The Elements of the Structures of International Systems

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Abstract Structural international theory has become largely a matter of elaborating "the effects of anarchy." Simple hunter-gatherer band societies, however, perfectly fit the Waltzian model of anarchic orders but do not experience security dilemmas or warfare, pursue relative gains, or practice self-help balancing. They thus demonstrate that "the effects of anarchy," where they exist, are not effects *of anarchy*—undermining mainstream structural international theory as it has been practiced for the past three decades. Starting over, I ask what one needs to differentiate how actors are arranged in three simple anarchic orders: forager band societies, Hobbesian states of nature, and great power states systems. The answer turns out to look nothing like the dominant tripartite (ordering principle, functional differentiation, distribution of capabilities) conception. Based on these cases, I present a multidimensional framework of the elements of social and political structures that dispenses with anarchy, is truly structural (in contrast to the independent-variable agent-centric models of Waltz and Wendt), and highlights complexity, diversity, and regular change in the structures of international systems.

Anarchy is regularly presented as the heart and soul (and most of the body) of the structure of international systems. The discipline of international relations (IR) focuses so centrally on the pernicious effects of anarchy—its dangers or perils[1]—that Barnett and Sikkink plausibly contend that "the study of international relations has largely concerned the study of states and the effects of anarchy on their foreign policies."[2] Roth argues, with only slight exaggeration, that "the core debate

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1. Google Scholar searches in May 2012 for "dangers of anarchy" and "international relations" and for "perils of anarchy" and "international relations" produced nearly sixty and more than 325 results.

2. Barnett and Sikkink 2008, 62. (Although they go on to argue that the "gravitational pull" of anarchy is declining, it remains very strong, especially in mainstream structural theory.)

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between the various paradigms of international relations theory concerns the extent to which anarchy … can be either managed, mitigated, or overcome."[3]

The extensive literature on the effects of anarchy certainly has been contested, often and vigorously. Nonetheless, claims that anarchy has determinate effects remain common[4] and anarchy continues to be widely viewed as the (sole) "ordering principle" of international systems. My challenge to these persistent (mis)understandings is distinctive in six ways. I examine an empirical case, "forager societies," that perfectly fits the Waltzian model of anarchic orders but does not experience security dilemmas or warfare, practice self-help balancing, or pursue relative gains. I criticize IR's dominant conception of structure (rather than particular substantive theories). I address the elements of international structures (rather than particular types or questions of ontology). I advance an alternative account of those elements. That account dispenses with anarchy. And I emphasize the systemic nature of structural theories.

Forager Societies

Hunter-gatherers, the simplest type of human society, vary in form from "the Calusa of southern Florida, who had substantial material wealth and a fully developed class system … [to peoples with] almost nothing in the way of material possessions and minimal social stratification."[5] Hunter-gatherers usually are divided into relatively simple and complex subtypes. Binford distinguishes "foragers" (who "have high residential mobility, low-bulk inputs, and regular daily food-procurement strategies") from "collectors" (who, facing "incongruent distributions of critical resources" "move goods to consumers with generally fewer residential moves").[6] Woodburn calls these immediate-return and delayed-return societies.[7]

I focus exclusively on simple immediate-return or forager societies, interchangeably using the labels "bands" and "foragers" (which draw attention to their principal social unit and the material basis of their way of life). More precisely, by *forager societies* I mean a type defined ostensively by nomadic bands of three African peoples that live in desert or dry savannah environments (the !Kung [San, Ju'hoansi, Basarwa] of Botswana and Namibia, the G/wi of Botswana, and the Hadza of Tanzania) and three non-African forest dwellers (the Aché of Paraguay,

3. Roth 2008, 142.

4. A Google Scholar search in May 2012 for "effects of anarchy" and "international relations" yielded almost 250 results since 2000.

5. Burch and Ellanna 1994, 3. See also Kelly 1995; and Lee and Daly 1999b, who provide nearly seventy brief ethnographic surveys. Bicchieri 1972 collects eleven much more detailed case studies.

6. Binford 1980, 9, 10, 15.

7. Woodburn 1982 and 2005. See also Meillassoux 1981, 14–17; and Leacock and Lee 1982, 7–9.

the Eastern Penan of Borneo, and the Nayaka of southwestern India).[8] This provides an empirical test while avoiding the possibility of working with an idiosyncratic individual case.

Although some readers will be skeptical of what follows, my account relies on standard models in anthropology and archaeology[9] and is supported by extensive detailed citations. Furthermore, after laying out the case I address alternative appropriations of anthropology in IR.

Ecology, Demography, and Economy

Today, most foragers have been forced to the edge of extinction or into sedentary life. (Nomadic/foraging Penan and Aché bands probably no longer exist and most !Kung, G/wi, Hadza, and Nayaka have adopted partially or fully sedentary lives.) Until recently, though, they were common across much of the globe.

Foragers thrive in, and today are confined to, environments that are hostile to agriculturalists and pastoralists. Extremely low population density and regular movement are required to avoid overtaxing the land. For example, an Aché band of twenty requires about a hundred square miles of forest.[10]

Bands typically number from about fifteen to several dozen individuals, living in households of nuclear (or slightly more extended) families.[11] Bands, however, are not kinship units.[12] Related and unrelated households and individuals regularly change bands,[13] following "lines of dissent rather than those of descent."[14] Bands are "open, flexible, and highly variable in composition."[15]

The simplicity of forager life makes subsistence "at least routine and reliable and at best surprisingly abundant."[16] Sahlins famously called foragers "the original affluent society."[17] They "are poor only in the sense that they do not accumu-

8. Binford 1980 uses the G/wi as his principal example and draws comparisons with the !Kung, Aché, and Penan. Woodburn 1982 focuses on the Hadza, with comparisons to the Mbuti, !Kung, Panaram, and Batek. I have added the Nayaka based on Bird-David 1992 and 1994.

9. Binford 1980 has more than a thousand cites on Google Scholar and almost 500 Web of Science citations. Woodburn 1982 has more than 400 and 200 citations, respectively.

10. Clastres 1998, 218.

11. See Lee and Daly 1999a, 3; Lee 1979, 54–71; Clastres 1998, 217; Silberbauer 1981, 295; Woodburn 1968; and Sellato 1994, 143–44.

12. Bands often practice "universal kinship," treating all members as kin even in the absence of relations of marriage or descent. See Barnard 2002, 11–12, and 1992, 280; Kaare and Woodburn 1999, 202; Silberbauer 1981, 309; Lee 1986; Sellato 2007, 74; and Meillassoux 1981, 19.

13. See Lee and DeVore 1968, 7; Woodburn 1968, 103, and 1982, 435; Silberbauer 1982, 24–26; and Bird-David 1994, 591. Most !Kung individuals do not live in the band into which they were born. Lee 1979, 54, 338–39.

14. Turnbull 1968, 137.

15. Woodburn 1968, 103. See also Silberbauer 1982, 24; Bird-David 1994, 591; Tanaka and Sugawara 1999, 196; and Sellato 2007, 74, 145.

16. Lee 1968, 30. See also Silberbauer 1982, 24; Bird-David 1992, 32; and Gowdy 1999, 392.

17. Sahlins 1968.

late property."[18] "All the people's wants (such as they are) are generally easily satisfied."[19]

Individuals and families privately possess simple tools and small personal items. "Property," however, is minimal—more by social choice than technological or ecological necessity. Sanctions against accumulation "apply even to the lightest objects such as beads, arrowheads or supplies of arrow poison."[20]

Bands do collectively practice limited territoriality.[21] For example, among the !Kung bands have rights to use and control *n!ores*, parcels of land around waterholes.[22] But the same norms that require asking permission to camp in another band's *n!ore* ordinarily require permission to be granted.

Sharing resources is central to forager life. "All individuals have an automatic right of access to ungarnered resources, [but] they are elaborately constrained about how they can use them. Garnered resources have to be shared and used immediately."[23] Plant products and small animals may be consumed individually, often while foraging. Large game, though, the most prized resource in band societies, is shared by everyone.[24]

Although hunting takes place individually or in small groups, the meat and its distribution belong to the community. Bands typically possess "elaborate formal rules dissociating the hunter from his kill."[25] Among the Aché, everyone in the band except the hunter and his parents gets a share.[26] Food "is, above all, a good that circulates."[27]

Politics

In forager societies, authority, like resources, is dispersed rather than concentrated. "The essence of this way of life is . . . communal sharing of food resources and of power."[28]

"Foragers are characterized by minimal social differentiation and a strong ethos of equality and sharing"[29] and by the "virtual absence of laws and social hierarchy."[30] Equality, which "does not have to be earned . . . but is intrinsically pres-

18. Woodburn 1988, 39.
19. Sahlins 1968, 89. See also Lee 1984, 51–53; Tanaka and Sugawara 1999, 196; and Clastres 1977, 164. Kaplan 2000, however, emphasizes issues of food quality and vulnerability to climatic stress.
20. Woodburn, 1982, 442. See also Lee 1982, 54; and Clastres 1972, 140–49.
21. See Kaare and Woodburn 1999, 202; Barnard 1992, 242; Clastres 1998, 217; and Needham 1971, 204.
22. See Lee 1979, 333–39; Barnard 1992, 103, 242; and Biesele and Royal-/o/oo 1999, 206, 208.
23. Woodburn 2005, 23.
24. See Kaare and Woodburn 1999, 202; Lee 1984, 45, and 1979, 336; and Wiessner 1982, 62–63.
25. Woodburn 1982, 440. See also Lee 1984, 50.
26. See Clastres 1972, 170–72; and Hill and Hurtado 1999, 93–94.
27. Clastres 1972, 171.
28. Lee 1982, 54–55. See also Barnard 2002, 7; Woodburn 2005, 23; and Bird-David 1992, 31.
29. Johnson and Earle 2000, 89.
30. Sugawara 2005, 107. See also Woodburn 1982, 434; and Leacock and Lee 1982, 8–9.

ent as an entitlement of all,"[31] "is actively promoted and inequality is actively resisted through a set of coherent interlocked and mutually reinforcing institutional procedures."[32]

"Relative age is one of the few status distinctions that can be made."[33] Even gender inequality is extremely limited.[34] Men monopolize hunting[35] but they have neither political nor domestic control over their wives or daughters, even in matters of marriage and divorce.

Foragers highly value autonomy, but they seek it cooperatively rather than competitively.[36] Generalized interdependence prevents dependence on any particular individual, family, or band.

Leaders, who vary with time and topic, "aid in group decision-making, but . . . do not hold power."[37] Bands have neither political nor ritual/religious offices. All adults may participate in discussions leading to a decision, which typically is taken by consensus.[38] And those decisions are neither formally binding nor centrally enforced[39] (although informal social pressures[40] do produce high levels of compliance).

Flexible band composition, minimal property, and consensual decision making mitigate conflict. Bands also emphasize "early detection of conflict and its treatment by means of a number of tension-relieving processes which reinforce cooperation and harmony."[41] Exit is a last resort, restoring harmony in the band and providing dissatisfied individuals a fresh start at little cost.

Foragers, like all societies, experience violent crime.[42] But they suffer no internal security dilemma, despite the absence of formal sanctions.[43] If informal sanctions and reintegrative conflict resolution fail, exit is the standard solution, even for murder.

31. Woodburn 1982, 446. See also Wiessner 1986, 31.
32. Woodburn 2005, 21. See also Boehm 1999, 60; Kelly 1995, 296; and Lee 1982, 53.
33. Lee 1984, 63. Among the Hadza, "principles of equality apply even between . . . father and son." Kaare and Woodburn 1999, 202.
34. See Lee 1979, chap. 9 and 11; Endicott 1999; Becker 2003; Tanaka and Sugawara 1999, 197; and Woodburn 2005, 23.
35. The Hadza also have exclusively male ritual associations. Woodburn 205, 26.
36. See Ingold 1999, 405, 407–8; Kaare and Woodburn 1999, 202; Kelly 1995, 296; Bird-David 1994, 586; and Sellato 1994, 145, 152.
37. Barnard 2002, 9. See also Hill and Hurtado 1999, 94; Clastres 1998, 105–8; Sellato 1994, 150–51; Lee 1982, 45–49; and Silberbauer 1982, 29.
38. See Needham 1972, 180; Silberbauer 1981, 169, 188, and 1982, 26–34; Hoffman 1986, 36; Barnard 1992, 108; Endicott 1999, 416; Hill and Hurtado 1999, 94; and Tanaka and Sugawara 1999, 197–98.
39. See Clastres 1977, chap. 7; Lee 1979, 343–48, and 1982, 45–52; Silberbauer 1981, 273–74, 316; Sellato 1994, 144; and Barnard 2002, 9–10.
40. Boehm 1999, 72–86 discusses sanctioning in egalitarian societies.
41. Silberbauer 1981, 318. See also Lee 1979, 371–87ff.
42. See Lee 1979, 376–97; Woodburn 1979, 252; and Clastres 1998, 269–72. The !Kung do have a high murder rate. Lee 1979, 370–71, 387–97. Nonetheless, they "do not fight much, but they do talk a great deal." Lee 1979, 372.
43. See Woodburn 1979, 252; and Silberbauer 1981, 318. Informal but socially sanctioned executions, however, do occur. See Lee 1979, 392–95; and Clastres 1998, 259–60.

Amity and sharing, not fear and balancing, characterize relations within the band. Self-help is not the norm. Feuding is unknown. Revenge killing is rare. Even enmity is atypical and usually short lived.

Inter-Band Relations

Foragers are "warless societies."[44] In relations between and across bands, foragers neither experience security dilemmas nor engage in "warfare," broadly understood as organized violent intergroup conflict (including not only "war" with "armies" but also raiding and violent feuding).

Warfare simply does not exist among the !Kung, Hadza, G/wi, Penan, and Nayaka. One cannot say much more about such a negative existential fact—except to challenge others to present contrary evidence. But in examining nearly two hundred sources, some sixty of which are cited here, I found not a single documented instance of warfare among these five peoples.[45]

Aché bands do fight—but only in accidental encounters, and even then only when flight is impossible.[46] They do not go to war, set out on raids, or in any other way intentionally attack one another. Such violence, unplanned on both sides, is not warfare in any serious sense of the term.

Special relationships do develop between bands. These are socially important and enhance security in times of climatic stress. They do not, however, involve balancing. And, except among the Aché, enmity between bands is unknown.

Relations with sedentary peoples follow different rules. Fear and uncertainty, however, provoke hiding rather than balancing. The Hadza, for example, practice defense by "avoidance. They protect themselves by scattering . . . [They] can and do avoid most serious inter-group conflict with enviable ease."[47]

Forager Warlessness

Students of IR usually turn to anthropology for evidence of the cross-cultural pervasiveness of warfare.[48] Foragers present a striking exception that reflects the struc-

44. Kelly 2000.

45. Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1974, 437, and 1979, 139–40) quotes an old Hadza informant, recorded in the late 1930s, recalling group fighting. That "fighting," however, sounds like a ritualized status competition—a violent game rather than warfare. It certainly was unrelated to enmity, fear, or a security dilemma. Quite the contrary, the victors afterwards visited the vanquished, as their guests, and hunted with them. (Analogously, club fighting contests among the Aché "caused deaths, but also built friendships." Hill and Hurtado 1996, 73.)

46. See Clastres 1972, 161–63, and 1998, 218, 237.

47. Woodburn 1979, 250. See also Woodburn 1988, 35. There are, however, records of violent conflict between southern African foragers and intruding pastoralists. Keeley 1997, 132–37.

48. See Masters 1964; Snyder 2002; and Gat 2006. Also, Buzan and Little's discussion (2000, chap. 6.) of hunter gatherer bands, which is perhaps the best-known account in the recent IR literature, has a rather different referent (as a result of their interest in what they call pre-international systems). Buzan and Little do not distinguish foragers from collectors. They deal principally with prehistoric bands (for

tured, characteristic behavior of a distinct type of society, not accident or statistical noise. Warless societies, although atypical, "are not scarce in the world ethnographic sample."[49] Ross finds that "wars with other societies take place rarely or never" in eighteen of eighty-five nonstate societies in his database.[50] Ember and Ember find a similar pattern in a dataset of nearly 200 societies.[51]

IR, however, has largely ignored forager warlessness—or even denied it. For example, Gat claims that "fighting is recorded across the whole range of hunter-gatherer societies"; that both internal and interband violence is the norm "across the range of hunter-gatherer peoples."[52] In fact, though, foragers are a distinct type of hunter-gatherer society and warlessness is essential to their way of life.

Gat does question "the apparent absence of warfare" among the !Kung and the Hadza.[53] But he merely mentions the Hadza in passing and among the !Kung documents murder not warfare.[54] Nowhere in his 800-page book does Gat document a single instance of warfare among foragers.

Gat does claim that the fieldwork on these societies "involves a curious selective blindness to whole aspects of the evidence we possess about hunter-gatherers."[55] The supporting note, however, reveals that "evidence" to be small parts of three books on Paleolithic peoples that, as Gat puts it of the third, "[take] no account of the anthropological studies of recent hunter-gatherers."[56]

Gat also references "Keeley's excellent *War Before Civilization*."[57] But Keeley offers no evidence of warfare among the !Kung or the Mbuti, the foraging peoples he addresses. In fact, Keeley acknowledges "real exceptions" to the general prevalence of warfare, amounting to about 5 percent of cases, primarily among nomadic bands in isolated or hostile environments[58]—that is, immediate-return foragers.

Forager warlessness not only is undeniable but its significance cannot be explained away. Keeley suggests that the "seeming peacefulness" of foragers may be "more a consequence of the tiny size of their social units and the large scale implied by our normal definition of warfare than of any real pacifism."[59] But warlessness should not be confused with pacifism. And warring is common among nonforager societies of the same size. Keeley also suggests that "armed conflict between social units

which we lack evidence of most of their political practices). And they rely heavily on Australian examples, which often differ from hunter-gatherers in other regions. (It is not a coincidence that none of the six exemplary peoples in my ostensive definition of foragers are Australian.)

49. Kelly 2000, 37.
50. Ross 1983, 179 and tab. 1.
51. Ember and Ember 1997.
52. Gat 2006, 14, and 2009, 576.
53. Gat 2006, 11.
54. Ibid., 71, 75, 79, 130.
55. Ibid., 12.
56. Ibid., 675.
57. Ibid., 12.
58. Keeley 1997, 28.
59. Ibid., 29.

. . . often is just terminologically disguised as feuding or homicide."[60] But feuding is not documented in any of the forager societies I examine. And homicide is not armed conflict between social units.

Bands, despite their limited functions and flexible membership, really are "units." They regularly persist over multiple generations, take collective decisions on the major matters of social importance, and interact with one another as corporate actors. Inter-band relations are truly analogous to interstate relations. There is no "political organization above the level of the band, which is completely autonomous in its decisions."[61] Finally, foragers are not formerly warring peoples that have been "pacified" by colonial or state authorities. Forager life depends on separation from, rather than subordination to, more complex societies.[62]

Binding through Sharing: A Logic of Anarchy

Foragers perfectly fit the Waltzian model of anarchic orders. Seeking survival and autonomy, they interact without government or hierarchy. Functional differentiation is minimal among both individuals and groups. All men are equal—and equally armed. But bands and their members seek security and autonomy, and usually achieve it, by circulating rather than accumulating goods and authority—by binding themselves to, rather than balancing against, other individuals, families, and bands. What I suggest we call "binding through sharing" is, like self-help balancing, a reasonable strategy for pursuing security and autonomy in some (but not all) kinds of anarchic systems.

Sharing should not be romanticized. It "come[s] no more naturally to hunter-gatherers than to members of industrial society."[63] Efforts to evade the norm are common.[64] It is "imposed on the donor by the community," much like taxation.[65]

Nonetheless, sharing is an ordering principle. Interests, rationality, and even needs[66] have a particular character in sharing societies. Foragers pursue neither relative gains nor absolute gains but seek sufficiency and guaranteed access to whatever is socially available. Sharing even helps to explain the absence of coercive enforcement of collective decisions. "Coercion, the attempt to extract by force, represents a betrayal of the trust that underwrites the willingness to give."[67]

60. Ibid.
61. Sellato 1994, 144. See also Silberbauer 1981, 273; Bird-David 1994, 583; and Clastres 1998, 161.
62. See Clastres 1972, 139; and Woodburn 1988, 35.
63. Kelly 1995, 164.
64. See Woodburn 1998, 55; Lee 1984, 55; and Peterson 1993.
65. Woodburn 1982, 441.
66. The Nayaka "culturally construct their needs as the want of a share." Bird-David 1992, 31.
67. Ingold 1992, 42. See also Needham 1971, 204.

Starting Over

Foragers demonstrate, empirically, that "the effects of anarchy," where they exist, are not effects *of anarchy*. Standard arguments that "self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order"[68] and that "no amount of cooperation can eliminate the dominating logic of security competition"[69] are not even close to true.

This conclusion is hardly novel. Scholars have known at least since Wendt's classic article "Anarchy Is What States Make of It,"[70] published twenty years ago in this journal, that anarchy has pernicious effects only in conjunction with additional forces. This knowledge, however, has not penetrated very deeply into IR's practice. For example, a Google Scholar search in May 2012 for "logic of anarchy" and "international relations" produced more than 900 results since 2000.

Much of the explanation, I suspect, lies in the tendency of discredited theories to persist until replaced by something "better." Abandoning plainly inaccurate talk of the effects of anarchy is likely to require a new conception of the elements of structure—which I try to provide.

IR has no widely employed alternative to what I call the tripartite (ordering principle, functional differentiation, and distribution of capabilities) conception of the elements of structure that Waltz introduced. It grounds structural realism and is adopted by both neoclassical realists and neoliberals (as a starting point for analyses that examine nonstructural forces that alter "the effects of anarchy"). Constructivists often supplement this list—but typically in an ad hoc fashion. Features such as norms and identity have not been integrated into a widely employed general structural framework.[71]

Furthermore, standard applications of the tripartite conception privilege anarchy over functional differentiation and distribution of capabilities. Waltz claims that "two, and only two, types of structures are needed to cover societies of all sorts."[72] And scholars talk not only of the anarchic structure of international relations but also, surprisingly frequently, of the "structure of anarchy."[73] This reduces "structural" analysis to identifying the effects of anarchy—which I have just shown are nonexistent.

The solution, I suggest, is to go back to the beginning and construct from scratch a new conception of the elements of social and political structures. Understanding

68. Waltz 1979, 111.
69. Mearsheimer 2001, 53.
70. Wendt 1992.
71. I address Wendt, who some might see as a counterexample, below. (Historical materialism, although a well-developed alternative, is not widely employed in contemporary IR.)
72. Waltz 1979, 116. The index to *Theory of International Politics* includes as an entry under structure "anarchy and hierarchy as the only two types of."
73. See Ruggie 1983, 281 ("the deep structure of anarchy"); and Keohane 1986, 27 ("the basic structure of anarchy"). A Google Scholar search in May 2012 for "structure of anarchy" and "international relations" produced 160 results, almost three-quarters since 2000.

structure as "the mutual relation of the constituent parts or elements of a whole as determining its peculiar nature or character"[74]—a structure is "defined by the arrangement of the system's parts"[75]—I ask what in fact arranges social and political systems. The answer turns out to bear little relation to the tripartite conception that has dominated IR for three decades.

Foragers, States of Nature, and Great Power States Systems

Consider three simple anarchic societies: foragers, Hobbesian states of nature, and great power states systems. This set combines the "exception" of foragers with the models most frequently employed in discussing "the effects of anarchy." My working assumption is that the features needed to differentiate these systems will provide the rudiments of an adequate account of the elements of social and political structures.

In Hobbes's ideal-type state of nature, men live without government or any other "common Power to keep them all in awe."[76] There is no functional differentiation. And capabilities are distributed evenly.[77] But in forager societies as well, materially equal and largely undifferentiated actors interact in the absence of hierarchy. The tripartite conception thus does not—cannot—explain Hobbes's "warre of every man against every man."[78]

Hobbes himself, though, draws attention to three additional factors. Actors are driven by competition, diffidence, and glory (which generate violent conflict for gain, safety, and reputation).[79] Conflict is intensified by an "equality of hope in the attaining of our Ends"[80] that is frustrated by scarcity, greed, and vanity. And "notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place";[81] that is, there are no normative constraints on or justifications for behavior.

The Hobbesian war of all against all arises where equal, competitive, fearful, and vain egoists with equal hopes of attaining their ends interact in a world in which goods and respect are scarce and where rules do not exist (and could not be enforced if they did). Binding through sharing, by contrast, arises where equal actors seek sharing social relations in a world of material sufficiency governed by deeply egalitarian customary practices.

Great power states systems have still another structure. They are composed of unequal and functionally differentiated actors. States are differentiated from, and

74. *Oxford English Dictionary*. See also Waltz 1979, 79, 9; and Wendt 1999, 139, 252.
75. Waltz 1979, 80.
76. Hobbes 1985, chap. 15, par. 5.
77. Ibid., chap. 13, par. 1.
78. Ibid., par. 12.
79. Ibid., par. 6, 7.
80. Ibid., par. 3.
81. Ibid., par. 12.

formally superior to, nonstate actors and the leading states are (at least informally) superior to lesser states. States and nonstate actors perform different functions. And great powers "take on special responsibilities" as "specialists in managing system-wide affairs."[82]

Great power systems, like forager societies but unlike states of nature, are rule-governed. For example, structural realists assume that the "units" are sovereign states[83]—which, by definition, have different rights and responsibilities than other actors. Sovereignty is also essential to the stratification of great power systems. And capabilities, in contrast to "rule-less" states of nature, cannot be measured by material resources alone; the normative and institutional resources of sovereign states are important elements of their power.

Great power systems, like both forager societies and states of nature, are closely associated with a particular kind of dominant actor. Great powers, however, are very different from Hobbesian egoists and forager bands.

Finally, great power systems have no single behavioral logic. Great powers balance among themselves. In relations with nonstate actors, however, they exercise sovereign rights and prerogatives. In dealings with lesser powers they often establish hierarchical domination. Weak states typically bandwagon (or hide). And nonstate actors are largely precluded from self-help action.[84]

At least six elements are necessary to capture the differences in the arrangement and characteristic behaviors of these three simple anarchic societies.

1. Stratification: the layered and ranked arrangement of social positions.
2. Functional differentiation, which defines and allocates social functions.
3. Unit differentiation, which generates social actors and distributes them across positions.
4. Norms and institutions: rules, roles, and practices that regulate relations and help to constitute actors of a particular type.
5. "Geotechnics": the material dimension of social positions and relations, conceptualized in terms of geography and technology.
6. Polarity: the number of great powers in a system.

Table 1 compares tripartite and multidimensional representations of the structures of these three simple anarchic societies. Before addressing each element, though, I want to return briefly to anarchy.

82. Waltz 1979, 198, 197.

83. See Mearsheimer 2001, 30–31; and Waltz 1979, 95–96, 116.

84. Waltz presents great power systems as lacking hierarchy and composed of undifferentiated units that act in the same ways. This reading, whatever analytical purposes it may serve, is not a fruitful simplification of the structure (arrangement) of great power systems. It gets everything wrong; even backward. There is perhaps no more striking illustration of the inadequacy of the tripartite conception: it fundamentally misrepresents the structure of the international system that it treats as exemplary.

TABLE 1. *Two representations of the structures of three simple anarchical systems*

	Forager societies	*Hobbesian states of nature*	*Great power states systems*
Tripartite conception (Waltz)			
Ordering principle	Anarchy	Anarchy	Anarchy
Functional differentiation	None	None	None
Polarity	Multipolar	Multipolar	Multipolar or bipolar
Characteristic behavior	Self-help balancing	Self-help balancing	Self-help balancing
Multidimensional conception			
Stratification	Unstratified	Unstratified	Stratified
Functional differentiation	None	None	States, great powers
Dominant unit type	Bands	Individual egoists	States, great powers
Norms and institutions	Customary rules	None	Sovereignty, international law
Geotechnics	Low tech, local	Low tech, local	High tech, large scale
Polarity	Unpolarized (no great powers)	Unpolarized (no great powers)	Multipolar, bipolar, or unipolar
Characteristic behavior	Binding through sharing	War of all against all	Balancing and bandwagoning

Anarchy and Structure

Anarchy, I have shown, is not an "ordering principle" in any plausible sense of that term. "Anarchic orders" run the gamut from binding through sharing to the war of all against all.

Neither is anarchy the logical opposite of (or in practice incompatible with) hierarchy. The stratification of great power systems is central to their structure.

What then is the structural significance of anarchy? Not much.

Anarchy indicates the absence of "archy," from the Greek *arkhē* (rule) or *arkhos* (ruler). Contemporary IR commonly defines anarchy as absence of government or central authority.[85] The tripartite conception, however, presents anarchy as the absence of hierarchy (which has many sources other than government). Anarchy also is regularly defined as the absence of *any* higher authority,[86] legitimate authority,[87] or authority simpliciter;[88] enforcement;[89] and law[90] or rules.[91]

Our three simple anarchic societies, however, show that absence of government is not necessarily associated with any of these additional features. Therefore, treat-

85. A Google Scholar search in May 2012 for "anarchy" and "international relations" and "(absence or lack) of government" yielded more than 600 results. Substituting "central authority" returned more than 200 results.

86. See Vinci 2008, 295; Lake 2003, 84; and Gowa 1994, 6.

87. See Hurd 1999, 383; Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner 1999, 658; and Levy 2007, 24.

88. See Gilpin 2002, 237; Wendt and Friedheim 1995, 694; and Krasner 1992, 48.

ing anarchy as a central or even defining feature of international systems—which seems to be the intent of most scholars who make central reference to it—requires restricting its definition to absence of government.

But these three simple anarchic societies also show that absence of government implies nothing of interest about behavior. This explains the desire for thicker definitions.

Thicker definitions, however, make "anarchy" no longer a feature of all international systems. They deprive "anarchy" of a single clear and determinate meaning. And they obscure the fact that "the effects of anarchy" are caused by something—probably several things—in addition to lack of government.

The solution, I suggest, is to retain the thin "absence of government" definition; drop anarchy from our account of the elements of structure; and include the features of thicker definitions that do important analytical work.

Abandoning anarchy may sound radical to those raised on the tripartite conception or the belief that anarchy is the "fundamental" feature of international relations.[92] But none of the seven editions of Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* contains an index entry for anarchy.[93] Similarly, "anarchy" occurs only twice in Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Kennan's *American Diplomacy*, and Kissinger's *A World Restored*.[94] Anarchy simply was not important to these leading pre-Waltzian realists.[95] Interwar idealists also typically used anarchy rarely and to indicate disorder or lawlessness[96]—as did leading postwar nonrealists.[97]

89. See Keohane 1990, 193; Schweller and Priess 1997, 6; Snyder 2002, 14; and Rathbun 2007, 537.

90. See Cashman and Robinson 2007, 17; Eckstein 2007, 12; and Hinnebusch 2011, 215.

91. See Halle 1996, 83; Harbour 1999, 36; and Heginbotham and Samuels 1998, 173.

92. See Milner 1991, 67; Schmidt 1998, 1; Miller 2002, 10; and Holmes 2011, 291.

93. Furthermore, in four major books searchable through Google Books, Morgenthau uses anarchy only fourteen times—and none of the nine passages for which a preview is available treats anarchy as a general feature of international systems. Morgenthau 1946, 117; 1951, 102, 203; 1962, 184, 197, 254; and 1970, 211, 268, 274.

94. Carr 1946, 162, 28 (referring to disorder and to the utopian view that "reason could demonstrate the absurdity of the international anarchy"); Kennan 1951, 33, 149 (referring to internal Chinese politics and to disorder); and Kissinger 1957, 17, 25 (both times quoting Metternich's fear of "universal anarchy").

95. Spykman does use anarchy twice in a sense similar to that of contemporary IR. Spykman 1942, 16, 41. More commonly, though, he uses anarchy to refer to disorder or lack of legal restraint. Ibid., 15, 226, 228, 251, 360, 463.

96. Angell 1910, 6; Bryce 1922, 58, 71; Moon 1926, 536; and Noel-Baker 1928, 76. (These are the only uses of anarchy in these works.) In Dickinson's *The European Anarchy* (2004) and *The International Anarchy* (1926), the most prominent interwar uses of the term, anarchy is treated not as a general feature of international relations but as a particularly pernicious form of power politics.

97. Wright 1983 (63, 113, 127, 170, 180, 232, 271, 326, 335, 336) uses anarchy ten times but never as a general feature of international relations. The three occurrences in Kaplan 1957 (49 [twice], 147) indicate disorder. The eight uses in Aron 1966 (65, 122, 199, 327, 376, 377, 720, 724) reference disorder or lawlessness.

Earlier authors did, of course, address features that contemporary IR associates with anarchy—but not as instances of anarchy or its effects. Returning to that practice, I set aside anarchy and focus instead on stratification, functional differentiation, rules, and other forces that actually arrange the parts of international systems. "The effects of anarchy" will thus be properly attributed. Because anarchy has failed in its principal contemporary uses—it is not the defining feature of international systems (domestic forager societies are anarchic); it is not an ordering principle; and "the effects of anarchy" are not effects of anarchy—this analytical advance comes at almost no cost.

The Elements of Social and Political Structures

Structures are relatively deep and constant features of systems that, as I will emphasize in the next section, produce their effects in distinctive ways. Properly identifying which features of systems are structural thus is vital to determining what produces which effects, how.

I have suggested that at least six elements are needed for an adequate account of the principal dimensions of structural variation. Elsewhere, I have outlined and illustrated this framework and presented an extended discussion of stratification.[98] Here I show how each element is required to depict the structures of our three simple anarchic systems. I also draw comparisons with the tripartite conception, note parallel work undertaken from nonstructural perspectives, and suggest a few (usually typological) ideas for further elaborating each element.

Most of my arguments build on well-established lines of criticism or research. My contribution largely involves connecting disparate discontents and bodies of work to the definition of the elements of social and political structures and integrating them into a framework for structural analysis.

Stratification

Our three simple anarchic societies are stratified—arranged in layers or levels. Forager societies and states of nature are single layered: unranked, flat, egalitarian, without formal or informal super- and subordination. Great power systems, however, have three hierarchical layers, and the particular placement of states above nonstate actors and great powers above lesser powers is essential to their character.

Although the tripartite conception devotes two of its three elements ("ordering principle" and "distribution of capabilities") to stratification, standard deployments do not depict patterns of stratification with anything close to tolerable accu-

98. Donnelly 2009 and 2012.

racy. "Anarchy," (re-)defined as absence of hierarchy, is wrongly ascribed to all international systems (and only international systems). "Hierarchy" is inappropriately excluded from international relations and unhelpfully treated as undifferentiated (or a residual; whatever is not "anarchic"). And ordering principle and distribution of capabilities are misleadingly presented as unrelated features rather than complementary, and usually interacting, sources and dimensions of inequality and super- and subordination.

"Stratification," by dropping any reference to anarchy and linking authority ("ordering principle") with force ("distribution of capabilities"), clarifies the centrality of "hierarchy" in most international systems. Although this point has been made repeatedly over the past two decades,[99] attention has been focused principally on the fact of hierarchy and on analyzing particular forms (especially empire). The next step is to catalogue and compare forms of stratification.

Elsewhere I have developed a typology that distinguishes unranked systems (such as states of nature), singly ranked systems (where one principle or dimension of stratification predominates, as in caste systems), and multiply ranked or "heterarchic" systems (such as medieval Europe).[100] Whatever the details, though, stratification comes in many forms, the particulars of which are central to a system's structure.

Functional Differentiation

The tripartite conception recognizes functional differentiation as inherently structural but holds that "the units of an anarchic system are functionally undifferentiated."[101] In fact, though, functional differentiation is central to great power systems. More generally, standard talk of international *political* systems rests on their differentiation from other functional subsystems.[102]

Even where all actors perform the same functions, as in states of nature, the system has a particular form (rather than the absence) of functional differentiation. Functional differentiation is a feature not of the actors but of the system. Functional differentiation refers to how—however—functions are distributed. This varies widely across anarchic and international systems.

In IR, functional differentiation is central to a line of theory and research running from functionalism and neofunctionalism through the extensive literature on international regimes (principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures governing a particular [typically functional] issue area). This work, however, usually has been presented as, and taken to be, nonstructural. It acquires new mean-

99. See Watson 1992, 13, 92–94ff.; Weber 1997; Lake 1996 and 2009; Hobson and Sharman 2005; and Donnelly 2006.
100. Donnelly 2009, 55–71.
101. Waltz 1979, 97.
102. See also Buzan and Albert 2010, 322–24.

ings when understood as addressing system structure rather than nonstructural modifications of the effects of anarchy.

Functional differentiation also presents the replacement of territorial by functional organization, which many see as central to globalization, not as a modest modification of a fundamentally constant structure but as a major structural change. Buzan and Albert even suggest that functional differentiation may be emerging as the ordering principle of a globalized world.[103]

I have no typology of functional differentiation to offer. The essential point here, though, is the centrality of functional differentiation to social and political structures, not the details of the forms it characteristically takes.

Unit Differentiation (Segmentation)

It may be true that "the logic of anarchy obtains whether the system is composed of tribes, nations, oligopolistic firms or street gangs."[104] Not, though, when the units are forager bands. Neither is it true that "the absence of central authority, not any characteristic of states . . . causes them to compete for power."[105] Forager bands do not compete for power.

Even leading realists acknowledge the structural centrality of unit type. For example, Gilpin argues that "the character of the international system is largely determined by the type of state-actor."[106] Waltz claims that "international political structures are defined in terms of the primary political units of an era."[107]

The tripartite conception's restriction of structure to "third image" features "at the international level" is as misguided as imagining that the structure of an organism can be specified without reference to its organs. It is no more true that "a systems theory of international politics deals with forces that are in play at the international, and not the national, level"[108] than that a theory of the circulatory system should not deal with the heart and blood vessels.

Systems are not composed of undifferentiated pieces. Quite the contrary, a system arises from integrating in a particular way parts of a particular character. Entities without specific properties—let alone property-less "units"—cannot be parts of a system. Sound systemic/structural analysis thus requires attending to the ways that structure is partly constituted by (certain features of) the units. For example, the interests of states, because they are states, differ from those of other types of "units," giving states systems a particular character.

Unit differentiation creates links to the vast constructivist and poststructural literatures on identity, which are usually understood as unrelated, if not antagonistic,

103. Ibid., 326–30.
104. Waltz 1990, 37.
105. Mearsheimer 2001, 414, n. 5.
106. Gilpin 1981, 26.
107. Waltz 1979, 91. See also ibid., 94, 95; and Waltz 1990, 37.
108. Waltz 1979, 71.

to structural analysis. It also allows structural theory to incorporate the classical realist distinction between status quo and revisionist powers and presents offensive and defensive realism as theories of different types of systems (rather than competing versions of "the best" realist theory).

The type of unit that predominates in a system—or whether there is a predominant type—is an empirical question. Therefore, IR probably should focus on comparing similarities and differences between historically important types (for example, states, empires, tribes) and how these features relate to other elements of the system's structure.

Norms and Institutions

Forager societies show that it is not true that "in a system without central governance … there are no effective laws and institutions to direct and constrain" actors.[109] Great power systems also have essential legal/normative and institutional dimensions (for example, sovereignty and alliances). Even the Hobbesian state of nature has a very particular normative order—as Hobbes puts it, "every man has a Right to every thing"[110]—that is vital to the system's structure.

Structures produce patterned behavior by encouraging, enabling, constraining, and ignoring actions. Social and political systems do this largely through norms and institutions. States, as Waltz argues, are "differently placed by their power and differences in placement help to explain both their behavior and their fates."[111] They are also, however, differently placed and shaped by their authority, status, and roles, by the rules that govern them, and by the institutions and practices in which they participate.

One cannot accurately depict the structure of a social or political system without reference to norms and institutions. Thus even those who deny their structural status sneak them back in. For example, Mearsheimer describes anarchy as "an ordering principle, which says that the system comprises independent states that have no central authority above them. Sovereignty, in other words, inheres in states."[112] In fact, though, sovereignty arises not from the absence of central authority—states of nature and forager societies lack sovereignty—but from constitutive practices of mutual recognition.

The grip of the tripartite conception is strikingly illustrated by the fact that even neoliberals, who focus substantively on institutions and norms, treat them as nonstructural. For example, Axelrod and Keohane write that "world politics includes a rich variety of contexts" that actors "seek to alter … through building institutions." "Establishing hierarchies, setting up international regimes, and

109. Waltz 1999, 698.
110. Hobbes 1985, chap. 14, par. 4.
111. Waltz 1990, 31.
112. Mearsheimer 2001, 30.

attempting to gain acceptance for new norms are all attempts to change the context." They even write of "deliberate efforts to change the very structure of the situation by changing the context."[113] Structures, however, are not (mere) "contexts" and the "structure of the situation" is not the same as the structure of a system. Although neoliberals "find the neorealist conception of structure too narrow and confining,"[114] they provide no alternative—and thus fail to do justice to the real (structural) significance of institutions. They typically adopt "the neorealist sense" of structure[115] or use "structure" in an ordinary-language sense in which situations are "structured" by many things other than "structure" in the sense I use it here.[116]

Constructivists frequently do see norms and institutions as structural. Their focus, however, has often been on the ontology of structures[117] and substantive discussions typically have been ad hoc, historical, or focused on particular issues.[118] Explicitly incorporating norms and institutions into a general structural framework not only permits but encourages studying them systematically and comparatively.

Norms and institutions that establish super- and subordination, differentiate functions, and constitute units probably are best treated as matters of stratification, functional differentiation, and unit differentiation. This suggests conceptualizing "norms and institutions," understood as a distinct element of structure, as system-wide rules, roles, and practices that regulate relationships between (occupants of) social positions (and thus help to constitute social actors).

Elsewhere I have sketched the idea of a "constitutional structure of international society" composed of four elements: (1) principles and practices of international legitimacy, which establish the members of international society; (2) principles and practices of internal legitimacy, by which dominant actors justify their rule; (3) hegemonic cultural values; and (4) fundamental regulative practices,[119] including prominently what Bull calls "life" (the regulation of the legitimate use of force) and "truth" (practices for establishing rules and obligations).[120] Although space

113. Axelrod and Keohane 1985, 227, 228, 251, 249.
114. Keohane 1989, 8.
115. Keohane and Nye 1987, 745.
116. For example, in a recent overview of liberal institutionalism, Keohane (2012) writes of "structures of power and interests" (125, 133, 134), "power structures" (128, 133, 134), and "structures of power" (129, 136), without even hinting at what these are made up of. And his reference (in a section heading) to "changes in structure" (133), if it does not implicitly refer to the neorealist sense, gives no indication of what in particular such changes involve.
117. See Wendt 1999; and Wight 2006. See also the discussion in "The Substance of Structural Analysis" section below.
118. See Sell 1998; Philpott 2001; Holsti 2004; Thakur, Cooper, and English 2005; and Chaulia 2011.
119. Donnelly 2012, 161–62, 166–67.
120. Bull 1977, 4–5.

again requires dispensing with further details, the structural centrality of norms and institutions is clear.

Geotechnics

The tripartite conception is usually described, by realists and nonrealists alike, as materialist.[121] In fact, though, material elements play a minor role. Anarchy is normative (absence of formal hierarchy) or institutional (absence of government, a particular institution of governance). Functional differentiation is normative and institutional. And polarity, although material, does little analytical work.

The tripartite conception presents anarchic orders as differing structurally in terms of their (material) distribution of capabilities only. Such differences between international systems, however, are largely peripheral. As Waltz puts it, "the logic of anarchy does not vary with its content."[122] Anarchy—which, to repeat, is not material—generates the security dilemma, balancing, and the pursuit of relative gains. Except when discussing differences between bipolar and multipolar systems, distribution of capabilities usually is ignored in mainstream structural analysis.

Structures, however, do have an important material dimension. I suggest conceptualizing it in terms of geography and technology; "geotechnics" in Deudney's useful formulation.[123] This (again) is the practice of those who adopt the tripartite conception. For example, Mearsheimer emphasizes "the primacy of land power" and "the stopping power of water."[124] Waltz argues that "among states armed with nuclear weapons peace prevails whatever the structure of the system may be" and that military and industrial technology "may change the character of systems."[125]

Geotechnics links structural international analysis with the discipline of geography, which has undergone a renaissance in recent decades,[126] and with geopolitics, which is undergoing a more modest revival.[127] It also provides a proper structural place for bodies of work that emphasize military technology, such as the offense-defense balance[128] and the literatures on weapons of mass destruction. It also opens structural theory to large parts of the globalization literature.

I suspect that there is promise in focusing on how particular technologies, both military and nonmilitary, shape a system's character. Consider, for example, gun-

121. See Mearsheimer 1995, 91; Wendt 1999, 5, 16, 34, 96, 157; Kubálková, Onuf, and Kowert 1998, xi; and Philpott 2001, 50, 65.

122. Waltz 1990, 37. Waltz also argues that a structure "cannot be defined by enumerating material characteristics of the system. It must instead be defined by the arrangement of the system's parts and by the principle of that arrangement"—which are nonmaterial. Waltz 1979, 80.

123. Deudney 2007, 39.

124. Mearsheimer 2001, chap. 4.

125. Waltz 2004, 5, and 1990, 37.

126. See Tuathail 1996; Agnew 2003; and Harvey 2006, for examples of geographers engaged in conversations with IR. On the current state of political geography, see Cox, Low, and Robinson 2008.

127. See Kearns 2009; and Cohen 2009.

128. See Lynn-Jones 1995; and Glaser and Kaufmann 1998.

powder and steam power. Systems also vary greatly in their scale[129] and interaction capacity.[130] Once again, though, the key point is the general importance of this element of structure, not its details.

Polarity

Finally, our three simple anarchic societies vary in polarity, the number of great powers. Great power systems have a few major poles of power. States of nature and forager societies have none; they are "unpolarized."

Among polarized systems, IR has focused on the distinction between bipolar and multipolar systems. Adding unipolar systems (which are historically almost as common as bipolar systems are rare) and tripolar systems (which although historically rare have a distinctive logic)[131] yields a topology of systems with none, one, two, three, or a handful of great powers.[132]

Systems and Structures

"Structures," in the sense that I have been using the term, are features of systems.[133] "The most general and fundamental property of a system is the interdependence of parts or variables."[134] The parts of a stable system "fit" one another; they have evolved or been designed to depend on one another as parts of a whole.[135]

The "fit" between parts of a whole explains the lack of sharp boundaries between the elements of social and political systems.[136] For example, unit type is often inextricably entwined with stratification and functional differentiation. (Consider the great powers.) Norms and institutions typically "suit" the actors, their functions, and stratification. Material features likewise tend to cohere with other elements of the system. Conversely, persistent "contradictions" between elements often generate system change or collapse.

129. See Deudney 2007, 37–41, 53–55.
130. See Buzan and Little 2000, chap. 9, 13, 16.3.
131. Schweller 1998.
132. Note, though, that I treat polarity not as an operationalization of distribution of capabilities—which is about as reasonable as operationalizing the distribution of wealth by the number of billionaires—but as a separate structural feature. (I treat distribution of capabilities as part of the informal dimension of stratification.)
133. See also Waltz 1979 73, 79; and Wendt 1999, 11, 21.
134. Parsons and Shils 1951, 107. See also Waltz 1979, 75; Wendt 1999, 142–43; and Jervis 1997, 3.
135. The coherence of social and political structures, however, is fully compatible with extensive contestation and even considerable contradiction. See Archer 1985.
136. It also introduces a certain conventionality into any framework. For example, polarity might reasonably be folded into stratification and unit differentiation might be distributed between stratification and functional differentiation. I treat them as separate elements, though, because they are widely considered important features of international systems.

Structural analysis must therefore attend to the interdependence of the elements of social and political structures. Stratification and functional differentiation, for example, are closely correlated: strong and weak, rich and poor, and privileged and despised actors tend to do different things. And causation runs in both directions.

Systems, being composed of interdependent elements, rarely have master variables. For example, lack of property is central to forager life. The emergence of property signals the passing of that way of life. But the absence of property is as much effect as cause, the result of the mutually shaping influences of particular forms of stratification, functional differentiation, and customs.

The elements of structures are not just very important or especially deep independent variables. They are not independent variables at all. "System effects"[137] result from (typically nonlinear) interactions of interdependent variables; of parts of a whole. Because independent-variable models consider neither parts nor wholes, but rather pieces broken out of their systemic context, they cannot actually explain structural regularities.[138]

Structural and independent-variable depictions of "the same" subject have different characters and provide different insights. For example, international institutions, understood systemically/structurally, do not mitigate, moderate, or modify "the effects of [the master variable of] anarchy."[139] Rather, they help to give a system, and "anarchy" itself, a particular quality. Institutions interact with stratification, unit type, and other structural elements to produce a system with a distinctive character. For example, dynastic, national, and territorial sovereignty help to create different kinds of privileged actors, different patterns of stratification and functional differentiation, different relations between polity, people, and territory, and different sources of conflict and cooperation.

The Substance and Subject of Structural Theory

My approach to structure also differs from Wendt's "structural idealism"—although more in emphasis than orientation.[140] Where Wendt stresses metatheory, especially ontology and the agent-structure problem, I approach structures more sub-

137. The classic discussion in IR is Jervis 1997. See also Harrison 2006; and Albert, Cederman, and Wendt 2010.

138. "The effects of anarchy" identifies a correlation between "anarchy" and certain political behaviors and outcomes. As we have seen, though, anarchy does not actually explain those effects—let alone offer a structural explanation.

139. A Google Scholar search in May 2012 for "mitigate" and "the effects of anarchy" produced more than 150 results. Substituting "moderate" produced ninety results; "modify" produced almost fifty.

140. One might even describe my framework as an extension of, or a different cut into, Wendtian structural idealism, building on Wendt's metatheoretical work but distinguished by its focus on systemic structural theory.

stantively. Where Wendt examines particular types of structures, I address the elements out of which types might be constructed. And where Wendt focuses on the impact of structures on agents, I focus on the systems that actors are parts of.

The Substance of Structural Analysis

Wendt aims "to rethink the dominant ontology of international structure."[141] I take for granted the ontological "stuff" of structures (understood in terms similar to Wendt's) in order to focus on their substantive "stuff," the elements of social and political structures. And rather than "defin[e] the structure of the international system as a distribution of ideas"[142]—a definition that, whatever its ontological merits, is for substantive analytical purposes about as useful as defining the structure of an organism as a distribution of organs—I define international structures in terms of stratification, functional differentiation, unit differentiation, norms and institutions, geotechnics, and polarity, thus specifying how and through what forces actors and opportunities are distributed.

Wendt's famous argument that "anarchy can have at least three kinds of structure based on what kind of roles—enemy, rival, or friend—dominate the system,"[143] although a tour de force for the metatheoretical purpose of "explicat[ing] the deep structure of anarchy as a cultural or ideational rather than material phenomenon,"[144] is deeply problematic as structural analysis. As Wendt notes, "the task of structural theorizing ultimately must be to show how the elements of a system fit together into some kind of whole."[145] But in addressing international structures Wendt considers "the nature and effects of shared ideas only."[146] He further narrows his focus to "role structure, the configuration of subject positions that shared ideas make available."[147] And among roles he considers only those involving "shared understandings governing organized violence."[148] These ideas (alone), Wendt claims, form "the deep structure of an international system."[149]

"Structure" is thus reduced to a single feature that does all the explanatory work. This is reductionist (analytical) not systemic (holistic) analysis—explanation in terms of the independent effects of separate pieces rather than the interaction of parts of a whole. But the behavioral patterns that Wendt identifies are no more effects of roles (alone) than "the effects of anarchy" are effects of anarchy.

For example, Wendt argues that "friendship generate[s] the macro-level logics and tendencies associated with 'pluralistic security communities' and 'collective

141. Wendt 1999, 22.
142. Ibid., 309.
143. Ibid., 247.
144. Ibid., 43.
145. Ibid., 139.
146. Ibid., 249. See also ibid., 314.
147. Ibid., 257.
148. Ibid., 313.
149. Ibid. See also ibid., 258, 314.

security.'"[150] These security systems, however, as Wendt himself notes, "have different structures, with different logics and tendencies."[151] Neither arises from or is explained by friendship (alone). And it is just as plausible that renouncing war generates the subject positions of friends—or that these are interdependent, co-constituting elements of a system.

Wendt also notes that "underlying [the Lockean anarchy of] rivalry is a right to sovereignty"[152]—making role structure an effect as well as a cause. "Modern interstate rivalry … is constrained by the structure of sovereign rights recognized by international law."[153] Thus international law, although not a logical consequence of rivalry,[154] is "a key part of the deep structure of contemporary international politics."[155]

"Role structure," much like "anarchy," presents an underspecified and one-sided account of system structure. My multidimensional framework allows cashing out, explicitly and in some detail, the forces that shape "roles" (and "anarchy"). It also addresses elements of structure that, because they are not prominently connected to regulating violence, Wendt ignores.

Getting the ontology of structures right may be necessary for effective substantive theory. But one also needs to get the substance (elements) of structures right and properly identify how they produce their effects. My framework is a step in that direction.

The Subject of Structural Analysis

Wendt, like Waltz (and most of mainstream IR), sees "the challenge of 'systemic' theory" to show "how agents are differently structured by the system so as to produce different effects."[156] This formulation prioritizes and adopts the perspective of agents. But systemic theory ought to adopt a system-centric perspective. And structural theory ought to be undertaken from the standpoint of structures (rather than things that they influence).

Actors considered as parts of systems are not agents[157] but occupants of structural positions; "officeholders." And structures are not external things that "shape

150. Ibid., 299.
151. Ibid., 302.
152. Ibid., 280.
153. Ibid. As Wendt notes, the language of constraints indicates behavioral effects (on already constructed actors). Ibid., 26. Sovereignty, however, constructs not only a particular type of rivalry but also rivals of a particular type—and different forms of sovereignty do so differently.
154. Neither does it follow from rivalry (alone) that states are "possessive individualists" or that sovereignty is territorial. Ibid., 294–95, 279.
155. Ibid., 280.
156. Ibid., 12.
157. More precisely, they are not "agents" in the "agent-structure problem" sense of semi-autonomous actors. They are more like "agents" in the "principal-agent" sense—although their responsibility is to a position not a person.

and shove"[158] actors. Neither are structures mere environments or contexts in which actors happen to be located. (Organisms are not the environments of organs.) Even Wendt's depiction of agents as "embedded" in structures[159] represents actors as (semi-)independent entities, to whom structures are essentially external, rather than parts of systems. (The parts of a watch are not embedded in the watch—which is the whole composed of its parts and their relations.)

Although Wendt notes that roles "are attributes of structures, not agents,"[160] he "focuse[s] on the role attributed to the Other."[161] Self and Other, however, are not structural positions but system-independent generic identities. And talk of attribution draws attention to agents rather than structural positioning and participation in shared practices.

Or consider Wendt's agent-centric talk of "role taking" and "alter casting"[162] and his insistence that role taking "at some level [i]s a choice."[163] That may, at some level, be true. But it is not a structural truth.

That structures ultimately depend on agency[164] may be crucial to general social theory. For structural theory, though, it is largely beside the point. Structural theories are usually—and I would argue most productively—understood to address the nature and effects, not the causes, of structures. Powerful structural theories are possible without directly considering how structures arise or change. My framework aims to provide a foundation for such theories.

One need not go as far as Luhmann's "modern systems theory," which dispenses with agents altogether.[165] Nonetheless, for the purposes of structural analysis there is much to be said for treating actors as occupants of structural positions rather than subjects or the targets of system effects—and treating structures as structures of systems (of which actors are parts) rather than as external influences on agents.

Structural analysis thus understood is not privileged, metatheoretically, theoretically, or methodologically. It does, however, deserve a place in IR—especially because substantive international theories that link agency and structure have proved well beyond our capabilities (as illustrated by the fact that Wendt treats them separately). Structural theories thus understood certainly have limits. One will undoubtedly miss many important things by not considering the causes of structures and how structure interacts with agency and process. Nonetheless, they have much to contribute. And my framework, I hope, may facilitate their development.

158. Waltz 1986, 343, 1997, 915, and 2000, 24.
159. Wendt 1999, 2, 7, 142, 309, 366.
160. Ibid., 257. See also ibid., 258.
161. Ibid., 264.
162. Ibid., 171.
163. Ibid., 329.
164. Ibid., 185.
165. For introductions to Luhmann's (extremely dense) theory applied to IR, see Albert and Hilkermeier 2004; and Albert 2010.

Applications and Implications

Finally, I offer an empirical application. My framework highlights the variability of international systems. Therefore, I look at system change. Two transitions provide four cases. Space requires that the cases be relatively well known. Selecting different time frames seems sensible. Based on these criteria, I consider the shift from medieval to modern international relations and the transformation of post–World War II international society.

Space permits only highly stylized accounts. I have chosen the most highly stylized presentation possible. Table 2 compares, in allusive summary fashion, my framework with those of Waltz and Wendt. This frees space to address a few implications of these comparisons.

Waltz and Wendt represent international systems as simple and relatively constant. I present them as complex and variable. Nothing in my framework remains unchanged across these four cases (or the three anarchic societies in Table 1)—suggesting that one can say little of interest structurally about "the international system."[166]

Where I see regular and repeated structural change, Wendt and Waltz see many centuries of structural constancy, with change only after World War II. They present early-twentieth-century international relations as structurally the same as thirteenth-century international relations—but fundamentally unlike its late-twentieth-century successor. Although accurate for the single element that each treats as variable, these readings, as general accounts of international structure, require neglecting a wide range of striking structural changes.

For example, medieval international relations took place among many different types of major actors, both secular (emperor, kings, various lesser princes, cities, and lineages) and ecclesiastical (the princes and polities of the church being almost as diverse as their secular counterparts and no less enmeshed in lineage politics). By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, states and dynasties were largely predominant. In the medieval system, authority was divided on the basis of function, polity type, local and regional customary rights and obligations, type of lordship, and contractual feudal obligations. By Westphalia, sovereignty, in the sense of a single supreme authority, was beginning to assert its predominance. A noble monopoly on the use of force had been replaced by a system of warfare based on massive armies of state-employed mercenaries. Religion had been largely eliminated as a ground for international conflict, at least among Christian princes in Europe. Christendom as an ordering principle was giving way to the idea of a European society of states. The leading powers were beginning to operate globally rather than regionally.

166. A Google Scholar search in May 2012 for "the international system" and "international relations" produced a staggering 52,000 results. Wendt uses this formulation on the first page of his book, six times on the second page, and more than a hundred times thereafter. See also Waltz 1979, 60, 104, 110, 138, and 145.

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TABLE 2. *Three representations of the structures of four historical international systems*

	Medieval (c. 1250)	*Early modern (c. 1650)*	*Pre–World War I (c. 1900)*	*Post–World War II (c. 1975)*
Tripartite conception (Waltz)				
Anarchy-hierarchy	Anarchy	Anarchy	Anarchy	Anarchy
Polarity	Multipolar	Multipolar	Multipolar	Bipolar
Cultures of anarchy (Wendt)				
Role structure	Enemy	Enemy	Enemy	Rival
Multidimensional conception				
Stratification	Multiply ranked (heterarchic)	Singly ranked (great powers, sovereign inequality)	Singly ranked (great powers, sovereign inequality)	Singly ranked (great powers), unranked (sovereign equality)
Functional differentiation	"Three orders" (clergy, knights, workers)	State consolidation, long-distance commerce	Great powers, markets, empires	Superpowers, markets, international regimes
Dominant unit type	None	Dynastic states	National and dynastic empire states	Territorial states
Constitutional structure				
Membership criteria	Tradition, religion, capabilities	(Proto-)sovereignty, tradition, capabilities	Sovereignty, capabilities, standard of civilization	Self-determination, territorial integrity
Cultural values	Christendom, hierarchy	Hierarchy	Reason, industry	Equality, democracy, development
Regulation of force	Noble monopoly, just war	Mercenarism, natural law, Realpolitik	State monoploy, right of war	State monopoly, nonaggression/self-defense
Rules and obligations	Custom, oaths, religion, natural law	Natural law, peace treaties	Customary international law, peace treaties	Contractual multilateral international law
Geotechnics				
Leading technologies	Agriculture, mounted armor	Agriculture, long-distance commerce, gunpowder	Industry, steam power	Postindustrial, nuclear weapons
Scale	Local	Local, national	National, international	National, international, transnational
Interaction capacity	Very low	Low	Moderate	High

Medieval and early modern international systems were composed of different parts arranged in different ways—that is, they had almost entirely different structures. And the remaining columns in Table 2 show further fundamental changes across the modern era.

Consider now late-twentieth-century international society. "Bipolar anarchy" is not an extremely economical representation of something like my multidimensional account. Bipolarity does not even hint at most of the changes my framework identifies. And those changes are at least as important as polarity in structuring postwar international relations. Even Waltz grants equal weight to weapons technology in explaining peace between the superpowers.[167] And principles and practices of self-determination, territorial integrity, and nonaggression, the rise of public and private nonstate actors, the creation of a new kind of international economy, and Cold War ideology (which my framework captures in competing visions of democracy and development) are on their face no less important. Although "bipolar anarchy" may explain some important features of postwar international politics, it simply is not a plausible representation of the structure (arrangement) of the postwar international system.

Rivalry does arguably identify "the heart" of the changes that distinguish postwar from prewar international relations. But this is a very different matter from identifying the structures of those systems. (Mammals are distinguished from other vertebrates by being warm blooded, producing milk, and having hair and three bones in their middle ear. This is not, however, an account of the structure of mammals. That A differs structurally from B by *c* does not make *c* the structure of A.)

My framework fully captures the changes that Wendt encompasses in rivalry. It also, however, allows one to unpack rivalry (as well as enmity and friendship), specify the forms role structures take historically, and link principles and practices governing the legitimate use of force to the rest of the structure of international societies.

Postwar rivalry was rooted in a contingent normative-institutional complex centered on self-determination, nonaggression, territorial integrity, and sovereign equality. This complex helped to alter patterns of alignment (for example, the rise of nonalignment, which involves neither balancing nor bandwagoning) and forms of hierarchy (for example, "neo-colonialism" and "informal empire"). It also both contributed to and was strengthened by the increasingly contractual and multilateral character of international law. And the associated abolition of empires and proliferation of "quasi-states,"[168] whose principal power resource is international recognition, helped to change patterns of unit differentiation and the system-wide distribution of capabilities.

With the survival of most states depending more on rights (sovereignty; mutual recognition) than might, space opened for the pursuit of absolute gains.[169] This

167. Waltz 1993, 44.
168. Jackson 1990.
169. See Wendt 1999, 282; and Waltz 1979, 71.

facilitated new forms of functional and unit differentiation (as evidenced in the proliferation and increasing importance of transnational actors and international organizations and regimes). The declining importance of the state as a protector from external attack was also associated with the rise of welfare and development as principles of internal legitimacy.

Postwar changes had an important geotechnical dimension as well. For example, nuclear weapons supported practices of territorial integrity and nonaggression. New communication and transportation technologies facilitated self-determination (by enabling new forms of indirect influence). They also were crucial to the development of an increasingly international economy, which not only altered patterns of functional differentiation but helped to produce sustained increases in welfare (which in turn became increasingly central to the legitimacy of postwar states).

Waltz and Wendt skip over depicting the actual structure (arrangement) of international systems.[170] They jump immediately to models focused on one or two dimensions of structure, "reading off" substantive theory from a limited range of values that one or two elements of structure characteristically take. And it seems to me no coincidence that each highlights a single difference between postwar and earlier international systems, suggesting that their focus is on substantive theory with a contemporary application rather than comparative structural analysis.

Wendt's and Waltz's models certainly provide considerable insight. But they neither accurately depict the structure of international systems nor present truly structural accounts of international action. For that one needs something like my multidimensional framework.

Conclusion

The tripartite conception remains IR's sole widely employed account of the elements of structure. Only structural realists, though, seem happy with it. And even they regularly, and of necessity, ignore its limitations. Discontent, however, has typically led to criticisms of particular formulations, ad hoc amendments, or abandoning structural analysis. I have instead presented a new framework of the elements of social and political structures as a foundation for a very different type of structural international theory.

That framework probably is incomplete.[171] Its elements certainly have not been adequately elaborated. Nonetheless, it permits identifying, with considerable accu-

170. One might alternatively say that they are less interested in exploring the multiple elements that make up international systems than in delineating particular types—although both also regularly address "the international system" in general. See note 166. On differences between "type" and "dimension" approaches to structure, see Donnelly 2012, 153, 164–65, 168–71.

171. Scarcity is an addition suggested by the comparison of forager societies and Hobbesian states of nature. Wendtian enmity, rivalry, and friendship might be associated with scarcity, minimal adequacy, and sufficiency (or abundance). Scarcity and sufficiency might also be associated with revi-

racy, how international systems are arranged and how that arrangement shapes their operation. This is a significant advance in IR's understanding of the structures of international systems and an essential first step toward more accurate and more powerful substantive structural theories.

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sionist and status quo powers and with the pursuit of relative and absolute gains. And I suspect that concern for survival can often be profitably conceptualized as an extreme expression of scarcity. (Note, though, that scarcity has both material and normative dimensions, as abundance among foragers strikingly illustrates.)

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