The Range of Realism

Realism is our dominant theory. Most international relations scholars are either self-identified or readily identifiable Realists. Most of our scholarship examines concepts derived from Realist models. In one exhaustive study of the development of the Realist “paradigm” since World War II, almost three-quarters of all the phenomena noted, and over 90 percent of the hypotheses tested, were identifiably Realist in inspiration. Realism, moreover, is our most distinctive theory, the theory that, for some, promises an explanation of international politics grounded in nothing below or beyond the anarchy of interstate relations itself. And Realism, our oldest theory, newly inspires creative work in applications of game theory, political psychology, and political economy.

Yet its philosophical foundations in Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau are unduly obscure. On the one hand, we too readily integrate its competing basic tenets into a comprehensive causal model and philosophy of life, the Structural-Realist model. Or we tend to define Realists as the sum of

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1 John Vasquez, The Power of Power Politics: A Critique (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983), chap. 5, especially tables 5.1 (indicating that 74.9 percent of the indicators in the field were Realist), 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 (indicating that 92 percent of the hypotheses and 94 percent of the variables tested were Realist). A wider survey of the field taken in 1972 (which included those more historically inclined) identified the American Realist Hans Morgenthau as the leading scholar of international relations and his Politics among Nations as the leading book (Vasquez, pp. 43–44). The overwhelming majority of other postwar general theorists have worked inside the Realist tradition.

2 For example, Robert Jervis, in a recent account comparing Realism and game theory, captures the conventional practical wisdom well when he describes Realism unproblematically and in shorthand as “structural, strategic, and rational unitary” (1988, p. 318). For a discussion of Realism in the context of the interdependence literature, see Weltman (1974).
their criticisms: the opponents of idealism or the critics of moralism, legalism, cosmopolitanism, or rationalism. Realists are sometimes reduced to a single identification, the philosophers of force. One important stream of popular culture grasps Realism by that "hard nose." In between descents into the 1993 violences of Bosnia and Rwanda, Christiane Amanpour, the ubiquitous CNN war correspondent, declared herself for the Realist stereotype: "I believe in the law of the jungle. There are strong and there are weak; there is an order in our species and our world. What's happening now is that no one seems to know what the order is. . . . Whatever anyone says, it's just about power."4

On the other hand, Realists are too readily dichotomized by others into tangential distinctions between, for example, traditional Realists and Neo-Realists, adherents of scientific-statistical or interpretive-historical methods. The most vociferous group of these critics draws a line between the structural and scientific Structural "Neo-Realism" of today, and the interpretive and historical "classical Realism" of Morgenthau and his predecessors back to Thucydides.5 Structural Neo-Realism the critics decry as statist, utilitarian, and postivistic ("an ideological move toward the economization of politics").6 Classical Realism, on the other hand, though incomplete, respects political judgment and the politics of the historical, traditional practice of international politics, according to the same critics.

In this part, I attempt three tasks:

First, I would like to retrieve the political arguments made by the Realists.7 I want to rescue the Realists from the charge of "economism" by examining the political values and choices that have shaped the arguments made by Realist philosophers of interstate politics. I also want to rescue them from the charge of irrationalism (aggressiveness for its own sake) by showing how their political analysis portrays politics as a means designed to advance the ends they posit.

Second, I would like to rescue Realism from the charge of monolithism. I

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3I think George Kennan's conception of Realism, described in the essays in American Diplomacy, is best understood as practical criticism of what he considers various excesses of American diplomacy. In this respect, he follows the Thucydidean tradition.


5Ashley (1984), and Walker (1987).

6See Alker (1981) for a similar criticism in which he focuses on the dialectical logic of world politics. Stanley Hoffmann (1977, p. 44) also defended a discontinuity thesis in the social scientific variant of international relations. But he placed the break at, not after, Morgenthau. Hoffmann noted Morgenthau's claim to having discovered a set of laws of power, which established a scientific field of endeavor that took root in postwar America in the new discipline of international relations—"An American Social Science."

7Thus I am not considering Realism in the philosophical sense of a philosophy "adequate to reality" of Berki (1981, pp. 67-69) or Navari's (1982) definition of real Realism based on the ontology of historical forces (in distinction to Hobbes, the nominalist and philosophical rationalist).
want to distinguish what divided the philosophic founders and still divides influential strands of contemporary Realism. I do this by showing how, even though each concentrates on one of the three levels of analysis, or Waltzian “Images”—the individual (1), the domestic constitution (2), or the international system (3)—each requires some set of necessary assumptions drawn from the other levels in order to make its argument complete and coherent.

Third, and on the other hand, I would also like to rescue the Realists from radical dichotomization, or extreme fragmentation, or incoherence. Here I explore what unites Realism. What is it that despite their differences makes Realists part of a single approach toward the hard choices that arise in world politics?

Realists, I plan to show, are united in a set of views about reality. These views distinguish them from other analytic traditions, and their differences as measured against other worldviews establish a common identity. They share a skeptical attitude toward schemes for pacific international order. They also share analytical assumptions. Realists, unlike Socialists, assume that state interests should and in most cases do dominate class interests. Unlike Liberals, they assume that state interests should and can be distinguished from individual rights. As theorists they hold that generalization is both possible and useful.

Beyond these political and scientific goals, their most important source of unity is a distinctive view of what constitutes international politics (their “dependent variable”). They are the theorists of the “state of war.” They discount any claims to system-wide international order other than that based ultimately on power or force, finding instead that among independent states, or other international actors, international society is best described as a condition of international anarchy. This is a condition that places all states in a warlike situation of reciprocal insecurity in which every alliance is temporary and every other state is a possible enemy, which makes, Hobbes argued, the possibility of war continuous. All states face in varying degrees a “security dilemma”: self-help is the only route to political security, and self-help makes other states insecure.

Their causal and normative routes to these conclusions differ markedly. While some of the differences among Realist theorists are illusory, others are real. Some search for, and claim to have found, deeply grounded or structurally

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8I want to differ from a too-natural skepticism such as that casually expressed in Stanley Hoffmann’s skeptical remark “…we are all realists now, but there are not two realists who agree either in their analysis of what is, or on what ought to be, or on how to get from here to there” (1981, p. 659).

9John Vincent has called the attitude Realist “cold water.” It consists of admonitions: “International politics is a struggle for power; war is inevitable in the international anarchy; there is no right and wrong, only competing conceptions of right; there is no society beyond the state; international law is an empty phrase” (1981, p. 93).
determined scientific generalizations; others deny the possibility of anything but contingently generalizable insight severely limited by contextual diversity. Some base their Realism directly on the competitive drives of human nature; others, primarily on international anarchy; still others, only on a particular combination of the two that stresses the varying effects of domestic social institutions. These differences lead to differing conclusions on the prospects for peace and war, cooperation and conflict, and empire and independence, as well as to differing judgments on how states can best pursue their interests. When these considerations are taken together, three elective affinities of assumptions, arguments and conclusions—three schools of interpretation—emerge. They all derive from historically contingent, or Complex, Realism. I call the three theoretical interpretations Fundamentalist, Structuralist, and Constitutionalist Realism. I will suggest that they correspond with four traditional discourses begun by Thucydides and developed by Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau.

In order to explore these similarities and differences, I will focus on three questions addressed to each of the three traditions.

- What causes the "state of war"?
- What causes particular wars and particular peaces?
- What strategy of peace is explicit or implicit in the work of each of the three traditions?

I do this in order to sort out the analytical differences among these four perspectives on realism. I also hope to lay the groundwork for an assessment of the empirical validity of the laws and moral coherence of the advice that each theory promulgates, explicitly or implicitly.
REALISMS

1. Complex, like all forms of Realism, portrays a worldview or an explanation of interstate politics as a state of war. Unlike the other Realisms, its interpretive insights are generally implicit, wrapped in historical accounts and contingent interpretations. Its insights are premised on three minimal assumptions. First, "the international scene is properly described as an anarchy—a multiplicity of powers without a government."¹⁰ Second, the primary actors are independent states whose domestic hierarchy (sovereignty) complements international anarchy.¹¹ Third, the lack of a legitimate international source of controlling authority means no restraint—whether moral, social, cultural, economic, or political—is sufficiently strong or general either to eliminate completely or to manage reliably conflicts of interest, prestige, or value. Together these three tenets generate the state of war, an omnipresent threat of war.

Mutual mistrust characterizes interstate politics so that, even with the best will in the world, no power can surrender any part of its security or liberty to another. But this view, common to a number of writers in the contemporary field, assumes nothing about the rationality of states, their pursuit of power or their "national interest," or the way they set their various goals.¹² Indeed, it assumes that the processes and preferences of states vary and are open to choice influenced by both domestic and interstate considerations. And it includes the possibility of an international society and international law providing some constraints on state behavior. The quality of political judgment is thus often seen as crucial because interstate action is not tightly constrained by the system or by human nature, and it may or may not be strictly determined by local or domestic politics. Political choice includes moral choices, but this variant of Realism assumes that ethical choices cannot be categorical or absolute—that is, that they necessarily depend upon a prior consideration of strategic security. Given the lack of international security, states seeking to maintain their independence must provide for their own security, and this calls for an attention to relative power.

¹¹Alternatively, the state is at least relatively autonomous. It faces no significant challenges to its authority from either "below" domestically or "above" internationally.
¹²For example, this view appears to fit Arnold Wolfers’s Discord and Collaboration (especially chaps. 1, 2, and 4); Kenneth Waltz’s Man, the State and War ("anarchy is the framework of world politics," but the "forces that determine policy" are located within the nation, p. 238); Martin Wight: "Power politics means the relations between independent powers. This implies two conditions: independent units which acknowledge no political superior, and continuous and organized relations between them" (Power Politics [Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1946], p. 68). It also follows Vasquez’s basic description of Realism (1983, p. 28).
The dominant inference of Complex Realism is the continuity of the state of war. Interstate politics thus constitutes a field in which generalization, when placed in proper context, can be useful. Particular wars have many causes, ranging from blunder to cold calculation and ideological crusades, from the pursuit of gain to the fear of defeat. The permanent context of anarchy makes fear an especially powerful cause of war, as G. F. Hudson notes in his discussion of the Second World War in the Pacific: “There is perhaps no factor which drives a state into war so inexorably as a steady loss of relative power. Sooner or later a desperate now-or-never mood overcomes the calculations of prudence, and the belief that a war may be won today, but cannot be won tomorrow, becomes the most convincing of all arguments for an appeal to the sword.”

Only changing one of the basic assumptions changes the essence of interstate politics. World government or empire or a very unlikely perfect normative consensus or harmony of interest: Any one would remove states from the international state of war. Societies then would experience international civil politics, a cessation of interstate politics, a universal empire, or a “security community.” Failing these, the state of war persists.

The descriptive virtue (and theoretical vice) of the Complex model of Realism is its accuracy. It is the model whose complexity most effectively allows us to re-create the actual process of world politics.

2. Fundamentalism characterizes all social interaction as fundamentally rooted in mankind’s psychological and material needs that result in a drive for power. State behavior, like all social behavior from the family through all other organizations, can thus best be understood as a reflection of interest-oriented, power-seeking activity. The struggle for power changes form, but not substance, when we move from a consideration of domestic to international politics and, as Hans Morgenthau notes, “politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature.” The drive for power produces the state of war.

The Fundamentalist accepts the anarchy assumption of the Complex Realists but questions the differentiation between domestic and interstate politics. Fundamentalism specifies both the means and ends (both power) left open by the minimalist assumptions of Complex Realism. Rooted in human nature itself, the drive for power leaves statesmen no choice other than power politics. Power, moreover, can be translated. Leadership can reshape one endeavor into resources available for other, as, following Machiavelli, “good arms make good laws; good laws, good arms.”

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15 Ibid., p. 32.
16 Ibid., p. 6.
In the first edition of *Politics among Nations*, Morgenthau notes this theory's dominant inference that "all nations actively engaged in the struggle for power must actually aim not at a balance—that is, equality—of power, but at a superiority of power in their own behalf."17 This same logic applies to individuals, who seek to maximize the satisfaction of their internal drives. Leaders can of course make mistakes. They should pursue power rationally, but human passions, prejudice, and error will ensure that some will fail to do so.18

The great virtue of the Fundamentalist model is that, with its focus on individual leadership, it helps us trace the mechanisms of change in world politics as it reveals the difficult policy choices statespersons regularly confront.

3. **Structuralism** also explains the state of war. Like the Complex version, Structuralism assumes international anarchy and the predominance of state actors. Unlike that model, Structuralism also assumes that state actors are "functionally similar units" differing in capabilities but not on ends, as Kenneth Waltz notes in his *Theory of International Politics*.19

Rational process, fungibility of power resources, and a strong preference for power as a means to security form necessary parts of the model.20 But unlike Fundamentalists, Structuralists see these features, not as assumptions about human nature or social organization, but as derivations from the structure itself. State behavior is homogenized—made rational and power-seeking—through competition and socialization.21 Only the rational and power-seeking will survive the competition to dominate and thus educate their rivals.

Specific Structural inferences, such as the hypothesized stability of a bipolar world,22 the instability of multipolarity, and the weaknesses of transnational restraints, are deduced from the model, once one specifies the number and capabilities of the states that compose the system. And scientific Structuralism offers the promise of regularities that can be falsified or confirmed.

The great promise of the elegance of Structuralism, with its sparse set of causal variables, is laws that are potentially disconfirmable and, therefore, scientifically rigorous prediction.

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18 Morgenthau (1951), pp. 12–15. Thus, according to Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson, the balance of power is really a doctrine of *prudence* for a "rationally conducted policy . . . for those nations which wish to preserve their independence" (*Principles and Problems of International Politics*, p. 104).
21 Waltz, *Theory*, p. 75. The structural determination depends, we need to add, on the systemic interaction's being sufficiently intense to select very efficiently for appropriate behavior, such as would be observed under the economist's model of perfect competition. See the valuable discussion in Keohane (1986, pp. 171–75).
22 Bipolarity (the economist's "bilateral monopoly") may, however, strain against the assumption of perfect competition.
Varieties of Realist Thought

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4. Constitutionalism examines the effects of variation in cultural, social, economic, and political institutions; otherwise it is most like the Complex interpretation of Realism. For like the Complex Realism of Thucydides, it allows for variation in all the major determinants of interstate relations, holding only to the assumptions of state action and international anarchy. But unlike Thucydidean Realists, the Constitutionalists explore variation systematically and make explicit the historically contingent factors that Thucydides leaves implicit in his narrative. Rousseau best exemplifies this strain of Realism as he focuses on the effects of European culture and commercial civilization and examines the effects of democracy and monarchy, unjust and just states. In modern scholarship, Raymond Aron's study *Peace and War* exemplifies the power of systematic generalization contained within a framework that portrays world politics as a semi-autonomous realm shaped by diplomats and warriors.

The great virtue of the Constitutionalist model of Realism is that it offers us a powerful sociology of world politics, identifies large and general constraints, and suggests the consequences of domestic reform or revolution.

Complex Realism can best trace its ancestry back to Thucydides. The closest philosophical roots of the Fundamentalist interpretation lie in Machiavelli's studies of the politics of both private and public life. The Structuralist's theory is based on assumptions and arguments best articulated in political philosophy by Hobbes. And Rousseau best articulates the assumptions and arguments of the Constitutionalists.

I explore each of these theorists as different routes to an understanding of why world politics can be seen as a state of war, different routes to an awareness of the fundamental forces that shape war and peace, cooperation and conflict, empire and independence, and differing prescriptions for how statesmen should manage a world where danger is so prevalent and opportunity so fleeting. I also lay the groundwork for a test of its central claim—that states engage in self-help by balancing power against power—as a way of determining when we should regard the Realists as realistic.
CHAPTER ONE

Complex Realism:
Thucydides

I propose first to give an account of the causes of complaint which they had against each other and of the specific instances where their interests clashed: this is in order that there should be no doubt in anyone's mind about what led to this great war falling upon the Hellenes. But the real reason for the war is, in my opinion, most likely to be disguised by such an argument. What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.¹

TO MOST SCHOLARS in international politics, to think like a Realist is to think as the philosophical historian Thucydides first thought. Realists invoke Thucydides in order to establish a continuous tradition and to say that their worldview dates back to the actual emergence of regular interstate politics more than two thousand years ago. We begin our articles and books with “Even as long ago as the time of Thucydides, political realism” or “Thucydides, the founding father of Realism,” or “Ever since Thucydides.”² Theorists as influential as Martin

Wight describe Thucydides as “the only acknowledged counterpart [to the classics of political philosophy] in the study of international relations. . . .”³

But was Thucydides a founder of Realism? Given the influence of Thucydides, the question may seem to invite a tautology. Was Thucydides Thucydidean? Is Realism Realist? As I noted in the introduction to this discussion of Realism, the variety of contemporary Realisms complicates any answer to that question. So too does the gap between Thucydides’s time and our own. Many thus reject the unity and continuity theses underlying the claim of a Thucydidean paternity for Realism. Critics draw a line between the Structural and scientific “neo-Realism” of today and the interpretive and historical “classical Realism” that goes back to Thucydides. Structural Neo-Realism is statist, utilitarian, and positivistic, while classical Realism respects political judgment and the traditional practice of international politics.⁴

In this chapter I propose to defend the continuity thesis but reject the unity thesis. Realism does hark back to Thucydides, but he is not a Structuralist, a Fundamentalist, or a Constitutionalist. Each strand of Realism can trace some of its crucial elements to Thucydides’s History. But only Complex Realism follows his methods and lessons, what Thomas Hobbes translated as his “everlasting possession.” This “everlasting possession,” moreover, is both a set of empirical lessons on how to understand what does happen in world politics and a set of moral lessons for statespersons seeking to preserve the security of their states in dangerous times.

Eminent practitioners of Realist diplomacy regularly invoke Thucydides’s authority, as Secretary of State George C. Marshall did at Princeton University in February 1947: “I doubt seriously whether a man can think with full wisdom and with deep convictions regarding certain of the basic international issues today who has not at least reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian Wars and the fall of Athens.”⁵ Astute journalists have also been known to catch statesmen in some less apt invocations as when Secretary of State Kissinger famously described the Cold War as a new “Peloponnesian War” between a United States “Athens” and a Soviet “Sparta,” and the journalist asked whether

³Wight, “Why Is There No International Theory?” p. 32.
⁴Richard Ashley (1986), pp. 260–63, with quote from p. 297. And see Alker (1988) for a similar criticism in which he focuses on the dialectical logic of Thucydides’s Melian Dialogue. Stanley Hoffmann (1977, p. 44) also defended a discontinuity thesis in the social scientific variant of international relations. But he placed the break at, not after, Morgenthau. Hoffmann noted Morgenthau’s claim to have discovered a set of laws of power that established a scientific field of endeavor that took root in postwar America in the new discipline of international relations—“An American Social Science.”
that meant that we were bound to lose.\textsuperscript{6} Strategists have followed Thucydides’s \textit{History} to learn about the roles of sea and land power. Political scientists have studied him for insights concerning the dilemmas of alliance with powers much stronger than oneself, the sources of the informal imperialism of the Athenian, imperial Delian League and of the interstate hegemony of the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League. Political theorists focus on his work to learn of the difficulties of moral action in international politics and of the typical strengths and weaknesses of democratic and oligarchic polities. (For it was in this \textit{History} that democracy first acquired the reputation for disastrous factionalism and international insecurity that has dogged it through the centuries.)\textsuperscript{7} And Thucydides himself makes a demanding claim upon our continuing attention when he says: “It will be enough for me, however, if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future. My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last forever” (I:22).\textsuperscript{8}

As a theorist of world politics Thucydides holds our attention for the depth of his insight, the range of his vision of interstate relations, and the “thickly described” complexity of his presentation. Born about 460 B.C., he came from the Athenian elite, a wealthy family owning mining property in Thrace. The war broke just as he was entering adult life, fully capable, he notes, of understanding its importance (V:26). He rose to strategos (general) in 424, but he then suffered a defeat at Amphipolis that led to his exile, an exile that he matter-of-factly says, allowed him better to obtain information from both sides (IV:104–07). He died about 404, soon after the defeat of Athens.

Thucydides is essentially a Realist, who believed that none of the traditional moral norms linking individuals across state boundaries have reliable effect. Interstate relations in his view exist in a condition where war is always possible, a state of war such as that “hard school of danger” that persisted between Athens and Sparta during the “peace” that preceded the actual outbreak of hostilities (I:19). To Thucydides, as to later Realists, international anarchy precludes the effective escape from the dreary history of war and conflict that are the consequences of competition under anarchy. Thucydides, after all, is the explicator of the “truest cause” of the great war between Athens and Sparta—the real

\textsuperscript{6}One reference to Kissinger’s use of the metaphor can be found in Elmo Zumwalt, \textit{On Watch} (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), p. 319.

\textsuperscript{7}Madison’s No. 10, for example, addresses the dangers of factionalism through the virtues of size. Kennan’s essays in \textit{American Diplomacy} continue to indict democratic foreign policy.

\textsuperscript{8}All translations are from the Rex Warner translation of Thucydides, \textit{The Peloponnesian War}. 
reason that it was “inevitable”—which lay in competitive power politics or, in modern parlance, the “security dilemma.” Efforts of each side to protect its security made the other side insecure. Severely complicating the normal systemic competition was a shifting power distribution: “—the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta” (I:23). Whatever goals and means political actors might choose in the conduct of foreign relations among states, their foreign politics, Thucydides suggested, had to be constrained by the need to preserve their security independently.

Thucydides’s Complex Realism

Human Nature xx
Domestic State and Society xx
Interstate System xx

But unlike some later Realists, Thucydides did not seek to reduce world politics to some causal essence. For him, world politics was caught in a web of antinomies. He did not think that states were the only significant actors in international politics. Individuals, such as Alcibiades, played important and sometimes independent roles in the determination of the course of international events; but their characters, mistakes, and misperceptions did not independently or essentially define world politics. Nor did Thucydides think that state interests could or should be defined solely in terms of the rational pursuit of power. No abstraction or structurally determined model of political behavior could successfully supersede a more complex explanation drawing on the actual variety of ends (“security, honor, and self-interest”) that animated political leaders and citizens. Polities did systematically differ, but their differences did not allow for a transformation of the state of war.

Nor, of course, did Thucydides conceive of his work as a work of science, a subject that could readily yield both universal laws and unique predictions of events, whether prospectively or retrospectively. Nonetheless, relations among states were and are subject to certain generalizations, lessons that could be derived from a careful study of the past, such as his own history of the great war between Athens and Sparta. Thucydides as a historian was not merely a chronicler or entertainer (as he implied that Herodotus had been). Historical interpreters are capable of generating meaningful, contingent generalizations. He carefully reports opposing interpretations and then argues for—explicitly or

10 For insightful views on the importance of shifting power distributions, see Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics.
implicitly—the view that he finds most persuasive. In the classical world, which lacked archives and detailed records, it was only because he was writing contemporary history—and thus could do field research and interview participants—that he could find the evidence to make those analytical and empirical determinations. Beyond that, the generalizability of Thucydidean history rests upon the assumption that human nature was constant (I:22). He wanted, moreover, his History to be "judged useful" because we can learn from it (I:22).

Thucydides reasoned that pressures of war and civil disorder would create the same effects in similar circumstances anywhere because all would follow the impulses of fear and self-interest and prestige (III:82). Circumstances, however, often differed. Fear of war yielded futile resistance in Melos, surrender in Mytilene, and successful defense in Sicily. His lessons, therefore, are embedded in the narration.

THE COMPLEXITY OF REALISM

The "complexity" of Thucydidean Realism suggests that the important events of interstate politics can be explained by examining the roles of leadership, state regimes, and international structures. At the same time, it cannot be explained by any one factor alone—not by the character of individual leaders or the proclivities of certain types of states or the imperatives of the balance of power. Only by considering all together can we gain a sense of why wars and peace occur, why some states achieve victory, and some are defeated.

Thucydides tells about each of these features of world politics in the course of his history of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and its allies and Sparta and its allies. His history of the war—the origins, conduct, and outcome of this war, these particular alliances, empires, and hegemonies—is explicitly an invitation to learn about the way interstate politics works in general. But his lessons are not simple or straightforward; instead he asks us to learn through a critical rethinking of each historical development and the careful consideration of the various interactions of all the actual participants.

11 Charles Cochrane, Thucydides and the Science of History (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 7–13, and Peter Pouncey, The Necessities of War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 20. Thucydides seems to accept Hippocrates’s argument that since the human physical constitution was sufficiently the same, the same symptoms occurring across the human population would signify the same disease (II:48). Ironically, Thucydides, who is said to have borrowed his methods of analysis from medicine, may have been a better diagnostician than even the professional medical men of his time. See Oswyn Murray, "Greek Historians," in John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and O. Murray, eds., Greece and the Hellenistic World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 189.
THE ORIGINS OF THE WAR

The background history to the war was familiar to all Thucydides's public. He
nonetheless took the time to repeat it, from the origins of Greek society to his
present, perhaps so that we, his later audience, would truly understand the
context from which he drew his lessons. It was, he noted, a period of "great
war" when both sides were at the height of their power and the Greek world
was divided into two great alignments, one about Athens, the other about
Sparta (1:1–20).

The two antagonists represented two different ways of life. Athens was a com-
mercial society, almost forced to be such by the poor quality of its soil and the
geographic advantage of a central position on the Aegean Sea. The wealth
supplied by commerce, together with an unusually ethnically homogeneous
population, allowed Athens to complete the democratization of its institutions
by the middle of the fifth century. The citizens, composed of about forty to fifty
thousand males, were divided by class into a landed elite, merchants, and arti-
sans. But all citizens were distinguished from metics (resident foreigners) and
slaves (who worked in the mines and in households). The citizens, however,
met one another as equals in the sovereign Assembly, which convened at least
forty times a year and generally drew an attendance of about six thousand. The
majority in the Assembly formed the government. It directly made all the vital
decisions, but it was assisted by a council (of five hundred, chosen by lot) that
prepared an agenda, and it delegated military leadership to ten annually elected
archons, of whom Pericles became the dominant figure.12

Sparta was almost Athens's opposite: agrarian rather than commercial, iso-
lationist rather than cosmopolitan, disciplined where Athens was free, and oligar-
chic where Athens was democratic. Unkindly described as a military barracks,
Sparta separated its young men from their families at seven and educated them
in packs for the military life. Sparta was ruled by a mixed constitution. At thirty,
male became full and equal citizens and members of the Spartan Assembly.
But a hereditary monarchy of two kings held the right to military leadership,
the supreme court was elected from among a small aristocracy, and five ephors
elected by the Assembly served as the executive agent with wide powers. The
Assembly acted only by acclamation, unlike the Athenian Assembly, which
depended on debate. Stability was Sparta's strong suit, but its stability rested on
a precarious domination over masses of other Greeks, the helots, enslaved to
work Spartan plantations.13

12See Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, The Origins of the Peloponnesian War (Ithaca: Cornell Uni-
versity Press, 1972) and Donald Kagan, The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (Ithaca: Cor-
GREECE AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR
Athens and Sparta cooperated to defeat the Persian invasion in 480, but soon thereafter their interests diverged. Sparta resented the leadership Athens began exercising over the Greek states liberated from Persia. Because it was suspicious of Athens's decision to build long walls to its port (which made the city invulnerable to siege), Sparta's anxiety festered and then grew as Athens turned an alliance against Persia, the Delian League, into an empire in which Athens taxed its “allies” to fund an Athenian fleet and an Athenian treasury. Yet under the lead of the archon Cimon, Athens sought to conciliate Sparta, the traditional hegemon of the Greeks.

**CHRONOLOGY OF THE THUCYDIDEAN ERA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>490 B.C.</td>
<td>First Persian War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>480</td>
<td>Second Persian War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>479</td>
<td>Revolts against Pausanias; Sparta abdicates strategic leadership of Greek allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>476</td>
<td>Delian League develops into Athenian empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>474</td>
<td>Helot revolt in Sparta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470</td>
<td>First Peloponnesian War; Athens is stripped of key colonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>446</td>
<td>Thirty Years' Peace; Athenian expansion resumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440</td>
<td>Revolt on Samos against Athenian control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>435</td>
<td>Corecyra and Corinth quarrel over colonial possession of Epidamnus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>433</td>
<td>Athens assists Corecyra in its victory over Corinth; Athens and Corinth quarrel over Potidaea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>432</td>
<td>Sparta supports a Potidaean revolt against Athens; Athens bans Megarians from its harbors; Corinth, Megara, and Aegina lobby Sparta to declare war on Athens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431</td>
<td>Thucydides's narrative begins; Thebes and Athens battle over Plataea (Athens is victorious); Pericles delivers his funeral oration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430</td>
<td>Athens is stricken by plague; Pericles is deposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>429</td>
<td>Pericles is reinstated but dies shortly thereafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>428</td>
<td>The Athenian Assembly splits into moderate and “war party” factions led by Nicias and Cleon respectively. After defeat in the north, Thucydides is exiled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427</td>
<td>Athens takes Mytilene; Sparta takes Plataea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421</td>
<td>The Peace of Nicias (albeit hostilities never fully abate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>416</td>
<td>Athens conquers Melos; Athens embarks on the Sicilian Expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>Sparta allies with Persia: The government of the 400 takes over in Athens; four months later the 400 is deposed in favor of the 5000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thucydides's narrative ends; Athenian democracy is restored; with the war party ascendant (now led by Cleophon); Athens rejects a Spartan offer of peace on the basis of the status quo.

Sparta and its allies continue to recover territory and raise revolts in Athenian colonies; Athens rejects a second Spartan offer of peace.

Cleophon is tried and executed; Athens surrenders to Sparta; the Thirty Tyrants come to power in Athens.

The Thirty Tyrants are deposed with Sparta's cooperation; Athenian democracy is again restored.

Relations deteriorated. In 465, following a devastating earthquake and the revolt of the helots, Athens sent an expedition to assist the Spartans, but fearing that Athens would assist the oppressed helots instead, Sparta sent them home. Discredited, Cimon fell. Athens then did assist a group of helot refugees, establishing them at Naupactus, a strategic site on the north coast of the Peloponnesus. When two Spartan allies, Megara and Corinth, came to blows, Athens accepted Megara's request for assistance. In addition to enraging Corinth, Athens now seemed to threaten Spartan hegemony: Megara's territory across the isthmus closed Sparta off from the rest of Greece. The First Peloponnesian War resulted as Sparta's allies dragged it into a long campaign against the dominating threat posed by Athens.

Athens lost the land-based portion of its empire in the Thirty Years' Peace, which ended the war in 446–45. Both hegemons seemed to have accepted a modus vivendi between the recognized land power of Sparta and the sea power of Athens. Each agreed to negotiate disputes and not to interfere in the affairs of the other alliance. Athens was careful not to provoke the Spartans and their allies in the west and carefully avoided imperial expansion in Sicily. In the north and east, remote from Spartan and Corinthian interests, Athenian expansion continued into the Aegean and the Black Sea granaries.

A crisis in 440 demonstrated how uneasy the peace was. Two Athenian allies—Miletus and Samos, the first dependent on Athens, the second autonomous—quarreled. Athens sided with Miletus and sent an expedition that crushed and then democratized Samos. Samian refugees turned to the Persians, and this became the signal for two other Athenian allies to revolt. This was an opportunity for Sparta to crush Athens, so it called a meeting of the Peloponnesian League. But Corinth later claimed (I:40) the credit for preventing war, implying for some that Sparta had sought war.¹¹⁴ Saved, Athens took the opportunity to consolidate its imperial rule.

¹¹⁴ This episode is one of the key differences between de Ste. Croix and Kagan on the origins of the Second Peloponnesian War. It raises the issue of whether the war nine years later was an accident or, as Thucydides says, forced by the growing power of Athens. de Ste. Croix, pp. 201–3. See below.
Five years later a crisis over the remote Adriatic city of Epidamnus led to the Second Peloponnesian War, the great war that Thucydides chronicles. Epidamnus—a colony of the dynamic, and neutral, Corecyra—experienced a democratic rebellion against its aristocrats. The aristocrats crushed the rebellion; the democrats appealed to Corecyra. When Corecyra refused assistance, the Epidamnian refugees appealed next to Corecyra’s founder, Corinth. Corinth, angered by years of rivalry with Corecyra, its disrespectful daughter colony, decided to assist the Epidamnians and, not coincidentally, thereby advance its commercial and strategic interests in the northwest. Sparta sought to moderate the actions of its Corinthian ally by refusing to intervene and urging the parties to negotiate. The Corinthians rejected negotiation, hired a fleet, but then were defeated by the Corecyreans, the second naval power in Greece.

Wealthy Corinth spent the next two years (to 433) preparing for revenge, recruiting a large fleet, and raising the alarm throughout the Peloponnesian League. Corecyra, outside the established alliances, then took its case to Athens. Arguing before the Athenian Assembly, Corinth appealed to law and morals. It invoked the provisions of the Thirty Years’ Peace (which did not include Corecyra) and Athenian gratitude to Corinth (for holding out against war in 440). Corecyra appealed to fear. It warned the Athenians that war with the entire Peloponnesian League was on its way and asked if Athens would want to fight Sparta with both the second (Corecyrean) and third (Corinthian) strongest navies on the Spartan side. This threat to Athenian naval dominance was inevitable should Corecyra be defeated and its fleet absorbed by Corinth.

Persuaded by Corecyra, the Athenians sought a limited involvement in order to avoid war. They sent a small “defensive” fleet to back up the Corecyreans in case they were in danger of losing. At Sybota, Corinthians, supported by two Peloponnesian allies (Elis and Megara), attacked, and in the confusion of battle the Athenians were eventually drawn in. The ensuing defeat of the Corinthian fleet raised tensions a significant notch higher.

Athens decided to punish Corinth’s ally Megara by imposing a trade embargo. It also tightened control in the empire, insisting that Potidæa (a subordinate Athenian “ally,” though settled by Corinthians) pull down its walls. Potidæa appealed to Corinth. Corinth and Megara demanded that Sparta call a meeting of the Peloponnesian League and declare for war.

A debate before the Spartan Assembly decided the issue. Corinthian envoys decided the issue. Corinthian envoys goaded the Spartans with the increasing power of Athens and threatened that the alliance would collapse unless Sparta acted now. The conservative Spartan king Archidamus urged a delay of a few years in order to build up Spartan forces. An ephor, Sthenelaidas, demanded war to uphold Spartan honor. The Assembly saw war as inevitable—as did the Athenian Assembly, according to Thucydides—and viewed the growing power of Athens as a great danger. Archidamus lost the vote but gained a delay in order to negotiate. But Sparta’s
demands—even the most moderate demand that the Megarian decree be lifted—were unacceptable to Pericles, who persuaded the Athenians that the demands were designed to weaken them in the face of inevitable war (1:140). Their empire, he assured the Athenian Assembly, was both readily defensible and too dangerous to let go.

CONTROVERSIES AND CAUSES

The war broke out in the summer of 431, when Thebes, an ally of Sparta's, attacked Plataea, an ally of Athens's, and thereby violated the provisions of the Thirty Years' Peace. The Spartans blamed Pericles, Athens's great democratic leader, for the war. Many of the Greek city-states blamed Athenian imperialism and commercial greed. Popular opinion also charged that Pericles, the leader of the anti-Spartan faction of Athenian politics, had a political stake in the war.\textsuperscript{15}

But Thucydides obviously means to tell us that none of these popular impressions was correct. No one state should be singly blamed for the war; no one leader caused it. Nor was the war a necessary feature of interstate politics. It was, however, explicable—that is, caused—and the "truest cause" was both generalizable and contextualized, likely to recur yet not permanent. Thucydides wanted to teach future statesmen how to recognize the dangers and perhaps to avoid, mitigate, or manage them.

Pericles led the anti-Spartan faction, so the Spartans insisted in a final message to the Athenian Assembly that the Athenians purge themselves of an ancient curse by throwing out those affiliated with the cursed clan (Pericles's). Plutarch, rather than Thucydides, gives us the background. According to charges then current, Pericles had fanned the flames of war in order to divert the citizenry from his own domestic political problems, specifically, the charges of impiety launched against Aspasia (his mistress) and of peculation against Pheidias, the sculptor (Pericles's friend). But the attempt to discredit Pericles backfired, and the Athenians rallied even more strongly behind him, whom they saw as the most steadfast defender of their public interests. Although Pericles led the Athenians, it is also important to remember that they chose demo-

critically to follow him. Some votes in the Assembly (such as the vote to come to the aid of Corcyra) were apparently close, but all the votes supported the actions that led to the outbreak of the war.

On the Spartan side, Sthenelaidas played an analogous but different role in moving Sparta toward war. In contrast with Pericles's cool argument, Sthenelaidas made a heated harangue, appealing to Sparta's pride in its military prowess and sense of fidelity to its allies. He, too, succeeded in moving the Spartan Assembly to vote for war (I:86). But, as with Pericles, his individual role may not have been that decisive. Sthenelaidas's rival, the king Archidamus, also thought that war with Athens was likely; he simply and for logistic reasons preferred to fight later, when Sparta would be better equipped, rather than sooner. After extensive consideration and debate the Spartans allowed themselves to be swept up by Sthenelaidas.

Thucydides's own explanation of the war is clear, straightforward, and dismissive of the charges against specific individuals. War, as he and most Realists argue, is usually a product of larger causes. For Thucydides, the real cause was the "growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta" (I:23). But does he mean that Athens or Sparta or Corcyra (which appealed to Athens) or Corinth (which strove to ignite Spartan fear) was the cause and deserves the blame for the war?

Corinth and Corcyra certainly sought to embroil the two bigger powers. In 435 Corinth decided to support the Epidamnians in their rebellion against Corcyra. Corinthian involvement sent the Corecyraeans to Athens to request Athenian support. The Corecyraeans helped enlist Athens by threatening to take the Corecyraean fleet, the second-largest in the Greek world, over to the Spartans if Athens refused to support them. Later, in 432, it was the Corinthians who argued before the Spartan Assembly the case for war against Athens, detailing an Athenian record that they charged was an implacably imperialist course of expansion. The long-standing rivalry between Corinth and Athens for control of the trade to the west serves as a backdrop to their hostility and to this series of escalating crises.16 But Corinth does not appear to have been aggressively bent on war with Athens. Earlier, in 440, it had been the voice holding out against Samos's request for Peloponnesian League support in the Samian rebellion against Athens. Corinth too tried to persuade Athens to stay out of its quarrel with Corcyra over Epidamnus.

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MAJOR STATESMEN OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Pericles  Preeminent democratic leader of Athens from approximately 460 B.C. until his death in 429 B.C. Pericles forged an Athenian empire out of states formerly in the pan-Hellenic Delian League.

Cleon  Imprudent, aggressive, cruel but not unpatriotic Athenian general, most influential after the rule of Pericles. Cleon lobbied the Athenian Assembly to punish the Mytilenian rebels harshly.

Nicias  The most prudent and least warlike of the Athenian generals. Thucydides questions his abilities as a strategist yet offers a rare eulogy on how among the war dead, Nicias least deserved the “butchering” he received.

Alcibiades  Traitorous and imprudent but brilliant Athenian general. Just as he set out from Athens to lead the ill-fated Sicilian expedition, Alcibiades was called back to Athens for trial on a charge of sacrilege. He escaped to Sparta and informed the Spartans of Athenian military secrets (upon learning that Athens had condemned him to death). Later, shifting loyalties once again, Alcibiades enjoyed a brief return to favor in Athens upon the overthrow of the Athenian democracy, yet eventually fell out of favor again and had to flee to Persia, where it was the Spartans who finally ordered him killed.

Archidamus  Spartan king from approximately 470 B.C. until approximately 426 B.C., but only mentioned once in Thucydides’s history after Book I. Archidamus advocated a prudent Realism, characteristic of Spartan conservatism, and sought to postpone the war with Athens until a more suitable moment. His influence with the aristocratic Spartan Assembly was not absolute, however, and his advice was not heeded.

Sthenelaidas  Spartan leader who successfully argued a case for aggressive Realism against Archidamus and for immediate war with Athens.
Diodotus

Athenian leader who successfully argued for prudent moderation against Cleon’s advocacy of cruel punishment in the treatment of Mytilene. As there is little historical record of Diodotus besides that of Thucydides, some have speculated that “Diodotus” (“soft speaker”) was a convenient voice for a view expressed in the Athenian debate that Thucydides wanted to highlight.

Hermocrates

Sicilian leader whose strong leadership forged military and civil unity out of the factionalism of his state, thereby contributing to its defeat of Athens.

Sparta, of course, bore formal responsibility for the war. In 431 it reduced the prospects for a reasonable arbitration by requiring that Athens lift the embargo on Megara as a precondition, and it added purely provocative demands, such as that the curse attached to Pericles’s clan be purged (I:127). It then, together with its Peloponnesian League, declared war. Spartan rage and pride also played a part in the war’s origins, as the reception Sthenelaidas’s harangue received at the Spartan Assembly indicates. Sparta’s honor, the growth of Athenian power, and fidelity to allies were each invoked by the enraged Spartans, who by a “great majority” voted with the ephor Sthenelaidas (I:86). But it would be wrong to see Sparta as the aggressive party driving all to war. Its reputation for caution, indeed excess delay, was more than demonstrated in the crises leading up to the declaration. It sought to restrain Corinth. Corinth repeatedly stressed Spartan procrastination and warned the hegemon of the Peloponnesian League of (or did Corinth threaten Sparta with?) defections (I:71) unless it backed up the interests of the members and confronted Athenian “aggressions.” These aggressions included attacks on Corinth (the Corcyraean affair); Potidaia (a Corinthian colony in rebellion from but allied to Athens); Megara (whose citizens were banned from Athenian ports as punishment for a border transgression); and Aegina (which accused the Athenians of restricting its freedom [I:67]).

Thus, to many Greeks, Athens seemed the oppressively and aggressively expanding empire. According to the Peloponnesians, its refusal to give “freedom” back to the Hellenes was the root cause of the war (I:125 and I:139). Indeed, though acting completely within the legal confines of the peace, Athenians had interfered in the affairs of neutrals (Epidamnus-Corcyra), forcibly disciplined its allies (Potidaia), and settled bilateral disputes in a heavy-handed manner (Megara). Under Pericles, the Athenian demos profited from and gloated in the expansion of the empire, which (though once a freely chosen alli-
ance against the Persians) had become a coercive restriction on the freedom of at least the nondemocratic members of the Delian League. Pericles, moreover, had accepted Corcyra’s warnings and its alliance and had come to think that war with Sparta was inevitable (1:33 and 1:44).

Pericles and the majority of the Athenians had come to believe that they had no choice. Athens had done nothing unusual, nothing beyond what was necessary, as the Athenian “ambassadors” at a prewar Spartan Assembly argued. Now they must prepare for a war that seemed bound to arrive (1:44). The Athenians in the debate at Sparta argued that no particular blame should be attached to Athens (1:75–76). Athens acquired an empire that began as a free alliance whose declared purpose was to liberate the Greeks from Persian domination (following the victories at Salamis and Platea in 480–479). All shared the fear of Persia, and the Spartans were not prepared to lead the Greeks. Afterward self-interest and honor also came to play a role in the transformation of the league into an expanding empire. But these motives too were common to most states, Thucydides’s History seems to imply. Moreover, any state that left Athens’s Delian League / empire would merely have defected to the Peloponnesian League; that, after all, was the fear upon which Corecyra had played. Security too affirmed the primacy of self-interest. And so Pericles warned the Athenians that even if their empire had been wrong to acquire, it would now be more dangerous to let it go than to defend it.²

THE END OF THE WAR

We see a similarly complex story in Thucydides’s account of the end of the war and the defeat of Athens. At the simplest level, Athens was finally defeated in 404 because Sparta and the Peloponnesian League turned out to be the more powerful coalition. From this perspective the revival of Persia, temporarily eclipsed by civil war, and its decision to provide financial and naval support to Sparta and against the dominant Athenian naval power, tipped the balance against the Athenian empire and led to the string of naval defeats that culminated in the Spartan occupation of Athens.

Thucydides, however, really wanted to tell us a more complicated story, despite the fact that his work remained incomplete at his death and his death came before the final defeat of Athens. He wanted to explain why Athens was losing. The tip in the balance of forces was to him a symptom, or intermediate

¹⁷ For discussion, de Ste. Croix, p. 290ff.
cause, of a deeper problem that explained how Athens had wasted its resources. A failure of strategy formed part of the explanation of how Athens had squandered what Pericles (and Thucydides) saw as its initial superiority in power. Pericles persuaded the Athenians to follow a prudent sea strategy, emphasizing a war of attrition. Athens, invulnerable to a land attack because of its dominance of the sea and the massive fortifications that linked its seaport Piraeus to the mother city, was to focus its naval forces on amphibious raids against Sparta and its allies. Eschewing any expansion of the empire, even abandoning Attica to Sparta's land campaign, and relying on its control of Aegean commerce to provide needed supplies, the Athenians were persuaded by Pericles that they would wear Sparta out (I:144).

Tragic fate, or chance, decreed otherwise. Sparta's land campaign, even though it could not dent Athens's true naval dominance, may have contributed to the flight from Attica into Athens that led to the outbreak of the plague in the besieged and overcrowded city. And the plague seems to have contributed, Thucydides argues, to the undermining of public morale that led to a deterioration of leadership, which led to a deterioration of strategy. Leaders such as Pericles combined brilliance, prudence, and patriotism, John Finley has argued in his influential study of Thucydides's History. Their authority also stemmed from the willingness of the populace to trust their judgment. The plague eroded public trust: None of the citizens could trust one another as those who helped the plague victims seemed to be the first to be punished by the baffling disease (II:53). Leaders then seemed to exploit the resulting fear and self-interest. Some, such as the hard-line demagogue Cleon, were patriotic but neither brilliant nor prudent. Others, such as the promoter of the Sicilian expedition Alcibiades, were brilliant, but neither prudent nor patriotic. Still others resembled the general in command of the Sicilian expedition, Nicias, who was patriotic and prudent (indeed excessively so) but not brilliant. Strategy began to reflect each of these tendencies. It became rash and cruel under Cleon, rash and brilliant under Alcibiades with the disastrous decision to expand the empire by conquering Sicily, and prudent and halting under Nicias, who frittered away the Athenian advantages in Sicily and helped produce the utter defeat of this vast expenditure of Athenian resources.

The other and deeper cause of Athens's defeat was factionalism. Even with poor leadership Athens would have won if it had remained united, Thucydides claims (II:65). The "internal strife" of oligarch against democrat, rural landlord against urban artisan fractured Athenian resources. The Spartan invasions of Attica destroyed the estates of the rural oligarchs first, making Athenian reliance on a naval strategy seem excessively democratic. The factions escalated

Beyond this, however, until, in the end, the democratic fleet fought alone as
oligarchs plotted with Sparta and surrendered Athens to Spartan fellow conserva-
tives in order to avoid domestic Athenian revolution. (Here one almost sees
a foreshadowing of the French right's dictum in the 1930s: "Better Hitler than
Léon Blum."

No single individual, no single state could account for the war or Athens's
defeat, Thucydides thus suggests. But where are we to find the underlying
causes he urged us to search for? Our three later variants—human Fundamen-
talism, interstate Structuralism, and domestic Constitutionalism—distill theo-
ries of such underlying factors. Let us see whether any one of the theoretical
distillations captures Thucydides's Complex interpretation.

**HUMAN FUNDAMENTALISM**

The Thucydidean view of politics shares important similarities with the Funda-
mentalistic view. But we can also distinguish Thucydides's views from the core
tenets of Fundamentalist Realism.

Fundamentalist Realists see all society, all politics—domestic as well as inter-
state—as being rooted in a human nature that gives rise to contests of compet-
ing interests, struggles for power, and drives toward domination. That is the way
human beings fundamentally are. Moral choice is irrelevant because for the
Fundamentalists, life is an unrelenting struggle for individual political power.
Politics is governed as much by chance and accident as by necessity and plan.

In this model, war derives from aggressive instincts, calculated or miscalcu-
lated. Using war to promote their interests, individual leaders exploit states and
their publics. Or driven by fear and prejudices, confusion and misperception,
leaders push their states to war, irrespective of true, rational, public interests. 19

Classical political thought was preoccupied with psychological causation. 20
An essential aspect of Thucydidean thought, moreover, was the continuity of
politics that rests on the continuity of human nature. It is "human nature being
what it is" that made it possible to understand clearly the past and the future—

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19 A valuable survey of the individual drive literature can be found in James Schellenberg,
*The Science of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) and Samuel Kim, "The
Joseph de Rivera, *The Psychological Dimensions of Foreign Policy* (Columbus: Merrill,
1966), and Sigmund Freud, "Why War?", *Collected Papers*, ed. James Strachey (New York:
Basic Books), vol. 22, pp. 204–11.

by its similarities to the past (I:22).\textsuperscript{21} In this respect Thucydides’s famous trinity of security, honor, and interest applied fundamentally to both personal and political motivation. Commentators on Thucydides have employed the connection between personality and politics to construct general theories of international change that span his time to our own.\textsuperscript{22} But there is a significant difference for Thucydides between intrastate and interstate politics that does not allow us to assimilate the two into one continuous struggle for power as the Fundamentalists would have us do.

Thucydides used personification ("Athens") somewhat less than modern scholars do (he more frequently used "Athenians"). He saw factions within the state as contributing to choices of foreign policy (Archidamus’s peace party at Sparta, the rural versus the urban inhabitants of Athens, the demos and the oligarchy). But with the striking exception of Alcibiades, individual leaders throughout the Peloponnesian War acted in the name of the public interest and through their control over state resources. Domestic factions, moreover, were not fixed in their influence or preferences. Thucydides meant politics to be understood as relatively autonomous public deliberation: choosing among competing interests and values.\textsuperscript{23}

The Complex interpretation of Thucydides’s Realism has been challenged by scholars (inspired by Fundamentalist views) who question the assumption of states as relatively autonomous actors. These critics question the notion that the state, the people, or their leadership could make politically responsible choices.\textsuperscript{24} An aggressive policy, some say, had been forced on Pericles by the domestic commercial faction within Athens that sought to promote its private business prospects overseas. The merchants were the group with the most to benefit from an imperialist policy in the west and from the destruction of their Megarian commercial rivals, and both these actions were the ones that embroiled Athens with Corinth and thus with Corinth’s ally Sparta.

\textsuperscript{21}Robert Gilpin (1986) makes this biological-psychological continuity an important part of the reason that justifies the extension of Thucydidean and Realist thought into the present.

\textsuperscript{22}Peter Pouncey (1980, p xii) and William Bluhm (1962, pp. 32–33) have shown how much of a contribution to our understanding of the Thucydidean state of war can be achieved with this method. Their theories of Athenian imperialism work through a “progress of pessimism”: from fundamental human aggressiveness, through political organization, to imperial conquest, to interstate resistance, to domestic strain, to civil war, and collapse into a war of all against all.

\textsuperscript{23}Marc Cogan (1981).

\textsuperscript{24}Cornford, chaps. 2 and 3, has challenged that core Realist assumption (which underlies all Realist considerations of foreign policy) in favor of an interpretation of the war stressing the determinant role of instrumental class interests. Cornford’s point is not that Thucydides held that class interests explained the war (were “the truest cause”) but that Thucydides lacked altogether an explanation of the war in terms of state rivalry and that his failings are revealed in the patent superiority of a materialist, economic explanation (pp. 68–69).
Critics reject the strategic rivalry between Athens and Sparta as a sufficient explanation because neither state was best served by an aggressive policy. But for a Realist—for Thucydides—the failure to achieve what would be the best outcome for each state considered separately is hardly a sufficient indication that the states were not acting according to their strategic interest. Nor is it an indication that they were instead being manipulated by particularistic domestic factions. Athens may well have preferred continued peace with its empire intact; Sparta, continued peace with its equality guaranteed. But if continued peace involved the steady increase in Athens’s imperial power and Sparta preferred war to inferiority (as its Assembly in fact chose), then Thucydides is offering a strategic analysis and a Realist explanation of why Sparta chose war over peace, since no arrangement of international anarchy could lead to a stable peace other than the balanced power resources of the two sides. For him, unlike for the later Marxists, class interests do not provide a coherent, alternative way to organize political life. Individuals shaped but also were shaped by the state and the interstate system.

Still other Fundamentalist scholars have challenged the analysis of changing interstate power underlying Thucydides’s explanation of the war. In making this challenge, these scholars attack another primary tenet of Complex Realist explanations. The continuity of interstate anarchy for the Realist provides the grounds for a comparative explanation of international events. The influence of changes in relative interstate power gives evidence of the underlying symmetry of interstate anarchy.

Thucydides asserts a Realist, power-oriented “truest cause” for the war—“what made the war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta” (I:23 and see also I:44, I:88, and I:128)—and in doing so, he initiated what has since become a Realist staple. But Thucydides failed—the critics argue—to offer a truly Realist explanation for the origins of the war. According to the critics, this is because he never fully demonstrated and explained the growth of Athenian power; instead he described a crisis in which allies embroiled the two antagonists and fear led one of them (Sparta) to declare war. Critics argue that his History shows that Corinth, not Athens, forced Sparta into war. Or it shows the significance of differences in political institutions, rules, and conventions, which in its turn draws us into all the

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25 Ibid., pp. 8, 13.
27 In classics literature the charge was made by Meyer, Schwartz, Momigliano, and others (see the account by Kagan [1969] pp. 357–64, of these views) and in the political science literature, recently in a valuable article by Garst (1989).
28 Meyer and Schwartz.
29 Garst.
nonstructural and contingent crises and complaints from Epidamnus onward.\textsuperscript{30}

Clearly, these critics are identifying something important. Thucydides’s History showed that differences in political culture between Athens and Sparta as well as Corinth’s incitement to action exacerbated Spartan fear. But Thucydides did not think they were the predominant, or truest, cause of Sparta’s fear or of the war, which was the growth in Athenian power. Furthermore, he attempted to demonstrate this carefully.

The “Archaeology” (I:1–19) with which Book One begins is a long account of why the Peloponnesian War was the greatest of all wars. Great suffering and various prodigies made it noteworthy, of course, but likely a more important reason was that the two main combatants were at the height of their power, which was greater than any ever before exercised in Greece. The “Archaeology” further explains the growth of power among the city-states and notes, in particular, the emergence of states in place of tribal societies, the development of shipping, and the increase in money (which together led to colonization), the growth in size of territory, and the replacement of unstable and personalistic tyrannical rule by more unified public rule.

Differences in just these dimensions of power—ships, money, and size—identified the growth in Athenian power relative to that of Sparta. By the time of the outbreak of the war, neither the “great majority” (pro-war) nor the minority (anti-war) of the Spartans disagreed with that proposition. King Archidamus, arguing for negotiation and peace, urged caution in the face of the already superior power of Athens and delay in the hope that financial and naval aid would in a few years tilt the balance of power to Sparta’s advantage (I:80–95). (But as a patriotic Greek he could not bring himself to utter the name of Persia, its only significant prospective source.) The ephor Sthenelaidas, arguing for war, played upon the military honor and sense of military superiority of the Spartan Assembly and warned it that it was better to have a war now—joining with its allies—against Athens than a war later, after having lost its allies, against an even stronger Athens (I:86). Thucydides then said that it was not so much that the allies persuaded or forced the Spartans, but that the Spartans, who made up their own minds, decided on war “because they were afraid of the further growth of Athenian power” (I:88).

Thucydides in the immediately following passages, the “Pentecontaetia” (I:89–117), proceeded to show how it was that Athenian power grew, stressing

\textsuperscript{30}On the other hand, if Spartan fear developed independently of the actual growth of Athenian power, Thucydides’s explanation would not be Realist, following the logic of self-help security; it would not be constrained by the continuity of international anarchy and conditioned by the evolution of the balance of power. If the war occurred inevitably through power dynamics and without the addition of Spartan fear, Thucydides’s explanation would be Realist, but purely Structuralist and not Complex. It would also, if Kagan and Gruen are correct, be much less persuasive.
the crucial sources of power the "Archaeology" had identified. The growth in
the relative power of Athens was a function both of its own success and of
Spartan stagnation. Despite Sparta's traditional military preeminence among
the Greeks, its institutions, its economy, and its culture were not conducive to
a growth in power following the defeat of Persia. Its conservative, subsistence
agriculture precluded the commerce needed to sustain seafaring and thus naval
power. Its leader and its forces were too boorish and overbearing to lead the
pan-Greek coalition then liberating Ionia from the weakened Persian empire
(I:94–95). Its helots were prone to revolt, thereby tying down Spartan forces for
domestic security. Athens, conversely, had the seafaring capacity to undergird
specifically naval power, the sophistication to lead the other Greeks, and all the
domestic security that a well-walled maritime city could enjoy. Taking over the
lead from Sparta in liberating the Ionians, it expanded its maritime activities,
established the leadership of a league of other states, which it transformed into
an empire, and imposed a tribute on its "allies" (I:96–97). The increase in
Athenian ships, money, and imperial expansion—the dimensions of power
stressed in the "Archaeology"—now made for the growth in power that alarmed
Sparta (see Thucydides's summary, I:118).

Differences in institutions and culture provoked tension and contributed
to the failure of postwar cooperation.31 Athenian conflicts with Sparta's most
significant ally, Corinth, and Athenian ties to Sparta's traditional enemy, Argos,
also increased tension. And the growth in Athenian power was not continuous.
Athens sustained setbacks during the expedition to Egypt and in the loss of
Boeotia following the First Peloponnesian War. But the fundamental sources
of Athenian power that Thucydides stresses—seafaring, the navy, and the
empire—remained intact and continued to grow until, in Thucydides's own
words, Sparta felt its position "to be no longer tolerable" (I:118).32 It was this

31The abortive Athenian mission to help Sparta put down a helot revolt serves as an ironic
example.

32A second set of critics has conceded that Thucydides attempted a power-oriented explana-
tion but argues that Thucydides's explanation is simply historically incorrect. This was the
charge made by F. E. Adecock (1927, pp. 190–91) and supported by Donald Kagan's revision-
list history of the causes of Peloponnesian War (1969, pp. 373–74). The crux of Kagan's
revision was that the truest cause according to Realist explanation was clearly not true. Ath-
ens's power was not growing between the end of the First Peloponnesian War (446) and the
diplomatic crises leading to the Second (435) (1969, chap. 19). The growth of Athenian power
in the 450s would have justified a Spartan preventive war. The peace of 446–45,
however, settled the first war following Athenian losses that radically reduced its power and
according to terms that were acceptable to both Athens and Sparta. The actual outbreak of
the second—Thucydides's—war was in 431. Athens's power did not increase between the
two, so power cannot be used to explain the war or Sparta's fear. Athenian power in 431
probably did not match its power in the 450s, when its fleet fought in Egypt, it occupied its
seafaring rival Megara, and it controlled most of central Greece (Boeotia). But Athens did
improve its strategic position after the peace of 446—that is, after the defeat in the first war
that saw the loss of each of those possessions. Thucydides may have exaggerated when he
shift in power that constrained policy choice. The Spartans were not free to ignore interstate politics without suffering decline; they were forced to fight or appease.

INTERSTATE STRUCTURALISM

Structuralism explains the necessity of the state of war by focusing on international anarchy. Structuralism finds the complexity and contingency of Complex Realism unnecessary. For the Structuralist, the important questions can be explained parsimoniously via international structure—not through difficult political or moral choice but through the unrelenting competition of independent states. Thucydides respected Structural parsimony. That is what the “truest cause”—“the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta” (I:23)—was all about. But his theory was not Structural.

According to the proponents of Structuralism, competition and socialization under anarchy select for power-seeking ends and rational decision-making processes in the way a competitive market selects for profit maximization. States that do not operate according to these standards of power maximization will simply be eliminated; we should thus assume that complex political and moral choices are irrelevant. States naturally balance power against power, rather than “bandwagon” toward the powerful. They fight when they think they can win. States can be assumed to be basically similar “units,” and international politics can thereby be understood primarily in reference to the number and relative power of the states—to the “structure” of the international system.

called 431 the high summer of Athenian power (I:1), but in the preceding fourteen years there is some evidence of real strategic advance on the part of Athens. Athens, as Romilly and more recently de Ste. Croix have noted, consolidated its naval preeminence and establishing complete command of the eastern Mediterranean. It shifted to a coherent imperial strategy by shedding its least defensible landed possessions while colonizing the more defensible island of Euboea. In 441–40 Athens crushed the strategically well-sited Byzantium and Samos (the single largest among its Delian “allies”) and thereby absorbed them as subordinate tribute-paying states. Athens thus completed the transformation of the hegemonic alliance of Greek states it had inherited from Sparta after the Persian War into a true maritime empire (arche) effectively controlled from the imperial center (Romilly [1963], pp. 19–20; de Ste. Croix [1972], p. 60). In 437 it sent major colonial expeditions to the Black Sea shore (Sinope and Nymphaeum in the Crimea). This enhanced its commercial presence in that important granary, which was now more secure than Boeotia had been, as long as Athens maintained naval predominance. Athens then secured its northern sea route by planting colonies and forls in Thrace (437–36). It stocked a war chest of six thousand talents drawn from surplus tribute. And in the prewar crisis Athens added a defensive alliance with Corcyra, the second naval power of Greece.

For example, Kenneth Waltz made structural factors the decisive reasons in his arguments against the significance of economic interdependence and for the stability of bipolar systems (1979, chaps. 7 and 8).

Ibid.
We can therefore reconstruct what a purely Structural account of the war would look like. After the great battles of Salamis and Plataea (480 B.C.), which crushed the Persian invasion of Greece, the Spartan general Leonidas led the Greek campaign to eject the Persians from the Aegean. His overbearingness, however, soon led the Greek allies to replace Sparta and entrust the Athenians with the leadership of a league of Greek city-states whose treasury they placed at Delos. Sparta and its allies dropped out. The successful liberation of Persia’s Greek colonies led to the growth of Athenian power. Step by step, Athens transformed the Delian League into an Athenian empire, fortified itself with long walls, and established a dominance over the commerce of the eastern Mediterranean. Sparta’s allies struck against Athenian power in a First Peloponnesian War, but this war resulted in only a temporary setback to the growth of the Athenian empire.

By the 430s, just before the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War, the distribution of power in the Greek world was what we would call quasi-bipolar, in that, as Thucydides says, the states of Greece were divided up between two “alliances”: the Peloponnesian League led by its hegemon, Sparta, one of the two “poles”; and the Delian League, an empire directed by Athens, the other pole (1:1). Both Athens and Sparta stood out as the militarily leading states; no one state—other than one of the two poles—could readily contemplate an attack on either of the two poles. In the 430s the composition of power was not identical. Sparta, the great land power, could in an emergency draw on fifty thousand of its unequaled frontline hoplites (elite troops). Sparta’s Peloponnesian League mustered 140 ships, mostly Corinthian, at the naval Battle of Sybota, which preceded the war, against Corcyra’s 110 ships, but the destruction on both sides eliminated those two powers as factors in the naval balance of power. Athens, the great naval power, kept thirteen thousand hoplites under arms and could draw on sixteen thousand in reserve; but its real strength lay at sea, where it could launch 300 ships and rely on a revenue of one thousand talents (six hundred of which derived from the empire alone).

The Structuralist logic of a static bipolar system suggests a stable balance of power since no small power can rationally challenge one of the two large powers and (given a normal advantage for the defense over the offense) neither of the two more equal large powers can contemplate successful aggression. Change, however, can be extremely disruptive in such a system. As Thucydides says, it was the “growth” of Athenian power that caused the war (1:23). To see how, we can compare it to a multipolar system. A bipolar system lacks one of

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35 This is one of the criteria that Waltz (1979) employs to define a bipolar relationship; see also the discussion in Hopf, (1991).

the dynamic stabilizing tendencies of a multipolar system. In a multipolar system the increase in the power of one state can be met in either of two ways. State A balances internally when it matches the rising power of state B with increases in spending on arms in the short run or investment in the long run. State A balances externally when it matches the rising power of state B by forming a coalition against B from among states—C, D, E, etc.—which were previously neutral or previously allied with B. Bipolar systems, by definition, lack effective sources of external balancing since the only other significant strategic power is the other pole. The only dynamic stabilizing factor of a bipolar system is internal balancing—increased investment in arms. Given Sparta’s traditional and complete dedication to military preparedness, the increase in Athens’s power meant surrender, resignation to subordination, or a war of resistance. War in turn meant war now or war later, when Athens would be even more powerful.

As a quasi-bipolar, on the other hand, some of the logic of multipolar politics applied. Before their fleets were destroyed, the threat of the combined Corcyrean and Corinthian fleets would have nearly matched that of Athens’s own fleet. Bipolar systems presume an indifference to the defection of allies—from the purely military point of view. This is what helps keep them stable. But neither Athens nor Sparta could be indifferent; they were not superior enough. In multipolar systems, on the other hand, alliances shift to reflect multiple changes in relative power. But Athens and Sparta were each too large to be readily balanced by marginal shifts in alliances. Quasi-bipolar systems suffer the evils of both systems; Corinthian and Corcyrean threats of defection helped drag in their superior allies, but they were insufficient to balance the power of the two leaders.

Of course, Thucydides does not explain the exact timing, in 431, in this way. For that we need his account of the expressed complaints from Epidamnus and Potidaea. These disputes spread the conflict from the minor powers, Corcyra and Corinth, to Athens and Sparta (I:36). But war was likely—if not at that time, then sooner rather than later—because of the systemic (Structural) slide in the key, bilateral balance of forces against Sparta and its Peloponnesian League. Thus the rise in Athenian power rationally compelled (explained) the war, both its occurrence and its timing.

But important as these Structuralist observations are, they are not the essence of Thucydides’s argument. Thucydides’s work is a testament to the fact that he held that a state’s ends, its means, and (therefore) its choices could not be

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adequately determined through an analysis of international structure. Structure was not enough to determine the political choices that shaped the war, the Athenian empire, or the Spartan hegemony. Structure, for him, was both too narrow and too shallow.

Did narrow power competition alone make the war “inevitable”? Thucydides notes that Sparta’s “fear,” one of the root causes of the war, was a product, not just of Athenian power, but of the mood that Sthenelaidas exploited in the Spartan Assembly. The growth in Athenian power was not in itself sufficient to make the war “inevitable.” Thucydides says in the famous verdict of 1:23: “What made the war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.” The trend toward an increase in Athenian power did seem to make a war rationally preferable now rather than later. But if Archidamus’s rationalistic analysis (1:80–81) was correct, Athens was already more powerful (possessed more strategic resources) than Sparta. War thus was not clearly the rational response. It was the addition of Sthenelaidas’s persuasive harangue (1:86) against Athenian power and his evocation of Spartan honor, hatred, and fear that overwhelmed Archidamus’s rational discourse on Athenian power and Spartan prudence. Athenian power did not compel or produce an inevitable result without Spartan fear and honor, both of which were stimulated by Sthenelaidas. This fear was produced not merely by Athenian power, but also by Spartan vulnerability and Spartan pride. Specifically, Sparta believed that it was vulnerable to a helot uprising, inspired and, perhaps, assisted by democratic Athenians. It also felt threatened by a loss of its leadership of the Peloponnesian League, which would have been set in motion had Corinth defected out of frustration with Sparta’s failure to overturn the Corcyraean alliance with Athens. Sparta’s pride shaped Sthenelaidas’s ferocious harangue and his demand that the assembled Spartans vote for “the honor of Sparta and for war.” Would Sparta be subordinate to Athens or, as it had once been, superordi-

38 Donald Kagan has introduced persuasive reasons for us to believe that each of the major participants—Sparta, Athens, Corinth—had a significant range of choice that was in part domestically determined (1969, pp. 351–56).
39 Supporting both Kagan’s history and Thucydides’s interpretation, Erich Gruen has suggested that the proper translation of Thucydides’s passage is “forced them to go to war,” which is less mechanical a compulsion than is suggested by “inevitable” (1971, p. 331). W. R. Connor translates this passage similarly, ending with “drove them into war” rather than employing “inevitability” (1984, p. 126). Thucydides. we should note, was contrasting not the underlying or remote as against the surface or immediate causes, but the real reasons or true causes actually compelling Sparta as against the expressed or superficial excuses and complaints. Athens’s power grew (a real and an underlying cause), and this helped explain fear in Sparta (also a real but an immediate cause). Together these factors caused the war.
40 In 462 Sparta sent home the Athenians who had volunteered to help them suppress a helot rebellion (1:102).
nate to Greece? That was the question he asked them. Their answer was not a simple rational response; their pride responded to Sthenelaidas’s superior harangue.

So too Thucydides found that Athens’s mistakes and final defeat could not be attributed to a simple decline in its relative power resources, for both its ends and means had changed. Athenian policy too had become subject to something other than rational, national, strategic calculation. Thucydides would have agreed that statesmen should, as Pericles did, calculate their security with close attention to the threats posed by other states and to the resources available to meet those threats. But states could become corrupted, as did Athens, through the strains of war, plague, and factionalism. In the debate over the decision to send an expedition to Sicily, private interests, not public security, governed policy, as I discuss below. Mass religious panic had an equivalent effect in the decision to prosecute the brilliant (though rash) general Alcibiades. Factionalism intensified, and soon Athenians fought Athenians, making the eventual Spartan victory a product more of Athenian disunity than of Spartan superiority. “In the end it was only because they had destroyed themselves by their own internal strife that finally they were forced to surrender” (II:65).

Thucydides also rejected shallow interpretations of power. He agreed that “We have no right, therefore, to judge cities by their appearances rather than by their actual power” (I:11). But power too had to be explained. One response to the increase in Athens’s power should have been internal balancing on the part of Sparta, including investment in a fleet, a larger expeditionary force, and its own empire, in order to match the Athenian empire. But Sparta’s social structure, which was equivalent to a massive penal colony designed to control and exploit the oppressed Messenian helots, resisted innovation. According to Thucydides, conservative, agrarian, aristocratic Sparta was simply incapable of stimulating growth through commerce and economic innovation.

Actualized power, also according to Thucydides, was not merely a function of similar categories of power, fungibly distributed in quantity across the interstate system. For Thucydides, Athens differed from Sparta not only in quantity of power but also in differences in the nonequivalent functions of power. At the outset of the war Athens’s army could no more invade and occupy Sparta than the Spartan Navy could blockade Piraeus.

Imperial power, moreover, differed from hegemonic power. The Athenian empire (arche) rested on the far-flung outposts and material benefits that an expansive commercial society could readily provide to its collaborating subordinates. Sparta’s conservative noncommercial society could not provide the exten-

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41 For a discussion of Sparta’s traditional preeminent ranking, see W. Robert Connor, Thucydides, pp. 33–34.
42 See Klaus Knorr, Power and Wealth (New York: Basic Books, 1973) for these distinctions.
sive range of material and psychological benefits that sustained imperial collaboration. Spartan hegemony (hegemonia) correspondingly rested on its military prowess.\textsuperscript{43}

Some polities, like the Greek remnants of the Persian empire liberated by Athens in the 480s, were vulnerable to imperial conquest, and others were much less so. Some were racked by deep social fissures. Their democrats became a trans-statal faction favoring Athens, just as their oligarchs favored Sparta. Each faction preferred to collaborate with foreigners in order to balance against domestic rivals, rather than to adhere to domestic unity in order to balance against external threats and preserve state independence. Indeed, this was exactly Alcibiades’s insightful point when, just before the expedition to Sicily, he assured the Athenians that no one should overestimate Sicilian power. Despite Sicilian numbers and wealth, their factionalism meant that they were “scarcely likely either to pay attention to one consistent policy or to join together in concerted action” (VI:17). The mistake of Alcibiades and Athens was not in failing to estimate the numbers of the Sicilians, but in failing to realize that under Hermocrates’s brilliant leadership the states of Sicily were more like the Athenians themselves than like the weak and divided islands Athens had absorbed from the Persian empire.\textsuperscript{44} Sicily was not a Structurally determined power center; Hermocrates made the Sicilians a power committed to their own defense.

For Thucydides, rational unitary action was a goal and a key to survival in an anarchic world. Balancing power against power was not a Structurally determined necessity. Rational strategic action relied on both domestic and international circumstances.\textsuperscript{45} The necessities that states, empires, and hegemonies claimed for themselves represented political choices made by statesmen and citizens.

\textbf{INTERSTATE CONSTITUTIONALISM}

Lastly, Constitutionalism makes the simple claim that domestic structures and institutions make a difference in the formulation of foreign policy and the shape of international politics. Actors, preferences, and information do not constitute themselves naturally; instead they are defined by rules and conventions that are

\textsuperscript{43}I attempt to provide support for and some qualifications to these propositions in Empires (1986, chap. 3, pp. 54–81).

\textsuperscript{44}They were “democracies like themselves,” of a considerable size, “well-equipped,” and polities against whom “fifth columns” (collaborators) were ineffective (VII:55).

\textsuperscript{45}Bagby, “The Use and Abuse of Thucydides,” pp. 131–153, offers a valuable examination of these issues.
primarily domestic, social constructs.\textsuperscript{46} The Realist version of Constitution-
alism makes modest claims because it assumes that no institution is sufficient
to take states out of the condition of war. Neither international law nor domestic
law, neither norms nor institutions, can make state behavior sufficiently trust-
worthy to end the insecurity, interest, and prestige that make states natural
enemies of one another.

International institutions, both formal and informal, appeared to have very
little influence in Thucydides's History. The Corinthian case for international
law and norms of gratitude held little weight against the Corcyraean argument
in favor of the naval balance of power. The Delphic oracle showed up largely
as a curiosity, reported coolly, as were various religious signs that occasionally
influenced soldiers and citizens.

Domestic institutions had more regular effects. The cultural divide between
(Athenian) Ionians and (Spartan) Doriens shaped the diplomacy of the entire
war. Sparta's existence as a slave economy and Athens's as a dynamic commercial
economy governed much of their initial distrust and fouled their attempts
at cooperation, as when Athens attempted to rescue Sparta from a slave rebel-
lion before the wars, merely resulting in heightening Spartan suspicions and
anti-Athenian sentiments (I:102).

Do democratic and aristocratic republics, as birds of different feathers, each
flock to their own kind and express hostility toward their opposites?\textsuperscript{47} Majority
self-interest, expressed through representative government and solidarity toward
those defined as similar to oneself, seemed to help account for the tendency
that made democrats the allies of democrats and aristocrats the allies of aristocrats.
And some evidence supports the hypothesis. The Delian League was
predominantly democratic; the Peloponnesian League, predominantly aristocratic
(or oligarchic).

But this hypothesis falters on what Thucydides observed to be the subversive
effects of complex self-interest, honor, and insecurity, together with the
dynamic effects of corruption and leadership. There were, for example, oligarch-
chic members of the Delian League (Chios, Lesbos, and for a while Samos) and
democratic members of the Peloponnesian League (Elis, Mantinea). While force majeure may have kept them allied (and there is evidence for this
with regard to Samos and others), so too did force majeure play a role in regard

\textsuperscript{46}James March and Johan Olson, "Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganiza-
tion Tells Us about Government," \textit{American Political Science Review} 77, 2 (June 1983),
pp. 281–96.

\textsuperscript{47}Spencer Weart, "Peace among Democratic and Oligarchic Republics," \textit{Journal of Peace

\textsuperscript{48}Bruce Russett and William Antholis "The Imperfect Democratic Peace of Ancient
Greece," in Bruce Russett, ed., \textit{Grasping the Democratic Peace} (Princeton: Princeton Uni-
to all of Athens’s allies, however popular the empire may have been with some of the demos, some of the time, on some of the subordinate islands.49 In crises the players were often driven in disparate directions by the search for security and honor: oligarchic Corinth turned out to be the protector of the democratic Epidamnians against the more democratic Corecyraeans. Athens attacked Syracuse, though Syracuse was a quasi-democracy, because it saw the Sicilians as weak, ridden with both class and factional divisions (as they were to some extent [I:20]). If Thucydides had found democratic institutional solidarity and automatic hostility to aristocracy to have been the governing principle of Athenian policy, he would have pointed it out. It would have violated his sense of rational prudence, and he had no sympathy for the excesses of democracy.

More important, Thucydides took pains to point out the changeability of institutions. Athens could become corrupted by private self-interest, causing the abandonment of its plan to wage a war of prudent attrition. Instead, the Assembly chose to expand its empire aggressively by means of the Sicilian expedition. As Periclean leadership disappeared, domestic distrust and demoralization favored leaders who appealed to single virtues that thus became vices: Alcibiades’s brilliance; Nicias’s caution; Cleon’s patriotism. Each lacked the combined and balanced virtues of Pericles. Athens came apart under the stress of war, plague, and poor leadership, and in the end this was the ultimate cause of the Athenian defeat (II:65). Some states fractured completely, as did Corecyra during its revolution. And some, equally important, were constructed during the war, as Hermocrates forged a unified Sicily to meet and then, with Spartan help, to defeat the Athenian expedition.

At root these republics may have been too similar for their institutional differences to have been decisive factors in interstate politics. Or perhaps the ancient democracies lacked the fundamental perceptions of human rights and equal human dignity that later made Liberal societies come to feel a significant degree of mutual respect. Human equality was still at best a matter for philosophic speculation, a matter still eloquently rejected by the great minds of Plato and Aristotle as a principle with which to govern the actions of states.

Another Thucydidean view of the effects of democratic institutions on relations among states serves as a valuable counterpoint to the modern view that attributes both power and peace to democracy.50 Rather than peace or restraint, power and imperial growth, followed by excess, factionalism, and collapse, were the traits that Thucydides associated with democracy. This association leaves us with two puzzles. The larger one is why we see democracy as peace-loving


50 For an interesting discussion of these issues, see David Lake, “Powerful Pacifists,” American Political Science Review 86, 1 (1992), pp. 24–37.
when he saw it as empire-making (this I postpone to the conclusion of Part II). The smaller puzzle, the Athenian puzzle, is how an institution so useful in making an empire could be so prone to overextension.

Democracy meant that power was in the hands not of the minority but of the “whole people.” Citizens enjoyed equality before the law, a political career open to talents, and a special freedom and tolerance in private matters (I:37). In actual practice, of course, Athens was a slave society depending on forced labor for its profitable mines at Laurium and for some of its agriculture. Still, for the forty to fifty thousand male citizens democratic self-rule was real, the Assembly and its democratically elected Council of Five Hundred being the dominant voice in legislative affairs of the state just as the ten democratically elected strategoi were in military and executive affairs.

For Thucydides, states are driven by “honor, security and self-interest” (I:76). States cannot escape from constant danger because “when tremendous dangers are involved no one can be blamed for looking to his own interest” (I:76). Since weakness always means subjection, only independent strength guarantees independent security, so states must look to their own relative power or accept the dangers of strategic dependence (II:62).

The most straightforward connection between democracy and power lies in the importance of naval power. When naval power relies upon oared galleys, a navy of free rowers is inherently superior to a navy of slave rowers, since in the heat of battle the former can be called upon to defend their ships. As Pseudo-Xenophon notes, “the poorer classes and the demos rightly possess more authority than the well-born and the rich because it is the demos that rows the ships and keeps the city powerful.”

A second democratic source of power comes from the resources that are freed up when citizens have a stake in the survival and success of the state. Rather than spend resources in coercing the citizenry, the state can draw upon citizens’ resources for what are regarded as public purposes. A free society generates an “adventurous spirit,” producing a willingness to take risks, to increase production, and to trade far and wide. A free society, furthermore, is a society in which deliberation in public can guide and, through the exercise of reason, improve public policy. As Pericles so eloquently explained in his funeral oration for the Athenian war dead (II:34–46), a democratic polity is the necessary expression of a free society, and only in a free society are the creative energies of the populace allowed full play to develop.

Third, democratic participation also provides a large part of the motive force—both material and ideal—that drives policy. By the 440s paid jury duty provided valuable sources of additional income to approximately half the citi-

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zenny.\textsuperscript{52} Colonial settlement on the confiscated lands of recalcitrant “allies” offered a livelihood to smaller numbers. Of the one thousand talents of annual state revenue in 431, six hundred were derived from imperial taxation, fees, and tariffs.\textsuperscript{53} Equally important (according to Pericles) was the authority public magistrates derived from the Athenian respect for law (II:37). Moreover, the freedom of Athens produced a confidence in one’s ability to overcome dangers that contributed to the Athenian patriotism underlying the empire (II:39–40).

Fourth, those domestic traits together made Athens an attractive center for all the Ionian peoples and offered the material basis that permitted it to “make friends by doing good to others” (II:40). The Athenian empire was, Pericles acknowledged, a tyranny, but it also had popular mass support, even in the subordinated colonies. Athens’s subordinate allies sought access to the economy it controlled. The masses sought association with the Athenian demos; indeed, they could be counted on as allies in many cases against their own oligarchic rulers. Athenian liberality, together with manifest productivity of its economy and cultural vitality of its society, also produced the international “popularity” that made association with the Athenian polis, even in its imperial form, attractive to the masses throughout much of the Greek world.\textsuperscript{54}

Democracy, however, is also a source of eventual weakness. Indeed, it is here, in Thucydides’s History, that democracy first acquired its reputation for such disastrous factionalism that, more than two thousand years later, the authors of the Federalist Papers still thought it necessary to try to rebut the charge. Athenian democracy fractured under stress. The great plague of 430 undermined trust (those first to help others became the most likely to be infected [II:51]). Afterward the patriotism, respect for the laws, caution, courage, and brilliance that had led the citizens to follow the wise strategy of attrition prescribed by Pericles (who embodied all those virtues) broke down into passion, suspicion, and greed. The citizens let themselves be led by lesser men who had some but not all his virtues; they followed the cautious (Nicias), or courageous (Cleon), or brilliant (Alcibiades).\textsuperscript{55} Each of these leaders and the

\textsuperscript{52} Hammond, p. 301.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 347.
\textsuperscript{54} The demos on Samos and other leading colonies stayed surprisingly loyal to the demos of Athens, even after Athens began to lose the war. (See Russell Meiggs, The Athenian Empire [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972], pp. 371–72.) Earlier in the war the demos of Mytilene, for example, resisted the efforts of the oligarchic faction to liberate Mytilene from the Athenian empire, so that when the oligarchy mistakenly armed them, they forced the oligarchy to surrender to Athens (III:27). But for a thorough treatment of the complex issue, see the debate on this issue between de Ste. Croix and Bradeen in Historia, in 1954 and 1960. For current scholarship on the international implications of Thucydides’s history, see Lebow and Barry Strauss, Hegemonic Rivalry.
\textsuperscript{55} John Finley’s Thucydides suggests this interpretation.
policies of appeasement, brutality, and adventurousness that they advocated became the public policy of the majority of the democratic citizenry. Nowhere better than in the debate over whether to send an expedition to conquer hitherto neutral Sicily do the effects of factionalism and majority tyranny emerge. Thucydides sums up the debate and fateful decision in this way:

There was a passion for the enterprise which affected everyone alike. The older men thought they would either conquer the places against which they were sailing or, in any case, with such a large force, could come to no harm; the young had a longing for the sights and experiences of distant places, and were confident that they would return safely; the general masses and the average soldier himself saw the prospect of getting pay for the time being and of adding to the empire so as to secure permanent paid employment in the future. The result of this excessive enthusiasm of the majority was that the few who actually were opposed to the expedition were afraid of being thought unpatriotic if they voted against it, and therefore kept quiet [VI:24].

Domestic institutions thus are fluid, not determinate. In a world that required that states look to their relative power in order to maintain security, democracy was valued because it contributed to state power and, in particular, helped create imperial power. But more than simply adding to resources and influence, democracy shaped and continuously reshaped public goals and visions. It engendered unnecessary reasons for expansion: to maintain employment; to enhance glory; to stir up adventures; to expand commerce; to educate other peoples in democratic civilization. These new goals, each chosen by a temporary majority, led to unnecessary wars, which then undermined the security of the state. That is the democratic tragedy of which Thucydides warns us.

**THUCYDIDIAN METHODOLOGY**

How, then, can a Realist draw everlasting lessons expressing the actual continuity of international anarchy if interests, security, and honor are contingent on both international structure (shifting balances) and domestic politics? The answer, if this analysis is persuasive, is “The way Thucydides did.” According to Hobbes, one should interpret Thucydides in the “narration.”56 Thucydides himself did not formulate general laws, though the speakers whose words he recounts often did. He, however, did seek truest causes and the exact truth, “an accurate view” (V.26). He reported competing explanations, but he only offered multiple interpretations of the same event in his own voice when he could offer nothing better and suffered from lack of information. His own method was a

combination of direct explanations of the “truest cause” variety and indirect explanations implied by his placing events in multiple contexts—interstate, domestic, and personal.

What are our interpretive options? We find general observations made by speakers whose words we must place in their context and then try to translate into ours. We find warnings in extreme situations. And we are shown typical, generalizable situations that confront statesmen in interstate politics. Thucydides provided direct warnings of the need to avoid the common and uncritical acceptance of popular stories (I:20) and of how parallels could be abused. This was what the Athenians did when they applied their memory of the conspiracy of Harmodius and Aristogiton to Alcibiades (VI:53–59). Thucydides also showed how history could be properly used. His lengthy demonstration of the comparative pettiness of previous Greek wars was designed to demonstrate the importance of the Peloponnesian War (I:1–21). Lessons learned from recognizing the plague and its social effects might warn us of what to expect in a recurrence (II:48). Together these methods—akin to those of medical diagnosis—made the history as a whole “useful” to “those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future” (I:22).

Thucydides believed, just as the Realists do, that no reliable order exists above the sovereign city-states. It is therefore interstate anarchy, as well as human nature, that makes interstate relations similar enough to be explicable. Both produce and reproduce, through the actions of states, a “state of war” which is mutual mistrust and a concern with the balance of power. Even with the best will in the world, no power will surrender any part of its security or liberty to another unless it is forced to do so by conquest or the need to counter an even greater, mutual threat (such as Persia). Shifts in relative power together with provokable fears make mistrusts into wars.

**THUCYDIDEAN ETHICS**

A long tradition of Realist thought in international politics says that one cannot be both realistic and moralistic. Realists have demonstrated little patience with statements such as that made by President Woodrow Wilson in the course of his declaration of war when he looked forward “to the beginning of an age in

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57 Hayward Alker (1981) has analyzed the Melian Dialogue using (appropriately) dialectical methods to uncover Thucydides’s interpretation of how force can govern logic.

58 Kateb (1964).


60 Cochrane, chap. 3.
which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and of responsibility for wrong shall be observed among nations and their governments that are observed among individual citizens of individual states.$^{61}$

Moral philosophers, however, have shown that Realist criticisms of “moralism,” persuasive as they often are, have little bearing on whether ethical judgments should apply to international politics. A sophisticated conception of morality, they also argue, should be preferred over a crude or simple moralism. States should not follow simpleminded rules when the security of their own population or human welfare more broadly considered demands the recognition of conflicts in moral duties. That leaders of states should arm, train, and send soldiers into battle to kill when necessary in a just cause no more corresponds to murder than lying to save a friend from a known assassin is a culpable lie. For the philosophers, the resolution of moral conflict is the essence, not the refutation, of ethical reasoning.$^{62}$

But the Realists have profound criticisms of the relevance of moral standards in international politics. Three of these criticisms together constitute Realist moral skepticism. The fourth develops a specifically Realist ethics of the international situation.

The first is that the structure of the international system leaves no room for choice. The necessity of states precludes even strategic choices—a fortiori moral choices. This can most clearly be associated with the Structuralist (or Hobbesian) view. The second, a Constitutionalist view, is that the competitive necessities of all politics preclude moral choices. All power corrupts (and absolute power, as Lord Acton opined, does so absolutely). The third highlights the pervasive human struggle for power and advantage, private or public, at home and overseas, which derogates all moral considerations. This associates itself of course with the Fundamentalist (or, some say, Machiavellian) condition.$^{63}$

The fourth acknowledges the existence of authentic moral choices, but argues that the circumstances of world politics severely limit the range of justifiable rules just as they limit the scope of individual and political choice. This is Thucydides own Complex Realism, an attempt both to explain the war and Athens’s defeat, as discussed above, and to probe the relationship between political necessity and moral choice.$^{64}$


$^{63}$ These correspond with three images of international politics. My views on these parallels were improved by a comment by Peter Furia. Both Hobbesian and Machiavellian forms of Realism are discussed in this way in the author’s “Thucydidean Realism,” Review of International Studies 16. 3 (July 1990). Machiavelli’s own views are more complicated, as the next chapter will suggest.

$^{64}$ The Constitutionalist view of Rousseau, as the most direct inheritor of Thucydides’s own Complex position, is quite close to Thucydides’s in this regard and will be considered in a later chapter.
Just as empirical Realists invoke Thucydides to establish a continuous tradition, so Realist moralists look to classical Greece to discover an ethics of world politics not constrained by what they regard as inappropriate religious or cosmopolitan moralities.\textsuperscript{65} I would like to show that Realists seeking to learn from Thucydides should realize that his views correspond to none of the Realist skepticisms outlined above but that he does develop the fourth argument. He does not reject ethical standards although he does instruct political leaders in the importance of circumscribing radically the range of moral choice in international politics. If we judge Thucydides’s views both by his few but important direct statements and by the lessons that the History considered as a whole teaches, he offers guidelines to a distinct Realist ethics of interstate politics.\textsuperscript{66} He rejects the idea that we can have categorical moral duties in international politics, such as those some liberals sometimes advocate, without rejecting the idea that we can have moral duties that should sometimes override both the political advantages of particular leaders and the material interests of particular states. For Thucydides, the range of moral choice should be circumscribed only by strategic necessity, the essential security of the state.

The Structural balance of power, the Constitutionalist conception of state interests, and the Fundamental power struggle of ambitious leaders did not eliminate political choice, according to Thucydides. Politics for him was open to responsible choice. But would the possibility of a responsible politics include moral considerations, and would they carry over to international politics? Could the foreign policy of a Thucydidean statesman join moral choice with the political “necessities” of Realism?

The outlines of Thucydides’s conventional Realism are hardly in doubt. After all, he was the explicator of the “truest cause” of the great war between Athens and Sparta: the pressures of power politics (I:23). Interstate relations in his view existed in a condition where war was always possible, a state of war such as that “hard school of danger” that persisted between Athens and Sparta during the “peace” that preceded the actual outbreak of hostilities (I:19). We all recall the stark warning the Athenian officials gave the Melians: “The strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept” (V:89). Thucydides also recognized that the struggle of factions that competed over policy could also threaten the domestic unity of every state. But he saw that statesmen—necessarily situated in both domestic politics and interstate competition—made choices among both values and interests.

In assessing the role played by values and interests in political choice, recent

\textsuperscript{65} For a careful interpretation of the modern Realist consciousness, covering in particular the reaction of modern Realists, through Niebuhr, to the problem of Christianity, see Michael Smith (1986).

\textsuperscript{66} Good examples of this style of interpretation applied to Thucydides’s politics can be found in Kateb (1964) and Robert Connor (1984).
scholarship suggests that Thucydides was much more of a categorical moralist than conventional Realism would allow. Many of his "amoralisms" were necessary rhetorical deceptions, we are told. Consider the following example. Thucydides recounts the Mytilenean debate in the Assembly when the Athenian citizens decided to reconsider their decision to execute all the Mytileneans as a punishment for their rebellion against Athens. Cleon demanded that the Assembly stick to its harsh sentence as a just punishment for the rebellious criminals he claimed the Mytileneans were. Diodotus told the Athenians that their Assembly was a political body, not a court of law. He then persuaded them that Athenian self-interest—the stable acceptance of their imperial rule by their colonies—required moderation. Diodotus may have been tempted to speak deceptively in order to persuade the war-weary Athenians. But deception did not require him to cater to the Assembly’s self-interest, disguising his own (and Thucydides’s) moral repugnance at Cleon’s "monstrous" but legalistic defense of vengeance. The Athenian populace itself had already come to regret the harshness of its previous decision.

We should not identify moral choice with the application of categorical rules. The debate between Cleon and Diodotus not only expresses Thucydides’s preference for Diodotus’s rhetoric of prudent self-interest over Cleon’s categorically moral, legal punishment, but also expresses Thucydides’s preference for Diodotus’s prudent morality over Cleon’s legalistic vengeance. Prudent self-interest can thus be read as an authentic expression of Thucydides’s views and not merely as a rhetorical tactic in a disguised morality.

The mainstream interpretation of Thucydides argues for another view, holding that, for him, every instance of strategic necessity eliminated moral or religious duty. Thucydides, on this account, saw military necessity as eroding all restraints—whether religious or moral—on Athenian imperialism. The example in question runs as follows: In the course of driving an Athenian force from their land, the Bocotians defeat the Athenian Army and then refuse to grant the

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67 A recent article by David Cohen focusing on the events of Book III at Plataea, Corcyra, and Mytilene has rejected the standard view of Thucydides as an “amoral realist” (1984), p. 37. See also the valuable and differing discussions of this issue in M. I. Finley, “Introduction” to the Penguin edition (“a moralist’s work,” p. 32), de Ste. Croix (1972, p. 11), and Kagan (1975). Cohen is revising earlier accounts such as Cochrane’s, which argued that the views of both Diodotus and Cleon reflected expedient reasoning (Cochrane, pp. 105–06).

68 We have good reason to believe that Diodotus did speak deceptively. He seems to have misled the Assembly into believing that only the local oligarchs were rebellious when it appeared that many more were involved. But we need not assume that his entire argument was deceptive, any more than we need to agree that Cleon made a true case for just punishment. See W. R. Connor (1984), pp. 87–88.

69 Thucydides also finds this reflected in the attitude of the Athenian expedition sent to punish the Mytileneans; they rowed slowly, expressing their reluctance (III.49). See the discussion in Walzer (1977), pp. 10–11.

70 For background, see Orwin (1989), p. 217.
return of the Athenian dead for burial. When Athens demands the return of its dead according to traditional international law, the Boeotians demand the evacuation of the last spot of Boeotia, the temple at Delium, which Athens has fortified and retains. The Boeotians denounce the fortification as an act of impiety. Athens pleads necessity to justify the fortification of the temple and use of the sacred waters (for drinking), claiming that military necessity compelled the use and that sovereignty over temples goes to those who conquer the territory (IV.97–99).

Thucydides refused to judge this issue explicitly. In the lack of explicit judgment, however, he seemed to acknowledge the weight of the arguments each side advanced—and thus the importance of necessity. But he did not seem to be saying that necessity eliminated all restraints. Both parties claimed necessity. On the one hand, Athens could justify its invasion of Boeotia as a matter of strategic necessity. Athens invaded in order to take the pressure off the repeated Spartan-Boeotian invasions of Attica. On the other hand, Boeotians could claim, as did their general Pagondas, that Athens was a continuously aggressive imperial power. Athens was a revolutionary state; it could not be treated as a normal state. Athens might no longer be threatening the survival of Boeotia, but its army had to be defeated wherever and whenever it was met in battle (IV.92).

The tragedy of war is that two incommensurate necessities can clash. When they seemed necessary for each party, necessities ruled and created impiety and injustice. But not every pressure of war eliminated moral and religious standards. Earlier in the campaign, abiding by the traditional laws of war in a cavalry skirmish, Athens returned the Boeotian dead (IV.72). And following the defeat of the Athenians at the temple-fortress of Delium, the Boeotians returned the Athenian dead, according to traditional religious and moral norms (IV.101).

Rejecting both extremes, Thucydides placed the questions of just what range of action was available for moral choice, and what range was governed by necessity, at the core of Realist morality. Thucydides’s accounts of the major speeches, including those of the Corinthians and Corcyraeans at Athens, the Corinthians and Athenians at Sparta, Cleon and Diodotus at Athens, Euphemus and Hermocrates at Camerina, all displayed a combination of moral-legal and self-interested, prudential reasoning.

He also seemed to disapprove of all the simple justifications for the extreme choices. He rejected views such as those of Cleon in the debate over Mytilene and those of the Corinthians in Athens at the outbreak of the war who argued that “right makes might” (that the moral course of action inherently builds strategic support or strength). Neither did he endorse the untrammeled pursuit of “might makes might.” Didn’t Thucydides think that Euphemus’s failure to persuade the Sicilians of Athens’s moderate intentions during Athens’s Sicilian intervention (VI.82–87) could be attributed to the Sicilians’ awareness of the
barbarous treatment of the Melians, whom the Athenians had mercilessly slaughtered and enslaved (V:116)? If so, the Athenian defeat in Sicily is the strategic lesson of the massacre at Melos and "might" made failure."

Thucydides equally rejected the "might makes right" doctrine; a wanton massacre is a wanton massacre, whether it be of the Mycalessians by the Athenian mercenaries (who slaughtered its inhabitants, including a school full of children [VII:29]), Thebans by Plataeans (III:63–67), Plataeans by Spartans (III:52), or Athenians by Sicilians—such as occurred in the killing of the defeated general Nicias, "who least deserved to come to so miserable an end, since the whole of his life had been devoted to the study and practice of virtue" (VII:86). But "right makes right" (the categorical moral and legal view) cannot govern state behavior when necessity speaks clearly. Safety required Athenian imperialism, and none can be blamed for this self-interest, Thucydides has the Athenian ambassadors say (I:75).

Nor did Thucydides follow the views of what is now called the ethics of a moderate patriot. Just as a parent observing two children (one her own) in mortal danger and, being unable to save both, can justly choose to save her own instead of the other, so a moderate patriot may, we are assured (if forced by circumstances to choose), prefer the survival of her own country to that of another.\footnote{I have found the discussion in W. R. Connor (1984), pp. 154–56, helpful on this issue.} Thucydides, on the other hand, said that the ethical Realist may perform what would otherwise be unjust acts of imperial oppression and war for the sake of enhancing the security of—avoiding danger to—his or her own country. That is, the Realist statesman had to be prepared to plan the certain death of foreigners today for the sake of decreasing the risk that the lives of fellow citizens might someday in the future have to be sacrificed in battle. Thus the death of Nicias was a "miserable end" inflicted on a man who "least deserved" it, but Thucydides does not condemn the Syracusans and Corinthians who ordered it to avoid "more harm in the future" (VII:86).

Thucydides viewed as necessary violence that was instrumental in promoting the security of the state. But he condemned unnecessary violence. The slaughter of all the men, women, and children of Mycalessus was "horrible," "pitable," a "butchery," not because a war of attrition against Boeotia was morally wrong (it was strategically useful), but because the slaughter was not a necessary part of waging a war of attrition (VII:29).

Although contemporary Greeks would have found Thucydides's spare use of moral rhetoric unusual, they would not have found his standards of judgment totally unfamiliar. Athenians could have seen a parallel situation in Aeschylus's tragedy Agamemnon. Agamemnon has to sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, in
order to secure the favor of the gods and guarantee the success of the expedition against Troy. He does not, however, have to sacrifice her as if she were a sacrificial animal, and so the chorus excoriates him: "That pollution never grows old."73 Polemarchus too, in Plato's *Republic*, describes a constrained conception of justice when he explains to Socrates that to be just is to "do good to friends and evil to enemies."74

Thucydides similarly showed how the Athenians present during the prewar debate at Sparta rejected legalistic rhetoric, noting, as later did Diodotus at the Mytilenian debate, that a political assembly was not a court of law (1:73).75 The Athenians admitted that Athens, like all states, pursued its security, honor, and self-interest in the establishment of its empire. At first the Delian League was a voluntary alliance and a liberation from Persian rule; later most of the Greeks (the oligarchy, if not the demos) saw the empire that the league had become as a tyranny. Furthermore, they noted that the weak usually became subject to the strong in interstate politics, where there was no international state that could forcibly prevent the strong from exercising their might.

Nevertheless, rather than rest the argument on a purely skeptical reading of interstate standards of moral judgment, the Athenians added two moral justifications. First, abandoning control over the empire would create great danger for Athens by enabling the former colonies to join the Spartan alliance against Athens. They therefore assert, "[w]hen tremendous dangers are involved no one can be blamed for looking to his own interests" (1:75). Given the need for self-help, authentic dangers to national security should allow one to escape blame and justify what would otherwise be immoral wrongs, like imperial oppression. Second, given the usually self-interested motives of competing states, "[t]hose who really deserve praise are the people who, while human enough to enjoy power, nevertheless pay more attention to justice than they are required to do by the situation" (1:76).

**Conditions of Realist Ethics**

Thucydides offered no set of rules for how to be an ethical Realist. The pressures of strategic necessity and political advantage continually threatened Realist ethics. Instead he sought to justify and teach Realist ethics. He thought he could justify Realist ethics by the accuracy of its interpretation of international

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75 Thucydides regularly undercut traditional, religious, and moral rhetoric. At the outset of the war he appeared to approve of the Athenian Assembly's rejection of Corinth's legalistic condemnation of Corcyra's actions. And by noting that the war seemed inevitable to both the Athenians (1:44) and the Spartans, he seemed to endorse the strategic reasons the Corcyreans offered for why the Athenians should support their cause against Corinth (1:31–1:34).
danger, by the prudence of the choices statesmen made among uncertain alternatives, and by the ethical value of the state. He thought he could teach it through his History.

First, in order for security to preempt moral rules, security had at least to be shown to be at risk. The "hard school of danger" Thucydides described was an education that a polis seeking to maintain its independence could not avoid. If interstate justice can hold only among equals, as the Athenians at Melos tell the hapless and inferior Melians, interstate justice must mean that only equals have the power to make sure that they receive what is their due from other states, not that states have effective interstate obligations to abide by international norms (V:84–113). Nothing in Thucydides's History contradicted the views of the Athenians who argued that Athens did nothing unusual in acquiring its empire (I:76). All states, they said, are motivated by self-interest, fear, and glory. Despite Sparta's condemnation of this Realist (Athenian) ethic in favor of an international ethic of established law, Sparta at the outset of the war refused to arbitrate its dispute with Athens (I:144), as the treaty between them required. Despite its demands that the Athenians liberate the subordinate states of the Athenian empire, Sparta maintained its own oppressive tyranny over Greek Messenians and other helots in the Peloponnese.

Second, to say that Realism could be ethical also presupposed that statespersons could be skillful—that is, display competence in determining when security was endangered and in deciding what measures could best reduce the danger to the state. No rules could adequately encompass Realist prudence. Instead the best leaders could do would be to follow the practice of the best doctors in diagnosing a disease. They should compare symptoms in order to reveal diagnoses in order, in turn, to prescribe what seemed to work, even when one could not fully understand the reasons for the ills that one observed. The purpose of Thucydides's entire history of the Peloponnesian War should be read as an education in just that kind of therapeutic statesmanship (I:22). It is not, however, a simple tale of ready cures, either prudent or ethical.

Strategic ends and moral choice were and (for Realists sharing Thucydides's views) still are only indirectly connected. We cannot, for example, infer from the final defeat of Athens that the Sicilian expedition, which expended so much treasure and lost so many lives, was morally wrong because it was strategically counterproductive. Nor can we infer that because the Sicilian expedition failed, the slaughter of Melos—word of which seemed to stiffen Sicilian resistance to Athenian intervention—was correspondingly immoral. Athens might have conquered Sicily, Thucydides indicates, if a surprise attack had been attempted against Syracuse, or if the leadership had not been divided between Nicias and Alcibiades, or if the public at home had provided fresh reinforcements. And

76 See Cochrane, chap. 3.
Athens fell because of "internal strife" (II:65), Thucydides notes, eight years after the Sicilian expedition. Chance (the plague), many other decisions (including the disaster in Sicily), and the frailty of human nature under stress led to the strife that caused the final loss of Athenian security.

As Thomas Hobbes once noted, the genius of Thucydides's teaching lies "in the narration"—in the opportunity to reconstruct hard choices as they were experienced by the participants in the war. Both security and morality were matters for judgment. We can infer from his comments and the course of the events that, to Thucydides, Athenian security required the empire, the Corcyrenean alliance, and war with Sparta (which Sparta chose). Pericles's strategy of attrition also served Athenian security by best promoting a victory at tolerable Athenian costs. These strategies called for what would otherwise be immoral killings, which a categorical moralist or modern "just war" moralist would condemn. But the Sicilian expedition was a simple waste of resources, a looting expedition chosen by a divided, contentious, self-interested Assembly. It distracted Athens from the war of attrition that should have been directed against Sparta. The slaughter at Melos added an island that was not clearly necessary, during the middle of truce, in a manner that would alarm neutrals at least as much as it would deter colonial rebellion. For Thucydides, necessary violence in a strategically valuable conquest was excusable, but Sicily and Melos were neither.

Third, though Thucydides's sense of the constraints of strategic necessity and the opportunities for moral action hold in both domestic and international politics, the moral difference between them was crucial. It was not true that interstate politics was the absolute realm of necessity, and intrastate politics the pure realm of ethical life. Mycalessus would have been a butchery wherever it occurred. But there was a striking difference in the structural opportunities for ethical behavior, in the practice of wise politicians, and therefore also in their ethical responsibility in the two realms. This difference justified placing the security of the polis over the rules of universal morality.

Civil war (the Corcyrenean stasis) could make a state of war of domestic politics. Ethical restraint dissolved as trust, and even language, lost their meanings (III:82). During the plague at Athens natural disease destroyed social security. Those who tried to help others died first (II:51). Empire, conversely, could make a nearly secure state of peace out of "interstate" politics, thereby increasing the prospect of impartial justice administered by regular courts. That, together with necessity, was the justification the Athenians at the conference at Sparta could offer for their empire (I:77).

Moreover, there is a significant difference for Thucydides between intrastate and interstate politics that does not allow us to assimilate the two into one

\[\text{Ibid., pp. 95–105.}\]

\[\text{Christopher Bruell (1974).}\]
continuous struggle for power, as the Fundamentalists would have us do. Leo Strauss's discussion of Machiavelli's princely politics identified but oversimplified the contrast: "Contemporary readers find in both authors [Thucydides and Machiavelli] the same 'realism,' that is to say, the same denial of the power of the gods or of justice and the same sensitivity to harsh necessity and elusive chance. Yet Thucydides never calls into question the intrinsic superiority of nobility to baseness...." 80

Part of the ethical difference between "Machiavellianism" and Thucydidean Realism lies in their different views of baseness, and the relations between interstate and intrastate baseness, and of its opposite, virtue. 81 Machiavellianism, according to some, allows to princes and those who would become princes license to achieve power over and above the interests of the state. Thucydides may admire Alcibiades, but he also condemns him. Thucydides also showed that ethical or legal standards were not sufficient in interstate politics. However ethical and law-abiding a citizen Nicias was, he was also a disastrously poor general (VII:6). 82 The Melians suffered the fate of the weak in interstate politics, and their appeals to law and justice fell on deaf ears. But in the polis, laws could make the weak equal. Domestic security made moral virtues, justice, and legality efficacious. It therefore made sense to try to shape policy according to a public interest. Thus Pericles in the funeral oration (II:37) told the Athenians to be proud and to honor the Athenian dead for their virtues and sacrifices, to which, he added, the present citizens owed their lives, welfare, and freedom.

Authentic security excused moral blame. Doing good, where safe and feasible, was morally praiseworthy. Ethical statesmanship and virtuous citizenship consequently consisted of finding ways to reduce the conflict between national security and universal good, as Pericles explained when he described how Athenians had "organized our State in such a way that it is perfectly well able to look after itself both in peace and war" (II:36) and could therefore "make friends by doing good to others" (II:40). 83

THUCYDIDEAN REALISM

The importance of Thucydides's History extends beyond Realism. Marxists have been fascinated by the little that Thucydides says about class conflict. And

81 De Ste. Croix, pp. 18-19; Arlene Saxonhouse (1978).
83 David Grene suggests a similar conclusion when he says, "[T]he area where moral comment is in order is only that in which human beings can be regarded as in some sense operating with a freedom to choose between one alternative and another without the direct force of necessity constraining them" (1965), p. 78.
what political society has ever been so subordinate to its mode of production as Sparta was to the suppression of its helot labor force? But Marxism does not rest its analysis of social development on the slave mode of production. The great transformation of modern life followed the classical world by two millennia. Industrialism has reshaped the daily life of human beings and added a vastly enhanced dynamism to world politics that magnifies both uncertainty and opportunity.

Liberal democrats cannot fail to consider Thucydides's indictment of the Athenian democrats for the irresponsible rashness of their decision to launch, as well as for the subsequent mismanagement of, the expedition to Sicily, which contributed to the eventual defeat and collapse of Athenian democracy. But Liberalism, however much it concerns itself with the democratic determinants of foreign policy, has as its central and distinctive contribution a view of the moral equality of all human beings. Liberals are committed to ensuring that the interests of the constitutional majority become public policy, whether foreign or domestic. They are equally concerned that the rights of individuals shape the definition of the public's interests whether at home or abroad. By those criteria, few societies have been more democratic and less Liberal than Thucydides's Athens. The public triumph of the Liberal ideal postdates Thucydides and his contemporaries.

Realism embraces the continuity of interstate anarchy. Thucydides belongs to the Realists. They belong to him. Henry Kissinger's harking back to Thucydides is not altogether wrong. We can see there a quasi-bipolar system, not too unlike the one we have just survived with its tendencies toward overextension, whether in Sicily or in Vietnam. We fortunately, it appears, lived for most of the Cold War in a bipolar world with two and not one dynamic superpower, and when the Soviets did decline in the 1980s, some of its leadership saw the possibility of an accommodation with a Liberal world. Both superpowers, moreover, possessed nuclear weapons, which left them less vulnerable to the defection of allies. The United States felt the "loss of China" in 1949 much less than Sparta would have felt the loss of Corinth, and the United States acted differently. But to the extent that we sometimes, in some of our foreign relations, live in a world without reliable law and order, we will need Thucydides's complex insights into the constraints the international "state of war" places on domestic orders and individual leadership.84

Although Thucydides is a Realist, he is not a Fundamentalist or a Structuralists or a Constitutionalist. Paternity suits tend to be messy, for each version of Realism can identify its views in Thucydides's History. Fundamentalists, Structuralists and Constitutionists can each draw upon the events of Thucydides's History to analyze the Peloponnesian War in particular, and international his-

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tory in general. But to borrow Thucydides’s judgments in order to support their conclusions, they will need to put their conclusions in his contexts, both domestic and international.

A Thucydides writing today would see the importance of the changes a Gorbachev or a Reagan has made, but he or she would also not assume that leaders can transform their polities according to their own interests and goals. Rejecting the Fundamentalist view, he or she would recognize the constraint on choice maintained by the historical compromises that have shaped the institutions and cultures of particular states. Rejecting extremes of the Constitutionalist perspective, he or she would also recognize that international anarchy makes national power and effective national independence go hand in hand. A modern philosophic historian with Thucydidean views, while noting the Structuralist trend away from bipolarity in the international system, would not assume that those changes in international structure would be either necessary or sufficient to end the hostility of the Cold War. At the same time such a historian would reject the view shared by many modern Liberals and Marxists that changes in the domestic structure (e.g., moves toward democratization or social equality) of the two superpowers could be sufficient to end the insecurity they share.

To be a Thucydidean Realist today is to see that states are not, as the Structuralist would claim, equivalent and without choice and that their differences are of real consequence. States are not reliably conditioned by the international system to behave rationally and nationally. These are ideals achieved only through outstanding leadership, such as that exercised by Pericles, and by unusual national unity, such as that manifested by Athens at the outset of the war and by its enemies at the end. To be a Thucydidean and Realist is to recognize that interstate and intrastate politics are not the same, even though human beings play out their hopes and fears in both. It is to realize that the continuity of the state of war is based on the persistence of interstate anarchy, just as the chance of either peace or war is contingent on domestic choice and international opportunity.

It is also to realize that, because the statesmen Thucydides described had choices, they could and should have made ethical choices. For a Realist, these choices were, and should have been, constrained by the “school of danger” that the persistence of interstate anarchy required states to attend. Security, prestige, and self-interest eroded all treaties and promises, dissolved gratitude and generosity, and did so according to the harsh logic of national egoism under conditions of international anarchy. Doing good to others was nonetheless still possible; avoiding unnecessary harm was morally required. Realism narrowed the range of moral choice. It did not eliminate it.
Prudent men are wont to say—and this not rashly or without good ground—that he who would foresee what has to be, should reflect on what has been, for everything that happens in the world at any time has a genuine resemblance to what happened in ancient times. This is due to the fact that the agents who bring such things about are men, and that men have, and always have had, the same passions, whence it necessarily comes about that the same effects are produced.

—Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, III:43

The grave and natural enmities that exist between the men of the people and the nobles, caused by the wish of the latter to command and the former not to obey, are the cause of all evils that arise in cities.... For the enmities between the people and the nobles at the beginning of Rome that were resolved by disputing were resolved in Florence by fighting. Those in Rome ended with a law, those in Florence with the exile and death of many citizens; those in Rome always increased military virtue, those in Florence eliminated it altogether...

—Niccolò Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories*, III:1

Machiavelli's realism rests causally and directly—fundamentally—on the individual leader, citizen, or subject and his or her ambitions, fears, and interests. Whether leaders lead well or ill determines whether we live in a

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glorious and secure “Rome” or an oppressed and dangerous “Florence.” He takes what was one element in Thucydides’s view of interstate politics and distills from it a practical guide to the behavior of new princes and the leaders of expansionist republics. Machiavelli thus can be seen as limiting a “Thucydides” to the mind of Alcibiades as a prospective tyrant or possible archon of a polis. Machiavelli, to be sure, draws his examples not from Greece but from the princes of contemporary Europe and the imperial republic of classical Rome. Where Thucydides explains by means of thickly described historical context, Machiavelli presents general lessons, often in dichotomies and antinomies (“whether it is better to be loved or feared”). He validates these lessons by providing two sorts of evidence. For supporting or contradicting example, he offers his contemporary European experience: the successes and failures of, among others, Ferdinand of Aragón, Cesare Borgia, Louis XII, and the players in the history of his own Florentine Republic. For integrated, or definitive and digested, exemplary experience, he offers the glorious experience of Rome, whose successful use as interpreted by Livy validates any procedure.²

**Machiavelli’s Fundamentalism**

| Human Nature | xx |
| Domestic Society | x |
| Interstate System | x |

Machiavelli (1469–1527) also shares some personal characteristics with Thucydides. Like Thucydides the unsuccessful Athenian general, Machiavelli was a public official forced by the vagaries of political life into a premature retirement. He rose to be an official and emissary, a sort of special assistant for national security affairs, a Henry Kissinger or Tony Lake of the Florentine Republic. Sent on a mission to Cesare Borgia in 1502, he was in Rome when Cesare lost his gamble to control the papacy. In Florence, Machiavelli established a citizen militia and led his new force to the conquest of Pisa in 1509. After the Medici coup of 1512, he was imprisoned and tortured. Following his release, he was forced into retirement on his farm in the hills above Florence. From there each day, after supervising his farm workers and dropping in at the local tavern for a few hours, he retired to his study and put on his former robes of state. There and then he commingled with the ancients and wrote his treatises, distilling in *The Prince* and *The Discourses* the lessons of Roman statecraft and of his own diplomatic experience. He hoped, it appears, to persuade the

Medici to offer him his old job, which makes The Prince the most brilliant job application in history.³

Machiavelli's great contribution is to provide historical depth, beginnings and endings, dynamics to the analysis of the state of war. He tells how individual political entrepreneurship makes states as well as how states expand and why they fall.

His state of war is both various and pervasive. This variety results from differences both in human character and in international and political, or constitutional, circumstance. Fundamentalist Realists need, he implied, to put their characters in a social context. His state of war is various, because it does not affect hereditary principalities or conservative republics to the same degree as it affects new princes and expansionist republics, and pervasive because it makes itself felt not only between states but within them. Hereditary princes, like the duke of Ferrara, can rely upon custom to secure the love of their subjects. That love poses formidable hurdles to the ambitions of conquerors, who would find these principalities not only difficult to conquer but even more difficult to hold against all those who prefer a return of the ancient ruling family.⁴ Conservative aristocratic republics like Venice and Sparta try to limit their insecurity by limiting their ambitions. By choosing isolation and autonomy, Sparta kept its citizens poor and powerless. Spartan kings ruled over citizens whose modest but adequate standard of living stimulated few appetites, either material or political, domestic or foreign.⁵ But neither hereditary princes nor conservative republics fully escape insecurity because they cannot completely escape new princes and expansionist republics.

PRINCELY VIRTÚ

Virtú⁶—the glorious exercise of an individual’s courageous ambition—depends on circumstances. But it faces a nearly constant danger, Machiavelli explains

⁶Isaiah Berlin catalogs the virtues of virtú as “courage, vigour, fortitude in adversity, public achievement, order, discipline, happiness, strength, justice, above all assertion of one’s proper claims and the knowledge and power needed to secure their satisfaction.” See his “The Originality of Machiavelli,” in Against the Current (Penguin, 1980), p. 45.
in *The Prince*, his brilliant treatise on how a prince could achieve “greatness.” New princes both cause and respond to the threat of violence that surrounds them, Machiavelli warns. Both new principalities (an enterprising individual stages a coup and seizes power) and “mixed” principalities (an old prince attempts to conquer a new province) create enemies of all those displaced in the conquest. At the same time, they gain little security from the support of their followers, whom they could not fully reward without further alienating the conquered population. Conquests that are similar in culture, have been previously governed by another prince rather than by a free republic, or are organized bureaucratically rather than feudally may be easier to hold than their opposites, but all conquests call for ruthless methods. Early, swift, ruthless violence—such as assassinating the previous ruling family—can economize on violence that might otherwise be needed later, but because some violence is necessary in order to avoid more violence, in no case can traditional moral standards tame the insecurity princes and subjects alike suffer.

So why would an ambitious person enter this violent contest? Are new princes simply seekers after “power for its own sake”? Machiavelli said that princes seek war and military conquest despite all the dangers for two reasons: first, in order to demonstrate and obtain the rewards fortune bestows on virtù (courageous ambition) and second, in order to protect their state from predation.

“It is a very natural and ordinary thing to desire to acquire, and always, when

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7 Machiavelli, from the “Dedicatorial Letter” of *The Prince*, offered to Lorenzo de Medici.
10 Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), pp. 200–02. Some commentators argue that Machiavelli subscribed to traditional moral standards in *The Prince* and *The Discourses* but that he said they caused more harm than good if they were applied to politics (Bernard Crick, “Introduction” to *The Discourses*, p. 62). However, Machiavelli also seems to endorse the utility, if not necessity, of the betrayal of all forms of trust in his play about love (or lust), the *Mandrake*.
men do it who can, they will be praised or not blamed,”

Machiavelli so matter-of-factly notes. Indeed, it is so ordinary—so fundamental a part of human nature—that even we common folk are not free from the drive, and this is what allows us to understand the great. For in love, as in war, human freedom allows aggressiveness and our too-extensive desires engender competition.

Machiavelli’s comedy the Mandragola depicts the strategy of war applied to war between the generations—between some of us, the common folk, fighting over sex. The young, wily Callimaco, deeply in love, tricks the foolish old Nicias to allow him to sleep with the old man’s beautiful young wife, Lucrezia, by persuading him that the first man to sleep with her will immediately suffer a horrible death. Nicias falls into this trap and thus bribes the wily Callimaco to “suffer” for him.

But many of us prefer the quiet life, safe in our private gardens, with our own wives or husbands and free from princely ambition. Thus Machiavelli’s true claim to originality begins in chapter 15 of The Prince, where he describes his new science of “effectual truth,” a realistic politics that applies to all of us, replacing “imagined,” idealistic politics. Here too is where Machiavelli outlines his new morality of civic life.

In addition to satisfying the human (or, at least, princely) drive for glory, the practice of war helps secure the “state.” Rather than an abstract sovereign institution, the state, for Machiavelli, was nothing less—or more—than the government, the prince himself at home and abroad. By securing himself, however, the successful prince can then provide us with some security too. “A wise Prince,” Machiavelli said, “knows how to do wrong when it is necessary and it is very often necessary to act contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion if the Prince wishes to sustain his government.” This is the Machiavellian justification for our modern metaphors of Realist ethics: what we call “dirty hands,” the “cracked eggs” that, Lenin said, an omelet requires, and Hamlet’s excuse: “I must be cruel to be kind.”

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13 Generalizing in the same vein, Machiavelli notes: “Men Jump from One Ambition to Another and First They Seek Not to Be Injured, Then They Injure Others”—a title from the Florentine Histories.
14 The most powerful evocation of Machiavellian ethics I have read is Isaiah Berlin, “The Originality of Machiavelli,” pp. 25–79. For an insightful application of these ideas to international ethics, see Stanley Hoffmann, Duties beyond Borders, chap. 1.
16 Machiavelli, The Prince, chap. 18.
moral logic of its own, an independent value in the common life of the citizens, separate from Christian moral teachings. Certain crimes, like the many murders committed by Agathocles, were simply unnecessary for the security of the state and the prince, and they were doubly wrong. But princes will often have to engage in necessary crimes—to lie, steal, and kill for the life of the state—if they are to succeed. In getting their hands dirty, they may also be saving the lives of their citizens, who, if left to their Christian ethics, would be “weak,” easy prey to “wicked men.”

“Cesare Borgia,” Machiavelli noted of a prince he admired, “was held to be cruel; nonetheless his cruelty restored the Romagna, united it, and reduced it to peace and to faith. If one considers this well, one will see that he was much more merciful than the Florentine people, who so as to escape a name for cruelty, allowed Pistoia to be destroyed.”

In order to succeed, Machiavelli advised that princes had to be both “lions” and “foxes.” Through lionlike military leadership, the prince can turn uncertainty into confidence, despair into courage. For populations having little in common except their subjection to him, the prince can offer a promise of success through strategic brilliance. Success in turn generates solidarity. Eschewing the defenses of fortresses, the prince should build a militia army, which can also become the womb of the nation. Through fox-like diplomacy the prince can economize on the use of violence, whether at home or abroad. Internally he should exercise financial parsimony, avoid the creation of divisions, and instead seek to create law and order, but above all avoid contempt and, should he fail to win the love of the people, make sure he enjoys their fear. Virtuous leaders provide themselves with good arms, and they win the fear (or love) of the people or the great, Machiavelli declares in chapter 24 of The Prince.

Princes achieve the vital “esteem” (chapter 21) that virtù craves by “great enterprises” and “rare examples.” The first great enterprise is the imperial acquisition of new provinces, as Ferdinand of Aragón (more below) did. Externally princes should be “true friends and true enemies,” as called for, and should neither declare neutrality nor, unless necessary, what we now call col-

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18 See also The Discourses, 2:2. This view (Berliner’s) of two, partly overlapping moralities, Christian and political, differs from the view expressed by Strauss and others, that Machiavelli is simply a pure egoist or pure skeptical immoralist. There are passages that support the latter view, and it was the interpretation I (I now think incorrectly) argued for in “Thucydidean Realism,” Review of International Studies (1989). But for an extensive defense of the latter interpretation, see Steven Forde, “Varieties of Realism: Thucydides and Machiavelli,” Journal of Politics 54, 2 (May 1992).


20 Shakespeare captured this virtù well in Henry V. When the frightened English, Welsh, Scots, and Irish gather around Henry at Agincourt on the morning of St. Crispin’s Day, young Henry inspires them with the sense of their glory and gives them unity and confidence by the confidence in victory he displays.
laborate or "bandwagon" by subordinating oneself or aligning with stronger foreign princes.\textsuperscript{21} Active "balancing" is both more prestigious and more secure, since aligning against the more powerful can make the difference needed for victory and failing to align with the weaker can leave you victim to the designs of the winner, now without the support of that weaker state. Beyond these the prince should ensure that his acts become well-known, "rare examples." Rewarding good civic acts that serve to increase the power or wealth of the state and punishing harmful ones that hurt it: Both, when done in striking ways, contribute to the glory princes seek.

Machiavelli gave us many important reflections on the requisites of successful statecraft. He also offered many examples of mistaken policies\textsuperscript{22} Machiavelli saw that the vigorous contest of world politics rested on good fortune and virtuous leaders. Some unfortunate leaders were both unfortunate and unwise and thus doubly disadvantaged, such as was Ludovico Sforza, who (appropriately) lost Milan, twice. Another who was fortunate but not wise was Louis XII, who invaded Italy at the invitation of the Venetians. Despite initial great advantages, he soon lost all his conquests, having made "five errors: he had eliminated the lesser powers; increased the power of a power in Italy; brought in a very powerful foreigner; did not come to live there; did not put colonies there."\textsuperscript{23} In his most famous example, a lack of good fortune—illness and a failure to anticipate the resentment that the new pope, Julius II, would bear—caused the downfall of Cesare Borgia, who otherwise was a most "prudent and virtú-ous" prince (chapter 7).

Ferdinand of Aragón was, on the other hand, doubly advantaged. Prince of Aragón, husband of Isabella of Castile, hence king of a united Spain, conqueror of Granada, Naples, Navarre, and North Africa, sovereign of the Americas, Ferdinand was the one contemporaneous Christian prince who could measure his virtú head to toe against the great founders of antiquity whom Machiavelli so admired: Moses, Cyrus, and Romulus (chapter 6). Unlike the bumbling Sforza, he captured the Machiavellian state—in the sense of authoritative sta-

\textsuperscript{21}See Machiavelli, The Prince, chap. 21, pp. 89-90. For contemporary advice of a similar sort, see Morgenthau, Politics among Nations, chap. 12, on different methods of the balance of power; and Waltz, Theory of International Politics, p. 126.

\textsuperscript{22}But he does not pursue just what necessities or failures of virtú would compel collaboration or bandwagoning. For a discussion of the literature on collaboration, see Doyle, Empires; for "bandwagoning" toward "threats" (not necessarily power), Walt, Origins of Alliances. Machiavelli recognized that threats arise from inside as from outside a polity. He thus expected and gave examples of what Steven David has called omnibalancing, balancing against the most dangerous threat whether internal or external ("Explaining Third World Alignment," World Politics 43, 2 [January 1991]), but he recommended overwhelming, where possible, internal threats rather than calling in external support against internal threats, since the latter strategy threatened escalating dependence and imperialized collabora-

\textsuperscript{23}Machiavelli, The Prince, chap. 3, p. 15.
tus (stato). He grasped both dominio, an effectively controlled territory, and imperio, a right of command.24

Understanding Ferdinand also requires us to understand the character of his leadership. Opportunity is not enough; there must be an entrepreneur to seize it. His action cannot be reduced to the simple Structural, "rational unitary state actor" variant of Realism. Although he was a rational calculator without compare and the founder of the Spanish state, his personal ambitions went much beyond the primacy of state security.

Ferdinand of Aragon's conquests, beginning with Granada, made him "the first king among the Christians" (chapter 21).25 He succeeded both in enlarging his kingdom at the expense of foreign rivals and, more important, in securing himself at home. He kept the barons of Castile (his domestic rivals) occupied in foreign war. He employed the riches of the people and the church to create his own army. He acquired great fame and wealth in an act of "pious cruelty," whose victims were the hapless Marranos.26

Although born in 1452 as the son of King John II of Aragon, he learned that to become great, one had to think like a new prince, as he proceeded to do. He helped his father destroy his older brother (from a first marriage), the prince of Viana, who led the nationalist faction in Aragon. With the help of the bribes funded by the great Jewish financiers of Castile and Aragon, he succeeded in winning the hand in marriage of Isabella of Castile.27 After trying a coup against his wife, he learned to appreciate her talents and ruled with her, suppressing the ancient independence of the noble magnates of Castile and Aragon, strengthening the bureaucratic discipline of the state, and then setting about great conquests.28

28W. H. Prescott in his classic History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella (New York: AMS, 1904/1968) exaggerates Ferdinand's virtues: "impartial justice in the administration of the laws; his watchful solicitude to shield the weak from the oppression of the strong; his wise economy, which achieved great results without burdening his people with oppressive taxes; his sobriety and moderation; the decorum, and respect for religion, which he maintained among his subjects; the industry he promoted by wholesome laws and his own example; his consummate sagacity, which crowned all his enterprises with brilliant success, and made him the oracle of the princes of his age" (vol. IV, p. 255). But Prescott also notes his propensity toward "vicious galantries" which disturbed both Isabella and the stability of the kingdom (p. 251). One natural son, Alonso, having been made archbishop of Saragossa at
Internationally his success first appeared in the reconquest of Muslim Spain, Granada, in 1492. By "keeping the minds of the barons of Castile occupied," the war against Granada put them under his power (chapter 21). This increase in his power allowed him to turn against former allies and reward new ones, so he ruthlessly expelled the Jews and Moors in order to reward his new allies: the missionary orders, the soldiers, and the great nobles. (He appears to have known that this was an economically foolish policy—that it would destroy finance and agriculture—because he refused to expel the Moors from his personal kingdom of Aragón.) He then turned his new domestic authority to more foreign conquest and went after Naples (a traditional arena of Aragonese expansion), a halfhearted conquest of North Africa, and, at Isabella’s urging, exploration of the Americas. Domestically his success in refounding the state was evidenced by his being able to raise public revenues from less than 900,000 reals in 1474 to 26 million in 1504.  

Ferdinand created an effective diplomatic service but repeatedly abused its members by requiring them to tell the most apparent lies. (The lies nonetheless successfully clouded his intentions, as Machiavelli noted in his letter to Vettori of 1513.) He also created a great army under the leadership of Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, composed of a modern infantry of mixed forces—halberd, sword, and arquebus.

His end honored him little. After a life spent struggling to create a great and independent Spanish empire dominating the western Mediterranean, he was forced to recognize his daughter Juana the Mad and her hostile husband, the Habsburg archduke Philip, as his sole heirs.

For Ferdinand, the balance of power was not an end or a policy but a tactic of "divide and rule" in an imperial strategy of conquest. His virtú was reflected in a willingness to take risks much beyond those someone attempting to maximize personal or national security would have been willing to assume. The state was an entity as yet uninstitutionalized and unpurposed. It was in Burckhardt’s phrase a “work of art” yet to be fashioned, whether well or ill, by “artists” such as Ferdinand or Cesare.

age six, did, however, serve with considerable worldly success as regent of Aragón at Ferdinand’s death.

29Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 90.
30Machiavelli, Letters, pp. 115–16. He made them famous for perfidy, as Guicciardini noted in his History (lib. 12, p. 273) and Machiavelli (Letters, letter 6, and see Machiavelli, The Prince, chap. 18, on lying).
31Elliott, Imperial Spain, p. 133.
32Burckhardt notes, "The feeling of the Ferrarese toward the ruling house was a strange compound of silent dread, of the truly Italian sense of well-calculated interest, and of the loyalty of the modern subject: personal admiration was transferred into a new sentiment of duty," in The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (1965), p. 32. And E. R. Hale comments, "National feeling and a national foreign policy were the consequence and not the cause of an age of dynastic wars," in The New Cambridge Modern History, vol. 1, p. 263.
Eliminating insecurity is impossible, for even hereditary princes have to fear the threat of “perpetual revolution” that the new princes pose.\textsuperscript{33} Managing the insecurity prudently is necessary, but managing is also the cause of insecurity for others, creating a “security dilemma.” Good arms (militias, not mercenaries) and good laws (being feared more than loved) will provide some self-help security against domestic and foreign foes (chapters 12–14, 15–19). Prudent conquest requires the crushing of overmighty subjects and never succumbing to the temptation to “balance” against them with the aid of foreign support (chapter 3). Effective, active aligning will help secure glory and security too. Above all, there is the core of Realism, “self-help”: “[A] prince should have enough state to support himself, if need be, by himself.”\textsuperscript{34}

In contemporary international relations, Machiavelli’s preferences would run to the patriotic founders: Churchill, Roosevelt, de Gaulle, Ho Chi Minh, Mandela. But Machiavelli’s princely politics also echo in the career of Saddam Hussein, with whom Cesare Borgia or Ferdinand, one suspects, would have felt very much at home. A reputation for ruthlessness, the rapid execution of oppressive acts, a delicate domination of rival factions among Sunni Moslems, a tight cadre of followers from his home village, strict control over Shiite and Kurdish areas, together with a policy of prestige and imperialism directed toward his neighbors in Iran and Kuwait, and, above all, his remarkable survival: All resonate with the virtù of a Machiavellian prince. His failure to estimate the determination of the Iranian revolutionaries and the readiness of the U.S.-led coalition to protect the oil of the Gulf are not atypical failings; Cesare, after all, underestimated the determination of the new pope, Julius II.\textsuperscript{35}

Machiavelli warned that eliminating insecurity in Italy as a whole may be possible only for that prince of outstanding virtù who can free Italy from the barbarians—that is, unite—that is, conquer—Italy (chapter 26).\textsuperscript{36} But having done so, he will face new and larger threats and more difficult (because more

\textsuperscript{33}See Grant Mindle, “Machiavelli’s Realism,” Review of Politics 47, 2 (1985), p. 217. This is the reason for Frederick II’s very interesting condemnation of Machiavellianism in the Anti-Machiavel. Machiavelli’s revolutionary ruthlessness, Frederick argued, was the product not of raison d’état but of the extension of raison d’état rationalizations to individuals who “should” be behaving as private persons (because they were not born sovereigns). See Frederick of Prussia, Anti-Machiavel, trans. Paul Sonino (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), pp. 159–81.

\textsuperscript{34}Quoted in de Grazia, Machiavelli in Hell, p. 171.


\textsuperscript{36}Some have argued that this chapter’s patriotism is out of place and that the chapter is not Machiavelli’s but a corrupted text. But the patriotism is very much a part of Machiavelli’s purpose, as I discuss below.
disparate) future conquests. All courses are dangerous; one picks the "less bad as good" (chapter 21). The struggle for power is continuous, fundamental, irremediable. That is the state of war.

MORE SECURITY THROUGH REPUBLICAN IMPERIALISM

States, Machiavelli says, are either princely or republican. Both can be warlike, for he argues that not only are republics not pacificist, but they are the best form of state for imperial expansion. Establishing a republic fit for imperial expansion is, moreover, the best way to guarantee the survival of a state that can overawe domestic enemies and overcome foreign foes.

Machiavelli's own preferences were then and are now clear. He is republican by conviction, a true lover of civic freedom: "Of all men who have been eulogized, those deserve it most who have been the authors and founders of religions: next comes such who have established republics or kingdoms." Republics, moreover, are better because — among other reasons — they are more lasting: "And if princes show themselves superior in the making of laws, and in the forming of civil institutions and new statutes and ordinances, the people are superior in maintaining those institutions, laws, and ordinances, which certainly places them on a par with those who established them."37

Machiavelli's republic is a classical mixed republic. It is not a democracy, which he thinks would quickly degenerate into a tyranny, but it is characterized by social equality, popular liberty, and political participation (The Discourses, bk. I, chap. 2, p. 112).38 The Consuls serve as "kings"; the Senate as an aristocracy managing the state; the people in the Assembly as the source of strength.

Liberty results from the "disunion," the competition and necessity for compromise required by the division of powers among Senate and Consuls and tribunes (the last representing the common people). Liberty also results from the popular veto. The powerful few, Machiavelli says, threaten tyranny because they seek to dominate; the mass demands not to be dominated. Their veto thus

37 Machiavelli, The Discourses, bk. I, chaps. 10 and 58. But this raises a problem. How then can we motivate a prince to found a republic when a Caesar has great glory despite the great evil of having destroyed a republic? The inspirational motivation seems to be the task of true historians, those understanding and sharing Machiavelli's verita effettuale, and is the task of Machiavelli's own histories, The Discourses on Rome and Florentine Histories. My understanding of Machiavelli's republicanism has been improved by discussions with Maurizio Viroli.

preserves the liberties of the state (I:5). But since the people and the rulers have different social characters, the people need to be “managed” by the few in order to avoid having their recklessness overturn, or their recklessness undermine, the ability of the state to expand (I:53). Thus the Senate and the Consuls plan expansion, consult oracles, and employ religion to manage the resources that the energy of the people supply. Lacking ordered management and the clever employment of patriotic religion, republics can become, as Florence became, prey to faction and coups. But no regime surpasses a well-managed republic.

Strength, and then imperial expansion, result from the way liberty encourages increased population and property, which grow when the citizens know that their lives and goods are secure from arbitrary seizure. Free citizens equip large armies and provide soldiers who fight for public glory and the common good, because they are in fact their own (II:2). If you seek the honor of having your state expand, Machiavelli advises, you should organize it as a free and popular republic like Rome, rather than as an aristocratic republic like Sparta or Venice. Expansion thus calls for a free republic.

“Necessity”—political survival—calls for expansion. Sparta and Venice each lasted a long time. They did so by restricting the entrance of new citizens (Sparta and Venice) and the expansion of their states (Sparta). This appears to be a tempting strategy if one seeks longevity. But Machiavelli rejects it. It is neither safe nor “honorable.”

Chance undermines the conservative, self-contained republic. If a stable aristocratic republic is forced by foreign conflict “to extend her territory, in such a case we shall see her foundations give way and herself quickly brought to ruin.” If domestic security, on the other hand, prevails, “the continued tranquility would ennervate her, or provoke internal dissensions, which together, or either of them separately, will apt to prove her ruin” (I:6). The latter is what happened to Florence, where a failure to expand eroded social solidarity, morale, courage, and endurance and thereby provoked corruption and factionalism, which in turn destroyed public stability and respect for the laws. Machiavelli therefore believes also that it is necessary to take the constitution of Rome, rather than that of Sparta or Venice, as our model.

Republican imperialism, however, contains one obvious flaw. To protect and glorify the freedom of one people, it crushes the freedom of others. What are the options? Machiavelli describes three. One could crush and enslave neighboring populations, as did the Spartans. Or one could form a league of “companions”—free and equal republics. This is what the ancient Etruscans and in his time the Swiss and the German free cities did. Or one could absorb free

cities as “companions,” but make sure that one retains effective control, as the Romans did.

Enslavement is exhausting and costly. A free league is tempting. It avoids unnecessary wars and offers security through unity against outside threats (II:4). Leagues tend to have a maximum size because difficulties of coordination limit their ability to expand. These limits unfortunately make them vulnerable to more powerful invaders, as the Etruscans were destroyed by the Gauls. Leagues are also stable only in special circumstances, as the German free cities depended on the imperial authority of the Holy Roman Empire for settling disputes and external protection (II:19). The best route to security and glory thus is the Roman way, expanding through “companions” (we would now call them collaborators), taking advantage of “empire by invitation” to extend effective rule.40

Hence republican as well as princely imperialism. We are lovers of glory, Machiavelli announces. We seek to rule or at least to avoid being oppressed. In either case we want more for ourselves and our states than just material welfare. Because other states with similar aims thereby threaten us, we prepare ourselves for expansion. Because our fellow citizens threaten us if we do not allow them either to satisfy their ambition or to release their political energies through imperial expansion, we expand. In doing so, we create a state of war— insecurity abroad as a way of mitigating, but never successfully eliminating, insecurity at home.

All this poses a challenge to republican strategy: “For as a free city is generally influenced by two principal objects, the one to aggrandize herself, and the other to preserve her liberties, it is natural that she should occasionally be betrayed into faults by excessive eagerness in the pursuit of either of these two objects” (I:29). Machiavelli then warns us of the danger of being ungrateful to those with virtue or suspicious of those who should be trusted. At the same time, we must be aware of the need to maintain social equality and avoid the development of a landed nobility, who can live without work, for they corrupt republican patriotism (I:55). The other danger is “daring enterprises” that risk the state by allowing the populace to become drunk with glory and booty, rather than prudent in the pursuit of security (I:53).

**MODERN FUNDAMENTALISM**

Modern Fundamentalists rest their analysis on similar basic human drives, but few are as consistent as Machiavelli. Like Machiavelli, Hans Morgenthau, the

40I have explored this theme in *Empires*. For a provocative interpretation of U.S. power in the postwar period, see Geir Lundestad, *The American “Empire”* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), whose phrase “empire by invitation” I borrow here.
preeminent modern Fundamentalist Realist, traces the "struggle for power," which he finds characteristic of all politics, whether domestic or international, to basic "elemental bio-psychological" drives in human nature.\(^{41}\) "The essence of international politics is identical with its domestic counterpart," he says. It is modified only by different conditions under which the same struggle takes place, for the "tendency to dominate" is "an element of all human associations from the family . . . to the state" (p.32). Like Machiavelli, Morgenthau notes that statesmen pursue various distinct types of struggle for power—policies of the status quo (chapter 4), imperialism (chapter 5), and prestige (chapter 6) among them. He presents us with an insightful picture of the breadth of balance of power policies, which range from "dividing and ruling" potentially threatening coalitions to "compensations" designed to distribute territories and populations in a stabilizing (balancing) fashion to the more traditional "armaments" and "alliances" (chapter 12).

Like Machiavelli, Morgenthau finds moral considerations unfit for the necessities that characterize politics, particularly international politics. Traditional moral considerations are real, but they should (can) restrain otherwise expedient policy only where necessity does not override them (as in restraining international assassinations of threatening heads of state during peacetime).\(^{42}\)

Unlike Machiavelli, however, Morgenthau fails to connect his domestic to his international struggles for power. We do not really learn why some states are imperialistic, others status quo—oriented. Morgenthau writes of the struggle for power without distinguishing Borgia's from Ferrara's (new from old princes) or Sparta's from Rome's (aristocratic from free republics). He thereby loses the analytic power of Machiavelli's insights concerning how variations in the distribution of human nature (few or many, with more or less virtù) make for variations in states and variations in foreign policies. He, unlike Machiavelli, therefore seems to suggest that statesmen pursue power for its own sake.

Morgenthau's own purpose, it emerges, is actually moral—"peace through accommodation." Since peace cannot now be achieved through "limitation"

\(^{41}\)Morgenthau, Politics among Nations, p. 31.

\(^{42}\)Ibid., p. 225. Morgenthau's position on moral restraints is, if anything, even more contradictory than Machiavelli's. Morgenthau consistently denies that he is a "Machiavellian" (by which he seems to mean a thoroughgoing moral skeptic). Morgenthau himself endorses what he sees as Hobbes's views (international moral skepticism) in his Defense of the National Interest, p. 34. But this does not square well with the international moral restraints he discusses in chapter 16 of Politics among Nations or with his transcendental ideal of a realm of absolute and universal ethical norms caught in an "inexorable tension" with the world of actual politics. See Robert C. Good, "National Interest and Moral Theory," in Statecraft and Moral Theory, pp. 285–86. (Hobbes bridges that tension by having the sovereign define ethical standards within the state.) Moreover, Morgenthau privately subscribes to an unexplained affinity for evolutionary (Hegelian) conceptions of political ethics (see Michael Smith, "Hans Morgenthau and the American National Interest in the Early Cold War," Social Research 48, 4 [Winter 1981], p. 778).
(disarmament, collective security, or international law) or through “transformation” (a world state or world community), diplomacy is the best we can do, and corrupted by ideology and the quest for electoral popularity, we are not doing that well (chapter 32).

Machiavelli’s Fundamentalism provides an intriguing and distinct view of the state of war within and between states that should not fall from the Realist vocabulary and catalog of insights. Princely virtù and republican imperialism rest on views on the nature of man and what they can create that preserve an entrepreneurial feature in Realist political analysis. But how would we know if Machiavelli and the Fundamentalists are correct? In a world dominated by new princes and Roman-style republics, we might be able to model state behavior as rational, self-interested, and power-maximizing (and nonnuclear). If we did, we might expect the emergence of balancing and a steadily increasing size of empires and steadily decreasing number of other states (as lesser powers were conquered).\textsuperscript{43} These hypothetical imperial results are characteristically Machiavellian.

In a world dominated by no single form of state, we might look for systematic differences in the behavior of new and old princes. Are the Hitlers and Mussolinis on average more aggressive (because more glory-seeking and risk-prone) than the traditional monarchs were? (On the whole, though, military dictatorships are not very expansionist.)\textsuperscript{44} Are more free, more egalitarian republics (Rome’s) more expansionist than more conservative, aristocratic republics (Sparta’s or late Venice’s)? There is of course considerable historical evidence for republican imperialism. Machiavelli’s own Rome and Thucydides’s Athens both were imperial republics in the Machiavellian sense. Were the aristocratic republics of the Middle Ages more or less aggressive than their Roman predecessor? Today, if the United States qualifies as a new Rome, the historical record of numerous U.S. interventions in the postwar period supports Machiavelli’s argument.\textsuperscript{45} But an equally notable feature of it is the lack of enthusiasm the people seem to show for it.

The Strategic Balance
The Machiavellian model adds an important perspective to national security. Machiavelli prefers glorious imperialism to balancing. He nonetheless illuminates an important facet of the theory of the balance of power. While some theories of the balance (as we shall see in the next two chapters) assume that it

\textsuperscript{43} See Richard Stoll (1987).
\textsuperscript{44} For interesting speculation on these issues, see Stanislav Andreski, “On the Peaceful Disposition of Military Dictatorships,” \textit{Journal of Strategic Studies} 3 (1980), pp. 3–10.
is an automatic result of Structural anarchy or the product of Constituted or sociological conditions, a Machiavellian perspective develops a "strategic balance" focusing on leadership. It holds that the balance of power is maintained only by (1) the special virtú of great Machiavellian princes, (2) the special vigilance of "statesmen" rather than "prophets," or (3) a particular strategy. Here the balance is neither a mechanical artifact nor a sociological circumstance but a work of art, a product of finesse, and history is made by great men (and great women).46

Machiavelli offers the classic explanation for why and how princes play the game of balance of power politics, considered as a contest in political entrepreneurship. Leaders, as we have seen, go for power in order to enhance personal glory and maintain national security. Machiavelli, we should recall, warns against both neutrality and what we now call collaboration, bandwagoning, or omnibalancing, subordinating oneself to or aligning with stronger foreign princes.47 Active interstate balancing is both more prestigious and more secure, since aligning can make the difference needed for victory and, in case of a loss, having failed to align with the weaker can leave you victim to the designs of the winner without the support of the weaker. More generally, Machiavelli illustrates the capacity of entrepreneurship to overcome Structural and Constituted constraints.48

Henry Kissinger offers us an eloquent portrait of a more developed strategic model with the statesman as the architect of the balance of power. Stability is a product of a consensus on legitimacy among states, according to Kissinger. Legitimacy is not natural or automatic but created. In legitimate orders disputes are settled diplomatically and alliances are appropriately flexible and pragmatic, because the legitimacy of the international order is not also up for dispute. "That Europe rescued stability from seeming chaos (at the close of the Napoleonic Wars) was primarily the result of the work of two great men: of Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, who negotiated the international

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46 We should note, however, that Machiavelli focused on strategies of "divide and conquer" that displayed no clear conception of the balance of power as a general system of relations among states. See Herbert Butterfield, "The Balance of Power," in H. Butterfield and M. Wight, eds., Diplomatic Investigations (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 134. His own strategic approach was closer to a simple policy of "divide and rule" (divide et impera), a policy pursued by any rational actor seeking to reduce potential threats to its ambitions, whether it is balancing power or aggressively seeking to expand an empire. See also Morgenthau, Politics among Nations, chap. 31, and Henry Kissinger, A World Restored (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), chap. 17.

47 For omnibalancing, see David, "Explaining Third World Alignment."

settlement, and of Austria’s foreign minister, Metternich, who legitimized it.” Great statesmen succeed in creating international orders within the balance of power by reconciling what their societies regard as just with what the resources of their nation and its allies make feasible. Metternich sought to create a transnational order that would deter revolutionary domestic change by international intervention; Castlereagh, to create an international order that limited aggressive domestic revolution by international alliance. The Congress of Vienna, Kissinger tells us, reflected the combined success of those two projects. Metternich established a concert system that would intervene against revolutionary change. Castlereagh fulfilled Pitt’s vision of a European balance that would employ an internally divided but externally stable German center as well as “great masses” of neighboring territory to contain the possibility of an imperial revival of France, all without turning Europe over to the Russians.

Bismarck adopted a similar creative role between 1870 and 1890. Then, by playing upon the fears of the three conservative monarchies against revolutionary democracy, he kept Russia, Austria, and Germany linked, despite their rivalries over the Balkans. By exacerbating Anglo-French tensions over Egypt and West African colonies and Franco-Italian tensions over the control of Tunisia and the naval balance in the Mediterranean, he kept France (deeply hostile because of its resentment over the loss of Alsace-Lorraine) isolated from its “natural” allies and dependent on Germany for diplomatic support. In 1890 the kaiser very unwisely dropped this “pilot” who had so successfully steered the international system.

Machiavelli’s Legacy

Princely virtù and republican imperialism rest on views on the nature of human beings and what they can create that preserve an entrepreneurial feature in Realist political analysis. They provide the motives and ends that so many critics of Realism fail to find in modern abstractions. Fundamentalism provides a model for how states are created or expanded or preserved where there is little in the way of strong institutions or nationalism to hold them together. In a powerful invocation of prudence, Machiavelli tells us that “fortune is arbiter of half of actions” (The Prince, chapter 25). More striking—especially to modern social scientists—is the other half of his claim: “[B]ut . . . she [fortune] leaves the other half, or close to it, for us to govern.”

Fundamentalist Realism also serves as a warning. Machiavelli’s new princes both preserve themselves and realize their ambitions through glorious expansion. (Old princes, beware! Political creativity may not be dead.) And Machiavelli’s republican imperialism warns us of tendencies in republican free

49 Kissinger, A World Restored, p. 5.
government. Extending the rule of the dominant elite or avoiding the political collapse of their state, each calls for imperial expansion, at least when there is no sense of fundamental human rights to guarantee us against those tendencies either at home or abroad.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{50}Unlike Machiavelli's republics, some modern Liberal (Kantian) republics are capable of achieving peace among themselves because they exercise democratic caution and because they are capable of appreciating the international rights of foreign republics. See the discussion in chapter 7.
CHAPTER THREE

Structuralism: Hobbes

Out of civil states, there is always war of every one against every one.¹
—Thomas Hobbes

Although Thucydides was the first of what we now call the Realists, he left much of what more theoretical Realists have wanted to understand caught up in historical contingency. His great themes—war, leadership, and democracy—were deeply embedded in his history of the Peloponnesian War. Machiavelli focused on one part of Thucydides’s lesson—the roots of violence in individual ambition—and told us how a prince might achieve glory and a republic security, but his lessons too were highly contextual.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)—Thucydides’s most famous modern disciple and the preeminent philosopher of the modern sovereign state—has given us a more theoretical—that is, a less historically or circumstantially contingent—treatment of Realist thought.² Hobbes’s Leviathan broke with Machiavellian Fundamentalism and began a strikingly different version of Realism, a Struc-

¹Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott (London: Collier, 1962, [1651]), p. 100. All page cites in the text come from this edition unless otherwise noted.
tural view that sees interstate anarchy as the defining cause of the state of war. He also provided two key foundations that contemporary Structuralism lacks (or neglects).

1. He explained why states should and could be treated as rational unitary actors, despite all their actual diversity.

2. He explained why international anarchy could and should be considered a state of war, despite all the actual variety of state motives and relations. He achieved both of these by drawing in considerations of human nature and the nature of the state (Image I and II features).

Hobbes was the first of the great translators of Thucydides into English. Hobbes was drawn to Thucydides by his admiration for the “most politic historiographer that ever writ” and because of what he saw as Thucydides’s effective refutation of radical claims, the sort of claims that were also being made in the 1620s. Many of his basic insights concerning human motivation (fear, honor, self-interest) and the dangers of civil war formed the core of Thucydides’s History. Indeed, the anarchy, destruction, and social collapse that occurred during the Corcyraean civil war were the closest analogue to what Hobbes describes in Leviathan as the “state of nature” without government. Writing his major political works in the 1640s, he addressed, directly and indirectly, the causes of the English Civil War, which he judged to be a result of religious dissent and the ambition of overmighty subjects. The horrible destruction of the war added force to his arguments concerning the dangers of anarchic confusion and fired his determination to discover a path to peace. Unlike both Thucydides and Machiavelli, Hobbes played no direct role in public affairs and earned his living instead as a tutor to members of the aristocratic Cavendish family and, briefly, to Charles II. Scholarly and unworldly, he (and his arguments for absolute sovereignty) managed to offend both the parliamentarians and the royalists in the course of the strife of the English Civil War.

His most distinctive contributions, however, were less his conclusions and more his methods. The spirit of the new mathematics of geometry and of the new science of mechanics added an especially abstract and forcefully scientific twist to his political arguments. Hobbes sought the essential, universal, and absolute truths of politics just as his near contemporaries Galileo, Descartes, and Newton did in mechanics, geometry, and calculus. He assimilated the contingent insights of politics to the rigor and certainty of science and geometry as a way of refuting once and for all and forever what he saw as the vicious arrogance of those who would challenge the authority of the state and inflict

4 Peters, Hobbes, p. 36.
the miseries of war on their fellow citizens. He reasoned that the necessary truths contained in the basic concepts of the human appetites, which form the foundations of interest, duty, and right, were just as absolutely true as was the geometrical truth that any straight line passing through the center of a circle bisects it into two identical halves. Introspection thus can tell us what we need to know about human nature. He supports, rather than empirically tests, those truths with ad hoc examples. (We fear our fellowmen; why else would we lock our houses at night?)

Hobbes’s Structuralism

Human Nature x
Domestic Society x
Interstate System xx

For international relations theorists, Hobbes’s most important contribution was his laying systematic and complete foundations for what is now the dominant model of international theory, Structural Realism. His argument was systematically Structural. Having assumed certain features of individuals (that they are rational but sometimes envious egoists), he showed how their interaction in anarchic conditions would lead them to want to form a truly sovereign state. He then showed how such states interacting in anarchic conditions would maintain a state of war. So, unlike the later Structuralists, who simply assumed, he explained why we should think of states as rational and unitary actors. Also, rather than simply assume, he explained why anarchy could lead to a state of war by explaining why it was that states would lack trust in one another and why strategies of cooperative security available within an anarchic international system would fail. Having done this, he could then argue that, for all essential purposes, effective states could be treated as like units. States seeking to preserve their security could, therefore, measure the threats posed by their neighbors by their neighbors’ capacities. He thus laid the analytic foundations of the systemic balance of power and showed that it was the best order sovereign states could hope to maintain.

NATURAL CONDITIONS

The “State of Nature” as a “State of War”
Hobbes’s description in Leviathan of the hypothetical “natural condition of men living together without a common power to keep them in awe” as a “state
of war” is duly famous. The state of war is a war of all against all, not a single battle but a tract of time “wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known” (p. 100). In the state of nature there is “no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” (p. 100).

Hobbes sees the state of nature as a state of war because all men are equal in body, ambitions, and reason and there is no common power to restrain them. Traditionalism and Realism clearly, despite frequent association, are wrongly paired in Hobbes. Hobbes is one of the first of the radical individualists, one of the first and most extreme of the true moderns. For Hobbes, all human beings are created equal. Differences in strength exist, but no differences are so significant that a man can go without fear of being killed by his fellows. All must sleep at times; a few can gang up on the most able. All humans seek roughly the same things: shelter, food, sex, esteem, security. And the things they do seek they seek with an equal intensity. We all have roughly the same intelligence. After all, as Hobbes famously noted, through introspection we can discover that no one thinks he or she is dumber than his or her fellows: “[E]very man is contented with his share.”5 And reason serves as an efficient scout and spy for our needs and desires. We are not identical. Some men are more fearful; they have “feminine” characters.6 Others are more aggressive and enjoy domination for its own sake. But these differences are swamped by our basic similarities.

“From equality proceeds diffidence,” that is, fear.7 We compete for needs and desires and are unwilling to cede them to a rival. Our competition makes us fearful of preventive or preemptive attack, and our equality gives us no confidence in our being able to maintain security alone, so we too choose to strike first for safety’s sake. Even if we ourselves have no such acquisitive desires, we know that there are those who do, so we strike, and we give the same impression to all others. Our competition also extends to matters of prestige, for prestige might translate into deference. In any case, no one has authority to decide who is more worthy, and no one is prepared to cede preeminence to a mere equal.8

5Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 98.
6Hobbes refers to “men” rather than “human beings,” and he draws some distinctions between men and women. Since the substantial differences among men do not swamp their basic similarity of human beings, there is not enough in Hobbes’s argument to support a view that differences between men and women are sufficiently large to swamp their basic similarity.
7Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 98.
Competition, diffidence (fear), and glory thus drive all against all into a “state of war,” a tract of time wherein the possibility of battle is continuous. Hobbes derives “laws”—normative precepts—for the state of nature which flow from our fundamental right of self-defense and the rational desire for security. The first is to seek peace where possible but, where it cannot be found, to use all the “helps and advantages” of nature for self-preservation. We should keep a promise to keep the peace if others have fulfilled their half first. But all promises under these circumstances are “covenants without the sword.” Since we cannot be sure that any promise will be enforced in a manner that can permit us to rely upon it, our own security must be the paramount rule of our conduct (chapter 15). Thus for Hobbes, as for so many contemporary social scientists, human beings should be considered rational egoists, at least in the sense that they rationally calculate the satisfaction of their passions.

The second law of nature is to be willing to lay down all our rights insofar as our safety requires if others are willing to do the same and on an equal basis. We thus can escape from this desperate condition of war by two means. Either we accept a state through conquest—we are conquered and pledge allegiance to a Leviathan in order to preserve our lives—or we establish a state, a commonwealth by institution and mutual contract. We institute a commonwealth by pledging one to another to cede all our rights except the right of self-preservation.

Driven by the terror of the state of natural war, we thereby accept or create the Leviathan, an “Artificial Man.” The people and their wealth, Hobbes suggests, are its muscles; government agents are its joints; rewards and punishments are its nerves; laws and principles of equity are like reason; and the sovereign is the soul, which should govern all. The Leviathan then is sole sovereign; it governs as it sees fit. Its authority is inalienable, once granted. It can do no injustice since it defines what is just and unjust. Its authority is indivisible. It can judge the guilt of a man according to the laws it has decreed, and all citizens are required to carry out the sentence. The sovereign thus has all the personal rights of an individual in the state of nature in addition to all the rights of the citizens who have agreed to establish it. Subject citizens retain only one right, the basic right of nature, the right not to have to kill themselves, the right to self-preservation (chapters 17 and 18).

Here is the hypothetical “single rational unitary actor” the Structuralist theorists conceived of and justified as a rational ideal. Hobbes’s reasoned intuition provides moral reasons why we should be prepared to cede to the state those characteristics. All Leviathans are equivalent in their absolute authority; hence

the international lawyer’s “sovereign equality.” The Leviathan can be either one person or a group of persons—a monarch or a republic—and neither makes a fundamental difference because it is the amount of authority, not the management of the authority, that counts for individuals desperate to escape natural anarchy. So we have also established the “like units” posited by the Structuralists. But they are also, we infer, alike in a special way. The Hobbesian sovereign, whether one person or a committee, is a Hobbesian individual—another rational egoist driven by competition, diffidence, and glory. Driven by terror and desire for security we surrendered all authority to such an individual. But is there something in the structure of interstate anarchy that tames or re-structures the Leviathan?

INTERNATIONAL CONDITIONS

Sovereigns in interstate politics are, by analogy, somewhat like individuals in the state of nature: They exist in a state of war in which there is not effective international law or morality; all have unrestrained rights, none has enforceable duties. Or, put differently, all have a duty to follow “international law,” but international law is nothing more than the same natural law of self-defense that was binding on individuals in the state of nature. “In all times,” Hobbes explains, “kings, and persons of sovereign authority because of their independency are in continual jealousies and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbors; which is a posture of war” (p. 101).

Like Hobbesian individuals, they are caught up in competition for goods, fear of attack, and struggles for prestige. Competition, fear, and glory: Each is a reason for conflict and possibly war.

Persistent Anarchy?
Yet the international state of war is not as “nasty, brutish, and short” as the natural condition of mankind, for four reasons involving the artificiality of the sovereign personality.9

1. “B]ecause they uphold thereby the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men”

(p. 101). That is, much industry and learning can take place within secure domestic borders despite international strife.

2. Soldiers retain the right to self-preservation, and so in a battle there is much running away on either side. According to Hobbes, subjects can hire substitutes if they are called up in a draft and suffer from a “natural timorousness.” Sergeants and officers of course have the right and duty to threaten a soldier with death if he runs away, and all soldiers must obey their officers in training and maneuvers up to the actual field of battle. In a national emergency, where the defense of all is required for the defense of each, soldiers will feel an especially strong incentive to stay and perhaps have a duty to do so. Volunteers especially have promised to stay, and Hobbes says they should. But even criminals retain the right to try to preserve their lives.

Soldiers will run away in dangerous battles. Knowing this, sovereigns are likely to be restrained in their aggressiveness and in their otherwise unfettered pursuit of their private and personal advantages. They will limit wars either to a lot of maneuvering or to campaigns against much inferior forces.

3. Sovereigns are not like individuals in important respects. Sovereigns, unlike individuals, are not mortal. The death of a king or a president does not end the state, so potential bushwhackers should be deterred.

4. Nor are sovereigns equal. Unlike natural men, artificial men can grow in disproportionate ways. Their inequality may even allow them to reflect differences in taste. In any case, the fear of the larger for the smaller is likely not to result in great insecurity; the fear of the smaller, to result in more deference. War, it has thus been argued, “is usually the outcome of a diplomatic crisis which cannot be solved because both sides have conflicting estimates of their bargaining power.”

Hobbes thus leaves the international state of war ambiguous. It is a state of war, but it is less brutal than the state of war of the natural condition. But being less brutal, it seems also to lack the terror that drives individuals to create a peace within the sovereign Leviathan. Thus the international condition may indeed be sufficiently safe and commodious that we would not be willing to establish a global Leviathan as a means of ensuring a truly global peace. The lesser danger of international war ironically seems to preclude the “sovereign” solution analogous to domestic peace. In the seventeenth century sovereigns provided enough security (and were themselves secure enough behind their armies) that no global sovereign was necessary. Today even the most extreme threats to survival—nuclear threats—under conditions of mutually assured

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destruction (stable second-strike capability) are deterred in ways that no individual in the natural condition can possibly count upon natural deterrence to work (individuals sleep at night, can be ambushed, etc.)\textsuperscript{11} Therefore, we continue to suffer international insecurity.

**International Cooperation?**

Does the persistent anarchy of the international condition allow for cooperation, stability, and perhaps international legal order? One suspects that Hobbes, with his analytic individualism, would have found the modern analysis of cooperation and conflict found in game theory especially congenial as a way to imagine the possibilities of cooperation and conflict among Leviathans that lack authoritative international order.

Many of the sources of cooperation and conflict may really be, the game theorists tell us, the harmony or discord of simple decisions. A and B are in a “deadlock” if each prefers conflict to any form of cooperation. If both the United States and the USSR preferred to conduct an arms race rather than to control arms, then conflict was inevitable. Or A and B are in “harmony” if neither would choose conflicting policies.\textsuperscript{12} If both trading states prefer free trade no matter what tariffs the other might impose, free trade is harmoniously determined.

More complicated causes of cooperation and conflict result from decisions in which cooperation is preferred to deadlock and in which coordination is necessary to achieve cooperation.\textsuperscript{13} In contemporary international relations theory, “games” can model the competition, fear, and glory that Hobbes saw as the continuous roots of conflict, ranging from the natural condition to the international state of war. Games too are anarchic: outcomes depend not on authoritative decision but on the interdependent strategies, the decisions, of the players.

Some situations are, we imagine, completely competitive, in that what one person wins the other must lose (a zero-sum game). Prestige (who is to be king, who subject) or a unique resource (the only dry cave in a region) may not be shareable among Hobbesian individuals or families (a natural unit, for Hobbes). Strategies of victory therefore rely first on relative power and then, often, on deception, as in the famous case of the attack game used to model some of the

\textsuperscript{11} For an argument that nuclear weapons do reconstitute the original insecurity of the natural condition, see Gauthier (pp. 207–09). Interestingly, even if one accepts the anarchy-enhancing logic of mutually assured destruction deterrence, the onset of first-strike capabilities should revive an interest in global sovereignty.


\textsuperscript{13} Not all interdependent decisions need raise the possibility of conflict. A and B may be “altruistic” if each wants the other to have what it wants. In international relations altruistic decisions are assumed to be so rare as to not warrant much attention.
famous battles of World War II, such as the Battle of Leyte Gulf, between the nearly equal forces of Admirals Halsey and Yamamoto, or the Normandy landing, contested between Eisenhower and Rommel. If the attacker (Eisenhower) can land (or strike) unopposed and achieve surprise, he wins; if the defender (Rommel) anticipates the time and location of the attack, the defender (given

**Zero-Sum Games**

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<tr>
<th><strong>COORDINATION GAME</strong></th>
<th>Player One</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>STAG DILEMMA</strong></th>
<th>One Hunter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperate</td>
<td>Defect</td>
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<td>Other Hunters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperate</td>
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<td>Defect</td>
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### Prisoner's Dilemma

**First Prisoner**

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<th></th>
<th>Cooperate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperate</td>
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<td>-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defect</td>
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### Chicken Dilemma

**First Driver**

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### Mixed-Motive Games

**Battle of the Sexes**

**Husband**

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<th></th>
<th>Mountain</th>
<th>Shore</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shore</td>
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<td>2</td>
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the usual advantages of the defense) wins. Here the payoffs for each strategy of either attack or defense (concentrating forces, let us say, north [N] or south[S]) depend on the choice made by the other player. In the illustration, the attacker's (row) payoffs are in the lower left and the defender's (column) payoffs are in the upper right of each quadrant. The attacker thus prefers outcomes SN or NS; the defender, complementarily, SS or NN.

But conflicts need not be so completely competitive in order to generate
strife. Even when both parties share some common interests, and both can lose or both can gain (as in variable sum games), conflicts can result. Even when states share an interest in a common good that could be attained by cooperation, the absence of a source of global law and order may mean that no one state can count upon the cooperative behavior of the others. Coordination games, for example, presuppose a shared and equivalent interest in cooperation, as occurs when both seek to coordinate outcomes, such as requiring that either all drive on their right (RR) or all drive on their left (LL) side of the street. Each prefers RR or LL to RL or LR. Established conventions usually solve these problems. Yet misperception and a lack of authoritative determination can produce "defections"—crashes.¹⁴

So-called Stag Dilemmas (after a story first elaborated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau) prove even more troubling. In a woods populated with deer and rabbits, a group of hunters stalk a stag, which only their combined skills can capture. Each hunter values his share of the stag (CC) at more than the value of an entire rabbit. But a rabbit can be caught by individual effort alone (DC). A rabbit appears as the hunters stalk the deer. If one hunter defects from the common enterprise of deer hunting, the other (that is, all the rest) will go hungry (CD) or be left scrambling for possible shares of other rabbits (DD). Can—should—any hunter rationally forgo the rabbit? The hunter’s preference ordering is CC>DC>DD>CD. The problem is that the hunter—by analogy, a state—has a rational incentive to defect from the cooperative enterprise if he cannot trust his fellow hunters to be rational. Here accurate information, transparency, is crucial to cooperation: If all the hunters truly recognize that all the other hunters recognize the superiority of shared venison, cooperation should be forthcoming. The "dilemma" arises because under anarchy, hunters wonder whether these understandings can be made clear to the dim-witted or enforceable against the perverse.

Correspondingly, in international politics, even though each state knows that security is relative to the armaments level of potential adversaries and even though each state seeks to avoid excess arms expenditure (CC), it also knows that because there is no global guarantee of security, being caught unarmored by a surprise attack (CD) is worse than bearing the costs of armament. Each therefore tries to arm alone (DC); all are worse off (DD). This is typical of arms race situations.¹⁵

Another situation under anarchy, illustrating rational preemption, may be the Prisoner’s Dilemma. Two suspects are captured by the police. Interrogated separately, each is offered his freedom if he “rats” (DC) on his partner, who would then be convicted, become the “sucker” (CD), and receive the maximum sentence. If both rat (DD, both “defect”), both are convicted, though with tainted evidence and so receive a large sentence, but fewer years than the sucker would receive. If both stick to their claim of innocence (and thus CC, “cooperate”), both are convicted of some much lesser offense for which the prosecutor has some evidence. The suspects’ preference ordering is again the same: DC>CC>DD>CD. Thus in colonial competition a cooperative scheme of exploitation (CC) would reduce strategic competition among the imperial metropoles and curb colonial wars (DD) in the peripheries and, above all, avoid the danger of losing out on the opportunity to claim resources (CD). But each metropole prefers even more to be the first and unchallenged claimant (DC). A “Scramble” (DD) ensues. This too is the situation in so-called Security Dilemmas, in which island nation A’s need for a fleet (DC) for defensive reasons so threatens B’s colonies (CD) that although both would prefer arms control (CC) to an arms race (DD), an arms race ensues.\footnote{John Hertz, Political Realism and Political Idealism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).} In one-shot Prisoner’s Dilemma play, the rational “criminal” or state will defect, making all worse off. Improvements in reliable information, transparency, merely increase the certainty of mutual defection. Only authoritative coordination, “sovereignty,” will prevent defection in one-shot play. Only the likelihood of repeated play raises the prospects of arriving at stable mutual cooperation (CC).

This brings us to the risk of war from glory. Under anarchy, heavily armed states confront one another and must rely on self-help for security. They rely upon their prestige (glory), their credibility, to deter states from testing the true quality of their arms in battle, and credibility is measured by a record of successes. In the game theory literature, 1950s teenage “rebels without a cause” model the situation in the game of chicken. To determine prestige, two drivers confront each other on a narrow road and roar directly toward each other to see who will be the first to swerve, thereby losing face. If both fail to swerve, the result is death. If they “cooperate” and both swerve, they save their lives, but swerving leaves both drivers with tarnished prestige (but not as stained as that of the single “chicken” who continues to cooperate by swerving while the other defects and flashes to glory down the center line). Their preference orderings are DC>CC>CD>DD.

So too for states armed with extremely destructive weapons (nuclear weapons, for example), once a posture of confrontation has been assumed, backing down, although rational for both together, is not rational (first best) for either
individually if one has an expectation that the other will back down first.\textsuperscript{17} Here more information may increase the chances of avoiding disaster. But each side has a powerful incentive to fake—engage in “brinkmanship,” risk-prone determination. The classic strategy is to throw a (one hopes, fake and spare) steering wheel out the window or make wild threats.

Not all games involve simple, equivalent payoffs. Some are also mixed-motive and raise the problem of power as a means to gain competitive goods, reduce fear, or acquire glory. “Battle of the Sexes” illustrates a common dilemma. A husband and wife like to vacation together. She, however, prefers the seashores; he, the mountains. Unlike in the previous games, the preference orderings differ: He prefers MM>SS>(MS or SM); she prefers SS>MM>(SM or MS). Here more reliable information or trust will not solve the conflict. Over the longer run, in healthy marriages, trade-offs take place—he gets the sports car, they go to the seashore—or they alternate vacation sites. But in a single decision only power (or altruistic love?) will rule. And in international relations love is in short supply.\textsuperscript{18} States are also concerned that although cooperation is valuable, they may benefit differently from the cooperative scheme. This becomes an especially large concern when, given the self-help assumption, differences in resources may be translated into coercive capacities and possible conquest.\textsuperscript{19}

States under international anarchy are thus insecure but not sufficiently terrified to form a global Leviathan. Are states in the international condition then safe and prudent enough to respect international law and thus create the minimum foundations needed for an interdependent international society?

Hobbes’s answer was that international law is nothing more than the laws of nature. Sovereigns have all the rights to pursue the security of their states that individuals in the natural condition have to pursue the security of their persons. Should a Hobbesian expect that the changed conditions of international relations create conditions sufficient for international cooperation and perhaps legal order?\textsuperscript{20}

Two arguments suggest grounds for a Hobbesian pacification. One is a matter of moral duty; the other, of rational egoism. A Hobbesian Realist could

\textsuperscript{17}Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma.”


argue that peace could be the outcome of prudent diplomacy guided by effective moral duties. Hobbes argues that sovereigns have a natural duty not to act against “the reasons of peace.... Dominions were constituted for peace’s sake, and peace was sought for safety’s sake.”\textsuperscript{21} The natural duty of the sovereign is therefore the safety of the people. But prudent policy cannot be an enforceable right of citizens because Hobbesian sovereigns, who remain in the state of nature with respect to their subjects and other sovereigns, cannot themselves be subjects. The sovereign nonetheless, according to some interpreters of Hobbes, has duties to God to uphold the natural laws, including that of peace, when they prudently can.\textsuperscript{22} But also according to Hobbes, individuals had such duties in the natural condition, yet succumbed to “natural passions of partiality, pride, revenge, and the like” (p. 129).

The natural passions of states may be more disciplined by the duty to preserve security. But, Hobbes notes, the international laws of nature are also undermined by the duty of the Leviathan to promote security. “[C]ities and kingdoms” also “for their own security” undertake invasions out of fear of being invaded and seek to weaken or destroy neighbors as a way of reducing foreign threats (p. 130). For even if one sovereign is dutiful (peaceful), its duties to its subjects include taking those possibly warlike measures against other sovereigns who, because of the very lack of guarantee that they are not also dutiful, cannot be assumed to be.

Security under anarchy would then for Hobbes and modern Structural Realists have to rely on more contingent, rational egoistic considerations. Recent additions to game theory specify some of the circumstances under which prudence could lead to cooperative peace. Experience, geography, expectations of cooperation and belief patterns, and the differing payoffs to cooperation (peace) or conflict associated with various types of military technology all appear to influence the calculus.

Differing military technologies can alter the payoffs of the “Security Dilemma”: making the costs of noncooperation high, reducing the costs of being unprepared or surprised, reducing the benefits of surprise attack, or increasing the gains from cooperation. In this regard, Robert Jervis has examined the differing effects of situations in which the offense or the defense has the advantage and in which offensive weapons are or are not distinguishable from defensive weapons.\textsuperscript{23} When the offense has the advantage and weapons are indistinguishable, the level of insecurity is high, an arms race ensues, and incentives for preemptive attack correspondingly are strong. When the offense


\textsuperscript{22}This has come to be called the Taylor-Warrender thesis; see Keith C. Brown, ed., Hobbes Studies (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), chaps. 2 and 3.

does not have an advantage and offensive weapons are distinguishable, the incentives for preemptive attack are low, as are the incentives for arms races. Capable of signaling with clarity a nonaggressive intent and of guaranteeing that other states pose no immediate strategic threat, statesmen should be able to adopt peaceable policies and negotiate disputes, further cooperation, and abide by international law. If motivated solely by security, states will not need to maximize their power (a needless expense in these circumstances), nor will they be concerned about relative gains from cooperation (because the extra assets of their rivals cannot be used to undermine security).  

Hobbes, however, is skeptical of so secure a picture of the international condition. Systemic anarchy alone does not produce the Realist's homogeneous “state of war.” Only when anarchy is combined with Hobbesian human nature, and the nature of state Leviathans, does it systematically produce and reproduce the Security Dilemma of a state of war.

Hobbes thus finds a wide range of cooperative cures insufficient. States, he argues, are not solely motivated by security. Leviathans are artificial constructs that are like ourselves, motivated by competition, fear, and glory. They thus also have aggressive motives, and even if they themselves do not have aggressive motives, they must assume that some other states do.

He finds alliances prudent, even necessary, but he does not regard either small or large alliances as reliable sources of security. Small alliances are feasible because no rational self-interested actor would continually betray commitments. They are also necessary, for continual betrayal would leave the soon-notorious culprit isolated and exposed to the attack of effective “confederations” (p. 115). But small alliances do not provide security by deterring attacks because small-number coalitions are vulnerable to attack by the many coalitions that are only slightly larger (if offense equals defense) or much larger (even if the defense is superior). Large coalitions demonstrate that states are rationally, self-interestedly capable of cooperation in a single short-term endeavor in order, for example, to defeat a common enemy in a war (pp. 130–31). On the other hand, they too fail to establish security because their large numbers hinder effective decision making. As soon as the common enemy is defeated, they break apart over their particular interests (p. 130).

Cooperation under anarchy can be enhanced when the factors of learning and time and established patterns of cooperation—what we now call regimes—are taken into account. Drawing analogies to biological systems, Robert Axelrod and William Hamilton have found that multiple-play Prisoner’s Dilemmas have rational long-run strategies that can produce long-run cooperation (CC)

by clearly signaling competitors that failure to cooperate will be punished (CD or DD). For these scholars, prudential rules for cooperation in extended play Prisoner’s Dilemma games are embodied in the superior strategy “Tit for Tat.” They include “don’t be envious” (seek absolute, not relative, gains), “don’t be the first to defect,” “reciprocate cooperation and defection,” “don’t be too clever (adopt simplicity).” But states, Hobbes takes pains to point out, are not capable of long-term, rationally self-interested cooperation, like “bees, ants,” or other sociable insects (p. 131)—the biological analogues made popular by Axelrod and Hamilton.

Hobbes’s objection to extended rational cooperation is threefold. First, if states cooperated over an extended time, the distribution of benefits might add to the power of some states and thus threaten the security of the less advantaged—the relative gains problem. Security, Hobbes noted, should always be “measured by comparison with the enemy we fear,” (p. 130) because eventually states under anarchy will experience changes in military technology (implying uncertain but likely shifts in the offense-defense balance), and so they will find that capabilities will count. Their present awareness of that possibility should constrain cooperation, by raising concerns for relative gains.

Second, there is a long-run rationality problem, for Hobbes holds that such schemes would be unlikely to persist long enough to generate benefits. He finds the rules of rational cooperation unrealistic for humans, however useful they may well be for bees. Bees and ants, Hobbes thinks, may be naturally harmonious and not merely cooperative. But apart from that, desires for “honor” and prestige mean that relative gains are more valuable for humans than absolute gains in cooperative schemes (humans are envious). Men and women are also driven by passion and fear. Substantive (long-run) rationality is an ideal; instrumental (calculating) rationality may simply serve the immediate passions. We share the instincts represented by the slogan of certain fans of British rugby teams in the 1990 season: “Get Your Retaliation in First!”

Third, there are misperception and uncertainty problems. The ability of men

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26 Axelrod, Evolution of Cooperation, chap. 6.


29 As reported in the Economist 27 (October 1990).
to reason and communicate means that disputes arise over interpretation and a desire for improvement (men are too clever—perhaps, as Axelrod would say, even for their own good). Lastly, men in anarchic circumstances (without a judge) cannot distinguish between injury and accident, and cooperative strategies rely very heavily on accurate signaling, an excessively demanding condition in interstate politics. Even the “clearest” technical messages appear subject to garbling. The pre-1914 period, which objectively represented a triumph of the distinguishable defense (machine guns, barbed wire, trench warfare) over the offensive, subjectively, as Jervis notes, was a period that appeared to military leaders to place exceptional premiums on the offensive and thus on preemptive war.

The purely Structural approach to Realism contains an important limitation. The two key Structural assumptions—anarchy and independent units—are not sufficient to generate a strong preference for power and a balance of power system. Anarchy can be contingently benign and stable. Anarchy also characterizes an interaction that turns into an imperial relationship. Both anarchy and independent “actors,” moreover, also characterize the units that, when they come into contact with one another, form, as we shall later see, a Liberal community or a “security community.”

In order, therefore, for Structure to serve as a foundation for Realism, we need to offer an additional argument to explain a strong, homogeneous preference for power, unrelenting competition, rational policy making, and an indifference to political regimes. This is what Hobbes’s Structuralism—a “state of war”—gives us, for Thomas Hobbes explains why states would always oppose power against power. States balance power, he says, because individuals create absolute, all-powerful, functionally equivalent “Leviathans” (rational unitary actors) in order to escape the terror of anarchy and achieve domestic law and order. Security will dominate all—“Clubs are Trumps,” Hobbes claims—and relative position dominates absolute welfare because Leviathans cannot be made responsible to their citizens. Even if they could, both Leviathans and

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32 These actors—usually either tribal or patrimonial societies—eventually tend to collaborate (bandwagon) rather than balance. Tribal societies destabilize under the impact of transnational forces, such as trade or missionaries. Patrimonial societies fracture and, after a period of crisis, their elites collaborate. Both tend to mount meager resistance to imperial aggression (see the argument and sources cited in Doyle, Empires, chap. 6 and ff).
their citizens pursue aggressive passions (glory and interest) that make all insecure. 35 Born out of terror, Hobbes concludes, such states would accept no external constraints apart from the opposition of power to power.

The international condition for Hobbes remains, therefore, a state of war. Safety enjoins a prudent policy of forewarning (spying) and of forearming oneself to increase security against other sovereigns, who, lacking any assurance that you are not taking these measures, also take them. Safety as well requires (as a duty) taking actions “whatever shall seem to conduce to the lessening of the power of foreigners whom they [the sovereign] suspect, whether by slight or force.” 36 If preventive wars are prudent, the Realist’s prudence obviously cannot establish a firm foundation for peace or international law.

CONTEMPORARY STRUCTURALISM

The insightful contribution of the Structuralists lies in a parsimonious argument that anarchy can rule. The effects of differing domestic regimes (e.g., whether Liberal or Socialist or not) are overridden, they claim, by the structure of international anarchy under which all states live. Hobbes, we noted, does not bother to distinguish between “some council or one man” when he discusses the sovereign. Differing domestic regimes do affect the quantity of resources available to the state and the quality of its morale. But the effective ends that shape policy are determined for the Structuralist by the competitive structure of the international system.

Domestic state structures are hierarchic and centralized (sovereign). Hierarchy allows for differentiated functions and capabilities. Police and courts specialize in security, allowing finance ministers, private entrepreneurs, and laborers to concentrate on generating wealth; the clergy and the religious, on salvation; etc. The international structure of anarchy precludes differentiation and specialization. Because there is no global source of law and order, all states must make security their prime concern; none can safely specialize in wealth alone, or art or salvation without bearing the imprudent risk of turning themselves into the prey of the militarily powerful. This, if you will, is the contemporary lesson of the invasion of the oil sheikhdom of Kuwait, which had specialized in wealth, by Iraq, which had specialized in military power. Capabilities thus must be translatable—capable of generating security through military power—and they must be measured relative to the capabilities of other

35 Grieco (1988) explores the resulting “positional” choices of states accepting these assumptions.
states. States learn the necessity of self-help—national egoism—through either socialization or competition (defeat).

Once we add Hobbes’s explanation for the sovereignty (unity) of states and his account of the preferences they hold (security, interest, glory), we can see how international politics can be explained merely by the number and power of the states. States can be considered “like units,” socialized or selected to pursue security as a primary goal. Stable state behavior is homogenized—made rational and power-seeking—through competition and socialization. Only the rational and power-seeking will survive the competition to dominate and thus to teach their rivals. These are the conditions that allow one to infer the universality of power balancing that the Structural approach assumes.

Structural Stability
International stability, or order, for the contemporary Structuralist then depends on the structure of the international system, whether it is unipolar, bipolar, tripolar, or multipolar. Stable order—in the sense of an absence of great power war—is by definition present in a unipolar system such as the Pax Romana (where there is only one great power). There is widespread agreement that tripolar systems are unstable because they are prone to forming aggressive, ganging-up coalitions of two against one. The interesting debate revolves about claims for bipolar versus multipolar systems.

The traditional argument appeared in Thucydides’s History. Bipolar systems are more unstable. Threats can be met only through “internal balancing” (domestic rearment), there being no third power of sufficient weight to deter an attack through “external balancing” (alliance realignment). Bipolar rivalries, moreover, tend to exacerbate hostilities through a continuous focus on a single

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37Waltz, Theory of International Politics, pp. 75, 101. Interestingly, Waltz supports his theory very much as Hobbes does, by making analytic arguments (based primarily on microeconomic reasoning rather than geometry) and illustrating, rather than testing, propositions—for example, for competitive balancing, Germany and Russia in the 1920s (pp. 127–28).
38Ibid., p. 75. The structural determination depends, we need to add, on the systemic interaction being sufficiently intense to select very efficiently for appropriate behavior, such as would be observed under the economist’s model of perfect competition. See the valuable discussion in Robert Keohane, “Realism, Neorealism, and the Study of World Politics,” pp. 171–75.
39There is some dispute in the field over the meaning of “stability.” For some, it seems to mean structural stability, or stasis, found when the rank order of the powers is maintained. For others, it means persistence of international regimes or rules of order. For still others, it means an absence of major war among the great powers. The last is the clearest, the one central to the major debate, and the one adopted recently by Kenneth Waltz, the topic’s leading controversialist.
40This, of course, need not necessarily result in an aggressive war if the single power can balance, or deter, the two lesser powers. There are also inherent restraints against one small power’s joining with a dominant power against another smaller power. As Machiavelli warned, the next victim is likely to be the now-helpless single small power.
enemy. Here Jonathan Swift’s brilliant satire in Gulliver’s Travels on the Anglo-French rivalry highlights the tendency in the contest between tiny Lilliput and Blefuscu, each of which extends its political rivalry to include the correct manner of opening soft-boiled eggs—large end or small. The modern analog presumably was the Cold War rivalry between the “free world” and “international communism”—the two ends of the eggs—which reflected the rivalry between U.S. and Soviet power. Multipolar systems, by contrast, offer both forms of balancing, external and internal, and they offer crosscutting cleavages as a means of muting hostilities. Mathematicians have even made interesting arguments that among multipolar systems, pentagonal, or five-power, systems are especially likely to be stable, offering the opportunity for the fifth state to play a special role as a balancer between two two-state alliances.

The new Structuralist argument, developed by Kenneth Waltz, argues just the opposite. Bipolar systems are the more stable. They resist “chain ganging” and “buck-passing”—two of the alleged weaknesses of multipolar systems. “Chain ganging” refers to the tendency to be drawn into wars as a means of protecting vital allies from defeat (as, for example, Germany was drawn to protect Austria in the crisis that led up to World War One). Bipolar great powers, however, have no allies that are that vital. “Buck-passing,” on the other hand, refers to the tendency to neglect remote crises. Great powers sometimes assume that some other great power will make the effort needed to curb a menacing but distant aggressor state. By passing the responsibility, great powers fail to deter aggressors, who then have the opportunity to increase their strength through aggression and provoke eventually a large-scale systemic war. Great powers in a bipolar system, by contrast, either can readily crush small power aggressors or, facing a great power aggressor, have no other pole to which they could pass the responsibility for deterrence. They tend therefore to be eternally vigilant. They also economize on the monitoring of threats, since they have to keep well informed about only one other serious rival.

In short, the alleged systemic virtues of each polarity are portrayed as alleged systemic vices of the other, and vice versa. The issue seems therefore to be empirical: Which claim is better supported by the historical record? Bipolar stability drew support from the stability of the Cold War. But critics decried

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44 Kenneth Waltz, “The Stability of a Bipolar World,” Daedalus (April 1964) was the classic article. He reformulates the arguments in chapter 6 of Theory of International Politics. For the development of these themes, see Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks,” International Organization, 44, 2 (1990).
resting arguments on a single case. They noted the equally compelling effect of nuclear deterrence as an alternative explanation of Cold War stability, and they cited the opposite effect in the Peloponnesian War and the Habsburg-Valois rivalry. The bipolarists counter persuasively that at least the Peloponnesian system was not truly bipolar (as we saw), and they decry the instability of multipolar systems, pointing at the sorry record of two world wars in our own century. Clearly a more complex answer is warranted. System structure alone will not decide.

Structural Regimes
A second focus of analytic effort by the Structuralists centers on the theory of international regimes. States that regard themselves as caught in a state of war necessarily place supreme importance on national security and rely primarily on self-help. Trade therefore would be encouraged only to the extent that it produced relative advantages over other states and avoided strategic dependence on other states. If all states pursued this agenda, however, opportunities for widespread multilateral trade would be few. Instead mercantilism and the trade and monetary wars of the 1930s would presumably be the norm.

Hobbes's contemporaries indeed argued for regarding trade as a form of war in which princes had to be concerned about acquiring plenty to maintain their power and power to preserve and expand their plenty. Mercantilists especially sought a favorable balance of trade (exports exceeding imports) as a way to encourage a steady inflow of gold specie. Indeed, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before the rise of efficient taxation, tariffs on international trade were one of the surest means to raise the ready state revenue that armies required.

Later mercantilists, including Friedrich List, identified the political roles embodied in seemingly neutral economic relations, which are in principle twofold. First, economic exchange can always be used as a tool of political power through boycotts, bribery, and the manipulation of trade incentives. Second, economic relationships can operate on a more fundamental level, shaping the political-economic growth of a weaker, less developed economy through the opportunity offered to it in the form of trade and finance. The weaker country in an economic relationship (like a weaker class) then becomes not just a group

of assorted individuals but a particularized, isolated, and dependent participant in the world economy—e.g., a single-crop exporter. an economy split into largely self-contained export and domestic sectors, or a "hewer of wood." Mercantilists see nations, as Marxists see classes, becoming alienated in the process of production and exchange.

These normative nationalistic concerns are far from new: they were eloquently addressed by U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton in his Report on Manufactures of 1790, in which he expresses the opposition of American nationalists to their country’s assuming the role of a raw material exporter to Britain. Nationalists feared and opposed two aspects of this role: the tying of American economic development to the British economy and the growing dependence on Britain for goods vital to national defense. Friedrich List, inspired by Hamilton’s observations of American trade policy, outlines in American Political Economy what he saw as the proper object for a developing country’s commercial policy: “This object is not to gain matter, in exchanging matter for matter, as it is in individual and cosmopolitical [Liberal] economy, and particularly in the trade of a merchant. But it is to gain productive and political power by means of exchange with other nations; or to prevent the depression of productive and political power, by restricting that exchange.” At the earliest stages of development, List later argued, a free trade policy designed to encourage new commodities and techniques may be advantageous, but at later stages, and in order to develop a national culture and a national system of industry, protection, the mercantilists argue, will be needed to stimulate the growth of infant industries and avoid foreign-dominated dependence.

But, the Structuralist argues, multilateral regimes of stable economic interdependence, including free trade, can arise. These could be explained by hegemonic or unipolar concentrations of power. For then the dominant pole would have a reduced security concern and could therefore maximize such secondary objectives as wealth, and secondary states, having no prospect of matching the dominant power, would have little choice (or be coerced) into maximizing trade, which might or might not be to their advantage, depending on the balance of economic productivities. So, the argument runs, we should expect open trade in periods of unipolar hegemony, trade wars during periods of multipolar

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competition, and trade and monetary blocs corresponding to bipolar blocs. Although critics question whether free trade was established coercively as well as whether hegemony is a logically necessary condition, the freer trade eras of the Pax Britannica and the (“free world”) Pax Americana offer some support (at least a correlation) for this thesis.

The connection between interdependence and international structure, however, seems indeterminate: Would a few large great powers trade less because as large markets they need trade less, or trade more because their more stable security gives them less to fear from economic coercion, much to gain from system-wide trade, and more capability to bear the costs of open markets?

If we seek evidence that might confirm (or, in the negative, disconfirm) other even more basic propositions drawn from Structural Realism, we would want to look at whether states successfully restrict interdependence; whether, when they subscribe to international law as a norm, they neglect its norms in practice; and, above all, whether they actually balance power against power.

Can we confirm Hobbes’s views that general coalitions will be brief and that alliances will form and remain small? Here a great deal of diplomatic historiography implicitly supports Structural theses, but there are few systematic studies. There is strong empirical support for one Hobbesian proposition: Wartime alliances tend to last little beyond the war. There is some support as well for a trend that Hobbes would find congenial; as the great power system aged (and sovereignties became more perfect and stable?), the frequency of great power war fell. Also tending to confirm, though weakly, Structural propositions are studies indicating a tendency toward rational resource-based trade-

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49 For the monetary case, see Hirsch, Doyle and Morse, Alternatives to Monetary Disorder. For the trade case, see Joanne Gowa, “Power, Politics and International Trade,” American Political Science Review 87, 2 (June 1993), pp. 408–20.

50 Waltz (1979), p. 145.

51 Gilpin (1975); Krasner (1976).

52 For a systematic critique of some of those structural assumptions, see Walt, Origins of Alliances.


offs between alignment and defense expenditure and a thoroughly Hobbesian tendency for wars to be more likely between equals than between nonequals.55

Structural Strategy—The Balance of Power
The strictest test—and also the key prescription—of Structural Realism is the balance of power against power. Do states align themselves according to a function that minimizes threats conceived of as power divided by distance?56 The balance would be regulated as if it were a market: autonomous individual decisions driven by egoistic motives produce social results that may differ from what any single actor intended. An “invisible hand,” to borrow Adam Smith’s famous market metaphor, coordinates action.57

The Structural model also holds that the balance of power should be the essential strategy of world politics. Hume’s assertion that the balance was founded on “common sense and obvious reasoning” (p. 63) argues for it in these terms and accounts for why it was familiar to the famously “perspicacious” ancients. Kenneth Waltz’s Structural Realism also presupposes a structured tendency toward balancing: “Balance of power politics prevail wherever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive.”58 Under those circumstances the tendency to oppose power with power, through either domestic efforts or interstate alliances, will prevail.

Four elements are said to constitute the sufficient foundations of the Structural tendency to balance power against power.59 First among them is international anarchy, a “state system” of independent states whose security is interdependent (potentially affected by one another). This results in the need for self-help simply because it assumes that there is no world empire managing internal security.

Second, individual states are coherent units, each seeking at the minimum to survive, at the maximum to expand in capabilities. No state is so riven by faction that its leadership prefers to collaborate with the enemy rather than resist foreign aggression. This serves to distinguish interstate from imperial sys-

58 Waltz (1979), p. 121. Waltz highlights the centrality of balance of power thinking when he suggests (for a Structural Realist): “If there is any distinctly political theory of international politics, balance-of-power theory is it” (p. 117). Other influential postwar Realists, including Martin Wight and Hans Morgenthau, regard the conjunction of Realism with the balance as essential and prudent, if not always necessary and obvious.
59 Two works that explore these issues are Edward Culick, Europe’s Classical Balance of Power (New York: Norton, 1967), and Inis Claude, Power and International Relations (New York: Random House, 1962).
tems. Structural Realism assumes not only international anarchy but also the predominance of state actors that are "functionally similar units" (making them the "coherent units"), differing in capabilities but not ends. States are therefore best conceived of as rational egoists.

Third, states, it is assumed, will rely on self-help for security, and in the absence of any global source of law and order, security and therefore estimations of power will tend to be relative.

Fourth is a "rational system of estimating power," a measurable or comparable appreciation of capabilities, such that statesmen can weigh the balance at any given time, employing either simple (size of armies or navies) or more complex capability measures.

Given these four conditions, Structuralists argue, states will form and re-form balances of power. They will balance internally by acquiring the arms they need and balance externally by forming and re-forming alliances they need against threats defined in terms of the capabilities of other states. The balance of power is the set of relationships—alignments and alliances—that result from states' trying to maximize their security, as defined by relative power.

Some individual case studies, however, suggest that the world is not so straightforward; states are not functionally equivalent units. States tend to balance perceived threats rather than objective threats. And perceptions include political, social, ideological, and other factors in addition to the power resources and distance of the threatening state. Less decisive tests then would assess whether other things being equal, there is a tendency to restore threat balances once they are upset or whether states tend to coalesce, balancing against a single hegemon rather than bandwagoning in its direction. In chapter 6, I illustrate how we can identify the operation of a balance of power and assess whether the Structural model is sufficient to explain it.

**Structural Legacy**

Realist Structural insight thus provides a significant step toward scientific parsimony beyond the contingent generalizations advanced by Machiavellian Fundamentalism. Contemporary Structuralists, such as Kenneth Waltz, have focused on explaining a few important things well (parsimoniously). But as some of their critics have argued, they leave the character of international politics indeterminate. Abstract anarchy, reason, and egoism are compatible with cooperation under certain conditions, and thus anarchic self-help need not create a security dilemma. By examining individual motives and accounting for

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60 For discussion of these issues, see Doyle, Empires.
63 Walt (1987).
64 Waltz (1979), p. 128.
absolute sovereignty, Hobbes explains why modern rational egoistic individuals, concerned for their security, would want to think of their state as a unitary rational actor yet not want their state to form a world government or to be bound by international law. Hobbesian citizens thus condemn their Leviathans and thus themselves to the state of war. Hobbes thus showed how Structural theory can be politically meaningful as well as potentially elegant.
CHAPTER FOUR

Constitutionalism: Rousseau

As individuals we live in the civil state, under the control of law; as nations, each is in the state of nature... we find ourselves exposed to the evils of both conditions, without winning the security we find in either... so long as the prince is regarded as absolutely uncontrolled, it is force alone which speaks to the subject under the name of law and to the foreigner under the name of reason of state: so taking from the latter the power and from the former the very will, to offer resistance... brute force reigns under the empty name of justice.¹

The authors of the Encyclopédie exaggerated when they said, "The philosophy of M. Rousseau of Geneva is almost the reverse of Hobbes's."² But Rousseau, writing a century later, did seek, albeit indirectly, to answer the "hard-nosed," authoritarian-leaning arguments that Hobbes had so effectively made. Rousseau made a case for the importance of justice and domestic political choice. He was the great democratic interlocutor of Hobbes and the democratic critic of his views on the state. He was and is the democratic Realist. He identified the national interest and made it something more than a slogan.

Rousseau's international theory differs from Hobbes's much less than his domestic theories would lead one to expect. Rousseau holds optimistic expectations of human nature. He believes in the justice of a state governed by self-determining free citizens. Yet he too sees an exceptionally dangerous interna-

tional state of war, some of whose danger is contributed by just those optimistic features of trust and solidarity carried onto the battlefield. He is a Realist who, though systematically theoretical, returns to the variety and complexity of Thucydides, seeing important causes of the state of war in the nature of human beings (Image I) and the structure of the international system (Image III). But both of these operate through differing domestic constitutions, and thus his most distinctive contribution is an understanding of the impact of the varying domestic structure of states (Image II). Rousseau is a Realist, but a remarkably complicated one. If Thucydides was wise; Machiavelli, brilliant; and Hobbes, rigorous; Rousseau is profound.

Rousseau’s Constitutionalism

| Human Nature | x |
| Domestic Society | xx |
| Interstate System | x |

Rousseau thus develops a third view of the state of war. For him, as for Machiavelli, the state of war is variable, not constant and homogeneous, as it was for Hobbes. But like Hobbes and unlike Machiavelli, Rousseau sees it as an international condition. War is an act among states from which international boundaries protect the domestic political life of a state.⁴

Unlike both Hobbes and Machiavelli, he traces its roots to variations in the constitution of the state. Like the other two, though, he also finds important sources in psychological and international structural variables. In making this

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③In Kenneth Waltz’s terms, Images I, II, and III are operating together (Waltz, 1954). For this point and many others, see Stanley Hoffmann’s classic essay on Rousseau, “Rousseau on War and Peace” (1965). Other secondary sources that have influenced my reading of Rousseau’s international thought include C. J. Carter, Rousseau and the Problem of War (New York: Garland, 1987); F. H. Hinsley, Power and the Pursuit of Peace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); W. Gallie, Philosophers of Peace and War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Waltz, Man, the State, and War; Maurizio Viroli, Jean Jacques Rousseau and the Well-Ordered Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Judith Shklar, Men and Citizens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); and Michael Williams, “Rousseau, Realism, and Realpolitik,” Millennium 18 (1989), pp. 185–203. The best collection of Rousseau’s writings on international relations together with a coauthored revision of Stanley Hoffmann’s interpretation can now be found in Stanley Hoffmann and David Fidler, eds., Rousseau on International Relations (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991). I have also benefited from conversation with Richard Matthew and from reading his fine dissertation on the evolution of world order principles, from Augustinian Christianity to Rousseauian nationalism.

④Rousseau is not completely consistent on this point. He describes the relation of master and slave as a “state of war” when he discusses Spartan oppression of the helots; in most contexts, however, he distinguishes and narrows “war” to policed (see below).
complex analysis, he takes us back to the range of insight embodied in the historical work of Thucydides. But he differs from Thucydides too in the systematic quality of the political philosophy with which he explains the origin and nature of the state—and the resultant state of war—and in his explicit moral critique of the various forms of oppression.

Descriptively he offers a truly systematic sociological account of the stability of the balance of power as well as an insightful political economy of interdependence and dependence. Normatively, keeping fully within Realism, he gives us the first meaningful analysis of the national interest and makes valuable contributions to how we can think about mitigating, at least for a while, the constant risk of war that is the state of war. He portrays a modern morality that does not shrink from nationalism. He tells what happens when the fully national state takes over. He confronts the moral dilemma of establishing a livable, albeit fragile and temporary, order in the face of international anarchy and thus as a fellow Realist seeks to promote international peace while acknowledging the force of the Realist challenge, later articulated so well by E. H. Carr: "Any so-called international order built on contingent obligation assumed by national governments is an affair of lath and plaster."5

Correcting Stereotypes
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who lived from 1712 to 1778, is in many respects an unlikely candidate for Realist social philosopher. Although many today identify Realism with conservatism, Rousseau reverses the association. He was the preeminent theorist of popular sovereignty and revolution, the theorist who inspired but is not responsible for much of the handiwork of Robespierre during the French Revolution. His revolutionary views made him obnoxious to the established monarchies of eighteenth-century Europe and earned him an early place in the revolution's pantheon. Alternately charmed by his genius and outraged by his views, the monarchs no sooner tried to give him pensions than they expelled him from their kingdoms.

Rousseau's personal characteristics hardly square with the tough-minded image cultivated by some contemporary proponents of Realist doctrine. After a peripatetic and unstable childhood, he developed an extremely high-strung personality, one given to great psychological dependence on friends and his many mistresses. He wandered across Europe, living off these friends and mistresses, leaving at least five children at foundling homes and failing to support their long-suffering mother, his former housekeeper Thérèse Levasseur. He revealed late in life the deep psychological and sexual frustrations from which he had long suffered in his extraordinarily frank psychological memoir, Confessions. Can you imagine Henry Kissinger or Alexander Haig or some other con-

temporary proponent of Realism confessing in public that he went through life craving to be spanked?

A bit of a con artist, he proceeded to set himself up as a teacher of music to young girls in Geneva before he could read a note. But above all, he was a genius; he quickly taught himself music, created a new system of musical notation, and proceeded to compose original operas.

THE STATE OF WAR

The international condition among states is a state of war characterized by "social misery." In the natural condition of mankind before the institution of states, there are many quarrels and fights, but war is a social creation of states, an act expressing an intention to destroy or weaken an enemy state. The "state of war" is characterized by a "mutual, constant, and manifest intention to destroy the enemy state, or at least to weaken it by all possible means" — that is, the continuing intention of policide, temporarily lacking the act. "War then is a relation not between man and man, but between State and State, and individuals are enemies only accidentally, not as men, nor as citizens, but as soldiers; not as members of their country, but as its defenders."  

The state of war, moreover, is inherently unjust. Justice calls for a union of force and law, with force controlled by law. In most (corrupt) states we suffer the worst of both worlds because we suffer the evils of two conditions: domestic tyranny and international insecurity (see the quotation with which this chapter begins). But even if we had a just state internally, international politics would remain the mere exercise of force without the control of law, for international law is a mere "illusion" — for want of any global sanction to make it an effective replacement for the exercise of force.

Describing the condition of all states in an anarchic international system, Rousseau thus appears to some to be a strikingly Structural interpreter of world politics. But he differs from Hobbes's route to these conclusions, and in the end he leaves a more varied set of possibilities open to the political struggle of rulers and citizens within and among political societies. The choices between a corrupt Europe and an ideal Social Contract are complemented by two case studies of partly imagined, partly real partial escapes: an isolated "Corsica" and a defensively constituted "Poland."

7 Ibid., p. 1.
9 See, for example, F. H. Hinsley (1967), chap. 3.
STATES OF NATURE

Where Hobbes portrays the Leviathan both as a natural man and his domestic tamer, Rousseau portrays the typical state as natural man’s ultimate oppressor. In the original state of nature (SoN1), stripped of all the attributes of civilization, man is a gentle animal, according to Rousseau.

Rousseau’s Constitutional Sociology of World Politics

Corrupt Social Contract 1 → Balance of Power

Collective Security

State of Nature 1 → State of Nature 2

Poland → Nonprovocative Defense

Just Social Contract 2

Corsica → Isolated Peace

Ideal Social Contract

Man is naturally equal, and his social relations are completely casual and neither cooperative nor warlike. “I see him satisfying his hunger at the first oak, and slaking his thirst at the first brook; finding his bed at the foot of the tree which afforded him a repast; and with that all his wants supplied.”¹⁰ Lacking in language, he has few thoughts. Reason guides his pursuit of simple wants. He experiences few fears, which include fear of pain and cold but not of death. He experiences natural compassion for the sufferings of others.¹¹

Soon scarcity arises as the numbers of men increase. This leads to a second state of nature (SoN2), which is both progressive and regressive. It is progressive because increased interdependence leads to stable relationships, the first “expansion of the human heart.” Families are organized, and love comes to characterize human relations within them. Language evolves and reason develops as careful calculation rewards its practitioners with increased material benefits. Here we develop what we think of as specifically human consciousness beyond that which we share with the animals.

At the same time, scarcity is the origin of property, possession, rivalry, pride, hatred, and jealousies. Individualism and familism now replace natural happiness. Identities come to be dominated by amour propre (jealous status) rather

¹¹Ibid., pp. 231–32.
than *amour de soi* (respect for oneself). Cooperation becomes inherently problematic. We become actors in Rousseau's fable of the stag hunt, caught in a problem of uncertain cooperation. It takes five hunters to catch a stag. Rousseau explains, and one to catch a rabbit, but one-fifth of a stag is more greatly valued than a whole rabbit. Rational hunters form groups of five and cooperate, but what happens when a rabbit appears? Do the groups stick together or do they break up, as each hunter runs after the rabbit—before his fellow hunters do—and seizes the less attractive but more certain game? Motivated by rational self-interest, but lacking trust and pulled by pride, the hunters abandon the common prey for the individual target of the hare.¹²

The spread of metallurgy and agriculture thus create extensive mastery of nature, more intensive social dependence, and fiercer competition. The more skillful at these more productive technologies became the rich; the less skillful became the poor. Inequality breeds more inequality. Deceit and pretension come to characterize human relationships. The poor then react and try to *steal* from the rich; the rich oppress in order to protect themselves from the poor.¹³

**CORRUPT STATES**

Then the rich decide to form a Social Contract (SCI). In order to protect their property, they trick the poor into accepting a legal equality of rights in property that in effect secures the rich's unequal superiority in possessions and influence. Armed with the power of the state, the rich and the domestically powerful pursue their particular interests at home and abroad.¹⁴ Wars are then waged for the classic trinity of "land, money, and men"—that is, for territory, booty, commerce, slaves, power, religion, and glory.¹⁵ The rich and powerful create more violence and mayhem among states in pursuit of their wealth and prestige than had ever characterized the original state of nature. Conflict now occurs between organized armies and not between individual quarreling.

**MITIGATING THE STATE OF WAR**

Balancing the Power of Corrupt States

Like Hobbesian Leviathans, most of Rousseau's states owed their survival to their balancing of power. Unlike Hobbesian sovereigns, however, the sovereigns

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¹² Ibid., p. 238.
¹³ Ibid., p. 249.
¹⁴ Ibid., p. 252.
¹⁵ See Grace Roosevelt's valuable retranslation of *State of War*, in *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), pp. 193–94. For ideology as a source of war, Rousseau cites the Greek republics that attacked one another to change their enemies' "forms of governments."
described by the Abbé St.-Pierre (whose Project for Perpetual Peace Rousseau summarizes and then criticizes) share a common civilization and the widespread interdependence of commerce and other transnational ties. They are not homogeneous units, like any other state in any other international system: "The Powers of Europe constitute a kind of whole, united by identity of religion, of moral standard, of international law; by letters, by commerce, and finally by a species of balance, which is the inevitable result of all those ties and, however little any may strive consciously to maintain it, is not to be destroyed so easily as many men imagine."\(^{16}\)

Their social interdependence and cultural homogeneity (not simply considerations of their own security) make the balance sufficiently important that states naturally want to reproduce it. Lacking these, Rousseau seems to be implying, states might not pay enough attention to balancing or might not perceive a need for competition. They succeeded in doing so because defenses (fortresses etc.) have the advantage over the offense and because national, particularistic preferences disrupt and stir up opposition to hegemony.\(^{17}\) Lacking these characteristics, a single hegemon might come to rule the whole in an escalating, unstoppable aggregation of power, prestige, and perhaps imperial legitimacy. Emperors, such as Constantine, restored Roman imperial unity in just that way, relying in part on economies of military scale and a sentiment of imperial unity. Economic interdependence complements cultural ties in supporting the political independence of Europe's states by spreading the equalizing force of economic development. If, on the other hand, interdependence were continuously to concentrate economic capacity, the independence of states might soon fall victim to coercion or the economic incentives of joining the dominant market.

All these foundations of the European balance of power rely as well on a very special, contingent European circumstance: on a geography (the Pyrennees, the Alps) favoring division and on the existence of the Germanic confederation, whose size and central location present a formidable obstacle to continental conquest yet whose internal balance makes it incapable of itself conquering the continent.

Transnational ties establish interdependence and promote the political, social and economic foundations of the balance of power, which serves to pro-


tect the independence of states. But they do not produce peace. They merely exacerbate conflict, giving more occasions—points of contact—for strife. Other social factors also influence the propensity toward war. Large undeveloped territories (low-population-to-area ratios) become vulnerable to predatory attack. Christian soldiers seem to be less effective than pagan ones. States weak in material resources need to compensate with national morale. Unscrupulous leaders will therefore exploit sentiments of amour propre (jealous nationalism akin to jealous personal egoism). They will promote diversionary wars as a means of fostering popular support for unpopular regimes.  

Peace through Collective Security—the International Organization of Corrupt States
These are the corrupt states for which the good Abbé de St.-Pierre is attempting to construct a league of peace, which will protect its sovereigns from both international conquest and domestic revolution. The balance of power can mitigate international tyranny, but it does so only through the threat of war. Therefore, says St.-Pierre, sovereigns need to combine their separate and fundamental interests in security and subordinate their private interests to an organized league of peace. St.-Pierre’s plan was just one of a series of early-eighteenth-century attempts to perfect the balance of power that were written by both scholars and politicians. In 1735, for example, Giulio Cardinal Alberoni (prime minister of Spain) had proposed a not-too-dissimilar unified diet of European princes (both Catholic and Protestant) joined in a project to dismember the Ottoman Empire.

In his critique of St.-Pierre’s peace project, Rousseau shows how peace is impossible for the protagonists. This is because (Image I) monarchs prefer their apparent interests (military prestige and relative superiority) to their real interests in security. And even if the monarchs were sensible (Image II), their ministers of state are the very individuals who gain from the existence of wars. These ministers are hardly likely to abolish the wars that are their greatest source of profit and influence. And (Image III) even if both monarchs and ministers became committed to cooperation and all concerned adopted the good of all as the highest good of each, how would one ensure that all states came to the same realization at once, except through force? If force was required, should peace then be more desired or feared? As a sign of the significance of these

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19 Rousseau, State of War.
22 Ibid., pp. 100-02.
systemic forces, peace plans tend to be more a product of aggressive coalitions directed, as was the French king Henry IV's, against convenient enemies (e.g., the Turks) than the result of peaceable attempts to achieve mutual security.

**REFORMED STATES**

Having dismissed international organization as a system-wide route to peace, Rousseau considers the route to peace through domestic political revolution. Adding to the above, he considers three revolutionary routes to peace: democratic revolution and the just Social Contract; isolationism and autarky; and nationalism and nonprovocative defense.

**The Social Contract—Democratic Revolution as a Route to Peace**

Rousseau imagines the hypothetical creation of a just Social Contract (SC2) that would liberate citizens from their subjection and inequality. Sometime early in the history of a people, before corruption has become deeply ingrained in its character and institutions, a great moral legislator might be inspired to break the chains that bind a people and set them on the path to self-government.

Each citizen would be asked to pledge all not to a corrupt monarch, his ministers, or a Hobbesian Leviathan but to each other. Sovereignty would be made secure at home since no one could justly challenge the authority of the laws. The citizens, moreover, then would escape from the strife of the state of nature. Each citizen would also become both equal to all others and free. Inalienable, indivisible, infallible as an expression of the true interests of the people as a whole, and therefore all-encompassing, the people assembled would decide laws applying to all on an equal basis, absolutely, and thus constitute the General Will. The aim of the General Will is justice. It secures justice, autonomy, and fair play. Each citizen receives his just due—the protection of life, liberty, and property—when each and all together, autonomously, make laws for themselves that apply fairly to all as equal citizens. Justice, Rousseau adds, is the right way to constrain the natural propensity of individuals or groups to act in their own selfish particular interests. The General Will constrains particular wills by taking away (in Rousseau’s famous and not altogether clear phrase) the “pluses and minuses that cancel one another, and the general will remains as the sum of the differences.”

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23This is the central idea of George Kateb’s illuminating essay, “Rousseau’s Political Thought,” pp. 519-43.
25Ibid., bk. 2, chap. 3.
common by means of a twofold process: by equal, autonomous participation in the democratic decision and by a preference for public justice that guides the general choice, a preference that is inculcated through civic education. Democratic institutions—the legislature and democratic education in schools and the arts—make all the difference. Rousseau thus gives us a powerful, moral, and democratic conception of the nation, the General Will. This General Will, or national interest, would thus be inherently general (meaning national, or coextensive with the polity) and rational; it is the people rightly understanding their long-term general interests.  

Discovering in practice what was in the national interest would nonetheless be a daunting task. A perfectly operating, directly democratic decision would, Rousseau suggests, ipso facto produce the national interest; the pluses and minuses of individual interests would cancel in the voting process, leaving what was truly general. In a less than perfect democracy, however, the concept still has moral and political force. What would be the sort of interest for which the public resources and citizen lives should be risked; what meets the “blood and treasure” test? A private or group interest—a foreign commercial contract or financial investment or a personal quarrel—foisted on to the public agenda clearly would not qualify. Even if it had some fraction of public benefit, the private or group benefit would be unlikely to justify the direct expenditure of public resources, not to speak of lives. Nor can we assume that a pattern of foreign policy, however long and consistently pursued, necessarily reflects the national interest—again, in anything less than a just democracy.

“Territorial integrity and political independence” are two conventional guideposts because they are prerequisites to any political authority. They make the exercise of just authority possible. Interests that affect all might be another indicator. But neither of those two indicators is free from problems. Citizens subject to an oppressive state might find a violation of “their” territorial integrity a precondition of their liberation. And general public policies, such as tariffs or industrial development policies, often have distributional implications that are not usually (if ever) balanced by systematic efforts to ensure that the losers are not made worse off. (For example, even if workers displaced by imports receive job retraining assistance, the psychic and social costs of dislocation can be

26Ibid., pp. 28–29.
27“...general will is always right and tends to the public advantage.” Ibid., bk. 2, chap. 3. But the General Will can be “deceived”—when citizens mistakenly pursue their private rather than the public interest.
28It could better be said to reflect state interests than national interests. State interests could be identified by their length and consistency and their having a public standing more significant than transitory interests. For a discussion of interests, see Stephen Krasner, Defending the National Interest: Raw Material Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).
severe.) Nonetheless, political prerequisites and all-around benefit (Pareto optimality or compensation) are valuable starting criteria.

Together these considerations serve to emphasize Rousseau’s revolutionary thesis. Although we can and must try to conceptualize a national interest, the very idea is murky, short of the direct democracy and simple similarity of egalitarian circumstance that Rousseau found essential to free democracy. Diverse interests are hard to weigh, and bureaucratic or elite rule weighs interests at best hypothetically.

In foreign policy the democratic Social Contract, unlike Hobbes’s Leviathan or the monarchs St.-Pierre tried to save, would pursue no whims or private interests that would lead the state into possibly frequent battles. Wars would be fought only for national purposes that expressed the long-term rational interests of the people. But soldiers would volunteer for any war the Social Contract required and fight until the death. Wars would be fought only if necessary, but if fought, they would be unrestrained in their degree of violence except by the natural sympathies for fellow human beings that were part of the natural human condition. Wars would be fought only among states—among the soldiers who fight for states, not against noncombatants—and soldiers would become noncombatants as soon as they surrendered.29

But would wars be necessary in a state of war inhabited by just Social Contracts? Clearly, in a world in which Social Contracts were but one of many forms of regime, Social Contracts would find themselves fighting at least defensive wars against aggressive monarchies and other corrupt states. But in a world homogeneously composed of Social Contracts would war disappear? Would the compassion of the original state of nature translate into a sympathetic General Will? Or would the spirit of jealousies (the family rivalries) of the late state of nature translate into a jealous General Will? Would the true general interests of one nation be compatible with the true general interests of their neighboring nations?

Probably, unfortunately, the state of war would continue. Sympathy would lead to the protection of noncombatant (for wars are fought only against states) and to the avoidance of unnecessary cruelty (for General Wills are rational). But even if jealousy did not rule, a state of war would be difficult to avoid, for Rousseau notes that even if the ministers St.-Pierre describes were not privately interested in war, the very independence of states precludes a stable solution to international cooperation. Even just General Wills, each reflecting true long-term national interests, can have competitive interests over, for example, who has the right to exploit a particular fishery or has unimpeded access to a waterway. There is no global institution to define and shape a global General Will. Disappointment breeds rivalry, and furthermore, the very artificiality of

the state (which, unlike natural individuals, has no fixed limits) together with the anarchy of the international system results in a ceaseless struggle for relative power: “Its security, its defense, demand that it try to appear more powerful than its neighbors; and it can only grow, feed itself, and test its strength at their expense.”

For a state to have a “safe foundation,” it must thus be small, so that the laws can be efficiently enacted and applied. It must have neither too much land, which makes it vulnerable to attack, nor too little, which requires it to depend on “commerce” or “war,” a dependence that makes its existence “short and uncertain.” Rousseau concludes that “all peoples have a kind of centrifugal force that makes them continually act one against another, and tend to aggrandize themselves at their neighbors’ expense.... thus the weak run the risk of being soon swallowed up; and it is almost impossible for any one to preserve itself except by putting itself in a state of equilibrium with all, so that the pressure is on all sides practically equal.”

Here, tragically, in order to account for horrible dangers of the state of war, Rousseau invokes not extreme or chauvinistic nationalism but a purely rational democratic nationalism. Although more stable states would be less dependent on commerce and war, these states would play the desperate game of nations more efficiently. Historically, moreover, quasi-democratic republics have sometimes found that it is war that defines and develops a national interest, rather than the national interest’s restricting the occasion of war. Thus Albert Gallatin, President James Madison’s secretary of the treasury, remarked on the War of 1812, “The war has renewed and reinstated the national feelings and character which the Revolution had given, and which daily lessened. The people have now more general objects of attachment with which their pride and political opinions are connected. They are more Americans; they feel and act more as a nation; and I hope the permanency of the Union is thereby better secured.”

Although we cannot imagine national reform achieving global peace, Rousseau suggests it might allow particular states to mitigate or even to escape, at least for a while, the general state of war. The Social Contract is an ideal. What possibilities exist for real states? Rousseau explored two democratic-leaning reforms—those of Corsica and Poland—and considered other conditions favorable toward peace.

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30 Rousseau, State of War, p. 191 in the Roosevelt translation.
31 Rousseau, Social Contract, bk. 2, chaps. 9 and 10.
32 Ibid., bk. 2, chap. 9, p. 46.
33 Rousseau, State of War.
Peace through Isolationism and Autarky
Under anarchy, contact—even among just states—is the problem, so Rousseau explored a model for an isolationist peace. Corsica is his model of the small, undeveloped society capable of sufficient democratic virtue to escape the international system through autarky. (An eighteenth-century version of the antidependency role claimed by Tanzania, Albania, Eritrea, or Myanmar (Burma) in our times?) The Genoese had blockaded the island, devastated the coasts, and slaughtered the native nobility. This tragedy offered a fortunate opportunity for authentic reform. From devastation, a wise Corsican leadership, Rousseau argued, could establish a society and republic of free farmers and small manufacturers, restricting trade with the outside world to the barest essentials. As a new "Sparta," it could cultivate its virtue with its small farms tilled by robust soldiers. Here, while rural simplicity persists, "Everyone will make a living, and no one will grow rich." Enjoying isolation and guaranteed by the unity a similarity of social circumstances brings, Corsica would present little temptation to and great resistance against any great power seeking a colonial conquest. The Corsicans gain security in their time. National security then lasts until the increase in population creates a need for extensive manufactures and foreign commerce, and with them an end to virtue, simplicity, and the international self-reliance that might have made Corsica strong and safe in the surrounding state of war.

Peace through Nonprovocative Defense
Rousseau also considered the establishment of what we now call nonprovocative defense. Not all eighteenth-century states were of Corsican dimensions or potential democratic virtue. For the larger, more developed (more complex) states, Rousseau offered the example of Poland (an eighteenth-century Egypt, Brazil, or India perhaps). Introducing rustic equality and democratic virtue (not to speak of island isolation) was out of the question in a traditional society dominated by aristocratic landowners, afflicted with the odd domestic disability of the anarchic Polish Diet and its liberum veto, and surrounded by imperialistic great powers.

Instead Rousseau recommended a step-by-step progressive reform, creating as a surrogate for Corsica's island isolation a nonprovocative defense of Polish

35 None of these states, however, was a democracy.
39 Ibid., p. 328.
40 A very good introduction to these arguments can be found in Dietrich Fischer's Preventing War in the Nuclear Age (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Allanheld, 1984).
independence. By cultivating education, cultural festivals, and a political system rewarding patriotic participation in public life, the Polish nationalists, Rousseau argues, could make Poland indigestible for any foreign conqueror. Since the strength of states was a function of both their capacities and their will, Rousseau hoped to supplement Poland's undeveloped resources with a vibrant national will. Eschewing the chauvinistic amour propre of the corrupt, with their diversionary wars, the Poles should develop an amour de soi, a self-respect, cultivated through a pervasive, universal, free, and public education. Elementary schools for the young and civic festivals for the adults would teach the nation's life, its heroes, achievements, almost to the exclusion of all else. Patriotic Americans soon after the separation from Britain expressed similar concerns and offered similar nationalistic recipes. In a letter of 1794 from a Virginia friend James Madison was urged: "No nation is really an independant one, unless their country, their Laws, Government, & Manners are, taken collectively, far preferable in the View of the people to those of any other nation whatsoever. . . . [T]he moment hostilities ceased, we relapsed into our old opinions & Habits, concerning Britain and her productions. It is this charm of inveterate Habits founded in former Subjection & political Nothings, that every American would wish to break & dissipate."

Rousseau hoped to avert political dependence in even more vulnerable Poland. Combining patriotism, confederalism, central sovereignty, and a militia army, he hoped that Poland's enemies would find it neither an offensive threat (because its militia army could not engage in long-range conquests) nor an easy prey to invasion (because the army would be a formidable guerrilla force on the home territory). Beyond that, especially during the vulnerable period when it began to undertake the reforms it needed, Poland could rely on the natural checkerboard of the balance of power (see next chapter), the natural support of Turkey, which was Russia's and Austria's rival to the south.

CONTEMPORARY REALIST CONSTITUTIONALISM

Testing the basic tenets of Realist Constitutionalism (as of Complex Realism) means confirming the continuing existence of a state of war. The significance of this form of Realism would be confirmed by the weaknesses of international law and order and the continuing insecurity of the international system considered as a whole. If all order is transient, all states in all their relations are subject

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42 I have found Roosevelt's discussion of these points in chapter 5 of her book to be persuasive.
44 Ibid., p. 236, pp. 244–54, 268–70.
to the state of war, yet the state of war systematically varies with changes in the domestic structure of states; this type of Realism is confirmed.\textsuperscript{45}

Tests are complicated, however, because specific propositions of Constitutionalist theorists themselves suggest ways in which the state of war can be mitigated and controlled for some states and for some period of time. Some of these theorists portray international hegemony as a source of imposed order. Studies of stability in balance of power systems stressing its necessary social and cultural foundations tend to confirm Rousseau’s arguments, as we shall see in the next chapter.\textsuperscript{46}

Rousseau’s own specific propositions also call for examination. Do small democracies resembling his Social Contract actually behave more rationally but fight, when they fight, more fiercely? Do small islands of isolationism temper avoid foreign entanglements? Do nonprovocative force postures founded on balanced confederal constitutions deter attacks and restrain aggression?

Modern Constitutionalists, such as Raymond Aron, Henry Kissinger, Stanley Hoffmann, Robert Gilpin, Stephen Krasner, and Peter Katzenstein and other “statists,” develop sociological models of the international system that build indirectly on Rousseau.\textsuperscript{47} They assume the Realist state of war and thus consider whether the distribution of power is unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar, highly concentrated or loosely dispersed. But, as does Rousseau, they also give important explanatory weight to whether the system’s domestic societies and cultures are heterogeneous or homogeneous, whether state and societal capacities are strong or weak and whether the international system accepts regimes as rules of order and tolerates nongovernmental actors as alternative sources of cooperation, conflict, and influence.\textsuperscript{48} Together, not separately, this wider range of factors determines the stability or instability of international politics.

International systems thus vary not only according to the number and power

\textsuperscript{46}See, for example, Gulick (1967) and Jervis (1988), p. 345.
\textsuperscript{47}They also thus build on Montesquieu, who influenced Rousseau’s approach to political sociology, and their more direct source of insight is Weber’s sociology, which operates in the field Rousseau’s politics opens. See, for example, Wight (1977), Aron (1966), Hoffmann, “The Limits of Realism,” Social Research (1981). For valuable surveys of recent contributions to this literature, sometimes called Soft Realism, see Zakaria (1992) and Rose (1996).
\textsuperscript{48}Thus power becomes not merely “relational power” (whether state A can get state B to do something it otherwise would not) but also “meta-power,” whether actor A can influence the rules of the system, the regime, so that other actors are required to respond to the agenda and rules the regime specifies. See Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, Power and Interdependence (Boston: Little, Brown 1977), Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), and Stephen D. Krasner, Structural Conflict (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), chap. 1. Much of this literature contrasts Realist interpretations with neoclassical economistic interpretations, arguing that political, power-oriented considerations influence policy and not merely profit-oriented considerations stressed by neoclassical economics. Contemporary international political economics does not yet seem to have Liberal models of international political economy that reflect Liberal political theory.
of the actors (the Structural view) but also according to the domestic constitutional characteristics of the states that compose the system and the social density of the “regimes”—the rules and international organizations—that constitute international society. Homogeneous systems, Raymond Aron and Stanley Hoffmann explain, sharing similar domestic state and societal structures (e.g., all monarchies or all aristocracies) should have less to quarrel over and fewer misperceptions. They are precluded from ideological wars over the best regime. They share a culture and set of assumptions that should reduce mistakes. Whether the society and its leadership are revolutionary, charismatic, or bureaucratic, Henry Kissinger argues, also influences the construction of foreign policy and the capacity for cooperation among states. Revolutionaries seek purity; charismatics, glory; and bureaucrats, order. The first mixes well only with its own kind (even then there will be occasions for doctrinal strife), and both of the first two mix poorly with bureaucrats. Rousseau thus credited to Europe’s common Christian culture and monarchical structure the efficacy of the balance of power, even if they did not, as St.-Pierre hoped, establish a sufficient basis for collective security and effective international organization.

(I return to these arguments in the next chapter.)

Contemporary state Constitutionalists narrow our focus to the institutional structure of the state. Is it “weak” or “strong,” meaning centralized or decentralized, capable of changing its society or subject to the interests of societal interest groups, a sculptor or a cash register? Rousseau offered us paradoxical advice on the role of state strength in international stability. On the one hand, weak states are vulnerable to easy invasion (as was Poland), to factionalized foreign policy (ministers start wars in order to promote their private interests), and to diversionary nationalistic wars (when desperate state leaders provoke war in order to build nationalistic support). On the other hand, it was the very weakness of the Holy Roman Empire at the center of Europe that permitted the European balance of power to be so stable, since its defensive mass deterred any attack on it and its internal weakness inhibited any aggressive capacity of its own.

Contemporary Constitutionalists, variously self-described as statists or institutionalists, agree on the importance of political structures. The first focuses on domestic state institutions, and the latter on international institutions. State elites seek to enhance their own power (sometimes simply measured by the

50 Raymond Aron, Peace and War and Stanley Hoffmann, The State of War (New York: Praeger, 1965). Hoffmann (p. 10) attributes the earliest contemporary formulation of this issue to Panaytsis Papaligouras, Théorie de la société internationale (Geneva: Kundig, 1941).
budget), and existing state structures determine the capacities of government. But few scholars think that state structure is the sole cause or even the primary explanation of policy outcomes. Graham Allison examined U.S. state structure during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 in order to show that even in a national emergency, when we would expect internal organizational and bureaucratic factors to be subordinated to unitary rational action, organizational routines and bureaucratic rivalries did shape policy, limiting some options that should (rationally) have been available (such as the surgical strike on Soviet missiles installed in Cuba).52 In foreign economic policy Peter Katzenstein and Stephen Krasner have shown how the weakness of the U.S. state (its federalism and division of powers) has resulted in less than optimal outcomes, compared with the results achieved by stronger state structures, such as those of Japan and France. The necessity of compromise with entrenched societal interests, bureaucratic stalemate, delay, inappropriate but entrenched institutions and routines all come into play. But increasingly, scholarship in this subfield has come to emphasize contingency. State strength seems to vary according to the issue and to international pressure and to societal strength or weakness.53

Institutionalists have recently revived a debate on the effectiveness of collective security, asking how much difference do explicit commitments, established legal provisions, and international organizations make. Responding to the Realist skeptics, they show how more modest definitions of collective security do moderate strategic competition and enhance national security.54

53 For the foundational contributions, see Peter Katzenstein, ed., Between Power and Plenty (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) and Small States in World Markets (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), Evangelista (1989), and Stephen Krasner, Defending the National Interest (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). Krasner distinguishes the raw material policy issue, where the United States is strong, from commercial policy, where it is weak. A recent volume of International Organization displays a range of contingencies: Some issues are more “public” as is monetary policy in which all firms and consumers suffer the same foreign exchange rate; others are subject to being captured by special interests, as is commercial policy with its many private special exceptions, Joanne Gowa has argued. Distinctions between the executive and legislative branches of the state are also significant (with the executive more national and strength-oriented). David Lake and Stephan Haggard have recently demonstrated. Michael Mastanduno adds that even the executive, if internally divided, will hamper state strength. Judith Goldstein indicates how entrenched institutions have ongoing effects, weakening or strengthening the state, despite the fact that the original circumstances that gave rise to the institutions have changed. And John Ikenberry shows how the executive when pressured by the international shock of the oil crisis can employ the market (usually a societal force) to change society through price-borne reallocations, when bureaucratic and regulatory means fail. See John Ikenberry, David Lake, and Michael Mastanduno, eds., The State and American Foreign Economic Policy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).
54 See the volume edited by George Downs, Collective Security beyond the Cold War (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) and International Security (Summer 1995), which contains a valuable exchange between “institutionalists” and their critics.
Contemporary theorists of societal structure draw our attention to the impact of culture and the corporate structure of society. Which modes of legitimacy characterize society? Is civil society pluralistic or monistic, consensual or dissensual, organized or amorphous, stratified by class, industry, ethnic, religious, or regional identity? For rational, prudent security, Rousseau stressed the importance of democratic unity (the General Will) achieved through participatory legislating and civic education. Contemporary Realist scholars also decry societal factionalism. Jack Snyder blames overexpansionism on logrolling among diverse factions in a weak state. Each has some interest in expansion, but when society as a whole bears the expense, the factions resolve their differences over particular interests in expansion by implementing them all. A stalemate of factions can also prevent state leadership, as seems to have occurred during the Great Depression, when, despite U.S. economic power, conflicts between nationalist and internationalist economic interest groups precluded coherent state policy. And contemporary proponents of nonprovocative defense consider both military organization and defensive technologies. This search has led some to explore inherently nonprovocative defense structures, such as defensive militias. Others explore the once-intriguing suggestion that a kilometer-wide belt of trees planted on the inter-German border would have denied (thus deterred) NATO’s greatest strategic concern, a Warsaw Pact tank invasion, without posing any direct offensive threat in the other direction.

The Political Economy of Hegemony
One of Realism’s most important contributions is to have outlined a perspective on the governance of the world economy. The Structuralists make an argument for hegemonic stability based on the existence of a dominant power that enforces openness to trade on weaker powers. The Constitutionalists develop that view based upon a more complicated sociology of national political economy.

“The governance of international systems,” Robert Gilpin notes, “has been provided by empires, hegemonies, and great powers that have arisen and fallen over the millennia.” Rather than be anarchic orders, shaped by a competitive balance of power, international systems are hierarchically governed, Gilpin argues, by empires, hegemonies, or great powers that enforce order on the

57An idea I once heard expounded separately by Lutz Unterscher and James Kurth.
other, the weaker, states. Rules and regimes are created by underlying hierarchy. Free trade in the nineteenth century reflects the interests and power of Great Britain. The Bretton Woods agreements of the post-World War Two period—establishing fixed exchange rates, multilateral free trade, and convertibility of currencies—similarly reflected the interests and power of the dominant economy of the time, the United States. The international system remains Realist, “a state of war,” but it is tamed, as it was for Rousseau, not by isolation or common civilization or particular structures of the balance of power but by dominance, by international governance.

Governance, however, raises a fundamental problem. Its underlying material foundations change, eroding the capabilities of the empires and hegemons that established and maintained the existing order. States establish empires or hegemons over the international system in order to profit through imperial plunder and taxation or hegemonic trade and seigniorage (the value of being able to print international reserve currency). They expand their rule until the costs of exercising control equal the revenues derived from control. But an equilibrium does not last. Soon the difference between the benefits and costs of rule tend to become increasingly negative, producing a fiscal crisis for the dominant power.

Benefits fall and costs rise for both internal and external reasons. Internally, economies experience slowing growth as technologies age and supplies of inputs become more costly to acquire. Over time expenditure on consumption crowds out investment, the costs of military technologies tend to increase, and affluence decreases the martial spirit of the dominant people. Externally the costs of political dominance increase as subordinate states increase in power. Subordinate states borrow the technology of the dominant power and, enjoying the “advantages of backwardness,” incorporate those techniques quickly and efficiently into their growing economies. Under these circumstances the international system enters “disequilibrium,” a “disjuncture between the existing governance of the system and the redistribution of power in the system.” Such disequilibria tend to be resolved by hegemonic war, as hegemons refuse to yield and challengers refuse to defer.

Historically, empires, like that of Athens described by Thucydides, and great powers, like France, Austria, and Britain, do appear to rise and fall. Some great powers do appear to have exercised hegemon-like influence, as the United...

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59 Gilpin, p. 186.
60 Robert Gilpin notes: “... there do not appear to be any examples of a dominant power willingly conceding dominance over an international system to a rising power in order to avoid war. Nor are there examples of rising powers that have failed to press their advantage and have refrained from attempts to restructure the system to accommodate their security and economic interests,” p. 209.
States did following World War Two over the Western bloc. The USSR exercised empire-like influence over the internal and external affairs of its bloc, while neither the United States nor the Soviet Union controlled the international system as a whole. Thus, while empires do establish governance over their colonies, it is much less clear that ordinary great powers, such as France and Britain in the nineteenth century, actually "govern" their international systems. Each great power enjoyed prestige and influence, but it is unclear how we would decide whether or not it governed. Did they control foreign policies—hegemonically, as did Sparta? Were the rules of the system imposed by the great power, or were they negotiated among the powers? The evidence is not clear. But it seems that France's and Britain's rivals—Austria and Spain in the seventeenth century and France and Germany in the nineteenth—would have denied that the two preeminent powers governed. Instead, during both centuries, the powers saw themselves in a multipolar balance of power in which no one power governed. Diplomatic historians suggest that they appeared to balance against each other, rather than being governed by a hegemon or even balancing against a single pole that threatened hegemonic control. (We shall examine these propositions in the next chapter.) International systems often do end violently, as did the nineteenth century in the cataclysm of World War One. Did war break out because Britain refused to cede preeminence to Germany? If so, why did Britain find itself at war with Germany and not with the other two rising powers, Russia and the United States? Would Britain have had to fight the United States (and vice versa) in 1914, if Germany and Russia had been growing less quickly?

The Constitutional Realists thus offer us numerous pictures of international order, ranging from isolation to hegemony. But the modal picture, as it was for the Structuralists, is the balance of power in which states are strategically interdependent because they are capable neither of isolation nor of domination.

Strategy: Socially Constituting a Balance of Power

For most states, most of the time, the best a strategy premised on Realism can achieve is a stable balance of power. The Constitutionalists have developed a second version of the balance of power, a "sociological" model. It incorporates a set of special conditions in addition to those of the Structural model, in order

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62 But the United States did have to accommodate the interests of many of its allies, such as Britain, and offer considerable incentives to persuade them to adopt the rules the United States most preferred. Indeed the Europeans and the Japanese were exempted from the convertibility and free trade rules until well after they had recovered from the war.

63 Robert Gilpin distinguishes the United States from Germany as being (following E. H. Carr) "tolerant and unoppressive" and draws our attention to the importance of "shared values and interests" in successful peaceful change, Gilpin's preferred form of international adjustment; see p. 209, War and Change.
to control aberrant behavior. They include such characteristics as a cultural
commitment to European constitutionalism or social interdependence, techno-
logical stability and a sense of shared legitimacy, a sense of common interest in
the continuation of the state system, or a recognition of a special position held
by a “balancer” (e.g., Britain) or a “keystone” (Germany). Since states seek
more than just security or power, this “semiautomatic” model identifies the
preferences and social conditions conducive to balancing behavior while
excluding those that undermine it. It introduces three additional assumptions
that together significantly redefine the preferences and behavior of the balance
of power system. They create a sociology of the balance of power to match its
Hobbesian political mechanics.

To the four requirements raised by the Structuralists—anarchy, coherent
state units, a focus on relative power, and a rational system of estimating
power—the Constitutionalists add three more:

First, in addition to a measurable scheme of power, the Constitutionalist
model assumes that the measure of power remains technologically stable. That
is, it should not be subject to large and radical shifts in military capacity, a
stability that is closely related to the following.

Second, the Constitutionalists highlight the importance of a relative homo-
geney of domestic structures among the leading members of the system, so
that all, for example, are monarchies or aristocratic landlord societies. One
need not assume identical domestic structures (this being remarkably unlikely).
For example, in the eighteenth century structures ranged from parliamentary
monarchies resting on aristocratic, landlord-dominated societies, such as Brit-
ain, to absolute monarchies, such as Prussia, resting on a similar base.

Third, this model rests on a shared transnational culture—in Europe, the
common heritage of Christianity and Greco-Roman civilization—that provides
a shared set of assumptions about values, norms, standards of taste, and even
the very vocabulary of politics.

Together, by controlling for diverse goals and radical misperceptions, these
assumptions transform the balance from an economistic, mechanical process
into a diplomatic politics governed by a shared sense of destiny, a system that
can be described as a “Christian Commonwealth” or a “Europe-wide Repub-
lic.” A “diversity in ideal unity” shapes the interaction of the states by provid-
ing a cultural foundation to the legal norms of international law. Specifically,

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64 See, for example, Stanley Hoffmann, “The Balance of Power,” in David Sills, ed., The
506–9; and Martin Wight, “The Balance of Power and International Order,” in Alan James,
ed., The Bases of International Order (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) and Alfred
65 These are the terms of the Abbé de Pradt writing in 1800, the international legal scholar
Emmerich de Vattel, and Friedrich Gentz in his Fragments on the Balance of Power, p. 69.
See the discussion in Edward Gulick, Europe’s Classical Balance of Power (Norton, 1967),
p. 11.
diplomats then can come to form a sort of *Internationale* (not unlike the Socialist International posited by Marx) in which their (often) aristocratic social origins create a dense web of mutual ties of family, marriage, and material interests and a community of respect for the institutions each of the separate states shares.

The Constitutional model thus adds more cooperative (not necessarily harmonious) expectations to the operation of the balancing system. States, most important, are presumed to have no *alliance handicaps*, so that each is an acceptable ally of any other and ideological definitions of threats are precluded. Their similarity excludes the ostracism of revolutionary powers, such as occurred during the early phases of the French Revolution, or the religious, ideological, or ethnic divisions of the fifth-century B.C. Peloponnesian system, in which democrat faced oligarch, and Ionian confronted Dorian. Henry Kissinger in his classic study of the creation of the coalition against Napoleon thus argues that “Diplomacy in the classic sense, the adjustment of differences through negotiation, is possible only in ‘legitimate’ international orders.”66 The minimal version of legitimacy posits a diplomacy of balancing achieved through homogeneity, which, by precluding social diversity, removes a potent source of alliance handicaps.

A maximal version of legitimacy makes a stronger claim. Common standards of civilization and legitimacy create a set of bounds on acceptable practice in the balancing system prohibiting the destruction of other members. This might have been what led the allies to restore the Bourbons to the throne in 1814 and 1815 and revive a coherent France as a full and equal member of the European system. Antagonisms thus tend to be muted by common standards of behavior in war.

None of these norms solves the security dilemma or therefore precludes competition for relative power, material interests, and prestige. Indeed, the Constitutional model assumes they enhance the prospect that states will effectively join together to confront and war against a potential hegemon by reinforcing individual security calculations with a sense of a common stake in the international system and the independence of all states that it protects. Nor, of course, does homogeneity necessarily make for systemic peace, which remains, in Gulick’s apt phrase, a “barnacle on the boat” of the balance of power.

Just as Hobbes provided the foundations that explain why any state would balance power, Rousseau explained how states could overcome various ideological handicaps operating against balancing and adopt balancing within an international commonwealth.67 Rousseau saw important determinants of the state

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67 Iris Claude, *Power and International Relations* (1962), regards Rousseau as an exemplar of the “automatic” (or Structural) approach because the balance works without direct human guidance, but I think the idea of sociological semiautomatism better describes what Rou...
of war in the structure of the system, the nature of mankind, and especially the varying domestic structure of states. Unlike Hobbesian sovereigns in a Structural or “automatic” balance of power, the sovereigns described by the Abbé de St.-Pierre shared a civilization and the widespread interdependence of commerce and other transnational ties. They were “a kind of whole, united by identity of religion, of moral standard, of international law; by letters, by commerce, and finally by a species of balance, which is the inevitable result of all those ties.”68 These ties do not, however, produce happiness or tranquillity. Indeed, these very ties are the “entanglements” that, without an international government to maintain law and order, produce rivalry, distrust, conflict, and a state of war that makes peace a mere truce and balancing both feasible and necessary. How well states have actually done in balancing power and how we can explain their successes or failures are the subjects of the next chapter.

The Constitutionalist Legacy
Reforms alter the state of war, mitigate its particular effects for particular states. The rational prudence of the General Will removes the factional, ideological, or purely chauvinistic aspect of conflict and war caused by monarchical and ministerial caprice. Isolation reduces the dangers of interdependence. Nonprovocative defenses assuage conflicts caused by fear of preemptive attack and deters attacks prompted by the likely success of easy conquest.

Each reform reduces the danger or offers a temporary (perhaps even for a generation or more) respite from the worst miseries of the state of war. No one of them promises “perpetual peace” or removes states from that state of war. Yet Rousseau presents us with a variety of options for mitigating and reducing international misery, each one suitable for a different political or social condition. The solution to which Hobbes condemns all states, a perpetual balancing of power, sustained the independence of most states. The balance is the best developed states—manufacturing economies, ruled by corrupt monarchies and oligarchies—could achieve, despite well-meaning efforts to establish collective security.

Rejecting Machiavelli’s advocacy of republican imperialism—acquiring new territory, new people, and glory as the best route to long-run security (Rome’s path)—Rousseau recommends that reformed developing states, small and agrarian, should attempt isolation and autarky. This constituted his advice to Corsica (another “Sparta”). Large and vulnerable, but undeveloped, states such as Poland should build nationalism through civic education and a nonprovoca-

tive militia defense. For individuals, seeking peace yet caught in a corrupt
developed society, no moral option remained except private virtue, educated,
as was Émile, to be as free as possible from the need to imitate the ways of a
corrupt society.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{69}Émile was Rousseau's version of Voltaire's "cultivating one's own garden."
INTRODUCTION

The Varieties of Liberalism

Promoting freedom will produce peace, we have often been told. In a speech before the British Parliament in June 1982, President Reagan proclaimed that governments founded on a respect for individual liberty exercise "restraint" and "peaceful intentions" in their foreign policy. But he then announced a "crusade for freedom" and a "campaign for democratic development." President Bush, similarly, on October 1, 1990, in an address before the United Nations General Assembly, declared: "Calls for democracy and human rights are being reborn everywhere. And these calls are an expression of support for the values enshrined in the Charter. They encourage our hopes for a more stable, more peaceful, more prosperous world." In a UN address ("Pax Universalis," September 23, 1991), he stated equally unequivocally: "As democracy flourishes, so does the opportunity for a third historical breakthrough: international cooperation" (the first two were individual enterprise and international trade). Perhaps most consequentially, the President justified the large cuts in U.S. tactical nuclear forces as a product of the decline in hostility that stemmed from the survival of democratic forces in the USSR after the 1991 coup. President Clinton continued this tradition, making "democratic enlargement" the doctrinal centerpiece of his administration's foreign policy.

In making these claims, these presidents and other Liberal politicians joined a long list of Liberal theorists (and propagandists) and echoed an old argument: The aggressive instincts of authoritarian leaders and totalitarian ruling parties

2 He earlier announced as a "plain truth: the day of the dictator is over. The people's right to democracy must not be denied." Department of State Bulletin (June 1989).
make for war. A modest version of this view led the authors of the U.S. Constitution to entrust Congress, rather than the presidency, with the authority to declare war. A more fiery American revolutionary, Thomas Paine, in 1791 proclaimed: “Monarchical sovereignty, the enemy of mankind, and the source of misery, is abolished; and sovereignty is restored to its natural and original place, the nation. . . . Were this the case throughout Europe, the cause of war would be taken away.”

Liberal states, the argument runs, founded on such individual rights as equality before the law, free speech and other civil liberties, private property, and elected representation, are fundamentally against war. When the citizens who bear the burdens of war elect their governments, wars become impossible. Furthermore, citizens appreciate that the benefits of trade can be enjoyed only under conditions of peace. Thus the very existence of Liberal states, such as the United States, Japan, and our European allies, makes for peace.

This is a large claim. The Realists described for us a state of war that could be mitigated but not overcome short of a world Leviathan. The Liberals, with important variations, announce to us the possibility of a state of peace among independent states.

In Part Two, we look at three distinct theoretical traditions of Liberalism, attributable to three theorists: John Locke, the great founder of modern Liberal individualism, who together with the later Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham, provided the Liberal foundations of international law; Adam Smith and Joseph Schumpeter and other Commercialists, explicators of the Liberal pacifism invoked by the politicians; and Immanuel Kant, a Liberal republican who calls for a demanding internationalism that institutes peace among fellow Liberal republics.

Human rights–based Liberalism provides us crucial moral foundations for international law. Commercial Liberalism identifies emerging sources of commercial pacifism in Liberal democracies. For some, Locke demands too little of Liberal republicans, and Schumpeter expects too much. Kant and other Liberal internationalists hold that Liberalism does leave a coherent legacy concerning foreign affairs. Liberal states are different. They are indeed peaceful. But they are also prone to make war. Liberal states, as Kant argued they would, have created a separate peace. They also, as he feared they might, have discovered Liberal reasons for aggression.

Principles of Liberalism
There is no canonical description of Liberalism. What we tend to call Liberal resembles a family portrait of principles and institutions, recognizable by certain characteristics—for example, individual freedom, political participation,

private property, and equality of opportunity—that most Liberal states share, although none has them all.

Political theorists, however, identify Liberalism with an essential principle, the importance of the freedom of the individual. Above all, this is a belief in the importance of moral freedom, of the right to be treated and a duty to treat others as ethical subjects, not as objects or means only. A commitment to this principle has generated rights and institutions.

A threefold set of rights forms the foundation of an ideal version of Liberalism. Liberalism calls for freedom from arbitrary authority, often called negative freedom, which includes freedom of conscience, a free press and free speech, equality under the law, and the right to hold, and therefore to exchange, property without fear of arbitrary seizure. Liberalism also calls for those rights necessary to protect and promote the capacity and opportunity for freedom, the "positive freedoms." Such social rights as equality of opportunity in education and such economic rights as health care and employment, necessary for effective self-expression and participation, are thus among Liberal rights. A third Liberal right, democratic participation or representation, is necessary to guarantee the other two. To ensure that morally autonomous individuals remain free in those areas of social action where public authority is needed, public legislation has to express the will of the citizens making laws for their own community.

Ideal Liberalism is thus marked by a shared commitment to four essential institutions. First, citizens possess juridical equality and other fundamental civic rights, such as freedom of religion and the press. Second, the effective sovereigns of the state are representative legislatures deriving their authority from the consent of the electorate and exercising their authority free from all restraint apart from the requirement that basic civic rights be preserved. Most pertinent for the impact of Liberalism on foreign affairs, the state is subject to neither the external authority of other states nor the internal authority of special prerogatives over foreign policy held, for example, by monarchs or military bureaucracies. Third, the economy rests on a recognition of the rights of private property, including the ownership of means of production. Property is justified by individual acquisition (for example, by labor) or by social agreement or social utility. This excludes state Socialism or state capitalism, but it need not exclude market Socialism or various forms of the mixed economy. Fourth, economic decisions are predominantly shaped by the forces of supply and demand, domestically and internationally, and are free from strict control by bureaucracies.

These principles and institutions have shaped two high roads to Liberal governance. In order to protect the opportunity of the citizen to exercise freedom, laissez-faire Liberalism has leaned toward a highly constrained role for the state and a much wider role for private property and the market. In order to promote the opportunity of the citizen to exercise freedom, welfare Liberalism has expanded the role of the state and constricted the role of the market. Both
nevertheless accept the four institutional requirements and contrast markedly
with the colonies, monarchical regimes, military dictatorships, and Communist
Party dictatorships with which they have shared the political governance of the
modern world. See Table 8-1 in chapter 8 for a list of Liberal regimes.)

Uncomfortably paralleling each of the high roads are “low roads” that, while
achieving certain Liberal values, fail to reconcile freedom, equality, and order.
An overwhelming terror of anarchy and a speculation on preserving property
can drive laissez-faire Liberals to support a law-and-order authoritarian rule that
sacrifices democracy. Authoritarianism to preserve order is the Realist argument
of Hobbes’s Leviathan, and it finds an echo in Locke’s Liberal concept of “tacit
consent.” It also shapes the argument of right-wing Liberals who seek to draw a
distinction between “authoritarian” and “totalitarian” dictatorships. The justifi-
cation sometimes advanced by Liberals for the former is that they can be
temporary and can educate the population into an acceptance of property,
individual rights, and, eventually, representative government. Other Liberals
focus solely on freedom of property and market relations and portray the state
as a simple rational agent of property rights or as a firm ready for entrepreneur-
ial capture, as do Bentham and Schumpeter. Lastly, some Liberals on the left
make revolutionary dictatorship a vehicle for democratic education.

Liberalism and International Theory
For international relations theory, the political theorist’s high and low views of
Liberalism have ambiguous implications. Defined by the centrality of individ-
ual rights, private property, and representative government, it is a domestic
theory. Realism, on the other hand, is an international theory, defined by the
centrality of the state of war. There appears to be no simple theoretical integra-

—The sources of classic laissez-faire Liberalism can be found in Bentham, Cobden, the
Federalist Papers, Kant, Spencer, Hayek, Friedman, and Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State and
Utopia (New York: Basic Books, 1974). Expositions of welfare Liberalism are in the work of
the later Mill, T. H. Grene, the Fabians and John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge,
Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971). Amy Gutmann, Liberal Equality (Cambridge: Cam-
bridge University Press, 1980) discusses variants of Liberal thought.

—See Jeane Kirkpatrick, “Dictatorships and Double Standards,” Commentary 68 (November
1979), pp. 34–45, and Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New
Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). Complementarily, when social inequalities are judged
to be extreme, the Welfare Liberal can argue that establishing (or reestablishing) the founda-
tions of Liberal society requires a non-Liberal method of reform, a second “low road” of
redistributing authoritarianism. Aristide Zolberg reports a “Liberal left” sensibility among
U.S. scholars of African politics that was sympathetic to progressive autocracies. See One
recent example is the confused reaction in Europe and the United States to the decision by
the Algerian government to abort an election that would have turned the state over to anti-
Liberal Islamic fundamentalists and the subsequent warming of European Community rela-
tions with the Moroccan monarchy (Economist [January 9, 1993], pp. 37–38).
tion of the two. Realist theory would be falsely portrayed, indeed caricatured, if it were "domesticized" by being limited to authoritarian or totalitarian domestic politics or even purely unitary states. Correspondingly, Liberal theory would be caricatured if it were "internationalized" by being limited to assertions about the natural harmony of world politics. Some Realists are totalitarian; Hobbes justified authoritarian states. Some are democratic communitarians, such as was Rousseau. Machiavelli was a republican Realist. Some Liberals, such as Bentham or Cobden or Schumpeter, were homogeneously pacific. Others, such as John Stuart Mill, justified imperialism under some circumstances and intervention under others. No simplification well represents the actual philosophical and historical richness of their worldviews.

Instead, for the sake of expanding our analysis of the range of world politics, we need a conception of world political Liberalism that identifies what is special about the international relations of Liberal states but that neither caricatures nor whitewashes them. Worldviews align themselves on spectrums; they do not fall into neat boxes. We should be looking for a world politics in which Liberal individualism makes a difference, in which the good of individuals has moral weight against the good of the state or the nation. From the other side, we should be looking for a world politics in which the state of war is not the general characteristic of international relations (or individualism might not be making a difference, or adding something to Realism). In order to make sure that we have not created a circle of cause and effect, we will then need to make sure that our models are disconfirmable and that we are able to account for theoretical perimeters by distinguishing our Liberals from their philosophic cousins, the near Liberals. We will need to do this by accounting for differences in both causes and effects.

The core of Realism (to simplify) portrayed world politics as follows: a state of war among all states and societies, which is a condition in which war was regarded as a continuous possibility, a threatening prospect, in which each state had to regard every other state as presenting the possibility of this threat.

This was because:

1. Relations among states were anarchic, in that they lacked a global state. Trade, culture, even institutions and international law could still exist under anarchy, but none altered its anarchic and warlike character.

2. States were independent units that could be treated as strategic actors. The variations in state structure range from the abstractly unitary sovereign rationality of Hobbes to the ideally unitary moral rational of the General Will and sociologically diverse nonideal states of Rousseau, to the rational princes and imperial republics of Machiavelli, to the diverse states of Thucydidean Greece. Despite the variation, each theorist conceptualizes the state as struggling for a monopoly of effective or legitimate power. No one, no group other than the
state itself (prince, people as a whole, Senate, or Assembly) had a legitimate claim on authority. If a nonstate group had an effective counterclaim, then the state collapsed or collaborated and became subject to another state, ending anarchy, substituting hierarchy.

3. Some of these states sought to expand; others, merely to survive. None was prepared to engage in long-term accommodation or cooperation.

The perception that some societies would have good reasons to want to expand, that the sovereign similarity of all states made them functionally similar egoists, and that the international system itself lacked a global sovereign together, though in various combinations for each theorist, made rational states at least fear one another. They feared one another even if they were not inclined to aggress on one another, because they could not be sure that their neighbor was not prepared to aggress on them. Each was in a state of war that we call a security dilemma. The net result was that international goods have only relative value. They are relative because, as Hobbes opined, “clubs are trumps.” At the extreme every good thus has to be measured first by the extent to which it contributes to security in a world where only self-help secures one’s existence. Within an alliance absolute values can be appreciated, but only because they contribute to the relative superiority of the alliance over a rival alliance. And alliances are easy to break.

The Liberals are different.

World politics, rather than being a relatively homogeneous state of war, is at the minimum a heterogeneous state of peace and war and might become a state of global peace, in which the expectation of war disappears. If two or more Liberal societies coexist in the international system, then rather than have a security rationale governing all interaction—as it must for rational states in a state of war—other criteria of policy come into play. Liberal societies compete to become rich, glorious, healthy, cultured, all without expecting to have to resolve their competition through war. Formal and informal institutions such as international organization and law then take on a greater role in competition with the warriors and diplomats who dominate the Realist stage.⁶

This is because:

1. Although states live under international anarchy, meaning the absence of a global government, they do not experience a general, state of war.

2. States are inherently different "units," differentiated by how they relate to individual human rights. So Liberals distinguish Liberal from non-Liberal societies, republican from autocratic or totalitarian states, capitalist from communist, fascist, and corporatist economies. Differences in international behavior then reflect these differences.

3. The aims of the state, as do the aims of the individual, go beyond security to the protection and promotion of individual rights.

Thus for Liberals, states behave differently and are not homogenized by the international system by being either competed out of existence or socialized into structural strategies. Some Liberals argue that Liberal states are inherently respectful of international law. Others argue that Liberal states are inherently peaceful, while authoritarians are inherently aggressive. Still others argue that Liberals are peaceful, but only toward one another.

Liberal states exist under anarchy (there is no world government), but their anarchy is different. Rather than being overwhelmingly a relative contest, a zero-sum game, their contest is a positive- or negative-sum game. They can win or lose together. A failure to inform may undermine coordination when Liberals are seeking compatible goals. In more competitive situations, a failure to trust may undermine cooperation when each would prefer at least one alternative to a failure to cooperate. This is because their insecurities can be solved by stable accommodation. They can come to appreciate that the existence of other Liberal states constitutes no threat and instead constitutes an opportunity for mutually beneficial trade and (when needed) alliance against non-Liberal states.

Liberals thus differ from the Realists. But they also differ from one another, and they do so in systematic ways. Each of the Liberal theorists, like the Realists, must make some assumptions about international structure, domestic society, and human nature. Liberals pay more attention to domestic structures and diverse human interests than do Realists. They all think that the international system has less than an overriding influence and so distinguish themselves from not only Structural Realists but also from almost all Realists. Still, compared with one another, we can identify "Image I" (human nature), "Image II" (domestic society), and "Image III" (international system) Liberals on the basis of where each variant locates predominant causes.

Locke we can identify as an Image I Liberal, who contributes an elaboration of human rights and consequent international duties. Schumpeter and the other commercial pacifists, Image II Liberals, focus on the effects of variations in domestic society, economy, and state structure. Kant, an Image III Liberal,
tells us about the interaction of states—that is, about the effects of dyads and systems, about the genesis of a “Pacific Union” of Liberal states.

Close Cousins
This leaves us with a dilemma. How do we distinguish the Liberals from Realists who are democrats, republicans, and fellow analysts and advocates of popular sovereignty and human rights? Realists predict an inescapable state of war, Liberals, a heterogeneous state of peace and war. How do we explain the differing conclusions reached by three democratic or republican Realists—Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Rousseau?

Ranked by longevity, the earliest view of popular government is democratic imperialism. Democracies, it was said, are an effective, perhaps even the best means to launch imperial aggression. This is the view of Thucydides, which influenced classical political thought up to and including Machiavelli. Rather than peace, rather than restraint, power and imperial growth, excess and factionalism were the traits that Thucydides saw associated with democracy. Machiavelli’s republic is characterized by social equality, popular liberty, and political participation. The consuls serve as “kings”; the Senate as an aristocracy managing the state, the people in the Assembly as the source of liberty and strength. All three are expansionist.

The second view is that democracy should be associated with effective defense in all directions, a policy of isolationism within a pervasive and generalized state of war. In order to be completely self-determining, the General Will requires of its international relations independence above all else. This is Rousseau’s vision.

In this part I shall examine what each of the Liberal traditions tells us about peace, war, and cooperation. I shall also explain how the Liberals distinguish themselves from the two types of democratic or republican Realists, who are also advocates and analysts of free and popular government.