CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE WORLD POLITY:

Toward a Neorealist Synthesis

By JOHN GERARD RUGGIE*

Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979, 251 pp., $7.95 (paper).

IN *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Émile Durkheim sought to establish the "social milieu," or society itself, "as the determining factor of collective evolution." In turn, he took society to reflect not the mere summation of individuals and their characteristics, but "a specific reality which has its own characteristics." And he attributed this social facticity to "the system formed by [individuals'] association," "by the fact of their combination." Hence, "if the determining condition of social phenomena is, as we have shown, the very fact of association, the phenomena ought to vary with the forms of that association, i.e., according to the ways in which the constituent parts of society are grouped."[1] In sum, the possibilities for individual action in the short run, and collective evolution in the long run, were to be accounted for by the changing forms of social solidarity.[2]

Durkheim's methodological premise was controversial from the start, but over the years its influence has waned and come to be felt largely indirectly, as through the analysis of "primitive" social structures by

* An earlier version of this paper was read at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York City, September 1981. I have benefited from the extensive written comments on previous drafts by Barry Buzan, William T.R. Fox, Ernst Haas, Robert Keohane, Friedrich Kratochwil, and Jay Speakman.

[1] Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, ed. by George E.G. Catlin (New York: Free Press, 1964), 116, 103, xlvii, 112.

[2] Cf. Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. by George Simpson (New York: Free Press, 1964), wherein this model was first developed. It should be noted that for Durkheim the designation "social fact" does not refer to all phenomena that take place within society, but only to those that exist exterior to individuals, are not subject to modification by a simple effort of will on the part of individuals, and function as a constraint on individual behavior (fn. 1, chap. 1).

© 1983 by the Trustees of Princeton University
World Politics 0043-8871/83/020261-25$01.25/1
For copying information, see contributor page.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Claude Lévi-Strauss.[3] Suddenly, it is enjoying a resurgence in the study of a social domain never contemplated by Durkheim: the international system. It is being adopted by the most unlikely of followers: American students of comparative and international politics. And it is as controversial as ever. Adherents share Durkheim's views that social totalities are the appropriate *unit* of analysis for the study of collective phenomena, and forms of association within them the appropriate *level* of analysis. However, they disagree among themselves as to the identity of this totality and its governing structures in the international realm.

One position is represented by Immanuel Wallerstein, himself a sociologist. In his methodological essay, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis,"[4] he posits that there is no such thing as *national* development in the modern world system, only development *of* the modern world system. "The fundamental error of ahistorical social science (including ahistorical versions of Marxism) is to reify parts of the totality into such [national] units and then to compare these reified structures."[5] Instead, he considers the appropriate focus for comparative analysis to be the world system itself, "which we define quite simply as a unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems."[6] In the modern world, the capitalist world economy comprises the appropriate unit of analysis. It is divided into core, periphery, and semi-periphery, which are linked together by unequal exchange and therefore are characterized by unequal development. Onto an ultra-Durkheimian premise, then, Wallerstein grafts his own peculiar brand of Marxism, a structural-functionalist variety in which social relations of production are determined by market exchange rather than the other way round,[7] and in which the international polity is at one and the same time an epiphenomenal byproduct of intercapitalist competition and the necessary structural condition for the existence and continued survival of capitalism.[8]

[3] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1967), esp. chaps. 2 and 15.

[4] First published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, XVI (September 1974); reprinted in Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); references here are to the latter source.

[5] *Ibid.*, 3. [6] *Ibid.*, 5.

[7] See the penetrating critique along these lines by Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism," *New Left Review*, No. 104 (July-August 1977).

[8] "Capitalism has been able to flourish precisely because the world economy has had within its bounds not one but a multiplicity of political systems" (Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, I [New York: Academic Press, 1974], 348); this structure in turn is maintained by the functional needs of capitalism, specifically the high economic costs of political imperium (fn. 4, p. 32), and the tendency of capitalists to resort to the instrumentalities of

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

A mirror image of this position is presented in the recent book by Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. He has no quarrel with the need to view international phenomena in systemic terms: "Nations change in form and purpose; technological advances are made; weaponry is radically transformed; alliances are forged and disrupted" (p. 67). And yet, "similarity of outcomes prevails despite changes in the agents that produce them. . . ." Clearly, "systems-level forces seem to be at work" (p. 39). But how should one conceive of international phenomena in systemic terms? Waltz's first answer, taking up roughly one-third of the volume, is: "not in the reductionist manner of the past." He is concerned primarily with the form of reductionism that seeks to know a whole through the study of its parts. This fallacy, he argues, is characteristic of most previous attempts to construct international theory, including self-styled systems theories.[9] For most of the latter, the system is simply an aggregation of pertinent attributes of units and their interactions; "the systems level thus becomes all product and is not at all productive" (p. 50). To be productive, the systems level has to express systemic properties and to explain how these act "as a constraining and disposing force on the interacting units within it" (p. 72). For Waltz—in contrast to Wallerstein whom he mentions only in passing—the critical international systemic property is not the hierarchical organization of exchange relations, but the horizontal organization of authority relations, or the international structure of anarchy. Not unequal exchange among economic units, but self-help by political units is the fundamental basis of international association.[10] The other two-thirds of the book are given over to elaborating and illustrating this model.

Wallerstein's efforts at theory construction have recently been reviewed in this journal.[11] The present essay may be taken as a companion piece on Waltz. Other writers have commented on the adequacy and

their respective states so as to enhance their international competitive position (fn. 4, pp. 19-20).

[9] Waltz's critical review of the literature has generated a sizable secondary literature of rejoinders and counteroffensives, of which the most offensive no doubt is by Morton A. Kaplan, "The Genteel Art of Criticism, or How to Boggle Minds and Confooz a Discipline," in Kaplan, ed., *Towards Professionalism in International Theory* (New York: Free Press, 1979). More generous readings may be found in Stanley Hoffmann, *Primacy or World Order* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1978), 146-47, and Richard Rosecrance, "International Theory Revisited," *International Organization*, XXXV (Autumn 1981).

[10] Waltz acknowledges that Wallerstein has also developed a systemic theory, but rejects Wallerstein's claims for its logical priority (p. 38). In principle, Waltz allows for the possibility of co-equality, but in deed he argues for the priority of the international polity, as we shall see below.

[11] Aristide R. Zolberg, "Origins of the Modern World System: A Missing Link," *World Politics*, XXXIII (January 1981).

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

accuracy of various parts of Waltz's theoretical enterprise.[12] My concern here is with the enterprise itself. Accordingly, I first situate Waltz's argument within its self-consciously Durkheimian problematic;[13] I then assess, modify, and extend it on its own terms, pointing toward the desirability of a more synthetic, neorealist formulation.

II

Waltz starts off by making two important distinctions: between system and unit, and between structure and process. The terms are defined in a somewhat circular manner, but his intention is clear: "A system is composed of a structure and of interacting units. The structure is the system-wide component that makes it possible to think of the system as a whole" (p. 79). Durkheim is helpful in disentangling these notions: "Whenever certain elements combine and thereby produce, by the fact of their combination, new phenomena, it is plain that these new phenomena reside not in the original elements, but in the totality formed by their union." A system, then, is this new totality formed by the union of parts, a totality enjoying a "specific reality which has its own characteristics."[14] The structure depicts the organization of a system, or the laws of association by which units are combined to form the systemic totality. Processes are simply the patterned relations among units that go on within a system—relations that reflect in varying degrees the constraints imposed by the system's structure.[15]

With these distinctions established, Waltz turns to his central concern: demonstrating the impact of variations in international structure on international outcomes, and explaining similarities of outcomes over time by structural continuity. His concept of political structure consists of three analytical components: (1) the principle according to which the

[12] In addition to the references cited above (fn. 9), see also the review by William T.R. Fox, in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 74 (June 1980).

[13] Durkheim is referenced four times in the index of Waltz's book; in a footnote (p. 115), Waltz promises to elaborate on Durkheim's typology of social ordering principles in a future work.

[14] Durkheim (fn. 1), xlvii, 103.

[15] There has been inordinate confusion about these distinctions, stemming largely from the way in which the so-called levels-of-analysis problem is usually interpreted. As originally defined, it simply says that the international system and national states constitute two different levels of analysis in the study of international relations. (J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba, eds., *The International System: Theoretical Essays* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961].) But that isn't the whole of it. The two terms, international and system, are frequently conjoined, and the assumption is made that any model expressing *international* factors is automatically a *systemic* model. However, as Waltz shows (chaps. 3-4), the norm—even when systems language is employed—is to explain international phenomena in terms of units and their interactions, not in terms of systems as ontologically distinct totalities.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

system is ordered or organized; (2) the differentiation of units and the specification of their functions; and (3) the degree of concentration or diffusion of capabilities within the system.

Applying these terms to the international realm, Waltz argues first that its most important structural feature is the absence of central rule, or anarchy (pp. 88-93). No one by virtue of authority is *entitled* to command; no one, in turn, is *obligated* to obey. States are the constitutive units of the system. Waltz advances empirical arguments why this should be so (pp. 93-95), but it follows logically from his premises: because legitimate authority is not centralized in the system, states—as the existing repositories of the ultimate arbiter of force—*ipso facto* are its major units. The desire of these units, at a minimum, to survive is assumed. And the organizing principle of self-help is postulated: if no one can be counted on to take care of anyone else, it seems reasonable to infer that each will try to put itself in a position to be able to take care of itself (p. 107). As a result, the international system is formed much like a market: it is individualistic in origin, and more or less spontaneously generated as a byproduct of the actions of its constitutive units, "whose aims and efforts are directed not toward creating an order but rather toward fulfilling their own internally defined interests by whatever means they can muster" (p. 90). This situation does not imply the absence of collaboration: collaboration is one of the means that states can muster in pursuit of their interests, some of which will be shared with others. It does imply that collaboration occurs "only in ways strongly conditioned by" the structure of anarchy (p. 116), which is to say that the acceptability of the means of collaboration takes priority over the desirability of its ends (pp. 107-10). Once formed, the international system, again like a market, becomes a force that the units may not be able to control; it constrains their behavior and interposes itself between their intentions and the outcomes of their actions (pp. 90-91).

With respect to the second component of international political structure, Waltz contends that, in a system governed by self-help, the units are compelled to try to be functionally alike—alike in the tasks that they pursue. Obviously, they are not alike in their respective capabilities to perform these tasks, but capabilities are the object of the third component of structure, not the second. Accordingly, since no functional differentiation of states exists apart from that imposed by relative capabilities, the second component of political structure is not needed at the international level (pp. 93-97).

The degree of concentration or diffusion of capabilities within the system is the third component of structure. Here Waltz again argues

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

by way of analogy: just as economic outcomes change when the structure of markets shifts from duopoly to oligopoly to perfect competition, so too do international outcomes change depending upon whether two, several, or no pre-eminent powers inhabit the system. "Market structure is defined by counting firms; international-political structure, by counting states. In the counting, distinctions are made only according to capabilities.... What emerges is a positional picture, a general description of the ordered overall arrangement of a society written in terms of the placement of units rather than in terms of their qualities" (pp. 98-99).

Care should be taken to understand one extremely subtle but critical point. Waltz strives for a "generative" formulation of structure.[16] He means for the three (or, internationally, two) components of structure to be thought of as successive causal depth levels. Ordering principles constitute the "deep structure" of a system, shaping its fundamental social quality. They are not visible directly, only through their hypothesized effects. Differentiation, where it exists as a structural property, mediates the social effects of the deep structure, but within a context that has already been circumscribed by the deep structure. It is expressed through broad and enduring social institutions, and therefore is more directly accessible to the observer. The distribution of capabilities comes closest to the surface level of visible phenomena, but its impact on outcomes is simply to magnify or modify the opportunities and constraints generated by the other (two) structural level(s). When all is said and done, however, this generative model eludes Waltz, with consequences that we shall explore at the appropriate point.

In conclusion, then, "international structures vary only through a change of organizing principle or, failing that, through variations in the capabilities of units" (p. 93). What outcomes are explained by international structure and structural variation, so defined?

[16] The distinction here is between generative and descriptive structures. Descriptive structures are simply abstract summaries of patterned interactions within a system. For example, national capabilities are measured, and hierarchies of state power are depicted. Trade and capital flows are measured, and hierarchies of economic power are adduced. Most uses of the concept of structure in contemporary international relations theory employ this meaning; the structural theories of Stephen Krasner and Johan Galtung offer a representative sampling. In the realm of generative structures, the concern is "with principles, not things" (Edmund Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology* [London: Athlone Press, 1961], 7). The object is to discover the underlying principles that govern the patterning of interactions, to infer their syntax. Saussurean linguistics probably was the first self-conscious expression of generative structuralism in the social sciences, which has transformed the study of linguistics and cultural anthropology. For useful surveys, see Miriam Glucksman, *Structuralist Analysis in Contemporary Social Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), and Edith Kurzweil, *The Age of Structuralism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

III

"From anarchy one infers broad expectations about the quality of international-political life. Distinguishing between anarchic structures of different type permits somewhat narrower and more precise definitions of expected outcomes" (p. 70). Waltz first describes the general consequences of anarchy (chap. 6), and then stipulates and illustrates more specific expected outcomes in three domains of international relations: the international security order (chap. 8), the international economic order (chap. 7), and the management of "global problems" (chap. 9). In the summary that follows, I combine general and specific consequences.

THE SECURITY ORDER

From the principle of self-help, it will be recalled, one can infer that states will try to put themselves in a position that will enable them to take care of themselves. They have two types of means at their disposal: "internal efforts (moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to develop clever strategies) and external efforts (moves to strengthen one's own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one)" (p. 118). As one or more states successfully undertake any such measure, however, "others will emulate them or fall by the wayside" (p. 118). As other states emulate them, power-balancing ensues. Thus, the international security order is governed by balance-of-power politics. "Balance-of-power politics prevails whenever two, and only two, requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive" (p. 121).[17]

Though Waltz is careless in maintaining the distinction, it should be noted that the theory predicts balan*cing*, not balan*ces*, of power, where balances are defined as equivalencies. Whether actual balances form, and even more whether any specific configuration or alignment forms, will only in part be determined by positional factors; it will also depend upon information and transaction costs, and a host of unit-level attributes.

Power-balancing can as readily produce war as it can lower its incidence. It is inherently indeterminate. However, its indeterminacy is reduced as the number of great powers in the system diminishes. Here

[17] Waltz thus rejects the conventional view that a balance-of-power system requires a minimum number of effective actors larger than two—preferably five, so that one can act as balancer. This, he points out, "is more a historical generalization than a theoretical concept" (p. 164). In fact, balancing takes place in a bipolar world no less than in a multipolar world, except that the methods of balancing are largely internal rather than external.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

is where the degree of concentration of capabilities becomes an issue. Waltz contends that systemic stability—defined as the absence of system-wide wars—is greatest when the number of great powers is smallest. For then actors exist who have both systemic interests and the unilateral capabilities to manipulate systemic factors—comparable to price-fixing, which becomes easier the smaller the number of firms involved. Barring a universal empire, which would domesticate international politics altogether, the most favorable situation, according to Waltz, is a system dominated by two great powers.[18] World War II produced such an outcome; it transformed a multipolar into a bipolar system, the only war in modern history to have had such a transformational consequence (p. 199). Waltz's concrete views on the virtues of bipolarity, as well as contrary interpretations, are required reading in introductory courses in international relations, so I will not address them further.[19]

THE ECONOMIC ORDER

The principle of self-help also shapes the fundamental contours of the international economic order. In a domestic realm, units are free to pursue economic specialization because the effects of the resultant mutual dependence among them are regulated by the authorities. Economic competition takes place, but it is embedded in a collaborative political framework. As a result, the elaborate division of labor that can evolve among the individual parts becomes a source of strength and welfare for the collectivity as a whole. Internationally, the principle of self-help compels states to try to be functionally alike precisely because mutual dependence remains problematic and therefore is a source of vulnerability to states. Economic collaboration takes place, but it is embedded

[18] The relationship between number and stability is not perfectly continuous, since, *ceteris paribus*, a world of three great powers is thought to be less stable than a world of four, though it may be *so* unstable that it inevitably resolves into bipolarity in any case (p. 163). Note also that the emergence of two opposing alliances in a multipolar world does *not* transform it into bipolarity; by the same token, the loss of an ally in a bipolar system does *not* transform it into multipolarity. Polarity is a structural attribute of systems, measured by the number of great powers, whereas alliances are process-level phenomena that serve as one of the means by which states pursue their interests (pp. 169-70).

[19] One vexing problem does require special mention, however. The absence of system-wide wars is not the only definition of stability employed by Waltz. He also uses the term in the economists' sense—of the system returning to a prior or corresponding point of equilibrium after a disturbance. Confusion ensues because *either* bipolarity *or* multipolarity comes out being *more* stable, depending upon the definition of stability, and Waltz is inconsistent and often unclear in his usage. As I understand him, multipolarity is more stable in the dynamic equilibrium sense (see p. 162, on the relative durability of the multipolar era in the modern state system), and bipolarity is more stable in the sense of the absence of system-wide wars (pp. 170-76, and "The Stability of a Bipolar World," *Daedalus*, No. 93 [Summer 1964]). But it remains to be seen whether the current bipolarity will do as well at averting system-wide wars as the 19th-century multipolarity did after 1815.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

in a competitive political framework. As a result, the international division of labor is slight in comparison, and reflects the relative strengths of the units and their respective capabilities to provide for their own welfare (pp. 104-7, 143-44).[20] Hence, "in international relations [economic] interdependence is always a marginal affair."[21] This is a general outcome that one expects, given the structure of anarchy.

Structural variation will produce changes in the international economic order. Waltz explores one such change. He contends that systemic interdependence, low to begin with, will be still lower the smaller the number of great powers.[22] The reason is that "size tends to increase as numbers fall," and "the larger a country, the higher the proportion of its business it does at home" (p. 145). Waltz is thereby led to his highly controversial conclusion that international economic interdependence is lower today, in the era of bipolarity, than it was prior to World War I, under multipolarity.[23] To confirm his conclusion, Waltz shows that the external sector "loomed larger" for the great powers prior to World War I than it does today, and that international trade and investment then reflected a greater degree of inter-country specialization than it does today.[24]

[20] These notions closely parallel Durkheim's distinction between organic solidarity, linking highly differentiated units in a complex society, and mechanical solidarity, linking like units in a segmental society. Organic solidarity represents a qualitatively higher form and quantitatively greater extent of interdependence. Durkheim (fn. 2).

[21] "The Myth of National Interdependence," in Charles P. Kindleberger, ed., *The International Corporation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), 206. Waltz means international system-level interdependence (see below) relative to domestic system-level interdependence.

[22] Waltz is quite explicit in denouncing what he calls unit-level measures of interdependence, but much less clear in defining what he means by systems-level interdependence. I infer from the Durkheimian inspiration and from the kind of evidence that Waltz presents that he defines it in terms of two factors: (1) the relative size of the external sector, and (2) the degree of national specialization reflected in international transactions. Both of these factors are expected to co-vary with the number of great powers. Matters are muddled further, however, because Waltz insists that in measuring systemic interdependence we take into account only "the relatively high or low level of dependence of the great powers" (p. 145). But to do so is to employ the same indicator for both independent and dependent variables! The number of great powers is a structural attribute used to *predict* systemic outcomes; surely, in order to *describe* those outcomes, we need some aggregate measure that will include, but not be limited to, the economic activities accounted for by the great powers.

[23] Waltz's original argument was with Richard N. Cooper, *The Economics of Interdependence* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1968). Cooper shows, among other things, that the price sensitivity of factors is much higher today than in the pre-World War I period. That may be economically a more interesting form of interdependence, Waltz maintains, but it is politically less important. The quick re-allocation of factors of production in response to relatively small margins of advantage demonstrates that those ties do not *need* to be maintained, that they do not reflect mutual dependence stemming from functional differentiation (pp. 141-42). The debate concerning these two positions is ably conceptualized and summarized by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977), chap. 1.

[24] Economists would point out that intrasectoral trade, which accounts for an ever-increasing share of total world trade, also reflects an international specialization of labor.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

What of the internationalization of production and finance and the worldwide integration of markets, of which both liberal and Marxist theorists make so much? Waltz remains unimpressed. These theorists "dwell on the complex ways in which issues, actions, and policies have become intertwined and the difficulty everyone has in influencing or controlling them. They have discovered the complexity of processes and have lost sight of how processes are affected by structure" (p. 145).

Lastly, Waltz is sanguine about this outcome on normative grounds. He believes that "close interdependence means closeness of contact and raises the prospect of occasional conflict," while lower interdependence diminishes this prospect. "If interdependence grows at a pace that exceeds the development of central control, then interdependence hastens the occasion for war" (p. 138). This general premise can be seen to follow from Waltz's theory, though its historical validity is dubious, or at least highly conditioned by unspecified factors.[25]

MANAGING "GLOBAL PROBLEMS"

Any political system develops means by which to order relations of force, to organize production and exchange, and to adapt to long-term changes in its environment. The international political system is no exception. The third functional domain, including what Waltz calls "the four p's—pollution, poverty, population, and proliferation" (p. 139)—is discussed under the general rubric of "international management," or the management of "global problems." It is governed by "the tyranny of small decisions" (p. 108).

The problem is structural. In a domestic society, individual behavior can be constrained by considerations concerning the desirability of the greater social good, as defined by some central agency. But the international system is not an entity that is capable of acting in its own behalf, for the greater social good. Thus, while a growing number of problems may be found at the global level, solutions continue to depend on national policies (p. 109). But national policies are constrained by the structure of self-help. Therefore, the incidence and character of "international management" is determined by the acceptability of the means by which to respond to "global problems," as calculated by the separate units, not

Waltz's response would be that this increases interdependence at the level of the *firm*, while it decreases it for the *state* compared to what it would be given an equivalent level of intersectoral trade.

[25] Waltz might be inclined to discuss the origins of World War I in this fashion, for instance, but then we would also need to have an explanation for the preceding "Hundred Years' Peace."

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

by the desirability of the end to be achieved. As a result, international management is likely to be supplied in suboptimal quantities even when all concerned agree that more is necessary. "A strong sense of peril and doom may lead to a clear definition of the ends that must be achieved. Their achievement is not thereby made possible.... Necessities do not create possibilities" (p. 109).

To break out of the tyranny of small decisions, "we have to search for a surrogate of government" (p. 196). International organization provides no answer. To manage the system effectively, a central agency would require the means to control and protect its client states, means that it could obtain only from those client states. However, the greater its potential managerial powers, "the stronger the incentives of states to engage in a struggle to control it" (p. 112). The result, far from centralizing authority, would be power-balancing. "The only remedy for a strong structural effect is a structural change" (p. 111). It should come as no surprise, therefore, that for Waltz the likelihood of approximating government is greatest when the number of great powers is smallest. "The smaller the number of great powers, and the wider the disparities between the few most powerful states and the many others, the more likely the former are to act for the sake of the system ..." (p. 198). Hence, Waltz's overall conclusion that in the world as it exists, not as we might wish it to be, "small is beautiful"—and "smaller is more beautiful than small" (p. 134).

CONCLUSION

How durable is this system? Remarkably durable, according to Waltz. There are only two ways to alter it, and neither occurs frequently or rapidly. Within-system change is produced by a shift in the configuration of capabilities. In the history of the modern state system, a multipolar configuration endured for three centuries even though the identity of the great powers changed over time. Bipolarity has lasted for more than three decades, and appears "robust" (p. 162). In the foreseeable future, only a united Europe that developed political competence and military power would be a candidate to effect this kind of change, and its prospects for doing so are not bright (p. 180). The other kind of change, a change of system, would be produced if the structure of anarchy were transformed into a hierarchy. In the history of the modern state system, this has never occurred. Indeed, its occurrence has been prevented by the very structure of anarchy. In a hierarchical realm, the emergence of a potentially dominant force (a leading candidate in an election, for example) initially may trigger attempts to balance it, but if its potential

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

for success increases beyond a certain point, there is every likelihood that it will benefit from "bandwagoning," which will assure success. By contrast, in an anarchical realm, the emergence of a potentially dominant force may well be accompanied by bandwagoning *until* it reaches a certain point. Then, if success seems possible, it is likely to result in efforts to balance it (pp. 123-28). Bandwagoning in the one case, and balancing in the other, best secures the position of the constituent units in the respective realms, and serves to maintain the deep structures of the respective realms.[26]

IV

Waltz's views have policy implications that cause displeasure and even distress in a variety of intellectual constituencies most directly concerned with those policy issues: other realists hotly dispute Waltz's benign assessment of recent changes in the correlation of forces between the United States and the Soviet Union; liberals, his dismissal of the global integration of economic processes; Third World supporters, his stress on the virtues of inequality; and world-order advocates, his general vision of the nature of the international system and the range of possibilities it offers. I make no attempt to recapitulate these debates here, because the various positions are well known. Less well known is the theoretical basis that Waltz invokes to support his views. To be sure, it was signaled in "The Third Image" of *Man, The State and War*,[27] but it had never been fleshed out in detail until the present book. Since my concern is the theory, having presented this brief summary sketch, I proceed at the same level of generality.

Insofar as Waltz's theoretical position embodies the mirror image of other and perhaps currently more popular bodies of theory, it is easy enough to reject his interpretations out of hand in favor of some other. Moreover, his own criticisms of contrary positions assume such a tone of *hauteur* and reflect such a sense of certitude as almost to invite this reaction. But that would be a mistake. The volume under discussion is one of the most important contributions to the theory of international relations since *Man, the State and War*; it enhances in a fundamental manner the level of discourse in the field.

The tack I take, therefore, is to ask whether Waltz succeeds on his own terms. I find that he does not do so fully. Part of the reason lies

[26] Cf. Ludwig Dehio, *The Precarious Balance* (New York: Random House, 1962), to whom Waltz, curiously, makes no reference.

[27] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, The State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

in errors of omission and commission, part is inherent to the enterprise as Waltz conceives of it. Since the chief theoretical aim of this book is to explain systemic continuity in international politics, I will take that to be the focus of my critique of and amendments to the theory.

V

"The texture of international politics remains highly constant, patterns recur, and events repeat themselves endlessly" (p. 66). We have seen Waltz's explanation. One problem with it is that it provides no means by which to account for, or even to describe, the most important contextual change in international politics in this *millennium*: the shift from the medieval to the modern international system. The medieval system was, by Waltz's own account (p. 88), an anarchy.[28] Yet the difference between it and the modern international system cannot simply be attributed to differences in the distribution of capabilities among their constituent units. To do so would be historically inaccurate, and nonsensical besides.[29] The problem is that a dimension of change is missing from Waltz's model. It is missing because he drops the second analytical component of political structure, differentiation of units, when discussing international systems. And he drops this component as a result of giving an infelicitous interpretation to the sociological term "differentiation,"

[28] Anarchy, recall, is defined as the absence of central rule. On the concept of "feudal anarchy," see Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1978): "It arose from the fact that the system of rule relied, both for order-keeping and for the enforcement of rights and the redress of wrongs, on self-activated coercion exercised by a small, privileged class of warriors and rentiers in their own interest" (p. 31). Moreover, any standard text will document that neither the papacy nor the empire constituted agents of centralized political authority; see, for example, Joseph R. Strayer and Dana C. Munro, *The Middle Ages*, 4th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959). Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), demonstrates nicely the balancing consequences triggered by threats of supranationality from the papacy, most profoundly in this instance: "the Gregorian concept of the Church almost demanded the invention of the concept of the state" (p. 22).

[29] Such an attribution would be historically inaccurate because there is a good deal of continuity in the "core units," if these are identified retrospectively as the units that would become the major nation-states. But the exercise is nonsensical because, as Hedley Bull has pointed out, contemporaries found it impossible to enunciate a "fundamental constitutive principle or criterion of membership" in the international system. The major units were known as *civitates, principes, regni, gentes* and *respublicae*, the common element among them, the idea of statehood, not yet having taken hold (Bull, *The Anarchical Society* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1977], 29). To these must be added cities, associations of trades, commercial leagues, and even universities, not to mention the papacy and empire—all of which, for some purposes, were considered to be legitimate political actors, though of course they varied in scope and importance. For example, the right of embassy could be granted or denied to any of them, depending upon the social status of the parties involved and the business at hand; see Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964).

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

taking it to mean that which denotes *differences* rather than that which denotes *separateness*. The modern system is distinguished from the medieval not by "sameness" or "differences" of units, but by *the principles on the basis of which the constituent units are separated* from one another. If anarchy tells us *that* the political system is a segmental realm, differentiation tells us *on what basis* the segmentation is determined. The second component of structure, therefore, does *not* drop out; it stays in, and serves as an exceedingly important source of structural variation.

What are these principles of separation or segmentation, and what are their effects? Taking my cue from no less a realist than Meinecke, I refer to the medieval variant of this structural level as a "heteronomous" institutional framework, and to the modern as the institutional framework of "sovereignty."[30]

The feudal state, if the concept makes any sense at all,[31] consisted of chains of lord-vassal relationships. Its basis was the fief, which was an amalgam of conditional property and private authority. Property was conditional in that it carried with it explicit social obligations. And authority was private in that the rights of jurisdiction and administration over the inhabitants of a fiefdom resided personally in the ruler. Moreover, the prevailing concept of usufructure meant that multiple titles to the same landed property were the norm. As a result, the medieval system of rule reflected "a patchwork of overlapping and incomplete rights of government,"[32] which were "inextricably superimposed and tangled," and in which "different juridical instances were geographically interwoven and stratified, and plural allegiances, asymmetrical suzerainties and anomalous enclaves abounded."[33]

This system of rule was inherently "international." To begin with, the distinction between "internal" and "external" political realms, separated by clearly demarcated "boundaries," made little sense until late in the day.[34] In addition, it was quite common for rulers in different

[30] Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, trans. by Douglas Scott (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); Meinecke spoke of the "heteronomous shackles" of the Middle Ages, referring to the lattice-like network of authority relations.

[31] Poggi refers to a protracted dispute over whether this designation is appropriate (fn. 28, p. 26, n. 11). The end of the feudal period does not end the cause of the dispute: see Federico Chabod, "Was there a Renaissance State?" in H. Lubasz, ed., *The Development of the Modern State* (New York: Macmillan, 1964).

[32] Strayer and Munro (fn. 28), 115; Strayer (fn. 28), throughout.

[33] Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974), 37-38.

[34] For instance, the lines between France, England, and Spain did not harden until the early 13th century. "It was at this period that not only were the boundary lines decided but, even more important, it was decided that there would be boundary lines. This is what Edouard Perroy calls the 'fundamental change' in the political structure of Europe" (Wallerstein, fn. 8, p. 32). But the story does not end there. As late as 1547, when Francis I

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

territorial settings to be one another's feoffor and feoffee for different regions of their respective lands.[35] And the feudal ruling class was mobile in a manner not dreamed of since—able to travel and assume governance from one end of the continent to the other without hesitation or difficulty, because "public territories formed a continuum with private estates."[36]

Lastly, the medieval system of rule was legitimated by common bodies of law, religion, and custom that expressed inclusive natural rights pertaining to the social totality formed by the constituent units. These inclusive legitimations posed no threat to the integrity of the constituent units, however, because the units viewed themselves as municipal embodiments of a universal community.[37] In sum, this was quintessentially a system of segmental territorial rule; it was an anarchy. But it was a form of segmental territorial rule that had none of the connotations of possessiveness and exclusiveness conveyed by the modern concept of sovereignty. It represented a heteronomous organization of territorial rights and claims—of political space.

As the medieval state represents a fusion of its particular forms of property and authority, so does the modern. The chief characteristic of the modern concept of private property is the right to exclude others from the possession of an object. And the chief characteristic of modern authority is its totalization, the integration into one public realm of parcelized and private authority. "The age in which 'Absolutist' public authority was imposed was also simultaneously the age in which 'absolute' private property was progressively consolidated."[38] In contrast to its medieval counterpart, the modern system of rule consists of the institutionalization of public authority within mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains.

The full significance and signification of this shift may best be observed through the lens of legitimations. The concept of sovereignty is critical.

---

reformed the apparatus of the French state, he fixed the number of *secrétaires d'État* at four; but the conception of "internal" and "external" was still so blurred that, rather than separating their duties according to it, each of the four supervised the affairs of one quadrant of France *and* the relations with contiguous and outlying states (Mattingly, fn. 29, p. 195).

[35] Strayer (fn. 32, p. 83) relates the hypothetical example of a king of France, who "might send letters on the same day to the count of Flanders, who was definitely his vassal, but a very independent and unruly one, to the count of Luxembourg, who was a prince of the Empire but who held a money-fief (a regular, annual pension) of the king of France, and to the king of Sicily, who was certainly a ruler of a sovereign state but also a prince of the French royal house."

[36] "Angevin lineages could rule indifferently in Hungary, England or Naples; Norman in Antioch, Sicily or England; Burgundian in Portugal or Zeeland; Luxemburger in the Rhineland or Bohemia; Flemish in Artois or Byzantium; Hapsburg in Austria, the Netherlands or Spain" (Anderson, fn. 33, p. 32).

[37] Mattingly (fn. 29), 41 and throughout.

[38] Anderson (fn. 33), 428.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

Unfortunately, it has become utterly trivialized by recent usage, which treats sovereignty either as a necessary adjunct of anarchy or as a descriptive category expressing unit attributes, roughly synonymous with material autonomy.[39] But sovereignty was not an adjunct of anarchy in the medieval system of rule, as we have seen. And in its proper modern usage, it signifies a form of *legitimation* that pertains to a *system* of relations, as we shall now see.[40]

The rediscovery from Roman law of the concept of absolute private property and the simultaneous emergence of mutually exclusive territorial state formations, which stood in relation to one another much as owners of private estates do,[41] occasioned what we might call a "legitimation crisis" of staggering proportions. How can one justify absolute individuation when one's frame of reference is inclusive natural rights? And if one justifies such individuation, what basis is left for political community? The works we regard today as the modern classics in political theory and international legal thought were produced in direct response to this legitimation crisis. Attempted solutions to the problems were diverse.[42] Of greatest interest for present purposes are the analogous

[39] It is quite common, particularly in liberal writings on interdependence, to read of "the relative irrelevance of sovereignty" in the contemporary world wherein all states "are subject to diverse internal and external conditioning factors that induce and constrain their behavior," and in which some states apparently are "more 'sovereign' than others." The cited snippets are from Richard W. Mansbach and others, *The Web of World Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 20-22. Waltz's definition of sovereignty is not helpful either: "To say that states are sovereign is not to say that they can do as they please.... To say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems ..." (p. 96). If sovereignty meant no more than this, then I would agree with Ernst Haas, who once declared categorically: "I do not use the concept at all and see no need to." "Letter to the Editor," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, VIII (September 1969), 70.

[40] More precisely, the internal side of sovereignty had to do with sovereignty as a legitimation for central state authority vis-à-vis competing domestic claimants. That was Bodin's concern. My discussion below addresses only the external side, which dealt with sovereignty as a legitimation for the interstate order.

[41] " 'Private,' to put it another way, refers not so much to the *nature* of the entity that owns, but to the fact that it is an entity, a unit whose ownership of nature ... signifies the *exclusion* of others from this ownership." R.N. Berki, "On Marxian Thought and the Problem of International Relations," *World Politics*, XXIV (October 1971), 99; emphasis added.

[42] Neo-Thomists like Vitoria and Suarez sought to adapt both inclusive property rights and natural law to the new circumstances, without abandoning either. Filmer and Hobbes abandoned both, arguing—on Adamite and utilitarian grounds, respectively—for the necessity of absolutist arrangements internally and, in the case of Hobbes, for the inevitability of the state of war externally. Grotius and Pufendorf developed mixed solutions that pointed the way toward the future. Both accepted the idea of exclusive property rights. Grotius allowed for some natural rights in things while Pufendorf argued that these rights must be conventional. But, critically, both defined the only remaining natural rights basis for sociableness or community negatively, in terms of the duty to abstain from that which belongs to another. Liberal theories of social order followed directly from this premise. A good summary, on which this characterization has drawn, may be found in James Tully, *A Discourse on Property: John Locke and His Adversaries* (New York: Cambridge University

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

solutions developed by Locke and Vattel, because they came to be the most widely accepted legitimations for their respective realms, bourgeois society and the interstate system.

Here is how John Locke defined the first of his tasks in resolving the crisis: "I shall endeavour to shew, how Men might come to have a *property* in several parts of that which God gave to Mankind in common."[43] He fulfilled this task by providing a theory of natural individuation of property that obtains "where there is enough, and as good left in common for others."[44] However, the condition of scarcity ultimately limits such individuation, and its advent is hastened by the introduction of money, which makes possible accumulation beyond what one needs and can use. Covetousness and contention ensue. Therefore, to "avoid these Inconveniences which disorder Mens properties in the state of Nature, Men unite into Societies."[45] As his second task, Locke endeavored to show the basis of the political community so constituted. This he accomplished by establishing a means-ends relation between the public good and the preservation of property: since individual property rights existed prior to the formation of civil society, "the power of Society, or Legislative constituted by them, can never be suppos'd to extend farther than the common good; but is obliged to secure every ones Property by providing against those ... defects ... that made the State of Nature so unsafe and uneasie."[46] In sum, for Locke the purpose of civil society lay in providing a conventional framework within which to protect natural individual property rights that, beyond a certain point in history, could not be vindicated in its absence. And the legitimation for the political community so established derived simply from the minimalist social needs of the separate "proprietors," without recourse to any "standard of right that stood outside and above" these bare facts.[47]

Precisely this was also Vattel's accomplishment in international theory.

Press, 1980), chaps. 3-5. For a brief and useful overview of the international side, see Leo Gross, "The Peace of Westphalia, 1648-1948," in Richard A. Falk and Wolfram H. Hanrieder, eds., *International Law and Organization* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1968).

[43] Cited in Tully (fn. 42, p. 95); the quotation is from the chapter in the *Second Treatise of Goverment* entitled "On Property," section 27; emphasis in original. Tully tries to debunk the notion that Locke was an apologist for absolute private property and emergent capitalist relations of production, as argued most forcefully by C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962); but he seems to me to go too far in the opposite direction.

[44] Cited in Tully (fn. 42), 129, from *Second Treatise*, section 27.

[45] Cited in Tully (fn. 42), 150-51, from *ibid.*, section 136.

[46] Cited in Tully (fn. 42), 163, from *ibid.*, section 131; italics omitted. Note, however, that Locke defined property very broadly here, to include that in which individuals have rights, including life, liberty, and possessions.

[47] Macpherson (fn. 43), 80. Macpherson develops this point in his discussion of Hobbes, but subsequently applies it to Locke as well.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

In *Droit des Gens*, published in 1758, Vattel wrote "the international law of political liberty"[48]—the political liberty, that is, of states. This law rested on natural rights doctrines. At the same time, Vattel brought to a successful resolution the floundering efforts of the better part of two centuries to establish a complementarity between the sovereign claims of the separate states and the idea of a community of states, rendered in such a way that the latter was not entirely discarded in favor of the former.[49] In the manner of Locke, Vattel accomplished this by establishing a means-ends relation between the international community and the preservation of the separate existence of its parts. To maintain the order that made this separate existence possible was, for Vattel, the province of the community of states. And the legitimation for the political community comprised of the minimalist social needs of "sovereigns" required no recourse to sources of authority or morality beyond "these bare facts."

In sum, from the vantage point of their respective social totalities—domestic and international systems—private property rights and sovereignty may be viewed as being analogous concepts in three respects. First, they differentiate among units in terms of possession of self and exclusion of others. Second, because *any* mode of differentiation *inherently* entails a corresponding form of sociality, private property rights and sovereignty also establish systems of social relations among their respective units. They give rise to the form of sociality characteristic of "possessive individualists," for whom the social collectivity is merely a conventional contrivance calculated to maintain the basic mode of differentiation and to compensate for the defects of a system so organized by facilitating orderly exchange relations among the separate parts. Third, the most successful theorists of the two realms—as measured by their political impact on bourgeois society and contemporary statesmen, respectively—developed an autonomous legitimation of the political order based simply on the minimalist social needs of its component units. That is to say, they derived an "ought" from an "is," where the "is" was

[48] Gross (fn. 42), 65. Emeric Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, trans. by Charles G. Fenwick, in James Brown Scott, ed., *The Classics of International Law*, IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916).

[49] F. H. Hinsley, "The Concept of Sovereignty and the Relations between States," *Journal of International Affairs*, XXI (No. 2, 1967), 242-52, at 245: "It was a condition of the discovery of the international version of sovereignty that the notion of Christendom be replaced by a different understanding of international society—one that was compatible, as the medieval understanding was not, with belief in the sovereignty of the state.... [T]here could be no successful international application of the theory until the notion of the sovereign power of the individual state had been reconciled with the ethical principles and the political needs of an international community consisting of independent states."

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

neither transcendental nor purely subjective, but enjoyed an irreducible intersubjective existential quality.[50]

The medieval system differed profoundly in each of these respects. Appropriately, the first specifically modern invention of diplomacy was the principle of extraterritoriality: having so fundamentally redefined and reorganized political space, states "found that they could only communicate with one another by tolerating within themselves little islands of alien sovereignty."[51]

In sum, when the concept "differentiation" is properly defined, the second structural level of Waltz's model does not drop out. It stays in, and serves to depict the kind of institutional transformation illustrated by the shift from the medieval to the modern international system; by extension of the argument, it serves as a dimension of possible future transformation, from the modern to a postmodern international system. Its inclusion has a number of more specific consequences, which I will simply enumerate:

1. This structural level gives greater determinate content to the general constraints of anarchy deduced by Waltz. One illustration will suffice to make the point. According to Waltz, the constitutive element of collaboration in an anarchical realm is "the exchange of considerations" (p. 113). Neither he nor Chester I. Barnard, whom he follows on this point, defines the term "considerations".[52] And from anarchy alone one *cannot* infer a definition. We do discover more of the meaning, however, by looking at the institutional frameworks of heteronomy and sovereignty. In the medieval system, the exchange of consideration was calculated *intuitu personae*, that is, taking into account the "majesty," "dignity," and other such individual and subjective attributes of the status and wealth of the parties to the exchange.[53] This is as foreign to the modern mind as is Aristotle's effort to calculate a just price for exchange by taking into account the social standing of the parties to it,[54] but it represents no less an "exchange of considerations" for it. In the framework of sovereignty characteristic of "possessive individualists," we know

[50] Macpherson (fn. 43), chap. 6. Autonomy, then, which is so often confused with the very term sovereignty, characterizes the ontological basis of the legitimation expressed by sovereignty.

[51] Mattingly (fn. 29), 244; see also Adda B. Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), chap. 13, where the origin, generalization, and acceptance of this "necessity" is traced.

[52] Barnard, "On Planning for World Goverment," in *Organization and Management: Selected Papers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 151.

[53] Mattingly (fn. 29), throughout.

[54] Karl Polanyi, "Aristotle Discovers the Economy," in Polanyi and others, eds., *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957).

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

that "considerations" translates as rough quantitative equivalency—which, of course, is what Waltz mistakenly thinks he is deducing from anarchy.

2. This structural level provides the basis for a more refined and compelling response than Waltz is able to give to liberal interdependence theorists who argue that *because* sovereignty (erroneously defined as unit autonomy) is becoming "relatively irrelevant," realism no longer offers an appropriate explanation of international outcomes. All that Waltz can, and does, say is that this is a unit-level issue which has no place in systemic theory. However, in view of the analogous relationship established above between private property rights and sovereignty, those who would dispense with the concept of sovereignty on the grounds of growing international interdependence must first show why the idea of private property rights should not have been dispensed with long ago in the capitalist societies, where they are continuously invaded and interfered with by the actions of the state. Yet we know that, at a minimum, the structure of private property rights will influence *when* the state intervenes; usually it also affects *how* the state intervenes. If this concept still has utility domestically, in the face of definitive state action, then its international analogue ought, if anything, to be even more relevant. The reason for the continued significance of the concepts is that they are not simply descriptive categories. Rather, they are components of generative structures: they shape, condition, and constrain social behavior.

3. This structural level allows us to reach beyond the confines of conventional realist analysis, to incorporate factors and address issues not normally considered by it—without, however, violating its basic premises. One illustration will again suffice. The institutional framework of sovereignty differentiates units in terms of juridically mutually exclusive and morally self-entailed domains. However, the *scope* of these domains is defined not only territorially but also functionally, depending upon the range and depth of state intervention in domestic social and economic affairs. It follows that the functional scope of the international system will also vary, depending upon the hegemonic form of state/society relations that prevails internationally at any given time. Therefore, the hegemonic form of state/society relations, or a lack thereof, constitutes an attribute of the international system and can be used as a systems-level explanatory factor. And a good thing that it can be so used; for despite his best efforts, Waltz cannot explain the qualitative differences in economic interdependence between the late 19th century and the post-World War II period simply by the facts of multipolarity then and bipolarity now. The differences stem from the respective heg-

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

emonic forms of state/society relations prevailing in the two eras—"laissez-faire liberalism" then and "embedded liberalism" now.[55]

4. Lastly, this structural level provides a basis from which to fashion a more comprehensive view of the "world system," including both its political and economic dimensions. I share Waltz's view on the priority of the states system, so long as the deep structure of anarchy prevails. Nevertheless, it is clear from the above discussion that the early modern redefinition of property rights and reorganization of political space unleashed both interstate political relations and capitalist production relations. The two systems, then, have similar structural roots. They gave rise to similar forms of sociality in their respective realms. They are reproduced by analogous mechanisms. And the evolution of these systems, at least in part, is "co-determined."[56] A properly augmented realist model ought to be able gradually to generate an explanation of this more comprehensive social formation.

VI

There is not only a *dimension* of change missing from Waltz's model. If he takes his Durkheimian premises seriously, then a *determinant* of change is missing as well. According to Durkheim, "growth in the volume and dynamic density of societies modifies profoundly the fundamental conditions of collective existence...."[57] Both are capable of altering "social facts." By volume, Durkheim means the number of socially relevant units, which Waltz includes in his model by counting the number of great powers. But what of dynamic density? By this, Durkheim understands the quantity, velocity, and diversity of transactions that go on within society. But Waltz, as we have seen, banishes such factors to the level of process, shaped by structure but not in turn affecting structure in any manner depicted by his model. Why this departure from Durkheim's framework, when it is followed closely in other respects? Waltz's neglect of "dynamic density" results, in my view, from three limitations of his model.

The first is simply the missing dimension of change that we have just discussed. It is the case, both on logical and historical grounds, that the pressure of what Durkheim calls dynamic density is exerted most directly

[55] At least, that is what I have attempted to show in my paper "International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Post-War Economic Order," *International Organization*, xxxvi (Spring 1982).

[56] The term is Zolberg's (fn. 11).

[57] Durkheim (fn. 1), 115; (fn. 2), Book II, chap. 2.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

on prevailing property rights within a society. Formal theories of property rights, for example, routinely invoke such factors as crowding, the existence of externalities, and the incentives of optimal scale to explain and justify the reordering of individual property rights.[58] Lacking this dimension of structure, Waltz rejects the phenomenon as not having anything to do with structure. True, the only relevant question for Waltz's purposes is whether the pressure of dynamic density is ever *so* great as to trigger a change not simply in *individual* property rights, but in the basic *structure* of property rights that characterizes an entire social formation. It happens that the shift from the medieval to the modern international system represents one such instance. And it is not an unreasonable hypothesis that any transformation beyond the modern international system will represent a similar instance.

In their enormously ambitious and provocative analytical economic history of the rise of the West from 1300 to 1700, North and Thomas discuss the medieval-to-modern shift in the following terms.[59] Self-sustained economic growth in the West was made possible by the instituting of efficient economic organization. Efficient economic organization in turn entailed a societal restructuring of property rights that reduced the discrepancy between private and social rates of return. This restructuring of property rights was produced by a combination of diminishing returns to land, resulting from population pressures; a widening of markets, resulting from migration patterns; and an expansion of the institutions providing justice and protection to achieve a more optimal size for commerce and warfare, as well as their reorganization to eliminate domestic competitors. The transformation of the state was driven on the supply side by rulers' pursuit of revenues; where the particular fiscal interests of state actors coincided with an economically efficient structure of property rights—as they did in the Netherlands and Britain—successful economic growth ensued; others became also-rans. In this instance, then, Durkheim's notion of dynamic density *can* be linked to a societal restructuring of property rights and political organization, which had the domestic and international consequences that we examined in the previous section.

North and Thomas's model, even if it were without problems on its own terms, cannot simply be extended into the future of the international system. For one thing (as the authors themselves point out), from the

[58] E.g., Eirik G. Furubotn and Svetozar Pejovich, eds., *The Economics of Property Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1974).

[59] Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973). My summary perforce is a highly stylized rendering of what is already fairly stylized historical work.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

17th century on, differences in the efficiency of economic organization have become a major determinant of the consequences of the "natural" forces that they examine, so that the phenomenon of dynamic density today is infinitely more complex. For another, the restructuring of property rights and political organization that they describe were in large measure instituted from the top down by rulers gaining control of the emerging state formations; no analogue exists in the contemporary international system. However, neither of these qualifications warrants neglecting dynamic density as a possible determinant of future systemic change; they merely suggest that its manifestations and effects are likely to be different, and that indicators designed to detect them will have to reflect these differences.[60]

A second reason for Waltz's neglect of dynamic density as a possible source of change reflects an error of commission rather than of omission. I mentioned earlier that Waltz strives for, but fails fully to achieve, a generative formulation of international political structure. As a result of this failure, one circuit through which the effects of dynamic density could register at the systems level is severed. In a generative structure, it will be recalled, the deeper structural levels have causal priority, and the structural levels closer to the surface of visible phenomena take effect only within a context that is already "prestructured" by the deeper levels. For example, we ask of the distribution of capabilities within the international system *what difference it makes* for the realization of the general organizational effects of the deep structure of anarchy, as mediated by the more specific organizational effects of the institutional framework of sovereignty. That is how we determine the *systemic effects* of changes in the distribution of capabilities. We then go on to ask how these systemic effects in turn *condition* and *constrain* international outcomes.

However, when assessing possible sources of change, Waltz short-circuits his own model: he shifts from a generative to a descriptive conception of structure. For example, in the face of demographic trends, quantitative and qualitative changes in industrial production and location as well as in technologies, ecological and resource constraints, and shifts in the international balance of forces—some of which surely could

[60] For a preliminary and still largely descriptive effort in this direction, see Ruggie, "On the Problem of 'The Global Problematique,'" *Alternatives*, v (January 1980). My tentative conclusion in that paper is that greater global dynamic density has produced change in the international framework of states' "private property rights," but that to date this change continues to reflect an underlying determining logic that has not itself changed. Thus far, therefore, it represents an adaptive redeployment of this structural level, not a fundamental rupture in it.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

be coded as measures of systemic dynamic density—Waltz tends to conclude: yes, but the United States and the Soviet Union still are relatively better off than anybody else, and the United States is relatively better off than the Soviet Union; therefore these changes have no systemic effects, and remain of no concern to systemic theory.[61] Whether or not Waltz's specific empirical assessments are correct has been widely contested.[62] But let us grant, for the sake of the argument, that bipolarity remains intact. A more fundamental problem stems from the fact that, in linking theory to real-world outcomes, Waltz has abandoned his generative model of structure at this critical juncture. The question that Waltz *should be* asking is whether any of these changes, singly or in some combination, make any difference not simply for the *relative* positions of the superpowers, but for the *absolute* capacity of bipolarity to *mute* the underlying deleterious organizational effects of anarchy and sovereignty. The answer to *this* question provides the basis for predicting the constraining and conditioning consequences of structure, within which individual states, including the United States and the Soviet Union, must find their way. A generative model demands this chain of reasoning, as Waltz himself makes clear in his abstract description of it.[63] I, for one, would be very surprised to learn that some of the changes alluded to above do not adversely affect the managerial capacity of bipolarity and, thereby, alter systemic outcomes.

There is a third and final reason why Waltz neglects dynamic density as a potential source of systemic change, and why he discounts the very possibility of systemic change more generally. Waltz reacts strongly against what he calls the reductionist tendencies in international relations theory. In the conventional usage, as noted above, he finds that the system is all product and is not at all productive. He takes pains to rectify this imbalance. He goes too far, however. In his conception of systemic theory, *unit-level processes* become all product and are not at all productive.[64] Hence, what Anthony Giddens says of Durkheim is

[61] This mode of reasoning permeates the last three chapters of Waltz's book; but see especially pp. 146-60.

[62] See, most recently, Rosecrance (fn. 9).

[63] Constructing and then adhering to generative structural models are extremely difficult intellectual exercises. Perhaps it is some consolation to know that, according to Lévi-Strauss, Durkheim failed too, as a result of which "he oscillates between a dull empiricism and a prioristic frenzy." Claude Lévi-Strauss, "French Sociology," in Wilbert Moore and Georges Gurvitch, eds., *Twentieth Century Sociology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), 528. Waltz's empiricism is never dull.

[64] Waltz imputes this unidirectional causality to the structural mode of explanation: "Structural thought conceives of actions simultaneously taking place within a matrix. Change the matrix—the structure of the system—and expected actions and outcomes are altered." Waltz, "What Causes What? Systemic and Unit-Level Explanations of Change," Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, draft, January 1982, 35. In point

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms

said even more appropriately of Waltz: he adopts what is supposed to be a methodological principle, and turns it into an ontological one.[65] In consequence, while his model in the end may *reflect* changes in its own parameters, it lacks any basis on which to *predict* them.

In Waltz's model of the system, as we have seen, structural features are sharply differentiated from unit-level processes, and structure is the productive agency that operates at the level of system. Accordingly, only structural change can produce systemic change. Waltz's posture in this regard is a welcome antidote to the prevailing superficiality of the proliferating literature on international transformation, in which the sheer momentum of processes sweeps the international polity along toward its next encounter with destiny. The problem with Waltz's posture is that, in any social system, structural change itself ultimately has no source *other than* unit-level processes. By banishing these from the domain of systemic theory, Waltz also exogenizes the ultimate source of systemic change.[66] By means of the concept of dynamic density, Durkheim at least in part endogenized change of society into his theory of society.[67] Not so Waltz. As a result, Waltz's theory of "society" contains only a reproductive logic, but no transformational logic.

In sum, I have made no concerted attempt to show that Waltz is substantively mistaken in his expectation about future continuity in the international system. My purpose has been to demonstrate that in his model, continuity—at least in part—is a product of premise even before it is hypothesized as an outcome. Despite its defects, Waltz's model is powerful and elegant. And, as I have suggested, its defects can be compensated for in a suitably amended and augmented neorealist formulation. Such a formulation would also go some way toward subsuming the major competing systemic theories. How far the "perfect" realist model would take us in understanding and shaping continuity and transformation in the world polity is a question for another occasion.

---

of fact, structural explanations in the social sciences are far more complex, and sometimes even dialectical, as the surveys in Glucksman (fn. 16) and Kurzweil (fn. 16) testify.

[65] Anthony Giddens, *Émile Durkheim* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 125. To avoid any possible misunderstanding, let me add that Waltz does *not* argue that unit-level phenomena are important for nothing, but that they have no place in systemic theory. In international relations, according to Waltz, they belong to the realm of foreign policy. (See his exchange with Richard Rosecrance, in *International Organization*, xxxvi [Summer 1982], 679-85.)

[66] For a structural model of international systemic continuity/transformation which stresses the *concatenation* of "synchronic articulations" and "diachronic processes," and which I find more satisfactory than either Waltz's model or the prevailing alternatives, see Anderson (fn. 33), 419-31.

[67] For Durkheim, the notion of dynamic density at one and the same time reflected structural effects *and* aggregated unit-level processes into a systemic variable that in turn affected structure.

This content downloaded from 128.103.193.216 on Wed, 04 Oct 2017 18:15:39 UTC
All use subject to http://about.jstor.org/terms