The fragmentation and consolidation of international systems

Stuart J. Kaufman

The world today, Benjamin Barber points out, is "falling precipitantly apart *and* coming reluctantly together at the very same moment."[1] While states from Canada to India are threatened with breakup due to fractious nationalist impulses of their peoples, the power of technology and markets is forcing ever-tighter economic integration worldwide. From a common-sense perspective, these two impulses are among the most important processes in contemporary world politics. Yet, there has been remarkably little attention paid to developing a theory of the international system that examines the effects of both. Hegemonic stability theory considers economic integration but not nationalism; the few studies of nationalism as a systemic force play down the effects of economic integration; and neorealism, the most widely accepted theory of the international system, has no room to address either trend.[2] The field is, partly as a result, a cacaphony of voices largely talking past one another.

The problem begins with conceptualization. As Robert Gilpin points out, "the character of the international system is largely determined by the type of state-actor: city-states, empires, nation-states, etc."[3] At the beginning of this century, for example, the system was dominated by a handful of world-girdling empires; today the number of sovereign units is approaching two hundred as ever-narrower nationalisms lead to the creation of ever-smaller states. The system defined by these smaller states both looks and acts differently from the old one, but our concepts of international system structure do not note the distinction, let alone explain its causes or consequences.

I thank Edward Finegold, whose ideas sparked my interest in researching ancient history; and Yao Aziabu, Matthew Gabel, Patrick James, Richard Mansbach, Robert McCalla, Karen Mingst, Edward Rhodes, James Richter, Harry Saggs, Stephen Saideman, and the reviewers and editors of *International Organization* for comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this manuscript. After having received all of this assistance, anything I have still managed to get wrong is entirely my responsibility.

1. Barber 1992, italics original. Compare Barber 1995.
2. On hegemonic stability, see Gilpin 1981; and Keohane 1984. On legitimacy and nationalism in the international system, see Mayall 1990; and Walker 1993. The seminal neorealist text is Waltz 1979.
3. Gilpin 1981, 26.

International Organization 51, 2, Spring 1997, pp. 173–208
© 1997 by The IO Foundation and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In this article, I sketch out a theory suggesting a way to conceptualize and explain the ongoing transformation of the international system. I begin by broadening the concept of the distribution of power into a concept of system consolidation. Systems vary not just from multi- to bi- or perhaps unipolar but from extreme consolidation (imperial hegemony), through balance-of-power systems (with varying numbers of "poles"), to extreme fragmentation (splintering into many units with no poles at all), with many possible gradations in between.[4] Differing degrees of system consolidation promote different dynamics in the international system, including different kinds and degrees of international order.

Four main forces, I argue, drive system consolidation and fragmentation. First is the "self-help" behavior promoted by anarchy, which encourages not stability but consolidation, as states are motivated to annex their neighbors when they can. The second force is economic interdependence, which also tends to promote state expansion and thus system consolidation. The third force, principles of unit identity, usually pushes in the opposite direction, tending to destabilize empires and promote system fragmentation. The fourth factor is administrative capability, or "social technology," which acts as a limiting factor: system consolidation depends on the existence of social technologies adequate for administering large units. My argument is that when all of these factors favor a specific degree of system consolidation, the system is likely to stabilize at that level. Highly consolidated systems may be destabilized, however, if any of the four factors strongly favors fragmentation.[5]

Since my topic is the nature of the international system, the system itself is the unit of analysis; studying it therefore requires surveying very broad sweeps of history.[6] The four centuries before 1990 are defined by only two systems—a multipolar balance among empires until 1945, and the bipolar Cold War—so attention to other periods of history is essential to find other examples of international systems. The history of the ancient Middle East, which provides examples of many different types of international system over two millenia, is fertile ground for such study. While any article-length study of such a broad sweep of history can only be suggestive, it does show the empirical plausibility of the theory of system transformation I propose. Studying ancient history also shows the durability of the issues I consider: these factors have been influencing international politics literally since the beginning of recorded history.[7]

But can we really learn anything relevant for modern international relations from the behavior of ancient Egypt or Babylonia? Have not technology, economics, and

4. For discussion of this distinction in some detail, see Watson 1992; Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993; and Buzan and Little 1994. Compare Doyle 1986; Ferguson and Mansbach 1996; and Wallerstein 1974 and 1991.

5. For a discussion of economic motives in particular, see Doyle 1986; Gilpin 1981; and Wallerstein 1991. On the importance of all four factors, see McNeill 1963, 51–52 and *passim*. For other attempts to integrate some of these ideas, see Ferguson and Mansbach 1996; Mayall 1990; McNeill 1963; and Watson 1992.

6. Here I follow the suggestion of Holsti 1995, chap. 2.

7. On the need for works from historical and cross-cultural perspectives, see Cox 1986, 208–9; and Ferguson and Mansbach 1991, 367–68. For examples of such work, see Cioffi-Revilla 1996; Ferguson and Mansbach 1996; Midlarsky 1995; and Watson 1992.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

social organization changed so much that the comparison is useless? The answer, I think, is this: if we can learn from the international politics of the eighteenth century A.D., before those social, economic, and technological revolutions took place, then we can learn from the ancient world.

Indeed, some issues facing ancient Mesopotamian rulers parallel modern concerns. In the twenty-fourth century B.C., Sargon of Akkad engaged in imperial expansion for reasons of economic and security benefit similar to those of nineteenth-century A.D. imperialists. Two centuries after Sargon, Utu-khegal of Uruk appealed to Sumerian patriotism and religion to justify his ouster of the foreign Gutians, who had conquered the Sargonid empire.[8] The Ur III dynasty of the following century collapsed, transforming hegemony into fragmentation, when its highly sophisticated bureaucracy was overwhelmed by internal and external pressures. In short, the needs of international trade, cultural identity, national security, and government administration affected international relations millenia ago in many of the same ways they do today. Ancient history has something to teach modern scholars.

My argument begins, in the next section, with a more detailed discussion of the spectrum of system consolidation and fragmentation. I next consider the causes of system transformation, beginning with the argument that neorealist-style self-help can work to promote system consolidation and sometimes hegemony rather than a balance of power. Later subsections discuss the key forces—the degree of economic interdependence, principles of unit identity, and administrative technology—which can counteract or reinforce that tendency. From these discussions I derive four hypotheses and several corollaries regarding the causes of international system transformation. After briefly summarizing the history of international relations in the ancient Middle East, I next use that history to illustrate the value of those hypotheses for explaining the causes of international systems change. The final section considers the implications of the argument for analyzing the contemporary international system.

The spectrum of system consolidation

We can best understand the degree of system consolidation as a range from a single hegemonic empire, through polar balances of power, to fragmented international systems. At one end of the spectrum are fragmented systems, which may consist of hundreds of tribes or city-states. Next come polar balances of power, which vary not only according to the number of poles but in the degree to which the poles jointly dominate the system. A large degree of such domination defines systems of dual or multiple hegemony. Hegemonic systems, at the other end of the spectrum, vary according to how much of the system is subject to direct imperial control or

8. Gadd 1971, 462.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Fragmented system	Fragmented multipolarity	Multi-polarity	Multiple hegemony	Dual hegemony	Single hegemony	Imperial hegemony
North America 1400	Europe 1500	Europe 1700	World 1900	Cold War 1950	Late Roman Republic 100 B.C.	Roman Empire A.D. 100

Figure 1. *The continuum of system fragmentation and consolidation*

suzerainty, and how much only to informal hegemonic influence. Figure 1 summarizes and illustrates this continuum.

This view represents something of a middle ground between the two existing concepts of international structure. At one extreme is the view of Kenneth Waltz that because there has never been a world empire, the international system has always been anarchic and polar. At the other extreme is Adam Watson's argument that the international system has followed a pendulum pattern between anarchy at one end and empire at the other, with intermediate degrees of hegemony the historic norm.[9] Watson's view, while superior to Waltz's, has two significant problems. First, by Hedley Bull and Watson's own criterion for an international system—whether "the behaviour of each [unit] is a necessary factor in the calculation of the others"—a system entirely characterized by empire has never existed;[10] even China and Rome at their peaks had to take into account the actions of independent neighboring tribes or states. Therefore, I define this end of the system consolidation spectrum as "imperial hegemony": a system in which a single unit is imperial in a large enough part of the system to enable it to be hegemonic (but not necessarily suzerain) in the rest.

At the other end of the spectrum, anarchy, Watson's continuum requires a bit more amendment. At this end, the issue is the distribution of power among small states as well as large ones—a variable that Watson's approach omits, as do other measures of polarity and "power concentration."[11] The familiar form of anarchy is the polar system, a system in which a few states are substantially more powerful than the others and in which these states balance against each other. Even in this case, however, one can distinguish among degrees of consolidation, not so much in the number of poles as in the number of non-poles. As Charles Tilly points out, Europe in 1500 had about five hundred independent units; in 1900 it had about twenty.[12] It was multipolar in each case, but obviously the great powers collectively had more influence on the system in 1900 than they did in 1500, partly because they had absorbed many of the smaller units. Watson's term "multiple hegemony" is useful for characterizing the system in 1900; the system in 1500 was clearly a more fragmented multipolar system.

9. Buzan and Little 1994, 248–49, quoting Watson 1992. For a similar typology of types of hegemonic control, see Doyle 1986.
10. The definition is from Bull and Watson 1984, 1.
11. On power concentration, see Mansfield 1994; and Rasler and Thompson 1994.
12. Tilly 1975, 24.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The system is different still if it is composed of a large number of relatively small units, none of which has much control over the others. In this circumstance, the units are too weak for their individual actions to affect the system significantly. The system as a whole is not, therefore, characterized by a balance of power, though local balancing behavior may occur. The extreme case would involve hundreds of small tribes, though dozens of medium-sized units would also lack a balance of power. In such systems, rules of international order may be difficult to establish, since none of the units can exercise leadership over the system as a whole.

Neorealism, structural realism, and system transformation

The balance of power and system consolidation

Properly understood, the logic of neorealism generates the prediction not of the preservation of a balance of power, but of its collapse.[13] The central claim of the theory is that anarchy forces states to engage in a particular kind of self-help, which in a multipolar system requires that they coalesce against any would-be hegemon in order to prevent hegemony and retain their own autonomy.[14] The maintenance of the European balance-of-power system in the three centuries after the Peace of Westphalia is commonly adduced as evidence for this view. This conclusion, however, is supported neither by the logic of the theory nor by the historical evidence.

The logical problem is summarized in Morton Kaplan's discussion of a multipolar balance of power.[15] Kaplan, like later neorealists, assumes that states are driven to seek power relative to one another. It therefore follows that after wars, losing powers great and small should be annexed by the winners: the winners should calculate that the certain power gain from annexation is preferable to the hope of aligning with the losing states later. Strictly followed, then, the logic of neorealism should predict a reduction in the number of great powers over time, at least to two, the allegedly most stable configuration. Recognizing the problem, Kaplan asserts that system maintenance also requires a rule that essential actors be preserved.[16] Kaplan's critics were correct that such behavior was neither deducible from realist logic nor fully compatible with the historical record, but such criticisms simply reinforce the dilemma: unless states make this sacrifice to maintain the system, multipolar systems will be subject to erosion in their membership.

Balancing, furthermore, is not the only behavior compatible with neorealist logic.[17] Statesmen may calculate that they can safely "hide" from an aggressor, "passing the buck" to force some other state to take the risks of balancing.

13. For a logical argument supporting this view, see Cederman 1994; and for an empirical one, see Watson 1992.
14. For a classic expression of this view, see Morgenthau 1967. For other versions, see, for example, Kaplan 1957; and Gulick 1955.
15. Kaplan 1957.
16. For another discussion of this problem, see Morgenthau 1967.
17. David 1991.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Alternatively, they may choose to "bandwagon" with the aggressor, seizing the chance for opportunistic expansion while turning the aggressor's attention elsewhere.[18] The trouble with these alternatives from the point of view of neorealism is that they do not contribute to the prevention of hegemony. Indeed, if such tactics do not lead to hegemony, the reason must lie in factors other than balancing behavior—factors neorealism leaves implicit.

In some cases, a multipolar balance-of-power system might be transformed into a bipolar system rather than a hegemonic one, as two roughly equally matched superpowers emerge from the ruins of multipolarity. But the process does not stop here: bipolar systems are likely to be even more short-lived, again for reasons recognized in the neorealist literature.[19] As Waltz points out, "overreaction" is the endemic problem in a bipolar system: both poles obsessively intervene in virtually every conflict everywhere in the system, continuously stretching their resources to the limit.[20] Waltz argues that the problem of overreaction is less serious than the problem of miscalculation in multipolar systems, but he offers little reason to think so. Multipolar systems last because genuine hegemonic threats do not appear very often, but in a bipolar system, two would-be hegemons are always present, so the threat of system breakdown into hegemony is likewise ever-present.

Furthermore, continual overreaction is likely to exhaust one or both of the superpowers relatively quickly, as precious resources are drained away in conflicts, possibly including a systemic war. If one of the superpowers is substantially weaker than the other, it is likely to collapse first and concede dominance to the other. This is what happened to the Soviet Union, though systemic war was not necessary. In other cases both superpowers, exhausted by their rivalry, can collapse and be conquered by another state, as Athens and Sparta fell to Macedonia. In either case, however, the duration of the system should be substantially shorter than that of a multipolar system.

The history of the European state system—not to mention the histories of other international systems such as the ancient Chinese—is consistent with this logic.[21] Sixteenth-century great powers Hungary and Poland, for example, were annexed by neighboring powers. Others, such as Spain, Sweden, and Holland, were stripped of their colonies and their influence as great powers by greedy rivals. The result, as noted above, was a reduction in the number of independent units of more than 90 percent by 1900. By the mid-twentieth century, an orgy of bandwagoning, buckpassing, and empire stripping had resulted in the elimination of most great powers and the emergence of a bipolar system—which, of course, quickly collapsed as well.

The effects of such behaviors are heavily influenced by the state of military technology.[22] The key issue is which sort of unit is favored by a given military

18. See Schroeder 1994; and Christensen and Snyder 1990. I thank W. Alexander Vacca and James Schlicht for the insight that bandwagoning behavior may be compatible with realist logic.

19. Gilpin 1981, 29.

20. Waltz 1979, 171–72.

21. Schroeder 1994. Compare Holsti 1995; and David 1991.

22. Some discussions of this point include Levy 1984; McNeill 1963; Quester 1977; and Van Evera 1985.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

technology: for example, an imperial state (the Soviet Union) or its guerrilla opponents (Afghan rebels)? Technology in this context refers not only to weapons but also to knowledge about military organization, strategy, and tactics.

This factor helps explain the timing of the collapse of the European balance. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century military technology favored kings over rebellious nobles but also favored defending kings over attacking ones, thus promoting a relatively stable balance of power among monarchies. Nineteenth-century warfare, in contrast, favored imperial conquest, as Napoleon first showed; the result was a period of European state consolidation—especially, the unification of Germany and Italy. The twentieth-century combination of tanks and aircraft with blitzkrieg doctrine finally ended the European-centered balance of power, promoting the further consolidation of the system into the bipolar cold war pattern.[23]

I summarize these arguments in the following hypothesis and corollaries:

HYPOTHESIS 1. *The logic of self-help under anarchy encourages strong powers to absorb weak ones when practical, promoting consolidation in the international system.*

COROLLARY 1A. *In bipolar systems, overreaction by the superpowers tends to cause their quick exhaustion, and therefore consolidation of the system, as one or both superpowers collapse, possibly as a result of superpower war.*

COROLLARY 1B. *The effects of anarchy are mediated by military technology. Military technologies that favor defenders of small units promote system fragmentation, while those favoring imperial conquest promote consolidation.*

A reformulated structural realism

Explaining why the balance of power lasted as long as it did requires reference to factors other than those considered by Waltzian neorealism—the systemic ordering principle (defined as anarchy) and polarity. Arguing that Waltz's approach is "unnecessarily narrow, static, and . . . ahistorical," Barry Buzan and his colleagues have suggested that the functional differentiation of units, the distribution of attributes other than power, and systemic interaction capacity are also important systemic variables.[24] By this logic, we can consider the other key causes of systems change I identify—economic interdependence, principles of unit legimitacy, and administrative technology—as systemic variables.[25] I explain further below.

Economic interdependence. Increasing economic interdependence is a strong factor promoting system consolidation, for several reasons. First, as Waltz notes,

23. For discussions of such military variables, see McNeill 1963; and Drews 1993.

24. Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993. For a creative attempt to apply these variables, differently defined, to explain international politics, see Collins 1986.

25. For a different approach to including these factors, see Ferguson and Mansbach 1996.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

states can decrease their interdependence, and therefore their vulnerability, by growing larger (implicitly, by annexing trading partners).[26] Second, states that control entire trade routes may more easily tax the trade, and thus deprive others of its economic benefits, if they so choose.[27] This argument is, of course, the core argument of hegemonic stability theory: interdependence promotes imperial expansion and therefore system consolidation.[28] Even if trade is carried out privately such expansion can be economically as well as politically rational, as the imperial state can provide protection against bandits, a single set of rules, a single currency, and no more than one taxing authority.[29] When states cannot gain control over needed resources, hegemonic stability theory suggests that they should logically fall back on the establishment of trade regimes to limit any exploitation of their dependence.[30]

The converse of this hypothesis is not necessarily true: low international economic interdependence need not lead to system fragmentation. Obviously, unsophisticated societies that engage in little trade tend to have less sophisticated political economies, rendering them less capable of building or sustaining empires. Large mercantilist empires, however, may carry on most of their trade internally, and in so doing define a relatively stable consolidated system with low economic interdependence. What causes system disintegration is the disruption of vital trade routes in a system of interdependent states, usually as a result of the interposition of hostile actors.

I argue that economic interdependence is actually a component of system structure, because it is an expression of the functional differentiation of units.[31] Since reasonably sophisticated economies must be specialized (differentiated), they inherently depend on trade. Some of the trade is typically international, meaning that states are interdependent economically. The degree of this economic interdependence varies, but it is in any case built into the structure of the international system.

I summarize the effects of interdependence in the following hypothesis and corollary:

HYPOTHESIS 2. *Greater international economic interdependence promotes system consolidation, other things being equal, and promotes the establishment of trade regimes where imperial expansion is impracticable.*

COROLLARY 2A: *Systems composed of interdependent units tend to fragment when trade is disrupted as a result of military intervention or political weakness.*

26. Waltz 1979, 144–45.
27. Friedman 1977.
28. See, especially, Gilpin 1981. Others making similar arguments include Bean 1973; Friedman 1977; McNeill 1963; and Spruyt 1994.
29. For an argument regarding the economic benefits of state governance in early modern Europe, see Spruyt 1994.
30. The seminal argument that hegemons establish such regimes is found in Gilpin 1981. For an argument that "collective hegemons" can do so, see Snidal 1985. The classic functionalist argument for international integration is Mitrany 1933.
31. Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993, 44. For another suggestion that interdependence might be a systemic variable, see Milner 1993.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Principles of unit identity. International systems are defined largely by the principles of legitimacy on which their component units are based.[32] Historians note this point when they use terms such as the "age of imperialism" or the "age of nationalism." More rigorously, the degree of system consolidation is determined by the nature of the units in the system—Gilpin's distinction between empires, nation-states, and city-states is a good starting point. The nature of the units in the system is, in the long run, determined by the sort of unit the people consider legitimate. The question of where principles of legitimacy come from, and why particular ones are accepted at particular times, is an important question that deserves further research, but I cannot examine it here.

My argument begins with the point that the nature and distribution of these principles is part of the structure of the international system. This can be so because the system itself is "socially constructed":[33] while material realities powerfully influence international interactions, international relations are in essence social relations structured by ideas and attitudes. The constituent units of the system, states, are themselves merely social constructions—systems of relationships among people. The international system, then, is a social construction created by people acting on behalf of social constructions: diplomats negotiating, soldiers following orders to shoot, officials taxing goods when they cross imaginary lines on a map. The defining principles of the states, then, govern its interactions. These principles determine to whom diplomats are loyal, where the lines on the map are drawn, and whose orders soldiers follow. Thus, the principles according to which its member states are organized define the system, meaning that the states' legitimizing principles are part of the system's ordering principles.[34]

One of the principles on which state legitimacy is based is the principle of unit identity. If the dominant units identify themselves as empires, for example, international norms and practice must recognize not only anarchy (among empires) but also hierarchy (between empires and their various dominions, protectorates, and the like). In the contemporary system based on national identity, in contrast, states insist on international norms and practices that recognize no such hierarchies, because such norms and practices help preserve their identity and sovereignty as nation-states.[35] Principles of *government* legitimacy, such as democracy, may also help to define the international system—thus the democratic peace phenomenon may be partly a systemic phenomenon—but I will not pursue that issue here.[36]

A simple scheme for distinguishing among principles of unit identity would recognize three basic types: personalism, nationalism, and imperialism. "Personalist" principles define the legitimate political unit as one consisting of people who can all in principle be personally acquainted. Such units include clans, tribes, or ancient city-states. Thus an age characterized by city-states and nomadic tribes, with few if

32. This point is suggested by Jackson 1990; Mayall 1990; and Walker 1984 and 1993.
33. The inspiration for this argument comes from Wendt 1987, 1992.
34. For a somewhat similar logic, see Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993.
35. For amplification, see Jackson 1990. Compare Mayall 1990; Walker 1984; and Walker 1993.
36. See Doyle 1983; Russett and Maoz 1993; and Owen 1994.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

any larger political units, is a personalist age. Larger units based on personalist principles are possible—agglomerations of tribes, for example, may be welded together by charismatic personalities, and lord-vassal relations can create "groups of groups"—but such units are typically unstable.[37]

A more inclusive concept of identity is ethnicity, which is based on a common name, history, culture, territorial association, and myth of common descent.[38] According to Ernst Haas, if an ethnic or other group is mobilized by modern technology, and "striv[es] to create or maintain [its] own state," it is a "nation" and its principle of identity is nationalism.[39] Most theorists do not consider premodern groups to have been nations—the nation, in this view, is uniquely the product of modern communications technology.[40] Anthony Smith points out, however, that premodern ethnic groups did exist and that some shared many characteristics of modern nations, including a degree of mobilization in pursuit of political independence.[41] I use the awkward but suggestive label "protonationalism" to identify the principle of identity of such groups.

Imperialism is a political principle that justifies the formation and maintenance of empires incorporating many nations and groups. Imperialism is commonly justified by assertion of religious principles, such as the claim of a divinely granted right to rule, or the desire to unite all believers in one state. Ideologies such as Communism can be viewed as secular religions that legitimize their actions on similar principles. Nonreligious justifications for empire can include national chauvinism or "hyper-nationalism," of which racism is a variant. In more stable empires, the imperial principle is accepted not only by rulers but also by the ruled, who consider subordination to empire to be inevitable or even appropriate.[42]

The degree of system consolidation is influenced by the nature and distribution of these principles of identity.[43] Empires or nation-states can be reasonably stable only when and where both rulers and ruled accept the imperialist or nationalist idea. Maintaining illegitimate rule requires more effort than if rule is legitimate, because it drains the state of resources needed for other purposes—thereby creating an advantage for more legitimate units.[44] Thus, personalistically oriented peoples such as tribes or city-states may be easy to conquer, but because they are notoriously difficult to rule, imperial rule over them should be unstable. Self-conscious nations are more capable of defending themselves and are even more difficult for aliens to rule. When present, therefore, personalism and nationalism should sap the strength of empires, leading to frequent revolts by discontented nations, tribes, and city-states. While empires can be kept together by brute force for a time, the cost of doing so is

37. Armstrong 1982, 27–37.
38. Smith 1986, 22–28.
39. The quotation is drawn from Haas 1986, 726.
40. See Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; and Anderson 1983.
41. Smith 1986, 11.
42. For some evocative nineteenth-century examples, see Jackson 1990.
43. See, for example, Franck 1990; Jackson 1990; and Watson 1992.
44. Jackman 1993, chap. 5.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

likely to be ruinous, leading eventually to the collapse of such empires into more legitimate local or national units.

If anti-imperial principles come to be encoded in international law or international norms, they can also create external pressures on empires. If imperial expansion violates accepted principles, for example, states are more likely to perceive it as the sort of threat that justifies forming a balancing coalition. Similarly, the pressure of systemically accepted principles promoted twentieth-century decolonization: the norms of national self-determination—useful for legitimizing leading states' independence—became so ingrained in international practice after World War II that even in cases where both colony and metropole might have preferred to maintain their relationships, the tide of decolonization often could not be stemmed.[45]

To summarize, the following hypothesis captures the effects of principles of unit identity on system consolidation:

HYPOTHESIS 3. *Accepted principles of unit identity generate systemic and internal pressures that push the nature of units toward the most legitimate form in that time and place—either empires, nations or proto-nations, or personalistic units. These pressures more often favor system maintenance or fragmentation over consolidation.*

Administrative technology. Technology does not refer to physical machines only; some key effects on the international system come from *social technology*—the capabilities and sophistication of social institutions, especially technologies for state administration. Obviously, units can last only if appropriate administrative mechanisms are invented. If an empire cannot be administered, it dies with its creator (like Alexander's), if not before. More broadly, all states contemplating expansion face the eventual problem of diminishing marginal returns; administrative technologies help determine at what point further expansion produces more costs than benefits—and therefore define the largest stable unit size.[46] Furthermore, the kind of social technology is important: states based on a system of governance akin to feudalism, in which most functions of government are delegated to vassals, interact differently from those administered by centralized bureaucracies. In medieval Europe, for example, kings often had to stop fighting after the traditional forty days of feudal service had been rendered.

Social technology for state administration is a systemic variable because it defines a kind of functional differentiation of states. Bureaucratic states take on functions that feudal kingdoms do not, for example, while tribal units take on fewer functions still. Since some administrative technologies, like the invention of bureaucratic government, may make a critical contribution to state power, we can assume (for good neorealist reasons) that such inventions will tend to diffuse across the system relatively quickly. As a result, they will come to characterize all of the leading states in the system and therefore the period as a whole. However, since not all states have a

45. See especially Jackson 1990.
46. Bean 1975.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

social structure that can support such administrative technologies—bureaucracy, for example, requires an adequate pool of literate people acceptant of discipline in a hierarchy—administrative technologies are likely to vary, resulting in some states being functionally different from others. Those capable of supporting the most effective technologies, of course, will as a result become the leading states.

The following hypothesis summarizes the importance of administrative technology:

HYPOTHESIS 4. *The size and nature of units is limited by the most effective extant administrative technologies, which tend to diffuse to other units capable of employing them. Units that are too large to be administered tend to collapse.*

The logic of international systems change

The argument so far has maintained that the causes of system transformation are systemic ones; it has not, however, made a systematic case for why these are the crucial causes. My core reason is inductive: all four of these forces seem necessary to explain patterns in international system transformation. The pressures of anarchy and economic interdependence, the favorites of current theory, are undeniably important, but both usually push in the direction of system consolidation. The mediating impact of military technology is not alone sufficient to explain system fragmentation. The effects of administrative technology and principles of unit identity are therefore necessary to explain why, and when, system fragmentation occurs. In short, deductive parsimony on this matter does not work, so I have fallen back on a more inclusive inductive approach.

Furthermore, the argument has a certain intellectual elegance in the context of Barry Buzan and Richard Little's reformulated "structural realism." Buzan and Little identify three categories of variables characterizing the structure of the international system: the "deep structural" variables of ordering principles and functional differentiation, and the "distributional structure." My main argument explains changes in system consolidation—i.e., distributional structure—by appealing to the effects of deep structure. Specifically, the ordering principles of the system include not only anarchy but also the legitimizing principles of the units themselves; while functional differentiation includes differences in social technologies for state governance and economic differentiation (which means economic interdependence).

The relationships among these variables are inherently recursive and collinear—that is, the "effects" rebound to affect the "causes," and the causes are not independent but influence one another, as Figure 2 illustrates. A simple case of recursion is that while more inclusive principles of identity promote increased system consolidation (i.e., the emergence of larger units), that consolidation can create pressures encouraging acceptance of more inclusive identity principles elsewhere, in order to legitimize the creation of larger states that can better protect themselves. Similarly, while economic interdependence may promote system consolidation, that consolidation can either reduce interdependence (by including whole trade routes in one

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

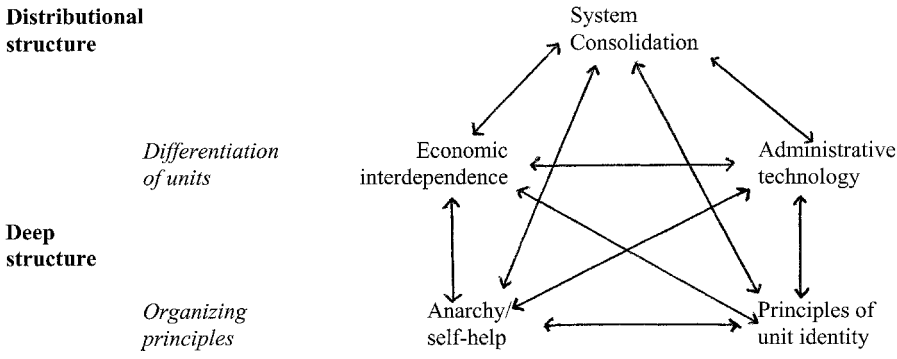


Figure 2. *Causes of system consolidation and levels of analysis*

empire) or increase it (by reducing trade disruptions). Anarchy may also spur imperial expansion (and system consolidation) as a form of self-help, but that expansion can result in the emergence of a hegemon, altering the basic systemic ordering principle from anarchy to hierarchy. Finally, while adequate administrative technologies are necessary to maintain empires, the existence of empire may itself spur the invention and diffusion of appropriate administrative technologies.

All of the causal variables also affect one another. Principles of unit identity (for example, personalistic lord–vassal principles) may determine which social technology is considered appropriate (feudalism), but a more effective social technology (royal bureaucracy) may promote acceptance of a different identity principle (dynastic imperialism). Interdependence, for its part, may aid in the creation of social technologies, as trading skills are applied to governance; and it may promote the emergence of imperial identity principles to justify economically motivated expansion. Conversely, effective social technologies can stabilize the empires that keep trade routes open, promoting more interdependence; while narrow nationalist identity principles may promote protectionism and therefore decrease interdependence.

Even anarchy and its effects are subject to such influence. Thus while anarchy may provoke states to decrease their economic interdependence, interdependence may prompt them to amalgamate into larger units, replacing anarchy with hierarchy. Similarly, while groups may be influenced by the self-help imperative to accept broader principles of identity, anti-imperial legitimizing principles can also reduce the "fight or die" self-help imperative, mitigating the impact of anarchy. Finally, while self-help may prompt states to adopt more effective social technologies, those technologies (i.e., institutions) may make possible forms of coordination or hierarchy that transform anarchy.

These phenomena of recursion and collinearity would be barriers to analysis if I were attempting to determine the specific weights of these variables in affecting systems change. The purpose of this article, however, is to argue only that these

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

variables do affect systems change, so recursion and collinearity are not a problem for this analysis.

International relations in the ancient Middle East

The following study of Middle Eastern history between about 2400 B.C. and 100 B.C. illustrates the ability of the above-mentioned hypotheses and corollaries to explain system transformation. I focus on this period because international systems lasted, on average, only about a century; the period therefore provides examples of twenty or more different systems, and of the transitions from each to the next. It is particularly interesting because it provides examples of systems defined by all three types of legitimizing principles—personalism, (proto-) nationalism, and imperialism.

Considering such a long time span means, of course, that this analysis can be no more than suggestive. Studying ancient events also means that relatively little information is available: some facts, such as leaders' motivations or popular views on legitimacy, may never be fully known; and in some cases, even the chronology remains uncertain: the standard dates (used here) for the conqueror Sargon, for example, may be off by as much as a century.[47] Additionally, my presentation is selective, focusing mostly on examples that support my hypotheses, omitting some that do not. Nevertheless, some value can be extracted from this analysis. Some periods are illuminated by good and detailed evidence, such as diplomatic archives from Hammurabi's time and the Amarna period, and the existence of some supporting evidence for my hypotheses at least demonstrates their empirical plausibility.

Figure three summarizes the history considered here, dividing it into periods.

Early dynastic period (circa 2900–2400 B.C.)

This period is backdrop for rather than the focus of this study. Sumerian civilization reached its peak in the mid-third millenium B.C. and was centered around a number of city-states in the lower Tigris and Euphrates valleys.

Akkadian to old Babylonian periods (circa 2400–1500 B.C.)

This era saw several periods of hegemony by single empires. Although they were mostly short-lived ones based in the old Sumerian heartland, they at times dominated most of modern Iraq, southwestern Iran, and parts of northern Syria.[48] The periods of imperial hegemony were those under the Sargonid or Akkadian Empire (circa 2334–2193 B.C., represented in Figure 4), the Third Dynasty of Ur, or Ur III Empire

47. For an argument that Sargon may have lived half a century earlier, see Saggs 1995, 28; for a claim that he lived a century later, see Wilhelm 1989, v and 7.

48. For two good sources on this period, see Oates 1986; and Saggs 1995.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

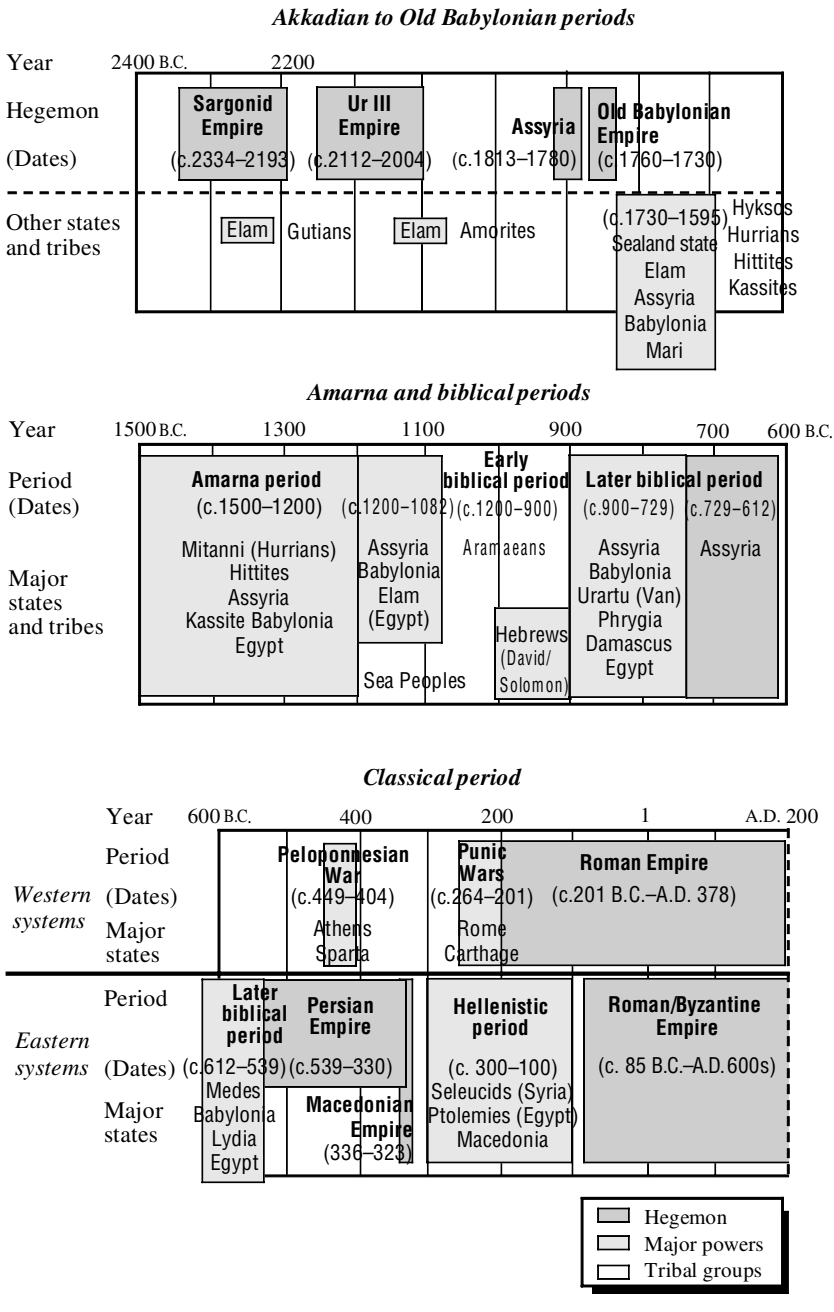
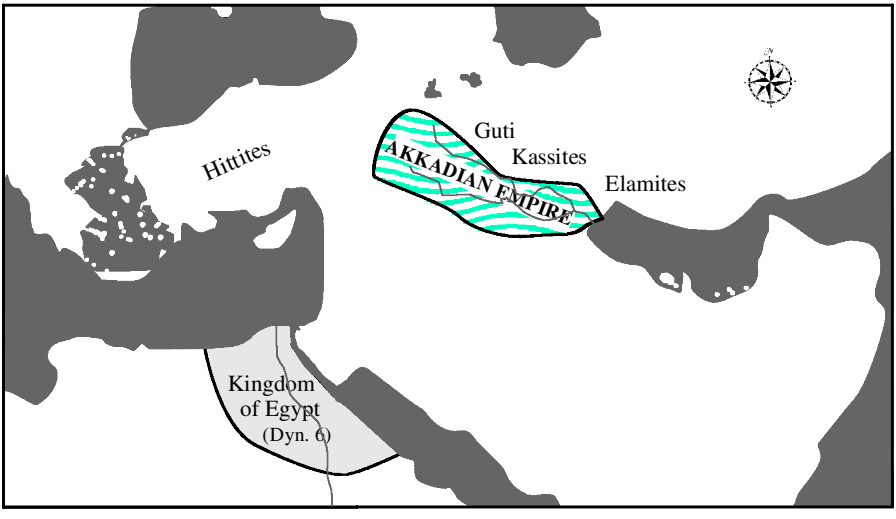


Figure 3. *Ancient history time line*

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Source: McEvedy 1967, 42–47. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

Figure 4. *Akkadian (Sargonid) Empire, circa 2250 B.C.*

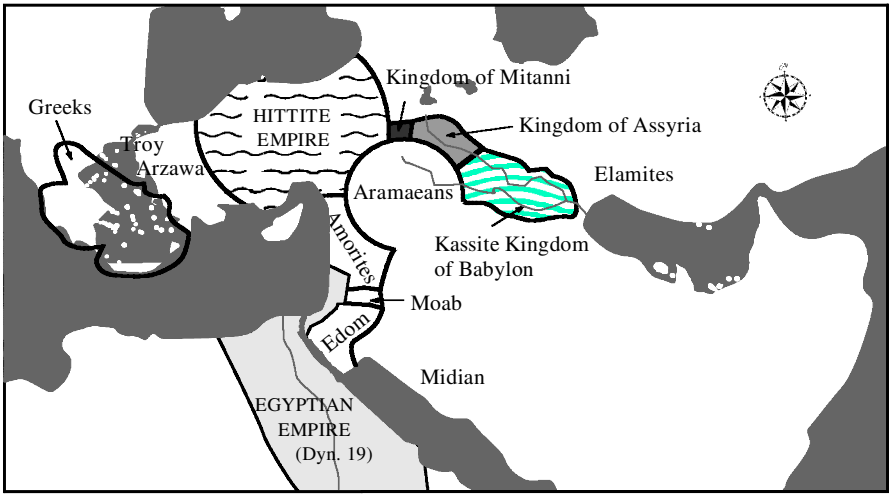
(circa 2112–2004), the first Assyrian Empire under Shamshi-Adad (circa 1813–1780), and the Old Babylonian Empire of Hammurabi (circa 1760–1730). All four empires broke down, due to external pressure and internal rebellion, into blocs of city-states, which engaged for some time in multipolar balance-of-power politics before eventually succumbing to another empire.

Amarna period (circa 1500–1082 B.C.)

This period was characterized by two balance-of-power systems.[49] For roughly the first century, the system was a bipolar one in which the empires of Egypt and Mitanni were the superpowers, dividing Syria between them. The 1300s and 1200s (depicted in Figure 5) represented a multipolar balance of power among proto–nation-states, as the Hittite and Assyrian states supplanted imperial Mitanni, and Babylonia under Kassite rule joined Egypt to form a quadripolar system with a highly developed diplomatic apparatus. The system ended around 1200 B.C., when the Hittite state was destroyed, and the Egyptians pushed back into Egypt, by a tide of tribal attackers. A remnant Assyrian-Babylonian-Elamite balance-of-power system in Mesopotamia collapsed a century later as Assyria and Babylonia were nearly destroyed by a wave of tribal Aramaean invaders.

49. For a good, though dated, source on the period, see Edwards et al. 1975.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Source: McEvedy 1967, 42–47. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

Figure 5. *Amarna period states, circa 1300 B.C.*

Early biblical period (circa 1200–900 B.C.)

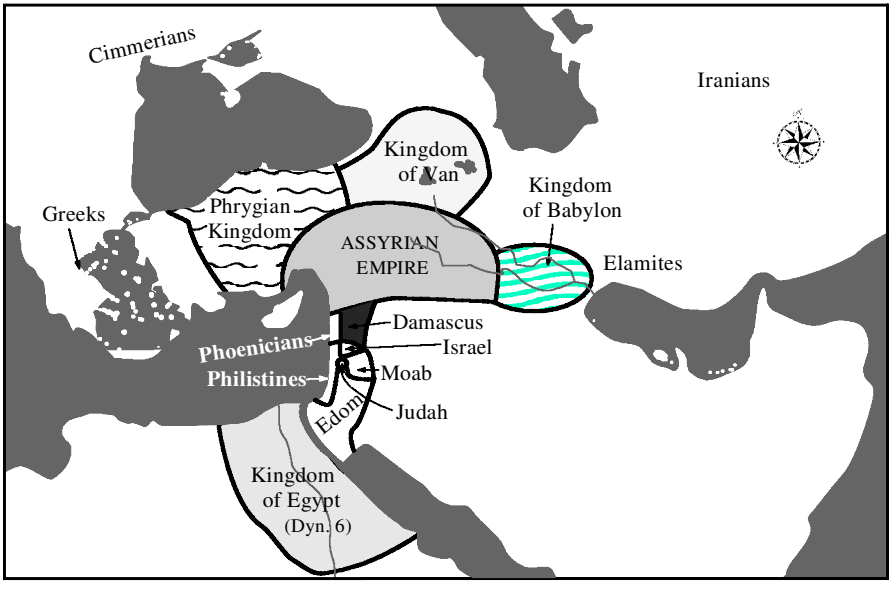
This period in the Levant (beginning a century later in Mesopotamia) was a primarily tribal system. This is the time described in the biblical books of Judges and Samuel, which continued to about 1020. In the Judges period, the Hebrews like most of their neighbors were organized on a loose tribal basis. There were no major states among which a balance of power could form. The small Hebrew kingdom under David and Solomon was able to dominate much of the Levant in the next century (circa 1000–930) because it grew essentially in a vacuum; that is, there were no more powerful states to check its growth. Further east, the Babylonian king in the mid-900s did not have firm control even over the immediate vicinity of his own capital.[50]

Later biblical period (circa 900–500 B.C.)

By about 900 B.C., a new balance-of-power system had emerged, as depicted in Figure 6. Assyria was the leading state in the Fertile Crescent but was checked by a number of neighbors of comparable power, including Urartu to the north, Babylonia to the east, Phrygia to the west, and Damascus to the south, with Egypt further away (Israel, divided by civil war, was subject to Damascus). By 729, however, Assyria had annexed Damascus and taken control of Babylonia; tribal Cimmerians had

50. Saggs 1995, 131–32.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Source: McEvedy 1967, 43. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

Figure 6. *Biblical period empires, circa 825 B.C.*

destroyed Phrygia and reduced Urartu soon after. Thus Assyria was left as hegemon, roughly from 729 to 612, even holding Egypt for a few decades.[51]

Assyria's fall was sudden, as it succumbed to a combined assault by a new Median empire, rebelling Babylonians, and tribal Scythians in 612. The resulting system, from 612–539, was quadripolar, with Media, Babylonia, Egypt, and (in western Anatolia) Lydia in relatively peaceful equilibrium. That system again collapsed suddenly, however, after Cyrus the Persian took control of the Median Empire and transformed it into the Persian Empire. Between 549 and 539, Cyrus conquered both Lydia and Babylonia (his son added Egypt a bit later), establishing Persia's hegemonic control over the Fertile Crescent for two centuries.[52]

Classical period (circa 500–100 B.C.)

This period encompasses several political systems. After Xerxes' defeat at Salamis and Plataea (480), Persia never again invaded Greece, leaving the multipolar Greek city-state system autonomous from the Persian-dominated Middle East. A bipolar subsystem led by Athens and Sparta soon emerged there and quickly degenerated into the Peloponnesian War (449–404).[53] As a result of that war, all of the Greek

51. McEvedy 1967, 42–47.
52. This history is nicely summarized in McEvedy 1967, 50.
53. Thucydides 1951.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

city-states were so weakened that they succumbed to conquest from the north, first by Thebes and later by Macedon. Alexander the Great (336–323) briefly extended Macedonian hegemony over the entire Persian Empire, but his successors divided his empire into several parts, creating the Hellenistic period balance-of-power system, which lasted for about two centuries (circa 300–100), until the advent of Roman rule.

In the Western Mediterranean, the bipolar system dominated by Rome and Carthage quickly degenerated into the first two Punic Wars (264–201), resulting in Carthage's submission and anticlimactic destruction decades later. During the next century, Rome established its dominance over the Hellenistic states of the Levant as well.

Consolidation and distintegration in ancient international systems

The above discussion outlines what international systems changes occurred in the period under study; I turn now to explaining why they occurred. I have hypothesized that four main factors should explain those changes: unstable balance of power dynamics, principles of unit identity, economic interdependence, and administrative technologies. I consider each factor below.[54]

The rise and fall of balances of power

Balance-of-power systems are one natural outcome of international politics, and they did repeatedly emerge in the ancient world. In some cases, these were longstanding multipolar balances among city-states, as in Babylonia in Hammurabi's time or Greece early in the fifth century B.C. After the effective domestication of the horse, multipolar balances of power could form among proto–nation-states (the Amarna period) or empires (the later biblical period). In other periods, the system resolved into bipolar standoffs: Egypt and Mitanni, Sparta and Athens, Rome and Carthage.

As hypothesis 1 suggests, however, balances of power were not necessarily stable. Sargon, Ur-Nammu (founder of the Ur III dynasty), and Hammurabi each overcame competing city-states not only to unite their own Sumerian-Akkadian cultural area but also to conquer (at least in part) neighboring cultures like the Elamites of southwestern Iran. Similarly, Assyria eventually defeated all of its rivals to achieve hegemony in the 700s B.C., and Persia conquered three other great powers in the 500s.

Each of these consolidations occurred for theoretically definable reasons. Hammurabi's rise to hegemony, for example, occurred because one of his key rivals chose to bandwagon rather than to balance. A diplomat of the time described the system as a multipolar balance of power, with Babylon one among five to seven comparable

54. For a broadly compatible recent treatment of the period, see Ferguson and Mansbach 1996.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

great powers.[55] By 1763 B.C., however, Hammurabi had amassed enough power to defeat a coalition of three rivals—Assyria, Elam, and Eshnunna—apparently in a defensive battle. At this point Eshnunna decided to bandwagon, joining Hammurabi in destroying their mutual rival, Larsa. The following year, however, Hammurabi turned on his partner, conquering Eshnunna and its ally Assyria. By the time of his death in 1749 B.C., Hammurabi had consolidated a multipolar balance of power into Babylonian hegemony.[56]

In the case of Assyria's rise during the biblical period, the key enabling factors were annexation and a sort of bandwagoning. The bandwagoning came from peripheral actors, the Cimmerian tribes, who defeated two of Assyria's great power rivals, Phrygia and Urartu, in order to settle the latter's territory. Assyria was then freed to eliminate the rest of its opponents—most importantly Egypt and Babylonia—either by annexing them or turning them into satellites.[57]

Assyria's later fall can be understood as the result of balancing and bandwagoning; its replacement by Persia was caused by "hiding." When the Median Empire emerged as a new great power in the seventh century B.C., it balanced with a rebelling Babylonia to end Assyrian hegemony. When the Scythians bandwagoned with the coalition, Assyria was destroyed (612) and a new multipolar balance of power resulted. Later, when Cyrus the Persian took control of Media and attacked Lydia (546), Nabonidus of Babylonia, apparently intimidated, chose to hide—that is, to appease Cyrus—instead of aiding his Lydian ally.[58] When Babylonia's turn came in 539, Egypt, the other remaining power, also chose to hide (behind the Sinai desert). They were therefore conquered one at a time, resulting in two centuries of Persian hegemony.

When balance-of-power systems were bipolar, they usually decayed rapidly, as corollary 1a suggests. Thus the Athens-Sparta system lasted only forty-five years, and the Rome-Carthage system lasted sixty-four years, both collapsing after a systemic war. The result of the Peloponnesian War was to pave the way for outside hegemons such as Macedonia; the Punic Wars, of course, led to enduring Roman hegemony. The Amarna period Mitanni–Egypt standoff was an exception to the rule, lasting a full century and remaining peaceful for most of that time; but the peace may well be attributable to internal weaknesses in both states, more than to any system-level stability.[59]

As corollary 1b suggests, changes in military technology played an important mediating role in these processes. In each case, it was the invention not just of new weapons but also of suitable tactics and organizations for their use that had the largest effect. The most dramatic example was the invention of effective war chariots by tribal invaders of the seventeenth century B.C.—Hittites, Hurrians, Kassites, and others who were then able to sweep away the remnants of Hammurabi's empire and

55. Oates 1986.
56. See Oates 1986, 60–67; and Hinz 1973, 264.
57. For a brief summary of this period, see McEvedy 1967, 44. See also Saggs 1965.
58. Lloyd 1973, 100–102.
59. See Goetze 1975, 5; and Wilhelm 1989, 28–30.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(in the guise of the Hyksos) conquer northern Egypt.[60] After a period of fragmentation, the result was the chariot-based empires of the Amarna period. This period marks a watershed: the first effective employment of horses dramatically improved the mobility and communications of imperial armies, leading to longer-lasting and more stable empires than were possible in earlier periods. The example also shows that the stability of ages of empire depended not only on the nature of military technology but also on what was done with that technology. Chariot-driving tribesmen destroyed the empires they found, but their descendants became chariot-driving aristocrats who built and maintained even better empires.

Other military innovations had different, sometimes equally profound, effects. Thus, new infantry tactics that gave tribal invaders the advantage over imperial charioteers apparently contributed to the collapse of the Amarana period empires after 1200 B.C.[61] Similarly, the evolution of the highly sophisticated Assyrian combined-arms tactics, which returned the advantage to aggressive imperial armies, was largely responsible for transforming the fragmented system of the early biblical period into the imperial system of the late biblical period.[62]

Principles of unit identity

Hypothesis 3 suggests that systems should reflect, or be transformed to reflect, the accepted principles of unit legitimacy. That did occur repeatedly. When tribally (i.e., personalistically) organized groups—Amorites around 2000 B.C., and Aramaeans after 1100 B.C.—overran parts of the Middle East, their ability to unite militarily against powerful empires was not translated into the creation of new empires. Instead, they formed systems of many independent tribal and city-state units that resisted all efforts to form larger units for centuries. The Amorites, for example, never reunited the Babylonian region into a stable unit: Hammurabi's state split up during the reign of his successor, and Babylonia was not reunified again until Kassite times.

Peoples with entrenched city-state identities behaved similarly. In Early Dynastic (pre-Sargonid) Sumer, for example, the theology held that each city existed primarily to serve a particular god, with each city-state's ruler considered the delegate of his city's god.[63] Although a concept of overall kingship did exist, it legitimized only a loose and tenuous suzerainty, rather than any real imperial control.[64] Therefore, when Sargon united the Sumerian city-states by force, his empire was not considered legitimate, especially by the powerful priests.[65] Partly as a result, every Sargonid ruler faced repeated rebellions as the Sumerian cities repeatedly tried to regain their

60. McNeill 1971.
61. Drews 1993.
62. Breasted 1953, 198.
63. Saggs 1962.
64. Westenholz 1979. For a different interpretation, see Watson 1992.
65. For evidence of priestly opposition to the Sargonids, see Saggs 1995, 72–75.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

traditional, and religiously sanctioned, independence.[66] The Greek cities of the classical age also held strong principles of city-state identity, and they too resisted unification: neither Sparta, Thebes, nor Macedonia was able to establish lasting control over the fractious Hellenic cities.

When larger units remained stable, that stability was supported by broader principles of identity. The kernel of the Ur III empire, for example, was established by a leader who explicitly appealed to Sumerian patriotism, producing inscriptions denouncing foreign occupiers as "enemy of the gods, who . . . filled Sumer with evil," and praising his own work because it "restored the kingship of Sumer into its own hand."[67] His successors acted to strengthen Sumerian identity further, promoting myths that emphasized Sumer's common cultural identity and glorified the Sargonid precedent of unity. Ur III kings also gained priestly sanction for their rule by piously carrying out religious ceremonies and building lavish temples for the priests.[68] These patriotic appeals, combined with improved social technology, seem to have worked: Ur III kings apparently faced few revolts in the Sumerian heartland, though the culturally distinctive Elamites were much less submissive.[69] Later Kassite kings followed the same formula of religious ceremony, temple-building projects, and deference to tradition with even more success: they controlled Babylonia for some three centuries, apparently with few attempts at revolt.[70]

During the Amarna period, in fact, proto-national identity became the norm systemwide, not only in Kassite Babylonia.[71] The period began when the Egyptians, out of protonationalist pride, revolted against the rule of the Hyksos, "despised Asiatic barbarians," and established an empire in Canaan and Syria.[72] In northern Syria, they met the Mitannian empire, which was built around ethnic Hurrians.[73] The Assyrians, divided between Mitanni and Kassite Babylonia, reacted by developing for the first time a concept of "the Land of Assur"—that is, Assyria—rallying together to assert their independence from both rival empires.[74] Similarly, the Hittites, harking back in one text to "ancient times [when] the Land of Hatti [the Hittite country] . . . used to rage against the surrounding countries like a lion," re-established their own state.[75] Eventually, the Hittites and Assyrians divided Mitanni between them.

All five Armarna period empires were based on ethnic groups distinguished from their neighbors by the same factors that differentiate ethnic groups today: language, religion, traditional homeland, political and legal norms, and other cultural traits. Like modern ethnic distinctions, ancient ones were not always neat: the Hittites, for

66. See ibid., 73; and Oates 1986, 34–37.
67. The quotations, attributed to the Sumerian leader Utu-Khegal, are from Gadd 1971, 462.
68. Oates 1986, 45–49.
69. Saggs 1995, 85–90.
70. See, for example, Saggs 1962, 79; Oates 1986, 86–89; and Saggs 1995, 116–21.
71. For a detailed discussion, see Smith 1986.
72. This characterization is from McNeill 1963, 82.
73. Wilhelm 1989, 49–76.
74. See Larsen 1979, 82; and Postgate 1992, 247.
75. Gurney 1979, 154.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

example, used two different written languages and were ethnically related to the Arzawans, their neighbors to the west. Nevertheless, where it existed, a sense of ethnocultural unity often provided part of the glue that held ancient states together.

Conversely, ethnic identity was sometimes an obstacle when states tried to control lands inhabited by alien groups. For example, Mesopotamian empires repeatedly tried to control ethnically separate Elam, but Elam repeatedly rebelled, destroying the Ur III dynasty and weakening its successors. Similarly, the last Assyrian empire collapsed in 612 due largely to rebellions by the main proto-nations subordinated in it, Babylonia and Egypt. The Hittites faced similar problems ruling Hurrians, who, in O. R. Gurney's words, did not "take kindly to government by barbarian Anatolians."[76]

In most of these cases, the result was the reestablishment of earlier, more legitimate units. Elam repeatedly reestablished its independence after each Babylonian conquest, for example, and Babylonia and Egypt reestablished their independence after the later Assyrian collapse. Alexander the Great's multiethnic empire broke up even more quickly into more legitimate units, with Egypt, Macedonia, and several fractious Greek states splitting off from the core of the previous Persian empire, now under Seleucid rule. The Hittite example shows how exceptions could be made: they managed to hold onto Hurrian regions by governing through native vassals to reduce local resentment.

One reason why Persia's hegemony lasted twice as long as Assyria's was that the Persians were more sensitive to such issues of legimitacy. As Mario Liverani describes, biblical period Assyrian elites interpreted their religious beliefs to hold that "the Assyrian kingship is the only one to legitimately exercise universal dominion, the Assyrian king 'has no equal.' "[77] Thus while Assyrian kings were able to reduce Babylonian discontent by carrying out certain religious rituals, most reflected the arrogance of their ideology and ruled by repression instead. As a result, they faced repeated Babylonian uprisings that eventually led to their undoing.[78] The Persians, in contrast, improved the lot of most conquered peoples, practicing religious toleration, allowing people exiled by Assyria (such as the Hebrews) to return home, and granting autonomy to subject peoples. Hence, Persia survived as hegemon for two centuries, collapsing only due to attack from the outside.

In sum, the structure of the international system was shaped by the cultural identities of major groups, and it changed only when those identities were extinguished by genocide or assimilation. Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, and Elam were key actors in one period after another because even when they were conquered, they either assimilated their conquerors, or else built a new state on the old identity when the conquerors weakened. Lasting hegemonic rule in the region was only made possible by massive cultural shifts: first Assyria broke the resistance of the fractious Aramaeans to imperial rule, then it virtually annihilated the Elamites in a military

76. Ibid., 157.
77. Liverani 1979, 310.
78. Porter 1993, chap. 5. Compare Oates 1986, 116–21.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

campaign during Assyria's final decline. The Medes and Persians later broke Assyrian and Babylonian power, opening the way for both groups to be assimilated to the Aramaic language, whose alphabetic script was easier to transmit than the Babylonians' clumsy cuneiform writing.[79] Only then was the way opened for the succession of empires—Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman—that dominated the area for the next millennium.

The reader might protest, but for whom did state legitimacy, in any ancient period, matter? Surely the mass of illiterate peasant farmers could have little known or cared which king ruled them? The answer is complex. Certainly each age held politically relevant classes whose aid, or at least acquiescence, was necessary for imperial rule. Disloyal scribes could conceal important information from rulers; recalcitrant landowners could withhold foodstuffs; and resentful priests could promote opposition among all classes. In the Amarna age, the chariot-driving military aristocracy was also the landed gentry, and kings could not move without their consent. In cities, even the masses could be important, as their attitude could determine whether an urban revolt would have any staying power: even a small dissenting minority would be able to open the city gates to besieging imperial armies.

Economic interdependence

Throughout the period under study, international trade was economically vital. Babylonia, especially, had little native timber or metal, so it always was forced to trade, usually exporting foodstuffs in exchange for other goods. As hypothesis 2 would predict, desire to control that trade seems to explain much of the imperialist impulse shown by the prominent leaders of the time. In some cases, when a sufficiently expansive empire was infeasible, rulers fell back on the establishment of institutionalized trade regimes. When trade was disrupted (corollary 2a), trading states collapsed and agricultural states were weakened.

The evidence that economic motives were typical for empire builders is fairly strong. Ancient texts describing Sargon's conquests as including "the Cedar Forest" (in Lebanon) and "the Silver Mountains" (the Amanus and Taurus ranges) strongly suggest his objectives for his wood- and metal-poor empire.[80] Indeed, control of land routes across the Fertile Crescent generated enough business to interest even distant trading partners in the accumulated riches: seagoing trade in the Sargonic and Ur III periods reached as far as the Indus valley.[81] Similarly, Hittite expansionism to the west in the 1300s B.C. apparently was motivated by desire to control the trade routes to tin and copper mines (whose products defined the Bronze Age) in Bohemia and elsewhere.[82] Assyria's rivalry with Urartu in the 800s and 700s B.C. largely was

79. Smith 1986.
80. The quotation and interpretation are from Oates 1986, 38.
81. Saggs 1962, 272–75.
82. Macqueen 1986, 37–41.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

centered around competition for control over similar routes; Cyrus of Persia conquered Lydia and Babylonia partly for the same reason.[83]

The Amarna period presents a somewhat different picture. In a period when several great powers—mutually agreed to be equal in status—coexisted for a long time, leaders apparently accepted that none was capable of conquering the others, so they had to find an alternative to imperial expansion. The expedient they hit upon, again in accordance with hypothesis 2, was state-sponsored international trade in the form of "gifts" among sovereigns.[84] For Egypt, the system approximated cash trade, as Pharaohs sent large quantities of gold in exchange for the horses bred in Assyria and Babylonia but needed as much by Pharaoh's chariot armies as by his neighbors'.

Furthermore, empires could be seriously undermined when their trade routes were cut off, as corollary 2a suggests. For example, the collapse of the Hittites after 1200 B.C. is largely due to the severing of the western trade routes by migrating tribes. The resulting economic decline made it possible for the Hittites' local enemies to overwhelm them.[85] A few centuries later, Assyria strangled its rival Urartu by severing its trade lifeline.[86] The evidence is everywhere—from the Ur III period to the final Babylonian collapse of 539 B.C. and beyond—that imperial collapse was often preceded by disruptions of trade, inflation, famine, and a resulting administrative, military and ideological collapse.

The cutoff of imperial trade often happened because key international trade routes extended beyond the military reach of any of the empires dependent on them—and therefore beyond the boundaries of the international political-military system.[87] The Amarna period's dependence on central European tin is one example. The trade routes apparently emerged in response to market forces, and trade continued as long as intermediaries chose to profit from it rather than disrupt it. During the interregnum after the fall of the Ur III dynasty, a similar situation occurred, as the seagoing Persian Gulf trade continued to provide such goods as gold, copper ore, ivory, and precious woods to the port at Ur.[88] Only when migrating tribes destroyed the Sumerians' trading partners in the Indus Valley, and others chose to rob the Hittite-bound caravans instead of taxing them, did the trade routes—and eventually the markets they served—collapse.

Administrative technology

As hypothesis 4 suggests, empires' staying power depended largely on the quality of their administrative technologies. Sargon created the first known system of direct

83. Saggs 1962, 285–86.
84. Saggs 1995, 117–21.
85. Macqueen 1986, 50–51.
86. Saggs 1962, 91 and 283–85.
87. For the suggestion that the international political system and the international economic system should be distinguished, see Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993.
88. Woolley 1928, 116.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

imperial administration, but it was only moderately effective, plagued by repeated rebellions by fractious city-states. The first really effective system came under the Ur III dynasty, which built one of the most impressive systems of political administration of ancient times. Administration and military command were carried out by different officials, who were circulated among forty districts to prevent their adoption of local loyalties. The economy was mostly state-owned, run by a huge system of royal bureaucrats reporting either to the crown or to the priestly establishment. The judicial system, too, was separated from the bureaucracy.[89] The effectiveness of this administrative system was probably an important reason why the Ur III empire did not suffer from the endemic uprisings that its Sargonid predecessor had faced. Its like was not seen again until the Assyrian empire was approaching its peak over a millenium later.

During the Amarna period, with aristocratic charioteers dominant on the battlefield, state organization was more feudal than bureaucratic.[90] In this context, the highly developed diplomacy of the era was simultaneously an administrative tool, as great power control was asserted by varying forms of suzerainty codified in carefully worded international treaties. The improved communications permitted by domesticated horses also aided administration, helping to tie together the loose empires of the period.

Other causes of system transformation

A number of variables other than the hypothesized four were often important in causing system transformation, but they generally acted by modifying the effects of the variables I have highlighted. For example, the revolution in communications and transportation wrought by the effective domestication of the horse greatly eased empire building by improving both military and administrative technologies.[91] As Karl Deutsch theorizes about a later period, better communications may also have promoted the broader proto-national identities that seem to have characterized the succeeding Amarna period.[92] On another plane, the great migrations of the Amorites in the century around 2000 B.C., which overwhelmed the Ur III empires, and the Aramaean migration that followed the Amarna age (around the 1100s B.C.) seem to have been spurred by climatic change—that is, these pastoral peoples may have been spurred to move into imperial territories by the dessication of their traditional pasture lands.

The accident of leadership ability also played an important role. Every hegemonic empire except Rome was the creation of individual geniuses, usually usurpers: Sargon of Akkad; Ur-Nammu, founder of the Ur III dynasty; Tiglath-Pileser III, the father of Assyrian hegemony; and Hammurabi, who made Babylon the capital of

89. Oates 1986, 43.
90. See McNeill 1971, 52; and Oates 1986, 101.
91. On the systemic importance of communications technologies, see Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993; and Barber 1995.
92. Deutsch 1953.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mesopotamia for a millennium; not to mention Cyrus of Persia and Alexander of Macedon. The most stable of these empires—Ur-Nammu's and Cyrus's—were so because their founders were not only conquerors but administrative geniuses who built institutional mechanisms to hold their empires together. No stable empires grew up between the collapse of Ur III and the Amarna period because the great conquerors of the intervening centuries, such as Hammurabi and Shamshi-Adad, failed to build durable state administrations. Thus the emergence of new orders, even on an international scale, depended on leadership and institutional invention as much as on material forces of military or economic pressure. Without such men as Ur-Nammu or Cyrus, the system would have remained as fragmented as it was when they found it.

Summary: the empirical record

The survey of ancient history presented here provides some supporting evidence for each of the hypotheses about causes of system consolidation. Balancing "failures" did repeatedly cause multipolar systems to collapse into hegemonic ones, in accordance with hypothesis 1. The clearest examples were the failure of Mesopotamian city-states to balance against Hammurabi and the failure of Babylonia and Egypt to balance against Persia. Two out of three bipolar systems (Athens and Sparta, Rome and Carthage) collapsed quickly into systemic war and then hegemony, as corollary 1a would lead us to expect. Further, ages of empire were typically distinguished by the superior military forms they developed—for example, the chariot-based armies of the Amarna period, Alexander's phalanx, and Rome's legion, as corollary 1b would imply. Conversely, shifts in military technology sometimes explained imperial collapse, as at the end of the Amarna period.

Principles of unit identity typically acted, as hypothesis 3 suggests, to destabilize empires and promote the establishment of smaller units among which balances of power could emerge. Thus when Sargon or Alexander tried to unite cities with strong city-state identities, they faced repeated rebellions, eventually ending in the independence of the city-states. Similarly, the efforts of imperial Assyria to swallow proto-national Babylonia also met with repeated rebellions and the eventual reemergence of an independent Babylonia. More legitimate units, in contrast, tended to create more stable systems. Thus balances of power among city-states could last for centuries, and re-form even after conquests by a Sargon or Alexander; the Sumerian city-states coalesced into a stable Babylonian state only after their identity principles changed. Similarly, the later Amarna age empires, based on proto-nations such as Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria remained a stable balance of power for centuries.

Economic interdependence also affected systems as hypothesized. Conquerors from Sargon to the Hittites and Assyrians were motivated largely by the desire to control key trade routes or sources of raw materials—such as Sargon's "Silver Mountains" and "Cedar Forest"—as hypothesis 2 predicts. When conquest was infeasible, some states, such as the Amarna period great powers, fell back on

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

establishment of norms of interstate trade. The risk in the latter course, as corollary 2a points out, is that when trade—whether within the system or with partners outside it—was cut off, trading empires declined and sometimes even collapsed.

Finally, I find some evidence for hypothesis 4, which proposes that the longevity of empires depends partly on the development of adequate social technologies for imperial administration. Thus, empires that were based purely on individual genius—Hammurabi's or Alexander's—hardly outlasted their founders, while those that developed sophisticated systems of administration, such as Ur III's, Assyria's, and to a greater extent Persia's and Rome's, tended to last for centuries.

Obviously, this evidence by no means constitutes proof of these hypotheses. It does, however, show the importance of dynamics that neorealism narrowly construed ignores. Taken together, these examples also suggest a broader pattern: entropy—the tendency for disorder to increase—does operate in international systems. In general, only one factor favoring fragmentation was sufficient to destabilize highly consolidated systems (for example, lack of legitimacy in Assyria's empire), while several favorable factors typically had to be in place to lead to system consolidation.

Implications for the modern international system

This article has made two main arguments. First, international systems can range from highly consolidated ones dominated by hegemonic empires, to highly fragmented ones consisting of many small units; multipolarity or bipolarity are merely two of the possible states in between. Second, the causes of system variance include not only power-balancing dynamics, which work only imperfectly, but also principles of unit identity, economic interdependence, and technologies for governance. The logic of power balancing and economic interdependence generally favor system consolidation, but narrow identity principles or weak social technologies for governance may keep the system fragmented.

This theory of system consolidation is useful for explaining modern as well as ancient international politics. The sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, for example, saw increasing system consolidation because all major factors promoted it. European states were able to build large empires because they possessed superior military and administrative technologies; because both rulers and ruled accepted imperial principles of legitimacy; and because inter-European efforts at balancing and at economic competition spurred competitive expansion. By one criterion, system consolidation proceeded even further in the early twentieth century, as the pressures of power balancing led to the elimination of major actors (hypothesis 1). Specifically, the multipolar Westphalian system collapsed into bipolarity as great powers were systematically eliminated or reduced—the Austrian and Ottoman Empires in World War I; and the British, French, German, Japanese, and others after World War II.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In other ways, however, the twentieth century showed a pattern of increasing system fragmentation. The rise of modern nationalism as the dominant principle of unit identity so delegitimized empire—even the empires of the winners of the world wars—that all of them collapsed: colonized areas asserted the right of national self-determination, and imperial powers lost the confidence and will to retain them by force.[93] At the same time, the imperialists' military advantage was eroded (as the French learned, to their cost), and the social technologies of imperialism (colonial administrations) were turned into instruments of separatism. The Soviet empire, with the most sophisticated alternative to nationalism as an identity principle, was the last to fall. However, the bipolar cold war rivalry, leading both superpowers to overreact to each other's moves, exhausted the Soviet Union in a few decades (corollary 1a), occasioning its 1991 breakup along nationalist lines.

In the post–cold war world, national self-determination remains the overwhelmingly dominant principle of unit legitimacy, shaping the international system in several ways.[94] First, states legimitized in this way have a mutual interest in promoting acceptance of a norm of mutual recognition of sovereign equality: such a norm, by delegitimizing annexation, improves the security of all recognized states and therefore mitigates the security dilemma imperative of "fight or die."[95] In fact, the principle of national self-determination has been so successfully embedded in international law, norms, and practice that it largely muzzles the "balance-of-power" push toward system consolidation: conquests are typically sources of weakness rather than strength, and they harm the conqueror's strategic position—as Saddam Hussein learned to his cost in 1991—by creating large hostile coalitions opposing the conqueror.

With annexations impractical in a system defined by so-called national self-determination (a term left ambiguous enough to legitimize most existing states), great powers or regional powers must resort to lesser degrees of political control, such as reducing clients to satellites. Even these lesser forms of control are difficult to sustain against national assertiveness, however, as the Soviet Union learned in Eastern Europe and Afghanistan. Indeed, the U.S. experience in places such as Bosnia, Liberia, and Somalia in the early 1980s shows that great powers have difficulty imposing their will even on much smaller states. As a result, great power spheres of influence are, generally, shrinking in the post–cold war world.

In a global system with almost two hundred often fractious "nation-states," this shrinking military-political reach of great powers means that unipolarity cannot easily be equated with hegemony. The would-be hegemon lacks the ability to enforce its will simultaneously against large numbers of dissenting states; it therefore lacks the ability to impose its leadership. In fact, rather than hegemony, the current system may be more likely to devolve into regionalization, as regional subsystems become

93. See, for example, Organski 1968; and Strang 1991.
94. Mayall 1990.
95. For a seminal work on international society, see Bull 1977. The criterion for defining international society is from Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

increasingly autonomous from global forces.[96] Some regional subsystems, such as that in Northeast Asia or perhaps East Asia more generally, might develop into regional balances of power. Other regions, such as parts of Africa, may be characterized by further fragmentation and disorder.

Principles of legitimacy are, in fact, promoting such fragmentation. As state breakup from Ethiopia to Yugoslavia is now making clear, the principles of legitimacy people accept are increasingly narrow ones, rather than the broader syncretic nationalisms that drove decolonization. Thus Yugoslav nationalism yielded to Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian nationalism; while Somali solidarity seems to have been replaced by sub-clan loyalties. Among other things, this trend suggests that most future wars are, like most recent ones, likely to be internal wars, especially ethnonationalist wars for secession or domination, rather than interstate wars as in the Iraq–Kuwait example. Furthermore, since even many of the larger states are to varying degrees threatened by breakup, as reviving Scottish and Quebecois nationalisms exemplify, the prospects for the emergence even of stable regional orders are problematic.

In a system marked by nationalism, forces that can cause identity change—such as migration, which may cause the assimilation of one nation by another—become politically important. Consequently, the forces that may spur such migration, such as environmental change and economic disruption, may also have systemic effects. Today, the rate of international migration is higher than it's been in fifty years, and environmental trends (for example, overpopulation leading to desertification) threaten to push millions more across borders. Populations are intuitively aware of the possibility that migration might lead to their group's assimilation by another, pushing issues of immigration high onto the agenda of states worldwide. This concern justifies the recent theoretical attention to the idea of "societal security": if people fear that the greatest threat to their nation's existence is immigration leading to assimilation, immigration becomes a "national security" issue.[97] The threat is often exaggerated, but governments must address it nonetheless.

Hypothesis 2, which concerns the effects of interdependence, points to other trends. International economic integration and modern communications technologies are increasingly combining to make the state too small a unit of economic organization. Since ideas about identity are tending to reduce the size of states rather than facilitate empire building, the only alternative is the creation of international economic regimes among relatively small political units, in a system like the one among the post-Ur III city-states. Hence international and supranational organizations from the European Union to the new World Trade Organization are becoming increasingly important, at the expense of the state. However, the continuing power of nationalism makes consensus in supranational units hard to achieve, as is evident in the oft-noted lament that Europe is an economic giant but a political dwarf.

96. Friedberg 1993–94.
97. Waever et al. 1993. See also Weiner 1995.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Indeed, corollary 2a—and the example of Ur III—point out a danger: as system fragmentation shrinks the effective political-military reach of major states, even the international economic system becomes increasingly suceptible to disruption. One reason is that trade outside the great powers' political-military reach is subject to disruption due to political-military instability: thus post-Ur III trade collapsed when the Sumerians' trade routes were disrupted by migrating tribes. The modern system could be similarly affected by domestic political instability in the Middle East leading to disruption of oil supplies. U.S. impotence in the face of the oil shock of 1979, occasioned by the Iranian revolution, illustrates the limited control of great powers over such disruptions.

If the system is decreasingly hegemonic, maintenance of the international economic system will increasingly depend on reaching voluntary consensus on rules of behavior. The effects of nationalism, however, are likely to make such consensus harder to reach, for three reasons. First, increasingly narrow nationalisms are increasing the number of states in the system, and the more states that have to reach agreement, the more difficult it is to find solutions that all will accept. Second, nationalists tend to guard jealously their national autonomy: China and Russia wish to join the World Trade Organization, for example, but not to submit to all its rules. Third, reaching consensus on rules typically depends on some agreement about underlying principles, but rising nationalism may tend to undercut that consensus. The current world trade system is built on liberal internationalist principles, but "economic nationalism" leads to neomercantilist policies that contradict those principles. Additionally, the costs of economic interdependence (for example, those imposed on workers and firms harmed by foreign competition) promote just such economic nationalist thinking. In sum, the combination of relatively declining great powers, rising political nationalism, and ideological dissensus on economic principles means that the problems of cooperation "after hegemony" are more serious than hegemonic stability theory might suggest.

Application of hypothesis 4 about administrative technology generates interesting questions, if not clear answers, about the contemporary system. For example, are existing social technologies adequate for administering the modern state? Formal bureaucracy was an astonishing innovation for the Ur III empire in the twenty-first century B.C.; but scholars, journalists and politicians increasingly sense its limitations for the twenty-first century A.D.. Similarly, Mancur Olson casts doubt on the ability of modern democracy to avoid dirigiste collusion among special interests at the cost of the general interest.[98] Indeed, given the rise of narrowly defined nationalisms, the task of reinventing government to make it more responsive and efficient, and less bureaucratic, is likely to be a critical factor in determining the fate of many existing states. The northern Italian movement toward secession, driven by disgust with corruption in Rome, illustrates the possibilities in both directions.

98. Olson 1982.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Corollary 1b, concerning the effects of military technology, also generates interesting questions. On the surface, the Persian Gulf War would seem to have demonstrated the superiority of great power military capabilities over even the most formidable middle-power challengers, implying a powerful force for system consolidation. However, the political results of that conflict—namely, Saddam Hussein's continued defiance, justified by reference to nationalism, of foreigners' demands regarding Iraq's weapons programs and Kurdish policy—show that great power military technology is not easily translated into political influence.

Furthermore, as the average state decreases in size, while sophisticated weaponry becomes less and less expensive, the relative influence of nonstate actors is likely to rise. Thus technology may increasingly favor terrorists over states. The reappearance of corporate-controlled mercenaries (as in the old British East India Company) might not be far behind, if states cannot protect vital corporate interests. Already, private contractors provide paramilitary services, including the training of armies, provision of security guards, and logistical support for the military operations of states and international governmental organizations.

Nuclear weapons, whether used or not, may provide further impetus for system fragmentation. Nuclear deterrence, on the one hand, leads nuclear powers to avoid direct confrontation with one another and therefore deters the great power wars that can promote system consolidation. Thus any reconsolidation in the eastern half of Europe, for example, will have to come about by slower economic and political rather than military means, if it happens at all. If nuclear weapons were to be used on any significant scale, of course, they would likely devastate the attacked states' economic and administrative structures, leading to the breakup of those states.

Structural realism must pay attention to such variables if it is to remain relevant. Working from his narrow neorealist perspective, Waltz is able to say little more about the post–cold war system than that new great powers will arise to compete with the United States, because "hegemony leads to balance," and has done so "through all of the centuries we can contemplate."[99] As I have tried to show, this argument is dubious historically; it is also misleading for the current, more fragmented age. Furthermore, Waltz's approach does not address such critical issues as the breakup of the Soviet Union, the importance of internal ethnic conflicts elsewhere, the prospects for further European integration, whether great power competition will imperil economic cooperation, or anything at all about the future of the Third World, including the geopolitically pivotal Middle East.

Considering the variables I highlight offers an interesting perspective on other international relations theories as well. Thus in contrast to the "clash of civilizations" hypothesis, the implication of my argument is that systemic forces that promote nationalism will work to prevent religiously defined civilizations from coalescing.[100] The politics of nationalism is the politics of separatism, civil war, "ethnic cleansing," and state breakdown, rather than of world wars between

99. Waltz 1993, 77.
100. On the clash-of-civilizations hypothesis, see Huntington 1993.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

civilizations. Hegemonic stability theory, another prominent approach, is not very helpful for analyzing such dynamics: like Babylonia in the early biblical age, the remaining superpower today lacks the ability to dominate defiant nationalists, so large areas are outside its hegemonic control. While theories of regime stability after hegemony effectively capture the current incentives for economic cooperation, they overlook the forces driving political fragmentation.[101] They are therefore of limited value for explaining, for example, Canada's simultaneous push toward economic integration and political disintegration.

A final advantage to the approach employed here is that it identifies system-level variables that human intervention can affect. It is the social determinants of system change—narrow principles of identity and flawed social technologies—that are driving fragmentation in the current system. These factors are significant potential threats to global prosperity and international security, but they can be fought. Leaders and thinkers can work to promote peaceful syncretic nationalisms instead of violent narrow ones, and they can develop social technologies that permit effective governance. Tolerant nationalisms are currently under siege from India to North America; but while their fates in such places will have systemwide effects, they will be decided region by region.

Put differently, the answers to two questions will largely determine the future of the international system. First, will the arguments over "multiculturalism" in West and East be won by those who consider broad, inclusive loyalties more important than narrow ones? And second, will policymakers succeed in inventing new administrative technologies that offer solutions to twenty-first century problems, to replace bureaucracies that are often themselves the problem? If the answer to those questions is no, further fragmentation of the international political and economic systems is inevitable. Either way, the fate of the system will not be determined entirely by large material forces; it is contingent on people's ideas, values, and inventiveness.

References

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.* London: Verso Editions and NLB.

Armstrong, John. 1982. *Nations before nationalism.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Barber, Benjamin R. 1992. Jihad versus McWorld. *The Atlantic,* March, 53–63.

———. 1995. *Jihad versus McWorld: How the planet is both falling apart and coming together and what this means for democracy.* New York: Times Books.

Bean, Richard. 1973. War and the birth of the nation state. *Journal of Economic History* 33:203–21.

Breasted, James. 1953. *Ancient times: A history of the early world.* Boston: Ginn and Company.

Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The anarchical society: A study of order in world politics.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Bull, Hedley, and Adam Watson, eds. 1984. *The expansion of international society.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

101. Keohane 1984.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Buzan, Barry, Charles Jones, and Richard Little. 1993. *The logic of anarchy: Neorealism to structural realism.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Buzan, Barry, and Richard Little. 1994. The idea of "international system": Theory meets reality. *International Political Science Review* 15:231–55.

Cederman, Lars-Erik. 1994. Emergent polarity: Analyzing state-formation and power politics. *International Studies Quarterly* 38:501–34.

Christensen, Thomas J., and Jack Snyder. 1990. Chain gangs and passed bucks: Predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity. *International Organization* 44:137–68.

Cioffi-Revilla, Claudio. 1996. Origins and evolution of war and politics. *International Studies Quarterly* 40:1–22.

Collins, Randall. 1986. *Weberian sociological theory.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cox, Robert W. 1986. Social forces, states, and world orders: Beyond international relations theory. In *Neorealism and its critics,* edited by Robert O. Keohane, 204–54. New York: Columbia University Press.

David, Steven R. 1991. *Choosing sides: Alignment and realignment in the Third World.* Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Deutsch, Karl W. 1953. *Nationalism and social communication*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Doyle, Michael W. 1983. Kant, liberal legacies, and foreign affairs. Part 1. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12(3):205–35.

———. 1986. *Empires.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Drews, Robert. 1993. *The end of the Bronze Age: Changes in warfare and the catastrophe circa 1200 B.C.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Edwards, I. E. S., C. J. Gadd, N. G. L. Hammond, and E. Sollberger, eds. 1975. *The Cambridge ancient history.* 3d ed., Vol. 2, part 2. *History of the Middle East and the Aegean region circa 1380–1000 B.C.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ferguson, Yale H., and Richard W. Mansbach. 1991. Between celebration and despair: Constructive suggestions for future international theory. *International Studies Quarterly* 35:363–86.

———. 1996. *Polities: Authority, identities, and change.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Franck, Thomas M. 1990. *The power of legitimacy among nations.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Friedberg, Aaron L. 1993–94. Ripe for rivalry: Prospects for peace in a multipolar Asia. *International Security* 18(3):5–33.

Friedman, David. 1977. A theory of the size and shape of nations. *Journal of Political Economy* 85:59–77.

Gadd, C. J. 1971. The dynasty of Agade and the Gutian invasion. In *The Cambridge ancient history,* 3d ed., vol. 1, part 2. *Early history of the Middle East,* edited by I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, and N. G. L. Hammond, 417–63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goetze, A. 1975. The struggle for the domination of Syria. In Edwards et al. 1975, 1–20.

Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and nationalism.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Gilpin, Robert. 1981. *War and change in world politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gulick, Edward Vose. 1955. *Europe's classical balance of power.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Gurney, O. R. 1979. The Hittite empire. In *Power and propaganda: A symposium on ancient empires,* edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen. 151–66. Vol. 7 of Mesopotamia: Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.

Haas, Ernst. 1986. What is nationalism and why should we study it? *International Organization,* 40:707–44.

Hinz, Walther. 1973. Persia circa 1800–1550 B.C. In *The Cambridge ancient history.* 3d ed., vol. 2, part 1. *History of the Middle East and Aegean region circa 1800–1380 B.C., edited by I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, H. G. L. Hammond, and E. Solberger,* 256–88. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. J. 1990. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holsti, K. J. 1995. *International politics: A framework for analysis.* 7th ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. Clash of civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22–49.

Jackman, Robert W. 1993. *Power without force.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Jackson, Robert H. 1990. *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, international relations, and the third world.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kaplan, Morton. 1957. *System and process in international politics.* New York: Wiley.
Keohane, Robert O. 1984. *After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world economy.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 1979. The tradition of empire in Mesopotamia. In *Power and propaganda: A symposium on ancient empires,* edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen. 75–103. Vol. 7 of Mesopotamia: Copenhagen studies in Assyriology. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.
Levy, Jack S. 1984. The offensive/defensive balance of military technology. *International Studies Quarterly* 28:219–38.
Liverani, Mario. 1979. The ideology of the Assyrian Empire. In *Power and propaganda: A symposium on ancient empires,* edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen. 297–318. Vol. 7 of Mesopotamia: Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.
Lloyd, Alan. 1973. *Marathon: The story of civilizations on a collision course.* New York: Random House.
Macqueen, J. G. 1986. *The Hittites.* London: Thames and Hudson.
Mansfield, Edward D. 1994. *Power, trade, and war.* New York: Columbia University Press.
Mayall, James. 1990. *Nationalism and international society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
McEvedy, Colin. 1967. *The Penguin atlas of ancient history.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
McNeill, William H. 1963. *The rise of the West: A history of the human community.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
———. 1971. *A world history.* 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
Midlarsky, Manus I. 1995. Environmental influences on democracy: Aridity, warfare, and a reversal of the causal arrow. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39:224–62.
Milner, Helen. 1993. The assumption of anarchy in international relations theory: A critique. In *Neorealism and neoliberalism: The contemporary debate,* edited by David A. Baldwin, 143–69. New York: Columbia University Press.
Mitrany, David. 1933. *The progress of international government.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
Morgenthau, Hans J. 1967. *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace.* New York: Knopf.
Oates, Joan. 1986. *Babylon.* London: Thames and Hudson.
Olson, Mancur. 1982. *The rise and decline of nations.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
Organski, A. F. K. 1968. *World politics.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Owen, David M. 1994. How liberalism produces the democratic peace. *International Security* 19(2): 87–125.
Porter, Barbara Nevling. 1993. *Images, power, and politics: Figurative aspects of Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy.* Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.
Postgate, J. N. 1992. The Land of Assur and the yoke of Assur. *World Archaeology* 23:247–63.
Quester, George H. 1977. *Offense and defense in the international system.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.
Rasler, Karen A., and William R. Thompson. 1994. *The great powers and global struggle, 1490–1990.* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
Russett, Bruce, and Zeev Maoz. 1993. Normative and structural causes of democratic peace. *American Political Science Review* 87:624–38.
Saggs, H. W. F. 1962. *The greatness that was Babylon.* New York: Praeger.
———. 1965. *Everyday life in Babylonia and Assyria.* London: Batsford Press.
———. 1995. *Babylonians.* London: British Museum Press.
Schroeder, Paul. 1994. Historical reality versus neorealist theory. *International Security* 19(1):108–48.
Smith, Anthony D. 1986. *The ethnic origins of nations.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Snidal, Duncan. 1985. The limits of hegemonic stability theory. *International Organization* 39:579–614.
Spruyt, Hendrick. 1994. *The sovereign state and its competitors.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Strang, David. 1991. Global patterns of decolonization, 1500–1987. *International Studies Quarterly* 35:429–454.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Thucydides. 1951. *The Pelopennesian War.* Translated by John H. Finley. New York: Random House.
Tilly, Charles. 1975. Reflections on the history of European state-making. In *The formation of national states in Western Europe,* edited by Charles Tilly, 3–83. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Van Evera, Stephen. 1985. The cult of the offensive and the origins of the First World War. In *Military strategy and the origins of the First World War,* edited by Steven E. Miller, 58–107. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Waever, Ole, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup, and Pierre Lemaitre. 1993. *Identity, migration, and the new security agenda in Europe.* New York: St. Martin's.
Walker, R. B. J. 1984. East wind, west wind: Civilizations, hegemonies, and world orders. In *Culture, ideology and world order,* edited by R. B. J. Walker, 2–23. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.
———. 1993. *Inside/outside: International relations as political theory.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. *The modern world-system.* New York: Academic Press.
———. 1991. *Geopolitics and geoculture: Essays on the changing world-system.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of international politics.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.
———. 1993. The emerging structure of international politics. *International Security* 18(2):44–79.
Watson, Adam. 1992. *The evolution of international society.* London: Routledge.
Weiner, Myron. 1995. *The global migration crisis.* New York: HarperCollins.
Wendt, Alexander. 1987. The agent-structure problem in international relations theory. *International Organization* 41:335–70.
———. 1992. Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics. *International Organization* 46:391–425.
Westenholz, Aage. 1979. The Old Akkadian Empire in contemporary opinion. In *Power and propaganda: A symposium on ancient empires,* edited by Mogens Trolle Larsen. 107–24. Vol. 7 of Mesopotamia: Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.
Wilhelm, Gernot. 1989. *The Hurrians.* Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips.
Woolley, C. Leonard. 1928. *The Sumerians.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

https://doi.org/10.1162/002081897550339 Published online by Cambridge University Press