

# Markscheme

November 2025

Global politics

Higher level and standard level

Paper 2

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The paper is marked using the generic markbands on the following page, and the paper specific markscheme that follows. The markscheme for this paper is the same for HL and SL.

### Markbands for paper two

Marks	Level descriptor
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.</li> </ul>
1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response reveals limited understanding of the demands of the question.</li> <li>• The response is poorly structured, or where there is a recognizable essay structure there is minimal focus on the task.</li> <li>• There is little relevant knowledge, and examples are either lacking or not relevant.</li> <li>• The response is mostly descriptive.</li> </ul>
6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response indicates some understanding of the demands of the question.</li> <li>• There is some evidence of an attempt to structure the response.</li> <li>• Some relevant knowledge is present, and some examples are mentioned but they are not developed or their relevance to arguments is not clear.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited understanding of the key concepts of the course.</li> <li>• There is limited justification of main points.</li> <li>• Counterclaims, or different views on the question are not considered.</li> </ul>
11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The demands of the question are understood and mostly addressed but the implications are not considered.</li> <li>• There is a clear attempt to structure the response.</li> <li>• The response is mostly based on relevant and accurate knowledge of global politics, and relevant examples are given and support arguments.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates some understanding of the key concepts of the course.</li> <li>• Many of the main points are justified and arguments are largely coherent.</li> <li>• Some counterclaims, or different views on the question are considered.</li> </ul>
16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The demands of the questions are understood and addressed, and most implications are considered.</li> <li>• The response is well-structured.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates relevant and accurate knowledge and understanding of global politics, and relevant examples are used in a way that strengthens arguments.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates a good grasp of the key concepts of the course.</li> <li>• All or nearly all of the main points are justified and arguments are coherent.</li> <li>• Counterclaims, or different views on the question are explored.</li> </ul>
21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very well structured and balanced response that addresses the demands and implications of the question.</li> <li>• Comprehensive knowledge and in-depth understanding of global politics is applied in the response consistently and effectively, with examples integrated.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates a very good grasp of the key concepts of the course.</li> <li>• All of the main points are justified. Arguments are clear, coherent and compelling.</li> <li>• Counterclaims, or different views on the question are explored and evaluated.</li> </ul>

The content listed indicates possible areas candidates might cover in their answers. They are **not** compulsory points. They are only a framework to help examiners in their assessment. Candidates may take a different approach, which if appropriate, should be rewarded. Examiners should not expect all of the points listed and should allow other valid points.

An understanding of, and an ability to work with, the key concepts of the course are particularly important in this paper. Whether or not the key concepts are explicitly mentioned in a question, students are expected to draw on their conceptual understanding of global politics and are invited to draw on any political concepts that are relevant to the arguments they put forward.

## Power, sovereignty and international relations

### 1. Evaluate the claim that state power increases through international cooperation.

Responses are likely to include a brief description of international cooperation. Students should explain international cooperation between two or more states as their adjustment or change in behaviour to the real or anticipated preferences of others, through policy coordination. Such cooperation may include treaties (e.g. Non-Proliferation Treaty, Montreal Protocol), collective security mechanisms (Organization of American States), strategic alliances (US–Japan), economic cooperation, including trade agreements, regional economic integration and informal cooperation through technology harmonization, cultural exchange. Students could also refer to international cooperation between non-state actors – international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), multinational corporations (MNCs), or between states and INGOs and MNCs. Students should show an understanding of the concept of power. Power is defined as the ability to make an actor do something or face consequences, or to achieve a desired outcome using different means through use of both coercive and co-optive mechanisms. Students could also provide a benchmark by which an increase in state power through international cooperation could be perceived. Students may also explain what qualifies as an ‘increase’ in the context of state power by referring to quantitative and/or qualitative measures.

*Arguments in favour of the claim that the state power increases through international cooperation may include:*

- Economic cooperation helps states gain markets, get raw material, get FDI and all these help states to develop and achieve greater economic power. This economic cooperation may be through trade or Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), e.g. United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the Alliance of Small Island States (ASOIS).
- Cooperation mechanisms help states pool their power and achieve assured support when they need it. Collective security arrangements whereby an aggression against one state is considered an aggression against all other states enable the state under attack to repel the aggressor with augmented power – both military and economic, e.g., NATO and the UN. In cases where cooperation is based on strategic alliances, states garner more strength. For instance, under the provision of the US-Japan Security Alliance, Washington is treaty bound to help defend Japan in case of an outbreak of conflict.
- Treaties such as the one that created/founded organizations have increased the power of member states, especially the smaller states, e.g. Treaty of Lisbon 2007 and Maastricht treaty of 1992 that led to the creation of the European Union (EU). The EU members, especially the smaller states, have strengthened defences and better opportunities for economic growth and development that provides them with augmented power.
- Informal international cooperation through cultural exchanges helps in the field of cultural diplomacy that becomes a tool of "soft power". States can use and leverage their cultural exchanges through music, sports and cinema to further their diplomatic objectives. It can also be a key to positive negotiations, e.g., China's Charm Offensive in the Global South.
- Cooperation between non-state actors such as international NGOs and MNCs at the international level also increases state power, e.g. international NGOs increase the power of states by providing them with aid, e.g., Jordan INGO Forum - a network of 60 international non-governmental organizations focusing on humanitarian and development needs of Jordan, bolstering its state power. The presence of MNCs such as Apple, Google can also add to the economic power of states.

*Arguments against the claim that state power increases through international cooperation may include:*

- Cooperation mechanisms such as treaties or trade agreements and economic cooperation agreements may impact on the power of states to take independent decisions in terms of policy making, e.g. environmental agreements such as the COP agreement.
- Cooperation mechanisms such as security alliances and collective security arrangements weaken state power and are critiqued for being incompatible with the national interests and power of sovereign states, e.g. Armenia froze its participation in the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) because the bloc failed to fulfil its security obligations towards it. Besides, they weaken the power of other members or partner states if another one comes under attack because they are forced to align with the principles of collective security.
- Economic cooperation through trade and FDI are often better for bigger states who are likely to enter into agreements with the aim of gaining access to markets, cheap labour and resources. This erodes the power of the smaller or weaker states, e.g., China and African states, and the debt stress some countries are facing due to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- Informal cooperation through cultural exchange leads to an erosion of identity and culture and weakening of the cultural power of states, e.g., the impact of Hollywood on Asian culture. There might also be resistance movements against such influence – e.g. Boko Haram resisted alignment with western thinking – and in the process undermined the power of the Nigerian state.
- Cooperation with non-state actors such as international NGOs and MNCs does not increase state power, e.g., MNCs such as Glencore impact the decision-making power of states like Colombia and Australia. Such cooperation may in fact weaken state power, e.g., Haiti depends on international help and this dependency on aid weakens the state's power and its ability to act independently.

Responses should contain references to specific examples. Arguments in favour of the claim could note how the power of states increases through cooperation and interactions in global politics. For instance, through being part of trade and investment networks through regional organizations such as the ASEAN, member states are known to have gained economic power. Similarly, the BRICS+ countries are planning and trying to introduce a new reserve currency that could be used for cross-border trade. This could potentially make them more powerful and, in reducing the dominance of the US dollar, weaken US power globally. Also, international cooperation can amplify a state's influence on the world stage far beyond what it could achieve independently. By actively participating in and sometimes leading international coalitions or organizations, states can shape global norms, rules and agendas to align with their interests, e.g., Germany in EU and Japan in the CPTPP. On the other hand, there could be arguments stating that the power of states decreases or remains unaffected through cooperation and interactions in global politics. For instance, Ecuador's structural adjustment program (SAP) required them to increase the role of private sector in state owned enterprises (SOEs). This is against the Constitution under which the state reserves the right to manage "strategic sectors" exclusively through SOEs. . Also, the benefits of international cooperation are not always evenly distributed, often reflecting and even exacerbating existing power asymmetries between states. While larger, more powerful states can shape international institutions and norms to their advantage, smaller or less powerful states may find themselves stuck operating within the frameworks that keep them subordinate. Finally, students may argue that the answer to the prompt depends on whether we are discussing absolute or relative increases in power.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which the candidate agrees with the claim that the power of states increases through cooperation.

2. "The legitimacy of a state depends mainly on its ability to ensure development." Discuss this view.

Responses are likely to include a definition of legitimacy that refers to an actor or action being commonly considered acceptable and provides the fundamental rationale for all forms of governance and other ways of exercising power over others. State legitimacy matters because it provides the basis for rule by consent rather than by coercion. Lack of legitimacy is a major contributor to state fragility. If the state achieves certain outcomes (e.g., delivers services) and these outcomes are achieved according to processes that the population perceive as right (e.g., services are delivered fairly), then citizens will likely accept the legitimacy of the state. Students should also define development as the sustained increase in the standard of living and well-being of a level of social organization. It could involve increased income; better access to basic goods and services; improvements in education, health care and public health; well-functioning institutions; decreased inequality; reduced poverty and unemployment; improved capabilities, social and political freedoms, and more sustainable production and consumption patterns. Students could explain how the legitimacy of a state depends on many factors but argue that its ability to ensure development is the main or primary factor underpinning its legitimacy.

*Arguments in favour of the view that the legitimacy of a state depends mainly on its ability to ensure development may include:*

- State legitimacy mainly depends on its ability to ensure development because it transforms power into authority and provides the basis for rule by consent. The state has the primary goal and mandate of ensuring overall development. Regardless of the regime type – democratic or non-democratic – the legitimacy of a state depends on its ability to ensure all-round development. For instance, states such as Canada (democratic) and China (non-democratic) derive most of their legitimacy by ensuring development.
- The legitimacy of a state mainly depends on a state's ability to ensure human development. Any state that is unable to do so is not performing its primary function and role, e.g., failed/fragile states, Sudan, Pakistan, Yemen. Such states are unable to provide an environment in which people's well-being and potential is secured and enabled and their legitimacy is often questioned both domestically and internationally.
- A state's legitimacy is enhanced by its ability to ensure sustainable development. By committing institutional resources and formulating environmentally friendly policies and taking substantial actions perceived necessary for long-term environmental sustainability, that respect ecological constraints of the environment states such as Finland and Costa Rica have gained enhanced legitimacy.
- Economic development is the basis for all other factors that provide states with legitimacy and is linked to the state's ability to carry out its primary work. It is the first among equals when it comes to components of state legitimacy. Unless a state is able to ensure economic development, all other important variables underlining legitimacy may be unachievable including the ability to ensure peace, rule of law and respect for human rights. Without economic development, a state cannot ensure that people are able to fully realize their capabilities.
- States also support development in the international arena as a source of state legitimacy - both internal and external. They contribute to development of other states through aid, investments, etc., leading to positive citizen perceptions and support. For instance, China's Belt and Road Initiative has led to a positive response and augmented legitimacy among many recipient states.

*Arguments against the view that legitimacy of a state depends mainly on its ability to ensure development may include:*

- Legitimacy of a state depends mainly on citizens' perceptions and expectations of the state and on how state actors come to power, e.g., in a democratic system through elections.
- Very few states rely primarily on a single source of legitimacy. There are other variables besides development that support the legitimacy of a state such as the ability to protect and enforce human rights, provide political stability, etc. It is therefore hard to determine what is the main source of legitimacy.
- Even if the state is ensuring economic development, its legitimacy will depend on its political stability and be negatively impacted by its use of coercion, the absence of peace/law, and the presence of dissident groups, e.g., Xinjiang, Myanmar.
- State legitimacy is based on a fluid dynamic between peoples' beliefs about how state power should be exerted and people's experience of the state. This means that if people are satisfied and leading a life where their well-being and needs are being met, they will accept the legitimacy of the state. Thus, the factors bolstering the legitimacy of a state keep changing, which means the primary factor cannot be clearly determined.
- Political development or the development of institutions, values and attitudes, ability to ensure order, recognition of individual liberties of citizens or even democratization and good governance may not be the main factor determining the legitimacy of a state. States with underdeveloped political institutions, lack of political participation of citizens or non-democratic regime types are also perceived to be legitimate on other grounds such as the ability to provide a stable government, e.g., Vietnam.

Responses should contain references to specific examples. Arguments in favour of the view could note how legitimacy of a state is strongly influenced by its ability to foster development, because that forms the foundation of good governance and well-being of people, which in turn provides them with a strong reason for people to accept the authority of the state. For instance, in countries such as Vietnam, the ruling party has managed to ensure their legitimacy, power and stability based on development (performance legitimacy). Arguments against the view may mention how development is just one variable shaping the legitimacy of a state and is thus not the sole or main criterion. They might argue that it is difficult to distinguish what comes first and state legitimacy rests on multiple legitimation strategies. Finally, students could argue that there could be legitimacy without development and vice-versa; that there is no necessary causal relationship between the two. In other words, there could be a situation where development slows down or stops, yet the legitimacy of the state persists. For instance, the UK is facing economic issues such as inflation, stagnation in living standards increasing inequality etc, but the legitimacy of the state remains largely intact.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which the candidate agrees with the view that legitimacy of a state depends mainly on its ability to ensure development.

## Human rights

3. “Cultural relativism promotes the effective enforcement of human rights laws and treaties.” Discuss this view.

Responses are likely to include a definition of human rights as basic claims and entitlements that, many argue, one should be able to exercise simply by virtue of being a human being, which are inalienable and essential for living a life of dignity. Students should also define cultural relativism, which, in the context of human rights in global politics, refers to the principle that an individual’s beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person’s own culture, rather than be judged against the criteria of another culture. When applied to human rights, cultural relativism posits that the concept and implementation of these rights are not universal and should vary depending on cultural, societal, or national contexts. In addressing this prompt, students may argue that cultural relativism allows for a more nuanced and locally relevant implementation and enforcement of human rights laws and treaties. Alternatively, they may contend that cultural relativism undermines the universality of human rights, allowing cultural practices to justify human rights violations contrary to existing human rights laws and treaties. In both cases, students should reference specific human rights laws and treaties. Students should provide some basis for gauging the effectiveness of human rights enforcement.

*Arguments in favour of the view that cultural relativism promotes the effective enforcement of human rights laws and treaties may include:*

- Cultural relativism emphasizes the importance of respecting diverse cultural norms and practices. This approach can lead to more effective implementation and enforcement of human rights laws and treaties by encouraging local adaptation and ownership. For example, many Islamic countries have made reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), particularly regarding family law, which is often governed by religious principles. In Morocco, the Moudawana family code was reformed in 2004 to improve women’s rights within an Islamic framework, balancing cultural practices with the principles of CEDAW.
- Advocating for cultural relativism in human rights enforcement helps avoid the accusation of cultural imperialism, where one set of cultural norms is imposed universally. For example, in September 2018, the Supreme Court of India decriminalized consensual homosexual relationships. Rather than reference Western LGBTQI+ rights standards, the judges cited Indian traditions and historical instances of tolerance toward sexual diversity.
- Embracing cultural relativism can facilitate dialogue and cooperation between different nations and cultures. This approach can lead to better understanding and collaboration in both the global and national human rights framework. For example, in June 2021 Canada passed Bill C-15, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which requires the Canadian government to ensure its laws are consistent with UNDRIP, recognizing and upholding the human rights of Indigenous peoples while respecting their cultural traditions and land rights.
- Cultural relativism allows for solutions to human rights issues that are tailored to specific cultural contexts. For instance, in the fight against child labour in South Asia, particularly in the context of some International Labour Organization’s (ILO) conventions, understanding local economic and social structures has led to more effective and culturally appropriate human rights interventions, such as community-based education programs in India and Bangladesh, rather than blanket bans that may not be feasible or effective in the local context.
- By considering cultural relativism, the enforcement of human rights laws can promote pluralism and tolerance. An example of this is how Indonesia, as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), is committed to upholding the freedom of religion (Art.18) but balances this within its own cultural and religious context by recognizing six official religions and allowing for the celebration of religious holidays from multiple faiths, promoting an environment of religious pluralism. Additionally,

the Pancasila, Indonesia's foundational philosophical theory, emphasizes religious tolerance and unity in diversity.

*Arguments against the view that cultural relativism promotes the effective enforcement of human rights laws and treaties may include:*

- Cultural relativism can lead to the undermining of universal human rights standards. For example, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is practiced in certain cultures as a rite of passage, yet it violates the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In countries where FGM is prevalent, cultural relativism is often cited as a reason to maintain the practice, thereby undermining the universal standards of these human rights treaties.
- Cultural relativism can be used to justify abuse and discrimination. In several countries, particularly where there are strict interpretations of religious laws, the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals are severely restricted, in direct conflict with the equality and non-discrimination principles of the Covenants. Cultural and religious beliefs are used to justify laws that criminalize homosexuality, negating the universal human rights standards.
- Adhering to cultural relativism can hinder progress and reform in human rights. For instance, despite having ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the caste system in India persists. Cultural relativism is sometimes used to justify the continuance of caste-based discrimination, hindering progress toward true social equality as envisioned by the convention.
- Cultural relativism can lead to inconsistencies in human rights enforcement. For example, variations in women's rights across countries, especially in states such as Saudi Arabia or Iran, where cultural and religious norms have led to restrictions on women's freedoms, illustrate inconsistencies with the principles of CEDAW. These cultural practices result in a varied application of the treaty, affecting the universality of women's rights.
- Cultural relativism makes addressing global human rights issues challenging. For example, the implementation of child labour laws, as governed by the ILO's conventions, is inconsistent due to cultural differences in the perception of child labour. In countries like Bangladesh or Pakistan, cultural and economic factors lead to lenient enforcement of child labour laws, challenging the objective of the ILO to eradicate child labour and ensure universal labour rights.
- The effective enforcement of human rights may be better promoted by factors other than cultural relativism such as the political will of state actors, civil society engagement, international cooperation and oversight, and economic stability and development.

Responses should contain references to specific examples. Arguments in favour of the claim could note how cultural relativism enhances local relevance and ownership when it comes to enforcing human rights. For instance, in countries recovering from conflict, such as Uganda and Sierra Leone, traditional or community-based justice mechanisms have been used alongside formal legal systems to address war crimes and other human rights violations to support reconciliation. Furthermore, there is a growing recognition and integration of Indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms in some national legal systems, offering alternative or complementary approaches to justice that may reinforce human rights laws and treaties. For example, Bolivia's constitution recognizes and grants legal validity to Indigenous justice systems, reflecting a pluralistic legal approach that respects the customs and traditions of indigenous communities. Arguments against the claim may mention how cultural practices erode the right to health. For example, in countries like Ghana and Indonesia, cultural beliefs and stigma surrounding mental health issues lead to practices that violate the rights of people with mental health conditions, such as chaining or confinement, directly contradicting the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which advocates for the dignity and rights of people with disabilities. In the United States, certain religious groups oppose medical interventions on the grounds of faith, potentially endangering children's right to health as protected under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Any other valid and relevant approaches and examples should be evaluated positively.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which the student agrees with the view that cultural relativism promotes the effective enforcement of human rights laws and treaties.

4. Examine how definitions of human rights in the 21st century have been shaped by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Responses are likely to include a definition of human rights as basic claims and entitlements that, many argue, one should be able to exercise simply by virtue of being a human being, which are inalienable and essential for living a life of dignity. Students will likely provide definitions of human rights that refer to notions such as inalienability, universality, indivisibility, equality, justice, and liberty. Students may identify non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as independent, non-profit groups that operate worldwide to address social, environmental, and human rights issues, playing a significant role in global politics by influencing policy, providing aid, and advocating for change. Students may provide some understanding of what it means to 'shape' a definition in the context of Global Politics.

*Arguments in favour of the claim that definitions of human rights in the 21st century have been shaped by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may include:*

- NGOs have been pivotal in shaping the definitions of human rights in the 21st century through their relentless advocacy and awareness campaigns. For example, in response to the 2013 global surveillance disclosures by Edward Snowden, the NGO Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) led campaigns against mass surveillance, influencing public opinion and policy discussions worldwide advocating for the right to (digital) privacy as a fundamental human right.
- By mobilizing communities at the grassroots level, NGOs have facilitated a bottom-up approach to defining human rights, ensuring that the voices of the most marginalized and vulnerable populations are heard. The global movement for LGBTQI+ rights, significantly supported by NGOs such as the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), demonstrates how NGOs can help redefine human rights to include sexual orientation and gender identity, leading to legislative changes and increased acceptance in many parts of the world, e.g. Taiwan's legalization of same-sex marriage in 2019.
- NGOs have played a crucial role in influencing legislation and policy at both national and international levels to reflect contemporary understandings of human rights. For example, the global campaign against landmines, significantly led by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), culminated in the Ottawa Treaty of 1997. The treaty, which prohibits the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel mines, is a direct result of NGO activism. By 2021, 164 countries had joined the treaty, significantly reducing the use of landmines worldwide and showcasing the power of NGOs to define and shape international humanitarian law.
- NGOs are instrumental in setting global standards for human rights through their participation in international forums and their contributions to drafting the language of international human rights instruments. For example, NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch, played a critical role in the development of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, adopted in 2011. These principles have set a global standard for addressing the impact of business activities on human rights.
- NGOs have been at the forefront of innovation and adaptation in addressing new human rights challenges in the 21st century, such as climate change and environmental degradation. Organizations like Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) have expanded the definition of human rights to include the right to a healthy environment, advocating for global action on climate change and biodiversity conservation. Their efforts have contributed to the growing recognition of environmental rights as essential components of human rights, influencing international discourse and policy initiatives like the Paris Agreement (2015) on climate change.

*Arguments against the claim that definitions of human rights in the 21st century have been shaped by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may include:*

- The primary responsibility for defining and implementing human rights lies with sovereign states and their legal systems. Many countries have developed their human rights frameworks independently of NGO influence, through national legislation, judicial decisions, and constitutional amendments. For example, India's Right to Information Act of 2005, which promotes transparency and accountability in the public sector, was largely a result of domestic advocacy and political will, demonstrating that state mechanisms can independently shape human rights definitions without direct NGO intervention.
- The foundational definitions of human rights in the 21st century continue to be shaped by intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and treaties, such as the United Nations (UN) and its various human rights instruments. For instance, The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goals related to reducing inequalities and promoting justice (Goals 10 and 16), were formulated through a process of international negotiation and consensus, showcasing the role of intergovernmental processes in defining contemporary definitions of human rights and shaping the human rights agenda.
- The global definition of human rights is also shaped by economic and political power dynamics, where powerful states and multinational corporations exert significant influence. The negotiation of international trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), involves considerations of labour and environmental standards that impact how human rights are defined, and which are influenced more by the economic interests of participating countries and lobbying by multinational corporations (MNCs) than by NGO advocacy.
- Governments and powerful institutions often resist or selectively engage with NGOs, limiting their influence on human rights definitions and practices. For example, in countries like Singapore, the government's tight control over civil society limits the impact of NGOs on human rights discourse.
- The rise of digital platforms and grassroots social movements has democratized the shaping of human rights discourse, allowing for a multitude of voices and perspectives beyond the NGO sphere. For instance, the #MeToo social movement, originating as a social media hashtag, has brought global attention to sexual harassment and assault, influencing legal and cultural changes in numerous countries.

Responses should contain references to specific examples. Arguments in favour of the claim could note how NGOs influence human rights definitions by shifting cultural norms and values through education and awareness campaigns. These efforts target deep-seated prejudices and aim to foster a culture of rights and equality. An example of this is The Malala Fund, co-founded by Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai, which works globally to ensure girls' right to education. By advocating for policy changes and investing in local education initiatives, the fund has contributed to shifting cultural norms around female education in conservative regions of Pakistan and extending its influence to countries in the Global North, emphasizing the universality of education rights. Arguments against the claim might note how the dependence of many NGOs on funding from state actors, particularly in the Global North, can compromise their independence and limit their ability to challenge state policies effectively, potentially skewing the definitions and advocacy of human rights. For instance, several NGOs in the European Union receive substantial funding from EU institutions. This financial dependency can lead to a reluctance to criticize EU policies and official definitions of human rights. Arguments against the claim could also illustrate how local contexts and grassroots mobilization can define human rights in terms that are culturally and contextually relevant. For example, the Zapatista movement in Mexico, advocating for Indigenous rights and autonomy in Chiapas, Mexico, challenges the individual-centric human rights framework often promoted by Western NGOs. Finally, students may consider how it is rarely one actor alone that shapes definitions of human rights in global politics but, rather, different actors working together or in opposition that do so. Any other valid and relevant approaches and examples should be evaluated positively.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which definitions of human rights in the 21st century have been shaped by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

## Development

5. Evaluate the view that environmental factors must be prioritized for development to occur.

Responses should include definitions of development and environmental factors. Development can be defined as a multi-dimensional process which raises the level of well-being, standard of living and quality of life for a country. Environmental factors can be defined as those relating to geography, resource endowment and/or depletion and the consequences of climate change on peoples and communities. Responses are likely to focus on sustainable development rather than development in general, as environmental factors have greater relevance to it. Responses may include evidence that environmental factors are already threatening disruptive changes in activity, for example, climate change, sea level rise and ice melt, ocean warming and acidification, extreme weather events, carbon dioxide levels, forced migrations, etc. The response is then likely to consider these as either threats or opportunities. Responses may argue that the issue is currently one of neglect or of insufficient attention which has not proved effective. Responses may offer some explanation of the meaning of the word prioritize in the context of the question.

*Arguments in favour of the view that environmental factors must be prioritized for development to occur may include:*

- Environmental factors must be prioritized because changes which result from environmental degradation are non-reversible in the current state of knowledge. An example is coral bleaching resulting from ocean acidification on the Great Barrier Reef. This damages tourism and fisheries, with 64,000 jobs considered dependent on the reef in 2016, changing the future path of economic development and underlining the need for it to be sustainable.
- Up to now, development has depended heavily on the exploitation of a narrow range of energy intensive resources and raw materials, some of which are nearing depletion. Without a change of direction there are limits to how much further this kind of development can go. Deforestation in the Amazon and overfishing around the British Isles are good examples of resource depletion, and BP argues that peak oil was reached in 2019.
- Neglect of attention to environmental factors can lead to severe consequences, such as sea-level rise, climate change, increased frequency of extreme weather events, droughts and floods, all of which disrupt economic activity and human well-being. Major ports such as Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai, Guangzhou and Dar es Salaam are threatened with being submerged by 2050, and 300 million more people in coastal areas are threatened by flooding.
- Climate change affects development which depends on natural resources, such as agriculture or industries which rely heavily on water supplies. For example, the clothing industry is the world's second heaviest water consumer, and Bangladesh produces 8% of it using groundwater, which is dropping 3 metres a year as climate change accelerates. This, and the resulting pollution, is unsustainable as Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to climate change, meaning that further development is threatened.
- Environmental factors and subsequent changes affect different populations unequally, leading to social and economic inequalities within and across states. Geographical factors such as elevation can exacerbate this. For example, low-lying states such as Kiribati are more threatened by rising sea levels compared with more mountainous countries.

*Arguments against the view that environmental factors must be prioritized for development to occur may include:*

- The agenda has already been set for environmental factors to be prioritized in development by, for example, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations (UN) in Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 13, 14 and 15, the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Change, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Greenpeace. Therefore, it can be argued that environmental factors are already recognized as a priority and are already being addressed, so further prioritization is unnecessary.
- Further, the existing prioritization has already worked. New ways of responsibly exploiting factor endowment, such as renewable energy sources, energy efficient technologies and sustainable infrastructure have already stimulated growth, created jobs and encouraged innovation, all of which are contributing further to development. In 2022 jobs in renewable energy were 13.7 million globally, and the International Labour Organization (ILO) expects 30 million jobs in low-carbon transition by 2030.
- The Environmental Kuznets Curve suggests that environmental degradation increases with economic growth up to a certain point, after which it starts to decline as societies become wealthier and can afford to invest in environmental protection. This hypothesis supports the idea that environmental issues can be addressed more effectively after achieving a certain level of economic development, rather than prioritizing them from the start.
- For some countries there are higher priorities than prioritizing environmental factors. Economic growth may be seen as the fastest way to lift people out of poverty and meet basic needs such as food, shelter, education and healthcare by providing employment, income and higher living standards. An example of this can be seen in the rapid industrialization of China, which is still building coal-fired power stations.
- Neglect of environmental factors is not the only reason that the future of development may be compromised. For example, geopolitical tensions have recently become the biggest threat to the global economy and development, as wars are taking place in regions critical to world food supplies (Ukraine) and energy supplies, while there have been threats to the Suez Canal which conducts 20% of world trade. Such uncertainties can compromise economic growth, which, in the long term can be seen as a pre-requisite for development, pushing environmental factors further down the list of priorities.

Responses should contain references to specific examples. To some extent the examples offered will depend on which environmental factors the promote or hinder development are chosen for consideration. Likely ones are global warming, climate change, water pollution, ocean acidification and loss of biodiversity. Arguments in favour of the view may note that, due to global warming, it is estimated that three quarters of the 124 million people in acute food shortage are threatened by climate shocks and extremes. The World Bank estimates that climate change will push a further 100 million people below the poverty line by 2030, and their reduced purchasing power will compromise development. Responses may also point to loss of biodiversity, illustrated by the calculation in 2016 that one million species are threatened with the danger of extinction by rising temperatures which affect crop growth, fisheries and livestock. Responses could note the injustice implied in this: climate change is unjust in that the poorest countries have done least to contribute to global emissions historically and currently emit less than rich countries yet are more vulnerable to its effects and have fewer resources to protect themselves. Arguments against the claim may note that for some countries solving more immediate problems such as poverty and food insecurity have a greater priority than environmental concerns, before turning to address them. Their early-stage development may depend on extractive industries and agriculture, regulated by environmental rules not faced by developed countries when they started. Furthermore, some countries may benefit from environmental change such as the Arctic Sea routes north of Russia, which can benefit shipping. Some students may argue that development is very much focused on adaptation and resilience, so it may be argued that there may be no need to prioritize environmental factors, development will deal with it. Finally, when addressing the term 'prioritized', it may be argued that all factors in development are delicately interrelated and that it is unrealistic to prioritize one over another.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which the student agrees with the view that environmental factors must be prioritized for development to occur.

6. “The greatest threat to development is from violent conflict.” Discuss this view.

Responses may include definitions of development as a process which raises the level of well-being, standard of living and quality of life for a community, and conflict as the dynamic process of actual or perceived opposition between individuals or groups. This could be opposition over positions, interests or values. Violent conflict involves at least two parties using direct violence to resolve competing claims or interests. Direct violence is often defined as physical or psychological force inflicted upon another being. Responses may distinguish non-violent conflict, which can be a useful mechanism for social change, and violent conflict which is harmful and requires conflict resolution. Responses should note that development is influenced by various factors, and not all conflicts have the same impact on every aspect of a society. Development may be considered from different perspectives such as economic, social, human rights etc. Violent conflict might be confined in presence to a small area of a country, away from its modern, developing sector. Responses may focus on the meaning of the word “greatest” in the question.

*Arguments in favour of the view that the greatest threat to development is from violent conflict may include:*

- Development depends heavily on the presence of physical infrastructure. Roads, bridges, airports, hospitals and railways are easy targets for violent aggression, and take time to replace, so economic activity and development can be hindered or halted for long periods. For example, the targeting of water, energy and agricultural infrastructure over several decades in Gaza has delayed or prevented development.
- Violent conflict can displace populations, violating human rights and dignity. Displaced peoples, once moved to another place, may find their social and human development damaged, and find it hard to contribute to development. Examples of conflict-induced displacement include refugees from the war in Syria, who have sought asylum in over 130 countries, but mostly live in neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt and struggle to be economically active, while consuming local resources.
- Development depends on human capital and skills, and violent conflict often leads to death, injury or migration. Recovery or replacement of human capital requires long-term education and training. Forced migration from a conflict-affected country immediately depletes capabilities in the home country's human capital. An example is Ukraine whose students and some professionals have sought study and employment abroad, especially in Poland, since the 2022 Russian invasion.
- The presence of violent conflict at different levels inhibits investment, which becomes seen as risky. This impedes movements of capital and thus the growth of businesses and ultimately development. This can happen both at the national level and at the local level because of violent disruption from strikes and demonstrations and crime. For example, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has calculated that in Sub-Saharan Africa, conflict has led to a persistent decline in productive capacity equivalent to a drop in real GDP of 15-20% over 5 years compared with non-conflict affected countries.
- Violent conflict can be a source of political instability. Development relies upon effective governance and institutional stability to create a climate conducive to economic and human development. In conflict situations, resources that could be allocated for development projects may be redirected by unstable governments to, for example, military expenditures or corruption, such as in Haiti or Venezuela, or fighting drug cartels as in Ecuador.

*Arguments against the view that the greatest threat to development is from violent conflict may include:*

- Development can occur despite the presence of violent conflict if resources are strongly desirable to other countries. Oil, gas and mineral reserves, on which the developed world depends heavily, continue to be exploited in areas of violent conflict. According to Greenpeace, almost two thirds of all European Union (EU) military missions are to monitor and secure the production of oil and gas to Europe. Despite a violent civil war conflict in Libya since 2011, crude oil production averaged nearly 1.2 million barrels a day in 2022 and is increasing.
- Other factors can claim to be greater local threats to development than violent conflict. Corruption, poor governance, and economic inequality can also be significant barriers to development, even in the presence of violent conflict. An example of this can be found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Another example is the persistence of religious fundamentalism which opposes modernizing social changes favourable to development and upholds rigid traditional values. The main targets are human rights and women's rights and freedoms such as in Iran.
- Violent conflict may be replaced by new forms of threat to development such as technological disruption, possibly sponsored by national governments, e.g. cyberattacks on infrastructure, disinformation, internet manipulation. These could prove as disruptive to development as single acts of violence. Iran's nuclear programme was severely damaged by Stuxnet, a malware worm programme which is believed to have infected 30,000 computers in 2010.
- The rapid pace of technological change and automation challenges human development by displacing large numbers of workers and increasing inequality. This may be a greater disruption to human development than violent conflict. Education, social safety nets and employment policies will all need adapting to the digital economy and artificial intelligence (AI). Increasingly AI is seen as a societal disruptor that will leave no profession safe.
- Climate change can be seen as a threat to all levels of global development. Climate change affects the entire planet regardless of the stage of development, whereas violent conflict tends to be locally based most of the time. For example, percentages of national populations directly threatened by rising sea levels are 47% in the Netherlands and 27% in Vietnam, and over 50 million people are endangered in China. Increasing water shortage in the Middle East and North Africa may not only inhibit development but provoke violent conflict itself.

Responses should contain references to specific examples. Arguments in favour of the view may point out that examples of violent conflict in global politics which threaten development can be found within developing countries such as Sudan or Congo. Violent conflict can also occur within developed countries as exemplified by the Paris riots of 2023 which damaged central Paris and discouraged tourism. The importance of this topic in recent years has led the IMF and World Bank to focus on countries affected by Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) and to argue that they are on a different and slower development path than the rest of the world, characterized by persistent poverty and declining human capital. They estimate that by 2030, 59% of the poorest peoples will live in fragile, conflict-affected countries. Arguments against the view may note how climate change outranks violent conflict as a greater threat, although it can also act as a stimulant to further violent conflict, e.g., the Lake Chad water crisis has displaced 2.3 million people. Responses may also argue that a greater threat to development comes from pandemics or demographic factors such as a low birth rate and an aging population. It might also be argued that violent conflict affects human development as the most vulnerable are disproportionately affected, e.g. women and children. Some students may argue that the impacts of a violent conflict on development depend on two aspects, duration and intensity. World Bank studies in 2016 calculated that a four-year civil war decreases GDP per head by about 18%, and that it remains 15% down after six years. Intensity of a violent conflict can make this worse, for example Syria lost 19–36% of its productive capacity after four years. Finally, responses could argue that violent conflict needs to be seen as a spectrum.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which the student agrees with the view that the greatest threat to development comes from violent conflict.

## Peace and conflict

### 7. "Peace is the absence of structural violence." Discuss this view.

Students should demonstrate an understanding of the main concept of peace. They might include a definition of peace, both in its positive and negative conceptions. While positive peace is defined as the presence of attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies, negative peace is defined as simply the absence of war or of direct physical violence. Students should also demonstrate an understanding of the key term violence, often defined as physical or psychological harm afflicted upon another being. Violence encompasses unequal distribution of power that excludes entire groups from accessing resources essential for improved living standards or well-being, and discriminatory practices that exclude entire groups of people from accessing certain resources. In particular, students are expected to focus on structural violence, understood as a form of violence in which a social structure perpetuates inequity, thus causing a disproportionately negative impact on particular groups and communities. Some examples of structural violence include institutionalized racism, sexism, and classism, among others. Students may also conceptualize what 'absence' means in the context of the view.

*Arguments in favour of the view that peace is the absence of structural violence may include:*

- The unequal distribution of power in the international system is a form of structural violence that excludes Global South populations from accessing essential resources, thus fostering tensions and conflicts at different levels. An example of this is the disadvantageous conditions for African countries seeking to access international credit markets from international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.
- Peace is predicated on the promotion of social justice and equity, which counteract the structural violence that perpetuates cycles of conflict and instability. For example, the implementation of affirmative action policies in Brazil aims to address historical inequalities faced by marginalized communities, fostering social cohesion and reducing tensions.
- Persistent structural violence is likely to enable direct violence by undermining the inherent dignity of individuals, depriving them of basic human rights and freedoms. For example, the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar illustrates how systemic discrimination and persecution have stripped Rohingya Muslims of their citizenship and subjected them to violence and displacement.
- Peace involves empowering marginalized groups and fostering their active participation in decision-making processes to address structural violence. The empowerment of Indigenous communities in Ecuador through the recognition of their rights and land titles has contributed to peace and stability by addressing historical injustices and conflicts over land ownership.
- Lasting peace is only possible if understood in its positive conception, where the focus is on addressing the root causes of violence rather than on manifestations of violence. It is not sufficient to ensure the temporary cessation of direct violence or hostilities among conflicting parties. The persistent violence on Black-Americans in the US is an example of how addressing the single instances of violence is not enough for establishing a lasting peace.

*Arguments against the view that peace is the absence of structural violence may include:*

- Peace necessitates addressing both the underlying structural inequalities and the immediate triggers of conflict. While addressing structural violence is crucial for long-term stability, resolving immediate sources of conflict is essential to prevent escalation and sustain peace efforts.
- The concept of negative peace, defined as the absence of overt conflict, prioritizes stability over addressing the root causes of injustice and structural violence. In this sense, peace can exist in the absence of overt conflict or direct physical violence, even if structural violence persists. The peace agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the Yugoslav Wars has produced peace even if it has not eliminated structural violence, ethnic tensions and political instability.
- Peace can sometimes be enforced through authoritarian measures or the suppression of dissent, even if structural violence remains unaddressed. The authoritarian regime in North Korea maintains a facade of peace through strict control over its population, despite widespread human rights abuses and structural inequalities.
- Environmental degradation and resource scarcity can serve as sources of conflict, regardless of the presence or absence of structural violence. Competition over limited resources can exacerbate tensions and lead to conflict. The ongoing conflict in Darfur, for example, has been fuelled in part by competition over scarcity of water and grazing lands, leading to violence and displacement. While structural violence existed in Sudan, the conflict also illustrates how environmental factors can contribute to instability and conflict, independent of structural violence.
- Different cultures and societies may have varying definitions and understandings of peace, which may not necessarily align with the absence of structural violence. Some cultures may prioritize harmony or stability over addressing systemic injustices. Thus, defining peace solely as the absence of structural violence could overlook the nuances of cultural perspectives on peace (e.g. women rights in Gulf countries).

Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence. Responses should contain references to specific examples. Arguments in favour of the claim could note how the absence of structural violence is essential for lasting peace to exist. Peace, as the absence of structural violence, creates enabling environments for development and prosperity by removing barriers to progress and fostering inclusive growth. When societies prioritize peace and equity, they can allocate resources more efficiently, promote innovation, and invest in human capital, leading to sustainable development (e.g. Norway and Sweden). Responses could also argue that where structural violence persists, it is not really possible to talk about peace. An example that demonstrates the impossibility of achieving peace in the presence of persistent structural violence is the ongoing conflict in Yemen since 2014. Indeed, when structural inequalities are minimized or eliminated, societies can thrive through cooperation, trust, and collective well-being. Arguments against the claim, instead, could cite examples of peace existing despite the presence of structural violence (e.g. Serbia and Kosovo). Students might note that structural violence may not always manifest visibly, making it challenging to define peace solely as the absence of such violence. Students may also suggest that structural violence might be minimized but it cannot be eliminated. They might highlight that peace is a contested concept and that structural violence can intersect with other forms of violence, such as cultural violence or direct physical violence, complicating the relationship between peace and the absence of structural violence. Any other valid approach should be rewarded.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which the student agrees with the view that peace is the absence of structural violence.

8. Examine the claim that interstate conflicts are caused by how states use their power.

Responses should consider the merits or otherwise of the argument that conflicts are caused by how states use their power, uncovering the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the key concept of conflict and define interstate conflict as a conflict between two or more states. Conflict is understood as the dynamic process of actual or perceived opposition between individuals or groups, in this case states. This could be opposition over positions, interests or values. Students should also demonstrate a clear understanding of the key concept of power, defined as the ability of one actor to influence the other or as the ability to make an actor do something or to achieve a desired outcome using different means through use of both coercive and co-optive mechanisms (hard, soft and smart power). They may also highlight different forms of power (e.g. economic, military, social, cultural, etc.) while maintaining the focus on how states, defined as a political and legal entity with defined borders, use their power. References to the concept of sovereignty are also likely as it is linked to the way states exercise their power. Sovereignty characterizes a state's independence, its control over territory and its ability to govern itself. State sovereignty could be described as the inherent supremacy of the state to control activities and actors within its borders (internal) and independence in international relations (external). Students may also explore the phenomenon of causality in Global Politics.

*Arguments in favour of the claim that interstate conflicts are caused by how states use their power:*

- States often use their power to assert dominance and expand their influence, leading to conflicts with other states seeking to maintain their own sovereignty. An example of this is Russia's intervention in Crimea in 2014.
- Sovereign states frequently engage in conflicts over control of valuable resources such as oil, minerals, and water, utilizing their power to secure access and deny it to others. An example of this is the conflict among Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).
- The exercise of power by states over disputed territories often sparks conflicts as rival claims clash, resulting in confrontations and military standoffs. For example, several states (e.g. China, Vietnam, the Philippines) are involved in the South China Sea conflict to assert their power and sovereignty.
- States may use their power to promote political ideologies or support regime change in other countries, leading to conflicts as opposing factions resist external interference. The Syrian civil war was a case in point, since it was fuelled by interventions from regional and global powers supporting different political factions and interests.
- Sovereign states form alliances and provide security guarantees to allies, leading to conflicts when these commitments are tested or when allies are drawn into disputes with other states. An example of this is the ongoing conflict in Yemen, involving regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, who support opposing factions in the conflict.
- Power competition among states can lead them to take decisions regarding economic policies, tariffs, and trade that foster interstate conflicts (e.g. the US and China trade war, driven by disputes over trade practices and economic dominance).

*Arguments against the claim that interstate conflicts are caused by how states use their power:*

- Conflicts are increasingly caused by non-state actors and transnational challenges such as terrorism, climate change, and pandemics, which transcend traditional state boundaries and are not solely driven by how states use their sovereign power. An example is the global fight against terrorism, where extremist groups like ISIS operate across multiple countries, challenging traditional state-centric approaches to conflict.
- Conflicts can arise from failures of global governance, highlighting the limitations of states in addressing complex global challenges. The breakdown of arms control agreements and the failure to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) have created significant tensions among states. Examples include the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty between the United States and Russia, which heightened security concerns in Europe.
- Climate change and the stress on the environment are key factors in causing environmental degradation and interstate conflict over resources. An example of this is the Lake Chad conflict that involves Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon.
- Conflicts often stem from cultural and identity differences rather than solely from how states exercise their power, highlighting the importance of understanding socio-cultural dynamics in conflict analysis. Ethnic conflicts in Africa, for instance, are driven by historical grievances, identity politics, and competition for resources, rather than purely by state actions (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo; Darfur).
- Many conflicts are caused by internal factors such as political instability, social unrest, and economic inequality, rather than solely by how states use their power externally. This can be seen in the case of the civil war in Syria, which was sparked by domestic grievances and government repression, rather than direct state-to-state aggression.

Responses should contain references to specific examples. As examples in favour of the view that conflicts are caused by how states use their power, students could cite examples where states' conduct and their use of power led to interstate conflicts (e.g. Iraq 2003). As examples against the claim, students could refer to cases of conflicts caused by non-state actors (e.g. Boko Haram) or broader structural factors such as cultural and religious clashes or failures in addressing global challenges such as climate change. They might also refer to examples where processes of economic interdependence and integration prevent conflicts from happening (e.g. the EU). Indeed, in many cases interstate conflicts do not arise from the way states use their power but more often from complex interdependence that characterizes global politics. Ultimately, students might note that the way states use their power can actually prevent conflicts (e.g. Switzerland neutrality). Yet, their opinions should be presented clearly, justified and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument. Any other valid approach should be rewarded.

Responses should include a conclusion on the degree to which the student agrees with the view that interstate conflict is caused by how states use their power.

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