



# Structural Realism



PRESENTED BY

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Structural realism serves as a **framework for understanding** international relations by emphasizing how the structure of the international system shapes state behavior and interactions.

## MAIN SCHOLARS OF STRUCTURAL REALISM

Scholars	Major Publications
Kenneth Waltz	<i>Theory of International Politics</i>
John Mearsheimer	<i>The Tragedy of Great Power Politics</i>
Stephen Walt	<i>The Origins of Aliiances</i>

# Analyzing Power Distribution

Understanding **polarity** is crucial in assessing global power dynamics. The **distribution of power** directly influences state behavior, stability, and international relations strategies across the globe.



# Core Principles

## PRIMARY ACTORS

In the realm of international relations, **states are recognized** as the dominant entities, shaping policies and actions based on their interests and security concerns within the global system.

## SURVIVAL PRIORITY

States inherently prioritize their **survival above all else**, leading them to adopt strategies that ensure their security and maintain their sovereignty in a competitive international landscape.

## ANARCHIC SYSTEM

The international system operates in a state of **anarchy**, meaning there is no overarching authority to regulate state interactions, leading to a self-help environment among nations.

## STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS

The structure of the international system **constrains state actions**, influencing how states behave and interact based on the distribution of power and existing relationships among them.

# Metrics for Measuring Power Distribution

Key indicators include:

- **Military Capabilities:** This is the most critical factor, encompassing size of armed forces, weapons technology, and military expenditure.
- **Economic Strength:** Measured through Gross National Product (GNP), GDP, and industrial capacity, which underpins military power.
- **Resource Endowments:** Population size and territory are fundamental, as they provide the manpower and resources to build power.
- **Technological Advancement:** The ability to develop advanced weaponry and critical technologies, which can alter the relative balance of power

# Methods of Analysis

- **Calculating Polarity:** Power is measured to determine if the system is unipolar (one superpower), bipolar (two), or multipolar (three or more). Bipolarity is often considered more stable by structural realists.
- **Relative Gains Analysis:** Structural realism dictates that states, especially in an anarchic system, must prioritize their relative gains (how much power they gain compared to others) over absolute gains.
- **The Power Transition Approach:** Analysts evaluate how a rising power's comprehensive capabilities catch up to or surpass the dominant power's, increasing the potential for conflict.
- **Alliances and Balancing:** Power distribution is assessed by observing how states form alliances to balance against a dominant power or a threatening coalition.

# Balance of Power

## COUNTERING RISING POWERS

States often **counter rising powers** to maintain equilibrium within the international system, ensuring that no single state becomes too dominant or able to impose its will unchecked.

## BALANCING AGAINST THREATS

States balance against **perceived threats**, not just based on power dynamics. This perspective emphasizes the importance of threat perception in shaping state behavior and strategic choices.

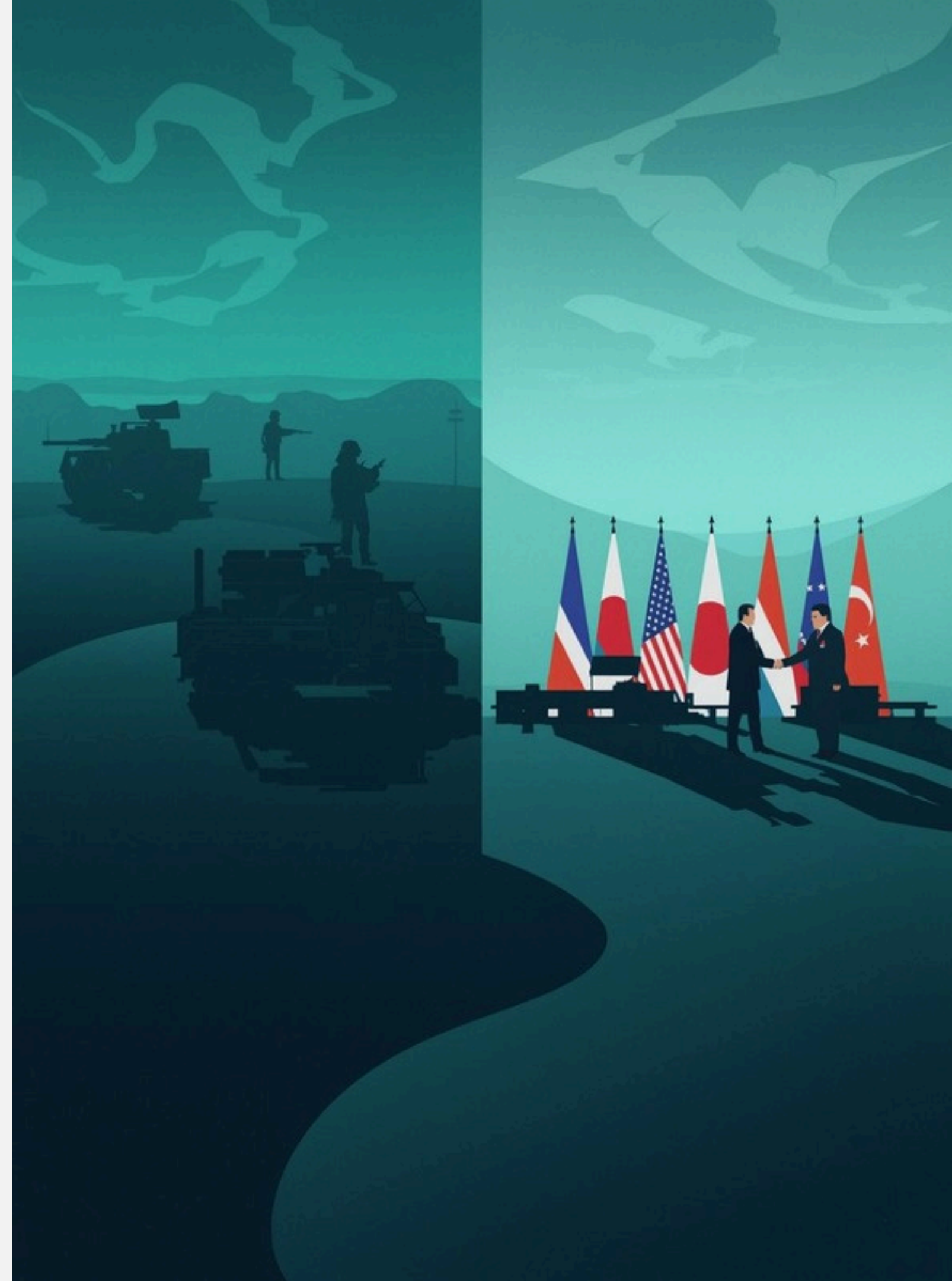
# Geographic and Strategic Variables

Geography plays a crucial role in state interactions, as **proximity can dramatically affect** threat perception and influence security dynamics in international relations.



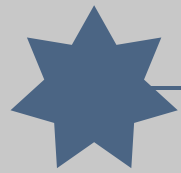
# State Perceptions

Understanding how states interpret threats and goals is crucial. **Perceptions shape** strategic responses, influencing decisions and approaches in the complex international landscape.



# Systemic Outcomes

## UNIPOLARITY



Historical trends indicate that unipolarity tends to be unstable over extended periods.

## RISE OF NEW POWERS



The emergence of new powers often leads to a shift towards bipolar or multipolar systems.

## BALANCING BEHAVIORS



States typically engage in balancing behaviors in direct response to shifts in power dynamics.

## SYSTEMIC COMPETITION



Increased competition is observed among states as they react to evolving global power structures.

# Concluding Remarks

**Understanding the structure** of international relations is crucial for predicting state behavior and outcomes, emphasizing the need for a systematic approach to global politics.

