**Principal Actors in the International System**

- **States:** considered the most powerful actors in the international system---states have four characteristics:
  1. territory
  2. a sovereign central government
  3. a loyal population
  4. recognition by other states

- **International Governmental Organizations (IGOs):** international organizations with states as members such as the United Nations and the European Union. *Sovereignty* rests in the hands of the member states. These are *multi-lateral* institutions.

- **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs):** international organizations with individuals or private groups as members, such as the World Council of Churches, Red Cross, Amnesty International.

**Process in International Relations**

- **Globalization**
  - Exponential Increases in International Economic Transactions
  - Integration of International/Global Economic Decision-Making
  - Strengthened Political International Governmental Organizations (IGOs)
  - Increases in International Non-Governmental Organizations and Activities (NGOs)
Perceptions in World Politics:

In preparing to study world politics, emphasis must be placed on the constant tension between facts and interpretation. If our study of required only facts, we could potentially all have the same understanding. **Facts do not speak for themselves, however.** They are organized by concepts, structured by theories, interpreted by worldviews and evaluated in the light of individual and subjective value systems.

1. **Realism:** portrays the world political system as an anarchic struggle for power and security among competing states. No higher authority exists than these states. Thus states individually, or in alliance with other states, provide for their own defense. Power is the only effective means of assuring security. Security follows from vigilance willingness to act prevent any state from achieving a preeminent and threatening position.

2. **Idealism-Liberal Internationalism:** suggests that there are reasons to believe that the dominant global role of states might be weakening. International institutions, international law and international commerce all contribute to the developing global community. Thus, we should describe the world **not only** in terms of state interaction but also in terms of increasing community.

3. **Radicalism:** Understands the world as organized according to capitalist imperatives. International relations are highly stratified and dominated by the unequal relationship between the industrialized and developing worlds. Radical, systemic change is necessary in order to achieve security on a global basis---a security understood as based on the satisfaction of basic needs for the world’s population regardless of their national identity.

4. **Thomas Theorem:** “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.”