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Territoriality and beyond: problematizing modernity in international relations

John Gerard Ruggie

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

—T. S. Eliot, *Little Gidding*

The year 1989 has already become a convenient historical marker: it has been invoked by commentators to indicate the end of the postwar era. An era is characterized by the passage not merely of time but also of the distinguishing attributes *of a time*, attributes that structure expectations and imbue daily events with meaning for the members of any given social collectivity. In that sense, what the journalist Theodore H. White observed in 1945 is true once again: the world, he wrote, is “fluid and about to be remade.”¹ Arguments will continue for many years to come about the determinants of the collapse of the old postwar order and the contours of the new post-postwar order. But even among diverse theoretical traditions there exists a shared vocabulary describing “the world” that has become fluid and is being remade: in its simplest, irreducible terms, it is the world of strategic bipolarity.

The same cannot be said of another “world” that also may be fluid and in the process of being remade: the modern system of states. This world exists on a deeper and more extended temporal plane, and its remaking involves a shift not in the play of power politics but of the stage on which that play is

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1. Theodore H. White, *In Search of History: A Personal Adventure* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 224.

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performed.² Here, no shared vocabulary exists in the literature to depict change and continuity. Indeed, little vocabulary for it exists at all.

Take efforts to express the emerging architecture of the European Community (EC) as a case in point. “It is a negative characteristic which first imposes itself,” the Marxist theorist Etienne Balibar concedes. “The state today in Europe is *neither national nor supranational*, and this ambiguity does not slacken but only grows deeper over time.”³ From the other side of the political spectrum, *The Economist* agrees and gropes for metaphor: in place of older federative visions, it sees “a Europe of many spires,” a European “Mont Saint Michel.”⁴ For their part, Eurocrats speak of overlapping layers of European economic and political “spaces,” tied together, in the words of EC Commission President Jacques Delors, by the community’s “spiderlike strategy to organize the architecture of a Greater Europe.”⁵

These formulations are not terribly precise or definitive. Still, they are improvements over the treatment Europe typically receives in the standard academic literatures. In Kenneth Waltz’s classic neorealist treatise, the EC earned only a few fleeting references, and then only to argue that it would never amount to much in the “international structure” unless it took on the form of a unified state.⁶ In the instrumental rationality of game theory and transactions cost analysis, macrostructures are either taken for granted or treated as relatively unproblematic consequences of the interplay of micromotives, and hence generate little interest as independent social facts.⁷ And, regional integration theory long ago acknowledged its own obsolescence in the face of the new European reality.⁸ In none of these theoretical perspectives is there so much as a hint that the institutional, juridical, and spatial complexes associated with the community may constitute nothing less than the emergence of the first truly postmodern international political form.

2. For a specification of the ontological and epistemological differences among incremental, conjunctural, and secular or epochal time frames, see John Gerard Ruggie, “Social Time and International Policy,” in Margaret P. Karns, ed., *Persistent Patterns and Emergent Structures in a Waning Century* (New York: Praeger, 1986), pp. 211–36. Within that typology, the “normal politics” studied by much of the international relations field falls into the incremental category, the cold war exemplifies the conjunctural, and the modern system of states the epochal time frames.

3. Etienne Balibar, “*Es Gibt Keinen Staat in Europa*: Racism and Politics in Europe Today,” *New Left Review* 186 (March/April 1991), p. 16, emphasis original.

4. “Many-spired Europe,” *The Economist*, 18 May 1991, p. 16. Some twenty years ago, I suggested that integration theory move from the model of a “tree” (in graph-theoretic terms) to depict the institutional end-point of the integration process to one of a semi-lattice—the definition of which sounds very much like a formal representation of *The Economist’s* European Mont Saint Michel. See John Gerard Ruggie, “The Structure of International Organization: Contingency, Complexity, and Postmodern Form,” *Peace Research Society (International) Papers*, no. 18, 1972.

5. “Inner Space,” *The Economist*, 18 May 1991. Delors is cited in Alan Riding, “Europeans in Accord to Create Vastly Extended Trading Bloc,” *New York Times*, 23 October 1991, p. A1.

6. See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

7. See, for example, Geoffrey Garrett, “International Cooperation and Institutional Choice: The European Community’s Internal Market,” *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992), pp. 531–60.

8. See Ernst B. Haas, *The Obsolescence of Regional Integration Theory*, Research Monograph no. 25 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1976).

Prevailing perspectives may have difficulty describing and explaining the process of European transformation, but none suggests that it is not occurring. At the level of the global economy, in contrast, the phenomenon of transformation not only strains the available vocabulary but on some accounts, its very occurrence remains in doubt.

There has been a remarkable growth in transnational microeconomic links over the past thirty years or so, comprising markets and production facilities that are designated by the awkward term “offshore”—as though they existed in some ethereal space waiting to be reconceived by an economic equivalent of relativity theory. In this offshore area, sourcing, production, and marketing are organized within “global factories,”⁹ in some instances “global offices,”¹⁰ and most recently the “global lab”¹¹—real-time transnational information flows being the raw material of all three. Financial transactions take place in various “Euro” facilities, which may be *housed* in Tokyo, New York, and European financial centers but which are considered to *exist* in an extranational realm.¹² Cross-investment among the leading firms or other means of forging transnationalized intercorporate alliances increasingly are the norm.¹³ Trade is made up disproportionately of intrafirm transactions as opposed to the conventional arms-length exchange that is the staple of economic models and policy.¹⁴ And, the financial sector, which historically (and in theory) is assumed to follow and service the “real” sector, now dwarfs it completely.¹⁵

Furthermore, the largest share of the “goods” that are “traded” in this offshore world actually are “services.”¹⁶ *The Economist* magazine, with tongue

9. For a description of global factories, see Joseph Grunwald and Kenneth Flamm, *The Global Factory: Foreign Assembly in International Trade* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985).

10. Steve Lohr, “The Growth of the ‘Global Office,’” *New York Times*, 18 October 1988. For example, Citibank does some of its financial data processing in Jamaica; American Airlines processes ticket stubs in Barbados and the Dominican Republic; and New York Life processes claims and McGraw-Hill, magazine subscription renewals, in Ireland.

11. The term is drawn from Pollack: “Just as they once moved manufacturing plants overseas, American companies are now spreading their research and product development around the world, helping to turn the creation of technology into an activity that transcends national borders.” See Andrew Pollack, “Technology Without Borders Raises Big Questions for U.S.,” *New York Times*, 1 January 1992, p. A1.

12. Joan E. Spero, “Guiding Global Finance,” *Foreign Policy* 73 (Winter 1988–89), pp. 114–34.

13. See Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations* (New York: Knopf, 1991).

14. Some 40 percent of U.S. trade is of the intrafirm variety, a ratio that increases to close to two-thirds if more relaxed definitions of “related party” are used. Moreover, intrafirm trade has been growing more rapidly than the standard stuff, and it is less sensitive to such macroeconomic factors as exchange rates. For evidence, see Jane Sneddon Little, “Intra-firm Trade: An Update,” *New England Economic Review* (May/June 1987), pp. 46–51; and the earlier but still useful study by Gerald C. Helleiner, *Intra-firm Trade and the Developing Countries* (London: Macmillan, 1981).

15. International trade amounts to some \$2.5 to \$3 trillion per year; international capital markets turn over at least \$75 trillion, and foreign exchange transactions now amount to approximately \$1 trillion per day.

16. Definitions are so bad that the balance of world services imports and exports routinely is off by as much as \$100 billion per annum—a margin of error equivalent to fully one-fifth of all traded services; see Ronald K. Shelp, “Trade in Services,” *Foreign Policy* 65 (Winter 1986–87). Bhagwati suggests several creative definitional distinctions but ends up recommending that the term “trade in services” be abandoned in favor of “international service transactions”; see Jagdish Bhagwati,

only half-in-cheek, has proposed defining services as “things which can be bought and sold but which you cannot drop on your foot,”—acknowledging the difficulty of devising a more rigorous definition.¹⁷ Nor is it entirely clear what it means to say that services are traded. In merchandise trade, factors of production stand still and goods move across borders; in traded services, typically the factors of production do the moving while the good (service) stands still: it is produced for the consumer on the spot. What is called trade, therefore, is really “investment,” or at the least “right of establishment,” baffling trade theorists and negotiators alike.¹⁸

The orthodox liberal position that these developments somehow imply the growing irrelevance of states is, as Janice Thomson and Stephen Krasner suggest, “fundamentally misplaced.”¹⁹ Indeed, states are anything but irrelevant even in the ever more integrated EC. Nevertheless, the standard realist ground for rejecting the transformational potential of these developments is equally misplaced. A leading realist journal of opinion recently offered a particularly egregious illustration in response to Robert Reich’s probing question about the new world of transnationalized production networks, “Who is ‘Us’?”²⁰ Reich sought to voice the conceptual complexities entailed in determining whether something is an American product any longer and whether the legal designation, “an American corporation,” still describes the same economic entity, with the same consequences for domestic employment and economic growth, that it did in the 1950s and 1960s. The response to Reich was a baffling and bizarre—but not atypical—string of non sequiturs, for example: “Only the state can defend corporate interests in international negotiations over trade, investment, and market access. . . . If the existence of the state is in doubt, just ask the depositors of BCCI in some fifty countries who

“Trade in Services and the Multilateral Trade Negotiations,” *The World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1987. See also Dorothy I. Riddle, *Service-Led Growth* (New York: Praeger, 1986); Orio Giarini, ed., *The Emerging Service Economy* (London: Pergamon Press, 1987); Terrence G. Berg, “Trade in Services,” *Harvard International Law Journal* 28 (Winter 1987); and Mario A. Kakabadse, *International Trade in Services* (London: Croom Helm for the Atlantic Institute for International Affairs, 1987).

17. “A Gatt for Services,” *The Economist*, 12 October 1985, p. 20. See also “Netting the Future: A Survey of Telecommunications,” *The Economist*, 19 March 1990; and “A Question of Definition: A Survey of International Banking,” *The Economist*, 7 April 1990.

18. At the time of this writing, indications are that the Uruguay Round will bring into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) framework that portion of international services which fits the conventional understanding of international trade. However, that portion is relatively small compared with the whole, and numerous highly disputatious issues lurk beyond the conventional framework. See “GATT Brief: Centre Stage for Services?” *The Economist*, 5 May 1990, pp. 88–89; and “GATT and Services: Second Best,” *The Economist*, 3 August 1991.

19. Janice E. Thomson and Stephen D. Krasner, “Global Transactions and the Consolidation of Sovereignty,” in Ernst-Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau, eds., *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1989), p. 198. See also Stephen D. Krasner, “Global Communications and National Power: Life on the Pareto Frontier,” *World Politics* 43 (April 1991), pp. 336–66.

20. See Ethan B. Kapstein, “We are US: The Myth of the Multinational,” *The National Interest* 26 (Winter 1991/92), pp. 55–62. The full exposition of Reich’s argument is in *The Work of Nations*, the final chapter of which is entitled “Who is ‘US’?”

woke up one morning in July to find their accounts frozen. . . . If the United States wanted to prevent the gathering or transmission of information by satellite, it could easily do so by shooting the satellite down.”²¹ And thus the conclusion, in the title of the essay, that “*We are US.*”

There is an extraordinarily impoverished mind-set at work here, one that is able to visualize long-term challenges to the system of states only in terms of entities that are institutionally substitutable for the state. Since global markets and transnationalized corporate structures (not to mention communications satellites) are not in the business of replacing states, they are assumed to entail no potential for fundamental international change, Q.E.D. The theoretical or historical warrant for that premise has never been mooted, let alone defended.

Illustrations of analytical problems of this sort can be multiplied many times over in other issue-areas. The global ecological implosion inherently invites epochal thinking, yet analytically informed empirical studies of “ozone diplomacy” or of attempts to save the Mediterranean invariably focus on negotiation processes and the dynamics of regime construction, as opposed to exploring the possibility of fundamental institutional discontinuity in the system of states.²² They do so because, among other reasons, prevailing modes of analytical discourse simply lack the requisite vocabulary.

The worst offender by far is the American field of security studies. Notwithstanding its alleged renaissance, no epochal thought has been expressed by any serious specialist in that field since 1957, when John Herz published his essay, “Rise and Demise of the Territorial State”—and this despite the fact that changes in military technology and in the relations of force are widely acknowledged to have been driving factors of political transformation throughout human history.²³

The long and the short of it is, then, that we are not very good as a discipline at studying the possibility of fundamental discontinuity in the international

21. Kapstein, “*We are US,*” pp. 56 and 61.

22. See Richard Elliot Benedict, *Ozone Diplomacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Lynton Keith Caldwell, *International Environmental Policy* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1984); Oran R. Young, *International Cooperation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and the Environment* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Peter Haas, *Saving the Mediterranean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

23. On the field’s alleged “renaissance,” see Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly* 35 (June 1991), pp. 211–39. For John Herz’s view, see his articles “Rise and Demise of the Territorial States,” *World Politics* 9 (July 1957), pp. 473–93, and “The Territorial State Revisited—Reflections on the Future of the Nation-State,” *Polity* 1 (Fall 1968), pp. 11–34, in which he elaborated and modified some of his earlier ideas. The recent interest in the “obsolescence” of war among democracies was not initiated by international security specialists—see, for example, John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989)—though it has now attracted serious attention from some. For examples see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Robert W. Jackman, and Randolph M. Siverson, eds., *Democracy and Foreign Policy: Community and Constraint*, special issue, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35 (June 1991). A partial exception to my characterization of the security studies literature is Robert Jarvis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989). On the historical relation between military changes and political transformation, see William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); and Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990–1990* (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

system; that is, at addressing the question of whether the modern system of states may be yielding in some instances to postmodern forms of configuring political space.²⁴ We lack even an adequate vocabulary; and what we cannot describe, we cannot explain. It is the purpose of this article, in Clifford Geertz's apt phrase, to help us "find our feet" in this terrain, which is the necessary first step of any scientific endeavor, no matter how hard or soft the science.²⁵

In the next section, I summarize briefly the major features of the lively debate about postmodernism that has been taking place in the humanities. It is suggestive in many respects, but it does not solve our problem entirely because the modern state and system of states barely figure in it. The bulk of this article therefore is devoted to a relatively modest and pretheoretical task: to search for a vocabulary and for the dimensions of a research agenda by means of which we can start to ask systematic questions about the possibility of fundamental international transformation today. The central attribute of modernity in international politics has been a peculiar and historically unique configuration of territorial space. Hence, I shall proceed by re-examining the transformation whereby this configuration of territorial space first came to be.

The ends of modernity

The concept of postmodernity suggests a periodizing hypothesis, an epochal threshold, the end of "an historical project."²⁶ That much is clear. But, what is the universe of discourse and practices to which it pertains? To that question numerous possible answers exist, not all of which are of equal interest for present purposes.

When the term "postmodernity" first gained currency in the 1970s and 1980s, it referred largely to recent developments in the realm of aesthetics or style: the nostalgic eclecticism in architectural forms, the prevalence of pastiche and abrupt juxtapositions of imagery in art, the deconstructivist impulse in literature. Simultaneity and superimposition replaced sequence; the subject was decentered, dismembered, and dispersed; and language was made to turn in on itself to create a void of infinite signification where the quest for meaning had previously unfolded.²⁷ In the field of international relations, these expressions of postmodernity have been symptomatic at best; as Pauline Rosenau has shown, they are preoccupied with style and method and offer only limited substantive insight.²⁸

24. One recent attempt to correct this shortcoming, to which I return below, is James N. Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

25. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 13.

26. The term is due to Albrecht Wellmer, "On the Dialectic of Modernism and Postmodernism," *Praxis International* 4 (January 1985), p. 337.

27. Ihab Hassan, *The Postmodern Turn* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), especially chap. 4, which presents a widely used schema differentiating modern from postmodern aesthetic practices.

28. Attempts to relate the postmodern reading of texts to issues in international relations may be found in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro, eds., *International/Intertextual Relations*

It was not long, however, before postmodernity came to be associated not merely with matters of style but with a historical condition, indicating, according to Andreas Huyssen, a “slowly emerging cultural transformation in Western societies.”²⁹ This transformation concerns the fate of what Jürgen Habermas calls the “project” of modernity, first formulated by the eighteenth-century philosophers of the European Enlightenment; i.e., systematic efforts “to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art, according to their inner logic.”³⁰ The Enlightenment was animated by the desire to demystify and secularize, to subject natural forces to rational explanation and control, as well as by the expectation that doing so would promote social welfare, moral progress, and human happiness. The optimism, certitude, and categorical fixity of this project were shattered—by Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein; Darwin, Einstein, Heisenberg; Braque, Picasso, Duchamp; Joyce, Proust, Becket; Schoenberg, Berg, Bartok; two world wars, a Great Depression, Nazi death camps, Stalin’s Gulags, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki—long before Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida pronounced and celebrated its demise.

Although the terrain is high culture, the subsequent battle between “Frankfurters and French fries,” as Rainer Nägele has described it irreverently, has been fought largely on political grounds. Habermas has endeavored to hold on to the *intentions* of the Enlightenment in order to complete its project.³¹ According to Huyssen, Habermas “tries to salvage the emancipatory potential of enlightened reason which to him is the *sine qua non* of political democracy. Habermas defends a substantive notion of communicative rationality, especially against those who will collapse reason with domination, believing that by abandoning reason they free themselves from domination.”³² Lyotard is hostile to the very thought: “We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one,” he shouts. “Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences.”³³ Even Habermas’s admirers express doubts about the viability of his quest.³⁴ Nevertheless, the Paul de Man saga, especially the shameful defense of de Man by several leading deconstructivists, shows poignantly how deleterious the politi-

(Lexington, Mass.: Lexington/Heath, 1989). For a sympathetic yet critical review of this literature, see Pauline Rosenau, “Once Again into the Fray: International Relations Confronts the Humanities,” *Millennium* 19 (Spring 1990), pp. 83–110.

29. Andreas Huyssen, “Mapping the Postmodern,” *New German Critique* 33 (Fall 1984), p. 8.

30. Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity and Postmodernity,” *New German Critique* 22 (Winter 1981), p. 9.

31. These are Habermas’s terms; see *ibid.*

32. Huyssen, “Mapping the Postmodern,” p. 31.

33. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 81–82.

34. See Huyssen, “Mapping the Postmodern”; and Martin Jay, “Habermas and Modernism,” in Richard J. Bernstein, ed., *Habermas and Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 125–39.

cal consequences can be that follow from the moral vacuum—if not moral vacuity—the French fries would have us inhabit.³⁵

The two distinctively modern programs for mastering international relations are deeply implicated in this project of modernity: realist balance-of-power thinking and idealist institutionalism, both of which have their origins in the eighteenth century. On the realist side, the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) enshrined the notion of a self-regulating equilibrium as a core feature of European society together with the idea that the defense of that equilibrium should be of concern to one and all.³⁶ For realist theorists of the day, “the sovereign states followed their ordered paths in a harmony of mutual attraction and repulsion like the gravitational law that swings planets in their orbits.”³⁷ On the idealist side, the eighteenth century opened with the Abbé de Saint-Pierre’s institutionalist plan to secure a “*Perpetual Peace*,” and closed with Kant’s.³⁸ Post-World War II realism and liberal internationalism are but the latest incarnations of realist and idealist thought, and neither, as I suggested above, has much to say about fundamental transformation today.³⁹

The concept of postmodernity also has been projected beyond the cultural realm, into the political economy, initially by Marxist analysts. Frederic Jameson led the way.⁴⁰ For Jameson, postmodernism depicts “the third great original expansion of capitalism around the globe (after the earlier expansions of the national market and the older imperialist system).” The production and manipulation of signs, images, and information are the raw materials of this new “mode of production” as well as the means by which its expansion is achieved. But this is an expansion, Jameson suggests, that in effect “internalizes”: just as the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles or the Eaton Center in Toronto seeks to internalize its exterior, aspiring “to be a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city,” so too does global capitalism today internalize within its own institutional forms relationships that previously took place among distinct national capitals. This results in a “postmodern hyperspace,” as

35. See David Lehman, *Signs of the Times: Deconstruction and the Fall of Paul de Man* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991).

36. See M.S. Anderson, *Europe in the Eighteenth Century, 1713–1783* (London: Longmans, 1963).

37. Martin Wight, “The Balance of Power and International Order,” in Alan James, ed., *The Bases of International Order* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 98.

38. F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963), chaps. 2 and 4.

39. In a certain sense, James Rosenau’s recent book touches on this cultural category of the postmodernist debate. The major driving force of international transformation today, Rosenau contends, consists of new sensibilities and capacities of individuals: “with their analytical skills enlarged and their orientations toward authority more self-conscious, today’s persons-in-the street are no longer as uninvolved, ignorant, and manipulable with respect to world affairs as were their forebears. . . . [T]he enlargements of the capacities of citizens is the primary prerequisite for global turbulence.” See Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics*, pp. 13 and 15.

40. See Frederic Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” *New Left Review* 146 (July/August 1984), pp. 53–92; and “Marxism and Postmodernism,” *New Left Review* 176 (July/August 1989), pp. 31–45.

Jameson terms it, a heteronomy of fragments which nevertheless remains unified by virtue of expressing the logic of late capitalism.⁴¹

Several other works of this genre have elaborated on Jameson's notions of a postmodern capitalist mode of production and its consequences.⁴² They resonate at a superficial level with the brief description of global microeconomic changes at the outset of this article, as well as with the images of spaceship earth, global warming, nuclear winters, and the like, by means of which the ecosphere is popularly visualized. But, they remain silent on the issue of the state and the system of states, which in the end is not surprising in light of the fact that they are cast in a modes-of-production framework.

Nevertheless, these works are suggestive at a deeper level in their emphasis on the space-time implosion experienced by advanced capitalist societies. Harvey notes that "space and time are basic categories of human existence. Yet we rarely debate their meanings; we tend to take them for granted, and give them common-sense or self-evident attributions."⁴³ Ultimately, he contends, the current transformation in capitalist production relations is merely one specific expression of a reconfiguration in social space-time experiences to a degree not witnessed since the Renaissance. Harvey concurs with Jameson, however, that "we do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace, . . . in part because our perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space I have called the space of high modernism."⁴⁴

And so the postmodernist debate has shifted in barely two decades from the domain of aesthetics, to culture more broadly, to political economy. Correspondingly, the meaning of "modern" in "postmodern" has shifted from what it is in modern art, the modern novel, or modern architecture, first, to the so-called age of Enlightenment; next, to the structure of capitalist production relations; and then to the very epoch in Western history that was initiated by the Renaissance. It is the last of these space-time frames that concerns me here, because it also marks the transformation that produced the modern mode of organizing political space: the system of territorial states. However, since no perceptual equipment exists, as Jameson remarks, through

41. The quotations are from Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," pp. 80 and 81.

42. The most comprehensive work is David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). For a detailed empirical study of the relationship between global capital and the reconfiguration of urban spaces, see Manuel Castells, *The Informational City* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). Marxist theorists of postmodernity encounter an inherent contradiction, to borrow their term, by the very nature of the enterprise. One of the features of postmodernity on which virtually all other schools of thought agree is that it invalidates the possibility of producing metanarratives, or *metarécits*, more fashionably—that "totalizing" and "logocentric" practice of modernity on which Lyotard urges us to wage war. Of course, few narratives are more "meta" than Marxism. Jameson's somewhat feeble response, in "Marxism and Postmodernism," is that a system that produces fragments is still a system.

43. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 201.

44. *Ibid.*

which to grasp what he calls “global hyperspace,” I hope to advance our understanding of the possible rearticulation of international political space by looking for clues to the past to discover how the modern political form itself was produced.

Modern territoriality

Historically, the self-conscious use of the term “modern” to denote “now” dates from the sixteenth century.⁴⁵ The epochal sense of modern to denote “modernity” dates from the eighteenth century, when the threshold demarcating its beginning was put at roughly 1500.⁴⁶ Writing in the eighteenth century, Lord Bolinbroke defined an epoch by the chain of events being so broken “as to have little or no real or visible connexion with that which we see continue. . . . [T]he end of the fifteenth century seems to be just such a period as I have been describing, for those who live in the eighteenth, and who inhabit the western parts of Europe.”⁴⁷

One of the chains in which visible connection to the past was ruptured was the organization of political space. The fact of that rupture is well enough known. But, what, if any, categories and modes of analysis does it suggest for the study of international transformation more generally? To that, the main task of this article, I now turn.

Differentiation

Let us begin at the very beginning: politics is about rule. Adapting a formulation by Anthony Giddens, we can define the most generic attribute of any system of rule as comprising legitimate dominion over a spatial extension.⁴⁸ I use the term “spatial extension” advisedly, to drive home the point that it need not assume the form of territorial states. The social facticity of any spatial extension in turn implies some mode of differentiating human collectivities from one another. By this I do not mean the progressive structural differentiation that was long a staple of macrosociological theorizing and which is now thoroughly discredited.⁴⁹ Instead, I mean the notion of differentiation that John Locke had in mind when he asked “how men might come to have a

45. Raymond Williams, “When was Modernism?” *New Left Review* 175 (May/June 1989), pp. 48–52.

46. Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), p. 243.

47. Cited in Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester, England: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 111.

48. Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 45.

49. See, for instance, Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage, 1985).

property in several parts of that which God gave to mankind in common.”⁵⁰ There are at least three ways in which prior or other systems of rule have differed in this regard from the modern territorial state.

First, systems of rule need not be territorial at all. That is to say, the basis on which the human species is socially individuated and individuals, in turn, are bound together into collectivities can take (and historically has taken) forms other than territoriality. For example, anthropologists quaintly used to characterize as “primitive government” those systems of rule wherein the spatial extension was demarcated on the basis of kinship. Moreover, they held that a critical stage in societal evolution was precisely the shift from consanguinity to contiguity as the relevant spatial parameter.⁵¹ To be sure, territory was *occupied* in kin-based systems, but it did not *define* them.

Second, systems of rule need not be territorially fixed. Owen Lattimore’s work on nomadic property rights is of relevance here.⁵² Writing of Mongol tribes, Lattimore pointed out that no single pasture would have had much value for them because it soon would have become exhausted. Hence, driven by what Lattimore called the “the sovereign importance of movement,” the tribes wandered, herding their livestock. But, they did not wander haphazardly: “They laid claim to definite pastures and to the control of routes of migration between these pastures.”⁵³ Accordingly, “the right to move prevailed over the right to camp. Ownership meant, in effect, the title to a cycle of migration.”⁵⁴ The cycle was tribally owned and administered by the prince.

Third, even where systems of rule are territorial, and even where territoriality is relatively fixed, the prevailing concept of territory need not entail mutual exclusion. The archetype of nonexclusive territorial rule, of course, is medieval Europe, with its “patchwork of overlapping and incomplete rights of government,”⁵⁵ which were “inextricably superimposed and tangled,” and in which “different juridical instances were geographically interwoven and stratified, and plural allegiances, asymmetrical suzerainties and anomalous enclaves

50. John Locke, “On Property,” in the second of the *Two Treatises of Government*, sec. 2.25, Thomas I. Cook, ed. (New York: Hafner, 1947), p. 134. Luhman has developed a nonteleological formulation of differentiation that I have found useful in which he distinguishes among segmentation, functional differentiation, and stratification, with segmentation having an obvious temporal priority. See Niklas Luhman, *The Differentiation of Society*, trans. Stephen Holmes and Charles Larmore (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). I use the term here in the sense of segmentation.

51. The classic statement of the traditional anthropological view is found in Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*, first published in 1877; a reprinted edition was edited by Eleanor Leacock (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963). For a contemporary discussion, see Jonathan Haas, *The Evolution of the Prehistoric State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

52. See Owen Lattimore’s works *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940) and *Studies in Frontier History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

53. Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History*, p. 535.

54. Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, p. 66.

55. Joseph R. Strayer and Dana C. Munro, *The Middle Ages* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), p. 115. See also Joseph R. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), *passim*.

abounded.”⁵⁶ The difference between the medieval and modern worlds is striking in this respect.⁵⁷

Briefly put, the spatial extension of the medieval system of rule was structured by a nonexclusive form of territoriality, in which authority was both personalized and parcelized within and across territorial formations and for which inclusive bases of legitimation prevailed. The notion of firm boundary lines between the major territorial formations did not take hold until the thirteenth century; prior to that date, there were only “frontiers,” or large zones of transition.⁵⁸ The medieval ruling class was mobile in a manner not dreamed of since, able to assume governance from one end of the continent to the other without hesitation or difficulty because “public territories formed a continuum with private estates.”⁵⁹ In this connection, Georges Duby writes, wryly, of Henry Plantagenet: “This was Henry, count of Anjou on his father’s side, duke of Normandy on his mother’s, duke of Aquitaine by marriage, and for good measure—but only for good measure—king of England, although this was of no concern to the country in which he spent the best part of his time.”⁶⁰ In addition, the medieval system of rule was legitimated by common bodies of law, religion, and custom expressing inclusive natural rights. Nevertheless, these inclusive legitimations posed no threat to the integrity of the constituent political units because these units viewed themselves as municipal embodiments of a universal moral community.⁶¹ Hence the “heteronomous shackles,” in Friedrich Meinecke’s words, on the autonomy—indeed, on the very ability of thinkers to formulate the concept—of the state.⁶²

56. The quotations are from Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974), pp. 37 and 37–38, respectively.

57. I have explored these differences at greater length in John Gerard Ruggie, “Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis,” *World Politics* 35 (January 1983), pp. 261–85. Markus Fischer has recently claimed that I and other theorists who find fault with neorealism’s inability to capture the phenomenon of transformation “imply” or “would expect” medieval life to have been more harmonious and less conflictual than modern international relations. Certainly in my case the claim is entirely fictitious, backed only by Fischer citing a sentence in my article that had nothing to do with this point and linking it to what he “would expect” me to have said. See Markus Fischer, “Feudal Europe, 800–1300: Communal Discourse and Conflictual Practices,” *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992), pp. 427–66; the questionable reference is cited in his footnote 12.

58. According to Edouard Perroy, as paraphrased by Wallerstein, this was “the ‘fundamental change’ in the political structure of Europe.” See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, vol. 1 (New York: Academic Press, 1974), p. 32. An extended discussion of the difference between borders and frontier zones may be found in Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History*. See also Friedrich Kratochwil, “Of Systems, Boundaries and Territoriality,” *World Politics* 34 (October 1986), pp. 27–52.

59. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, p. 32.

60. Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 286.

61. Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 41 and *passim*.

62. Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, trans. Douglas Scott (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957). The term is attributed to Meinecke by Scott in his introduction to the book, which was first published in 1924.

The antonym of Meinecke's term is "homonomous."⁶³ The distinctive signature of the modern—homonomous—variant of structuring territorial space is the familiar world of territorially disjoint, mutually exclusive, functionally similar, sovereign states.

The chief characteristic of the modern system of territorial rule is the consolidation of all parcelized and personalized authority into one public realm. This consolidation entailed two fundamental spatial demarcations: between public and private realms and between internal and external realms.⁶⁴ The public sphere was constituted by the monopolization on the part of central authorities of the legitimate use of force. Internally, this monopolization was expressed through the progressive imposition of what was called the "king's peace," or the sole right of the king's authority to enforce the law. As Norbert Elias notes, this idea was "very novel in a society in which originally a whole class of people could use weapons and physical violence according to their means and inclinations."⁶⁵ Externally, the monopolization of the legitimate use of force was expressed in the sovereign right to make war. Philippe Contamine has put it well: "'The king's war' and 'the kingdom's war' must, in the end, be identical."⁶⁶ Finally, the inclusive bases of legitimation that had prevailed in the medieval world, articulated in divine and natural law, yielded to the doctrine of sovereignty, and *jus gentium* slowly gave way to *jus inter gentes*.

To summarize, politics is about rule. And, the distinctive feature of the modern system of rule is that it has differentiated its subject collectivity into territorially defined, fixed, and mutually exclusive enclaves of legitimate dominion. As such, it appears to be unique in human history.⁶⁷ Without the

63. The term "heteronomous" refers to systems wherein the parts are subject to different biological laws or modes of growth and "homonomous" to systems wherein they are subject to the same laws or modes of growth; see *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed. s.v. "heteronomous" and "homonomous." In the original, biological sense of the terms, the fingers on a hand would exhibit homonomous growth—for a current international relations meaning, read "all states are functionally alike"—and the heart and hands of the same body heteronomous growth—read "all states are functionally different."

64. According to Perry Anderson, "the age in which 'Absolutist' public authority was imposed was also simultaneously the age in which 'absolute' private property was progressively consolidated"; see Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, p. 429. Eric Jones reaches a similar conclusion via a different route: "Productive activities that had been subject to collective controls were becoming individualized. This is a staple of the textbooks. But that Europe moved from the guilds and the common fields toward *laissez-faire* is only half the story. The missing half is that just when production was becoming fully privatised, services were becoming more of a collective concern, or where they were already communal, now the government was being involved." See E. L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economics, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 147. Jones is referring to the provision of such services as internal pacification, internal colonization of uncultivated lands, disaster management, and the like. The gradual differentiation between internal and external, as seen through the lens of changing norms and practices of diplomatic representation, is portrayed brilliantly by Mattingly in *Renaissance Diplomacy*.

65. Norbert Elias, *Power and Civility* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), p. 202.

66. Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 169.

67. For a sophisticated survey, see Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

concept of differentiation, then, it is impossible to define the structure of modernity in international politics—modes of differentiation are nothing less than the focus of the epochal study of rule. Hence the supreme irony of Waltz's continued insistence that the dimension of differentiation “drops out” from the neorealist model of international structure.⁶⁸

The obvious next issue to address is how one accounts for this peculiar form of sociopolitical individuation. Now, providing an account of things in contemporary international relations research typically means specifying their causes. That in turn requires that we have a theory—in this case, a theory of international transformation. But we have no such theory. As I have suggested, we can barely even describe transformation in the international polity. Hence, I mean something far less ambitious by the phrase “providing an account of.” The modern system of states is socially constructed. The issue I mean to address is simply what were the raw materials that people used and drew upon in constructing it? I find that developments in three dimensions of European collective experience were particularly salient, and that the three dimensions are irreducible to one another: namely, material environments, strategic behavior, and social epistemology.

Material environments

The study of the *longue durée* has become a special province of the *Annales* school of historiography.⁶⁹ The starting point of the *Annales* approach is the “ecodemographic” dimension of human collectivities, on the premise that it poses the biggest long-term challenge for social structures. It then moves on to various constructed environments and patterns of routine social practices. If we were to view the emergence of the modern mode of structuring territorial space from the vantage point of this perspective, what sorts of developments would catch our eye?

Consider the material side of life throughout the thirteenth and into the fourteenth century: human ecology, the relations of production, and the relations of force. Climatologically, the early phase of the period remained favored by the so-called little optimum of the early Middle Ages.⁷⁰ Population grew markedly. Land clearing, draining, and diking progressed rapidly, increasing the size of the cultivated area and breaking down barriers to

68. Waltz, inexplicably, views the differentiation of a collectivity into its constituent units to be an attribute of the units rather than of the collectivity. His original argument is in *Theory of International Politics*, chap. 5; and a defense of his position can be found in Kenneth Waltz, “Reflections on *Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics*,” in Robert O. Keohane, ed., *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

69. The exemplar of this school, of course, is Fernand Braudel; his general approach is discussed in Braudel, *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

70. David Herlihy, “Ecological Conditions and Demographic Change,” in Richard L. De Molen, ed., *One Thousand Years: Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), p. 13. See also Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's classic study, *Times of Feast, Times of Famine: A History of Climate Since the Year 1000*, trans. Barbara Bray (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971).

communication within territorial formations while expanding their external frontiers.⁷¹ Although the overwhelming proportion of the population continued to live in rural areas, medieval cities grew, and some (Milan, Paris, Venice) may have reached 150,000 inhabitants.⁷²

A sustained economic expansion took place as well. Productivity increased; more and more goods were produced for sale or exchange; and trade revived, not merely in luxury goods but increasingly in staples. That last point is crucial. In the words of Eric Jones, “the peculiarities of European trade arose because of the opportunities of the environment. Climate, geology and soils varied greatly from place to place. The portfolio of resources was extensive, but not everything was found in the same place.”⁷³ Moreover, economic relations became increasingly monetized, and developments in “invisibles,” including the great fairs, shipping, insurance, and financial services, further lubricated commerce and helped to create a European-wide market.⁷⁴

In the realm of force, the feudal cavalry was coming to be undermined by the longbow, pike, and crossbow and the feudal castle, subsequently, by gunpowder.⁷⁵ The monetization of economic relations, together with the commutation of feudal services into money payments, made it possible for territorial rulers to retain mercenaries. Generating revenue through taxation augmented the trend toward standing armies. The more effective internal pacification produced thereby provided a more secure economic environment, which in turn increased both private and public returns.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, territorially defined, territorially fixed, and mutually exclusive state formations did not emerge at this point. It was not that simple. What happened instead was that this period of expansion and diversification was arrested suddenly and ferociously in the mid-fourteenth century. Famines, wars, and plagues decimated the population of Europe, reducing it by at least one-third and probably more. Entire localities disappeared; deserted lands reverted to heaths and swamps. The economy went into a deep and seemingly permanent depression and pillaging, robbing, and civil unrest again became endemic. Recovery did not return until the second half of the fifteenth century.⁷⁷

71. Jones, *The European Miracle*, chap. 4.

72. According to Herlihy, even in the most densely populated areas, northern Italy and Flanders, three out of four people continued to live in the countryside; elsewhere this proportion was roughly nine out of ten. See Herlihy, “Ecological Conditions and Demographic Change,” p. 30. For a more elaborate discussion of the structures and functions of towns in premodern Europe, see Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000–1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), chaps. 1–3.

73. Jones, *The European Miracle*, p. 90.

74. See *ibid.*, chap. 5; Herlihy, “Ecological Conditions and Demographic Change”; and Elias, *Power and Civility*. Elias explores the importance of monetization not only for economic but also for political development.

75. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power*, chap. 3.

76. See *ibid.*; Elias, *Power and Civility*; and Jones, *The European Miracle*, chap. 7.

77. Surely the most readable account of this period is Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York: Ballantine, 1978). For a standard history, see Denys Hays, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, 2d ed. (London: Longman, 1989).

These changes in the material world, both positive and negative, were so profound, however, that existing social arrangements were strained to the point of collapse.

Strategic behavior

Indeed, economic growth and diversification from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century had encountered institutional limits well before they were snuffed out by the Black Death and the Hundred Years' War. These limits included the feudal structure of property rights and forms of labor control; inadequate investment, especially in agriculture; the maze of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdictional constraints that pervaded medieval society; and the socially parasitic nature of the multiplicity of territorial rulers. One way to characterize the impact of the material changes discussed above on the prevailing institutional order is to say that they altered the matrix of constraints and opportunities for social actors, giving rise to different situations of strategic interaction among them. This is the subject matter of the "new economic history."⁷⁸ Consider the following illustrations.

First, the drastic demographic declines of the fourteenth century affected relative factor prices, favoring agricultural workers and industrial producers while disadvantaging the land-owning class—the very basis of feudal society.

Second, as Jones has argued, the fourteenth-century calamities created opportunities for "entrepreneurial politicians" to prove their social utility by providing a variety of social services, ranging from disaster relief to more effective institutional arrangements for the conduct of commerce. According to Jones, the forces favoring institutional change responded more imaginatively to the calamities than the forces that sought to impede it.⁷⁹

A third example involves the relationship between medieval juridical authorities and the trade fairs—a relationship that in some respects resembles that between the transnational economy and national jurisdictions today. The medieval trade fairs were encouraged by local lords; some took place only a stone's throw from the feudal castle. The fairs were favored for the simple reason that they generated revenue. In the case of the famous Champagne fairs, O. Verlinden writes that revenues were gained from "taxes on the

78. For the purposes of the present discussion, the pathbreaking work is the brief book by Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

79. See Jones, *The European Miracle*, chap. 7. Perhaps the drollest illustration cited by Jones, but nonetheless a significant one, actually comes from a later century, when the Austrian Hapsburgs built a *cordon sanitaire* some 1,000 miles long, promising to shut out the plague that persisted in the Ottoman empire. Their feat had little epidemiological effect, but it called forth considerable administrative effort and social mobilization and contributed, thereby, to statebuilding. Douglass North and his colleagues have produced a fascinating formulation of the process whereby innovations in contracts were created and enforced; see Paul R. Milgrom, Douglass C. North, and Barry R. Weingast, "The Role of Institutions in the Revival of Trade: The Law Merchant, Private Judges, and the Champagne Fairs," *Economics and Politics* 2 (March 1990), pp. 1–23.

residences and stalls of the merchants, entry and exit tolls, levies on sales and purchases, dues upon weights and measures, justice and safe-conduct charges upon the Italians and Jews.”⁸⁰ Moreover, local lords at any time could have closed down a fair in their domain—much as states today can close down offshore markets or even shoot down communication satellites—though other lords in other places probably would have been only too pleased to provide alternatives sites.

In no sense could the medieval trade fairs have become substitutes for the institutions of feudal rule. Yet, the fairs contributed significantly to the demise of feudal authority relations. They did so because the new wealth they produced, the new instruments of economic transactions they generated, the new ethos of commerce they spread, the new regulatory arrangements they required, and the expansion of cognitive horizons they effected all helped undermine the personalistic ties and the modes of reasoning on which feudal authority rested. As Marvin Becker has put it, the medieval trade fairs were a place in which “the exchange system was freed from rules and rituals.”⁸¹ Like the exchange system, the system of governance also ultimately became unraveled. Once momentum shifted from fairs to towns, greater institutional substitutability did come to exist because, in the words of a medieval maxim, “Town air brings freedom”—that is to say, the towns actually exercised jurisdiction over and evoked the allegiance of their new inhabitants.⁸²

Fourth and finally, Hendrik Spruyt recently has shown that the erosion of the medieval system of rule, the growth of trade, and the rise of the towns triggered new coalitional possibilities among kings, the aristocracy, and the towns. Indeed, Spruyt explains the pattern in political forms that succeeded medieval rule—territorial states in some places, city-states in others, and city-leagues elsewhere still—by the specific nature of the coalitions that formed.⁸³ In short, the exogenous shocks of the fourteenth century fundamentally strained the existing social order and created a new matrix of constraints and opportunities for social actors.

Some of the new economic historians want to go further, however, to imply

80. O. Verlinden, “Markets and Fairs,” *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 127. Verlinden also points out another possible analogue to the present situation, namely that “from the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, money-changing [in the fairs] begins to take precedence over trade” (see p. 133). Also see Robert-Henri Bautier, *The Economic Development of Medieval Europe*, trans. Heather Karolyi (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), chap. 4.

81. Marvin B. Becker, *Medieval Italy: Constraints and Creativity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 15. See also the excellent review article of Becker’s book by Janet Coleman, “The Civic Culture of Contracts and Credit,” *Comparative Study of Society and History* 28 (October 1986), pp. 778–84.

82. The original quotation is “Stadtluft macht frei,” and is found in Fritz Rorig, *The Medieval Town* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 27. See also Jacques Le Goff, “The Town as an Agent of Civilization,” in Carlo M. Cipolla, ed. *The Middle Ages* (London: Harvester Press, 1976).

83. Hendrik Spruyt, “The Sovereign State and Its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change,” Ph.D. diss., Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego, 1991.

that the modern system of states resulted *directly* from this process because the state represented the optimal size of political units that was required to provide efficient property rights and physical security. Smaller units simply “had to grow,” Douglass North and Robert Thomas contend.⁸⁴ In the economic realm, this drive for juridical expansion is said to have come, on the demand side, from a desire for efficient property rights, which would reduce the discrepancy between private and social rates of return. On the supply side, expansion, they argue, was driven by the fiscal interests of rulers for higher revenues.⁸⁵ In the security realm, new weapons technology and a shift in advantage to the offense allegedly drove the desire for larger and fiscally more capable political formations.⁸⁶

The theory that the modern state was functionally determined in this manner has at least two serious shortcomings. First, its retrodictive value is severely limited: centralizing monarchies emerged in the west, to be sure; but city-states were consolidating in Italy and principalities as well as city-leagues in Germany, thus preventing their formation into larger (and by the logic of the new economic history, presumably more efficient) political units. Meanwhile, eastern Europe merely sank back into the somnambulance of another round of serfdom. Moreover, as Spruyt demonstrates, two other successor forms to the medieval system of rule, the Italian city-states and the Hanse, in fact were viable political alternatives to the territorial state, fully able to levy taxes and raise armies, for the better part of two centuries.⁸⁷ In social life, two centuries is no mere time lag.

Second, there is a substantial logical and empirical gap between the existence of some functional pressure for political units to grow, and their blossoming specifically into a system of territorially defined, territorially fixed, and mutually exclusive state formations. To assert that the specificities of the modern state system *also* were functionally determined entails a claim of staggering historical and intellectual proportions, which the new economic history cannot vindicate. We shall now see why.

84. North and Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World*, p. 17.

85. See *ibid.*; and Jones, *The European Miracle*.

86. See McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power*.

87. For a more elaborate summary of prevailing patterns of state forms, see Charles Tilly, “Reflections on the History of European State-making,” in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 3–83. Tilly points out a methodological problem that the “new economic historians” gloss over: there are many more failures than successes in the history of European state building. “The disproportionate distribution of success and failure puts us in the unpleasant situation of dealing with an experience in which most of the cases are negative, while only the positive cases are well-documented” (p. 39). Tilly explores a greater variety of state-building experiences in his most recent work, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990*. Spruyt’s methodological critique is even more damning, however. He points out that because successor forms to the medieval system of rule other than territorial states have been systematically excluded from consideration, there is no fundamental variation in units on the dependent-variable side in theories of state building. See Spruyt, “The Sovereign State and its Competitors.”

Social epistemes

Michael Walzer points the way. "The state," he once wrote, "is invisible; it must be personified before it can be seen, symbolized before it can be loved, imagined before it can be conceived."⁸⁸ The process whereby a society first comes to imagine itself, to conceive of appropriate orders of rule and exchange, to symbolize identities, and to propagate norms and doctrines is neither materially determined, as vulgar Marxists used to claim, nor simply a matter of instrumental rationality, as the irrepressible utilitarians would have it.

German social theorists in a line from Max Weber to Jürgen Habermas have viewed society as comprising webs of meaning and signification. In the French tradition, from Durkheim to Foucault, there has been a continuing exploration of *mentalités collectives*. No single concept captures both sets of concerns, the one being more semiotic, the other more structural. For lack of a better term, I shall refer to their combination as expressing the "epistemic" dimension of social life, and to any prevailing configuration of its constituent elements as a "social episteme."⁸⁹ The demise of the medieval system of rule and the rise of the modern resulted in part from a transformation in social epistemology. Put simply, the mental equipment that people drew upon in imagining and symbolizing forms of political community itself underwent fundamental change.

At the doctrinal level, students of international law and organization have long noted the impact on the concept of sovereignty of the novel religious principle *cujus regio ejus religio*, which placed the choice between Protestantism and Catholicism in the hands of local rulers, and the corresponding secular principle *Rex in regno suo est Imperator regni sui*, which stipulated that the political standing of territorial rulers in their domains was identical to that of the Emperor in his.⁹⁰ Sir Ernest Barker exclaimed that in these two phrases "we may hear the cracking of the Middle Ages."⁹¹ Moreover, the rediscovery of the concept of absolute and exclusive private property from Roman law no doubt aided in formulating the concept of absolute and exclusive sovereignty.⁹²

At the deeper level of political metaphysics, historians of political thought have long noted the impact on the emerging self-image held by European territorial rulers of a new model of social order: a view of society as a collection

88. Michael Walzer, "On the Role of Symbolism in Political Thought," *Political Science Quarterly* 82 (June 1967), p. 194.

89. With due apologies, I adapt the latter term from Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1970).

90. See, for example, Leo Gross, "The Peace of Westphalia, 1648–1948," in Richard A. Falk and Wolfram Hanrieder, eds., *International Law and Organization* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Lippincott, 1968); and F. H. Hinsley, "The Concept of Sovereignty and the Relations between States," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1967, pp. 242–52.

91. Cited by Gross, "The Peace of Westphalia," pp. 56–57.

92. Berki writes that "private" . . . refers not so much to the nature of the entity that owns, but to the fact that it is an entity, a unit whose ownership of nature . . . signifies the exclusion of others from this ownership." See R. N. Berki, "On Marxian Thought and the Problem of International Relations," *World Politics* 24 (October 1971), pp. 80–105. On the relationship between private property and sovereignty, see Ruggie, "Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity."

of atomistic and autonomous bodies-in-motion in a field of forces energized solely by scarcity and ambition. This is a view within which such distinctively modern theorists as Machiavelli and subsequently Hobbes framed their thinking.⁹³

It may be possible to claim, though I think hard to vindicate, that both the doctrinal and perhaps even the metaphysical changes were determined by power and greed, or by “efficiency” considerations, to use the more clinical term favored in the literature today. However, the new forms of spatial differentiation on which the novel political doctrines and metaphysics were constructed are another matter: their specifically political expressions mirrored a much broader transformation in social epistemology that reached well beyond the domains of political and economic life.

Consider, for example, analogous changes in the linguistic realm, such as the growing use of vernaculars, and the coming to dominance of the “I-form” of speech—which Franz Borkeu described as “the sharpest contradistinction between I and you, between me and the world.”⁹⁴ Consider analogous changes in interpersonal sensibilities, as in new notions of individual subjectivity and new meanings of personal delicacy and shame. These changes, among other effects, led to a spatial reconfiguration of households, from palaces to manor houses to the dwellings of the urban well-to-do, which more rigorously demarcated and separated private from public spheres and functions.⁹⁵

93. See Walzer, “On the Role of Symbolism in Political Thought”; Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960); C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962); and J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).

94. On the use of vernacular, see Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, trans. David Gerard, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton, eds. (London: Verso, 1984), especially chapter 8, which contains interesting statistics on books in print by subject and language. On the I-form of speech, see Franz Borkeu, *End and Beginning: On the Generations of Cultures and the Origins of the West*, Richard Lowenthal, ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

95. Changing sensibilities are illustrated and analyzed at length by Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978). To illustrate only one aspect of medieval household organization as late as the fourteenth century, consider the following excerpts from Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror*: “Even kings and popes received ambassadors sitting on beds furnished with elaborate curtains and spreads” (p. 161); “Even in greater homes guests slept in the same room with host and hostess” (p. 161), and often servants and children did too (p. 39); “Never was man less alone. . . . Except for hermits and recluses, privacy was unknown” (p. 39). See also David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); and Georges Duby, ed., *A History of Private Life*, vol. 2, *Revelations of the Medieval World*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1988). Martines documents that “Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1502)—the Siense engineer, architect, painter, sculptor, and writer—was one of the first observers to urge that the houses of merchants and small tradesmen be constructed with a clean separation between the rooms intended for family use and those for the conduct of business.” See Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 271. Finally, the differentiation between person and office also evolved during this period. As Strong notes, “the possibility that one human being could separately be both a human being and a king—a notion on which our conception of office depends—is first elaborated by Hobbes in his distinction between natural and artificial beings in the Leviathan.” See Tracy Strong, “Dramaturgical Discourse and Political Enactments: Toward an Artistic Foundation for Political Space,” in Stanley Lyman and Richard Brown, eds., *Structure, Consciousness, and History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 240.

Arguably, the single most important of those developments occurred in the visual arts: the invention of single-point perspective. Previous visual representation exhibited two spatial characteristics. First, artists rendered their subjects from different sides and angles “rather than from a single, overall vantage.”⁹⁶ Second, variation in figure scale was determined by the symbolic or social importance of the person or object represented and “not by any principle of optical inversion.”⁹⁷ As Harold Osborne explains, in single-point perspective (the invention of which is generally credited to Filippo Brunelleschi about 1425) “the pictorial surface is regarded as a transparent vertical screen, placed between the artist and his subject, on which he traces the outlines [of the visual field] *as they appear from a single fixed viewpoint*.”⁹⁸ The corollary to the fixed viewpoint, from which the world is seen, is the horizon vanishing point, at which objects recede out of view.

By virtue of this development, precision and perspective became prized; Brunelleschi, for example, also made major contributions to optics and cartography. But of greatest significance is the fact that this was precision and perspective from a particular point of view: a *single* point of view, the point of view of a *single* subjectivity, from which all other subjectivities were differentiated and against which all other subjectivities were plotted in diminishing size and depth toward the vanishing point.

If there is one common element in the various expressions of differentiation that we have been discussing, this novel perspectival form surely is it. Every civilization tends to have its own particular perspective, Edgerton concludes in his classic study, its own dominant symbolic form for conceiving and perceiving space, and single-point perspective “was the peculiar answer of the Renaissance.”⁹⁹ What was true in the visual arts was equally true in politics: political space came to be defined *as it appeared from a single fixed viewpoint*. The concept of sovereignty, then, was merely the doctrinal counterpart of the application of single-point perspectival forms to the spatial organization of politics.¹⁰⁰

This transformation in the spatial organization of politics was so profound—literally mind-boggling—that contemporaries had great difficulty grasping its full implications for many years to come. Mattingly, for example, recounts the

96. Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 9.

97. John White, *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 103.

98. Harold Osborne, *Oxford Companion to Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 840, emphasis added.

99. Edgerton, *The Renaissance Rediscovery of Linear Perspective*, p. 158.

100. Marshall McLuhan made several offhand remarks in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962) about an alleged parallel between single-point perspective and nationalism. He thereby misdated the advent of nationalism by several centuries, however. Moreover, he was less concerned with developing the parallel than with attributing its cause to the cognitive impact of the medium of movable print. Nevertheless, I have found McLuhan’s thinking enormously suggestive. The relationship between changing perspectival forms and the organization of cities and towns is explored extensively in the literature; see, among other works, Martines, *Power and Imagination*; and Giulio C. Argan, *The Renaissance City* (New York: George Braziller, 1969).

efforts of Francis I as late as 1547 to reform the apparatus of the French state by fixing the number of *secrétaires d'Etat* at four. Rather than separating their duties according to the logical distinction, by modern standards, between domestic and foreign relations, each of the four was assigned one quadrant of France *and* the relations with all contiguous and outlying states.¹⁰¹

To conclude, material changes may have awakened both a need and a desire for this broad transformation in the prevailing social episteme, which produced fundamentally new spatial forms. And entrepreneurial rulers could and did try to exploit those new images and ideas to advance their interests. Nevertheless, the breadth and depth of these changes argue, at the very least, in favor of a relative autonomy for the realm of social epistemology. Walzer has put it well: “If symbolization does not by itself create unity (that is the function of political practice as well as of symbolic activity), it does create *units*—units of discourse which are fundamental to all thinking and doing, units of feeling around which emotions of loyalty and assurance can cluster.”¹⁰²

Accordingly, I turn next to the domain of social practice, wherein the new unity was achieved. I highlight two aspects of it in particular: the process of social empowerment, which facilitated the consolidation of territorial rule; and the process of “unbundling” territoriality, which made it possible for the new territorial states, who viewed their individual subjectivity as constituting a self-sufficient moral and political field, to form a society of states.

Social empowerment

The disarticulation of the medieval system of rule meant that parametric conditions would have to be fixed at three levels in the newly formed social aggregations of power: the domestic social structure, the territorial formation, and the collectivity of territorial units. In each case, the relative success of the contending parties was shaped not simply by the material power they possessed or the interests they pursued but also by a process of social empowerment that reflected the ongoing transformation of social epistemes. I focus below on the territorial state and its collectivity.¹⁰³

101. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, p. 195.

102. Walzer, “On the Role of Symbolism in Political Thought,” pp. 194–95, emphasis original.

103. For a rich and provocative discussion of the process of social empowerment domestically, see Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977). As Hirschman puts it: “Weber claims that capitalist behavior and activities were the indirect (and originally unintended) result of a desperate *search for individual salvation*. My claim is that the diffusion of capitalist forms owed much to an equally desperate search for a way of *avoiding society’s ruin*, permanently threatening at the time because of precarious arrangements for internal and external order” (p. 130, emphasis original). Thus, according to Hirschman, the ultimate social power of the bourgeoisie benefited from a shift in social values whereby commerce became socially more highly regarded—not because of any perceived intrinsic merit or interest in commerce but for the discipline and the restraint it was thought to impose on social behavior in a period of severe turbulence and grave uncertainty. Cf. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New

At the level of territorial state formations, the key parametric condition to be fixed was precisely where in society (i.e., around which power aggregation) the right to rule would crystallize. Let us return for a moment to the western European monarchies around the middle of the fifteenth century. Their future looked bleak. In Castile, whose king sometimes claimed the title Emperor, the crown was among the weakest in all of Europe; the towns were dominant. In Aragon, the towns were weak and the nobility was in control, pledging allegiance to their king with this unimpressive oath: “We, who are as good as you, swear to you, who are no better than we, to accept you as our king and sovereign lord, provided you observe all our liberties and laws: but if not, not.”¹⁰⁴ In France, the monarchy had to be saved in 1429 by a farmer’s daughter who was guided in her quest by visions and voices from “higher” sources; but not even that intervention helped, and when the Hundred Years’ War finally ground to a halt more than two decades later, the country lay in ruins. England, already weak and divided, became further torn by the deadly Wars of the Roses. And so it went.

The turn came suddenly. By the end of the century, strong centralized administration had “almost completely transformed the political life of western and west-central Europe,” in Johnson and Percy’s words.¹⁰⁵ The new political units had become a palpable reality, no longer simply an aspiration, a trend, or a struggle. In France, moreover, a weak central monarchy ended up absorbing a stronger duchy of Burgundy in the process.

How can this shift be explained? One way to put it is that central rulers became more powerful *because of* their state-building mission. A fundamental shift was occurring in the purposes for which power could be deployed by rulers and be regarded as socially legitimate by their subjects. Internally, legitimate power became fused with the provision of public order, steadily discrediting its deployment for primitive extraction and accumulation. Externally, legitimate power became fused with statecraft, steadily discrediting its deployment for primitive expansion and aggrandizement.¹⁰⁶

This process of empowerment also helps to account for the geographical pattern of successful centralizing efforts noted above. The monarchs in the west tended to hitch their fate to those new objectives, and large-scale exclusive state formations emerged. West-central Europe and Italy, on the other hand, still had to cope with those meddlesome remnants of heteronomy, the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy. While they lacked the power to prevail, so long

York: Scribners, 1958). Additional support for Hirschman’s argument may be found in Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*: “It looks, then, as if Machiavelli was in search of social means whereby men’s natures might be transformed to the point where they became capable of citizenship” (p. 193).

104. Jerah Johnson and William Percy, *The Age of Recovery: The Fifteenth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 56.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

106. See Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*; and Bernard Guenee, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe*, trans. Juliet Vale (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

as they retained some degree of social efficacy it remained difficult to formulate clearly the concept, let alone create the institution, of an exclusive state formation. Here city-states and principalities became the expression of homonomous territoriality. In the east, these social changes never took hold in the first place. One should not exaggerate the ease with which these processes took hold even in the western kingdoms. As Charles Tilly points out, the leaders of prior institutions and even ordinary people “fought the claims of central states for centuries,” right into the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁷ Over time, however, the issue at stake increasingly became the *terms* of central rule, not the fact of it.

At the level of the collectivity of states, the critical parameter to fix concerned the right to act as a constitutive unit of the new collective political order. The issue here was not who had how much power, but who could be designated *as* a power.¹⁰⁸ Such a designation inherently is a collective act. It involved the mutual recognition of the new constitutive principle of sovereignty. Martin Wight points out that “it would be impossible to have a society of sovereign states unless each state, while claiming sovereignty for itself, recognized that every other state had the right to claim and enjoy its own sovereignty as well.”¹⁰⁹ Reciprocal sovereignty thus became the basis of the new international order.

To be sure, the new organizing principle of reciprocal sovereignty was challenged in and hammered home by wars; but even in the evolution of European wars we can see signs of that new principle of international legitimacy taking hold. As already noted, private wars ceased to be tolerated, and war making came to be universally recognized as an attribute of sovereignty. Even more interesting, European warfare thereafter seems to exhibit a progression in the dominant forms of war.¹¹⁰

The first form we might call “constitutive” war. Here the very ontology of the units—that is to say, what kind of units they would be—was still at issue. The Wars of Religion are the prime instance. As characterized by Reinhart Koselleck, the Peace of Augsburg (1555) “meant that the fronts of religious civil war were to be shut down, frozen in situ.”¹¹¹ It also produced a moral compromise. As described by Koselleck: “The compromise, born of necessity, concealed within itself a new principle, that of ‘politics,’ which was to set itself

107. Tilly, “Reflections on the History of European State-making,” p. 22.

108. Richard K. Ashley, “The Poverty of Neorealism,” *International Organization* 38 (Spring 1984), especially pp. 259 and 272–73.

109. Wight, *Systems of States*, p. 135.

110. Kaiser points out that all wars throughout the period I am here discussing had specific political and economic objectives, but that prior to the eighteenth century they also exhibited very complex overlays of other dimensions that have not been seen since. See David Kaiser, *Politics and War: European Conflict from Philip II to Hitler* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), chap. 1. I am here attempting to capture and give expression to these other dimensions.

111. Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p. 8.

in motion in the following century.”¹¹² Still, an international politics morally autonomous from the realm of religion did not become firmly established until the Peace of Westphalia (1648), ending the Thirty Years’ War.

This first phase was followed by warfare in which the nature of the units was accepted but their territorial configuration remained contested. We might call these “configurative” wars. The Wars of Succession of the early eighteenth century—Spanish, Polish, and Austrian—and the Seven Years’ War (1756–63) illustrate this form. Among other factors, these conflicts revolved around the principles of territorial contiguity versus transterritorial dynastic claims as the basis for a viable balance of power. In the end, territorial contiguity won out, at least in the European core.¹¹³

The third phase in the evolving form of warfare consists of the familiar strategic and tactical wars ever since, wars that we might call “positional”—interrupted by periodic quests for universal empire, which have been successfully repulsed on each occasion.¹¹⁴

Finally, when the concept of state sovereignty expanded to become the concept of national sovereignty, the use of mercenaries in warfare declined and ultimately was eliminated altogether. Armed forces subsequently became an expression of the nation.¹¹⁵

The critical threshold in this transition was the passage from constitutive to configurative wars, for it first acknowledged the principle of reciprocal sovereignty. When all was said and done, Europe ended up with a great many not-so-powerful states, including the nearly two hundred German principalities, which could not possibly have vindicated their right to exist by means of material power, but which were socially empowered by the collectivity of states to act as its constitutive units.¹¹⁶

Thus, the process of social empowerment was part of the means by which the new units of political discourse were inscribed in social life to produce new units of political order.

112. *Ibid.*

113. See Anderson, *Europe in the Eighteenth Century, 1713–1783*; and Kaiser, *Politics and War*.

114. Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance* (New York: Knopf, 1962). What Gilpin calls the cycle of hegemonic wars does not contradict my point. As defined by Gilpin, a “hegemonic war” concerns which power will be able to extract greater resources from and exercise greater control over the system of states; neither the nature of the units nor the nature of the system, for that matter, is at issue. In fact, Gilpin’s description of the calculus of would-be hegemons suggests that hegemonic wars fit well into my generic category of positional wars. See Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

115. For a good discussion of this development, see Janice E. Thomson, “State Practices, International Norms, and the Decline of Mercenarism,” *International Studies Quarterly* 34 (March 1990), pp. 23–47. On the emergence of national sovereignty, see Benedict Arnold, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

116. Strang has demonstrated the impact of reciprocal sovereignty for the entire history of European expansion into non-European territories since 1415. He finds that polities that were recognized as sovereign have fared much better than those that were not. See David Strang, “Anomaly and Commonplace in European Political Expansion: Realist and Institutional Accounts,” *International Organization* 45 (Spring 1991), pp. 143–62.

The paradox of absolute individuation

Our story ends in a paradox. Having established territorially fixed state formations, having insisted that these territorial domains were disjoint and mutually exclusive, and having accepted these conditions as the constitutive bases of international society, what means were left to the new territorial rulers for dealing with problems of that society that could not be reduced to territorial solution?

This issue arose in connection with common spaces, such as contiguous and transborder waterways as well as the oceans: how does one possess something one does not own? And, still more problematic, how does one exclude others from it? Inland waterways could be split down the middle and typically were, though often not until other and more violent means had been exhausted. Ocean space beyond defendable coastal areas posed a more substantial problem. Spain and Portugal tried a bilateral deal whereby Spain claimed a monopoly of western ocean trade routes to the Far East and Portugal the eastern, but they failed to make their deal stick. At the request of the Dutch East India Company, a young lawyer by the name of Hugo Grotius launched a distinguished career by penning a pamphlet entitled, and proclaiming the contrary doctrine of, *Mare Liberum*, which did stick.¹¹⁷

The really serious problem arose not in the commons, however, but right in the heart of the mutually exclusive territorial state formations: no space was left within which to anchor even so basic a task as the conduct of diplomatic representation without fear of relentless disturbance, arbitrary interference, and severed lines of communication.

In medieval Europe, the right of embassy was a method of formal and privileged communication that could be admitted or denied depending upon the social status and roles of the parties involved and the business at hand.¹¹⁸ Ambassadors had specific missions, for which they enjoyed specific immunities. For a variety of misdeeds and crimes, however, ambassadors were tried and sentenced by the prince to whom they were accredited, as though they were a

117. Grotius's immediate aim was to establish the principle of freedom to conduct trade *on the seas*, but in order to establish that principle he had first to formulate some doctrine regarding the medium through which ships passed as they engaged in long-distance trade. The principle he enunciated, and which states came to adopt, defined an oceans regime in two parts: a territorial sea under exclusive state control, which custom set at three miles because that was the range of land-based cannons at the time, and the open seas beyond, available for common use but owned by none. See Aster Institute, *International Law: The Grotian Heritage* (The Hague: Aster Institute, 1985).

118. The following discussion is based on Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*. Note Mattingly's summary of medieval practice, and contrast it with what we know to be the case for the modern world: "Kings made treaties with their own vassals and with the vassals of their neighbors. They received embassies from their own subjects and from the subjects of other princes, and sometimes sent agents who were in fact ambassadors in return. Subject cities negotiated with one another without reference to their respective sovereigns. Such behavior might arouse specific objection, but never on general grounds" (p. 23).

subject of that prince. This solution ceased to be acceptable, however, once the right of embassy became a sign of sovereign recognition and ambassadors were in place permanently. The short-term response was to grant more and more specific immunities to resident ambassadors as the situation demanded. During the century or so of religious strife, however, that option too came to be undermined by, among other factors, the so-called embassy chapel question.

As the term implies, this had to do with the services celebrated in an ambassador's chapel, at which compatriots were welcome, when the religions of the home and host sovereigns differed. For example, Edward VI insisted that the new English prayer book be used in all his embassies; Charles V would tolerate no such heresy at his court. It was not uncommon for diplomatic relations to be broken over the issue in the short run. In the long run, however, that proved too costly a solution; the need for continuous and reliable communication among rulers was too great. A doctrinal solution was found instead. Rather than contemplate the heresy of a Protestant service at a Catholic court and vice versa, it proved easier to pretend that the service was not taking place in the host country at all but on the soil of the homeland of the ambassador. And so it gradually became with other dimensions of the activities and precincts of embassy. A fictitious space, designated "extraterritoriality," was invented. Mattingly has put the paradox well: "By arrogating to themselves supreme power over men's consciences, the new states had achieved absolute sovereignty. Having done so, they found they could only communicate with one another by tolerating within themselves little islands of alien sovereignty."¹¹⁹ These islands of alien sovereignty were seen, Adda Bozeman adds, "not only as the foreign arm of each separate government, but also as the nucleus of the collective system of . . . states . . . outside of which no sovereign could survive."¹²⁰

What we might call an "unbundling" of territoriality (of which the doctrine of extraterritoriality was the first and most enduring instantiation) over time has become a generic contrivance used by states to attenuate the paradox of absolute individuation.¹²¹ Various types of functional regimes, common markets, political communities, and the like constitute additional forms whereby territoriality has become unbundled. Thus, in the modern international polity an institutional *negation* of exclusive territoriality serves as the means of situating and dealing with those dimensions of collective existence that territorial rulers recognize to be irreducibly transterritorial in character. Nonterritorial functional space is the place wherein international society is anchored.

119. Ibid, p. 244. See also Adda B. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 479–80.

120. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History*, pp. 482–83.

121. I adapt this notion from the discussion of unbundling sovereign rights in Kratochwil, "Of Systems, Boundaries and Territoriality."

Patterns of change

Mattingly, in his magisterial study, acknowledges that “the taproots of the modern state may be followed as far back as one likes in Western history [even] to the cities of antiquity whereof the hazy images continued to provide some statesmen in every medieval century with an ideal model of authority and order.”¹²² But, he shows persuasively, the modern state did not *evolve* from these earlier experiences; rather, it was *invented* by the early modern Europeans. Indeed, it was invented by them twice, once in the leading cities of the Italian Renaissance and once again in the kingdoms north of the Alps sometime thereafter. This suggests a final issue for consideration: the patterns exhibited by epochal change. Three are indicated by the medieval-to-modern transformation.

First, unanticipated consequences played a major role in determining the ultimate outcomes of long-term changes. The Crusades were not designed to suggest new modes of raising revenues for territorial rulers, but they ended up doing so.¹²³ The modern state was not logically entailed in the medieval papacy; yet, according to Strayer, by the example of effective administration it set, “the Gregorian concept of the Church almost demanded the invention of the concept of the State.”¹²⁴ Society did not vote for capitalism when it endorsed the civilizing impulses of commerce; but the bourgeoisie, the social carriers of commerce, embodied it. Later, monarchs did not set out to weaken their constitutional powers by selling offices or convening assemblies to raise taxes; they sought only to increase their revenues.¹²⁵ In short, the reasons for which things were done often had very little to do with what actually ended up being done or what was made possible by those deeds.¹²⁶

Second, fundamental transformation may have had long-standing sources, but when it came, it came quickly by historical standards. Moreover, it came amid crisis and disintegration of the previous order—amid a generalized loss of predictability and understanding of, in Tracy Strong’s words, “what might

122. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, pp. 105–6.

123. Ronald C. Finucane, *Soldiers of the Faith* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1983).

124. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State*, p. 22.

125. North and Weingast demonstrate this very nicely, both formally and empirically, in the case of seventeenth-century England—except for the overall logic they attribute to the process, which “interprets the institutional changes on the basis of the goals of the *winners*.” See Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast, “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-century England,” *Journal of Economic History* 49 (December 1989), p. 803, emphasis added. The problem with their interpretation is that the goals of the *losers*—the insatiable quest for revenues on the part of rulers—not of the winners, drove the process that ultimately made possible the imposition of constitutional constraints on the prerogatives of monarchs.

126. Discussing a biological parallel, Stephen Jay Gould contends that avian limbs became useful for flying once they were fully developed into wings, but they probably evolved for so commonplace a purpose as keeping birds warm. See Gould, “Not Necessarily Wings,” *Natural History* 10/85.

count as politics, of what counts as evidence and what as fact, and of what is contentious and what might appear secure.”¹²⁷ Once the system of modern states was consolidated, however, the process of fundamental transformation ceased: “[states] have all remained recognizably of the same species up to our own time,” Tilly concludes, though their substantive forms and individual trajectories of course have differed substantially over time.¹²⁸ Paleontologists describe this pattern of change—stable structures, rupture, new stable structures—as “punctuated equilibrium.”¹²⁹

Finally, change has never been complete or all-encompassing. As Spruyt makes clear, the medieval system of rule in the first instance was succeeded by several viable forms of territorial governance: large-scale territorial states, city-states, and city-leagues. And the process that ultimately selected out the territorial state embodied a different logic than the process that produced both the state and its alternative forms.¹³⁰ Moreover, keep in mind that the formal demise of the Holy Roman Empire (1806)—a relic of medievalism that historians insist never was holy, nor Roman, nor an empire—actually is closer in time to the birth of the European Community (EC) than to the Peace of Westphalia, the usual marker of the inception of modern international relations. Finally, sociopolitical collectivities of very long historical standing remain vital today without being contained in territorial states.¹³¹ In short, the coexistence of different historical forms is not unusual. Designating dominant historical forms, therefore, is a matter of balance: of judging ascendancy and decline, relevance and spurious signification. Nonetheless, it is the case that the modern state has succeeded in driving out substitutable alternatives more effectively than any other prior form.

127. Strong, “Dramaturgical Discourse and Political Enactments,” p. 245.

128. Tilly, “Reflections on the History of European State-making” p. 31. For a suggestive typology of different substantive state forms, see Michael Mann, *States, War, and Capitalism* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), chap. 1.

129. See Niles Eldredge and Ian Tattersall, *The Myths of Human Evolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Eldredge, in a personal conversation, attributed the basic insight for the punctuated equilibrium model to the historian Frederick Teggart—which is ironic in the light of the influence that the Darwinian model of human evolution has had on social thinking, including historiography! See Frederick J. Teggart, *Theory of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1925). Bock has described large-scale social change in similar terms: “In place of a continuous process of sociocultural change, the records clearly indicate long periods of relative inactivity among peoples, punctuated by occasional spurts of action. Rather than slow and gradual change, significant alterations in peoples’ experiences have appeared suddenly, moved swiftly, and stopped abruptly”; see Kenneth Bock, *Human Nature and History: A Response to Sociobiology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 165. Excellent discussions of punctuated equilibrium and path dependency in the origins of the modern state may be found in two articles by Stephen D. Krasner: “Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics,” *Comparative Politics* 16 (January 1984), pp. 223–46; and “Sovereignty: An Institutional Perspective,” *Comparative Political Studies* 21 (April 1988), pp. 66–94.

130. See Spruyt, “The Sovereign State and its Competitors.”

131. The so-called Arab nation is a case in point; see Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1991).

Historicizing postmodernity

At the close of the fifteenth century, Europe stood poised to reach out to and then conquer the globe. By the beginning of the twentieth century, this “Columbian epoch,” as Sir Halford Mackinder characterized it in 1904, was coming to an end.¹³² In his seminal essay, Mackinder addressed two distinct dimensions of the new “global” epoch. The first has attracted the most attention but is the less important for present concerns: the strategic consequences of the essential unity of the world’s oceans, which gave rise to the great heartland/rimland and land-power/sea-power debates that became the stuff of geopolitics, right down to the postwar theory of containment. The second, which subsequent commentators have largely ignored, concerned the spatial and temporal implosion of the globe: the integration of separate and coexisting world systems, each enjoying a relatively autonomous social facticity and expressing its own laws of historicity, into a singular post-Columbian world system.¹³³

In this essay, I have looked for a vocabulary and the dimensions of analysis that would allow us to ask sensible questions about possible postmodern tendencies in the world polity. I have done so by unpacking the process whereby the most distinct feature of modernity in international politics came to be: a particular form of territoriality—disjoint, fixed, and mutually exclusive—as the basis for organizing political life. In conclusion, I summarize briefly the main findings of this endeavor and point toward some methodological as well as substantive implications for future research.

To summarize, the concept of differentiation was the key that allowed us to uncover the historically specific and salient characteristics of modern territoriality. Accepting that the international polity, by definition, is an anarchy, that is, a segmented realm, on what basis is it segmented? On what basis are its units individuated? What drove the peculiarly modern form of individuation? And what were its implications for the international collectivity? The mode of differentiation within any collectivity, I suggested, is nothing less than the central focus of the epochal study of rule.

The modern mode of differentiation resulted from changes in several domains of social life, which are irreducible to one another. These domains included material environments (ecodemographics, relations of production, relations of force); the matrix of constraints and opportunities within which social actors interacted (the structure of property rights, divergences between

132. See H. J. Mackinder, “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *Geographical Journal* 23 (April 1904).

133. As Mackinder predicted, “Every explosion of social forces, instead of being dissipated in a surrounding circuit of unknown space and barbaric chaos, will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political and economic organism of the world will be shattered in consequence.” See *ibid.*, p. 421.

private and social rates of return, coalitional possibilities among major social actors); and social epistemes (political doctrines, political metaphysics, spatial constructs). Each was undergoing change in accordance with its own endogenous logic. But these changes also interacted, sometimes sequentially, sometimes functionally, sometimes simply via the mechanism of diffusion, that is, of conscious and unconscious borrowing. Whereas individual strands of change can be traced back almost at will, at a certain point the new forms crystallized fairly quickly and shaped all subsequent developments.

The domain of social epistemes, the mental equipment by means of which people reimagined their collective existence, played a critical role.¹³⁴ The specificity of modern territoriality is closely linked to the specificity of single-point perspective. Social epistemes did not, however, act as some ethereal *Zeitgeist* but through specific social carriers and practices. Social epistemes affected outcomes via the mechanisms of social empowerment and delegitimation and by informing such doctrinal contrivances as extraterritoriality, on which the society of territorial state formations came to rest.

Our case offers some methodological implications for the study of transformation today. One methodological point follows directly from the relative autonomy of the diverse domains wherein past change occurred. Clearly, different bodies of contemporary international relations theory are better equipped to elucidate different domains of contemporary change and continuity. Neorealism is very good on the endogenous logics of the relations of force, but it is even more reductionist than most modern Marxisms when it comes to appreciating the role of social epistemology. The microeconomics of institutions provides great insight into strategic behavior, but it is silent on the origins of the social preferences that give it substantive meaning. Cultural theories are virtually alone in addressing the role of spatial imageries, but typically they neglect the effect of micromotives, and so on. Each, therefore, can become a “grand theory” only by discounting or ignoring altogether the integrity of those domains of social life that its premises do not encompass. Nor are the various bodies of extant theory in any sense additive, so that we could arrive at a grand theory by steps. In short, while there may be law-like generalizations *in* the medieval-to-modern transformation, there are none *of* it. Accordingly, understanding that transformation—and presumably any analogous shift that may be taking place today—requires an epistemological posture that is quite different from the imperious claims of most current bodies of international relations theory. It requires, as Quentin Skinner characterizes it, “a willingness to emphasize the local and the contingent, a desire to underline the extent to which our own concepts and attitude have been shaped by particular historical

134. There is no adequate English translation of Duby's notion *l'imaginaire sociale*, which I draw on here; his translator renders it as “collective imaginings.” See Duby, *The Three Orders*, p. vii.

circumstances, and a correspondingly strong dislike . . . of all overarching theories and singular schemes of explanation.”¹³⁵

A second methodological point follows directly from the first. If it is true that the intellectual apparatus by which we study fundamental change is itself implicated in a world that may be changing, how valid and viable is that intellectual quest to begin with? This is particularly vexing in attempts to understand the prospects of postmodernity, insofar as prevailing scientific approaches are part and parcel of the very definition of modernity.¹³⁶ Not being a philosopher of science, my answer perforce remains somewhat unschooled. Nevertheless, I find fault with the postmodernist epistemologues and the dominant positivists alike.

For the postmodernists, modern scientific method represents either force or farce. In its stead, they retreat into a fetishistic parent(he[re]tical) obscurantism that they impute to poststructuralist/postmodernist method.¹³⁷ But their “move”—to borrow one of their “privileged” terms—is deeply misguided, as a simple example will show. In discussions of cultural transformations toward postmodern forms, few insights are accorded greater significance than Einstein’s theories of relativity. This is because relativity shattered one of the fixed and even absolute pillars of modernist thought by revolutionizing human understanding of space and time. Yet Einstein’s theories were soon confirmed: the special theory by laboratory experiments and the general theory during the eclipse of 1919, all in accordance with fairly straightforward scientific methods. What Einstein did was to formulate an entirely new and different *ontology* of the physical world. Indeed, he never even accepted the implications for *epistemology* that others drew from his work, as illustrated by his often-cited rejoinder to the uncertainty principle, that God does not play dice with the universe. Hence, it is entirely possible to say things of importance about postmodernity, and even to have contributed to the historical condition of postmodernity, without degenerating into what passes for postmodernist method.

As for the dominant positivist posture in our field, it is reposed in deep Newtonian slumber wherein method rules, epistemology is often confused with method, and the term “ontology” typically draws either blank stares or bemused smiles. I choose the Newtonian analogy deliberately and with care. Gerald Feinberg’s depiction helps to show why it is useful: “Newtonian mechanics by itself did not attempt to explain what forces might exist in nature, but rather described how motion occurred *when the force was known*.”¹³⁸

135. Quentin Skinner, *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 12.

136. For a superb discussion of these issues, see Seyla Benhabib, “Epistemologies of Postmodernism: A Rejoinder to Jean-Francois Lyotard,” *New German Critique* 33 (Fall 1984), pp. 103–26.

137. For examples, consult the extensive bibliography in Pauline Rosenau, “Once Again into the Fray.”

138. Gerald Feinberg, *What is the World Made Of? Atoms, Leptons, Quarks, and Other Tantalizing Particles* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1978), p. 9, emphasis added.

Merely by substituting “structures” or “preferences” for “forces” in that sentence, one obtains an apt rendering of prevailing international relations theories today.¹³⁹ They describe how “motion” occurs—*given* a set of structures or preferences. Accordingly, these theories cannot, ontologically, apprehend fundamental transformation, for the issue of “what forces [structures/preferences] might exist in nature” is precisely what the study of transformation is all about.¹⁴⁰

Our examination of the emergence of modern territoriality also has substantive implications for the study of potential transformation in the international system today. A full application of the historically grounded conceptual framework sketched out here is well beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, I close with an overall analytical lead, as well as some working hypotheses about each of the illustrative cases with which I began.

The preceding analysis suggests that the unbundling of territoriality is a productive venue for the exploration of contemporary international transformation. Historically, as we have seen, this is the institutional means through which the collectivity of sovereigns has sought to compensate for the “social defects” that inhere in the modern construct of territoriality.¹⁴¹ This negation of the exclusive territorial form has been the locale in which international sociality throughout the modern era has been embedded. The terrain of unbundled territoriality, therefore, is the place wherein a rearticulation of international political space would be occurring today.

Take first the EC, in which the process of unbundling territoriality has gone further than anywhere else. Neorealism ascribes its origins to strategic bipolarity; microeconomic institutionalism examines how the national interests and policy preferences of the major European states are reflected in patterns of EC collaboration; and neofunctionalism anticipated the emergence of a supranational statism. Each contains a partial truth. From the vantage of the

139. Using Kratochwil’s typology, mainstream international relations theory traffics mostly in “the world of brute facts,” or the palpable here and now; it discounts “the world of intention and meaning”; and it largely ignores altogether “the world of institutional facts.” See Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chap. 1.

140. Structurationist theory is one recent attempt to formulate an ontology of international relations that is predicated on the need to endogenize the origins of structures and preferences, if transformation is to be understood. See Alexander Wendt, “The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory,” *International Organization* 41 (Summer 1987), pp. 335–70; David Dessler, “What’s at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?” *International Organization* 43 (Summer 1989), pp. 441–73; John Gerard Ruggie, “International Structure and International Transformation: Space, Time, and Method,” in Czempiel and Rosenau, *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges*, pp. 21–35; Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall, “Institutions and International Order,” in *ibid.*, pp. 51–73; and Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46 (Spring 1992), pp. 391–425.

141. Once again, I have in mind a Lockean understanding, namely those “Inconveniences which disorder Mens properties in the state of Nature,” the avoidance of which is said to drive “Men [to] unite into Societies.” See Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, sec. 2.136. These “social defects” thus may be thought of as the generic form of international “collective action problems,” of which various types of externalities, public goods, and dilemmas of strategic interaction are but specific manifestations.

present analysis, however, a very different attribute of the EC comes into view: it may constitute the first “multiperspectival polity” to emerge since the advent of the modern era. That is to say, it is increasingly difficult to visualize the conduct of international politics among community members, and to a considerable measure even domestic politics, as though it took place from a starting point of twelve separate, single, fixed viewpoints. Nor can models of strategic interaction do justice to this particular feature of the EC, since the collectivity of members as a singularity, in addition to the central institutional apparatus of the EC, has become party to the strategic interaction game. To put it differently, the constitutive processes whereby each of the twelve defines its own identity—and identities are logically prior to preferences—increasingly endogenize the existence of the other eleven. Within this framework, European leaders may be thought of as entrepreneurs of alternative political identities—EC Commission President Delors, for example, is at this very moment exploiting the tension between community widening and community deepening so as to catalyze the further reimagining of European collective existence.¹⁴² There is no indication, however, that this reimagining will result in a federal state of Europe—which would merely replicate on a larger scale the typical modern political form.

The concept of multiperspectival institutional forms offers a lens through which to view other possible instances of international transformation today. Consider the global system of transnationalized microeconomic links. Perhaps the best way to describe it, when seen from our vantage point, is that these links have created a nonterritorial “region” in the world economy—a decentered yet integrated space-of-flows, operating in real time, which exists alongside the spaces-of-places that we call national economies. These conventional spaces-of-places continue to engage in external economic relations with one another, which we continue to call trade, foreign investment, and the like, and which are more or less effectively mediated by the state. In the nonterritorial global economic region, however, the conventional distinctions between internal and external once again are exceedingly problematic, and any given state is but one constraint in corporate global strategic calculations. This is the world in which IBM is Japan’s largest computer exporter, and Sony is the largest exporter of television sets from the United States. It is the world in which Brothers Industries, a Japanese concern assembling typewriters in Bartlett, Tennessee, brings an antidumping case before the U.S. International Trade Commission against Smith Corona, an American firm that imports typewriters into the United States from its offshore facilities in Singapore and Indonesia. It is the world in which even the U.S. Pentagon is baffled by the problem of how to maintain the national identity of “its” defense-industrial base.¹⁴³ This nonterri-

142. This process is by no means free of controversy or resistance, as a recent London front-page headline (“Delors Plan to Rule Europe,”) makes clear—but historical change never has been. See *Sunday Telegraph*, 3 May 1992, p. 1.

143. At the time of writing, the Pentagon is considering, among other options, a “reconstitution” model for the U.S. defense-industrial base, now that large and long-term procurement runs are

torial global economic region is a world, in short, that is premised on what Lattimore described as the “sovereign importance of movement,” not of place. The long-term significance of this region, much like that of the medieval trade fairs, may reside in its novel behavioral and institutional forms and in the novel space-time constructs that these forms embody, not in any direct challenge that it poses as a potential substitute for the existing system of rule.

Consider also the transformative potential of global ecology. The human environment is of central importance for future planetary politics from many perspectives. Central among them is its potential to comprise a new and very different social episteme—a new set of spatial, metaphysical, and doctrinal constructs through which the visualization of collective existence on the planet is shaped. This episteme would differ in form from modern territoriality and its accoutrements insofar as the underlying structural premise of ecology is holism and mutual dependence of parts. The difficulty is in tapping this social epistemological dimension empirically. Nonetheless, it may be possible to infer from state behavior whether and to what extent it is coming to express new and different principles of international legitimacy, for example. The concept of international custodianship is an obvious candidate for closer scrutiny. Under it, no other agency competes with or attempts to substitute for the state, but the state itself acts in a manner that expresses not merely its own interests and preferences but also its role as the embodiment and enforcer of community norms—a multiperspectival role, in short, somewhat in the manner of medieval rulers vis-à-vis cosmopolitan bodies of religion and law.¹⁴⁴ Another possible approach is to examine the impact of real or simulated environmental catastrophes on the thinking of policymakers and on the popular imagination at large: Chernobyl, the Antarctic ozone hole, and global warming scenarios come to mind.¹⁴⁵

Finally, this analysis also potentially enriches the field of international security studies. To cite but one example, despite the severe dislocations that have accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union’s East European empire and then of the Soviet Union itself, no one in any position of authority anywhere in Europe to date has advocated, or is quietly preparing for, a return to a system of competitive bilateral alliances. Thus far, all of the options on the table concerning the external mechanisms for achieving security in Europe,

unlikely to persist widely. It has proved extraordinarily difficult, however, to decide whether what should be available for reconstitution should be defined by ownership, locale, commitment to the economy, nationality of researchers, or what have you—the divergence between those indicators of national identity being increasingly pronounced—and to determine whether, once defined, such units will actually exist and be available for reconstitution when needed.

144. Allott considers several provisions of the maritime Exclusive Economic Zone to exhibit “delegated powers,” under which coastal states act “not only in the mystical composite personage of the international legislator but also in performing the function of the executive branch of their own self-government.” See Philip Allott, “Power Sharing in the Law of the Sea,” *American Journal of International Law* 77 (January 1983), p. 24.

145. On the epistemic import of the Antarctic ozone hole, see Karen Therese Litfin, “Power and Knowledge in International Environmental Politics: The Case of Stratospheric Ozone Depletion,” Ph.D. diss., Department of Political Science, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992.

East and West, have been multilateral in form.¹⁴⁶ These mechanisms include NATO reaching out institutionally to the EC via the West European Union on one side; and, on the other side, to the East European states via the newly created North Atlantic Cooperation Council, comprising the membership of the two formerly adversarial alliances, as well as to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.¹⁴⁷ This development suggests a hypothesis for further exploration. Within the industrialized world, and partially beyond, we may be witnessing emerging fragments of international security communities—alongside the traditional war system that continues elsewhere. These security communities are not integrated in the sense that the ill-fated European Defense Community would have been, but they are more extensively institutionalized than the “pluralistic security communities” of integration studies in the 1950s.¹⁴⁸ Once more the term “multiperspectival” seems appropriate. Within the scope of these security communities the imbalances of advantage that animated positional wars throughout the modern era now are resolved by more communitarian mechanisms instead. Such mechanisms do not imply the abolition of the use of force; they do imply, however, that the use of force is subject to greater collective legitimation.

It is truly astonishing that the concept of territoriality has been so little studied by students of international politics; its neglect is akin to never looking at the ground that one is walking on. I have argued that disjoint, mutually exclusive, and fixed territoriality most distinctively defines modernity in international politics and that changes in few other factors can so powerfully transform the modern international polity. What is more, I have tried to show that unbundled territoriality is a useful terrain for exploring the condition of postmodernity in international politics, and I have suggested some ways in which that might be done. The emergence of multiperspectival institutional forms was identified as a key dimension in understanding the possibility of postmodernity.

On reflection, though, the reason territoriality is taken for granted is not hard to guess. Samuel Becket put it well in *Endgame*: “You’re on earth, there’s no cure for that.” Unbundled territoriality is not located some place else; but it is becoming another place.

146. John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organization* 46 (Summer 1992), pp. 561–98. Waltz distinguishes between internal and external balancing mechanisms in *Theory of International Politics*.

147. Based on personal interviews at NATO headquarters, Brussels, May 1992. Japan has undertaken a slow but systematic process of its own to normalize its security relations by means of multilateralization: through the postministerial conferences of the Association of South East Nations, for example, as well as through the recent legislation permitting Japan to participate in United Nations peacekeeping forces (based on personal interviews at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, May 1992).

148. The classic study is Karl W. Deutsch et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957).