

# International Politics INTS10001 Lecture Notes

# 1A Introduction and Early to Modern International Systems

## **History of International Relationships**

#### HGBs and 'the international'

States have not always existed. States are historical product. Early human communities were not in forms of states, they were structured as hunter-gather bands (HGBs), without institutionalized hierarchy that characterizes formal states.

HGBs exist with other HGBs. They interacted with, exchange with, and fought with each other. Exchange surplus, but not production for surplus (not capitalism)

no surplus = no enduring political institutions

## Agricultural/Neolithic Revolution (10 000bc)

- most fundamental shift in human history
- generate a surplus for food, there is more food in early societies than the people to eat it
- allows to take some people out of the process of food production
- development of settled communities, population growth (greater human reproduction, live longer have more children), population expand and society expand, first 'states' understand the function of priests, ministers etc.
- distinction between domestic and international emerges

#### **Nomads and Empires**

- + international politics was, for millennia, given by the complex and interconnected relationship between nomads and empires
- + Nomads largely pastoral farmers sat outside the frontiers of empires (Chinese, Roman, etc.); no fixed territory for these communities
- + Exchanges and interactions at border zones; external relations generate internal developments
- + Raids and, at times, conquest of empires; empires then assimilate their new rulers while adding aspects of Nomadic cultures

#### **Early Modern International Relations**

Feudal International Relation System —> European System

- Feudal Europe is a system of overlapping sovereignties
- not 'like units' different privileges/roles
- not all political authorities / states carry out the same functions
- territory not contiguous: little bits of territory dotted all around a specific geographical area that belong to one political authority
- ▶ Lords controlled means of violence

complex relationship between 'states' and Church (Holy Roman Empire)

# 1648 Peace of Westphalia

marks the start of international relationship

#### Thirty Years War, 1618-1648

incredibly violent and destructive conflict; millions of combatants and civilians die

#### Peace of Westphalia, 1648

- Two treaties, Munster and Osnabruck
- Treaties between HRE & France/Sweden

## **Outcome of the Peace**

- 1. States recognize each other as independent
- 2. established the principle of sovereignty
- 3. 'inside/outside' firmly defined: domestic politics characterized by hierarchical governance and order;
- 4. outside/ international politics has not overarching authority (anarchy), absence of any political authority who can enforce order on that society
- 5. no world state, cannot use theories of domestic politics to study relations between states/political communities

#### 1648 and IR Theory

- 'Eurocentric' European history as starting point for International Relations theory
- Where is the rest of the world in this story? For example, if we look at East Asia from 1300 to 1800 we see stable hierarchy, not anarchy and the balance of power
- Underplays role of empire, both pre-1648 and in creating modern international system
- Overemphasizing anarchy, under emphasizing hierarchy and domination; get a poor picture of what international politics has, and can, look like

# Why does it matter

- informs how we think of 'modern' international politics and how we build theories
- if there was no period of 'billiard ball' sovereignty/ anarchy, theories developed assuming there was/ is must be faulty; need to rethink ideas like the 'balance of power' as being a good policy/ strategy to pursue
- our understanding of globalization and the emergence of 'new' types of political units, think about non-state/ transnational actors like AI Qaeda, ISIS or ICRC is also altered

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# **1B From Westphalia to Modern International Relations**

#### After Westphalia

- ▶ After destructiveness of the Thirty Years War European states came to see need for ways to manage states relations to each other
- ▶ 18th century sees continuing development of these practices
- notion of sovereignty
- ▶ the balance of power is one solution; power always balances other powers (e.g Peace of Utrecht 1714)
- in order to avoid the worst conflict in international society, need to make sure that there is no single power that is significantly stronger than other powers in international society balance of power between states, provides order
- ▶ Institutional solutions: development of international law and custom; legitimacy; diplomacy (resident embassies); limited war (Watson 1992)
- what makes states legitimate
- ▶ With no sovereign above them, and no hegemony to enforce agreements, pressure came form power and 'peers' (social sanction) e.g balance of power between US and China

# The Age of Revolutions

<u>Three political Revolutions:</u> American Revolution, French Revolution, Haitian Revolution

- + changed the principle of sovereignty
- + sovereignty is no longer the property of the king or aristocrats alone, sovereignty belongs to the people who exists within the states' society. —> Popular sovereignty
- + all human beings have the right to participate equally in their own process of making their lives.

#### Napoleonic Wars and the Concert of Europe

- + Balance of power system is upset by French Revolution 1789
- + European states react by invading, and France tries to spread its universal message to other states via war
- + states acting to contain growing power of France
- + Coalition of states forms Britain, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, Russia - to limit/balance French power
- + End of conflict (1815) sees attempt to create Great Power management of the system, the Concert of Europe
- + 19th century in Europe sees relative stability, at lease until 1860s'1970s; no major war until 1941
- + hierarchy will not work in international society as their is a balance of power

## The East Asian International System

- + Characterized by hierarchy, not anarchy and the balance of power
- + East Asian international system defined by clear status and rank between formally independent, but not formally equal states

- + China at the centre of the system and top of the hierarchy; it receives tribute from subordinate states
- + No balance of power order is legitimated by normative agreement

#### **Beyond the Balance: The Transition to Capitalism**

- ▶ Pre-capitalist modes of production struggled to break free of environmental limits, population peaks/ troughs, and sustain technological innovation over time. e.g famines, natural disasters
- transition to capitalism altered human material reproduction
- Agriculture previously based on small-scale farming and direct ownership of means of production by farmers —> commercial farming model classic triad of landowner/ tenant framer/ day laborer
- prompts large scale technological innovations, industrial revolution
- ▶ for capitalists to reproduce themselves in market place they need to compete with others by producing more products, through investment in technological advancements

# **Impact of Transition on Global Politics**

- lead to greater interaction capacity, greater speed of interactions; continuous technological change; greater efficiency in production —> modernity
- 2. countries that make initial transition to capitalism gain enormous material advantages over other societies e.g Britain, as first state to transition to capitalism

#### The Great Divergence 1800

The split between the west and the rest based on the initial transition to capitalism by Great Britain.

- + China, greater and more powerful in material wealth and technology than Europe in 16th-18th centuries, now sees European states leapfrog it in terms of material wealth and technological development
- + Initiates process of divergence between 'the West' and 'the Rest' sees spread of European state system and practices

#### The Atlantic World System

- ▶ The late 18th and 19th century sees the emergence of a global economy centered on the Atlantic World System.
- impact on Africa societies complex coastal kingdoms enriched via interaction with European slavers, but interior kingdoms devastated
- benefit to European industrialization and economic development should not be underestimated; slavery integral to Western capitalist wealth creation
- ▶ Triangular trade central to British industrialization, American economy, etc.

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## **Required Readings**

George Lawson, 2020. "Chapter two: The rise of modern international order", in Baylis, Smith and Owens (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

#### **Introduction p.40**

- → "in the international sphere, political units are forced to coexist in the absence of an overarching authority"
- → Definition of international orders: "regularized practices of exchange among discreet political units that recognize each other to be independent."
- modern international order is constructed of "a global economy, a global system of states, and the global circulation of ideas"

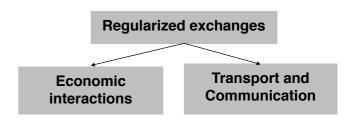
#### Historical international orders

- surpluses generated two dynamics: trade between people and put groups at risk of attack p.40
- development of political hierarch —> establish order through the command of leaders —> their interaction with counterparts establish diplomacy — > international orders p.41
- most accounts of international order begin in early modern Europe Peace of Westphalia "benchmark date from which 'modern' international order emerged" p.41,43
- Effect of Westphalia:
  - + "European states could no longer intervene in other states on the basis of religious belief"
  - + "states assumed sovereignty over their own territories" p.42
  - + establishment of the principle of 'sovereign territoriality'

# Criticisms of the Westphalia narrative

- 1) "Westphalia was not an European-wide agreement, but a local affair." Its impact on European international relations "was not as great is often imagined" p.42
- 2) "the gains of Westphalia were relatively slight" p.42
- "Westphalia actually set limits to the principle of sovereignty established at the 1555 Peace of Augsburg"

International Orders — Regularized practices of exchange among discreet political units that recognize each other to be independent.



"Regularized exchanges among political units general forms of interdependence in which events in one place have a major effect on others." p.42

Modern international order only emerged in the last two centuries as before nineteenth century, "the vast majority of economic actives did not take place over large distances, but in 'microeconomics' with a 20-mile circumference" p.43

# How did modern international order emerge?

The promotion of Western states' GDP per capita increased in relation to other countries in the globe. This rapid turnaround during the nineteenth century represents a major shift in global power. p.43

# The Great Divergence

- "scientific advances associated with the European Enlightenment" p.44
- led to "circulation of people, ideas and resources" p.45

# Three dynamics of the emergence of international relations:

Industrialization

Rational States

Imperialism