social conflict with a propensity to violence. On the other hand, within this academic subdiscipline the term conflict resolution depicts a particular stage within the life cycle of social conflicts, the exact definition of which is however disputed.

In particular against the historical backdrop of the Cold War rivalry and nuclear threat, conflict resolution as a distinct field of study emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, aiming to develop strategies for a regulated and peaceful settlement of social conflicts in general and international conflicts in particular. This might include preventive activities or direct influence, such as attempts of mediation or arbitration. Jacob Bercovitch et al. (2009: 1) characterize the discipline as follows: 'Conflict Resolution is about ideas, theories and methods that can

improve our understanding of conflict and our collective practice of reduction in violence and enhancement of political processes for harmonizing interest'. Shifting the focus on the conflict parties themselves, John W. Burton defined conflict resolution as the 'analysis of the underlying sources of conflict situations by the parties in conflict. The term also encompasses the process whereby institutional and policy options are discovered that meet the needs of the parties, thus establishing the basis for a resolution of the conflict' (Burton 1987: 7).

Furthermore and as already indicated, the term conflict resolution refers to a specific situation within an ongoing conflict. Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall (2008: 29), for instance, argue that: 'Conflict resolution . . . implies . . . that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed. This implies that behaviour is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile, and the structure of the conflict has been changed'. Thus, conflict resolution is a stage within the life cycle of a conflict, following the emergence, escalation and attempts of managing a conflict. In conflict management, third-party intervention seeks to de-escalate conflict by providing the conflicting parties with alternative strategies to regulate the conflict through agreements with at least some formality. In contrast, conflict resolution addresses the deep-rooted causes of conflict, and aims at a mutual understanding of the conflicting parties towards peaceful dispute settlement that ultimately transforms the incompatibilities at the heart of the conflict, rather than to merely manage them peacefully. This is reflected in Peter Wallensteen's definition of '[c]onflict [r]esolution as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other' (Wallensteen 2007: 8).

In contrast to these rather positivistic conceptualizations of conflict and thus of conflict resolution, critical voices, such as for instance Vivienne Jabri (1996), seek to reconstruct the discursive societal processes reproducing conflict and violence as an inherent feature of human existence and political life. In such views, conflict is closely tied to social and political identity, and the incompatibility at the heart of a conflict is not merely one of goals but of self-conceptualizations (see Diez, Stetter and Albert 2006: 565–7). Such scholars often prefer the term 'conflict transformation' (see also Ramsbotham et al. 2008: 21).

Moreover, the concept of conflict resolution has been questioned from a postcolonial perspective, most prominently stated by Paul Salem in his 'critique of western conflict resolution from a non-western

perspective' (1993, 1997). Salem argues that from an Arab–Muslim perspective, the concept of conflict resolution is based on western 'liberal' perceptions and norms about societies and approaches that are not shared everywhere in the world, despite the fact that theorists of conflict resolution argue that their approaches are universally applicable and objective. These approaches furthermore do not take into account traditional models of conflict resolution already existing in these parts of the world, but rather seek to apply western-based concepts.

3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

In the field of conflict resolution theory and practice are closely linked, in particular since most of the literature builds upon the empirical observations of analysts, diplomats and other practitioners. Nevertheless, with the expansion of the subdiscipline, a number of crucial theoretical concepts and approaches were introduced.

The most central debate within the academic literature on the management of conflicts lasted until the late 1980s and focused on the question of whether third-party intervention should centre on the settlement of conflicts by reaching formal agreements between the political elites or should rather seek to identify and transform the underlying social relations and misperceptions of societal actors fuelling the conflict. According to David Bloomfield (1995), these dichotomous approaches originate in different conceptualizations of conflict: the first position characterized conflicts as objectively observable and based upon positional differences regarding material interests or power. In consequence, authors in this tradition argued for the enforcement of agreements between formal representatives of the parties to manage the conflict. The second position emphasized that the causes for conflict had their roots in the relationship between the parties to the conflict and were therefore subjective. Consequently, these authors argued in favour of a conflict resolution approach aiming to transform the relationships and perceptions of the parties involved (Bloomfield 1995: 153). With the start of the 1990s, more integrative approaches have sought to reconcile these differences and develop more differentiated models of conflict escalation and third-party intervention by combining elements of both positions (e.g. Fisher and Keashley 1991).

Probably the most influential model analysing the conditions of conflict was introduced to the study of conflict resolution by Johan Galtung in the late 1960s, conceptualizing conflict as a triangle between

contradiction, attitude and behaviour. According to Galtung, the notion of contradiction refers to the perceived incompatibility of positions by the actors involved, while the term attitudes implies the perceptions and misperceptions of the parties about themselves and their opponent. The last vertex encompasses the respective behaviour towards the conflict. Regarding conflict as a dynamic process, where attitudes, contradictions and behaviour are constantly changing, Galtung concludes that for a conflict to become pronounced all three components must be present (Galtung 1996: 72; Ramsbotham et al. 2008: 9–10).

John W. Burton developed an additional theoretical approach towards conflict resolution by differentiating between conflicts about interests and conflicts about needs. Drawing on systems and inter-organizational theory as well as (→) game theory, Burton argues that conflicts about material interests, such as access to resources or disputes about territories, can be solved relatively easily by compromise and negotiations as soon as both parties at least share an interest in reaching a solution for the problem. In contrast, conflicts about immaterial human needs, such as security, identity or recognition, are more difficult to handle, since they are usually based on deep-rooted societal and psychological perceptions and emotions. In these cases the conflict can only be resolved by identifying and addressing the underlying causes (Burton 1990; Burton and Dukes 1990).

Following the identification of particular phases of conflict and the development of specific conflict cycles, of which probably the most illustrative is Friedrich Glasl's nine-stage model of conflict escalation (1982), further theoretical approaches seek to associate specific stages of conflict with respective measures, so for instance the hourglass model by Ramsbotham et al. (2008) or the contingency model of third-party intervention by Fisher and Keashley (1991). According to Fisher and Keashley, for instance, it is much more promising to seek a change in the conflicting parties' attitudes towards each other prior to a violent escalation of the conflict. After such an escalation has taken place, the negative experiences have intensified prejudice and misperception in a way that it makes much more sense to force the disputants into formal settlement of the conflict by an agreement in order to stop violence. In this stage of a conflict, Fisher and Keashley argue for formal power-based interventions by third parties (Fisher and Keashley 1991: 34–9).

As this brief overview already indicates, the central question concerning third-party intervention is the question of timing, which was most prominently addressed by theories about the ripeness of a conflict, such

as formulated by I. William Zartman or Richard N. Haas. According to Zartman, for instance, the intervention into conflicts cannot be successful, as long as the conflict is not 'ripe for resolution', characterized by a 'mutual hurting stalemate' between the conflicting parties. Zartman elaborates this situation as marked by a recent or impending catastrophe, where both parties involved come to the conclusion that not only can nothing be gained by further escalation of the conflict, but also that leaving the conflict at the current stage would even be worse. Following Zartman, at this moment third-party intervention is more likely to be successful since the parties realize that they need outside assistance (Zartman 1989). What remain unspecified in the works of Zartman are the subsequent questions of how this moment of ripeness should be identified by third parties as well as the options for third parties to actively create these moments of ripeness (Kleiboer 1994: 109).

4. EMPIRICAL PROBLEMS

The more specific institutions and research centres, such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) or the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the University of Virginia, have been established, and the more academic journals, such as the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, have spread theoretical considerations, the more influential these theoretical approaches towards the resolution of international conflicts have become to practitioners such as diplomats and government representatives within their daily practice. According to Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, for instance, the Centre for Intergroup Studies in South Africa successfully applied the theoretical approaches emerging in the field towards the disputes between the system of apartheid and its opponents. Similar efforts have been made during the Middle East peace process or in Northern Ireland (2008: 4). Probably the most systematic attempts to apply in particular Burton's problem-solving approach to practice have been made by researchers identified with the 'Harvard concept', including scholars such as Michael Banks, Chris Mitchell as well as Edward Burton, offering problem-solving workshops in deep-rooted conflicts of that day, such as the conflict between the Greek and the Turkish communities in Cyprus in 1965 and 1966. The idea behind the Harvard concept consists in the engagement of individuals into these workshops, who play a significant role in the negotiation process, but are not officials of the governments involved, hoping for the

development of different personal and communicative relationships between the conflicting parties despite the ones dominant in the official dialogues and statements. In evaluating these workshops it became evident that they had to be adapted to the specific conflict situation at hand, but could indeed contribute towards the establishment of alternative relationships amongst the parties of the conflict. Nevertheless, it proved difficult to assess to what extent these changes affected the official negotiation process (Ramsbotham et al. 2008: 48–9).

5. CORE READING

Bercovitch, Jacob, Victor Kremenyuk and William I. Zartman (eds) (2009) *The Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (London: Sage). Provides a comprehensive overview of themes and theoretical perspectives on conflict resolution.

Ramsbotham, Oliver, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall (2008) *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2nd edn). Introduces concepts, definitions and contemporary developments in the field.

Wallensteen, Peter (2007) *Understanding Conflict Resolution* (London: Sage, 2nd edn). Explores the settlement of interstate and internal conflicts by linking theory to contemporary cases.

6. USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.sipri.org/>. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute offers research resources and databases for peace and conflict studies.

<http://icar.gmu.edu/>. Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the George Mason University, Virginia, papers and reports in peace and conflict studies.

<http://jcr.sagepub.com/>. Website of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (Sage).

<http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/programs/picar/>. Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Harvard University.

<http://www.ccr.org.za/>. Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town.