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Global Cities and the Transformation of the International System

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Abstract

In recent decades a discourse has emerged around the concept of the 'global city'. This discourse has sought to understand the nature of a set of physical changes to the form of many cities around the world, linking these changes to processes of globalisation. Despite its inspiration for important work in other fields, International Relations has been slow to recognise the implications of the rise of the global city. This thesis argues that the emergence of the global city phenomenon is an important indication of broader transformative tendencies in the contemporary international system. It also argues that International Relations as a discipline offers a unique set of theoretical resources that can help analysts draw out the wider impact of the global city on international politics.

In particular, the core concept of the 'international system', when formulated in a historically sensitive fashion, offers insight into the rise and fall of many different institutional forms and structures across time. The modern state system, when viewed from the perspective of *la longue durée*, may be viewed as a unique historical moment. For much of history, different polities have existed together: empires, city-states, leagues of cities, nomadic peoples. This thesis examines the proposition that the rise of the global city reveals another historic shift in the nature of the international system, and indicates the theoretical resources that may allow us to comprehend such a change. The important relationship between cities and states, it is argued, is now undergoing a historic shift, just as it has at many other points in the past. Understanding the nature of this change illuminates a host of important issues, including transformation in the nature of the state itself, and the renegotiation of the relationship between polities, territorial scale and the global economy in the contemporary world.

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Introduction

This thesis is concerned with what we understand by the concept of the international system. It examines the variety of different ways in which the international system has been conceptualised. It seeks to understand how we can account for the different forms that the international system has taken through time. Even this last aim is accompanied by much controversy. A significant contingent of International Relations (IR) scholars has viewed the international system as a system of states. This has led them to see state systems as isomorphic across vast tracks of time, and, as a consequence, shaped by similar imperatives: the desire to achieve security, the balancing of power. This thesis argues for a historically sensitive perspective on international systems. It is only when viewed from the perspective of *la longue durée* that the many different forms and structures of successive international systems are revealed. The modern international system is seen to be just one of many possible configurations, with its historically specific combination of territory, state form, and organising principle of state sovereignty. The past has been witness to many other different combinations, many different institutional forms and logics of organisation. For much of history, different polities have existed together in the same international system: empires, city-states, free cities and leagues of cities, nomadic peoples. It is a unique characteristic of the modern international system that its fundamental political, social and economic units have been alike.

Approaching international systems with an appreciation of the richness of their history has an important benefit. It allows an appreciation of change. Letting go of a commitment to a state-centric understanding of international systems recovers the possibility of analysing transformative tendencies in the contemporary international system. We should not expect the current arrangements to endure indefinitely. There is nothing in the historical record that would suggest that they should. Indeed, the arguments unfolded here will suggest that there are strong indications that the modern international system is unravelling in various ways. In order to appreciate these transformations, however, it is necessary to construct an analytical framework that reveals such change. Much of the thesis is concerned with how such an analytical framework should be constructed. It draws on, and critiques, the different resources and theories within the academic discipline of IR, where a variety of analysts have sought to comprehend international systems: their composition, their logics, their formation and their disintegration.

Because the modern arrangement of the international system has been comprised of sovereign states, with hard boundaries and territorial contiguity, any transformation of that international system will mean that these arrangements must weaken, and other institutional forms emerge. This argument focuses upon one such possibility, the emergence in the late-twentieth century of

a new urban form: the global city. The thesis uses the rise of the global city as a way to particularise the general conceptual apparatus that is developed to understand the transformation of international systems. The advent of global cities serves to shed light on the changing nature of the relationship between cities and states, on the changing nature of the relationship between territorial states and the global economy, and of the changing nature of the relationship between polities operating at different spatial scales in the contemporary world. These issues will form central themes of the arguments presented here.

Cities in general, and the burgeoning literature on global cities in particular, have attracted very little attention from IR scholars. This is attributable to the state-centric bias that IR scholars have tended to adopt when conceptualising the international system. Outside of IR, however, there has been sustained interest in the importance of the city in history, and, more recently, in the centrality of the global city to the processes underpinning the contemporary wave of globalisation.

Cities are a key achievement of human civilisation. The world's great cities have played a central role in the evolution of human history. Changes in urban form are indications of profound developments in history. The emergence of the proto-cities of the Anatolian plateau, such as Çatal Hüyük, which dates from around 7000-5000BC, signified the movement from nomadic hunter gathering to a more settled form of existence, and the beginning of agricultural cultivation. The advent of the first true cities, harnessing the fertile potential of the river valleys of ancient Mesopotamia around 5000 years ago, enabled a profound change in political, economic and social organisation. These cities were intrinsic to the emergence of hierarchical social relations, a more complex division of labour, the political revolution embodied by the city-state, the development of warfare. In the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution brought with it the industrial city, which was integrally bound up with the birth of the modern world.

Cities, are, then, intrinsically related to states. They formed the bedrock for the first city-states, and, later, the first empires grew from cities. In the modern international system, cities were subjugated to the state, and, with industrialisation, became the growth engines of national economies. Taking a long historical perspective reveals to us that, 'compared to cities, nation-states are 'young' enterprises that have yet to prove their viability'.[1] Over the course of the last four decades there has been a growing awareness in the academic world, and increasingly in the media, of another significant change in the nature of the world's major cities. It has been argued that these changes may well amount to another great revolution in the nature and form of the

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[1] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 6)

city, perhaps as significant as those earlier turning points in urban life.[2] If this is so, we should expect this development to augur significant changes to the international system, as the relationship between states and cities undergoes another historical shift.

The perception of a profound shift in the nature of urban form really began to take root in the 1980s. A growing research programme, pulling in urban sociologists and political geographers, sought to develop concepts and theories that would enable them to come to terms with the changing shape and functions of cities in the late-modern period. Their efforts resulted in a new term: the global city.[3] The literature surrounding these ideas has gone through a number of distinct phases in its development, and, as I shall go on to show, there is still a great deal of controversy and debate surrounding the meaning of the term and the processes that it is deployed to understand. However, the concept of the global city is now strongly established, and seems likely to play an important continuing role in how we understand changes to the world's economic and political structures.

The literature on global cities emerged initially in response to structural changes in the world economy that took place in the 1970s. It has been centred on the attempt to come to understand the nature of this restructuring, and how changes to the material form of cities are directly linked to global economic processes. In turn, certain cities are viewed as essential to the changing nature and geography of contemporary global capitalism.[4] As Peter Taylor, a leading figure in this intellectual project, argues, the ways in which the global economy has been reconstituted in the final decades of the twentieth century has made the traditional framework of analysis, the national economy, increasingly obsolete.[5] The global cities thesis argues that capitalism is being reconstituted at a different scale to that of the national and territorial state. Important economic processes are de-territorialising at the national scale, only to re-territorialise within the crucial strategic sites offered by certain cities. Global cities are seen as linking global and local spaces together in a new geographical framework that alters the significance of the national level.

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[2] Soja (2000: 196)

[3] In some of the earliest incarnations of the literature, the term 'world city' was used: Friedman (1986). This term continues to be used fairly inter-changeably with the term 'global city'. I see the two terms as broadly interchangeable here, although I prefer 'global city' for two reasons. Firstly, the term 'global city' links the urban phenomenon in question with the globalisation literature. Secondly, the term 'world city' was designed in the early literature to link the phenomenon directly to Wallerstein's (1974, 1980, 1989) world systems theory, which is not the theoretical approach adopted here. There is some debate about the historical novelty of the contemporary global city. These debates are discussed in chapter six.

[4] Brenner and Keil (2006: 9)

[5] Taylor (2003: 21)

The Transformation of Urban Form: Global City Regions and Networks

What, then, are the material changes that have led some urbanists to identify a major urban revolution in the form and function of cities in the late-twentieth century? There are significant general urban trends, but global city theory is designed to pick out the specific relationship between cities and the global economy. Before going on to outline the specific value of the global city literature, I want to briefly set some context by examining some of the significant contemporary urban developments that touch importantly on the changing relationship between the state and urban life.

The twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented urbanisation of the planet. Great numbers of people left the land and moved into cities. To give an indication of the scale of this change, in 1700, less than ten percent of the global population lived in cities. In 2004, for the first time, a majority of the world's people were living in urban habitats. By 2020 it is anticipated that at least twenty-three of the world's cities will contain populations of over ten million.[6] In 2050 it is estimated that over seventy-five percent of the global population will be urban.[7] Beyond swelling the size of cities to historically unprecedented proportions, this urbanization of the globe will bring with it a number of significant new problems, and, most likely, innovations. For cities of this size present both a challenge to traditional forms of human organization and social cohesion, but also the resources and the creative synergies to tackle those challenges. Cities consume resources voraciously: they are dependent upon their hinterlands and wider markets for energy, food, water and other resources. Cities are responsible for much environmental damage: they emit over seventy-five percent of global carbon dioxide emissions.[8] The movement of people around global networks of cities spreads disease. Huge flows of migration have diversified the populations of many cities. Such heterogeneity may bring in its wake new or reawakened ethnic and religious tensions, and the formation of new political identities beyond the modern nation. Cities are at the heart of many of the issues that engage those seeking to understand those processes of intensified globalisation that appear to be altering many aspects of world politics.

These great shifts in the urban population cannot but have implications for the modern nation-state. An early consequence of the growing importance of cities in the global arena is the rise of the city mayor in a variety of major cities: New York, Paris, London, Stockholm, Berlin, Rome.[9] Another development is the rise of urban social movements, particularly in Latin America. At the same time as the developed world adapts to these changes, they are also impacting less developed

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[6] Reader (2004) Hobsbawm (1994: 289)
[7] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 6)
[8] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 22-23)
[9] Gerlin (2005: 41-49)

regions. Since the 1950s there has been a significant shift in the geography of urbanization: over seventy percent of the global urban population is located in the developing world.[10] This has resulted in mega-cities of unprecedented size: Mexico City has over 19 million people. As the urban social fabric is overwhelmed, we have seen the mass production of slums. The UN estimates that over one third of urban dwellers live in slums: well over a billion people.[11] These developments cannot be divorced from the politics that states have pursued. Mass slum production has been attributed to the unquestioning embrace of market principles, as many states began to implement neoliberal economic orthodoxy in the last decades of the twentieth century.[12] One of the core arguments underpinning this thesis is that societies create social spaces in line with the dominant ideologies and processes of their particular time. The forms that cities, states, and the international system take all conform to this principle. As the great urban theorist Jane Jacobs remarked, 'the look of things and the way that they work are inextricably bound together'.[13] An urban fabric marked by fragmentation, inequality and discontinuity is intrinsically bound up with the political and social policies that states have pursued. It is a distinct possibility, to be explored in the course of this argument, that the agency of states has brought about a transformation of their own structure and form, in addition to the transformation their policies have wrought on the form and function of cities.

These general trends are tied to the emergence of the concept of the global city, but, as some have complained, they are not always discussed in the discourse that surrounds the global city concept.[14] In the midst of this great urbanization of the planet, certain key strategic urban locales are developing distinctive functions. There are two broad and mutually compatible ways of viewing how the importance of these sites is reshaping urban form. The first focuses on the development of global city regions. The second examines the emergence of global city networks. These formations are examined in detail in chapter six, but I will briefly introduce them here.

The global city region is a striking visible manifestation of changes to urban morphology.[15] The notion of the global city region shows how cities in the contemporary world are beginning to show very different characteristics to cities in earlier periods of history. The industrial city of the nineteenth century, for example, was characterised by a concentration of factories and poor quality workers' housing at its centre. The onset of de-industrialisation in the twentieth century, the growth of middle-classes, and technological innovations such as the automobile, worked to turn industrial cities inside out, sucking people, jobs and life from the inner city into the suburbs.

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[10] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 58-60)
[11] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 65)
[12] Davis (2006)
[13] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 8)
[14] Smith (2001)
[15] Scott (2000)

The advent of the global city indicates another revolution in urban space. Strategic connection to the world economy has reinvigorated their central business districts, introduced unprecedented levels of density and verticality, and gentrified and reinvigorated inner cities. Unprecedented population growth has also stretched such cities horizontally, creating a new polycentric configuration, as previously separate cities merge into distinctive urban conglomerations. Global city regions now take in vast trans-territorial populations, as high-speed rail links and air networks shrink journey times and alter the nature of urban space. These developments are global. They can be seen in the vast global city region developing along the urban eastern seaboard of China in the form of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen-Canton-Macau-Zuhai-Pearl River Delta region. London-Paris-Lille-Brussels-Netherlands-Frankfurt-Cologne are viewed as creating a transnational region, with a population that outstrips that of the majority of nation-states.[16]

At the same time, these vast urban regional formations are seen to be growing around particular global city sites that are plugged into the networks of value in the digital and global economy, acting as strategic nodal points. Particular cities, based upon their historical lineage, and upon particular functions that they fulfil for the world economy, become intrinsic elements of global networks. Therefore, London becomes a key strategic and nodal point for processing capital, while Tokyo becomes a key site for exporting capital. Houston becomes a key site for the concentration of skills and expertise in the energy sector, Chicago the node for commodities exchange. Global cities are linked together selectively through the creation of a dense digital infrastructure: a vast project of infrastructure construction comparable to the construction of the railways, mass transit systems and motorways of previous periods.[17]

The growing general perception of the importance of global city networks in the contemporary world is highlighted by an article that appeared on the cover of the January 2008 edition of Time Magazine. This article, entitled 'A Tale of Three Cities', discusses the links between New York, London and Hong Kong, and argues that, through the development of a common elite financial culture, connected by a network of air-traffic routes and technological infrastructure, these three cities, and the banks and investment firms operating within them, have become integral to global economic trade and development. They have become central to economic globalisation itself, yet still they are often an:

> overlooked aspect of a generation's worth of global growth: the extent to which New York City, London, and Hong Kong, three cities linked by a shared economic culture, have come to be both examples and explanations of globalization. Connected by long-haul jets and fiber-optic cable, and spaced neatly around the globe, the three cities have (by accident — nobody planned this) created a financial

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[16] Castells (2001: 230)
[17] Hall (1998: 960-961)

network that has been able to lubricate the global economy, and, critically, ease the entry into the modern world of China, the giant child of our century. Understand this network of cities — Nylonkong, we call it — and you understand our time.[18]

We may see this development as both something qualitatively new, and, also, something that follows in a long historical lineage:

> Staying in their favourite hotels and dining at their favourite private clubs, Nylonkong's financial-services executives are heirs to the Tuscan moneylenders who first stretched the sinews of capitalism 700 years ago.[19]

The Tuscan moneylenders were central to that great flowering of Italian Renaissance city culture that represented one of the most creative periods in history. In this sense there are certain

historical continuities, and, in what follows, we will see how cities are at the heart of both economic growth and political transformation. But there is something new here too: something historically unprecedented. It is hinted at in the core idea of the piece, that these three formerly distinct historical cities now form 'Nylonkong, that interconnected tripartite city'. The tripartite city is stylised in a depiction on the magazine's front cover: key architectural landmarks from the three global cities are jumbled together to form a single skyline. This is an imaginative response to the ideas suggested in the article, and

yet it captures some of the very real material changes in the world that this new tripartite city manifests. It is important to ask what drives this depiction of three separate urban entities, existing in the physical world many thousands of miles apart, as one.

The answer is to be found in the nature of contemporary information and communications technologies, which are redrawing our conceptions of time and space. These three cities occupy nodal points in what Manuel Castells has called the 'space of flows': a social space created from the material supports of an increasingly sophisticated and extensive digital infrastructure.[20] This digital infrastructure allows sections of the global economy to work in real time, diminishing distance, reducing time lag, and creating a non-physical social space that allows two or more actors to interact simultaneously, despite occupying different locations in the physical world. The creation of this technological infrastructure should not be thought of as simply impacting global cities. This infrastructure is itself an urban infrastructure, and is selectively sited, maintained and upgraded within particular global cities, following a logic of path dependency that, although not

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[18] Elliot (2008: 31)
[19] Elliot (2008: 31)
[20] Castells (1996: 407-459)

entirely closed, is providing certain sites within global networks with a cumulative advantage.[21] It is this infrastructure that is having profound social, political and economic effects, such as the world may now be depicted in ways that would have seemed nonsensical in the not so far distant past. Such a redrawing of the relationship between space and time should hold great interest for those involved in conceptualising and understanding global politics. But the key question is, how do we link this idea of the global city, and the phenomena surrounding their emergence, with the central concepts and categories of IR, which have, in general, evolved to interrogate a very different landscape.

Conceptualising Cities within International Systems

In order to understand the wider implications of these important changes to the form and function of cities, I would argue that it is crucial to engage with the resources offered by the discipline of International Relations. In the literature that has engaged with global cities in urban sociology and political geography, the unique concepts and perspectives developed by IR scholars are not utilised. This oversight ignores highly developed resources that may offer valuable insight. The question is, how can these literatures be linked? In order to do so, I draw connections between the three elements that form the title of this work: global cities, international systems, and theories of their transformation.

The central question under consideration is whether the emergence of global cities in the last decades of the twentieth century signifies and reflects wider fundamental transformations within the contemporary international system. But, in order to be satisfied, this question must also be turned in another direction, such as to ask: how would we recognise when a fundamental transformation of the international system has taken place? This question also implies a third, intertwined problem: exactly what is the international system? Of which components is it made, and of what substance is it comprised? These three intellectual components, 'global cities', 'international systems', and theories of their transformation, will be interrogated at length during the course of this argument, in pursuit of insight into the important issue of whether the contemporary international system is in the process of a significant historical shift.

To make things clear from the beginning, the international system will be formulated here as a trans-historical concept or framework that takes on different configurations during different historical periods. It is not, therefore, seen as being limited to the narrow conceptualisation of the modern inter-state system that emerged from the Wars of Religion in seventeenth-century Europe, and later spread around the world in the following centuries. Here, the concept of

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[21] Castells (2001)

international system is deployed to include all the different configurations of political, economic and social entities that have existed in various historical relationships with each other over vast swathes of time.[22] These entities would include, but are certainly not limited to, empires, city-states, city-leagues, nomadic tribes, multi-national companies. This places the thesis outside of the traditional core of International Relations as an academic discipline, which typically sees the modern state system as the object of its analysis. It moves it more in line with the growing interest in the historical sociology of international relations, and those approaches that seek to historicise and de-essentialise the state as the touchstone of the discipline.[23] My contention is that a very long historical perspective, that which Fernand Braudel termed *la longue durée*, is necessary for scholars to discern significant transformative trends within international systems. Only then can the state-dominated system that has characterised the peculiarly modern configuration of the international system be seen in all of its historical specificity. Only by placing particular historically specific international systems in comparison with one another can we break free of the pervasive notion that the contemporary international system is a timeless phenomenon.

The different comparative configurations of historical international systems provide the backdrop, then, from which to introduce the historically particular phenomenon of the global city. In this sense, the consideration of the emerging phenomenon of global cities operates within this argument as a particular manifestation of much broader transformative tendencies at work within the contemporary international system. Global cities offer a concrete phenomenon, to which can be applied a theoretical framework of transformation. However, global cities are also part of a wider category of historical urban formations, which are, in turn, a feature of most historical international systems.[24] One of the key aims of this thesis is to argue that the urban element of international systems has been much neglected in IR, at the cost of significant analytical purchase.[25] This thesis seeks to bring the urban element of international systems back into focus, and, in so doing, investigates some of the unique insights that urban form and process can bring.[26] These general insights are then brought to bear in greater detail on the global cities phenomenon.

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[22] In this way of conceptualising international systems I follow a framework laid out by Buzan and Little (2000), who were themselves greatly influenced by the work of Adam Watson (1992). These theorists are regarded as being situated within the 'English School' of IR.

[23] Hobson and Hobden (2002) provide a useful overview of the development of this literature and its concerns, which are by no means agreed upon amongst its practitioners, but who commonly seek to rectify the atemporality of much mainstream IR. See also Lawson (2007) for a review of the field.

[24] Soja (2000: 8)

[25] Notable exceptions here are Chase-Dunn (1997) and Abu-Lughod (1989, 1999). Neither, however, strictly work within IR, and both adopt a world systems approach, which has a different theoretical lineage and set of concepts to the international systems approach as conceptualised here.

[26] Lefebvre (1991, 1996) Soja (2000)

The fact that the urban element of international systems, and the historical significance of cities, does not find its way much into IR analysis, is due, in large part, to the tendency of IR scholars to marginalise history and see the modern state system itself as a trans-historical phenomenon. A feature of the discipline has been the ascendency of rational choice approaches and the application of a positivist scientific methodology. Both are inherently uncomfortable with incorporating the unquantifiable effects of historical context. But the lack of attention to the urban is also due to the specifically modern subjugation of cities to the dominance of the state, which, as Charles Tilly has argued, rose to universal favour over alternative political and economic forms because of its superior war fighting capabilities.[27] Cities, in the modern period, became incorporated within the hard protective shells of state borders, becoming the great growth engines of national economies.[28] The social sciences were born within this particular historical configuration. Both IR and urban studies have long had their perspective on the world coloured by this light: cities viewed as part of national urban systems, states seen as the only serious players on the international stage.

There are signs that this situation is beginning to change, as signified by the growing historical sociology literature, and by the now established research programme around global cities and transnational urban formations in urban studies. Both of these disciplines have sought to get to grips with the processes and effects of 'globalisation', which has formed the core focus of debates about the transformation of many aspects of modern social, political and economic life. The nature and intellectual lineage of the globalisation debate will receive due attention in chapter five. It is seen as a manifestation of some of the core processes that are transforming the modern international system. But, I argue, one of the great advantages of the global cities concept, and its related research programme, is that it lends substance to the very often insubstantial and rootless nature of the globalisation debates. Thus, globalisation can be seen to have a material shape, a technological and infrastructural backbone, a specific urban geography. Rather than remaining an ephemeral set of ideas, the transformations wrought by 'globalising' processes can be given a material form.

This leads back again to questions about the nature of international systems, and how they should be conceptualised. This question has become something of a central battleground for IR scholars in recent decades, symbolised by the widespread attention that accompanied the publication of Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*.[29] Wendt's work has become the central statement of a moderate social constructivist approach to conceptualising the

[27] Tilly (1990)
[28] Taylor (2003: 15-16)
[29] Wendt (1999)

international system, with its argument that the international system is primarily an ideational phenomenon, a distribution of inter-subjectively held ideas that states hold about each other and themselves. This perspective is in sharp contrast with the previously dominant neo-realist and neo-liberal rational choice paradigm, which conceptualised the international system as an ever-changing distribution of material capabilities that states struggled to accumulate in the absence of a central political authority. The differences between these theories will be investigated in depth in the thesis, but, for now, I wish simply to note that the ways in which the international system is conceptualised by different analysts has crucial consequences for the types of theories they build, and the conclusions that they reach. Ideational and material approaches to international systems form a key dividing line and tension within the theoretical development of the discipline, and the tension between ideas and their instantiation in material form will be a central theme of the argument developed here.

These issues are essentially ontological in nature. Indeed, Colin Wight has recently argued that it is ontological questions that comprise the central theatre of disciplinary politics for IR.[30] In attempting to make the concept of the global city fit ontologically with that of the state system, it is vital to employ a flexible, pluralist and historically sensitive conceptualisation of the international system. At first glance, these two theoretical objects would seem to be defined by two very different ontologies. I want to consider for a moment two brief sketches of the ways in which the contemporary world can be viewed in these seemingly very different paradigms.

The first is the very familiar image of the political map. Framed against the world's continents, a patchwork of coloured blocks mark out an abstract portrayal of bounded territorial space, separating the world up into its one hundred and ninety or so nation-states. These coloured spaces are a jumble of different shapes and sizes. The borders they denote are contiguous and solid: there is no overlap. Contrast this with another image: a satellite picture of our planet at night. Against the velvet backdrop of the seas, and the lighter shade of the continents, rest millions of sparkling lights. The lights are unevenly distributed. The densely packed eastern coastal cities of the United States shine brightest, separated by a vast darkness from another thin strip of illumination on the Pacific coast. Europe shows a dense concentration in the west, with a notable peak around London. Japan sparkles in the Pacific Ocean, while the eastern seaboard of China burns intensely, the light fading as the gaze moves westward. With a few exceptions (the Indian subcontinent, the eastern seaboard of South America, the southern tip of Africa, the north of Mexico), the rest of the planet is shrouded in darkness. These networks of light pick out the major cities and city regions of the world.

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[30] Wight (2006)

Although these two images are different ways of seeing the same world, both images are socially produced. The first is a product of cartographers and diplomats, reflecting historical processes of state formation, boundary drawing, and ideas about political sovereignty and territoriality. The second is a product of scientists and technological development, of information and communication technologies and the firms that develop them. It is showing us something about the uneven shape and pattern of urban settlement and development in the contemporary world. Territorial states and cities have tended to remain separate objects of analysis in the academic division of labour, with separate bodies of knowledge emerging that mirror these two very different snapshots of the contemporary world. This argument seeks to show that states and cities are intrinsically bound up in the fortunes of each other, and how these literatures can, and should, speak to one another.

But, beyond this, I will argue that these two snapshots of the contemporary world, seemingly very different, have much in common. They are both reflections of the underlying relationship between form and process, between ideas and their material manifestations. In the first example, the idea of the territorially sovereign state, as the principle political and economic entity, is expressed in the political map, and also in the state borders enforced in the physical world, which place material constraints on the free agency of individual people. The map expresses a political idea, territorial sovereignty, which has no objective existence outside of the realm of inter-subjective understanding. But, at the same time, this idea has material effects: it becomes instantiated in political space. The second example describes a material phenomenon in the physical world: the shape and spread of the great twentieth and twenty first-century urbanisation, the infrastructures and technological grids of the great global cities and mega-cities of the world. But this material infrastructure and urban geography follow processes linked to sets of ideas: ideas about the spread of global trade, about the international standardisation of technology, the social shaping of technology itself (which is far from value neutral), and about the way to deal with, or not to deal with, global inequality. Some of the ideas embodied in these two snapshots are increasingly at odds with each other, following different logics. This tension is at the heart of my investigation into the transformative potentials in the contemporary international system.

The relationship between form and process, and between ideas and their material instantiations, are the central concerns of systems theorising as developed in the natural sciences. They have also been threads that run through attempts to theorise the nature of the international system, since early attempts to build a systemic theory modelled on the natural sciences.[31] But, often, this relationship has been pushed into the background. Part of my aim here is to bring back this connection between form and process as a way of connecting ideas and the material structures in

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[31] Kaplan (1957) Singer and Small (1966) Waltz (1979)

which they find expression, whether in urban or political space. This is, in fact, the way in which cities have long been conceptualised: as both urban form and urban process.[32] I will argue that international systems should be seen in exactly the same way, and this lends a certain ontological symmetry to conceptualising cities and the international systems of which they are a part. In this way, the historical emergence of the global city can be linked to related transformations in the nature of the state.

Conceptualising the linkages between cities, states and the historical transition points between international systems requires consideration of two crucial debates. The first regards the different theories that have been developed to understand how various political and economic institutions have evolved, succeeded or failed historically. For the most part, it has been the transition from the medieval and early modern world to the world of nation-states that has received the most attention in these debates, as scholars seek to understand the formation of modern nation-states. This is an important set of debates: understanding theories of the formation of the modern state is essential if we are to theorise their dissolution or transformation. A second crucial debate in the context of my argument is the role of technology in social change, and, in particular, the nature of the information and communications technologies of the contemporary period, which are intrinsic to the global city. In the remainder of this introduction, I want to briefly introduce these key themes, and set up some of the positions that inform this thesis, before going on to tackle them in more depth in the main body of the work.

Three Theories of International Transformation

IR has developed a number of distinctive theoretical resources for understanding the transformation of international systems. Three of these positions form a fulcrum that will be utilised recurrently during the arguments about the implications of the rise of the global city for international life developed here.[33] These theories have been developed in pursuit of an explanation of the emergence of the modern state, and, thus, the distinctively modern international system. These theories are therefore also applicable to the demise of this historically specific international system, and the emergence of alternative institutional forms.

The reasons for the emergence of the modern territorial state have been the source of much debate. Some of the positions defended are mutually exclusive, although a variety of theories are compatible and complementary. While it is clear that the diffusion of the modern territorial state has been a very gradual process, only coming to comprehensive universal dominance in the

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[32] Kostof (1991: 37-41)
[33] Buzan and Little (2000) Ruggie (1998) Spruyt (1994)

second half of the twentieth century with the final waves of decolonisation, most interpretations place its origins in Western Europe in the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was here, particularly in England, France and Spain, that monarchs began to prise secular authority away from the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire, while, at the same time, achieving effective military dominance over their own nobilities. They consolidated their apparatus of revenue extraction, and replaced reliance on mercenaries with permanent standing armies, extending their monopoly over the control of legitimate violence.[34] These developments began to give the territorial state an institutional edge over competing forms of political and economic organisation, which was brought home brutally to the city-states of the Italian Peninsula during Charles VIII's invasion of 1494.[35]

There are, however, dissenting voices that argue for a different interpretation of the nature and origins of the modern state. These arguments tend to distinguish sharply between the absolutist territorial state, and the later emergence of a capitalist territorial state, which is, in this view, a product of the nineteenth century, and is seen as a distinct institutional form linked to the rise of capitalist social relations.[36] However, as Hannes Lacher has argued, the prior existence of a territorial state system has had important effects on the way in which capitalism has developed historically, and thus the modern state system cannot be derived from the logic of capitalism as a social system. The historically contingent interplay of capitalism and territorial states has worked to produce national capitals, contained within spatial co-ordinates, which the logic of capitalism, being a fundamentally transnational system, would not be sufficient to explain.[37] This historical emergence of national capitals has, therefore, shaped the international political economy of modernity in important ways: mercantilism, imperialism and inter-state warfare can all be argued to be an effect of the desire of states to extend the territorial boundaries of their national market. This continuing interplay of capitalism and territoriality, as well as other core features of modernity, is essential to understanding the rise of the global city, and I return to it later in the thesis.

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[34] Rae (2007: 123)
[35] Bobbitt (2002: 80). Technological development also played a role in the dominance of the territorial state. Portable artillery pieces and professional standing armies increased the military reach of the larger states. These developments destroyed the city-state advantage in the commercialization of war. What saved the Italian city-states from outright territorial subjugation by any one particular dynastic competitor in the longer term was the competition of the dynastic states with each other for the prize. The competing states turned away from attempting to rule the city-states directly, and concentrated their efforts on appropriating the source of their wealth: their networks of trade and commerce: Arrighi (1994: 40).
[36] Rosenberg (1994) Teschke (1998, 2002)
[37] Lacher (2006)

The accumulation of centralised secular power and control over the monopoly of legitimate violence is a crucial aspect of the rise of the modern territorial state, but there were other essential processes at work that must feature in any comprehensive explanation. Attempts to understand the rise to dominance of the territorial state, and the distinctive modern international system that it generates, have led to the emergence of three distinctive theories of transformation within IR, that I discuss in detail in chapter three.[38] The first of these has been elaborated by Barry Buzan and Richard Little, who have sought to show how the concept of the international system should be applied within the framework of world history. Only then, they argue, can the distinctiveness of the modern international system be properly appreciated. They develop a range of concepts that broaden out the capacity of an international systems framework to account for the different types of political, social and economic entities that have existed in different historical configurations over time.[39] This type of historical sociological understanding of the international system can help us to accommodate the impact of the rise of the global city within an IR framework.

The second theoretical framework that is of interest in this regard is Hendrik Spruyt's theory of institutional selection. Spruyt argues that a theory of institutional selection requires two stages: a revolutionary event or crisis that ends a period of stability and alters the international environment, followed by a stage where new institutional forms emerge and compete with each other within that environment. Spruyt uses the emergence of the modern state and its institutional competition with city-states, city-leagues and empire to test his theory. But the theory is, of course, equally applicable to the kind of conditions that would arise from a crisis in the contemporary state system. Should we view the rise of the global city in the context of a renewed round of institutional competition, as the international environment undergoes change at the end of the modern period, and the nature of the modern state adapts to the forces of globalisation that it has itself unleashed?

The third perspective on international transformation is related to the social constructivist turn in IR, and, in particular, the work of John Ruggie on the social structures of time and space that characterise and define successive international systems.[40] Ruggie outlined how the development of new ideas and social knowledge, such as the advent of single point perspective and notions of private property, are essential facets of new spatial and temporal imaginaries for building alternative social forms. Building on the work of the *annales* historian Fernand Braudel, Ruggie

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[38] The most influential theoretical position on the international system in IR in recent decades, structural realism, limits its understanding of change to the rise and fall of states within the international system. As a result, its capacity to envisage qualitative transformation from one form of historical international system to another is severely curtailed.

[39] Buzan and Little (2000)

[40] Ruggie (1998)

argues that the development of such ideas was a pre-requisite for the possibility of the territorial sovereign state system, itself a production of social space very different from the overlapping and fluid composition of the spaces of European feudalism. Ruggie's work on the structures of social space and time, although part of a seminal collection in the development of social constructivism in IR, has not been built upon significantly. In my examination of the rise of global cities, and the technological infrastructures that they house, I will utilise Ruggie's foundational work to look at the signs of spatial and temporal structural change in the contemporary international system.

The Social Shaping of Technology

This third theoretical position, on the changing structures of space and time as indications of international transformation, must encompass the role of technology. As I have already noted, the concept of the global city is inseparable from the advent of new digital networking technologies. The emergence of different technological paradigms has been crucial historically to the ways in which different societies have constructed and perceived of space and time. The digital information and communications technologies that have emerged in the late-twentieth century, I will argue, are destabilising modern structures of time and space. I develop this argument at length in later chapters, but it is important to lay down some principles with regard to the role of technology in social change.

Consideration of the role of technology in society has to engage with the problem of technological determinism: the extent to which scientific advances resulting in new technologies affect the shape of societies. A hard technological determinism implies that technological developments follow their own logic, based upon technical efficiency, and develop beyond the influence of society and culture, whose trajectory they then influence. This is technological determinism as a theory of society.[41] Hard technological determinism is not a particularly attractive position for sociologists of technology today, although, it is still a very pervasive way of viewing the effects of technology outside of this field.

The alternative is to see technology and society as mutually constituted: shaping each other. This perspective is often referred to as the 'social shaping of technology' – it refuses to view technology as an independent variable, and it emphasises the role of historical context in

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[41] MacKenzie and Wajcman (1999: 3) cite the famous example of White's (1962) thesis that feudal society developed in response to the invention of the stirrup, which allowed more effective specialized mounted combat.

influencing the forms that technological development takes.[42] If technological determinism sees technological development as following a trajectory of maximum technical efficiency, then the social shaping of technology position argues that the definition of what is optimal relies upon the values and goals of particular societies.[43] In this sense, pre-existing material, political and economic resources and institutions must be taken into account.[44] Technology develops within a particular social structure, is imbued with particular social values and aims, and evolves in response to signals given by particular economic frameworks. At the same time, society could not endure across time and space without technology.[45] In this sense, technology embodies society, and society shapes technological innovation: 'technology is society, and society cannot be understood or represented without its technological tools'.[46]

A crucial institutional factor in the promotion or stagnation of technological development is the stance taken by the state. The current information and communications paradigm is seen as being shaped in a context where the US state allowed for an environment that encouraged entrepreneurialism, the expression of individualism and social counter-cultural movements, which then interacted with that state's attempt to restructure capitalism along neoliberal lines.[47] This encouraged and shaped the particular technological system or paradigm that formed. To show the importance of the state in shaping technology, and, in turn, the import of such shaping for world history, it is instructive to consider the 'great divergence' between Europe and China that occurred from around the fourteenth century onwards.[48] At the beginning of this period, China could claim to be the most advanced technological civilisation on the planet. It had sophisticated hydraulic engineering, water clocks, ocean going vessels. It had gunpowder, paper and printing, the iron plough, silk weaving and textile spinning. It has been argued that in 1400 China was on the cusp of an industrial revolution, at the time when Europe was just beginning its renaissance.[49] The question of why the world's most advanced technological power stagnated, and Europe raced ahead, has been linked to the changing relationship of the Chinese state to science and innovation. It has been argued that changes in the dynastic leadership of China at this time resulted in a loss of interest in technological development, with the state emphasising social stability over dynamism, a trend reinforced by the growth of an entrenched bureaucratic

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[42] Bijker et al. (1995) Pickering (1995). These arguments still leave room for a soft technological determinism, which is to say that technology still has very important effects on society once it has developed within a contingent historical context: Smith and Marx (1994).
[43] MacKenzie and Wajcman (1999: 19)
[44] Williams (2004: 434)
[45] Latour (2005) Strum and Latour (1999: 116-124). This point will be elaborated on in chapter two's discussion of structure and agency, where technology is an important consideration.
[46] Castells (1996: 5)
[47] Castells (2004: 13-22)
[48] Pomeranz (2000)
[49] Jones (1981)

class.[50] The environment for technological development fostered by the state and society nexus thus suffocated China's incipient industrial revolution. As political realism has long argued, failure to build up a state's internal resources in a competitive international system can have dangerous consequences. In the 1842 Opium Wars, China was 'opened up' and subjected to the imposition of European colonial institutions. A lack of 'technological mastery' limits the capacity of the state both to transform itself and defend itself: arguments have been made that an important cause of the collapse of the Soviet Union was the statist paradigm's failure to master information technology, leading to a fatal productivity decline in the economy relative to its competitors.[51]

Central to the nature of the emerging global city networks is the way in which their material and technological infrastructure has been shaped by the social and historical context in which they developed. There has been very little detailed analysis of this technological paradigm in IR. Manuel Castells has attempted to build a global sociology of the transformative developments in the contemporary world by using technological change as the starting point for his analysis.[52] Castells' later career may be viewed as an intervention in the debates about the character and meaning of the move from industrial society to a post-industrial or informational paradigm.[53] After detailed empirical research on the technological basis of these debates, Castells views the widely used concept of the informational society as inadequate to properly capture the changes to global social structures crystallising in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[54] Information, it is argued, may be seen as an essential component of economic and social power in all historical periods. A more refined concept is required to describe the qualitative changes wrought by the new set of digital technologies. Castells uses the concept of the 'network society' to capture the ways in which technological change shapes and is shaped by the movement from hierarchical to networked forms of organisation in every aspect of society:

> A network society is a society whose social structure is made of networks powered
> by microelectronics-based information and communications technologies. By social
> structure, I understand the organizational arrangements of humans in relations of

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[50] Mokyr (1990) Qian (1985) Wong (1997)

[51] Castells (1996: 9)

[52] Castells (1996, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2006). It is especially interesting to note in the context of this argument that Castells has been a central figure in the urban studies literature (1977), and in the debates about global cities (1989), before moving on to global sociology. Castells has continued to view the urban as a particular instantiation of wider social forces. Furthermore, the theory that he has developed also lines up interestingly with his personal biography. The emphasis he places on social movements and counter-cultures must certainly have been influenced by his position at Nanterre, University of Paris, where he was present during the student uprisings of 1968. He was later based in California at the height of the digital revolution of the 1980s and 1990s. See Stalder (2006: 1-14).

[53] These debates are covered in detail in chapter five.

[54] Castells (2004: 7)

production, consumption, reproduction, experience and power expressed in meaningful communication coded by culture. A network is a set of interconnected nodes...a network has no center, just nodes. Nodes may be of varying relevance to the network. Nodes increase their importance to the network by absorbing more relevant information, and processing it more efficiently. The relative importance of a node does not stem from its specific features but from its ability to contribute to the network's goals.[55]

Castells takes seriously the position outlined above on the social shaping of technology. For him, the rise of the network society is a result of historical contingency, the convergence of innovation, accident, the confluence of events at a particular historical juncture, interacting within a particular historical context and institutional framework. There is no direction to history in this philosophy, no single cause or driver.[56] Castells identifies the interaction of three strands as crucial in shaping the network paradigm. The first is the ongoing set of technological innovations emerging from the microelectronics revolution and the digitalisation of information. These are seen as qualitatively different technologies to earlier, yet related, technological developments that also had the effect of redrawing the relationship between time and space in the late-nineteenth century: the railways, the telegraph and telephone, cinematography. Where some have argued that the latest round of technological innovation simply follows in this lineage, Castells argues for the qualitative distinctiveness of the current round of technological development. It provides a historically unprecedented capacity to process and communicate information in terms of volume, complexity and speed. The flexible, decentralised and distributed nature of the technological paradigm overcomes the processing limitations of stand-alone technologies. Finally, these technologies are argued to have emergent properties that allow for continuous innovation and recombination of digital information, offering a vast potential for innovation in economic and cultural creativity and production.[57]

The second driver that the new technological paradigm interacted with is seen to be the culture of personal freedom, openness and individuality that grew out of the Western counter-cultures of the 1960s, particularly the cultures of American university campuses.[58] It is argued that these cultural trends shaped the new technologies in their emphasis upon resisting hierarchy and centralisation, in their desire to rescue technology from the grip of corporations (resulting in the personal computer),[59] and in their stress on individual expression and entrepreneurialism. The third strand, the crisis led global economic restructuring of the 1970s, linked up with the first two

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[55] Castells (2004: 3)
[56] Castells (2004: 13)
[57] Castells (2004: 9-11)
[58] See Marwick (1998) for a valuable historical treatment of the cultural revolutions of the West in the 1960s.
[59] MacKenzie and Wajcman (1999: 17)

in a historically contingent fashion.[60] The result was that the new global configuration of capital was both enabled by, and went on to shape, the emerging technological paradigm. The digital technologies enabled capitalism to de-territorialise and re-territorialise at a scale beyond the national (and thus created the strategic functions of global cities discussed above). The new capabilities and cultural proclivities resulted in a new form of economic organisation: the networked enterprise.[61] The networked enterprise replaced the inefficient hierarchical fordist model of organisation. The networked enterprise follows the cultural embrace of decentralisation, fragmentation and recombination in new and innovative forms expressed by the technological and cultural transformations. It is

> not a network of enterprises [but] a network made from either firms or segments of firms, and/or from the internal segmentation of firms. Thus large corporations are internally decentralised as networks...small and medium businesses are connected in networks, thus ensuring the critical mass of their contribution, while keeping their main asset: their flexibility.[62]

These different firms and segments of firms link up with each other in flexible and limited alliances to pursue specific projects at specific times. With the preceding discussion of the state's role in the shaping of technological development in mind, it is clear that, in both the space given to counter-cultures, and in the interplay between economic restructuring and digital technologies, the state has played an important facilitating and shaping role in the constitution of this paradigm.

Of particular interest for the framework for transformation presented here are Castells' arguments about changes in the structures and cultures of space and time that have accompanied the new digital technologies, and the social effects that these produce. If substantial international transformations bring with them new cultures of space and time, as Ruggie argued in relation to the emergence of the modern international system, Castells theoretical elaboration of the concepts of the 'space of flows' and 'timeless time' are, in turn, useful tools to consider the possible transformation of the modern international system. Castells' arguments will be considered in more detail later on. But, briefly, Castells argues that the new technological paradigm has created the material supports for a new type of social space, a 'space of flows' that coexists with earlier social spaces, and yet reconfigures their meaning. The space of flows:

> refers to the technological and organizational possibility of practicing simultaneity without contiguity... because practices are networked, so is their space... the space of the network society is made up of the articulation between three elements: the places where activities are located, the material communication networks linking

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[60] Castells (2004: 15)
[61] Castells (2004: 21-28)
[62] Castells (2004: 28)

these activities, and the content and geometry of the flows of information that perform the activities in terms of function and meaning.[63]

For Castells, the space of flows becomes dominant over physical spaces, which do not, of course, disappear, but now receive their meaning from their functioning as nodal points within specific networks.

As space and time are connected, so the new social construction of space brings with it concomitant changes in the culture of time. 'Timeless time' is the new structure that time takes in the network society. Digital technologies, it is argued, through their creation of simultaneity, have disrupted the traditional sequencing of time as practiced in the modern period. The sequencing of time is disrupted by being

> compressed... as in the split-second global financial transactions or the effort to fight "instant wars" [and] by blurring the sequence of social practices, including past, present and future, in a random order, as in the electronic hypertext or in the blurring of life-cycle patterns... the space of flows dissolves time by disordering the sequence of events and making them simultaneous.[64]

Of course, the new structure of time remains unevenly distributed, with the culture of simultaneity only applying to those within the networks. Indeed, Castells argues that how the sequencing of time is organised in society is always an object of political struggle.[65] The new technological paradigm is destabilising social actors' ability to establish reliable and consistent patterns of temporality, resulting in a fragmentation and splintering of individuals and collectives, a situation very different from the temporal and spatial structures of modernity. These issues will form a central plank of the argument that follows, and I will return a number of times to Castells social theory of the network society.

Plan of the Thesis

These opening comments, then, form the starting point of my argument, which I develop over six chapters and a general conclusion. I begin with an investigation into the nature of the concept of the international system, and move forward through the chapters to build the argument. In this sense, the thesis chapters do not stand alone. The latter chapters require the framework developed over the course of the earlier ones. The first two chapters are concerned to understand the way in which the international system has been conceptualised, and to defend a systemic and processual approach to IR. The third chapter examines theories of transformation in social life generally and in international systems specifically. These three opening chapters,

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[63] Castells (2004: 36)
[64] Castells (2004: 37)
[65] Castells (2004: 37)

taken together, form a detailed investigation of the nature of the international system and how it changes over time. The fourth chapter begins to examine the nature of cities and theories of the urban, and what the urban dimension, missing in most IR theory, contributes to our understanding of change. The fifth inquires into the nature of modernity, and those theories that postulate its transformation into something qualitatively different. These two chapters are a necessary foundation for the last chapter, which begins to delve into the history and nature of the global cities concept in more depth, arguing for its importance in understanding the globalising world of the twenty-first century, but also for a recognition of the partial nature of the global cities discourse, and for the dark side revealed by its many silences.

The first chapter introduces the central theoretical concept of the thesis: the international system. It argues that this analytical concept is either implicitly or explicitly at the heart of nearly all investigations of international politics in some formulation. It is a central aspect of this argument that the international system is a necessary concept, without which the analyst is overwhelmed by the complexity of international politics. The chapter also argues that, when carefully formulated, the concept of the international system can offer insights that are only revealed from a systemic perspective. However, this does not mean that the concept is straightforward or uncontested. This chapter seeks to look at the ways in which international systems have been conceptualised within IR, and the implications of taking up different ontological positions as to the nature of the international system, the units that comprise it, and the stuff of which it is primarily made, a subject disputed by those that would see it as a primarily material or ideational phenomenon. In order to help unpick the contribution of the contending perspectives in the IR literature, the chapter also investigates the origins of systems thinking in the natural sciences. It is here that we find the most explicit connection made in systems thinking between the material forms of systems and the processes and organising principles that are embodied in those forms. The chapter argues that this relationship is extremely important to theorising and understanding the different historical configurations of international systems, and this theme runs as a thread throughout the thesis.

Chapter two extends some of the ideas and arguments in chapter one by examining the different positions that analysts have taken in relation to international systems in the agent-structure debate. The agent-structure debate is seen here as a way to unpick the different ontological possibilities for conceptualising international systems. It is argued that all theorists must inevitably incorporate a perspective on the agent-structure debate within their work. The agent-structure problem is shown to be linked to positions adopted within the philosophy of science, and a key division between IR theorists that has characterised debates about international systems in the literature is seen to be a split between philosophical idealists and philosophical

realists. Indeed, perhaps the two most influential texts of the discipline in recent decades, Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, and Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*, base their arguments explicitly upon a particular philosophy of science.[66] Philosophical realism has formed the foundations for the growth of social constructivism in IR, which has re-conceptualised the international system as a primarily ideational phenomenon. One of my arguments in this chapter is that perhaps the pendulum has swung too far in this direction, at the expense of some of the important material elements. The chapter looks at the concept of material agency, a fairly radical recent proposition in social theory, and the structural resources and constraints inherent in social space. One of the key motivations for engaging with this literature is that it is traditionally argued that, in order to conceptualise an entity as a unit within an international system, that unit must be 'sufficiently cohesive to have actor quality' and to be 'capable of conscious decision making'.[67] This kind of approach leads to an unwarranted reification and essentialism. In the way that I conceptualise them, cities do not necessarily embody this kind of cohesiveness. But the argument of this chapter is that agency need not be conceived of in narrow terms. Agency is about the presence of human sentience in the system. Cities do embody this quality, and, through material agency, produce effects within the system.

Chapter three takes the international systems framework of the first chapter, and the agency-structure problem of the second, and relates these arguments to the tension between transformation and continuity within international systems. This chapter begins to engage with the question of how we can understand the transition points between international systems. It looks at how the analytic framework of units, structures and organising principles of international systems, introduced in chapter one, can help us to understand changes between different historical configurations. The purpose of this chapter is to lay out some of the basic conceptual frameworks that will be elaborated with the more detailed example of contemporary global cities, and the tendencies towards transformation in the contemporary international system that they point towards. The chapter alights upon three particularly useful frameworks for understanding change discussed earlier: the idea of change within the dominant sector of the international system (political, economic, social), the idea of change in the dominant institutional unit of the international system (empire, city-state, state, etc.), and the transformation of *longue durée* structures of social space and time within international systems.

Chapter four extends this analysis with a fourth framework for understanding transformation within international systems: the neglected urban dimension of transformation. This chapter develops a framework for understanding cities in general, which will later be applied to the

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[66] Waltz (1979) Wendt (1999)
[67] Buzan and Little (2000: 101)

specific emergence of global cities. It seeks to investigate the nature of cities, and what they can add to our understanding of international life. It argues that it is difficult, perhaps counter-productive, to try to pin the multi-faceted nature of cities down to an all-encompassing definition. The city is as much a concept as a physical entity, and theories about cities feed back into and affect the course of their material development. The chapter investigates the unique and trans-historical creative and generative properties of cities. In lieu of a definitive definition, the chapter seeks to explore the relationship between the morphological and material features of cities, and their processual or social aspects. It links the literature on cities to ideas about the social production of space, engaging with the work of Henri Lefebvre.[68] Lefebvre argued that all major revolutions in social thought must be expressed in material form in the production of a new type of social space in which they are embodied. In any society of moderate complexity, this will be an urban expression. Form becomes a receptacle for meaning.[69] As I have argued, this relationship between form and process is a feature of systemic thinking. The broader argument of the thesis seeks to link this insight about the nature of urban transformation to the wider transformation of international systems, thus bringing back in the forgotten urban dimension. The second part of this chapter is given over to examining three points of historical urban revolution as expressed in the morphology of the proto-city, the agrarian city and the industrial city. The proposition to be investigated later in the thesis is that the emergence of global cities signifies a fourth major urban revolution, and thus indicates strongly that the wider international system is in a state of transformation.

Chapter five is concerned with the nature of the peculiarly modern form of the international system, and the question of whether this modern configuration is in a period of crisis and breakdown. If we are to investigate this proposition, it is vital to come to an understanding of the historically specific features and characteristics of modernity, and how these features are instantiated in the material form of the modern international system. The chapter looks at the intellectual underpinnings of modernity, and its resolution of a number of transhistorical philosophical problems through the modern system's organising principle of territorial sovereignty.[70] It then goes on to examine the intellectual debates that have grown up around the idea that modernity is undergoing some form of profound shift: the interrelated theories of postmodernity, post-industrial society and globalisation. This theoretical lineage is then subsequently linked to the emerging literature on global cities.

Chapter six then addresses the literature on the emergence of global cities. It outlines how the concept of the global city evolved as an attempt to understand the changing geography of the

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[68] Lefebvre (1991, 1996)
[69] Kostof (1991: 9)
[70] Walker (1993)

world economy during the period of crisis-led economic restructuring of the 1970s. This literature has undergone a number of theoretical shifts. The first wave of research linked the concept to world systems theory, and to the new international division of labour. It then linked the global city concept and phenomenon to the globalisation literature. Finally, an understanding of global cities as networked and relational entities has emerged. But these theories, although offering an important way to understand urban transformation in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, can be seen as a sanitised discourse of high technology and economic power. The chapter also examines the growth of the global slum population, and of the growing wealth gap between urban areas, and relates them directly to the development of global cities. It investigates the notion that urban life is being 'splintered', as technological networks reconstitute urban space along lines very different to the modern integrated infrastructural ideal of the city. Taken as a whole, this chapter charts how new ideas about society and economy in late-modernity are being instantiated in a new socially produced transnational arrangement of space.

The final chapter offers some concluding remarks based upon the arguments outlined in the preceding chapters. It firstly considers the implications of the particular ontology of the international system that has been adopted and defended over the course of the argument, and how this ontology enables the project of conceptualising the historical interplay of cities and states. It argues that IR scholars have already developed some significant theoretical resources that make them well placed to participate in the debates about the significance of global cities to international life. The chapter then goes on to clarify the ways in which the three core theories of international transformation focussed on in the thesis can be applied to the rise of the global city. The final section offers some concluding thoughts on the changing nature of the relationship between the city and the state at the contemporary conjuncture. It argues that the renegotiation of spatial scale at the heart of the rise of the global city changes the nature of this relationship as it has existed under modernity. Both capitalism and forms of political violence have been trans-nationalised as a consequence of the conjuncture of economic restructuring, neoliberal political philosophy and a new technological paradigm. The global city becomes a strategic site in a decentralised global economy, but the technological infrastructure that it houses becomes particularly vulnerable. The state's legitimacy and function are increasingly derived from the provision of security. These developments continue to tie cities and states together. As many of the core features and tensions of global and national politics become 'telescoped' into the contemporary global city, these sites magnify systemic contradictions and take on great importance for the future of global politics.

1   International Systems: Material and Social Approaches

Introduction

Mainstream IR has largely concerned itself with relations between states. This is understandable: states have been the dominant way of organising political life during the first century since the discipline's inception. The behaviours and motivations of states have been of pressing political concern in an era punctuated by World War and Cold War. The argument unfolded here, however, is that an excessive focus on the relations between states forces us to miss other important relationships in international politics.

One of those relationships is that between states and cities. This relationship changes historically. The subordination of cities to the national economies forged by nation-states is simply a particular, historically specific, configuration of that relationship.[71] The broad thrust of this thesis is that the emergence of a new type of urban form in the late-twentieth century, the global city, is an indication that the relationship between cities and states is undergoing some kind of transformation.

In order to investigate this proposition, it is necessary to develop a framework that enables us to theorise the points of historical transition at which the relationship between cities and states change. There are a great many insights contained in the literatures on cities, urban studies and political geography that are of value in enhancing our understanding of international politics. They have, so far, largely been ignored by IR scholars. But, equally, it is my conviction that IR contains a set of theoretical resources that can be immensely valuable in illuminating some of the problems that the theorists of cities grapple with. I hope to show the points at which these different disciplines, ostensibly concerned with different problems and objects of analysis, can offer insight to each other.

Key to linking the study of cities and states, and integrating cities into an IR framework, is the core concept of IR: the international system.[72] It is this concept, if deployed with historical sensitivity, which can allow us to bring in a wider range of entities to our theories than just states. The concept of the international system has, however, been stretched in a number of different directions. In this opening chapter I seek to clarify the nature of this concept. I then go on to develop an understanding of international systems that I use in the thesis to examine the nature of the relationship between cities and states.

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[71] Taylor (1995)
[72] Hoffmann (1995: 228)

I outline a flexible approach to international systems that can accommodate the many different political entities that have existed historically. This contrasts sharply with many of the mainstream approaches to the international system within IR today. At its heart, the question of how we conceptualise the international system is one of ontology: what are the objects of analysis that make up the international system. IR has taken something of a philosophical turn over the course of the last decade, and ontological questions now lie at the core of the discipline and disciplinary politics.[73] This only makes it more important to clarify the ontological approach to international systems adopted here. Finally, I argue for the crucial importance of history in understanding how the international system is subject to unceasing change and transformation – an aspect of its nature that is inaccessible to the influential yet ahistorical and state centric accounts that have dominated the centre ground of IR. In essence, I argue for a theoretical approach to international systems that recognises the importance of both structure and history, continuity and change.

The chapter develops in three stages. In the first section I justify the use of an international systems approach, outlining its benefits for analysing international politics. In the second section, I seek to clarify some of the conceptual issues that underpin an international systems approach, using insights from the history of systems thinking in IR and from the development of systems thinking in the natural sciences. In the third section I assess some of the contending ways in which the concept has been formulated in IR. I look at the benefits, limitations and problems inherent to some of the main approaches. The conclusion makes a case for a historical and structural analysis of international systems that can include a plurality of different political, economic and social units, including cities. Such an analysis can help us to better understand moments of transformation in international politics.

An International Systems Approach

The domain of international politics is vast. It encompasses political, economic, social and cultural interactions and transactions. It includes a variety of actors, variables, factors, objects of analysis, causes, processes, events. Taken together they overwhelm comprehension. International politics is unintelligible without an analytic framework of some kind. This is what the concept of an international system provides. It is an analytical construct that recognises the interrelated nature of a world of complex phenomena, yet offers the possibility of picking out the elements that are important. Its deployment comes with the implicit assumption that what the analyst seeks to comprehend represents a totality of some kind. That totality may be an international

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[73] Wight (2006)

system delimited in geographical extent, as in earlier historical periods, where a number of separate international systems existed in relative isolation from each other.[74] Or it may be a system of global extent, as in the contemporary world. Indeed, because it is possible to manipulate space through the application of technology, the geographical extent of a system may be only one way to view international systems.

The notion of an international system is at least implicit in most IR accounts. Thinking about the world in this way is a defining characteristic of IR. There are many other approaches to thinking about social life. Comparative social analysis, event driven narratives and national histories are examples of other ways of thinking about the world, but they miss the crucial insights that a systems approach can offer for understanding the totality of international politics. Arguably, this distinctive contribution provides the rationale for the existence of the discipline of IR as a separate realm of academic inquiry.[75] The position adopted here is that viewing international politics through a systems lens offers unique and important insights that may go unnoticed in other frameworks. There is, however, no general agreement within the discipline on the nature of the international system, what its important features are, or, indeed, of what stuff it is made from. The one common thread that unites the various accounts is the use of the idea of a system to tame overwhelming complexity. The international system is, then, a map for the lost traveller, a distillation of reality that offers up the important landmarks: the key units of analysis, the patterns of recurrence and repetition, the points of change and transition. Depending upon the tastes and concerns of the analyst, the concept has been used as a scientific instrument to offer predictability and control and to establish IR as a policy science; as a device that can highlight the transition points between one type of world order and another; as a tool to analyse how capitalism constitutes itself as a global economic system.[76]

At heart, then, it would appear that the way that the international system is conceptualised is intrinsically linked to the question of what the analyst believes IR is really about. It is a noteworthy feature of the historiography of IR that the concept has tended to morph along with intellectual fashion. Initially envisaged as a material phenomenon, more recent trends have seen this view of the international system undermined by a focus on its ideational content, a story outlined in the later sections. Systems thinking itself emerged in biology in the 1920s, and was extended with the growth of cybernetics: a legacy of the Second World War.[77] It made its way into IR in the 1960s, in conjunction with the intellectual high tide of the behavioural revolution,

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[74] Buzan and Little (2000)
[75] Buzan and Little (2001: 19-39)
[76] Waltz (1979) Cox (1981) Wallerstein (1974)
[77] Wiener (1948)

particularly through the work of David Singer.[78] Since that time, the international system has successively been described as a set of statistical correlations by the behaviouralist project, as a set of general laws inspired by the positivist philosophy of neo-classical economics, as a realm of inter-subjective ideas in the mode of social constructivism, to highlight just three of the main intellectual trends.[79] It is also readily apparent that how the analyst deploys the concept often implies a political and historical subjectivity on their part. It has been set to work to analyse systemic power fluctuations during the Cold War. It has been deployed to facilitate understanding of the complex economic interdependence of states revealed by the oil shocks of the 1970s.[80] It is also clear that the problems with which the discipline has been concerned often reflect the political issues of the leading states in which it is practiced most.[81]

Although the concept of the international system has unique value as an analytical tool, it is apparent from this brief summary that in order for it to be deployed in this argument it is crucial to carefully clarify my interpretation of it. In the following sections I will examine some of the most influential theories of the international system. From the preceding discussion I take forward three issues worthy of particular note.

The first resides in the politics involved in identifying the problems for which the concept is to be deployed. This is the distinction, famously made by Robert Cox, between problem solving theory and critical theory.[82] In many cases the concept of the international system is taken by the analyst to be synonymous with the system of states, and from such theoretical beginnings theories of state behaviours emerge. Alexander Wendt goes so far as to label this the 'states systemic project': it seeks to offer insights that will help solve the problems inherent to a world of states.[83] This approach marginalises other important actors and features of international politics, and unnecessarily limits our understanding of the contemporary landscape of IR, pushing the analyst down a predetermined route. In my view, it blinds us to the potential indicators and sources of immanent change within the international system, of which I believe the emergence of global cities to be just one.

Secondly, this problem is closely related to the question of ontology: of which elements and substance is the international system made? To say that it is made up primarily of states, and that states and their interactions are the crucial objects of analysis in international politics, is an ontological choice representative of a particular perspective. The third issue that arises, once

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[78] Singer (1961)
[79] Singer and Small (1966) Waltz (1979) Wendt (1999)
[80] Keohane and Nye (1977)
[81] Weaver (1998)
[82] Cox (1981)
[83] Wendt (1999: 8-10)

again interlinked, is the question of naturalism: to what extent is it possible to analyse the social world using the methods and techniques used by the physical sciences to understand the natural world. The problem of naturalism has underpinned all of the discipline defining debates in IR.[84] It is at the heart of the two most influential texts on the international system. Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* and Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* both explicitly ground their theories in different philosophies of science.[85] In the following sections these three issues will be useful to bear in mind during the discussion of the different approaches scholars have taken to the international system.

Systems Thinking

A Systemic Approach to International Relations

Although the concept of an international system informs the majority of work in IR, scholars do not always explicitly consider the nature of systems thinking, particularly as conceived in the physical sciences, where the concept of a system originated. The thinker who has done most to conceptualise international relations within a systems framework is Kenneth Waltz, and it is perhaps no coincidence that *Theory of International Politics* has had the influence that it has. Waltz used the principles of systems thinking to generate a number of powerful insights about international politics. I will explore Waltz take on international systems in more depth in the next section, along with a selection of theorists who conceptualise the international system in different ways. But, at this point, I wish to consider the concept of the international system at a more general level, and to ground the discussion with some brief points about systems thinking and the history of its development in the physical sciences.

In their book *International Systems in World History*, Barry Buzan and Richard Little offer a comprehensive framework for understanding international systems across the entire sweep of human history. They find the concept to be surprisingly underdeveloped in every one of the mainstream accounts to be found in IR, given the conceptual weight that it is asked to bear. At the basic level, they argue, the international system may be viewed as a set of interacting parts (or units) organised by a structure of some kind. The structure embodies the organising principle of the system, and indicates the way in which the parts are arranged in relation to each other.[86] Beyond this basic definition, Buzan and Little go on to outline a set of concepts that deepen our thinking about the nature of international systems, and so reveal the partial nature of most of the systemic accounts in IR. They point our attention to issues such as the type of units that

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[84] Wight (2006)
[85] Waltz (1979) Wendt (1999)
[86] Buzan and Little (2000: 90)

comprise the system, the extent and type of interaction between the units in the system, the patterns of interaction between the units, the scale of the system, and the type of stuff that the system is comprised of: is it a physical system made up of material phenomena, or a socially constructed system, where the sentience of the actors within it and their ideas are paramount?

A core motivation of the authors of *International Systems in World History* is to show the sheer diversity of international systems that have existed historically. From the perspective of *la longue durée* the modern preoccupation with the nation-state seems parochial. IR has tended to equate the international system with the system of territorial states. It is conventionally argued that the structure that binds these state units together and organises their interrelations is the structure of anarchy. Anarchy in this context is taken formally to mean the absence of overarching government above the level of the sovereign state. Sovereignty is seen as the flip side of anarchy – the two constitute each other. The institution of sovereignty, with the state as supreme authority over a particular geographic territory, ensures that all the units in the system are alike – they are functionally undifferentiated. So we have a set of like units, states, organised by a structure of anarchy.

According to the structural realist tradition in IR, of which Waltz is a central exponent, the lack of an overarching authority to arbitrate between the competing interests of states forces them to behave in certain ways. It forces them to be concerned for their own survival, as they can call on no higher authority to protect them if threatened. In a world of interacting states competing for limited resources, structural realists argue that the structure of anarchy necessitates that states must maximise their power in relation to other states. As each state seeks to maximise their own power a balance forms among them, preventing any one state from dominating. In this way, structural principles condition the behaviour of states, locking them into certain logics of behaviour. If they refuse this logic they may suffer harm in the form of subjugation or destruction. The alternative to an anarchical structure in Waltz's theory is some kind of hierarchical arrangement of the units, with some units subordinate to others, and a functional differentiation of the system as a whole.[87] This may take the form of an empire of some kind, which would be the result of one state gaining dominance and creating a hierarchically structured system.

I will look at the structural realist interpretation of the international system more closely in the next section, but for now I want to note that the argument of Buzan and Little is that this situation is a relatively recent configuration for the international system. Much of the historical record reads differently. They advocate an empirical approach to uncovering the type of units

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[87] Waltz (1979)

that have existed at different points in history. The state, and particularly the territorial nation-state, is a relatively recent invention. The origins of the state system are conventionally traced to the treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which ended the Wars of Religion in Europe. But this system of sovereign states remained a primarily European phenomenon until deep into the twentieth century – much of the rest of the world being carved up into spheres of European empire. Buzan and Little rightly argue that there is no reason why units under anarchy need be alike. The historical record exhibits a great variety of units: empires, city-states, city-leagues, nomadic tribes, hunter-gatherer bands, economic firms.[88] Much of the time, such units have existed simultaneously. Although theoretically more extensive, their historical approach overlaps somewhat with that of Adam Watson, who attempted to uncover the diversity of states systems across a broad swathe of time. He produced a spectrum of organising structures for the arrangement of political units that included systems of independent states, hegemonies, suzerainty, dominion, empire.[89] I will look more closely at these ways of conceptualising the changing nature of the international system in the third chapter.

One of the reasons that the discipline has been obsessed with states, Buzan and Little argue, is because it has tended to view the international system as a political and military system. They introduce the idea of disaggregating the international system analytically into sectors: military, political, economic, societal. In this way the analyst may see more clearly the units that exist in the different sectors, although they should always bear in mind that this is a purely analytical separation of the complex whole. The types of units that dominate in one sector may differ from those in another sector. The dominance that the state attained in both the political and economic sectors in the modern period may be seen as a result of the historically specific ideology of mercantilism.[90] This was not the arrangement in earlier periods, and an essential part of the argument unfolded here is that it is unlikely to be the case in the future, with the economy becoming partially loosened from the control of states as a result of their adoption of neoliberal policies.

Another important concept that flows from Buzan and Little's historical approach is that of the *interaction capacity* of the interacting units, and the *type of interaction* they are engaged in. The interaction capacity in an international system is about the geographical reach of the units, and thus about which other units they can interact with. This is linked to Buzan and Little's concept of *pattern*, which asks whether units interact in a multi-ordinate fashion, having direct access to all

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[88] Buzan and Little (2000: 102)
[89] Watson (1992: 14-16)
[90] Mercantilism, as a school of thought in International Political Economy, dominated in Western Europe between the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. A basic tenet of mercantilism is that foreign economic policy should be in line with the interests of the state.

other units in the system, or whether they interact in a linear and limited fashion with only the units geographically adjacent to them. The example given of such a linear pattern of interaction is the ancient silk road that joined the Roman Empire and ancient China together as an economic international system.[91] The ability to interact also determines the *scale* of an international system: there is no need for international systems to be thought of as global. The early interacting Sumerian city-state units formed a geographically delimited international system of small scale.[92] The geographic reach of units is continually altered through the development and adoption of different technologies, with their respective capacities to shrink distance. The capacity to move troops or trade goods is immensely different if one is utilising the respective capabilities of horses, sail ships, steam ships, railways, aircraft. It is an essential element of this thesis that the information and communications technology revolution of the last four decades is intensifying and altering the nature of interaction in the global economy. By manipulating the nature of space and distance it is, in effect, once again changing the relationship of units to geography, and, therefore, to each other.

Interaction capacity determines what level of interaction is possible within the system, but not the type of interaction engaged in. Political realists in IR have tended to see interaction in systems as primarily being of a strategic, political and military nature. But with Buzan and Little's sectoral approach it is possible to bring in economic and societal interaction. This helps to incorporate within an international systems approach the challenge to political realism posed by the rise of international political economy and social constructivism in the discipline in recent years.[93] Ideas, such as economic and political ideologies, religions, technological innovations, can flow around the system much faster than armies. Viewing international systems in this way opens up the possibility of distinguishing the extent of the different sectors. Buzan and Little identify a historical pattern where the economic sector of international systems tends to expand faster and wider than the political and military sector.[94] Trade tends to outpace strategic interaction. I will argue that, with the growing depth and intensity of the electronically mediated global economy, we are seeing this historical pattern repeat itself. The strategic and political sectors are slower in reacting to fundamental changes in the international system initiated by the new technologies than the economic and societal sectors. The emergence of the global city as a new historical unit in the international system reflects this.

The different natures of the different sectors raises a difficult point. In this discussion I have been mixing physical and social technologies and ideas freely as elements that circulate within

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[91] Buzan and Little (2000: 96)
[92] Buzan and Little (2000: 98)
[93] Buzan and Little (2000: 92-95)
[94] Buzan and Little (2000: 110)

international systems: religious ideology, railways, armies, money, diffusion of technical knowledge, may all be seen as types of interaction. A connected and still deeper problem is the nature of the units themselves. Is the state a physical entity, defined by its territorial borders, its infrastructures, the buildings that house its bureaucracy, its police forces? Or is the state an idea, only detectable in the actions of people in thrall to that idea? Are city-states defined by their physicality: city walls, streets, monumental buildings, dwellings? Or are they defined by their *civitas*: the community of citizens that constitutes them and gives them their form? In short, is the international system a physical and mechanistic system, or is it a social system constructed from inter-subjective understandings and practices? This question has underpinned much of the important debate in IR in recent years. As Buzan and Little acknowledge: 'these two approaches have tended to develop separately within IR and not much thought has been devoted to how they relate to each other'.[95]

It is at this point that some insights from the development of systems theory in the natural sciences may help us to think through how the physical and ideational elements of international systems may relate.

Systems Ontologies

The relationship between ideas (held in the mind) and physical matter is a deep metaphysical problem. It may at first seem remote from the issues of international politics. But ontological choices have implications for the type of theories of the international system that get constructed, and, by extension, the type of actions undertaken on the basis of such theories. IR has taken a philosophical turn in recent decades on the basis of this realisation, particularly with the rise of social constructivism. This has resulted in increased sophistication in IR theorists' awareness of the philosophy of social science underpinning the discipline's major theories. This has opened up a whole new set of debates, as scholars take up different positions in the philosophy of science. These different positions in relation to the mind/matter problem generate conflicting perspectives in a number of other key social science debates: over the nature of the objectivity of the scientific observer in relation to that which is observed, over holism and reductionism, and over essentialism and relationalism. The dualism of mind and matter also both subsumes and manifests itself in a number of other dualities: form/process, social/natural, subjective/objective, agency/structure. In this section I will briefly outline these debates and point to why they have become important to IR and to theories of the international system. The aim of this section is to clarify the value that taking a systems or systemic ontology offers.

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[95] Buzan and Little (2000: 107)

At the heart of any approach to the relationship between ideas and the physical world is the question of whether to take a dualist or monist perspective. The modern scientific worldview has been informed by what has come to be known as Cartesian dualism. This refers to the analytical separation of the internal realm of mind and the external realm of the material world that Descartes[96] affected in the seventeenth century, and which, following from the ideas of Bacon and Galileo, helped to lay the foundations of the European scientific revolution.[97] For Descartes, mind and matter were two entirely different substances, whose interaction was irreconcilable.[98] The seventeenth century saw the elaboration of this worldview, culminating in the formal scientific framework of Isaac Newton. Central to the new scientific paradigm was the notion that the natural world could be understood in its entirety by breaking it down into smaller and smaller component parts, and analysing the function of each in turn.[99] This is reductionism. The reductionist method could be used to explain the workings of the whole system as *no more* than the sum of its parts. The dominant metaphor of this worldview was the universe as a giant machine, the mechanism of which could be taken apart. A complex whole was broken up into its constituent pieces, and the whole was then to be comprehended through the properties of the parts. Nature as a machine, whose inner workings are comprehensible to human reason, became manifest in the social and economic practices that we have come to know as the industrial revolution. The political and cultural effects can be grouped under the broad heading of modernity.[100]

However, the Cartesian system should be seen as a historically specific reading of the perennial philosophical problem of conceptualising the relationship between mind and matter: a particular historical configuration that is subject to change when convincing new knowledge of the world emerges. The analytical separation affected by Descartes had itself been a radical break from the past. It undermined the basic tenets of classical and medieval thought. In classical Greece, and in the medieval Christian system that inherited much of its thought, mind and matter, form and substance, were not so distinct. Aristotle, whose philosophy influenced two thousand years of thought, argued that form was contained within matter, whose development over time was the gradual realisation and perfection of that form.

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[96] Descartes (1644/1988)
[97] From the perspective of international politics, it is interesting to note that Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651/1996) also takes much of its inspiration from the atomistic worldview that defines the scientific revolution. Hobbes' work links these scientific ideas with political theory in addressing the problems arising from the seventeenth-century wars of religion. His solution of a political community that stops at the borders of the sovereign state gives the international system its characteristic Westphalian look.
[98] Russell (1994: 546)
[99] Capra (1997: 18-19)
[100] Cottingham (1992). See chapter five for a broader discussion.

Just as the Cartesian system and Newtonian mechanics came to dominate and marginalise this earlier view of nature, so they too have came to break down on facts offered by a twentieth century revolution in scientific knowledge that they are unable to accommodate. Hopes for a 'science of society', modelled on this scientific paradigm, foundered on the difficulty of applying mechanistic scientific principles to the social realm.[101] A social science based upon the principles of the radical separation of mind and matter, so effective in the scientific revolution, fails to account for the reflexivity that characterises the social world. This makes the social world a very different object of analysis than the natural world, which, it used to be argued, remains unchanged by observation. In contrast, social systems adapt to attempts to observe and intervene in them, implicating the observer within the system.

This problem, it should be stressed, also now extends to the physical world, where the twin revolutions in physics of relativity theory and quantum theory call into question strict mind/matter duality. Einstein's *Special Theory of Relativity* (1905) demolished part of the Newtonian paradigm and ended the notion of the universe as a clockwork mechanism.[102] The reductionist notion that the whole could be put together through the material building blocks of its parts was then dealt a fatal blow by the advent of quantum theory in the 1920s. At the sub-atomic level, the mechanistic, material conception of reality breaks down:

> the objects of classical physics dissolve into wavelike patterns of probabilities...of interconnections...nature does not show us any isolated building blocks, but rather appears as a complex web of relationships between the parts of a unified whole.[103]

A further feature of quantum mechanics involves reconsideration of the role of the scientist in his own experiment, and, therefore, of the very possibility of acquiring objective knowledge of a real world external to the observer. To observe a particular object requires a scientist to set up an experiment, including the choice of the instruments to be used. This choice implicates the scientist in the type of knowledge he will derive of external reality: 'since observer and observed are implicated in the same system, knowledge of the object is conditioned by the subject'.[104] Reflexivity places the very notion of objective social science into question, as postmodernists,

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[101] Gray (2003: 38-43) Berlin (1997: 1-17). Chapter two contains a broader discussion of the perennial desire for a 'science of society'.

[102] Davies (1995: 16) relates how Einstein showed that space and time are relative to the observer. In Newtonian mechanics, time is universal, uniform and had law-like mathematical precision. The observer could have no impact on time; it formed a frame in which everything was encompassed. Given enough information, the past, present and future could be calculated with precision. Einstein removed this frame, and proved that there was no universal time, only a relative time linked to the observer. This pliable property of space and time, in contrast to the notion of a universal, common time and space, will be important later on in the discussion of how transformation occurs in international systems.

[103] Capra (1997: 30)

[104] Taylor (2001: 115)

feminists and critical theorists have long argued. These problems may imply a form of cultural relativism that threatens the very possibility of objective knowledge of any kind, offering only a kaleidoscope of personal worlds. Such a danger has led others to try to recover scientific principles from the wreckage of pure objectivity. This is one of the key drivers of the renewal of debates over philosophy of science in the social sciences – the desire to claim scientific legitimacy for theories, without relying upon a naive positivism.

There are a number of distinctive positions in the philosophy of science that produce different perspectives on the nature and possibility of building knowledge claims. Early attempts to place IR on objectively scientific foundations led from the behaviouralists of the 1960s in a direct line to Waltz's influential work in the late 1970s, and, particularly in the United States, entrenched rational choice approaches to the international system. These approaches are based upon positivism (or, in some formulations, neopositivism), which is a philosophy of science that bases claims to knowledge upon that which is observable in the physical world. Thus, structural realism is concerned with observable fluctuations in the distribution of *material* capabilities within the international system. In recent years this perspective has been challenged by scholars who advocate a scientific (or critical) realist approach to the philosophy of social science.[105] This approach posits a clear distinction between the mind of the observer and an independent, separately existing reality. An important way in which this approach differs from positivism is in its ability to include unobservables within its theoretical range.[106] The import of this shift is that theories rooted in this philosophy of science can bring into their accounts non-measurable and unquantifiable social elements, such as ideas, and, indeed, social structure itself. This is why the most influential account within the social constructivist wave of writing on the international system, Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*, explicitly grounds itself in scientific realism.[107] Another radical difference that philosophical realism offers to positivism is its stress on 'causal mechanisms'. Historically contextualised causal mechanisms offer a very different view of causality than positivist 'covering laws'.[108] And, because causal mechanisms can be, and, in large part are, unobservable, they must be conjectured. Indeed, scientific realism argues that the majority of the social and natural world is unobservable, and that it is the role of theory to create models and conjectures that bring it into the open.[109]

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[105] Strictly speaking, scientific realism refers to a philosophy of science of the natural world. Critical realism is the modified application of this philosophy of science to the social world, often associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar (1979) and Margaret Archer (1995). For applications to IR, see the forum on critical realism in *Millennium 35:2.* Joseph (2007) Wight (2007) Chernoff (2007) Brown (2007).
[106] Wight and Patomaki (2000)
[107] Wendt (1999: 47-138)
[108] Kurki (2007)
[109] Pickel (2004: 178)

If these two perspectives operate from a dualistic separation of mind and matter, there are alternative positions that deny the strict ontological separation of ideas and the material world. These accounts are monist. A traditional example is the interpretivist accounts of IR offered by the early English School, and defended by Hedley Bull against the positivists in the late 1960s.[110] Such accounts argue that a scientific theory of IR is neither achievable nor desirable, and that an intuitive understanding of the international system is what accounts should strive for. More recently, Patrick Jackson has sought to argue for a similar position, although situating his ideas more explicitly in philosophical pragmatism.[111] Jackson argues that the possibility of objective knowledge is a chimera, an aspect of the Enlightenment project whose darker inclination towards coercion and control mean that it should be dropped. Jackson argues, in the tradition of Max Weber, that we should renounce the goal of objectivity, and embrace the inevitably partial and culturally conditioned nature of our theories as subjective portrayals of the world. In this reading, the Western obsession with progress towards achieving certain knowledge is seen as a cultural value commitment, specific to a particular time and place.[112]

A further monist approach, and clearly the most ambitious (and the most speculative), has been outlined by Alexander Wendt. Drawing inspiration from the latest work on consciousness in the natural sciences, he proposes a 'quantum social theory'.[113] Taking arguments from neuroscience and philosophy, the basic proposal here is that mind or consciousness is not a classical phenomenon, but a quantum phenomenon. It is not, therefore, a question of bridging the mind/matter divide, or recognising the futility of bridging it, but of recognising that mind and matter are deeply entangled with each other. The bet is that consciousness is present in all matter: a doctrine known as panpsychism. This project for elaborating a quantum social science is clearly at a very early stage, but, given the philosophical turn in the social sciences, and the problems overcoming the mind/matter dualism, it is easy to see why such a project would be attractive.

Related to the mind/matter problem is the question of whether we view the world in holistic or reductionist ways. The arguments about the limits of Cartesian dualism, and the superseding of the mechanistic worldview, point strongly towards a holistic perspective. Systems thinking, both in the natural and the social world, push in this direction. Although there were precursors to the approach, formal systems frameworks emerged in the 1920s across a number of different scientific disciplines: organismic biology, ecology, quantum physics, *gestalt* psychology.[114] The holistic systems approach directly repudiates the mechanistic worldview. It looks to the thinkers

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[110] Bull (1969)
[111] Jackson's arguments run parallel to Richard Rorty (1980).
[112] Jackson (2008: 138)
[113] Wendt (2004, n.d.)
[114] Capra (1997: 30-36)

and intellectual traditions that have viewed the world in terms of patterns, immanent order and relationships: Aristotle, Kant, German Romanticism, for example. The physicist Fritjof Capra understands the central theme of the competition between mechanistic and holistic thinking as the tension between the parts and the whole. The mechanistic approach is reductionist, atomistic, concerned with physical matter and structure. Holism is organicist, context reliant, concerned with patterns and relationships. In the holistic approach, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The key concept here is emergence.[115] The whole exhibits emergent properties that do not exist within the individual parts themselves. A reductionist approach – dissecting the whole into its constituent parts – destroys the emergent properties of the whole, and therefore the object of analysis. The nature of the whole is therefore different from the nature of the parts, but it is a nature that emerges from the relationships between the parts. This entirely reverses the Cartesian paradigm of analytic reductionism: in a systems paradigm it is not the individual building blocks that are important, but the principles that organise the relationships between those building blocks: the patterns and processes that are only visible from the systemic level.[116]

In the social sciences, a systems ontology has been defended by the philosopher of science Mario Bunge.[117] Bunge views the systemic as a fundamental ontology of both the physical and social world. He posits that every phenomenon in the universe is, was, or will become a system or a component of a system: there are no isolated elements or 'strays'.[118] For Bunge, a system is:

> a complex object whose parts or components are held together by bonds of some kind. These bonds are logical in the case of a conceptual system, such as a theory; they are material in a concrete system, such as an atom, cell, immune system, family or hospital...

> Depending on the system's constituents and the bonds among them, a concrete or material system may belong in either of the following levels: physical, chemical, biological, social and technological.[119]

Bunge argues that the material and social elements of systems cannot be meaningfully separated.[120] Systems are aspects of reality, but, in line with Bunge's scientific realism, they need to be conjectured and then modelled and described through the development of theory. I would argue that this is, in effect, what theories of the international system are doing for the complex world of international politics: they are trying to offer conjectures about what is important in

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[115] Capra (1997: 28). See Harrison (2006) for an account of the value of applying the insights of complexity science, including the concept of emergence, to world politics.
[116] Capra (1997: 29)
[117] Bunge (1979, 2004) Pickel (2004, 2006, 2007)
[118] Bunge (2004:190)
[119] Bunge (2004:188) cited in Pickel (2007: 401)
[120] Pickel (2007: 397). Mayntz (200: 253) argues that all systems are specific to a particular historical context.

international life and investigating them by developing logical conceptual systems.[121] If the importance of history and transformation are included within such models, then such theories are also concerned with how particular international systems emerge, maintain themselves, and then dissipate. Such a concern might, for example, investigate the processes and dynamics underlying the formation of the state system. This is where the realist emphasis upon causal mechanisms comes in: it is concrete mechanisms and processes, often interacting in combination, that drive the dynamics of systems. Thus, in accounting for the formation of the state system, and its possible dissolution, important mechanisms or processes would include inclusion and exclusion, coercion and conflict, trade, technological innovation, to name some of the key mechanisms that comprise this thesis.

Indeed, this emphasis upon mechanisms and processes has also provided another key area of debate in IR in recent years, with a set of writers, perhaps forming a nascent Columbia School, arguing for a relational approach to the social world in general, and to the international system in particular.[122] This debate focuses around another philosophical dyad, the tension between essentialism and relationalism. In terms of the international system, this problem is really about whether we view the units of the system, be they specified as states, cities, empires or something else, as ontologically primitive, that is, as having pre-existing qualities. Conceptualising units in this way makes the possibility of their transformation highly problematic. This problem attends many mainstream IR theories of the state system, where states do not change over time. At the most, their corporate identities may change, as state-centric constructivists such as Wendt contend. As Jackson and Nexon argue, explaining change in a substantialist account of units becomes a logical contradiction, because such change invalidates the premise of the original substantialist definition of the unit. Alternatively, this position leads to the problems conceptualising historical change that we see with structural realism.[123]

A relational approach focuses instead upon the processes and relationships, often forming durable and recurrent patterns, that allow the entities that become units to form and dissipate over time - thus problematising the existence of units at any given point in history.[124] Such an approach takes social transactions to be the basic elements or building blocks of social theory, arguing that, in a dynamic world, processes are philosophically more fundamental than things. A processual philosophy 'does not – or need not – deny substances (things), but sees them as subordinate in status and ultimately inhering in processes'. This is an ontology of 'becoming and change – the origination, flourishing, and passing of the old and the innovative emergence of

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[121] Pickel (2007: 400-401)
[122] Tilly (1984, 2008) Jackson and Nexon (1999) Emirbayer (1997, 1998)
[123] Jackson and Nexon (1999: 296)
[124] In Buzan and Little (2000: 79) these recurrent patterns are termed 'process formations'.

ever-new existence', where things are seen as the stable manifestations of processes. [125] Jackson and Nexon argue, rightly I believe, that such a perspective is essential for analysing emerging changes to the structures of global politics, and for appreciating how new units and entities may appear. Such an approach questions the durability of boundaries, such as sovereign territoriality, and emphasises the constant flux inherent in the social world.[126]

The concern with problematising the origins of units, and denying them essential identities, thus brings in the possibility of accounting for their transformation. But, at the same time, the durability of units and structures over time should also be a concern of international systems theory. Fritjof Capra has tried to work through some of these issues in his systems approach to the natural world. Capra's core concern is to produce a synthesis of mechanistic and holistic approaches to understanding the emergence of life. He seeks to combine the mechanistic concern with substance and structure with the holistic preoccupation with form and pattern. In a living organism, the component parts undergo continuous change as cells are replaced (Capra terms this *process*), but the system as a whole maintains its form or structure (in a systems approach, a structure is seen as the manifestation of an underlying process).[127] The form or structure of the system is specified by the *pattern of organisation* that defines how the component parts interrelate. It continually reproduces this relationship, despite the constant flow of energy through the system.

Capra provides a useful example to clarify this relationship between the physical structure of a system, the pattern of organisation that holds the structure together in its particular configuration, and process, which is essentially about the activity of the system over time. It is worth reproducing the example here:

> The structure of a system is the physical embodiment of its pattern of organization. Whereas the description of the pattern of organization involves an abstract mapping of relationships, the description of the structure involves describing the system's actual physical components – their shapes, chemical compositions, etc.

> To illustrate the difference between pattern and structure, let us look at a well-known nonliving system, a bicycle. In order for something to be called a bicycle, there must be a number of functional relationships between components known as frame, pedals, handlebars, wheels, chain, sprocket, etc. The complete configuration of these functional relationships constitutes the bicycle's pattern of organization. All of those relationships must be present to give the system the essential characteristics of a bicycle.

> The structure of the bicycle is the physical embodiment of its pattern of organization in terms of components of specific shapes, made of specific materials.

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[125] Rescher (1996: 27-28)
[126] Abbott (2001)
[127] Capra (1997: 42)

> The same pattern 'bicycle' can be embodied in many different structures. The handlebars will be shaped differently for a touring bike, a racing bike, or a mountain bike; the frame may be heavy and solid or light and delicate; the tyres may be narrow or wide, tubes or solid rubber. All these combinations and many more will easily be recognised as different embodiments of the same pattern of relationships that defines a bicycle.[128]

There are some clear overlaps in this approach to systems in the physical sciences with some of the problems inherent to conceptualising international systems outlined above. The approach taken by Capra gives a different emphasis and terminology to that used by Buzan and Little, who limit their systems talk to structures and units. But it is nonetheless useful in aiding our understanding of the relationship between the ideational and material elements within international systems. The international system consists of a number of component units, be they political, economic, or societal entities. These units exist in a variety of configurations throughout history. Taking as an example the particular Westphalian configuration of a system of territorial states, we might see how Capra's formulation may add to our understanding of the nature of the system.

The pattern of organisation that links the units together and orders their relationships is that of territorial sovereignty/anarchy. In IR terminology this logic of anarchy is associated with structure. But in Capra's formulation, structure is the physical embodiment of pattern. The physical embodiment of the ideas of sovereignty/anarchy is the set of territorial states that are functionally alike because they take on themselves all of the functions of government and allow no other authority within their territorial jurisdiction. The international system thus takes on its characteristic Westphalian shape. This shape endures over time because the pattern of organisation of sovereignty/anarchy remains in place – although the inhabitants of a particular state will change over the generations, the state and the state system are reproduced while these ideas remain dominant. The logic of this argument is that change, the transformation of international systems, would require a change in the pattern of organisation of the system, which would then be reflected in new physical structures: new units that make different uses of geographic space. A central element of the argument here is that, as Castells has noted, deterritorialised networks are emerging as key patterns of organisation in all spheres of social life the twentieth century.[129] This development is in clear tension with the organising principle of sovereignty that has characterised the modern international system.

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[128] Capra (1997: 154-155)

[129] There are close affinities and links between Capra and Castells. They were colleagues at the University of California at Berkeley, and both are concerned with networks as fundamental organisational forms. See Stalder (2006: 170-175).

Capra's work helps to clarify the relationship between ideas and material phenomena through his linkage of organising patterns, which in a social system exists in the realm of ideas, with the material forms and particular configurations of physical space that emerge as a result. These arguments link well with the theoretical problems that IR theorists have been having in conceptualising the international system. Together with Buzan and Little's contributions, they produce an interesting set of concepts and theoretical resources with which to engage with the main competing visions of the international system that have defined the shape of the discipline in IR.

Conceptualising International Systems

Despite the international system being the central concept of IR, as I have argued, there is no general agreement on how to conceptualise it. In the majority of theories of the international system, the parts chosen by the analyst to constitute the system are territorial states, although there are sometimes some radical alternatives on offer.[130] Because IR does not have the benefit of a universally accepted model for the international system, the arguments over which elements should comprise international systems have profound implications. The particular theoretical and ontological approach adopted will inevitably influence the types of conclusions that scholars derive from their models. The way the international system has been conceptualised in IR has gone through a number of distinct phases, each influenced by the wider intellectual trends of the time. The 1960s saw a highly positivist statistical approach, which was refined in the 1970s and 1980s, but continued to emphasise measurable material aspects of international systems. The 1990s saw the emphasis changed to the ideational content of the international system, with the wider rise of social constructivism in the social sciences. Recent moves, as I have noted, have sought to conceptualise international systems in the context of world history, recovering a marginalised tradition in IR that problematises state-centric accounts by holding them up against the diversity of the historical record. In this section I explore a number of the key material, ideational and historical approaches to conceptualising international systems, and argue that some combination of these elements is ultimately desirable.

It is possible to draw a distinction between those approaches that implicitly take the international system to be a system, and those approaches that explicitly and self-consciously use a systems approach adapted from the physical sciences. Therefore, Marx, and the many subsequent adaptations of Marxist thought, viewed the world in systemic terms, with capitalism operating as a global structure. Neo-Marxist and world systems approaches that emerged in the 1960s clearly

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[130] Ferguson and Mansbach (2004), for example, try to overcome the state-centric bias of mainstream theories by using the more flexible concept of *polities*.

formulated their framework in systemic terms, as they sought to analyse the structural dependency of less developed peripheral countries on the imperial core.[131] There have been attempts to read systemic thinking into the work of the ancient Greek writer Thucydides, whose *History of the Peloponnesian War* contains an appreciation of a mechanical balance of power operating between the Greek city-states.[132] Before the Second World War a geopolitical systemic perspective became highly influential, largely through the work of Halford Mackinder, who argued that the relationship between global geography and human movement has had a profound impact on the development of international politics.[133] Such perspectives became unfashionable in the second half of the twentieth century, largely because of their inherent geographical determinism, allied to the unfortunate fact that they were used by the Nazi regime in Germany to provide a scientific veneer for the policy of *lebensraum*.

In recent years, as globalising processes have knitted the world into an ever tighter set of linkages, historical scholarship has turned to a systemic world history. In part, this is a rejection of the constricting influence of post-modernism, which eschewed grand narratives in favour of localised historical projects about particular times and places. World history is the only available canvas on which to paint a picture of the big patterns in history that can offer a systemic perspective, and, as such, its return to favour should be welcomed, even though the postmodern wariness of master narratives and the political role of the author are to be taken seriously. Recent valuable additions to the tradition of writing history on a vast scale (pioneered by the *Annales* school that emerged in France in the 1930s, which I shall assess in more detail in chapter three) have been the civilizational perspective of William McNeill, the focus on geography and climate of Jared Diamond, and Manuel DeLanda's synthesis of Deleuze and Braudel, which charts the impact of flows of energy, genes and language across the totality of earth's history.[134]

While these theories clearly view the international world as a system, they are not systems approaches in the formal sense adopted in the natural sciences. Starting with the behaviouralists in the 1950s and 1960s, IR theorists started to think much more self-consciously about the nature of systems thinking, and specifically imported some of the ideas that had emerged there. The leading figure in behavioural IR in the 1960s was David Singer.[135] Singer was part of a wider movement in American IR, and American social science more generally, that wanted to reorient the discipline to be more akin to the natural sciences, where, it was argued, knowledge was built upon more objective foundations. The work of Singer, Morton Kaplan, and the later work of

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[131] Frank (1967) Wallerstein (1979)
[132] Boucher (1998)
[133] Mackinder (1904: 421-437)
[134] Braudel (1981, 1982, 1984) McNeill (1963) Diamond (1997) DeLanda (1997). See also Bayly (2004).
[135] Singer (1961)

Kenneth Waltz, exemplified this desire to draw up parsimonious theories that utilised positivist methodology and looked to the objectivity of the natural sciences for legitimacy.[136]

Singer struggled with the issue of how to generate a systemic perspective supposedly free of value judgements. He advocated the empirical collection of data, which would then be analysed with statistical tools. This methodology could then provide an aggregate picture of the relations between units, and thus reveal systemic properties not visible from the perspective of the individual units themselves.[137] In this way, changing patterns of behaviour between states across time could be revealed: one of the patterns that Singer revealed was the changing shape of where particular states stood in a diplomatic hierarchy. This was achieved through an analysis of the size and status of diplomatic missions in various state capitals.[138] Such approaches could also provide other systemic perspectives, such as the changing shape of alliances within the international system.

It is clear, however, that the supposedly objective, scientific footings of this approach are open to question. Before the analyst goes out and accumulates the empirical data to be analysed, there is an ontological choice that needs to be made about what type of data is to be collected, what type of relationships are to be assessed. In the case of Singer's work, there is a built in assumption that in the international system it is the relationships between states that are most important. Given that the analyst is choosing the tools and objects of analysis, they are implicated in the system that they are to analyse. The relative merits of the empiricist and positivist philosophy of science that began to dominate American IR at this time became the subject of the second of the discipline defining 'great debates'.

This disagreement was, at heart, about the relative weight of historicist and scientific methods. It was institutionalised in an exchange about the legitimacy of scientific approaches between Morton Kaplan and the Oxford classicist Hedley Bull in the 1960s.[139] The key point of contestation was the 'unity-of-science' or 'naturalism' question: whether natural and social sciences can be studied similarly. Kaplan advocated the merits of statistical modelling and other quantitative methods to study what were taken to be the causal laws of international relations. In his response to Kaplan, Bull defended the tradition of IR that had grown up in British universities, which drew upon political philosophy, law and diplomatic history, and would later go on to form the core of the distinctive 'English School' approach.

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[136] Singer and Small (1966) Kaplan (1957) Waltz (1979)
[137] Buzan and Little (2000: 37)
[138] Singer and Small (1966)
[139] Bull (1969)

This classic division between the 'explanation' offered by 'scientific' methodology, and the 'understanding' promised by historical and hermeneutic approaches, has gone on to divide the discipline ever since. Some argue that the divide between these two 'incommensurable' forms of knowledge is ultimately unbridgeable.[140] With reference to the arguments of the previous section, it seems clear that the 'second debate' has never been satisfactorily resolved in IR, and continues to lie at the centre of many of the discipline's key theoretical arguments. What is also clear, however, is that those that favoured a positivist approach to studying IR, backed by the power of the American academy, went on to dominate the discipline, primarily through the success of a theory that explicitly drew upon concepts drawn from systems thinking.

Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* looked to systems thinking to argue against the type of methodology Singer had advocated in his statistical analysis. Waltz critiqued the purely descriptive character of Singer's work.[141] He wanted to develop a systems theory with explanatory capabilities, not just one that could identify patterns. He also questioned whether Singer's approach was truly systemic. For Waltz, a systemic theory should not be dependent upon the features and nature of the units, but should show how the structure of the system conditions the units and restrains their behaviour.[142] For Waltz, system structure can only be either hierarchical or anarchical. In a hierarchy, units are structurally dependent upon each other as they perform different functions within the international system: economic, political, military. In an anarchical system the units are functionally independent, such as sovereign states. The anarchical structure of the Westphalian system forces states to be concerned with their survival and to maximise their power relative to other states. The nature of the domestic constitution of the state, its internal political system, whether democratic or totalitarian, is not a feature of the theory, and does not account for their behaviour. All states are likely to behave in a similar self-regarding fashion, the theory predicts, because of the structural imperatives of anarchy. If states wish to survive and prosper, they must skillfully read and react to signals about the changing distribution of power and capabilities in the world. This distribution of material capabilities, and the motivation of states to protect themselves, determines the shape of alliances. As states seek to stop any one competitor becoming too powerful, a balance of power is automatically generated, in the same way that a market structure is generated by the uncoordinated activities of individual firms. Waltz's theory is one of system maintenance, explaining how systemic features, such as war and the balance of power have persisted over time.[143]

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[140] Hollis and Smith (1990)
[141] Buzan and Little (2000: 40)
[142] Waltz (1979: 121-122)
[143] Buzan and Little (2000: 40-41)

It is interesting to note how the foundations of Waltz's theory are borrowed from microeconomics. In particular, Waltz theory is influenced by the ascendancy of neo-classical economics, as exemplified by the work of Milton Friedman.[144] Friedman's thought lifted economics from out of its historical context and sought to establish universal and ahistorical laws of economic behaviour. Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, which seeks to identify timeless laws of behaviour for states in the international system, can be viewed as belonging to this intellectual lineage. By way of contrast, the work of classical economists such as Adam Smith, who, in turn, influenced Marx, was deeply rooted in an appreciation of history, an appreciation that has declined in the social sciences during the ascendency of positivism.[145] Waltz's theory has been heavily criticised for its ahistoricism, and, in what follows I will look at those criticisms and argue for a historically sensitive approach to international systems.

One such criticism of Waltz is that his theory simply does not work when applied to certain historical periods. John Ruggie makes this argument, claiming that Waltz's theory cannot account for the feudal international system that characterised medieval Europe.[146] Feudalism did not conform to the notion of territoriality that underpins the exclusive sovereign spaces of nation-states. In the medieval period a mobile ruling class moved between different geographical areas, embodying their authority personally, rather than ruling over one contiguous piece of territory. Multiple, overlapping authorities held various claims over different segments of society, in a fluid arrangement of space. For Ruggie, no firm territorial boundary lines existed in Europe until around the thirteenth century. This critique of Waltz highlights the problems that a rigid and ahistorical focus on anarchical states systems brings with it.[147]

Another problem that arises from Waltz's neo-classical economic analogy is that this strand of economic thought is unconcerned with how the identities of the acting units in the system are formed.[148] The assumption that the structure of anarchy springs into life immediately when state units begin to interact is a weakness in Waltz's theory that has allowed social constructivists to argue that he builds in a set of *a priori* theoretical assumptions about state identity. Waltz views structure as an environment that constrains the possible behaviours open to sates. Alexander Wendt, drawing heavily on the structuration theory of the sociologist Anthony Giddens, argues that structure and units must be *mutually* constituted.[149] Wendt argues that it is impossible for

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[144] Friedman (1962)

[145] Gray (2003: 41)

[146] Ruggie (1998)

[147] This line of thinking has contributed to a new wave of historical sociological work within IR. A number of different positions are outlined in Hobden and Hobson (2002).

[148] Waltz (1979: 91) Wendt (1999: 16)

[149] Giddens (1984)

structures to have effects separate from the interactions of agents.[150] Wendt does not take issue with the argument that the structure of the system is anarchic. But, because of his commitment to a social constructivist ontology, he sees that states under an anarchical structure may develop among themselves different 'cultures of anarchy'. In their interactions with each other over time, they may come to view each other as enemies, friends, or rivals. This inter-subjective understanding will influence their behaviour towards each other, modifying the structural imperatives that Waltz sees as springing up as soon as interaction occurs.

The key difference which allows this extra flexibility in Wendt's theory is his differing ontological commitment as to what type of fabric the international system is made from. In Waltz's structural realism, the international system is understood as a distribution of material capabilities under anarchy. Neoliberals also view the international system in this way, but they argue that a certain level of co-operation between states is possible through the development of certain minimal institutions and regimes.[151] But, for both, the material and structural imperatives make the international system a place of conflict. The rise of social constructivist thought has attacked this assumption on ontological grounds. Emerging from the intellectual ferment of postmodernism, feminism and structuration theory in sociology in the 1980s, social constructivism made its way into IR.[152] Wendt emerged as a central figure largely because he is also sympathetic to a state systemic view of the international system, which makes his arguments more palatable to the mainstream. More radical postmodern critiques of structural realism are offered by Richard Ashley and Rob Walker.[153] John Ruggie and Friedrich Kratochwil offer modernist forms of social constructivist critique.[154]

These thinkers are committed to the stance that the international system consists primarily of a distribution of ideas. An idealist reading of international systems understands structure as being determined by shared ideas. This is in direct opposition to those that view material forces, such as environment, biology or technology, as determining outcomes.[155] The opposition of these two ontologies is a direct result of the tension I charted earlier in the discussion of systems thinking in the natural sciences: how do we conceptualise the relationship between mind and matter. In Waltzian structural realism matter dominates, and states are at the mercy of the distribution of material capabilities under anarchy. In Wendt's moderate social constructivist account, material elements are present, but his ontology is 'ideas (almost) all the way down'. By this phrase he

[150] Wendt (1999: 12)
[151] Keohane and Nye (1977)
[152] Wendt (1999: 1)
[153] Ashley (1984) Walker (1993)
[154] Ruggie (1998) Kratochwil (1989)
[155] Recall the parallels here with arguments in the introduction concerning the social shaping of technology.

means that the meaning and constraining influence of material objects and conditions are not simply given by nature. Because the world is a tapestry of ideas, the material aspects of life depend upon the inter-subjective understanding of actors for their meaning and effects.[156] Therefore, the development of shared understandings, cultures and practices between states over time allow them to behave under anarchy in ways that Waltz's theory says they should not. States have the capacity to inter-subjectively modify structure as they redefine their interests through communication and discourse. Anarchy is what states make of it.

Wendt's social constructivism is, in many ways, loyal to the agenda set by structural realism. Although its ontology radically opens up the possibility for change to occur in the international system, it remains state centric. Wendt makes no apologies for this stance. He makes clear that his project is concerned with the big problem of regulating violence in international affairs – or, to put it another way, the maintenance of order in international political life. This impulse has been with IR since it was formed as a discipline. Wendt focuses on the state because the state remains the structure of authority with a monopoly of legitimate violence in the contemporary system.[157] He further argues that, although there are other important actors in world politics, all significant changes in the system must occur through states. In an international system where the power of the state has become dominant across the different sectors, it is difficult to disagree with this assessment. However, the argument I develop here is that leading states have, since the 1970s, embarked upon a series of policies, informed by neoliberal ideology, that have begun to have a transformatory effect upon the international system. Such policies have relocated a number of functions to the global economy and nascent global civil society that were previously under tighter state control, and have weakened the state's monopoly of violence.

Wendt, having argued that that the logic of anarchy can be modified by the inter-subjective cultures that states create among themselves, fails to push the logic of his own argument far enough. The possible relations between states may go beyond the understandings of friend, enemy, rival. It is possible that they may embark upon collective projects that alter international systemic structure in even more radical ways, as the neoliberal project seems to have done. It is also possible that such actions may have unforeseen consequences, and that the effects of agency take on new logics of their own. I will argue that this is what has happened as a result of the neoliberal project: the unintended feedback of such policies has been the weakening of the state as the unchallenged unit across all of the sectors of the international system. This has allowed the emergence of other units to take on some of the state's functions. Wendt's theory anticipates the

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156 Wendt (1999: 31)
157 Wendt (1999: 8)

continuity of the states system, and the state continuing to dominate all the important areas of international life. This outcome is by no means certain.

In my view, state-centric theories are hampered by their lack of historical sensitivity and their blindness when it comes to *la longue durée*. They read a transient historical configuration, the dominance of the state in all spheres of life, as a natural condition for the international system. But Wendt's social constructivism does allow us a mechanism for understanding how transformation can occur. As new ideas about how states should relate to each other can change the culture of anarchy among them, I would argue that so too can new ideas and ideologically inspired projects be reflected in the physical structures of the units that give shape to political space. With the longer historical perspectives of some of the approaches to international systems discussed earlier, it is clear that states alone need not make up international systems. It is therefore important that we try to uncover the moments and mechanisms of transition at which the units of international systems change. Linking units and structure together as Wendt does makes such a project theoretically possible, although his state-centric approach cannot do it.

An approach that has shown greater historical subtlety is the English School. This was the perspective that Hedley Bull defended against Kaplan in the debate over the relative merits of historicist and scientific method during the 1960s. The English School has its roots in the Grotian tradition, which sees states as regulating their behaviour through the development of international law.[158] It shares many features with Wendt's later brand of social constructivism. But it did not presume to take a 'scientific' approach to systems. The key concept of the English School is that of 'international society', and its position is exemplified by Bull's *The Anarchical Society*.[159] International society emerges from the more mechanical concept of international system when

> a group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities)
> ... not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary
> factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and
> consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and
> recognise their common interest in maintaining these arrangements'.[160]

Clearly, these rules and institutions exist in the minds of diplomats and statesmen: they are social constructions that soften an anarchical system to form a society. Features that are, for structural realists, generated mechanistically, like the balance of power or war, are, for the English School, institutions of international society, in the sense that they embody a set of established practices between political communities. In this way, the inter-subjective identities that interacting units

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158 Cutler (1991)
159 Bull (1977) Wight (1960) Watson (1990, 1992)
160 Bull and Watson (1984: 1)

form over time become institutionalised, locking states into a set of structural relationships that they themselves have created.

One of the key advantages of the English School approach is that it allows the analyst to see how such socially constructed institutions change over time, as new collective ideas and cultural practices evolve. The latest incarnation of English School thought has taken shape in Barry Buzan's *From International to World Society?*[161] In this reconceptualisation of the theoretical tradition of English School concepts, Buzan seeks to lay out a framework that is capable of charting the evolution of international society through time. He distinguishes between different forms of international society depending upon the degree of shared values. He plots these possibilities on a continuum between pluralist international societies at one end of the scale, which possess a relatively low density of shared norms and values, to solidarist international societies at the other end, where the density is high.[162] In addition, he maps the changing nature of the institutions of international society that have existed historically. In this fashion it is possible to see, for example, how institutions of past international societies, such as colonialism, mercantilism, dynasticism, and slavery have gradually given way to new institutions, such as nationalism, democracy, and an emerging concern for human rights.[163]

A central aspect of Buzan's work is to interrogate how international society, which refers to societies of states, relates over time to another key, yet underdeveloped, concept of the English School: world society. World society is concerned with the non-state dimension of international politics: individuals, non-state organisations, social classes, for example. Implicit in his study of the emerging 'social structure of globalisation' is the idea that this relationship is under constant negotiation. The current playing out of the reconfiguration of the relationship between international society and emerging non-state units is to form the subject matter of the rest of this thesis, which uses the appearance of global cities as a prism to view theories of systemic transformation in international relations.

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[161] Buzan (2004)

[162] In this formulation Buzan actually dispenses with the international system element of the English School tradition, reconceptualising this dimension as an especially asocial and unlikely form of pluralist international society. This approach fully embraces social constructivist ontology, but at the expense of losing some of the conceptual insights of the structural realist approach that characterised his earlier work with Richard Little. See Little (2000) for an alternative construction.

[163] Buzan (2004: 161-204)

Conclusion

The international system is a concept that is essential if we are to unpick the overwhelming complexity of international politics. Systems thinking is a uniquely valuable approach to international relations because it enables us to see those features of international politics that are only visible from the perspective of the complex whole, remaining invisible to unit level theories that engage with foreign policy analysis, the psychology of leadership, or domestic political theory. This is the difference between the mechanistic/reductionist and holistic approaches to understanding social life that I charted as a fundamental divide in how we have conceptualised the world. In a systems approach, the social whole has properties that are emergent, and not reducible to the individual parts.

The ontological choice of how to conceptualise the international system has profound implications. The choice is open to the analyst, but this choice will obscure certain features and highlight others. A theory that concentrates on states alone will miss the crucial relationships that states have with other units, and obscure important sources of potential change. A key question is: how much of international life do we wish to exclude to make our theories parsimonious and elegant? Is parsimony a virtue in theorising the international system? Waltz argues that it is, but his theory fails to match up to the empirical facts of history. As Wendt has made clear, shifting ontology opens up new theoretical angles. His reconceptualisation of the relationship between structure and units, based on social constructivist ontology, generates very different possibilities for understanding systemic change. The mind/matter relationship at the heart of this debate is a thread that runs through all attempts to theorise international life, and I will come back to this issue in the next chapter. As some of the insights gleaned from systems theory in the natural sciences showed, one important perception to focus upon is that there is a close relationship between ideas and how they are physically embodied in specific configurations of political space. I take this key argument forward in later chapters by examining the relationship between neoliberal ideology and policy, the restructuring of the global economy in the late-twentieth century, and the emergence of global cities and their novel use of transnational space.

The argument here is that Wendt does not go far enough in his arguments about the impact of ideas on international systemic structure, content as he is to see the international system as a states system. The historically informed work of the English School, extended to *la longue durée* by Buzan and Little's world historical perspective, reveals a wealth of possible units other than states that can form pluralist international systems. City-states, city-leagues, nomadic tribes, empires, various forms of states, can be conceptualised as existing together in different configurations of relationships. These relationships are a crucial, yet largely overlooked, aspect of international

relations. If we can observe such diversity in the historical record, why not in the future? Buzan and Little's disaggregation of the international system into analytic sectors offers the possibility of comparing how the different sectors (political, military, economic, societal) relate to each other, and how their relations change over time. This approach may not have the cutting edge of Occam's razor, but it does have the benefit of multiplying the analyst's power to see beyond the Westphalian system.

Introduction

The previous chapter argued for a holistic systems approach to understanding international political life. It looked at some of the most influential systems theories of international politics, and uncovered some of the key issues that divide them: the difference between materialist and idealist ontologies, the preference for scientific or historicist method, state systemic approaches as opposed to approaches that see international systems as composed of a variety of different political, economic and societal units. It was argued that a key point of divergence between theories was the different ontological positions that they embrace.

In this chapter I seek to take a more detailed look at these points of divergence by discussing them in the context of a central problem for social scientific theory: the agent-structure problem. Debates over the agent-structure problem have also become crucial to systems thinking in IR. All conceptualisations of the international system must entail a theoretical approach to the interrelationship of agents and structures. The preceding chapter referred to a minimal definition of an international system: a set of interacting parts (or units) organised by a structure of some kind.[164] This gives a deceptively simple way in to thinking through the relationship between the parts and the structure. But, as the often torturously complicated debates in social theory and IR show, there is a great deal of argument about how to conceptualise both structures and agents. How such debates are resolved has crucial implications for how we conceptualise the world and the possibilities that exist within it. Such debates are an aspect of the same fundamental dualism discussed in chapter one: the relationship between mind and matter, form and substance, ideas and the material world. By examining the agent-structure problem in detail, it is possible to deepen the discussion of international systems set out in chapter one.

This chapter begins by outlining an initial understanding of what the agent-structure problem is about, what is at stake within the debates about agents and structures, and why the problem has become such a central issue for the social sciences in general, and IR in particular. It shows how entering the debate has become a way of outlining an ontological position for analysts as they approach the study of the social world. These ontological positions must include, either self-consciously or implicitly, the embrace of a position in the philosophy of science.

The second section discusses some of the ways in which agents and structures have been conceptualised in social theory. Earlier social theory tended to develop extreme positions on this

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[164] Buzan and Little (2000: 90)

issue, which would give absolute primacy to either structuralist or intentionalist interpretations. More recent formulations have shown greater sophistication, moving dialectically away from the extreme positions towards theories that incorporate both structural and agential elements simultaneously. The section then traces how the agent-structure issue has been conceptualised in IR, using foundations borrowed explicitly from social theory.

In the third section I look at some radical approaches to the agent-structure problem. The first is the concept of 'material agency'. This concept has developed primarily in work derived from the sociology of technology, and is associated with what has become known as actor-network-theory.[165] It questions mainstream accounts of human agency, and tries to show how the social world is constructed through complex combinations of human and non-human elements arranged in networked relationships. It includes the idea that non-human subjects may possess a form of agency through their ability to mediate outcomes. It helps to shed light on two key issues at stake in the agent-structure problem: the relationship between ideational and material elements, and the relationship between past, present and future. These relationships are crucial to the issue of conceptualising the transformation points between international systems, which forms the central question for chapter three. The second approach considered in this section focuses upon the production of social space, drawing upon the work of Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre's ideas about social space also add to an understanding of the interrelationship of agency and structure over time, and bring a spatial perspective to the relationship between material and ideational elements, and between form and process. Both of these approaches will later illuminate the contribution that cities can make to our understanding of international systems.

The Agent-Structure Problem as Ontological Debate

For a debate that has generated so much heat, the essence of the agent-structure problem is still summed up nicely by Marx, who, over one hundred and fifty years ago, observed in the opening lines of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, that 'men make their own history, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen'.[166] This is the heart of the issue: political actors do not have free reign to implement their plans or achieve their goals. They are everywhere constrained by the structured contexts in which they find themselves. The agent-structure problem is about the role that human agency plays in our theories of the social world. Human agency represents those qualities that can introduce change and indeterminacy into social life: the conscious exercise of free will, the ability to implement choices after having

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[165] Law and Hassard (1999)
[166] Marx (1852/1960: 115)

reflected on circumstances, the possibility of acting on desires and moving towards goals. Without space for the possibility of human agency, theories must fall into embracing predetermination or teleology.[167]

But there remains the question of how we conceptualise agents. To say that agents can only be human beings is to embrace ontological individualism. Many social theories argue that agents can also be conceptualised as emergent social wholes. In Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*, states are viewed as corporate actors that are, quite literally, people: 'states are people too'.[168] In most systems theories in IR, states are conceptualised as agents. Buzan and Little, although arguing against a narrow state-centrism, define units within international systems as

> entities composed of various sub-groups, organizations, communities and many individuals, sufficiently cohesive to have actor quality (i.e. to be capable of conscious decision making), and sufficiently independent to be differentiated from others and to have standing at the higher levels (e.g. states, nations, transnational firms).[169]

In their formulation, units must be capable of self-directed behaviour. Recent radical social theory, such as actor-network-theory, stretches such definitions of agency, as I will discuss in the third section of this chapter.[170] It is clear, though, that there is a great deal of latitude as to how we can conceptualise the role of human sentience as it becomes embodied in agency.

The difference that human sentience makes in social life is a crucial issue that must be answered at least implicitly in all theories. Once again, the question of whether the social and the natural sciences can be approached with a unity of method bears crucially on this question. The natural sciences have often been viewed as holding out the prospect of predictive knowledge, precisely because the objects under analysis exist within a structured context, but do not alter that context.[171] The sentience of human actors means that they are able to reflect upon their circumstances and alter their actions accordingly. This creates an element of unpredictability for

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[167] As I will argue in the second section of the chapter, many of the theories that social science has embraced in the modern period are influenced by religious philosophy and come close to determinism. Alexander Wendt (2003) has recently attempted to revive a more sophisticated form of teleological theorising. Extreme structuralist positions would include the determinism of the structural Marxism of Althusser (1970); the process-less march of a variety of globalisation theories described by Rosenberg (2000); the economic structuralism of Wallerstein (1974). It could also be argued that in its reliance upon a rational choice approach to decision-making in social life, both the neorealist and the neoliberal variations in IR represented by Keohane and Nye (1977), embrace a form of determinism by marginalising the space for choice in their theories.

[168] Wendt (1989)

[169] Buzan and Little (2000: 101)

[170] Latour (2005) Law and Hassard (1999)

[171] Hay (2002: 51)

the social world that seemingly undermines the prospects for the attainment of that predictive, policy oriented, theoretical knowledge so longed for by those that subscribe to a positivist philosophy of science.

However, as Marx's line indicates, the idea that human reflexivity needs to be incorporated into theory does not mean that actors are able to modify the world as they wish. Structures play constraining roles. If they did not, intentionalist accounts, where actors simply put their stated aims into practice, would be correct.[172] But what are the structural constraints that actors face? Structures can be viewed as material phenomena, such as the underlying economic structures that determine social and cultural activity in many Marxian theories. Structures can also be viewed as recurring behaviours, or as regularities, patterns or institutions. Indeed, structures, it has been argued in recent social theory, should not be thought of simply as restraining actors. They also provide the materials and resources through which agency takes place.[173] I will return to this issue later in the chapter.

In any formulation of the agent-structure problem there is a decision to make about the relative weight that gets attributed to the power of agents and structures respectively.[174] There is also the important issue of how the two elements are related. Answers to these questions are implicit in all theories that attempt an explanation of political or social phenomena. There is, however, a growing perception that the agent-structure problem is not a problem that has a correct solution, or a puzzle that can be definitively solved. A more considered approach brings us back again to the issue of ontology. Colin Hay argues that

> *structure-agency is not so much a problem as a language by which ontological differences between contending accounts might be registered.* The language of structure and agency provides a convenient means of recording such ontological differences in a systematic and coherent manner. It should not be taken to imply an empirical schema for adjudicating contending ontological claims.[175]

Once again, it seems that we return to the political nature of ontological choices, which, once made, go on to condition the type of knowledge that theories of the world can produce. The ways in which different analysts formulate the agent-structure problem, the type of entities that they designate 'agents' and 'structures', the relative weight that they give to those agents and structures respectively, is that analyst's particular take on the potential possibilities and projects that are available in political and social life. This reading of the debate has animated Colin Wight's project to map the various positions within the philosophy of social science that IR

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[172] Extreme views of the unlimited possibilities of agency include intentionalist accounts such as Garfinkel (1967), argues Hay (2002: 89-134).

[173] Giddens (1984)

[174] Hay (2002: 94)

[175] Hay (2002: 91) Wight (2006: 5)

scholars have taken up.[176] Wight argues that if we are sensitive to the philosophical positions that IR scholars take, it will be possible to see more clearly how certain scholars develop their theories with particular political projects in mind.

His first move, then, is to dissect the problems inherent to the positivist philosophy of science that informs most of the mainstream theories of international politics. He then goes on to argue for a scientific realist philosophy of science as a more suitable ontological basis for thinking about international life, and as an antidote to positivism. This formulation maps on to the central debate in IR between Waltz and Wendt, who, as I argued in the preceding chapter, explicitly formulate their respective theoretical approaches to international systems with arguments drawn from the philosophy of science: Waltz as a positivist, and Wendt as a scientific realist. This distinction is what pushes them to view the international system, and the agents and structures that constitute it, in different ways: Waltz as primarily a material phenomenon, where the changing distribution of power can be observed, Wendt as a realm of inter-subjective ideas.

As outlined in chapter one, philosophical realism is a position in the philosophy of science that argues that the world exists independently of human thought and perception – it has historically set itself up in opposition to idealist philosophies of science that argue that the physical world is in some way linked with, or depends on, human perception and observation. Positivists, as anti-realists, seek to limit discussion of non-observable entities in their investigations into the nature of reality. The key issue in the philosophy of science debates in IR, then, is the status of unobservable entities in our theories. For positivists of various stripes, the theories that we hold about the world are limited to the things that we can observe and access through sense data. This is empiricism. For realist philosophers, unobservable entities may be included in theories even though we may only be able to detect them by their effects, much as we posit the existence of black holes because they exert a gravitational pull. It is worth engaging in some of the background to the philosophy of science debate that underpins this difference of opinion.

Back in the eighteenth century, the early positivists interpreted modernity as 'the transformation of the world by the use of scientific knowledge'.[177] The early positivists Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and August Comte (1798-1857) argued that there was no distinction between the methods that could be applied to study the physical world and the social world. Both realms were ruled by hidden laws that it was the function of science to uncover. Their ultimate goal was the unification of all forms of human knowledge through the uncovering of the universal laws that drive the history of nature and society. They hoped that these universal laws could provide the

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[176] Wight (2006)
[177] Gray (2003: 38)

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standard of agreement between competing perspectives and knowledge claims that secular society required.

Their empiricist approach to the question of naturalism is part of the long tradition of what Isaiah Berlin has called 'the pursuit of the ideal', traceable to Classical Athens, where Socrates and Plato were driven by the notion that rational argument could find firm foundations for politics and ethics. [178] Behind all this is the conviction that a timeless and transcendent universal body of knowledge exists, waiting to be unveiled. Once discovered, these laws would be irrefutable, and all opposing judgements must give way. The ultimate foundation of such certainty came to be seen to rest in the pure form of knowledge offered by mathematics, which had underpinned all the great advances in the natural sciences, and allowed unparalleled access to the secret laws of the physical world. The eighteenth-century positivists hoped such

> order could be introduced into the social sphere as well – uniformities could be observed, hypotheses formulated and tested by experiment; laws could be based on them … and these in turn could be based on still wider laws, and so on upwards, until a great harmonious system, connected by unbreakable logical links and capable of being formulated in precise – that is, mathematical – terms, could be established.[179]

Moving into the early decades of the twentieth century, these ideas were pared down and refined by the logical positivists. The core of logical positivism was the empiricist (and extreme anti-realist) position that the world can only be constructed from information accessed by the senses: that ultimately social reality is simply that which we can observe. Scientific method alone can allow us to interpret such sense data as we can collect, and only those assertions that can be backed up and tested by science have any meaning. Any speculation outside of this framework is denied legitimacy.[180] The forced emigration of many of the logical positivists from Vienna by the rise of Nazism meant that their ideas were eventually incorporated into American social sciences. They helped to build the foundations of post-war economic thought in the United States through the work of Milton Friedman, who was heavily influenced by the Vienna Circle. Friedman's thought lifted economics from out of its historical context and sought to establish universal and ahistorical laws of economic behaviour.[181]

This approach, manifested in the social sciences in positivist methodology, marginalises history and historical context in two different ways. Positivists either saw the history of society as

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[178] Berlin (1997: 1-17)
[179] Berlin (1997: 4)
[180] The logical positivists, as extreme anti-realists, sought to limit discussion of non-observable entities in their investigations into the nature of reality – for them, any such discussions were mere metaphysical nonsense. As Colin Wight (2006: 19) argues, the logical positivist position essential rules out discussion of ontology.
[181] Gray (2003: 39-43)

moving along a pre-determined path of development towards a utopia where all values converged on foundations of scientific reason – neo-Kantian theories of the democratic peace may be viewed as a part of this lineage.[182] Alternatively, the economic framework inspired by the ideas of logical positivism leads to an essentially ahistorical position – human behaviour can be distilled into a set of timeless principles and laws applicable to all periods. Structural realism, and the research programmes derived from it in IR, such as liberal institutionalism and regime theory, replicates this ahistoricism. In both stances the rich possibilities offered by more complex and robust historical understanding are cast aside.

There are two major critiques of these positions. Firstly, there is the argument that historical context does indeed matter, and that the dream of an essential and ideal knowledge that lays underneath surface appearances, and outside of time, is illusory, and dangerous in its desire to impose universal truth. Secondly, there is the Kuhnian inspired critique that science itself is a process that evolves in historical time, and that its methods and aims change with the knowledge and problems of the day.[183] Both of these critiques reaffirm the centrality that a deeper understanding of the complexity and contingency of history should be playing in our theories of the social world.

The idea that historical context matters for explaining the social world is sometimes used to draw a sharp distinction between incompatible ways of knowing the natural and the social world.[184] Scientific explanation, in this reading, is concerned with establishing ideal models and the laws that regulate behaviour, placing to one side the messy and unquantifiable impact of ideas and feelings.[185] This approach strives for objectivity and seeks a vantage point outside of the object under analysis. In sharp contrast, the other way of knowing is held to be one of understanding the development of human society from the inside, accepting that motivations and causal links must be understood by looking at the ideas and historical contexts of the actors involved. Such an approach is inherently historical, recognising and seeking to imaginatively reconstruct changing historical structures and mentalities as they vary over time and space. It rejects the idea of essences and identities that exist outside of historical time, as well as the notion of the

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[182] Doyle (1986)

[183] Thomas Kuhn (1970) placed the development of science itself into historical context, noting how scientific knowledge did not accumulate uniformly, but was subject to periodic crisis and reconstitution. In Kuhn's work, the history of science becomes not a simple description of scientific activity through time, but serves to inform science as to the type of problems to be addressed in successive historical frameworks: Somers (1998: 737-738). In this way, Kuhn challenged the positivist position that scientific theories should be discarded because of failure to live up to empirical observation. In the history of science, theories are more often discarded because competing theories offer a more intuitively appealing vision of the world for a particular historical time period: Somers (1998: 741).

[184] Hollis and Smith (1990)

[185] Rational choice assumptions of social behaviour are set up to try to resolve this problem.

eighteenth-century positivists that there can be one universal solution to the problem of designing a political society, based on logic and reason.[186] In this view there is no one model of modernity on which societies will converge, but many paths to multiple modernities.[187] Each solution to a set of historical problems will not bring society a step closer to utopia, but will rather bring with it another set of problems to be resolved.[188]

This approach brings us closer to an alternative understanding of what science is, and therefore an alternative approach to the question of naturalism. Scientific realism offers an important critique of the positivist position in both the natural and the social sciences.[189] The philosophical realist position consists in the conviction that the content of science is not contained in its methods, but in its attempt to work towards deep explanations of the reality that underlies surface phenomena. In this sense, it posits that unobservable objects are real, in that their existence does not rest simply in their being available to the senses. Unobservable entities, such as society, can come to be rationally known through their causal power, even if they cannot be shown to exist via observation. In the realist model, 'the world is an ensemble of powers, propensities and forces which are the result of the ways in which things are composed, structured and related to each other within systems'.[190] Realism further insists that science is always a historically located undertaking and that the knowledge arising from it is therefore a social product, not a reflection of universal laws that exist outside of time.[191] Science, therefore, becomes not about prediction and control, as those in the positivist tradition desired, but about the cataloguing and categorisation of particular causal mechanisms, not the discovery of timeless causal laws.

This debate has become important in IR in recent years, as dissatisfaction with positivist inspired ways of doing social science in IR has grown. In the wake of the failure of structural realist theories of international politics to anticipate the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the credibility of positivist claims that IR can be a predictive policy science has taken a critical battering. Although positivist inspired accounts of international life are rightly being questioned, the philosophical realist critique lacks coherence, and there are a number of different strands of philosophical realism that are often incorrectly used in an inter-changeable

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[186] This approach to historical understanding can be traced initially to the work of the seventeenth-century Neapolitan Giambattista Vico (1725/1984), and is exemplified in IR by Robert Cox (1981). See Berlin (2000) for an account of Vico's historicism and its opposition to the positivist strand of Enlightenment thought.
[187] Eisenstadt (1999). Chapter five begins to look in more detail at the relationship between the particular historical configuration of the international system in the epoch of modernity.
[188] Berlin (1997:12)
[189] Bhaskar (1979)
[190] Wight (2006: 45)
[191] Wight (2006: 19-46)

fashion.[192] Yet philosophical realism has made its way into IR because of the impact that it has had in the wider social sciences and in social theory. In IR it has been used to underpin the moderate social constructivism of Wendt, which has moved to colonise the centre ground. Its contribution can, perhaps, be seen most clearly in relation to the agent-structure problem, and the next section looks at how and where this impact has been made. It builds on the history of the agent-structure problem in social theory by examining how these ideas have been imported into the ways IR scholars conceptualise international systems.

The Agent-Structure Debate in Social Theory and IR Theory

Structures and Agents in Social Theory

The development of the literature on the agent-structure problem has followed a trajectory that has moved dialectically away from two extreme positions, towards recent attempts at a more sophisticated synthesis. This synthesis has been a necessary step for social theory because predominantly structural or agential formulations have tended to simply reduce the role of one element to the other. Pure intentionalism, or pure structuralism, although rarely found in any social theory, are instantly undermined by their marginalisation of either structures or agents.

Colin Wight argues that such ideal types may be useful as a basis for examining the later moves that social theorists have made to combine structural and agential elements within a single account. In classical social theory, the two thinkers often drawn upon as exemplars of the two extremes on the spectrum between intentionalism and structuralism are Max Weber and Emile Durkheim.[193] Weber's methodological individualism forms the foundations for his approach to the study of society. This approach looks to identify explanations for what happens in the political and social world from the perspective of human beings as they go about identifying and pursuing their goals. In this view, only individual human beings, not larger social systems, collectives or corporate bodies, can possess agency. The approach builds in an assumption that individuals are able to achieve their stated goals, and a concomitant marginalisation of context and structural constraints. It assumes that individuals are working towards their goals on a level playing field, because the uneven residues of history are not considered as central to social possibility. Such intentionalist accounts concentrate on the present, and thus fail to take into account the ways in which history structures the contexts in which individuals find themselves.

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[192] Wight (2007) Chernoff (2007) Brown (2007)
[193] For this account I have drawn on the discussion of Weber and Durkheim in Wight (2006: 64-72).

By concentrating on what individuals say and do, intentionalist accounts also have a tendency towards favouring description over analysis.[194]

At the other end of the scale rests Durkheim's structural approach to social theory. Durkheim refused the notion that social and political explanations are reducible to individuals. On the contrary, individual people are constructed by the political and social structures in which they find themselves. For Durkheim, the social whole precedes the individual and must form the focus of analysis. Individuals are not free to define themselves and their goals, but are socialised by the collective consciousness that pre-exists their coming into the world.[195] The individual, in every respect, is shaped by the historical context into which he or she is born. Durkheim inspired structuralism tends to look for patterns and logics that exist within social systems as wholes, and which are beyond the power of individuals to refashion. Such patterns would include those identified by structural realism or world systems theory in IR.[196] Such approaches, it is clear, marginalise the ability of human agents, either individually or collectively, to modify the social systems in which they find themselves. There is no space in a purely structuralist theory for political change or the transformative power of agency. A pertinent critique would raise questions about the paradox of how we might come to know about structuralism: if individuals are constructed by social structures, their ideas produced and provided by the context in which they are embedded, how can they hope to stand outside of such a context and analyse their situation from an objective vantage point? How might we come to know we are determined by structure, if structure is all that there is?[197]

Probably no contemporary social theorist would embrace an entirely structuralist or intentionalist position. There is most often some concession to the choices of individuals or the constraints of structure. Not many writers today would argue for the unfettered power of individuals to make their own history, or for historical philosophies of predestination. But the agent-structure problem remained a dualism at the heart of social theory. This has given rise to a number of attempts to overcome that dualism. Those theories that give priority over one element or the other have been eschewed in favour of theories that incorporate both elements. The most successful and influential recent attempts to engage with the agent-structure problem have looked to the interplay of agency and structure over time. The historical aspect is essential in order to conceptualise the movement of both elements. It is also notable that the newer approaches are explicitly based upon a realist philosophy of science, which gives them the intellectual resources to move beyond the limitations of earlier social theory. Embracing an

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194 Hay (2002: 111-112)
195 Wight (2006: 64)
196 Hay (2002: 102)
197 Hay (2002: 109)

ontological position of philosophical realism allows these theorists to argue that, because the world does not present itself directly to our senses, but yet exists and can be known, social structures can exist beneath the surface appearances of methodological individualist approaches or materialist structuralism. Two key strands have emerged from the early critical realist philosophy of Roy Bhaskar: the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens, and the morphogenetic approach of Margaret Archer. These approaches are united in their view that agents and structures are intertwined, with agents finding themselves situated in a structured context that presents them with uneven prospects, opportunities and constraints, depending upon their position within it. Agents have the ability to shape their context over time, but within a certain set of limits.

A crucial way in which these theorists reconceptualise the agent-structure problem is to view social structure as not simply a constraining element that restricts agents, but as a set of resources that are an essential pre-condition for the possibility of any type of agency. At the same time, Bhaskar argues that social structures cannot possibly exist outside of human agency: society is the outcome of human agency.[198] This way of viewing structure and agency is key to Giddens' influential *structuration theory*. Rather than see agents and structures as a dualism, Giddens views them as a mutually constituted *duality* that cannot be separated ontologically: they are, in his metaphor, two sides of the same coin. Like Bhaskar, Giddens sees structure as not simply a restricting force, but as the essential condition for agency, providing the medium by which skilled actors either reproduce or alter their context. Structure is then both the medium and outcome of social and political conduct, and does not have any existence outside of human agency.[199] 'Structuration' is Giddens' term for how the social relations that are generated by this 'duality of structure' are then manifested in an arrangement across time and space. One of the ways in which this formulation moves forward from the more simplistic conceptualisations of the agent-structure problem that preceded it, is that it focuses upon the process of transformation as well as the reproduction of social structure.[200]

However, although Giddens' work has been highly influential, and is a clear move beyond earlier formulations, it is not without its difficulties. One line of criticism is that, rather than move the agent-structure problem forward, Giddens' formulation instead changes the terms of the debate. This is because Giddens uses a definition of structure that is unlike most others. He defines structure as 'rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems', adding, 'structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and

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[198] Bhaskar (1979: 43)
[199] Giddens (1984: 374)
[200] Hay (2002: 119)

as instantiated action'.[201] Colin Hay argues that there is thus no dualism in the way Giddens formulates the agent-structure problem. In Hay's view, if agency is about the actor's capacity to act, and structure is about memory traces or instantiations of action, then there is very little theoretical space between them. He complains that, 'accordingly, it would seem, the dualism of structure and agency is resolved less by theoretical innovation than by definitional sleight of hand.'[202]

Margaret Archer has a different critique of Giddens, which she uses to then build her own morphogenetic response to the agent-structure problem.[203] Archer does not buy into Giddens' reconceptualisation of structures and agents as an inseparable duality. For her, agents and structures must remain ontologically separate, existing in different time periods. The moment of agency, and the structures in which it becomes instantiated, exist in different temporal frames. As a result, Gidden's concept of the duality of structure fails to deal with the process of structure and agency over time. She develops the concept of the *morphogenetic sequence*: the temporal sequence of structures and agents as their mutually dynamic relationship unfolds. The concepts of *process* through time, and of the *emergent* properties of both structures and agents, are key. Structures are the result of agency, but they are not reducible to the actions of agents. Structure precedes action; action then takes place over a limited period of time, and the intended or unintended consequences of that action then goes on to reproduce or transform structure over time.[204] In this way, the uneven temporal nature of the elaboration of agency and its instantiation in structure is captured.

Structures and Agents in International Relations

Although there are points of disagreement between them, these philosophically realist inspired formulations of the agent-structure problem do seem to have moved social theory forward over the last three decades. It is only natural that these insights have been picked up by IR scholars and used to shed new light on the issue of how we conceptualise international systems. Armed with new insights drawn from social theory, IR scholars have tended to turn their sights upon the positivist inspired accounts that draw their inspiration from Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, discussed in the preceding chapter. It is a mark of the conceptual power of Waltz's theory that it has tended to form the focal point for theorists' critiques and attempts to formulate their own positions on the international system. Possibly pre-eminent among them, Wendt has drawn explicitly on a scientific realist philosophy of science and on Gidden's structuration theory to

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[201] Giddens (1984: 377)
[202] Hay (2002: 121)
[203] Archer (1995)
[204] Hay (2002: 124-125)

offer his idealist reformulation of the international system. Other critics have also used the agent-structure problem as a way in to discussing the nature of the international system. I will outline some of those approaches here, before moving on to the question of how the international system can be conceptualised to include the historical contribution of cities, which has, so far, been greatly overlooked.

It is useful to begin the discussion of the agent-structure problem in IR with reference to a related issue: levels of analysis. The levels of analysis debate may be seen as a version of the agent-structure problem, and as an additional way of organising the different positions in the field.[205] It gives greater leverage on the question of how wholes are related to parts, which formed the focus of chapter one. 'Levels' are a useful metaphorical way of viewing the world. Depending upon the focus that a particular analyst takes, certain aspects of a system are highlighted, while others lose focus.[206] Levels of analysis are also an analytical tool for locating sources of explanation in the international system.

The levels of analysis concept was made a focus of IR through Kenneth Waltz's 1959 book *Man, the State and War*. Waltz offered three 'images', in effect 'levels', where we might look for the causes of war. The first is level is in the nature of the individual, effectively human nature. This level has been central to the classical tradition of political realism: the basic human condition of fear and insecurity leads to aggression, a struggle for power, conflict. Waltz's second level is that of the state, its domestic political constitution, its ideology, whether democratic or totalitarian. The third level is the systemic level – the anarchical properties of which he went on to elaborate in *Theory of International Politics*.[207] Singer developed this analytical scheme, broadening the questions to be asked about international politics, but reducing the three 'images' to two 'levels', the behavioural and the systemic, leaving the analyst the choice of how to designate the two levels.[208] Waltz later built upon this framework to draw his distinction between unit and system level properties.[209]

However, the number of levels that may conceivably comprise a system is not limited: it is essentially an analytical choice. Buzan argues for five: individual, bureaucracy, unit, subsystem, system.[210] The analyst is free to move up and down the levels, changing perspective. The implication is that agents and structures appear differently as the perspective of the analyst shifts between levels: individuals may face bureaucratic constraints, while political units are constrained

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[205] Wight (2006: 102)
[206] Onuf (1995: 42)
[207] Waltz (1979)
[208] Singer (1961)
[209] Waltz (1979: 60-67)
[210] Buzan (1995)

by systemic factors. The levels metaphor has become a staple of systems thinking in IR, sharpening theory, although some critics have argued that it has contributed to a narrowing of vision by reifying and naturalising a particular vertical ontology as a way of conceptualising political space.[211] This is a valid criticism, but in the following discussion the concept of levels is seen as a way of elaborating how the agent-structure problem has been developed in IR.

Given the influence of his theory, and his self-conscious use of levels, structures and agents, Waltz is a natural starting point for discussing the agent-structure debate in IR. As related in chapter one, Waltz's theory defines structure as the distribution of material capabilities under anarchy. Anarchy is the structure that organises the way state units interact with each other by constraining and shaping their behaviour. It is at this level of analysis that the causes of state behaviour are to be located.[212] The anarchical structure of the international system is generated spontaneously when states begin to interact with each other. For Waltz, the anarchical structure is an unintended consequence of the interaction of autonomous, self-regarding, sovereign states. This theoretical assumption logically entails that state units exist prior to structure.[213] However, once states begin to interact and structure is in place it is impermeable to agency: states are trapped within its logic and forced to behave competitively in order to ensure their own survival. It is plausible, for Waltz, that states should refuse this logic, but his argument is that such a refusal to monitor and keep pace with, or adapt to, other states' military and economic power capabilities, is likely to result in destruction or subordination. The logic here is one of Darwinian selection: those units that do not behave competitively will be selected out of the system. Those that do will have been socialised by their anarchical environment.[214] This is also held to account for the ubiquitous nature of the state in the Westphalian international system: the state is the most efficient political/military unit in history; it can mobilise and wield the greatest preponderance of power. This advantage has seen earlier political forms, such as the city-state, for example, fall by the historical wayside. This is a contestable assumption, and one that I examine alongside a range of theories of unit transformation in the next chapter.

Waltz's structural theory takes no account of the internal properties of the state units that comprise the international system. Structure is the distribution of power under anarchy, nothing more. Structure accounts for the behaviour of states, not their properties, which are held by Waltz to be outside the purview of a systemic theory of international politics. This strict separation of structural and unit level properties is problematic, and forms the focus of many of the attempts to move beyond Waltz's conceptualisation of international politics. In chapter one I

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[211] Walker (1993: 128-131) Sassen (2007: 21)
[212] Waltz (1979: 90)
[213] Dessler (1989: 449)
[214] Wendt (1999: 99)

referred to Ruggie's critique, that structural realism cannot identify certain historical periods that do not look like the Westphalian system: medieval Europe for instance.[215] This highlights the ahistoricism of structural realism: its only way to conceptualise change is through the changing distribution of material capabilities, as states gain or lose relative power, and as particularly powerful states create poles of material power. It problematically assumes that an anarchic structure springs into being as states begin to interact, yet, as we have seen, international systems have often been characterised by units other than states. Additionally, Waltz's theory itself contains an evolutionary logic, which suggests that two theories of time are contradicting each other within his theory.

A further set of problems is inherent in both Waltz's notion of structure as a material phenomenon, and the idea that states must react to the logic of anarchy as egoistic power maximisers. Waltz argues that a systemic level theory should take no account of unit level properties, yet the assumption that his theory makes is that states will react to the imperatives of structure by acting rationally to maximise their power. It has been pointed out that Waltz is essentially smuggling in a theory of the properties of the units here by making an unfounded pre-scientific and essentialist metaphysical assumption about the nature of states as egoistic rational actors.[216] There is no theoretical justification for such a move, and yet the assumption plays a central role in the systemic theory. This has offered a crucial possibility for later theorists to open up the interplay of state units and structure. Waltz wanted to theorise structure as an *observable* material phenomenon because of his commitment to an empiricist philosophy of science. Deploying a scientific realist ontology puts a very different emphasis on the nature of the international system, its structures and the relationships between units.

David Dessler was one of the first to attack Waltz's materialist conceptualisation of structure by drawing upon those insights from social theory that argued that structure should be seen as not just a constraining force, but also as the indispensable medium and materials through which agency is exercised. Dessler argued that structure should not be seen merely as the material distribution of power under anarchy, but as incorporating ideational elements, such as the social rules by which rational action would be internalised by units as values and beliefs.[217] Dessler was writing at a moment when the rise of social constructivism was beginning to permeate the field of IR, and the international system was being reconceptualised as an ideational phenomenon made up of inter-subjectively held collective representations, norms, values and rules.[218] This position had its precursors in the English School tradition outlined in chapter one, but now it

[215] Ruggie (1998)
[216] Ashley (1984)
[217] Dessler (1989: 456-460)
[218] Onuf (1989) Kratochwil (1989)

was given an explicitly philosophical foundation. This new wave of theory challenged Waltz and his followers very notion of what kind of thing the international system is: now it was being theorised as primarily a distribution of knowledge and ideas, which take precedence over, and condition, the meaning of material capabilities and factors.[219] Dessler's critique is that, without the ability to instantiate such rules in structure, there is essentially no room for transformative agency in Waltz. [220]

Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* developed in this environment. Wendt takes much of his inspiration from Gidden's structuration theory, as he reconceptualises the relationship between anarchical structure and state agents.[221] It will be remembered that Giddens viewed structures and agents as a mutually constituted *duality*: two sides of the same coin. Structures constrain agency, yet structures also provide the essential medium through which agency is possible.[222] Wendt's argument against Waltz is that international structures not only constrain the *behaviour* of states, but they also have another effect: they constitute the *properties* of states.[223] This is clearly a direct challenge to Waltz's notion of what a systems theory should be, but it is in line with philosophically realist social theory and an ideational conception of structure. It is attractive because it provides more conceptual latitude to account for change under conditions of structural anarchy.[224]

Wendt opens up the concept of the international system by reconsidering the nature of structure and agency, and their relationship to each other. He draws a distinction between the internal and external structures of social entities (in his theory, states). He also adds a layer to the structural level, where he identifies micro-level and macro-level structures. These two conceptual moves are related, and give the necessary space to account for possible change in the international system. Whereas Waltz argued that the nature and properties of the states that comprise the system are irrelevant to a truly systemic theory, Wendt argues that it is impossible to understand the properties of states apart from their interaction.[225] These properties are constituted through social relations: it is only through interrelations with other political units over time that states have developed their particular identities. Such interrelations may include the type of response to the anarchical environment that Waltz outlines, but it may also allow for other responses. To forget that the meaning given to anarchy and the identities and roles that states derive from their interaction with each other are social phenomena is to commit the error of reification, to forget

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[219] Wendt (1999: 139)
[220] Dessler (1989: 466)
[221] Wendt (1999: 77)
[222] Giddens (1984)
[223] Wendt (1999: 26)
[224] Wendt (1999: 87)
[225] Wendt (1999: 71-78)

that human beings are the authors of their own world, and that what appears to us now as a fact of nature is in actuality a stage in a process with a distinctive history of its own. The sovereignty of a state, for example, can only develop its meaning in relation to other sovereign actors who are willing to recognise sovereignty as a principle. This is a shared culture that constitutes the roles states play and the identities that they take on. To declare sovereignty without the possibility of recognition by other sovereigns would be a meaningless exercise. State identities are constituted in relation to other states (or, in other periods, in relation to alternative political units).

This insight is then taken forward to broaden out the concept of structure into 'two levels of structure': macro-structure and micro-structure. Wendt argues that Waltz has reified structure by separating it from agents, when the two are mutually constituted.[226] Micro-structure is about the interaction that goes on between states, constituting their collective inter-subjective identities. It is structure seen from the perspective of the unit. Macro-structure is about the larger systemic patterns that Waltz is concerned with: the balance of power, recurrent warfare, or perhaps the decline of warfare at the systemic level. This is structure from the perspective of the system, the effects produced by the system as a whole, which Wendt terms the 'logic of anarchy'.[227] Such a formulation opens up the possibility of change in the system, not in the sense of a change in the distribution of power, but in the sense of a changing collective culture. New forms of collective identity may form at the micro-level from the interaction of states over time, and this can modify the meaning of anarchy at the macro-level: anarchy becomes 'what states make of it'. In short, there is the possibility that, by developing new ideas about each other and themselves, there is made space for agency to change the structural effects of anarchy. States may come to see each other not as enemies or as rivals in competition, but as collaborators in collective projects (such as the development of global economic institutions), or as friends.

This is an attractive formulation and a radical advance on Waltz's model, but one that is also capable of incorporating the insights of structural realists, where the competitive international system may now be seen as a particular type of international society, in which the units' collective identities are ones of suspicion and rivalry.[228] It offers the conceptual resources to theorise major transformation points in the international system as shifts in inter-subjective understandings between units, and I return to this aspect of Wendt's theory in chapter three. But, in many ways, Wendt's scheme is quite conservative. This pertains not so much to his theory of structure in the international system, but to his theory of agency. His agents are states, seen as unitary actors. He conceptualises them, quite literally, as people. Wendt believes that we need to be able to 'attribute anthropomorphic qualities like identities, interests and intentionality' to states, as a 'precondition

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[226] Wendt (1999: 146)
[227] Wendt (1999: 147-151) Buzan, Jones et. al (1993)
[228] Buzan (2004)

for using the tools of social theory to analyze the behaviour of corporate agents in the international system, since social theory was designed to explain the behaviour of individuals, not states.'[229] This would appear to be a very limiting concept of agency, although it is also close to Buzan and Little's emphasis upon units being 'sufficiently cohesive to have actor quality' and possessing a capacity for 'conscious decision making'.[230] Colin Wight argues that Wendt is committing here the 'error of methodological structuralism': giving the powers and attributes of humans to social collectives.[231] Recent developments in social theory have begun to conceptualise agency in ways that go beyond the conscious decision making of individuals, whether corporate persons or individual human beings. It is clear to Wight that structure and agency mean different things to different theories, and many of the real conflicts lay at the level of ontology. Indeed, Wight argues that, depending on how we define our ontological position, agency can be stretched far wider as a concept.[232] In the next section, in pursuit of a way to understand moments of transition, I examine the radical concept of material agency and how it relates to the discussion so far, and also the often neglected structural constraints and resources offered by social space.

Alternative Perspectives on Agents and Structures

In Buzan and Little's survey of the cycle of international systems through *la longue durée*, they identify many different units that have the necessary cohesive quality of agency: bands of hunter-gatherers, nomadic tribes, city-states, for example. My aim here is to find a way of theorising the historical impact of cities in international systems. Cities are the oldest form of large, organised human settlement, and they have had a profound, yet changing, impact on the crucial aspects of social life in every historical epoch. Cities have been marginalised in the study of IR, largely because of their subordination to the modern sovereign state. Yet, I will argue, the relationship of urban forms to other political, economic and social units can help us to understand some of the radical changes that are taking place in the contemporary international system, just as it has been central to change in the past. In this endeavour, it is necessary to formulate a way of understanding the agency of cities and their relationship to other units in the international system. Although cities may conceivably be seen as actors with a level of cohesiveness and conscious centralised decision making, with representative municipal governments in many cases, this is not the only way to conceptualise them. In this section, I look to the concept of material agency, and to the social production of space. One of the things that these approaches have in

[229] Wendt (1999: 43)
[230] Buzan and Little (2000: 101)
[231] Wight (2006: 188)
[232] Wight (2006: 181)

common is that they display their value in times of social transformation, when stable norms are disrupted.

Material Agency

In the preceding discussion of agents and structures the conventional definition of agency, as the special impact that human consciousness has on the environment in which it finds itself, was employed. However, in many ways, this distinction between agents and structures mirrors the modern Cartesian formulation that treats mind and matter as absolutely distinct. The scientific worldview of modernity described in chapter one, and the understanding of the concepts of nature and society that it has formed, have tended to set the boundaries for how we view agency. The duality of agency and structure is a shadow of the more fundamental issue of how mind and matter are divided, or combined, in our dominant scientific paradigm of the world. In the more holistic versions of science that have begun to replace the analytic and atomistic accounts of earlier frameworks, mind is made from, and always implicated in matter.[233] There is no pure and abstract operation of reason outside of matter. The actor does not simply act on his environment: he is a part of it.

IR theory, as has been noted, has generally conceptualized agents as collectives of some kind: as corporate 'persons' in Wendt, as cohesive, conscious collective units in Buzan and Little. Structures have been envisaged as material forces or as inter-subjective ideas and rules, with either the material or ideational element exerting the greater influence. In this section I want to examine a more radical formulation of the agent-structure problem that sees these dualisms in a different light. Implicit in a new configuration of mind and matter is the necessity of broadening out the conception of agency to include the possibility that it can be a quality possessed by non-human objects or entities. Such an angle has emerged from studies undertaken within the sociology of technology.[234] This approach has been labelled variously actor-network-theory, or, alternatively, the 'sociology of associations'. I turn to this sub-field of social theory as a source of insight for theorising the type of agency that cities have. It stretches the concept of agency to include a wider range of entities than those that may be said to possess or instantiate human consciousness. It does so because it is in disagreement with the way that much of mainstream social theory formulates the concept of society.

In the accounts of social theory that I have discussed so far, there is an implicit assumption that that there is a social structure that presents actors with an uneven distribution of constraining

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[233] Maturana and Varela (1980) Wendt (2004)
[234] Latour (1987) Law and Hassard (1999)

and enabling elements. This way of looking at the social world has tended to see actors as stable sets of social collectives: Wendt's state as a corporate person. It assumes that this collective grouping will, despite the constant turnover in the individuals that comprise it, remain a stable emergent corporate individual, persisting over time. The reification of social groupings as stable and permanent is what the sociology of associations seeks to undermine.

This alternative way of looking at society insists that social aggregates are not made exclusively of human connections. It suggests that social theory has forgotten the original etymology of the word 'social', which was about how things are connected or assembled together.[235] It argues that social theory evolved simultaneously with modernity, and thus alongside the modern structure of bounded territorial nation-state societies that has tended to form its subject matter. Instead, it studies the ways in which people, ideas and material objects become connected together and assembled into larger units, and how the presence of material objects is essential to allow such collective entities to endure across time and space. In this, it reconceptualises the relationship between agents and structures. In actor-network-theory, agents are described as actors: they are given the capacity to act in certain ways only as part of a network of ideas and objects collected together. This network takes the place of 'social structure' in conventional social theory. Bruno Latour argues, in *Reassembling the Social*, that social structure or context is not the glue that binds things together, but, rather, the social is what gets made from different networks of entities. Whereas traditional social theory (that which Latour terms the 'sociology of the social) starts with society and uses it to explain certain phenomena, his 'sociology of connections' tries to explain society by tracing the connections that form it, maintain it, or reform it.[236] This approach has a political critique attached: in conceptualising social wholes as national societies, to take an example of a typical stabilised social grouping, sociologists arbitrarily exclude a wide number of elements from their theories.[237] Latour's argument is that in times of relative stability it might be possible to get away with reifying a grouping such as the nation-state. But in times of change, when boundaries are shifting quickly and the sense of belonging to a particular group is in crisis, and new groupings of ideas, people, and material objects are being formed, it will not suffice.

In these kinds of transformatory moments it is essential to trace new connections and networks and to see how they are being assembled. In this way, Latour seeks to realign our understanding of the social world with the scientific paradigm of relativity, removing the background frame and forcing the analyst to swap the god's-eye vantage point for relative insights: constantly moving between multiple frames that travel at different speeds.[238] Such an approach has become essential

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[235] Latour (2005: 9)
[236] Latour (2005: 64-65)
[237] Latour (2005: 49)
[238] Latour (2005: 12)

because of the accelerating pace of change and innovation in the contemporary world, where important groups are multiplying and technology is manipulating the speed of events. This has exposed traditional approaches developed for studying the relatively static social entities of the past: national societies are not eternally stable entities; they are simply shorthand for something that has been assembled at a particular historical moment. The contemporary debates surrounding globalisation have highlighted that this particular grouping may be under threat.[239] This point of tension, between the hitherto relatively stable groupings of nation-states, and the forces of globalisation in the contemporary international system, represents a point at which it is useful to look for new types of connections and assemblages of people, ideas and material objects. My argument here is that contemporary global cities, and the technological networks that are connecting them, represent just such an opportunity to study the fraying boundaries of territorial nation-states, and, of course, the larger Westphalian international system that they form.

Latour's key observation is that social ties alone are exceptionally weak and difficult to maintain.[240] They have very little durability; they have to be ceaselessly renegotiated and maintained. On their own, they cannot extend very far in time or space. In terms of social power relations, such ties have to be translated into other types of links; they must be embodied in more permanent material, otherwise the actor exerting dominance would have to work too hard, and too continuously, to make the dominance worthwhile. Social ties require the material objects of technology to keep them in place, largely embodied in some type of physical infrastructure. This network then takes on qualities of agency, in its ability to have mediating effects, but also some of the qualities of structure, in that it can work to enable or constrain future possible action. Only technology and architecture make it possible to build on a larger than human scale. But such building work requires constant maintenance, attention, care and renewal.[241] So, for example, in the incessant conversation about globalisation, it is vital to remember that the global is not some pre-existing natural context, or some inevitable historical destination, or some condition that will endure once attained, but a set of social ties that derive from particular local sites and activities, carried out by particular social groups, that can be traced to particular sites: the trading rooms and stock exchanges of London, Tokyo, New York, Frankfurt, for example, and the technologies that connect them; fibre optic cables, computers, software programs, office buildings, transport

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[239] There are clear parallels here with Jackson and Nexon's (1999) arguments, covered in chapter one, about the need for a relational approach in periods of social flux, where essentialist methodologies constrain analysts from conceptualising processes of change.

[240] This insight was apparently first formed through study of the amount of work that baboon troops have to constantly put into forming and maintaining their fragile societies in the absence of any technology to keep those ties stable and in place: Strum (1987).

[241] Latour (2005: 204)

networks.[242] In fact, no site dominates in such a way as to claim the title of global, just as no place is self-contained enough to be purely local.

The 'sociology of associations' is against the premature closing off or reification of social entities. It looks for linkages. It argues that even individuals cannot claim to be bounded entities. They are open systems, and in their openness, in their network connections to other systems, they are constituted by the circulation of many elements: the subjective human individual is created and assembled by exposure to countless circulating currents of ideas, information, culture:

> how many circulating clichés do we have to absorb before having the competence to utter an opinion about a film, a companion, a situation, a political stance? If you began to probe the origin of each of your idiosyncrasies, would you not [trace a] star-like shape that would force you to visit many places, people, times, events that you had largely forgotten? This tone of voice, this gait, this posture...'[243]

Even individuals are comprised of many intervening agencies from the past, carrying them from other places and other times. Structures are to be viewed as the enduring forms of many types of agency: the ways in which agents maintain and care for social ties of many kinds, including relations of power and domination. But structures in themselves exert agency through mediation – they fold past time into the present, so that many actors from the past act in the present to constrain, limit or empower new actors.[244]

I argue here that the most visible and important type of mediating structure, where agencies from the past and present combine, is that of the city. Cities have the great advantage of being tangible in a way that the invisible notion of society is not. If agency is to include the technologies that hold social collectives and projects together, then architectures and infrastructures are visible and traceable in the physical environments, the buildings, the technologies of communication, that have crystallised and mineralised the efforts of people around the world to keep social ties in place. Cities are, of course, as ancient as civilisation. They contain the records, the effects, and the combined technological projects of many generations of people. They provide the analyst with the possibility of tracing the historical interplay of materials and ideas, just as geological records enable us to uncover the history of the mineral world.[245] Without the permanence of cities there could be no lasting dominance of certain groups over others. A set of technologically linked cities in the contemporary world is emerging as the infrastructural backbone of 'globalisation'. We can map out the material and ideational networks that are supporting new

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[242] Sassen (2007: 21)
[243] Latour (2005: 209)
[244] Latour (2005: 200-201)
[245] DeLanda (1997: 25-57)

ways of drawing political space.[246] Elaborating this relationship between cities, technological infrastructures and political space, and how this relates to the transformative tendencies within the international system, will form the core of this thesis.

The Social Production of Space

This chapter has outlined the centrality of the interaction of agents and structures over time to social theory, and the importance of temporal sequences.[247] A largely overlooked part of the agent-structure problem is its spatial aspect. A sophisticated analysis of how space is socially produced is available in the pioneering work of Henri Lefebvre.[248] Lefebvre is sensitive to the way in which space constrains actors, but, also, of the resources that it offers as a precondition for agency. Lefebvre's work can be seen as path breaking, and has influenced a host of contemporary social and critical geographers.[249] Castells, Harvey, Soja and Massey have all taken insight from Lefebvre, and worked to extend his ideas in various ways.[250] These theorists have tended to work with the insight that, once a spatial form is created, it tends to institutionalise the future development of social processes: social space is a product of past human activity that powerfully structures and conditions social possibilities. Change has, therefore, to involve a reconstitution of social space.

In IR, this work does not seem to have had much influence. One particular way in which Lefebvre's ideas on space may be useful, however, is in application to the avenue of research opened up by Ruggie on the different structures of time and space exhibited by international systems, which I engage with more fully in the next chapter.[251] Here I wish to introduce some of Lefebvre's ideas about the social production of space, in relation to the agent-structure debate. Lefebvre's approach should be read in the context of his desire to defend a form of materialism against the threat, as he perceived it, of the dominance of linguistic perspectives on social life, particularly in France, where the influence of Saussure, Lacan and Derrida was strong. Lefebvre's strategy to rescue some of the insights of Marxism from the 'priority-of-language thesis' was to link space and language, and to show how political struggle is carried out and inscribed in space.[252] This is an aspect of his wider project to understand the implications of late-modern capitalism for social life, and the continuing durability of capitalism as an economic and social form.

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[246] Taylor (2003)
[247] Archer (1995)
[248] Lefebvre (1991)
[249] Aronowitz (2007: 134)
[250] Castells (1989, 1996) Harvey (2006) Soja (1989, 1996, 2000) Massey (2005)
[251] Ruggie (1998)
[252] Lefebvre (1991: 17, 55)

Lefebvre begins his investigation by posing questions about the relationship between different types of space: how are the spaces of the natural world related and connected to social spaces, and to the way space is conceived of in the mind. In his emphasis on how the mental perception of space intersects with physical spaces, Lefebvre is working within the familiar mind/matter problem that has featured in so much of social theory. In attempting to link the subjective space of the mind, the social construction of space, and the material realm of the body, Lefebvre seeks a unified theory of space. With much the same motivation as Latour, Lefebvre reconnects ideas, ideologies and discourse to the material world, which is seen as essential to their durability across time and space. He asks,

> what is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies? What would remain of a religious ideology – the Judaeo-Christian one, say – if it were not based on places and their names: church, confessional, alter, sanctuary, tabernacle?...The Christian ideology...has created the spaces which guarantee that it endures. More generally speaking, what we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and thus by taking on body therein.[253]

Lefebvre's tripartite conception of space is clearly very different from the Cartesian and Newtonian abstract notion of absolute space as a pre-existing container in which objects are placed. Space is a property of the natural world, but it is also a property of the social world, and their interrelation conditions the meaning of each. Indeed, Lefebvre views the notion of space as abstract, absolute and logico-mathematical as a product of the dominance of Western philosophy's particular way of *representing* space.[254]

Instead of accepting this understanding, Lefebvre attempts to demonstrate the many ways in which space is socially produced by different historically situated societies. The object of analysis moves from the location of things in space to the social production of space. The social production of space is analysed through consideration of three interconnected dimensions. The first of these is referred to as *spatial practice*, and is concerned with everyday interaction with the material world at the level of sense perception. The second dimension is the *space of representations*, which includes the manifestation of a particular society's knowledge, social codes and inter-subjective understandings in physical space: in architecture, in writing, in technology, in maps. The third dimension is what Lefebvre refers to as *representational space*, by which he means the way individuals interpret space symbolically: in their imaginations, in their dreams and in art.[255]

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[253] Lefebvre (1991: 44)
[254] Lefebvre (1991: 14)
[255] Lefebvre (1991: 53)

Seen in this way, space becomes a product of different historically situated societies, and of the changing perceptions and shared mental frameworks of individuals within those societies. Lefebvre argues that every historical period produces its own 'spatial code', a common language, which can then be read or decoded by the analyst. Thus, the European world of the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution was characterized by a spatial code that included classical perspective and Euclidean geometry. As Ruggie has argued, these mental representations of space were a crucial pre-condition for the political space of the bounded territorial state.[256] The formation and dissolution of spatial codes thus offer a way to understand historical change:

> If indeed spatial codes have existed, each characterising a particular spatial/social practice, and if these codifications have been *produced* along with the space corresponding to them, then the job of theory is to elucidate their rise, their role and their demise.[257]

Different societies, and, from the perspective of this argument, different international systems, produce very different types of spaces, with different characteristics and effects. They have different spatial structures. Therefore, we might contrast the overlapping and fluid spaces of the European medieval system with the bounded territorial spaces of the sovereign state system, and, again, with the emerging technologically constructed transnational space of flows. Such spaces structure future agency, offering an uneven spatial landscape of opportunity to agents. But space, conceived of as social space, also offers an indispensable resource for change.

Lefebvre's emphasis on the socially constructed character of space clearly overlaps with some of the arguments that constructivists in IR have made about the international system. Although they have rarely emphasised the spatial element of international systems, every theoretical position on the international system must include a formulation of political space. As Richard Little has argued, structural realism has offered IR a powerful theory of political space by sketching out two archetypal configurations of political space and exploring the relationships between them: the hierarchical space inside the state, and the anarchical space between states.[258] This provides theoretical bedrock for others to work on, and social constructivists have further developed ideas about political space by focusing upon how the influence of ideas impacts upon the two archetypal extremes sketched out by realists.[259] This emphasis on the interplay of the material and the ideational in the constitution of political space is in line with Lefebvre's earlier philosophical investigation of space.

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[256] Ruggie (1998: 185)
[257] Lefebvre (1991: 17)
[258] Little (2002: 48)
[259] For example, Reus-Smit's (1997) arguments about the different meaning of anarchy for the ancient Greek city-state system and the modern state system.

Lefebvre's arguments lead towards the conclusion that in order to understand how societies change we have to examine how the spaces that they produce change. Space is a social construct, but it is manifested materially in different historical configurations. As a result, there is a history of social space inscribed in the physical world. The spatial practices of previous epochs become sedimented structural remnants of the past in the present. This understanding of social space is, I would argue, essential in understanding the transition points between historical international systems. If every distinctive society produces its own social space, then, just as Ruggie has argued, each important break in continuity in the international system will be accompanied by a new configuration of social space.[260] The need to be watchful for the emergence of new forms of social space has also been recognised by Little, who argues that 'IR theorists need to be more sensitive to the conception of political space because we are ostensibly living through an era when political space is undergoing fundamental change'.[261]

To understand such transition points we should look to see how the particular spatial code of a given historical society undergoes crisis and collapse, as in the dissolution of religious conceptions of space with the advent of perspective and Euclidean geometry, or, as I argued earlier, with the rise of relativity and quantum mechanics. Lefebvre argues that all periods of revolutionary social upheaval are accompanied by the pre-conditions for a new form of space.[262] This observation is at the heart of my argument about global cities and their associated transnational spaces – these are qualitatively novel developments that signify a period of revolutionary change in the international system of territorial sovereign states: the visibility of new forms of space is an essential indicator of processes of transformation at work.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, in order to endure, such change *must* produce its own space. Lefebvre argues that one of the failures of socialism in the twentieth century was its inability to produce a distinctive social space. Its failure to produce a distinctive form of city, novel architectural innovation, or different form of territorial organisation, was indicative of socialism's failure to realise itself in space, and, therefore, to succeed as a social form.[263] As I will argue later, the ability of neoliberal ideology to create new forms of social space, in combination with cultural and technological developments, offers a powerful indication that it is an important driver of transformative developments in the international system.

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[260]As Ruggie (1998) also realised, because of their intrinsic connection, this new configuration of space will also be reflected in new social structures of time, an issue covered in the next chapter.

[261] Ferguson and Jones (2002: 45)

[262] Lefebvre (1991: 54-56)

[263] Lefebvre (1991: 54-55). Kostof's (1991) assertion that there was a distinctive socialist form of the city is a refutation of Lefebvre's argument. But the failure of state led socialism to exorcise capitalism, as argued by Derrida (1994), and confirmed by historical developments, does tend to reinforce Lefebvre's position.

Conclusion

The agent-structure problem has taken a central position in debates within IR, and it is a key component in how we conceptualise the international system. It is clear from the direction that the debate has taken that the issue is primarily an ontological one. Taking a cue from the development of social theory over the last three decades, IR has been heavily influenced by the decline of empiricist and positivist philosophies of science and the rise of philosophical and critical realism. This philosophy of science offers a far wider and more tolerant set of premises on which to build different theories, and is far less dogmatic about the content of scientific theory, objects, knowledge and method. The effect has been a radical reconceptualisation of the international system, bringing in the impact of ideas and inter-subjective rules, but retaining the philosophical warrant that this is indeed legitimate social science. Recall from the first chapter that the second 'great debate' in IR, between Kaplan and Bull, focussed on the relative merits of 'scientific' or interpretive accounts of international politics. Philosophical realism insists that unobservable objects such as ideational structures are every bit as real as observable, measurable and quantifiable objects, and that positivism does not mark out the boundaries of scientific knowledge. To be is more than to be perceived.

The agent-structure problem has been gradually reworked to include a more sophisticated understanding of the inter-relationship of both agential and structural elements within the flow of time. Whether we consider agents and structures to be mutually constituted, fluid processes in a state of constant flux, or ideas instantiated in material form, the issue is now firmly seen as an ontological choice on the part of the analyst. In IR, a good deal more latitude has opened up in how we conceptualise agents and structures in the international system.

In recent mainstream IR theory, structure has been considered to be primarily an ideational phenomenon, while agents are considered to be social aggregates that instantiate the human consciousness considered essential for agency. I would argue that the pendulum has swung a little too far towards the ideational content of the international system, at the expense of some of the material ways in which the context in which agents find themselves is created and maintained. In the discussion of material agency and the social production of space, it has become apparent that conceptualising agency simply in terms of conscious and cohesive human aggregates may be too narrow a way to understand the many types of agency and structural forces at work in social and political life.

When reified social aggregates, such as national societies or states, undergo periods of crisis or tension, it is useful to see how new collectives are put together from material and ideational objects and elements, and how new social spaces are produced. These approaches fit well with theories of how to conceptualise cities: the way in which urban form is constituted by both ideational and material elements, which will be discussed in chapter four. It also offers the prospect that cities can exert agency within international systems, and thus be conceptualised as units alongside other types of units, even if their agency is of a somewhat different nature. How cities relate to other political and social units, and their role in the points of crises and transformation that periodically reformulate the international system, will be the subject of later chapters.

3 The Transformation of International Systems

Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which fundamental systemic transformations between different types of international systems have been theorised. The notion that moments of systemic transition can take place in itself assumes a particular theory of international systems and their history, and this chapter seeks to record the different ways in which the histories of international systems have been conceptualised. The chapter builds on the foundations of the previous two chapters. Chapter one argued for the holistic perspective offered by the concept of the international system, and for how such a perspective can reveal insights unavailable to other forms of theory. This chapter is about the way an international systems theory allows us to conceptualise large-scale, system-wide change. Chapter two charted the tension between the agency that brings change and indeterminacy to social life, and structures inherited from the past that constrain and channel the possibilities of the present in an unevenly contoured landscape of opportunities. The tension between agents and structures translates into the tension between transformation and continuity in international systems that forms the core of this chapter.

The chapter is arranged in three sections. Section one takes a general look at how transformation and continuity have been conceptualised in historical and social theory. It identifies a number of key positions and methods of analysing change and continuity in historical and social theory. Section two uses this discussion, and the insights of the previous two chapters, to examine theories of change and continuity that take the international system as their object of analysis. This discussion centres on the three theories of international transformation outlined in the introduction. It draws upon the central IR debate about the role of units, structures and organising principles of systems. It examines what the implications are of saying that the international system is undergoing a fundamental transformation of some kind, where we would look to find evidence of such a transformation in the past, with a view to establishing where we would locate signs of transformation in the present. It also discusses how international systems have come to differ historically in the ways in which the categories of space and time are conceptualised, arranged and instantiated in their physical structures. The discussion will be extended in chapter four, which seeks to show the unique role that cities play in social change. Chapter four's examination of urban forms, their role in the international system and their relation to other types of units, such as states and empires, begins to lay some foundations for the examination of what the emergence of global cities may mean for our understanding of the transformative tendencies at work in the contemporary international system.

Theories of Historical Transformation

The question of the transformation of political and social structures is intrinsically linked with the question of how agents and structures are related to each other. Just as understanding of the agent-structure problem has become more subtle and sophisticated in recent social theory, so we should also expect the related issue of transformation to require a reasonably complex formulation. Just as the agent-structure problem was approached with a number of relatively simplistic and one-dimensional theories when originally engaged with in social theory, so too has the question of transformation frequently been conceptualised in a relatively unsophisticated teleological fashion. And, like the agent-structure debate, which moved dialectically away from the structuralist and intentionalist polar extremes, we might trace the movement of the debates about the pace, tempo and shape of historical development inwards, from revolutionary and evolutionary opposites, towards forms of accommodation that take into account both continuity and discontinuity within the parameters of a single theoretical approach.

Different ways of approaching the question of the continuity or change of political and social structures inevitably involve taking either a tacit or explicit position in relation to the philosophy of history. There is a deep-rooted tendency to try to discern patterns in the unfolding shape of history. Buzan and Little, in their review of the positions taken in the debates over the history of international systems, identify four broad philosophical positions on the direction of history in the work of world historians.[264] History can be seen as the tale of the progress of humanity; as a story of inexorable decline; as the cyclical movement of civilizational rise and fall. A fourth, synthetic position, which combines the first and third possibilities, sees history as a spiral of upward progress, where one civilization passes its achievements on to the next. I would add a further position: history as a contingent and context dependent process, where neither progress nor decline is guaranteed.

The first of these philosophies of history, the belief that history has an upward, progressive direction, finds its roots in the positivists of the eighteenth century, such as Comte and Saint-Simon, who I touched upon in the preceding chapter. History, for them, was the story of the gradual unfolding of reason towards the perfection of humanity at a pre-determined end point. This philosophy of history owed much to the religious philosophy of Christianity that preceded the secular modern age, and from which the moderns borrowed many of their modes of thought.[265] Marxian theories of the inexorable historical movement through a succession of economic stages fit into this category. Indeed, Arnold Toynbee went so far as to call Marxism the

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[264] Buzan and Little (2000: 50)
[265] Becker (1932/2003). Chapter five will examine the impact on the international system of modernity's inheritance of Christian thought in greater depth.

'last great Christian heresy'.[266] Hegel, who also viewed history as working its way towards an end-point, indicated by dialectical mechanisms of conflict and contradiction, can also be located in this tradition.[267] In IR theory the thinking of Kant and Hegel have been refitted for the contemporary world. Michael Doyle has argued influentially that the prospect of a perpetual peace is a distinct possibility in an international system made up of republican democratic states.[268] Francis Fukuyama has drawn upon the Hegelian thesis to argue that the liberal democratic free-market state is the perfection of political and economic institutions in time, in which humanity can find its fullest expression.[269]

These theories adopt an evolutionary and developmental position on the direction of history and the nature of change. They envisage one path towards the development and perfection of political, social and economic institutions, which will be realised universally, across all regions of the globe. They offer the prospect of a snapshot comparison of different societies at particular moments of development.[270] They are frequently teleological and deterministic, relying upon the contested concept of human rationality as their only concession towards agency. To the extent that they insist that human rationally must be exercised as the one correct response to a particular set of environmental pressures, such theories do not incorporate the possibility of deviation from a pre-defined path. They argue for history without agents.

The polar opposite of such a philosophy of progress in historical time is that which sees in history recurrent decline. Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* set the standard in charting the collapse of a great pinnacle of civilization.[271] In the 1980s, as Japan's economic growth seemed set to lead to the eclipse of the United States' economic leadership, Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* argued that those hegemonic great powers that come to dominate international life in a given historical period will tend to take on a wider set of military and strategic commitments than their economic base can sustain.[272] The third philosophy of history, the cyclical rise and fall of civilizations, bears some resemblance to the decline and fall position, although it might be stressed that, whereas notions of progress or decay bear a distinctly Christian flavour (salvation from the loss of paradise), a cyclical philosophy of renewal bears overtones of an eastern philosophy of time.[273] This position informs Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, where the cyclical rise and demise of civilizations

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[266] Kumar (2005: 105)
[267] Hegel (1985)
[268] Doyle (1986)
[269] Fukuyama (1992)
[270] Hay (2002: 137)
[271] Gibbon (1776)
[272] Kennedy (1988)
[273] Eco (1999)

signifies a world of endless conflict, and thus comes close to the position of the political realists, who, in structural realist mode, see only the eternal movement of the balance of power, and, in classical realist guise, the tragic condition of a permanently flawed human nature.[274]

The historian Arnold Toynbee envisaged a spiral view of history as a combination of upward linear progress through cyclical changes in civilizations.[275] Toynbee, it is argued, viewed history as a cyclical pattern, carrying humanity onwards towards some final destination.[276] More akin to a civilizational relay race than the realists eternal power struggle, this view of history brings in its wake no less a dose of unfounded metaphysical speculation about the hidden patterns that define the human story. More concrete proposals suggest that the international system gets refigured at regular intervals as a result of periodic crises: a major war, or the limitations of a particular economic system, which then require the reconstitution of the arrangements that have failed.[277]

These notions of progress and continuity, or of cyclical recurrence, continue to influence both the analysis and direction of world politics today. Liberal theories of progress towards peace through co-operation, Marxist theories of transition via the structural contradictions of capitalism, political realist notions of power continuously changing hands as the system itself endures. What many of these philosophies of history lack is an element of contingency, where the system may move in an unexpected and unpredictable direction. The desire to incorporate the impact of agency, while appreciating the constraints of historical structures that arise from the past, has led to a synthesis of two previously opposed approaches to the problem: the evolutionary and the revolutionary. The synthetic position that arises is a form of evolutionary theory that takes into account the gradual development of institutions in normal periods of stability, but also builds in the possibility of bursts of rapid and destabilising change. This position is known as 'punctuated equilibrium'.[278]

Early attempts to conceptualise the development of political and social institutions in the terms of evolutionary science drew on classical evolutionary theory in developmental biology.[279] Thinkers such as Herbert Spencer drew on the metaphor of society as a living organism that builds up a greater level of complexity as its cells divide and re-divide to produce the complex living body. Spencer saw the process of evolution in society as one of increasing structural and

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274 Spengler (1926) Huntington (1996)
275 Toynbee (1954)
276 Buzan and Little (2000: 50) McNeill (1963)
277 Bobbitt (2002) Arrighi (1994)
278 See Modelski and Poznanski (1996) for an overview of evolutionary paradigms in the social sciences.
279 Hay (2002: 156-157)

functional differentiation.[280] Society becomes more complex over time as it develops an increasingly specialised and differentiated division of labour. This underlying philosophy can be seen at work in the rise of the functionalist school in IR, which considered the growing integration of the international economy in the first quarter of the twentieth century.[281] It is also the underlying philosophical framework in the thought of neo-classical evolutionary social theorists such as Talcott Parsons.[282]

One of the key tenets of an incremental evolutionary approach is the assumption that the system is relatively stable, and that the level of social tension and protest remains low, with the state responding to alleviate any build up of tension.[283] The opposing position is a revolutionary view of change, where large-scale systemic transformation comes about through rapid destabilising bursts, often as a result of the build up of tensions and contradictions within the system. This position sees relatively stable periods ending with a catastrophic breakdown of established social, political or economic institutions, sometimes accompanied by a level of violence. Often the pattern is cyclical, as with Marxist modes of production, or Kondratieff's economic 'long-waves'.[284]

Recent thinking has tried to merge aspects of the evolutionary and revolutionary positions, although here the view of evolution is not in the tradition of Spencer's developmental biology, but rather the Darwinian tradition of selection through competition and adaptation to the environment.[285] Just as species are seen to evolve through the natural selection of traits best suited to their environment, so political and social institutions are viewed as competing with each other, with some forms selected out because of their inability to compete. This reading of institutional change is inherent to Waltz's theory of international politics, which sees the anarchical structure of the international system exerting environmental pressures of competitive selection to produce the like units of self-regarding egoistic states. It also forms the theoretical foundations of Hendrik Spruyt's examination of the political institutions that emerged from the breakdown of the European medieval international system, discussed in the next section.[286] This is a distinctive departure from the classical evolutionary approaches that underpin the functionalist thesis, where society is a systemic whole that grows and divides into greater complexity over its lifetime. In the Darwinian reading, a number of individual societies, each of them a separate organism, compete with each other. The story is one of complex adaptation to

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[280] Spencer (1891)
[281] Woolf (1916)
[282] Parsons (1966)
[283] Hay (2002: 160)
[284] Kondratieff (1984)
[285] Hay (2002: 158)
[286] Waltz (1979) Spruyt (1994)

the environment, and, as such, it builds in both the adaptation strategies of agents and the constraints of structure. The evolutionary history of political and social institutions becomes contingent, but, at any one point, the institutional history of the system offers a limited and unevenly distributed range of options.[287]

In the punctuated equilibrium perspective, the evolution of political and social institutions is not seen as a gradual, incremental process, but, rather, as one characterised by periods of stability, punctured by periodic catastrophic events and ruptures that alter the system's environment. The periods of stable and incremental change are associated with consensus politics, economic stability and growth. The points of crisis incorporate aspects of the previously separate revolutionist position. It is at the point of rupture that evolutionary change occurs, as the environmental adaptations that favoured certain political, social or economic forms become less useful. New institutional forms emerge that are better suited to the new environment, and competitive selection takes place between them.[288] At the end of this process, the system has been reconfigured, and another period of relative stability begins. This type of theory fits well with the problem of explaining the emergence of the modern territorial state system. This perspective incorporates a discontinuous and relativist vision of historical time, which moves unevenly throughout the course of history: sometimes slowly, at other times with great and destabilising pace.[289] In the next section I wish to examine how these different positions on the transformation of political, social and economic structures have been operationalised in thinking specifically about the international system.

Theories of the Transformation of International Systems

In this section I look at how the possibility of the transformation of international systems has been conceptualised in IR. In light of the discussion so far, it is important to note that the ontological position that underpins a particular analysis of the international system will define the way that transformation is thought about, and the possibilities for transformation that may exist. Theories that stress the ideational or material content of international systems differently will tend to view the nature and possibility of change in different ways. This is one of the consequences of the earlier claim that the ontology behind the way in which scholars build their particular theories of international systems will condition the types of conclusions that they are able to draw. Another key aspect of the question of transformation is how a particular theory conceptualises the relationship between the system's different elements: the units, the structure and the particular level of analysis at which explanations are located. These issues were covered

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[287] Pierson (2004)
[288] Krasner (1984)
[289] Braudel (1984)

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in detail in the first two chapters, and that discussion should be viewed as the basis for the following consideration of the transformation of international systems. This section covers three broad theoretical positions on international transformation; institutional competition, systems and their organising principles, and structures of space and time.

Institutional Competition

Competition between different institutional forms is at the core of theories of state formation, which have tended to stress the superiority of the territorial state to its competitors. Waltz's structural realism incorporates an understanding of international transformation that is determined by his conception of structure. The structure of anarchy forms an environment that selects for a narrow range of possible outcomes. Other types of unit, it is assumed, have been eliminated by history because of their military weakness in relation to the territorial state. Within this anarchically structured system, change over time is limited to shifts in the distribution of power around the system. States rise and fall as their material military and economic capabilities wax and wane in relation to others. Great powers come and go. Should the balance tip too far towards one great power, the only alternative to the organising principle of anarchy, a hierarchically organised system, would be the result. One power would take a hegemonic place within the system, and the units within it would adopt a functionally differentiated relationship. These are the boundaries of the possibility of transformation in Waltz's formulation.

It has already been noted in the preceding chapters that there are problems with Waltz's structural emphasis. Waltz's theory, for all the insight that it offers about the behaviour of states under conditions of anarchy, fails to account for the historical diversity of international systems. Its Darwinian logic of competitive selection or socialisation affords a marginal role for agency. As a result, in combination with its materialism, it cannot envisage any fundamental transformative change resulting from new ideas developed by reflexive actors. This critique also applies to others within the neo-realist tradition, such as Robert Gilpin, whose work is more interested in the historical composition of international systems, but whose focus remains unnecessarily narrow.[290] Gilpin looks at the way in which structure may vary over time, charting the succession of imperial and hegemonic international systems that existed before the sovereign state system and the world market economy emerged.[291] Gilpin's formulation, which does stress systemic organising principles, again leaves out much from the historical record: we do not find the impact of cities, or city-states, or of European feudalism. There is a lack of recognition within realism that the territorial state, whether independent, or at the heart of an empire, is but one way

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[290] Gilpin (1981)
[291] Buzan and Little (2000: 53)

of organising political space, and that states have competed and existed side by side with other political and economic entities throughout much of history.

The problems that structural realism has with the issue of unit transformation form the background to Hendrik Spruyt's work on institutional change in the international system.[292] Spruyt is interested in the transition from European feudalism to the modern international system of sovereign states. He notes, however, that medieval Europe, with its many overlapping authorities and political units of Church, Empire and feudal lordship, did not simply morph into a system of territorial sovereign like units. Close scrutiny of the historical record reveals that a number of different institutional alternatives emerged from the breakdown of the feudal system: independent city communes such as Florence or Venice, urban leagues such as the northern European Hansa, sovereign monarchies such as Capetian France. Spruyt's theory of change incorporates the notion of punctuated equilibrium outlined in the previous section. Spruyt argues that it is mistaken to assume that there can be a simple unilinear movement between the alternative institutional forms that make up successive international systems. The reasons for the decline of the medieval international system are separate from the reasons why the territorial sovereign state eventually replaced feudalism. States did not simply replace the previous institutional forms. Rather, a number of institutional alternatives were on offer at the point of crisis that accompanied the end of the feudal system. Spruyt's argument is that we then require a theory of systemic selection to see why the state won out over the other possible alternatives.[293]

Spruyt's theory of systemic change, then, is based upon the premise that a period of stability is ended by some kind of revolutionary event, which alters the environment of the system and allows for the emergence of new institutional forms. These will, in turn, be suited to that environment in different ways. In his chosen case, the growth of trade and the expansion of the European economy served to undermine the feudal units of church, empire and lordship. It led to a new set of bargains between different social coalitions in France, Italy and Germany, between the growing towns, monarchs and aristocracies. The different ways in which these bargains were formulated led to institutional variation. This is the second stage of the theory of systemic change: institutional emergence. City-states, city-leagues, sovereign states were all possible future units for the system, and we cannot at this point know which one will come to dominate.

This builds in a moment of contingency, intended to undermine the unilinear determinism of those theories that see the state system as emerging unchallenged. This stage is followed by that

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[292] Spruyt (1994)
[293] Spruyt (1994: 5) Tilly (1990) Tilly and Blockmans (1994)

of systemic selection: why does a particular institutional form, in this case the state, emerge as the dominant unit? There have been a number of alternative explanations for the success of the sovereign territorial state at the expense of alternative institutional forms. The state is often seen as a unit of superior efficiency and effectiveness in exercising authority and control over its particular domain, mobilising ideological and economic resources and channelling them into a competitive advantage. Charles Tilly has famously argued that it was the superior war making capacities of the state that spelled the end for other forms of unit.[294] Spruyt offers an alternative possibility, arguing that the territorial logic of the sovereign state was ultimately incompatible with the non-territorial logics of many of the alternatives available, and with the earlier institutional forms of European feudalism. The feudal church and the empire were based upon non-territorial forms of identity: they both appealed to a community of believers, not a bounded community. The same non-territorial logic applied to the personal networks of feudal lordship.[295] City leagues also worked on a network logic of organisation, while empires tend to be extended across large spaces of uneven authority. Sovereignty over a particular territory, and the notions of equality between political units that it entailed, were simply incompatible with non-territorial logics.[296] Once the sovereign state was in place, a logic of competition between states drove further innovation in technological and economic development, and led to the demise of other forms of political and economic organisation.[297] It is interesting to note that this way of looking at the transformation from a feudal international system to a number of alternative institutional possibilities to the sovereign state system, incorporates both an ideational element and a material element. Before the superior organisational and war fighting capabilities of the sovereign state could emerge, the ideas underpinning the institution had to be accepted and instantiated in political space.

Units, Structures and Patterns of Organisation

As discussed at length in the first two chapters, the tension between ideational and material conceptions of international systems has emerged as a central focus of debate in IR. Social constructivists have added depth to our understanding of the accounts of the formation of the state system, highlighting the role of inter-subjective ideas as a complement to the earlier emphasis on power.[298] As we have seen, for constructivists, ideas and identities provide material conditions with their meaning, and thus influence their effects. This formulation moves us away from a teleological understanding of the evolution of the state, where its superior material

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[294] Tilly and Ardant (1975)
[295] Spruyt (1994: 55)
[296] Spruyt (1994: 197)
[297] Bobbitt (2002)
[298] Price and Reus-Smit (1998) Reus-Smit (2004)

capabilities make its dominance inevitable. Much stress is placed, for example, on the evolution of the social norm of sovereignty. Constructivist approaches provide much needed theoretical purchase on the possibility of future change: for constructivists, units and structures are mutually constituted. In the period of state formation, the new relationship between territorial states was reflected in new normative structures for domestic politics within states. In a future international system, we should expect new ideational norms and social patterns of organisation to be reflected in new institutional structures.

Wendt puts forward the case that an anarchical structure comprised of independent states can be modified to form competitive, cooperative or collective cultures, as a result of the inter-subjective social relations states develop over time. This move, as we have seen, is made possible because of Wendt's distinction between the systemic level macro-structure of anarchy, and the unit level micro-structure of interaction between states.[299] For Wendt, although the structure of anarchy remains constant, transformation may occur at the micro-structural level, meaning that real, substantive change is possible within the international system as a result of the changing meaning of inter-subjectively held ideas. States can theoretically move from a culture of rivalry to one of friendship over time, thus broadening out our understanding of anarchy to resemble a scale or spectrum, rather than a fixed condition: from a point to a series of gradations.[300]

This raises the possibility that we should envisage hierarchy and anarchy not so much as binary opposites, but as positions on a spectrum, with a whole series of other points in between. Taking a longer historical perspective, a scholar associated with the English School project, Adam Watson has attempted to fill in some of the possible structural relationships that may exist between the extreme independence of the modern state system and the hypothetical possibility of an integrated world empire. Watson's scheme includes:

Independent states	Units have the capacity to determine their own internal and external policies, although they will be constrained by systemic factors and commitments voluntarily undertaken to help facilitate the smooth running of the system.
Hegemony	The system is ordered and maintained by a hegemonic power (or powers) with the strength to order relationships, and whose legitimate authority to provide order is accepted by other units.
Suzerainty	Political over-lordship of one unit over another is acquiesced to by a particular political community.
Dominion	Imperial authority is exercised to determine the government of another political community, although they maintain their separate

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[299] Wendt (1999: 147)
[300] Buzan (2004) offers an important reformulation of this position.

	identity to some extent.
Empire	An imperial centre directly administers the government of another political community.[301]

These are general categories that are designed to serve as an illustration of the possible diversity of structural relationships that may exist within an international system. Watson goes on to produce a history of the many different historical structures that have existed. But the central point to take from the more historically sensitive thinkers, who emphasise the role of the socially constructed aspects of international systems, is that many combinations of hierarchy and anarchy, of homogeneity and heterogeneity, and of the political and economic units that accommodate them, have been achieved in the long run of history, and will surely be built in the future. Utilising the notion of a spectrum of possible ways of organising international systems opens up a wider array of conceptual possibilities for understanding past international systems, as well as imagining future possible ways of organising international systems.

An issue that is at the centre of this great diversity of possibilities for organising the international system is that of how political order is maintained. As Hedley Bull argued, the mechanisms by which order emerges, so as to achieve some semblance of stability from incessant conflict over the basic resources of life, is arguably the central concern of IR. By order, Bull does not mean the avoidance of war, but the avoidance of conflict so pervasive and unlimited that it renders any other possibility of progress in life impossible.[302] Bull was concerned only with order in the modern international states system, where he saw the balance of power as the main mechanism for maintaining order in an anarchical society. For Bull, the maintenance of the balance of power is an artefact, created through inter-subjective rules and norms, built by the society of states from the raw materials of their common culture. This contrasts sharply with Waltzian structural realism, where the balance of power is generated automatically by the structural features of anarchy.

Theoretically, the achievement of order through the balance of power in the modern international state system has served to promote stability and progress within domestic politics, while change in the anarchical space between states has been effectively frozen through the institution of sovereignty: the understanding that no state has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another. In practice this arrangement has been breached many times, and the development of a global economy, complex interdependence and pooled sovereignty, and a

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[301] Watson (1992: 14-16)

[302] Bull (1977: 3-8) identified three basic requirements for order in social life: some level of security against arbitrary death, some insurance that agreements will be honoured, and an understanding that the possession of things will not be subject to challenge without limit.

nascent concern with universal human rights, place the continued viability of this particular mechanism of order in doubt.

But, as Watson's scheme shows, there are other forms of order that have arisen historically from different structural relationships between units. One of the key motors of transformational change is the tension between the need for order, and the need for the independence that promotes creativity, growth and change:

> Order promotes peace and prosperity, which are great boons. But there is a price. All order constrains the freedom of action of communities and in particular their rulers. The desire for order makes constraints and voluntary commitments acceptable, for the reasons set out by Hobbes and others. But in so far as the order is imposed by the actual or potential force of a hegemonial authority, it can be felt as oppressive... The desire for autonomy, and then for independence, is the desire for states to loosen the constraints and commitments imposed upon them. But independence also has its price, in economic and military insecurity.[303]

The relationship between order and independence, homogeneity and heterogeneity, is characterised by Watson as leading to a pendulum effect, where too much of either results in a reaction in the system towards the other extreme. The international system of classical Sumer is described as a hegemony, where its particular arrangement of order arose from the legitimate authority of one city and its dominant god. This was a historical international society with a relatively homogenous common culture. The pendulum swing towards growth and diversity came with the rise to hegemony of Babylon, which was a dynamic trading city that extended its power in the region by means of its exceptional wealth and growth; although its dynamism, genetic and cultural diversity meant that it was seen as an illegitimate hegemon by the other city-states that it dominated. We may discern a common pattern recurring in the dynamic cities of the Italian Renaissance, and again, with the rise of global cities in the late-twentieth century, as elements of heterogeneity seek to supplant homogeneity.

A further issue to consider when it comes to understanding the nature of transformation is the question of the analytical differentiation of international systems into sectors, first introduced into the literature by Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde.[304] As we have seen, this purely analytical separation of sectors (military, political, economic, societal) allows us to view the relationships between units that have their primary function in different sectors. Although in the functionally undifferentiated Westphalian system the state theoretically dominates all of these sectors, the rationale of this work is that, by taking a long view of international systems historically, we may use the concept of sectors to help us understand how change occurs, and how historical international systems have differed over time. Buzan and Little utilise the systemic concepts that

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[303] Watson (1992: 14)
[304] Buzan, Waever et al. (1998) Buzan and Little (2000)

they have developed in their work to track the changing nature of international systems through history: the relationships between interaction, structures and units.

For Buzan and Little, transformation points between historical international systems are to be identified when the dominant unit in the system changes. It is the character of the dominant unit that defines the nature of the system. They identify three points in history where such a transformation has occurred. The first is the emergence of pre-historical systems, where the key unit is the hunter-gatherer band. The second key transformation point is around 3500BC, with the rise of ancient and classical international systems, as the first cities and city-states formed, largely, but not exclusively, because of the possibilities for sedentary life offered by the development of agriculture in irrigated river valleys.[305] For Buzan and Little, the rise of the new political unit represented by these early forms of hierarchically organised political states represents the key transformation point to the first recognisable, if geographically limited, international systems.[306]

It is, however, important to recognise the partial and slowly evolving nature of these transition points: the expansion of the type of relations and interactions represented by these new international systems took millennia, in which they existed alongside more primitive pre-international systems. The third epochal transformation is seen as the emergence of the modern era, which Buzan and Little mark as occurring around 1500, with the emergence of the modern state, a proto-industrial revolution, and the technological innovation of ocean going sailing vessels, which opened up the possibility of a global scale international system for the first time.[307] This historical marker is also seen as coinciding with the dominance of western power and ideology, and the development of a world capitalist economic system.[308] This date is earlier than the emphasis placed by much of mainstream IR on the 1648 Peace of Westphalia as the beginning of the modern international system constitution. However, with questions of periodicity, there is no reason to insist upon abrupt ruptures. Ideas, cultures and political and economic developments gestate over long periods of time, and their effects are realised unevenly in different structural contexts. The Peace of Westphalia was a particular event, but, events, as Fernand Braudel, that foremost historian of large-scale historical change, famously wrote, are merely 'surface disturbances, crests of foam that the tides of history carry on their strong

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[305] This transformation accompanied the rise of the first true cities. The role of urban transformation as a key factor in points of major transformation between international systems is examined in detail in the next chapter.
[306] Buzan and Little (2000: 397-398)
[307] Buzan and Little (2000: 401) Tilly (1990)
[308] McNeill (1963) Wallerstein (1974)

backs'.[309] 1648 represents one such surface disturbance, the formalisation of a broad set of transformatory tendencies in the international system.

A big question is how does this framework help us to decide if the contemporary international system, which has accompanied the epoch of modernity, is, in turn, now undergoing some kind of fundamental epochal transformation into a new type of international system. In Buzan and Little's scheme, we would expect to see intimations of change in the system defining dominant unit: the modern nation-state. It is here that Buzan and Little's analytic sectoral distinction shows its value. After making the argument that the political and military sector has dominated the history of international systems, Buzan and Little speculate that the liberal discourses of globalisation and democratic peace may represent a shift towards the economic sector gaining dominance in the contemporary international system. They remark that, 'sectoral transformation...when it comes, would have profound effects on both units and structures'.[310]

The issue of the transformative potential of the set of processes collected under the rubric of 'globalisation' forms the subject matter of chapter five, but, for now, I will touch briefly upon the issue as it relates to Buzan and Little's argument about sectors, units and structures. The core of the debate is about whether the increasing economic and cultural interdependence of nation-states is eliminating major conflict and great power war in the military political sector of the international system. This possibility is encouraged by a set of developments pointing in this direction: the increased integration and sensitivity of formerly national economies to the world economy, the spread of democratic domestic political systems, the growing independence of civil society, and the changing nature of warfare, particularly in response to the technological development of nuclear weapons, which raise the stakes for great power conflict greatly.[311]

If this move from a dominant military to a dominant economic sector is a stable reality, Buzan and Little argue, we should begin to see a concomitant transformation in the dominant unit, the modern state. There are many indications that this is indeed the case, although what may be underway is not necessarily a change of dominant unit, but a change in the nature of the dominant unit.[312] Buzan and Little are careful to suggest that the jury is still out on whether such a transformation is underway, but there are many others who have suggested that the state is undergoing some kind of fundamental transformation. Cerny has argued that the pursuit of

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[309] Braudel (1980: 10)

[310] Buzan and Little (2000: 357)

[311] Keohane and Nye (1977) Van Creveld (1999) Kaldor (1999). It should be noted that some theorists accept neither the premise that there have ever been distinctive national economies, Wallerstein (1974), or, alternatively, that a globalised economy is developing: Hirst and Thompson (1999).

[312] Buzan and Little (2000: 359)

economic liberalism as a primary goal of leading states' policy in the last quarter of the twentieth century has led to a 'hollowing out' of the state, as it relinquishes control of many of its previously core economic functions to other economic actors, both above and below the level of the state.[313] This has led some to suggest that the rationale for the state as a political and economic entity has exhibited a number of changes over the course of the twentieth century; from providing security through its war making capacities, to providing welfare, and then from providing welfare to simply providing opportunities for its citizens to make their own way in the world.[314]

If these assessments are accurate, then a number of interesting questions are opened up about the possible transformation of the contemporary international system. Given the connection between units and structure within a systems framework, we might anticipate that a rise to dominance of the economic sector of the international system may lead to new dominant structural logics. In a political sense, the structure of anarchy still exists, but economic structures, such as free market logic, begin to have powerful effects in shaping unit behaviour and composition. The emergence of other powerful actors on the international stage, in response to the state abdicating some of its previous functions, also raises some important issues in the context of the discussion of transformation so far. The modern international system, previously characterised by the homogenous and dominant sovereign state, appears to be under pressure from a new heterogeneity of actors, in multiple sectors and at levels above and below the state: regional political constructions such as the EU, intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, non-governmental organisations within civil society, multinational corporations, private military contractors, religious movements, transnational crime networks.[315] Such actors place in question the sovereignty of the nation-state, and the integrity of its hard territorial borders, two staples of the international system of modernity, and have led to speculation about the coming of a new neo-medievalism, characterised by non-territorial and over-lapping spheres of authority and influence.

In an interesting reversal of the conditions that formed the modern international system, which I discussed in relation to the work of Spruyt on the breakdown of medieval feudalism, the move towards exclusively territorial units seems to be in retreat: new forms of transnational and non-territorial economic and political units are appearing, largely as a result of the new possibilities of manipulating space and time offered by the technological developments of the twentieth century in information and communications.[316] It may be argued that the state's adoption of neoliberal

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[313] Cerny (1989, 1995)
[314] Rosencrance (1985, 1999) Van Creveld (1999) Beck, Loon et al. (2000) Bobbitt (2002, 2008)
[315] Kaldor (1999) Glenny (2008) Scahill (2007) Ascherson (2008) Meek (2007)
[316] Appadurai (1996: 158-177)

political and economic policies is in large part a response to economic crisis. This is the type of crisis central to Spruyt's theoretical framework of institutional selection. We might, therefore, expect to see a period where a number of unprecedented institutional forms, including the 'hollowed out', 'virtual', 'networked' or 'trading states', the new actors mentioned above, and the global cities that I will discuss in detail later, are all in the competitive mix to emerge as dominant units in some future international system. Certainly, with the weakening of state sovereignty, it is possible that we may see the emergence of functional and sectoral differentiation, although not, as structural realists would have it, within a political empire, but, rather, in some novel arrangement of the international system beyond the scope of state centric theories.

A further issue, within the framework for international systems set out in chapter one, is that such a profound transformation of the international system must be reflected in the physical structures that develop to reflect the new ideas that underpin these transformative tendencies. In chapter one it was argued that an international system is defined by its pattern of organisation, a dominant idea or set of ideas that links units together in a particular historical configuration of relationships. The pattern of organisation that links units together in the modern international system of nation-states is that of sovereignty/anarchy. The physical embodiment of the ideas of sovereignty/anarchy is the set of functionally alike territorial states, embodied in physical space by their hard and contiguous borders. This arrangement has endured, it was argued, because the pattern of organisation of sovereignty/anarchy has remained in place, reproducing the state and the state system over time. A transformation in this pattern of organisation will be reflected in new physical structures: emerging units that make novel uses of geographic space. The de-territorialising tendencies of some of these new actors, and the possibilities of reconfiguring space through new technologies, offers the prospect that just such a transformation is underway. The uses that units make of space, and the related category of time, is, however, a largely overlooked subject in IR, even though these are fundamental categories of human experience. They will occupy an important part of the remainder of my analysis, beginning in the next section, which seeks to lay some foundations for the use of the categories of space and time when applied to the question of transformation in international systems.

The Spatial and Temporal Structures of International Systems

The categories of space and time are central to our understanding of international systems, although they are not always explicitly probelmatised in the IR literature. There are notable exceptions: Martin Wight famously argued that the space inside the state now marked the boundary of political progress in time, bracketing the space between states as apolitical, a no

man's land of repetition and recurrence.[317] Wight thus demarcates two types of space, with two different arrangements of time existing within them. Rob Walker argues that the discipline of IR has been built around this normalised and internalised understanding of the relationship between space and time, and that the discipline itself has become an obstacle to new political imaginaries.[318] The mistake, for Walker, is to think that this peculiarly modern arrangement of space and time in the international system is a transhistorical fact. As I have argued, a historically sensitive approach to international systems shows that it is not. Walker argues that the need to engage with the transhistorical categories of space and time is a perennial philosophical necessity that every historically situated society must come to terms with: conceptualising and building material arrangements of space and time through political imaginaries and institutions.

For Kant, the categories of space and time were a necessary basis for all human experience.[319] But, even if we agree with the centrality that these thinkers give to these categories, they are still extremely difficult to pin down and highly contested. Space and time are deeply bound up in each other, yet even physicists have not been able to come to agreement as to their nature. At the cutting edge of physics there is disagreement as to whether time exists as a fundamental constituent of the universe, or whether it emerges as an illusion from human consciousness and perception.[320] Newton conceived of time as absolute, existing outside of the material world, whose entities could have no effect on it. Einstein's theories of relativity undermined absolute, universal time, showing how time in the physical world speeds up or slows down depending upon particular relative frames of reference. Einstein's great contribution 'was to show that the separation between cast and stage was an artificial one. Space and time are themselves *part of the cast*…[they] are not simply 'there' as an unchanging backdrop to nature; they are *physical* things, mutable and malleable, and, no less than matter, subject to physical law'.[321]

I have already introduced the linkage of social and material space attempted by Henri Lefebvre. For Lefebvre, space is not simply an external environment, but a social product, the creation of human agency. David Harvey has extended Lefebvre's categories, adopting a tripartite distinction of absolute space, relative space and relational space, which he argues are, although conceptually distinct, always in play at the same time.[322] Absolute space refers to space as something outside of matter, in which things are placed and can be located and measured, in the sense that would be familiar to Euclid, Newton and Descartes. Absolute space would be the arena of the material: buildings, geographical features, territorial boundaries. Relative space refers to the space that

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[317] Wight (1960)
[318] Walker (1993)
[319] Kant (1781/1999)
[320] Stix (2006)
[321] Davies (1995: 16)
[322] Harvey (1973:13) Harvey (2006: 121)

emerges from the relationships between objects, and only exists as a consequence of the existence of those relationships. This fits with an Einsteinian and non-Euclidean (such as in a Riemannian or Gaussian geometry) understanding of space, where measurement is dependent upon a particular spatial and temporal frame of reference. A Geographer's use of relational and topological representations of transport networks, where the friction of distance and transport costs between two points modify measurements in absolute space, may be an example here. Relative space takes in such phenomena as flows of people, commodities, information, energy.[323] Relational space is associated with the thought of Leibniz, who argued that space is internal to a particular object or process. Objects and processes define their own spatial frame, rather than simply taking up a position within space. A particular point in space is not defined simply by its position or relationships at any one point in time, as in absolute or relative space, but by all the different social understandings that combine in an object or process to give it meaning. Relational space is clearly impossible to measure empirically, but it is intended to capture the social significance of particular spaces: an absolute or relative understanding of space cannot capture the meaning of such spaces as Ground Zero, Mecca, Tiananmen Square or Stonehenge.

This movement from absolute to relative time and space begs some important questions. For example, if time is relative, then what is it relative to? Since time cannot be measured meaningfully against itself, it appears that time is relative only to different conscious observers. As Minkowski argued in the early-twentieth century, in his work on the phenomenology of time, the ontological nature of time should take primacy over its chronological nature: people do not experience time as an even and simple chronological ordering of events, but, rather, they experience time as operating at different tempos, and place different significance on particular periods and events at the expense of others.[324] This points to the subjective and cultural nature of time, and this applies both for individuals and societies.[325] Both Durkheim and Spengler conceived of time and space as socially relative.[326] Durkheim made an important distinction between the private perception of time of the individual, and the public time embodied in the cultures of whole societies. Spengler was interested in how societies conceptualised and lived in space, and in how past societies had conceived of space in bounded ways: the ancient Egyptians as a narrow path for the individual soul, the ancient Greeks as a closely bounded and limited cosmos. The modern era had a special quality, in that space came to be seen, for the first time, as limitless and infinite.[327] Time is similarly a cultural construct, filtered through, and modified by, particular technologies: primitive hunter-gatherers measured the passing of days between phases

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[323] Harvey (2006: 122)
[324] Kern (1983: x)
[325] On the social construction of time see Gunnell (1987) Bender and Wellbery (1991).
[326] Durkheim (1915) Spengler (1926) Kern (1983: 19, 137-139)
[327] Kern (1983: 138)

of the moon by making notches on sticks, ancient Babylonians invented calendars to aid them in agricultural planting, while in the eighteenth century the mechanical clock segmented and regimented time.[328] The advent of computer networks and high-speed transport appear, once again, to be redrawing our notions of space and time in the early-twenty first century.

The notion that time and space are not simply absolute, immutable, pre-existing entities, but are inter-subjective and relative concepts, subject to both physical and cultural manipulation, is key to bringing these crucial categories into our frameworks for understanding the transformation of international systems. We can add to our understanding of moments of transition, which have so far taken in important periods of crisis, and the adaptations and responses of units to changes in their environment, those points at which cultures of time and space change. These are the moments at which new imaginaries of possible configurations for the international system begin to emerge. These moments have rarely been addressed within the IR literature, and there is very little work that talks about this issue in ways that fit an international systems framework.

One striking exception is the work of John Ruggie. According to Ruggie there are three inter-linked dimensions of transformation that we must take into account if we are to say that the international system is experiencing fundamental discontinuity: structure, space and time.[329] Key to the manipulation of these dimensions is the emergence of new forms of culture, and the technologies that reflect them. Ruggie examines medieval European perceptions of space and territoriality and shows how they contrast with those embodied in the modern international system. His goal is to set up a precedent for transformation that can then be used to shed light on the possible movement to a post-modern form of spatial organisation in the contemporary international system.

Ruggie sees the feudal system in Europe as one without fixed borders and territorial boundaries, which only began to emerge in the thirteenth century. The idea of authority in the medieval system was invested in people rather than territory, and spheres of authority could be multiple and overlapping. The development of notions of private property was clearly important to the emergence of exclusive sovereign territories, but Ruggie also makes a further link to the emergence of single-point perspective in the European Renaissance.[330] Here, a technical

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[328] Stix (2006)

[329] Ruggie (1998: 172)

[330] Ruggie (1998: 185). The recovery of the principles and mathematical ratios underpinning classical architecture was crucial to the Italian Renaissance's new emphasis upon space in the visual arts, exemplified initially by the work of the architect Brunelleschi. The painter Masaccio's *Trinity with the Virgin* (1427) is an example, 'without precedent in the history of painting', of the application of perspective to a new geometrically informed understanding of space, which

development helped to create the conditions for a revolution in social knowledge. The emergence of a single perspective, an individual, fixed, subjective point of view, opened the imagination to new ideas about social space and new spatial forms: 'the mental equipment that people drew upon in imagining and symbolizing forms of political community itself underwent fundamental change'.[331] This period saw the emergence of a new appreciation of temporality and contingency, as the eternal certainties of a divinely ordered universe began to dissolve. The emerging modern distinction between subject and object is seen as contributing to new ways of organising social space. Hard, impermeable, territorial borders appear along with the institutionalisation of sovereignty.[332] Embryonic ideas of natural law, new ideas about how the ordering of political life may be achieved through the application of human reason, began to disturb the settled hierarchical order of the medieval period. To this began to be added the prospect of a 'law of nations', which would emerge as an extension of the natural rights of individuals to goods such as life and property, and whose achievement could be reached through the agreement of common rules and shared understandings about issues such as war and trade.[333] The development of these types of ideas was crucial to the possibility of conceiving the modern state system, with its patchwork shape of contiguous territories.

Looking at the possibilities for a transformation of this nature in the contemporary international system, Ruggie suggests that a post-modern international system would be one where modern arrangements of space and time had lost at least some of their social effectiveness.[334] For Ruggie, there are several possible transformative developments in the dimension of space that could lead to a post-modern configuration. Following on from his single-point perspective insight, Ruggie looks for signs of the emergence of a multi-dimensional perspective, where actors might hold new understandings of space as non-distinct and overlapping.[335] One candidate for a new type of

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reflected a transformation in the individual and social psyche of the Renaissance world: Brucker (1969: 244-248).

[331] Ruggie (1998: 184)

[332] Walker (1993: 10)

[333] These themes form the preoccupations of the thought of Grotius (1583-1645), whose ideas were shaped by living through the Wars of Religion that destabilised European Christendom.

[334] Ruggie (1998: 172)

[335] This line of argument parallels Stephen Kern's wide-ranging investigation of *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*. Kern is concerned with the momentous changes to American and European society's understanding of the categories of time and space in this period, as reflected in the creative response across a wide range of artistic and intellectual fields. The period was characterised by the invention and development of a number of profoundly destabilising technologies which altered the relationship between, and, perception of, space and time: the telephone, wireless radio, telegraph, x-ray, cinema and photography, automobiles, railways and factory systems. Kern investigates the impact that the new perception of space and time had on modernist sculpture, painting, literature and politics. He sees the notions of simultaneity and multi-dimensional perspective as crucial innovations of the culture of this period. An analogy with the ground-breaking artistic expression of the Renaissance painter Masaccio, mentioned in the footnote above, would be the cubist revolution in painting of this period, which portrayed a

political use of space is the European Union. Here, a complex meshwork of overlapping institutional and juridical arrangements work to undermine inviolate sovereign territory, yet, at the same time, the European Union cannot simply be characterised as a larger unit or state. However, the destiny of this political project is far from clear. It is possible that the old power of nationalism may be reawakened in its member states, or that the union will slowly evolve into a new form of super-state to act as a balancer in a world of great powers.

There is another use of space that points towards non-territorial organisational logics. The expansion and acceleration of the transnational global economy is a candidate for a new system-wide use of space. The logic of deregulated transnational economic relations has created globally integrated capital and currency markets, global factories for manufacturing, as capital floods to the cheapest labour markets available, and an increasingly global market for trading services.[336] Rapid developments in information, communications and transport technologies provide the means to deepen existing links and integrate new markets into transnational economic spaces. Partly through the application of new technologies, a global market has emerged that, despite its activities taking place at different physical locations around the planet, in functional terms exists as if its elements were operating in the same place. For Ruggie:

> these links have created a 'global region' in the world economy – a decentred yet integrated space-of-flows, operating in real time, which exist alongside the spaces-of-places that we call national economies. The conventional spaces-of-places continue to engage in external economic relations with one another, which we call trade, foreign investment, and the like, and which are more or less effectively mediated by the state. In the non-territorial global economic region, however, distinctions between internal and external once again are exceedingly problematic, and any given state is but one constraint in corporate strategic calculations.[337]

It is this space of flows that nation-states are increasingly unable to control, despite the fact that they were an intrinsic element in its creation. Any development that undermines the sovereign territorial spaces of the modern state places the continued existence of the international system in its historically modern configuration into question. This is a clear indication of the value of the

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multi-dimensional perspective on a single canvas at one time (for which an early fore-runner is Cezanne's set of still life paintings of the 1880s and 1890's). The technological innovations of this period show a clear line of development onwards to the supposedly revolutionary developments in information, communication and transport technologies of the late-twentieth century, which have offered a wider range of experience of simultaneity. But one important question is whether this is simply more of the same, the extension of fundamental changes that occurred over one hundred years ago, or if a qualitative difference is on offer in the late modern period. In the discussion of Castells theoretical contribution in the introduction, I indicated that the late-twentieth century technological revolution offers a qualitative difference to the earlier, related, technological developments.

[336] Sassen (2007: 20)
[337] Ruggie (1998: 196)

category of space for our understanding of transformation. But in what ways can we tie in the related category of time to our framework?

I have already touched upon the way in which time is experienced differently for different societies, filtered through their particular cultures and technologies. The measurement and meaning of time in an ancient agricultural society and an industrialised society are clearly very different. The rhythms of a life in tune with the slow changing of the seasons and the requirements of the harvest are very different from the mechanised clock time of the factory. These are different types of social time, and it is clear that one of the key attributes that differentiate them is the use of technology.[338] Another way to think about time is to distinguish not just between social forms, but between different types of duration.[339]

The historical movement of the *Annales* School, that emerged in France in the late 1920s and is associated with Marc Bloch, Jacques Le Goff and Fernand Braudel, pioneered the application of different types of duration to historical analysis.[340] *Annales* historians sought to move away from the traditional narrative style, with the ambition of writing the total history of particular societies and regions. They sought to analyse the underlying economic, cultural and material structures of society on vast regional canvases, over immense timeframes. Such ambition was clearly beyond the limits of the traditional diplomatic archives. In order to fulfil their ambitions, the *Annales* historians freely borrowed methodological and conceptual tools and frameworks from other disciplines: economics, statistics, anthropology, psychology, geography.[341] The school's greatest practitioner, Fernand Braudel, comes closest to realising the vision of total history in his vast work on the development of the Mediterranean region, and in his global history of the social and economic structures of the early-modern world.[342]

In Braudel's work, it is historical structures rather than unilinear causal chains that provide the focus of analysis. Through a variety of methods, Braudel seeks a holistic analysis of whole regions by uniting them in their structures of time and space – his comparison of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* is a case in point:

> how different, how opposite they seem when approached by the narrowly political historian, how similar when seen in their context of time and space![343]

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[338] Thompson (1967)
[339] Bergson (1910, 1911, 1912)
[340] Bloch (1949)
[341] Hexter (1972)
[342] Braudel (1973)
[343] Trevor-Roper (1972: 475)

Structures provide the way to unite theory and history, and offer new insights unreachable by previous approaches. Braudel's key contribution to the subject of historical time saw him draw a tripartite distinction between different temporal structures.

The first type of duration is incremental time, and is associated with the discreet, infinitely divisible units of time understood by actors as constituting the social arena where single actions and events take place. This is the ephemeral time frame of events, the *histoire événementielle* that traditional history is concerned with. Secondly, a conjunctural time frame allows us to distinguish the patterns and cycles that underpin, shape and are shaped by the aggregate result of actors and events. We may, for example, associate Kondratieff economic long waves with this type of duration. This is the timeframe of social forms, political structures, both stable and unstable, large and small. The final type of duration is epochal, the deepest structural layer of time, *la longue durée*, which can be regarded as 'not simply lasting a long time, but as having the structure of a system, emerging at one point and dissipating at another'.[344] If, as Ruggie argues, time, space and structure are intertwined, but that it is only *la longue durée* that can be regarded as having the temporal structure of a system, then we can expect epochal systemic transformation to occur only when the temporal structure that underpins modernity 'dissipates'.

One conventional way to conceptualise historical structures of epochal duration is to distinguish between the structures of agricultural social systems and industrial social systems, or pre-modern and modern social systems. The emerging distinction between modern industrial society and a postmodern informational society will be a feature of the remainder of my analysis, which investigates the question of whether we are witnessing an emerging discontinuity in social time and social structure. One way in which a possible break in the temporal structure of modernity has been characterised is as a movement from sequence to simultaneity.[345] Simultaneity is, perhaps, the ultimate destination of the observable time/space compression that underpins the analyses of the globalisation theorists. It has been the economic aspect of globalisation that has driven the compression of time towards simultaneity. The logic of capitalism, working to eliminate costs and maximise returns, has pushed the development of informational technologies to shave off more and more of the inefficiencies created by time lag. In recent years, for example, the time lag of days that used to separate the completion of a trade on the global money markets, which were forced to wait for the clearing and settlement of funds, has been gradually eliminated through the perfection of the technologies involved: there now exists a twenty-four hour global market where distance is negated.

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[344] Ruggie (1998: 157)
[345] Giddens (1990)

The pursuit of more efficient markets for capital drives technological developments that push towards the elimination of sequential time. For theorists of the linkage between capitalism and the culture of postmodernity, such as David Harvey, this latest stage of capitalism is one where the basis of production has moved to the creation and manipulation of information, images and signs.[346] The possession of, and ability to use, knowledge and information becomes the fundamental source of power in the informational economy. The movement of capitalism into a late-modern phase is explicitly linked to a transformation of the culture of time and space by the cultural critic, Frederic Jameson.

Jameson views postmodernism as the cultural expression of the multi-national or post-industrial phase of capitalism that took shape in the 1970s.[347] This new phase represents both the continuity of capitalism as an economic form, and an experiential and cultural rupture in the organisation and perception of capitalism. For Jameson, the culture of postmodernism performs the ideological task of co-ordinating the mental habits, practices and 'structures of feeling' of individuals with the new requirements of flexible, fragmented and decentralised forms of economic production and organisation, and with a new globalised division of labour.[348] In short, postmodern culture creates postmodern people, adapted to function in the socio-economic environment of late-capitalist societies. Later on I will argue that it has also created an analogous form in the global city, a decentred and fragmented social space that both expresses and offers material support for such a culture.

Jameson's wide-ranging analysis of postmodernism's cultural artefacts offers some useful insights into the changing cultures of time and space of the late-modern period. I will briefly outline some of his analysis here, and reengage with some of these insights later in the argument. Postmodernism can be read as the exhaustion or ideological rejection of modernism: 'postmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good...a more fully human world than the older one, but one in which "culture" has become a veritable "second nature"'.[349] This transition manifests itself not only in postmodern cultural artefacts, such as literature, art, and the peculiarly postmodern form of the videotext, but also in the built environment (and, I will argue later, in the material form of the international system itself under globalisation). These various expressions exhibit a structural discontinuity in the culture of time and space.

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346 Harvey (1990) Lash and Urry (1993)
347 Jameson directly links his categories of realism, modernism and postmodernism to Ernst Mandel's (1978) stages of capitalism: market capitalism, monopoly capitalism, post-industrial capitalism.
348 Jameson (1991: xiv)
349 Jameson (1991: ix). Chapter five expands on this theme.

One way in which Jameson interrogates the postmodern culture of space is through an analysis of postmodern architecture. It is in architecture and the built environment that postmodernism can be experienced physically. One way to appreciate the novelty of postmodern architectural values is to show their break from the values and forms of modernism. The high-modernist architecture of a Le Corbusier or Mies van der Rohe are read as utopian projects that sought a visible and radical separation from the failed and degraded neighbourhoods of the traditional city.[350] Such a violent separation represents the imposition of a master narrative, by a master planner, on the traditional city space, the dominance of high culture, and the desire to re-engineer society from the top-down: hallmarks of the modern.

Postmodern architectural forms move away from all this by rejecting the distinction between high and low culture and engaging in a supposedly playful embrace of the mass commercial market as a form of aesthetic populism. But this superficial populism is misleading: the postmodern building does nothing to reconnect with the organic fabric of the traditional city. Instead, it designates a private and secluded space, equally distinct from its surroundings, no longer tied to any kind of political utopianism, but, rather, to the commercial world of late-capitalism. Jameson's analysis of several postmodern buildings in Los Angeles leads him to the conclusion that the ultimate rationale for the spaces that they enclose is not to reconnect to the city, but to become its replacement, or equivalent, enclosing a miniature self-sufficient city within itself.[351] To that end, such buildings, and the multinational downtowns that they form, present to the world a 'strange new surface', where entryways are downplayed to a minimum to symbolise their dislocation from that surrounding 'older ruined city fabric' that modernism had sought to replace. No longer the object of political transformation, the older city is simply left to itself, its image reflected back from the impenetrable glass skins of postmodern buildings. The fragmentation, privatisation and separation of space embodied in these cultural forms is matched, I will go on to argue, by the splintering of the national spaces of modernity embodied by the emergence of global city networks and regions.

The attempt at a replacement of the older space of the city with its complete and self-contained simulacrum thus reflects deep changes to the way social space is constructed under neoliberal or 'late' capitalism and its associated technologies. As structures of space and time are intrinsically connected, so the fragmentation and splintering of the modern narrative of space can also be discerned in the postmodern culture of time. Jameson notes that, where temporality, history and progress in time were core themes of modernity, under postmodernism history itself undergoes crisis, also becoming fragmented, and succumbing to that depthlessness and superficiality that

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[350] Jameson (1991: 2, 41)
[351] Jameson's (1991: 38-45) most extensive analysis focuses on John Portman's Westin Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

can be discerned in social space. This phenomenon is also hinted at in some postmodern architecture, where the collage of historical themes, through the 'random cannibalization of all the styles of the past', results in their re-combination as decorative elements.[352] Jameson argues that here lies an expression of a deeper structural discontinuity in the perception of time under late capitalism.

Jameson contends that the sequential understanding of history and time that characterised modernism is being undermined by a new simultaneity. Just as a reading of architecture was used to bring out changes to the culture of space, Jameson uses the videotext, as the 'art form par excellence of late capitalism', to reveal its temporal features (much as the literary text may have been used in earlier periods). One of the reasons the videotext is given so much importance is because it is a technological expression of late capitalism, and technological 'mutations' are viewed as the way in which capitalism responds to the periodic crises inherent in its nature.[353] With the continuing technological convergence between video and digital computer networks in the period since Jameson wrote, this judgement seems to be sound. The videotext, which encompasses both video art and commercial television, reveals this culture of simultaneity in two ways. Firstly, Jameson argues that commercial television, whose constant or endless flow lacks the temporal closure of other art forms (such as plays or films), requires the simulation of temporal rhythms, producing an 'imaginary fictive time'. In this way, the experience of time, already simulated once in plays or films, becomes the 'illusion of an illusion, the second-degree simulation of what is already itself, in other art forms, some first-degree illusory fictiveness or temporality.' In this sense, the culture of time begins to move away from the simple linear flows of the modern, one more step away from nature towards that more 'fully human world'.

Secondly, the wider implications of this change in the experience of temporality are brought out in Jameson's deconstruction of video art. It is here that the tendency towards the breakdown of temporal sequence is most explicit. The most striking characteristic of the particular videotext that Jameson considers is its random juxtaposition of the fragmented and broken pieces of the older visual and auditory images and forms embedded within it. Removed from their historical sequence, these scattered fragments now derive their meaning from their position within the text, rather than from their former position within a historical sequence. The videotext stages a process of ceaseless random interaction between different cultural signs or logos, which have been largely emptied of their original meaning. Instead, new meanings and interpretations result from their interaction with the images and signs that they appear next to. The text as a whole is

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[352] Jameson (1991: 18)
[353] Jameson (1991: 76) See also Thompson (1967).

argued to resist interpretation or meaning: the parts or components fail to add up to any recognisable pattern or purpose.[354]

The broader suggestion of this analysis is that something of this nature is occurring in the everyday experience of time and history where postmodern culture dominates, and, particularly, where digital computer networks underpin economic and cultural production, creating an electronically mediated environment of signs and symbols. These moves towards simultaneity, this loss or diminution of sequence, result in a crisis of historicism and self-identity. The dislocation of images of the past from their referents, the emptying or manipulation of their content, results in a 'new and original historical situation in which we are condemned to seek History by way of our own pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach'.[355] The consequences for the individual, themselves reduced to 'heaps of fragments', for social justice, for the possibility of politics, seem as profound as they are difficult to theorise, and, indeed, part of Jameson's argument is that the very essence of the cultural logic of late capitalism is to obscure and confound the potential for theorisation.

The sociologist Manuel Castells' work is concerned with the way in which these cultural forms are supported by, and reflect, a shift in the material basis of social life. The movement into the digital informational economy is accompanied by the emergence of new forms of social organisation based around networks. Castells argues that, 'as with all historical transformations, the emergence of a new social structure is linked to the redefinition of the material foundations of our existence, space and time.'[356] Castells designates the emerging structures of social time and space, which Jameson had identified, as 'timeless time' and the 'space of flows'. These emergent forms do not replace older spatial and temporal structures, but exist alongside them.

For Castells, the space of flows represents a new form of social space that offers the technological and organisational potential to practise simultaneity. In other words, it offers an infrastructure that enables people in non-contiguous locations to interact together in a new form of social space. Castells sees the space of flows as being made up of three elements: the places where people and activities are located, the technological networks that connect them together, and the content of the flows of information that inform their activities.[357] In Castells scheme, the space of flows now dominates the space of places. Places, of course, do not disappear. Rather, their meaning and function are now determined by their position within the flows of information as nodal points in particular networks. This is one of the key reasons for the emergence of global

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[354] Jameson (1991: 67-96)
[355] Jameson (1991: 25)
[356] Castells (2004: 36)
[357] Castells (2004: 37)

cities: they act as vital strategic nodes and hubs within various flows and networks in the contemporary world, in addition to housing substantial elements of the material technological networks that make the space of flows possible. Castells argument is that many of the most important social functions and processes are now organised around networking logics. Financial markets, global governance, transnational production, social movements, for example, are all seen to be organised through the space of flows.

This logic also gives rise to those that reject it. Resistance to the power of the space of flows often centres on traditional forms of identity. The rise of religious fundamentalism, the return to the local, the reinvigorated appeal of nationalism and ethnicity, may all be seen as expressions of resistance by those excluded from the networks of social power. But, where these forms of identity look to the past for their appeal, Castells also identifies a new form of culture emerging for those within the 'networked society'. This emergent culture he calls 'real virtuality'. It results from people sharing the new forms of space and time made available by technology. This is the world constructed from ideas, a world of imaginary representations stored and communicated through computer memory and networks, whose cultural features Jameson decoded in his deconstruction of the videotext. The symbols that comprise this world are not merely metaphors, but constitute actual experience, a form of reality, for those in the network society.

The social exclusiveness of these networks of power and value leads to rising inequality, and this inequality appears within states as well as between states. Castells describes black holes of poverty and disconnection existing within cities and states, the emergence of a fourth world, distinguished from the territorial inequality that separates the old third world from the prosperous nations. These black holes of poverty very often exist physically just blocks away from areas of cities that are home to firms centrally involved in global flows of power. Members of these firms are likely to identify, culturally, more closely with others located in similar parts of cities across the globe: within the space of flows forms a novel type of transnational class identity. In this sense, Castells formulation offers something qualitatively new from earlier forms of neo-imperialist theory that have influenced IR, such as that of Johan Galtung, for example, who examined the core-periphery model that seemed to be emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[358] Instead, Castells focuses on how technology has created a qualitatively new global social space, where disconnection and connection are expressed through non-contiguous networks that operate at different scales. This raises questions about the privatisation and citadelisation of corporate space, the decline of the public sphere, the integrity of the national territory, and of social justice. I return to this issue in later chapters.

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[358] Galtung (1971)

The technological creation of a space of flows enables the temporal structure of simultaneity that Castells calls 'timeless time'. This temporal structure refers to the disruption of sequencing inherent in the separation of the contiguity of social space from social time. Much of the culture of modernity has been informed by the notion of progress in time, in both politics and in the development of economic production. But, as we have seen, within the crystalline memory of digital technologies, the symbols and expressions of all recorded earlier times and spaces are made available. These symbols and signs can be mixed and manipulated, arranged and re-arranged. Access to the collected symbolic history of multiple cultures becomes a source of power. Castells also argues that, in the network society, temporal sequence is first compressed, then blurred, and, eventually, dissolved. For those privileged actors within the space of flows, *being cancels becoming*, while in the 'multiple space of places, fragmented and disconnected...devalued activities and subordinate people endure life as time goes by.'[359] The ways in which time is sequenced becomes a battleground for political projects, just as Lefebvre argues that the construction and reconstruction of social space is. As Castells notes, 'there are alternative projects of structuration of time and space, as an expression of social movements that aim at modifying the dominant programs of the network society', such as the environmental movement, that argues for a society that adopts the *longue durée* temporal structure of 'glacial time'.

Although it is clear that Castells and Jameson's formulations are by no means comprehensive, their work represents the most important attempt so far to understand and theorise the changes to the social structures of time and space that result from late capitalism and its technological paradigm. They can be seen as especially useful to IR scholars when viewed as a complementary set of theories to John Ruggie's constructivist perspective on how a transformation in the structure of international systems is accompanied by changes in the social structures of time and space. I will return to them later in the context of the emergence of the global city.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the tension between continuity and change within international systems, and has sought to identify ways in which we might apprehend significant points of transformation. The most useful analytical tools we have, it was argued, are those that come from a systems perspective. In particular, I picked out three theoretical approaches that may offer useful tools to understand change in the contemporary international system.

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[359] Castells (2004: 37)

Two of these approaches emphasise changes in the nature of the dominant institutional units, in the dominant analytical sectors of the international system, and in the organisational relationships between these elements. Spruyt's theory of institutional selection argues that changes in the international environment, brought on by a period of systemic crisis, are necessary for a change in the dominant unit of the system. In the medieval period it was the great expansion of trade and the growth of the European economy that destabilised the previous international system. In the contemporary period, a crisis-led reconstruction of the global economy has resulted in a number of inter-linked developments across the other sectors of the international system, which I discuss in chapter five. This opens up the possibility that states, in responding to this structural crisis, have reacted to alter the environment in which they themselves have developed. This, in turn, opens up the potential for a new wave of institutional selection, and the emergence of novel forms of unit. Global cities may be viewed as one institutional alternative, and we may also expect to see other novel forms emerge. Additionally, Buzan and Little contend that it may well be that the political sector of the international system, dominant throughout history, is giving way to the economic sector. This would also be a key indicator of change, and, as I will go on to argue, global cities, at present, operate primarily in the economic sector of international systems.

This chapter has also argued, building on some of the insights of the previous chapters, that Ruggie's notion of the importance of systemic structures of social space and time as indicators of epochal change within international systems also offers important, but neglected, resources for understanding the contemporary conjuncture. I have highlighted the interesting parallels between Ruggie's analysis of the emergence of the modern state system, and Jameson and Castells' analyses of the changing structures of space and time in the contemporary period. In the next chapter, I emphasise another key indicator of change in international systems: the urban dimension of transformation.

4   The Urban Dimension of Transformation

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the urban dimension of epochal moments of historical transformation. This chapter begins to lay foundations for justifying the claim that IR has overlooked a very important phenomenon and source of insight in its marginalisation of the role of urban form and process in the workings of international systems. The chapter begins to delve more deeply into the nature of cities. What are cities? What functions do they fulfil? How do they change over time? What can the changing nature of cities in history tell us about wider social change? What can a focus on cities tell us about the spatial aspects of international systems that we may have missed by looking at them from a primarily state centric perspective? This chapter begins the task of bringing the city back in to our frameworks for understanding international politics, a large and anomalous gap to have left in any understanding of the processes driving change in the international system of the twenty first century.

Within the context of my larger argument, there are two particularly important issues to bear in mind in this chapter: how do cities relate to other units within international systems over time, and how do periods of major urban transformation in history relate to the debates about moments of fundamental systemic change between historical international systems. The preceding chapter outlined how the transformation of international systems has been understood within the IR literature. This chapter looks at these debates from the perspective of urban change, and argues that the social production of city space can add to the debate. This discussion forms a crucial foundation for the broader argument about the transformatory qualities of global cities in the contemporary international system. If, as I argue here, major transformation points between particular historical international systems feature an urban dimension, then the revolution in urban form signified by the debates over global cities and their technological networks has clear implications for how we assess fundamental transformation in the contemporary international system.

The chapter is organised into three main sections. The first deals with theoretical questions regarding the city; issues of definition, debates about the genesis of cities, material and social ways of conceiving of cities, their built environments and the processes that constitute them. These issues are far from clear or agreed upon in the literature. They are also intimately bound up with some of the theoretical and philosophical questions that have been at the centre of the preceding chapters; material and social ways of conceptualising the world, the nature of space, the agent-structure problem. The second section of the chapter tracks the changing forms and

processes of the city in history, and identifies three key points of urban transformation within the literature. The first is the emergence of proto-urban sites, over 10,000 years ago, as hunter-gatherer bands traded their nomadic lifestyle for settlement. The second is the emergence of the first true cities, and from them the first city-states, in ancient Mesopotamia, around 5000 years ago. And then, less than 200 years ago, the advent of the industrial revolution constructed a new urban form: the industrial city. In the late-modern period we may well be in the midst of a fourth major transformation in urban form, signified by the debates about global cities, a proposition saved for chapter six. The third section of this chapter relates these observations about the changing form of cities over time to debates about key points of transformation between historical international systems. It looks at which perspectives on change are reinforced by the periodicity ascribed to city transformation. It shows how the changing nature of cities over time can help us to theorise the perennial historical issue of how territorial and deterritoralised forms of social organisation are inscribed in historical international systems.

The Nature of Cities

What, then, is the city? At the outset I will state that there is no meaningful simple definition of the city. There is no particular size or population threshold, no special architectural feature or legal status, which can adequately allow a quick identification of the city, or meaningfully differentiate it from smaller urban settlements. It is perhaps meaningful to talk of urbanism and the urban way of life as a minimal distinction from the rural, but, even then, city forms have often incorporated significant areas of rural activity within their shifting boundaries.[360] Indeed, the city is as much a concept as a physical object, a 'disputed and often chaotic concept' to be sure, and it is important to note that theories about cities have a major impact on the development of the forms that cities take.[361] In this sense, to place an arbitrary definition on a contested, complex and multifaceted conceptual and material entity of this nature would be a mistake, and would, in any case, tell us little about the nature of cities.

This, indeed, was the opinion held by the architectural historian Spiro Kostof, who, although reluctant to pin the nature of cities down to any kind of all encompassing definition in his wide-ranging study of city forms and processes throughout world history, offered some general features that cities share. For Kostof:

• Cities have high levels of *relative* density of settlement, which is not related to their absolute population,

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[360] Braudel (1984)
[361] Hubbard (2006: 1)

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- Cities form part of urban systems, without which they would not exist,
- Cities are bounded entities, but the boundary may be material, symbolic or legal,
- Cities are places with a specialised division of labour and social heterogeneity,
- Cities have a source of income, whether from a position within a trading network, an agricultural surplus, a commodity, a geomorphic resource such as a natural harbour, or a human resource such as a king,
- Cities exist in symbiosis with their surrounding countryside or hinterland,
- Cities are given scale and identity by monumental buildings and symbols,
- Cities are amalgams of buildings and people, where *ideas, values and form constitute a single phenomenon*.[362]

These fairly general features do seem to capture some of the essential nature and properties of cities, and show how cities, as material phenomena and as concepts and imaginaries, encompass a range of different processes. They are a spatial location for people and material objects, they incorporate geographical features, they are agglomerations of economic activity, they embody and encompass particular sets of social relations, they can be political and administrative units, and they have different built forms and layouts from rural spaces, on which they are also dependent.[363] Kostof's point about cities being bounded entities may be valid, but it is also problematic, and much cutting edge research on cities, and especially their nature under globalisation, is now questioning the city as a bounded entity, conceptualising cities instead as networks of flows and processes operating at multiple scales. This reconceptualisation is important for my larger argument, and I will come back to this issue.

Cities as Form and Process

Kostof's observation that cities are constituted by people and their ideas, values and perceptions, as well as by their built environment, and that these elements are mutually constituted and combine to create a *single phenomenon*, represents an important insight into the nature of cities. This points to the understanding that cities are simultaneously material and social phenomena, and that the two elements are interlinked. I touched upon this subject in earlier chapters on the philosophical foundations of approaches to international systems, and the material and social elements of a city's nature mirror the way in which international systems have been seen as both material and social phenomena. As I have argued, the material and social approaches to international systems have often been applied exclusively, but they are bound up with each other. In approaching the study of the urban, the idea that the city can be known from its material form

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[362] Kostof (1991: 37-41)
[363] Hubbard (2006: 1)

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has constantly vied with the notion that the city should be seen as a socially constructed space. There is room for both of these perspectives in understanding the nature of cities, just as both material and social factors are at work in the broader international system of which cities are a part. This offers conceptual unity to the problem of understanding cities as units within international systems.

The material aspects of cities relate to their shape or morphology, to the form of the material and built environment. The social aspects of cities encompass processes and relationships, networks, flows and mobilities. Cities take on many shapes and forms through history, and the reason for their constant change is that, as Kostof argues, paralleling Lefebvre, 'form is a receptacle of meaning': city form reflects and preserves the specific cultural contexts that act upon it over time.[364] As I argued in chapter two, this is a facet of the agent-structure problem: urban material forms embody agency from the past in the present. In the context of contemporary debates about globalisation, the global city networks being constructed in the contemporary world embody a set of social values and ideas within their material forms, shaping a contemporary landscape of unevenly distributed constraints and opportunities. The particular forms and processes of the contemporary global urban landscape are covered in chapter six. For now, it is important to note how both form and process are essential to understanding the nature of cities, and how urban form embodies and preserves social ideas and values, giving them a permanence and power larger than the individuals and groups that hold them.[365] In this sense, the city is never a completed or bounded entity, never finite and closed, but always open to change, through the continual embodiment of new ideas, values and technologies.

The morphological approach to understanding the development of cities would seek to follow their material traces through time. These traces would include both the impact of the natural environment and the physical structures of the built environment: buildings, streets, squares, plazas, parks and monuments, the architectural form and location of residential and commercial districts.[366] This way of approaching the city tends to see it as a type of container for social life and its achievements and products. Linked to this idea of the city as container is the concept of storage: the storage of wealth, both material and civilizational. Lewis Mumford, in his great work *The City in History*, certainly saw the emergence of the city in such terms. In the first permanent

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[364] Kostof (1991: 9)
[365] Latour (2005)
[366] Camillo Sitte is an early exemplar of this method of approaching the study of cities. Sitte tried to understand how the pattern of a city's streets and buildings had evolved by using historical surveys, particularly from medieval times, and what the underlying principles of these shapes may be. In his *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (1889/1965), Sitte is looking for the ideal functional form for the city. Of course, it is unlikely that there could ever be one, ideal, functional form for the world's diversity of city spaces.

settlements that formed in the arc between the Baltic and modern India, Mumford saw humanity developing for the first time a consciousness that could contemplate both past and future.[367] Contemplation and permanence were made possible, for Mumford, by the growth in food supply offered by new understandings of how to reproduce food plants through the gathering and planting of seeds. Surplus of all kinds requires storage, and the first rudimentary granary, bank, arsenal and library have been traced to this time. This is the shifting boundary between the Palaeolithic age, characterised by movement and survival, to the Mesolithic, where settlement, security and storage became a central element of human life. For Mumford, the village was the first container, and a city can be thought of as a container of containers: 'the modern city, for all its glass and steel, is essentially an earth-bound stone-age structure.'[368] Later, in the first half of the twentieth century, the Chicago School of urban ecology would seek to understand the city as a bounded system, a container for a human population that could be studied in much the same way as ecosystems and their environment.

Although storage and permanence are clearly important features of cities, more modern interpretations would move away from the notion that cities can be understood simply by what they encompass. Indeed, is it really realistic to view cities as self-contained, enclosed by solid boundaries? Such a city would cut itself off from the sources of change and growth.[369] In reality, cities are permeated by all sorts of flows of knowledge and ideas, resources and people, floods of migration and movement that are a characteristic of historical change. They are unstable, and incorporate shifting and multiple identities. Cities, in this sense, have a dual nature: their internal nature, where they and their surrounding hinterlands are seen as self contained units, and a second nature, where cities 'exist to be connected'.[370] It is only through the combination of these two natures, 'cities as systems within systems of cities', that we can hope to comprehend their complex contribution to both national and international life.[371]

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[367] Mumford (1961: 9)

[368] Mumford (1961: 16)

[369] The physicist Ilya Prigogine once made an interesting analogy using two imagined cities of different natures to demonstrate the social implications of his theory of complexity and dissipative structures (a dissipative structure keeps its form, even though the flows of matter and energy that pass through it are constantly changing: it is a combination of form and process). The first city is isolated and closed off from the world, the other a bustling trading hub. While the former would eventually decay and breakdown, giving way to the inevitable forces of entropy, the second would thrive, grow and evolve into greater complexity because of its relationship with its external environment and the other cities to which it is connected: Brennan (2003). This seems a fitting analogy for the notion that successful, enduring cities are open, networked entities; an argument made forcefully by Jane Jacobs (1984).

[370] Berry (1964)

[371] Taylor (2003)

This latter perspective is the social and processual approach to understanding cities. It incorporates a view that focuses less upon the fixed structures of cities, and more upon the mappable patterns that shape and mould the city over time: the way that economic wealth is distributed and redistributed, the way that land is owned and used, the way that identities form in parts of the city and spread, the areas in which class differences are realised and perpetuated. It focuses upon flows and movement, dynamism and change, but seeks also to understand the underlying social reasons for these movements, searching to identify the role of the producers (and consumers) of space.[372] If we are to view cities as processes, both internally and externally, it becomes increasingly clear that part of the nature of cities is to act as connecting nodes and hubs in wider networks, through which various flows and movements take effect.

Urban Genesis and Economic Development

The tension between material and social interpretations of the city, although considered here to be a false one, has run as a thread through a number of key debates about cities and urban life. One of the most important and revealing debates is about urban genesis, the conversation about why the first cities formed. The traditional explanation for the emergence of the world's first cities tended to stress a combination of environmental and technological factors. At around 7000BC the world's great plains dried out enough to become habitable, and technical progress in irrigation, water management and plough culture combined to form cities in the Euphrates and Tigris valleys. The classic literature focussed upon the development of what were considered to be the first true urban forms, the ancient Sumerian cities that began to flourish around 5000-2500BC. It was argued that these cities were enabled by the food surpluses made available by the increased production power of the fertile plains, allied to the new technologies, which freed some elements of the population from the requirements of subsistence, and enabled a division of labour within the settled population. The increased agricultural power offered by irrigation in river valleys also, it was argued, later brought forth cities along the banks of the Nile, Indus, and Hwang-Ho-Yangtze.[373]

However, more recent archaeological evidence, allied to a contemporary desire to reject forms of explanation that stress environmental determinism at the expense of human choice and agency, have called this traditional view of urban genesis into question. The date for the emergence of urban life has been pushed back dramatically, with the discovery of the archaeological remnants of settlements in southwest Asia, the rift valley of the Jordan River on the site of biblical Jericho,

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[372] See, as exemplary of this approach, Massey (1984) on the spatial dimensions of labour under urbanisation, and Zukin (1982) on the role of culture and consumption in the process of urbanisation.
[373] Mumford (1961)

and in south-central Anatolia at the site of Çatal Hüyük, in modern Turkey. It was here, it is now argued, that around 10,000 years ago, small, nomadic bands of hunter-gatherers first settled in permanence, and laid the foundations for an evolving urban revolution that continues to define the contemporary world.[374] The discovery of these early urban forms, around the middle of the twentieth century, and the ongoing archaeological project to uncover their secrets, has served to shed a new light on traditional arguments about the formation of the first cities.

Where historians have tended to stress the role of environmental factors, it has been critical archaeologists and geographers that have highlighted the centrality of human choice in the *social* production of the earliest urban forms.[375] This represents a desire in the liberal social sciences to highlight the importance of human decisions, free will and of the role of individuals in shaping the development of societies over time. There is a clear political and ethical implication to arguing for the role of human agency in the making of cities: cities that are a product of human agency hold out the possibility that they can be remade in new forms.

The new interpretations link the role of human agency in producing the proto-city space of settlements like Çatal Hüyük to the later emergence of the Sumerian cities. They argue that these newer, larger cities are directly related to the earlier settlements, having traded with them, and thus derived certain innovations from them. The presence of more sophisticated examples of pottery in the older settlement of Çatal Hüyük points to a rudimentary division of labour, with artisanal and trading occupations long predating the advent of the larger city-states. Thus, a key feature in the more recent interpretation of urban genesis is the stress that is placed on economic factors, and, in particular, the formation of the first trading networks.[376] Emphasis is placed on the creative and economic benefits of people clustering together in permanent settlements. The critical geographer, Edward Soja, uses the term *synekism* to describe the unique benefits of clustering and agglomeration that occur in cities:

> Synekism is directly derived from *synoikismos*, literally the condition arising from dwelling together in one house, or *oikos*, and used by Aristotle in his *Politics* to describe the formation of the Athenian *polis* or city-state. Many other terms have been spun off from the root term *oikos* and its intrinsic sense of organizing and managing a shared space or common habitat: *economics* (originally "home economics" or "household management," expanded to encompass much larger territories from the local to the global), *ecology* (the study of how various organisms "dwell together" in shared spaces or environments)…Synekism thus connotes, in particular, the economic and ecological interdependencies and the creative – as well

[374] Soja (2000: 27-48)
[375] Hodder (1991)
[376] Jacobs (1984)

as occasionally destructive – synergisms that arise from the purposeful clustering and collective cohabitation of people in space, in a "home" habitat.[377]

From out of the general notion of *synekism*, of dwelling together, two key, interlinked, functions of cities can be drawn: the social production of space that cities represent, and the economic and developmental generative power of cities. This latter element was the consistent theme of the career of the urban critic and theorist Jane Jacobs, who argued that the special qualities of cities, that emerge from the density of population that they alone achieve, are essential for all economic growth and development. Urban density leads to its own particular problems, and also the creativity and innovation that arise in response to those problems. Out of the interaction of the uniquely heterogeneous and diverse mixtures of people found in cities, Jacobs perceived the generative force behind all trade, wealth, and economic development.

It is clear that cities have been the sites of some of the most profound bursts of creative innovation. The advantages of clustering and agglomeration that Soja described in his definition of synekism do seem to give cities a unique generative power. The problems and advantages that come with many people living in a densely populated space have given rise to great innovation in ideas and technologies. The ancient Greek city-states and the city-states of the Italian Renaissance, the cities of axial China and India, were sites of some of the most extraordinary expressions of intellectual, artistic and scientific creativity and discovery in all of history. The source of the special quality of creativity released by these cities has been the subject of much speculation.

Peter Hall, in *Cities in Civilization*, cites the research on innovation and creativity in cities undertaken by Gunnar Törnquist and Åke Anderson at Lund University in Sweden.[378] For Törnquist, the creative bursts of innovation that led to progress in such cities required an initial knowledge base and competence in handling the external environment, but it was the qualities of the densely packed, diverse, and often overcrowded city which offered the possibility of swift information transition. Together these factors add up to a *creative milieu*. Törnquist and Anderson argue that a strong element of instability was also required to kick-start innovation: an imbalance between need and opportunity, an uncertainty about the future, an external threat, and war. Such conditions were certainly present in the examples mentioned above.

Such imbalances and crises may be necessary to induce these exceptional periods of historical creativity. However, for Jacobs, innovation is a normal result of the synekism of city life. The dynamic creative environment of cities is seen by Jacobs as driving the economic process itself, a

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[377] Soja (2000: 12). In the language of economics this would be known as an agglomeration economy.
[378] Hall (1998:18)

once radical and marginalised view that is gaining ground.[379] Jacobs began to publish in the 1960s, a decade of urban social unrest and crisis, in response to what she saw as the decline and decay of the great American cities. Jacobs reacted against the modernist utopian planning regimes that had begun to change the face of cities in the United States and Europe. She argued that the separation of commercial and residential districts would kill the spark of economic life so central to the nature of the city.[380] She wanted to protect the freedom, unplanned spontaneity, and the cultural diversity that gave cities their creative dynamism, supporting the market and rebelling against centralised planning. The emphasis she placed upon the spontaneous spark of economic life within cities was a forceful argument against the centralisation and top-down utopian planning that she perceived to be destroying the life of cities.

These battles highlight the inherent and recurring tension between the state and the city. In essence, one of Jacobs key political points was that it was the city, and not national governments, that drove macro-economic development, and to think otherwise was to court the danger of destroying economic growth altogether. City life, for Jacobs, was the spark of all major economic development: without it there could be no growth or prosperity, only stagnation and decline. The city and its region are thus seen as the only entity with the generative power to consistently build wealth and promote growth spontaneously from within its own resources.[381]

The Significance of City Space

As multi-faceted conceptual and material entities, it is important to recognise that the nature of cities is about more than economic functionality. They are the spaces in which social collectives most fully realise and embody themselves. As cities are spatial entities, both in their material form and in the social production of space that they embody, to fully understand their nature requires further investigation into the nature of space.

In recent decades the category of space has attracted a good deal of attention, leading many to speak of a 'spatial turn' in the social sciences. The 'spatial turn' is seen as beginning to correct an imbalance that has privileged historical and temporal explanations.[382] The earlier bias towards

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[379] Jane Jacobs spent much of her lifetime working on ideas at the margins of different disciplines, but her work has attracted increasing interest and momentum. However, to an extent, hers is a position mirrored by the nineteenth century economist Alfred Marshall (1842–1924), who studied the dynamic innovation of small industrial districts and the developmental forces that flowed from them: see Soja (2000: 168-169). In modern economic theory, Michael Storper (1997) follows in the tradition.

[380] Jacobs (1972)

[381] Jacobs (1984)

[382] The geographer Doreen Massey (2005) has persuasively argued that the subordination of space to time has had forceful political consequences. In particular, she points out that the

historicism is read as having been built into the very foundations of social science as it emerged in the late-nineteenth century.[383] In particular, the centrality of time in the dominant classical social theory of Marx, who built his historical materialism on top of the Hegelian vision of the unfolding of historical progress, powerfully shaped approaches to understanding society. The 'spatial turn' incorporates both a practical element for geographers in their attempts to understand material phenomena, but also includes an engagement with space in cultural, social and literary theory.[384] In the late 1960s, Michel Foucault had already begun to draw attention to how the concept of space had been subordinated to that of time in the social sciences, a phenomenon bound up with the effects of modernity in altering perceptions of time and space and the cultures built around them.[385] Foucault drew attention to the effects that the privileging of time had on the way space was perceived:

> Did it start with Bergson or before? Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic. [386]

But the most comprehensive philosophical investigation into the nature of space and its relationship to society and time came from Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*.[387] Lefebvre, as we have seen, investigated the interrelation between material space, social space and mental space. He shared the view that space had not been given its due weight in social explanation.

This kind of relational concept of space can be argued to subsume the concept of place within the broader category of space.[388] The concept of place seems to have grown in significance as the processes of globalisation have intensified in recent decades: the flows that are characteristic of globalisation are often viewed as placeless, while the places of the 'local' are viewed in opposition to the global as genuine and organic sites of resistance. This is a simplistic view of the processes of globalisation, as I will argue in the next chapter. Taking the concept of place as a subset of relational space, it would appear that it does indeed speak to another important element of the

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creation of the powerful image of a line of historical development that nations must inexorably follow on the path to development relies upon a static imaginary of space. Nations and cultures that exist simultaneously, but have not developed along the lines of Western modernity, are often represented as existing in the past. In this way, the political issues of living together in difference and diversity are sidelined. Massey argues that focusing upon the nuances of space allows for the recognition of the *synchrony* of time in different places.

[383] Soja (2000: 7)
[384] Harvey (2006: 129)
[385] Kern (1983)
[386] Foucault and Gordon (1980) quoted in Soja (1989: 10).
[387] Lefebvre (1991). Lefebvre was influenced by the work of Edward Cassirer (1944) and his investigation into human experiences of space, in which he distinguished organic, perceptual and symbolic spaces. See Harvey (2006).
[388] Massey (2005)

nature of cities.[389] Place, and the symbolic life of cities, brings in the imaginative dimension that can neither be measured empirically nor captured by focussing upon the economic processes and functions of cities.

Orum and Chen have sought to bring the importance of place in human life into urban sociology.[390] The symbolic attachment to place can be seen at the very origins of the city itself. Many cities grew up on sacred sites, and many of the great cities in the modern world retain this religious character: Jerusalem or Mecca are two city sites that, because of their sacred nature, continue to dominate world affairs millennia after people first worshiped at them. Rome, Lourdes and Kyoto occupy sacred sites, and cities are often tied to original natural features: monolithic stones, sacred groves, or holy springs. Mumford declared that amid 'the uneasy wanderings of Palaeolithic man, the dead were the first to have permanent dwellings', in burial mounds and ceremonial places. For Mumford, it was a fundamental truth that the spiritual origins of human settlements could not be separated from their history: 'a city of the dead is the core of every living city'.[391] The concept of an attachment to place has also been seen as central to the possibility of politics: as the embodiment of the political community or *polis*.[392] This attachment, originally closely linked to the city, has been stretched by the development of the nation-state, as the local political community was replaced by an imagined community.[393]

Lefebvre's work on the production of space has also inspired, and been extended by, the critical geographer Edward Soja. Soja seeks to focus upon the spatiality of human life, the way in which people collectively produce the spaces in which society is realised: cities, territories, regions and environments.[394] He argues that space is an explanatory category in its own right, one that has been ignored because of a skewed focus on history and social theory. His argument here is linked to the agent-structure problem. It involves, again, the notion that space is not simply a stage in which events take place, absolute space, but that individual and collective agents, actions and ideas produce and shape space, and that socially produced space then goes on to condition and

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[389] The philosopher Edward Casey (1997) has argued that place can be conceptually distinguished from space, and has sought to provide philosophical foundations for the concept of place. Casey focuses upon the way in which the body unites the realms of the material and the perceptual world, the mind and the place in which the body is extended. It is through contact with the body that specific places come to be imbued with symbolic meaning, that the individual can come to form identity in a particular community and engage in social and political life. These insights are, in my view, subsumed by the broader interpretation of social space that Lefebvre, Soja and Harvey employ.

[390] Orum and Chen (2003)

[391] Mumford (1961: 7)

[392] Arendt (1958)

[393] Anderson (1983)

[394] Soja (2000: 6)

shape actions and thought. Soja argues for a 'trialectic' approach that gives equal balance to geography, history and society, contending that 'what is social is always spatial'.[395]

Central to Lefebvre's position on the social production of space was the intent to re-establish the link between a lived, dynamic, vibrant and everyday conception of space and society. His central insight is that *social categories and social relations must always remain entirely abstract until they are realised in space*. Social categories such as class, economy, market, family, community, or state do not take on meaning until they are spatialised. Ideas and ideologies can have no consequences until they are realised in space. This is the spatial production of society – the necessary corollary of the idea that space is a social product. The tendency for the modern imaginary that underpins much social science to abstract away these spatial formations does not reduce their inherent spatial dimension. For example, the dominance of neo-classical economics in recent decades has tended to reduce economic theory to de-spatialised abstractions, where the elements of location and distance are de-emphasised. A spatial understanding of economic relations would re-emphasise the clusters, networks of relationships, flows of ideas, and the transit systems and built environments in and through which they take place

A key conclusion that Lefebvre draws out of this recombining of society with its spatial dimension is that 'the development of society is conceivable only in urban life, through the realisation of urban society'.[396] Any social relations of more than rudimentary complexity need to be somehow expressed, solidified and preserved in space in urban form. Again, this feeds back into the discussion of material agency in chapter two, and the argument of Bruno Latour that the social fabric is weak, and needs to be embodied and preserved in material forms such as architecture and technology if it is to survive for any duration.

A further important conclusion to be drawn from Lefebvre, in the context of my wider argument about the urban dimension of international transformation, is that, if, as these thinkers argue, the link between social production and spatial production is properly restored, any kind of social change or transformation of great consequence must necessarily involve a new production of social space. For Lefebvre, this inevitably meant that every social revolution must be an *urban* revolution. In the context of the discussion of transformation points in the development of international systems over time, this would indicate that the major points of change between international systems would require a significant urban dimension, a central role for cities as reflecting the changing forms and processes at work within the international system. Therefore, if we are to investigate the periods where one historically specific international system has

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[395] Soja (1996)
[396] Lefebvre (1968): cited in Soja (2000: 19).

transformed into another, we will be aided by considering the urban dimension of these international systems, and the relationship between urban space and the way in which space is embodied in particular historical international systems.

Building upon Lefebvre's insights, Soja develops the concept of *cityspace*. City space is a general category, a concept used to encompass particular configurations of historical-social-spatial arrangements. Soja refers to the concrete forms that city space has taken over time as the *spatial specificity of urbanism*, by which he means:

> the particular configuration of social relations, built forms, and human activity in a city and its geographical sphere of influence. It actively arises from the social production of city space as a distinctive material and symbolic context or habitat for human life. It thus has both formal or morphological as well as processual or dynamic aspects. [397]

In this sense, social change can be captured in the dynamic shaping and reshaping of city space. In stressing that specific creations of city space in time are shaped by both morphological and processual forces, Soja is again pointing to the importance of incorporating structural and agential forces into our understanding of cities: city space is both an expression of the interaction of form and process in the past, while providing the context for their interaction in the present.

The abstract concept of city space, incorporating, as it does, the material, ideational and symbolic elements of city life, and the different types of space that I have discussed, enables us to grasp the important transition points in the history of urbanism. There are three major periods where historically specific city space can be identified.[398] These point to three primary junctures of urban transformation, which I later relate to the debates about the major periods of transformation between international systems. In the late-twentieth century, we appear to be witnessing a further significant revolution in city space, embodied in global cities and transnational urbanism. In the next section I briefly examine the features of each of these types of city space: the proto-city, the agrarian city, and the industrial city. I then go on to relate them to arguments about periodising change between international systems.

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[397] Soja (2000: 8)

[398] Kostof argues for a slightly different arrangement, in that, in addition to the pre-industrial and industrial city, he posits the existence of a specifically socialist city, characterised by the prohibition of capitalist ownership of land and property. Lefebvre, however, argued that one of the failures of communism was its inability to embody its ideals in spatial form, and that no specifically socialist socially produced space was ever created.

Urban Transformations

Proto-Cities

As discussed in the previous section, traditional arguments about the origins of cities saw urban genesis as closely linked to environmental change, approximately fifteen thousand years ago, when the retreat of the Pleistocene glaciers altered the habitat and ecology of stone age hunter gatherers, offering up fertile river valleys for the development of large scale agriculture:

> Hunters and gatherers intensified their exploitation of wild cereal grains and wild animals, possibly in response to changing climactic conditions. The ecological milieu of Southwest Asia and Egypt, especially in the arc of highlands surrounding the Tigris-Euphrates valleys running from present-day Iran, through the Anatolian Plateau and Iraq and then through Syria and Palestine to the Lower Nile, was particularly propitious for these developments.[399]

The traditional view has been that these responses to environmental change led to increasingly sedentary lifestyles, to domestication and an enlargement of the population of early villages on the basis of the first agricultural surpluses.[400] In the most fertile and abundant areas, like river valleys, villages coalesced into larger urban settlements, eventually growing to the size achieved by the first true cities in Sumeria, Southern Mesopotamia, during the Uruk period, around 4300-3100BC.

However, as outlined in the previous section, the move away from environmental determinism towards a focus on human agency, in conjunction with new archaeological discoveries, has pushed arguments about the origins of cities back far beyond this, to around 12000BC, and generated a more complex picture of urban development. New archaeological discoveries at the site of Çatal Hüyük, which dates from around 7000-5000BC, far older than the Sumerian cities, have led to revisionist arguments that the first cities did not arise in the fertile crescent, but in and around the area of the Levant, and in the highlands of southern Anatolia. Pieces of pottery, of far more sophisticated manufacture and design than could be found in the Sumerian cities centuries later, have been recovered from Çatal Hüyük and the surrounding region.[401]

The inference drawn from these developments is that some kind of fairly complex division of labour, which freed up time for artistic and creative work, preceded the development of more extensive agricultural societies. The new discoveries also point to the existence of an extensive trading network that could have been in existence as far back as 12000BC, lending weight to

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[399] Soja (2000: 21)
[400] Maisels (1990)
[401] Reader (2005: 17-24)

Jacobs' general arguments about the self-generating economic power of clusters of people living closely together. For Jacobs, cities are not a result of the agricultural revolution, but a necessary precondition for agriculture to take off. Cities come first, and were required for the generation of an agricultural surplus. Soja takes up this argument:

> In Jericho, as well as in Beidha, Çatal Hüyük, and other sites in Southwest Asia, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that hunter gatherers, along with smaller numbers of traders, animal herders, farmers, cultic specialists, craftspersons and artists clustered together in dense urban settlements that were far larger than the size usually attributed to agricultural villages, even after 5000BC. These large urban settlements certainly did not originate as agricultural villages, nor can they be seen as consolidations of pre-existing agricultural settlements. No specialised agricultural villages have yet been discovered anywhere in the world that significantly predate the founding of Jericho. So how can it continue to be thought that there had to be a simple linear progression of human settlement or sedentarism, from tiny encampments of hunter gatherers to small hamlets to the first small farming villages, to a few overgrown villages and proto-towns, and only then to true cities?[402]

For Soja, there is a forceful case to be made that Jericho, in the Levant, the earliest known permanent settlement, dating back to around 9000BC and reaching a population of 3000 at one point, can be seen as the earliest expression of the first urban revolution. Jacobs liked to posit an imagined first city in the region around Çatal Hüyük, a city of hunters she named New Obsidian, built around the trade of volcanic rock that is known to have been crucial to life in this period, alongside the developing knowledge of animal and food domestication. From such a beginning (surely the search for the 'first city' is of little real consequence), Jacobs builds a picture of spontaneous economic generation, the development of extensive trading networks, urban stimulated growth and development, and the diffusion of ideas that ultimately link these first urban sites to the larger cities of Sumeria centuries later. The Sumerian cities environmental advantages gave them the power to gain in size, but the revisionist perspective reduces the causal and generative power that the environment originally assumed.[403]

Because of their novel production of city space, these early trading settlements may be viewed as the first urban revolution, and distinguished from the cities that grew up in the fertile river valleys later. The most detailed archaeological evidence for this position comes from Çatal Hüyük, where an enormous amount of material has been uncovered over the course of the twentieth century.[404] One important feature that distinguishes this proto-city space from the agrarian city is that it appears that, in Çatal Hüyük, life was based around egalitarian principles, with no discernable centralisation. The urban form takes the shape of a contiguous mass of dwellings,

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[402] Soja (2000: 35)
[403] Jacobs (1969)
[404] James Mellart (1967) led the original archaeological dig at Çatal Hüyük, and was followed by his former student, Ian Hodder (1996, 2006).

with shared walls with no space in between them, and entryways cut into the roofs. There was no centralised religion: each dwelling had its own religious shrine. Judging from the goods recovered, there was an immense diversity of crafts and occupations: pottery, basket ware, wooden implements, jewellery, stone tools. There were works of art and mirrors fashioned from polished obsidian, hinting, perhaps, at the first awakening of self-identity and reflexivity.[405] This egalitarian social production of urban space in Çatal Hüyük is one that differs greatly from the larger cities that emerge in Sumeria centuries later, where the centralisation of political authority and religious power gave rise to a very different type of city space, whose form reflected the emergence of class stratification in the first city-states.

Agrarian Cities

The use of city space that emerged in the Sumerian city-state period took on a very different character from these early urban settlements, and it was this urban revolution that marks it out as a key historical transition point, linking with the development of the first small-scale classical international systems. It was not simply the relative size and scale of these cities that distinguished them, but the qualitative differences in how society was imagined and organised. In particular, these cities reflected the growth of hierarchical social relations, a complex and class based division of labour, and a more sophisticated and self-conscious urban culture. The organisational requirements of social life on this scale would auger the first political revolution, instantiated in space by the development of the city-based state. The size and dynamism of these emerging city-states would lead them into conflict for resources and trade routes, and thus generate a perennial feature of international life, organised warfare. Eventually, the battle for dominance in the Sumerian inter-city-state system would also lead to another recurrent organisational feature of historical international systems: empire.

The first cities in Sumeria marked a quantum leap forward in terms of technological development and innovation – they are commonly associated with the advent of civilization itself. This is partly due to the development of writing: cuneiform script developed at this time, allowing the possibility of deriving history from records. The wheel and the plough were invented. Formal social institutions began to take shape: centralised places of religious worship, city-based markets and politically centralised states.[406]

When village life began it is likely that its more complex social form had required the development of organised moral codes, rudimentary government and law, and perhaps even the

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[405] Soja (2000: 39-41)
[406] Soja (2000: 50-51)

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concept of justice. It was with the coming of cities that these emerging qualities of social life were intensified. Uruk developed a population of around ten thousand during this period, rising to fifty thousand by 2700BC.[407] Such growth represented more than simply a change of the scale of human settlement: it represented a 'change of direction and purpose manifested in a new type of organisation'. That purpose, according to Mumford, was to 'exert power in every form'.[408] Such power was manifest in a new technical dominion over nature, whose unpredictability pre-urban and proto-urban humans had accepted.

A new division of labour was essential for running cities of this scale, and the new social organisation required a new type of leadership. Greater social complexity required territorial urban governmentality: we see in this period the development of social hierarchy, centralised power and class segmentation. Authoritarian power and the apparatus of state surveillance can be seen to emerge. A distinctive set of class based occupations can be read in the records of the ancient Sumerian city-states: a religious and bureaucratic class, merchants and traders, and the workers on whose labour base the surplus of production was generated. With these new occupations and preoccupations came, for Mumford, the enlargement of the human ego. The simplicity and harmony of village life were replaced by the desires and demands of a more complex human society.[409] Private property, military power and coercion, and patriarchal dominance become features of social life. At the bottom of the social scale came slavery. At the top of the hierarchy sat the first kings and their priestly advisors, using a combination of force and the power of religion to cement their authority. And, as has been argued, these social relations had to find their expression in space: the urban morphology of the ancient cities was often described by a central political and religious complex, symbolically and materially realised in the building of ziggurats, such as the tower of Babel of biblical legend, and the endlessly repeated quartered circle layout, with concentric and radial zones of land use springing out from it.[410]

The fundamental religious features of early cities were manifested in the central power of the temple and citadel complex, a feature to be found at nearly all of the ancient city sites around the world. The priestly caste, gaining their authority from their ability to commune with both natural and supernatural forces, joined with a strong chieftain or king to provide leadership, direction and protection. The Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh* provides our earliest insight into the central role of such figures. Through the combined secular and spiritual power of citadel and temple, the city

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[407] Haywood (2001)
[408] Mumford (1961: 57)
[409] Mumford here reveals the gulf of difference between his position and Jane Jacobs. Mumford saw the city as a source of corruption, as wiping away an Arcadian idyll of simple village life. Jacobs, although against the centralising tendencies of utopian city planning, saw the city as the root of all social and economic development.
[410] Soja (2000: 57-59)

became a command and control centre for the surrounding region. And it was with the development of this bureaucratic class, organised to manage and distribute the city surplus, that the distinction between public and private worlds was drawn, and the development of political life set in motion, reaching, perhaps, its apogee within city life with the flowering of political philosophy in the ancient Greek *polis* around 500BC.

In order to deal with the greater complexity inherent in urban life, new technical practices were continuously developed. This is the dynamic force of synekism at work. Expanded by the technologies of agriculture and irrigation, the city unleashed its inhabitants' creative potential, as they sought to solve the range of problems urban life confronted them with. A burst of inventiveness followed. Technological leaps forward were made in civil engineering, long distance transportation, agricultural productivity and astronomy. As ancient cities accumulated goods and wealth, writing and mathematics developed to supplant the limitations of human memory. The city became a communications hub, intensifying the movement over time and space of messages and materials.

Early cities enabled a cycle of development. Each innovation led to greater complexity, with further technical innovation then required to deal with the issues presented by that complexity. Density of population worked to enable greater levels of creativity. The achievements of early cities generated ever-greater surpluses of material and social goods. Through technical mastery of the surrounding region, cities developed into concentrated stores of wealth. Through their role as command and control centres, cities gained a redistributive function over the stored surpluses. Through their ability to intensify communication over space and time, cities consolidated their positions as vital trade hubs, which further supplemented their wealth and power, bringing in new types of raw materials to aid in further innovation and technological development.

The city operated as a structure whose function was to store and communicate the achievements of civilisation. In that structure was stored, and transmitted to future generations, not just material wealth, but knowledge, information, culture. The first libraries, archives, schools and universities emerged. For the first time a permanent structure existed to accumulate and store knowledge, and amplify its generation. Indeed, it could be argued that it is the preservation and transmission of knowledge, which cities first enabled on a grand scale, that is the defining quality of a civilisation. A recurring nightmare of civilization has been the annihilation of the city, along with its contents. From the destruction of ancient Ur, Babylon and Carthage, modern Dresden and Hiroshima, through to contemporary fears of a terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction, these fears continue to haunt urban populations.

The regional city-state system in Sumeria eventually saw its different city-states' expanding resource requirements lead them into conflict with each other. The population levels that had enabled these cities unprecedented growth became a source of competition for resources, trade routes and dominion in the river valleys. Out of this conflict emerged the recurrent pattern of autonomy, subordination and recovered independence that would characterise the history of cities. City-states that succeeded in warfare went on to create the first empires.[411] Despite the fluctuating currents of history, the urban form created at this time remained remarkably consistent until the nineteenth century, allowing for small regional variations. It was only then, in northern Europe, that the industrial revolution would begin to remake city space with unprecedented speed and force.

Industrial Cities

The industrial revolution remade city space, and industrial urbanism brought in its train a volatile mixture of densely packed and starkly unequal social relations, amidst a technologically induced quickening of the pace of social change. Although the first industries would establish themselves in locations outside of cities, near natural energy sources, rivers, raw materials and labour pools, they were transplants of techniques and crafts developed in cities. The new factories were soon brought into the city centre, along with the mass of wage labour that was required for their operation.[412]

The industrial city, responding to the demands of capitalism as an organising force in social life, saw a new configuration of the city and its social relations reflected in material urban form. There was another gigantic leap in population size. In the first industrial cities of northern England, of which Manchester was the prime exponent, workers poured into the cities. Whereas Beijing, at its imperial peak, had been the largest urban space in history until this point, Manchester surpassed it in the period between 1780 and 1850 alone. The historical balance between rural and urban life began to change at this point, until just two hundred years later the majority of the world's population live an urban life. Eric Hobsbawm argues that this long migration into industrial cities is a historical watershed:

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[411] Such subjugation begins with the rise of the neighbouring Akkadian Empire. Autonomy was recovered only to be lost again, as a series of unstable rival empires (Hittite, Babylonian and Assyrian) sought to dominate the region. Eventually these empires gave way to the Persian Empire, which, at its height, stretched from Egypt to the Indus. By then, that greatest century of human intellectual creativity that flowered in the Greek city-states was already underway. These free Greek city-states would themselves be subordinated by the Macedonian and post-Alexandrian empires. It would take two thousand years for their ideas to be recovered, once again in free city-states, this time in northern Italy.

[412] Lefebvre (1996: 64)

the most dramatic and far-reaching social change of the second half of this century, and the one which cuts us off forever from the world of the past, is the death of the peasantry.[413]

The industrial city created three new classes of urban population, expressed spatially in a new form for the city. It created the proletariat working class, selling their commoditised labour, and now packed into the centre of the city in slums and tenement blocks, situated next to the factories and industrial buildings at which they worked. This area came to be a familiar feature of cities: the central business district. The industrial bourgeoisie, or middle class, emerged at this time as owners of the factories, connected to the city centre by new technologies of transit. With these two classes came a growing number of urban poor, a homeless underclass, the reserve army of labour Marx described as essential to keeping the proletariat under control.[414]

The material form or morphology of this new socially produced city space is clearly very different to the pre-industrial city, with its central religious and administrative space and radial residential and commercial districts. The new form of the industrial urban landscape reflected a social revolution that would spread across Europe in the nineteenth century, and around the world in the twentieth century. At the same time these growing urban centres were being incorporated within the socially created spaces of nation-states, as the new social imaginary of nationalism tied sets of cities into larger imagined communities in the nineteenth century, linked by new technologies of canal and rail, forming national systems of cities.

> What was formerly the fluid accretion of city-states and their tributary regions into an imperial mosaic became the more formal establishment of the nationally bounded territorial state, bent on erasing the regional borders and cultural identities of the city-states contained within it through its homogenising powers and those of the expanding market.[415]

In this way, industrial cities became economic growth engines for national states, while their former diversity was curtailed. The industrial city became bound up with the nation, and intrinsically linked to the cultural experience of the modern urban person. The metropolis is the home of modern life.[416]

The European and North American experience of modern industrial urbanism made the city into a battleground or laboratory for social development, where competing utopian visions of progress were applied to the myriad problems that emerged from unprecedented numbers dwelling together in cramped, unhealthy, unhygienic conditions. This reflected the modern method of applying scientific method to practical problems. The subsequent interaction between

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[413] Hobsbawm (1994: 289)
[414] Lees and Lees (2007)
[415] Soja (2000: 78)
[416] Benjamin (1999)

the social theory of cities and the form of the city represents the self-reflexivity that is the hallmark of modernity.

Two broad approaches can be seen to emerge. The first was the liberal, developmental, reformist approach to the problems urban society brings. It sought to address issues related to social inequality, depravation and poverty, declining habitat and environment. It offered a set of problem-solving reforms. These included the incremental legislative reforms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, state sponsored public health works and environmental improvements. The alternative strand focused upon social justice. It argued for an analytical dissection of the failures of society, and a revolutionary recomposition of capitalist class and ownership relations, drawing inspiration from the work of Marx and Engels.

In the twentieth century these two distinct approaches would dominate the study of urbanism. In the 1920s urban investigation and scholarship was shaped by North America, with the rise of the 'Chicago School', inspired by the work of the European social scientist George Simmel. The focus of urban studies moved from Manchester to the industrial metropolis of Chicago. The Chicago School, driven by the reformist approach to social and urban life, used that city as a laboratory of insight to be generalised to all cities.[417] Until this point cities had been studied in terms of their material shape or morphology. The Chicago School focussed upon the patterns of human activity within cities by adopting a framework best described as 'urban ecology'. Scholars working in this paradigm developed a neo-darwinian framework that viewed the city as a self-contained ecosystem, where competition and domination led to the development of different habitats, different patterns of land use and housing, of migration and population settlement, as they developed in different zones. Through the application of concepts such as central place theory and other statistical models, and the undertaking of a great many pioneering empirical studies (of homelessness, criminal gangs, ghettos, land values, immigration etc.), the Chicago School was able to investigate the spatial allocation of resources and social and economic patterns to be found in Chicago in the 1920s.[418] This success entrenched the dominance of the North American approach to studying urban life, despite the inherent problems of universalising observations of one particular city to all cities.

Urban studies continued to grapple with the problems of industrial cities throughout the twentieth century. The 1960s witnessed a series of breakdowns in the functioning of cities, most notably with riots in New York and Paris, also repeated in other cities around the world.[419] The pressing need to understand this breakdown in urban life provided the impetus for the

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[417] Park (1916)
[418] Soja (2000: 87)
[419] Soja (2000: 95-109)

reassertion of the radical, Marxian inspired strand within urban theory, with the growth of a school of urban political economy, represented by the work of Manuel Castells and David Harvey.[420] These theorists were concerned with the ways in which the capitalist city produced, and continued to reproduce, patterns of poverty and inequality. They argued that the state led problem-solving approach to urban planning, rather than operating to tackle these problems, was, in fact, complicit in their perpetuation. Castells, in *The Urban Question*, argued that the nation-state had destroyed the historical territorial integrity and functional viability of cities as autonomous units, leaving them at the mercy of capitalist logics.[421] Harvey, in *Social Justice and the City*, noted how capitalist logics of accumulation demanded the constant restructuring of the city's built environment, in successive waves of creation and destruction that sought to overcome capitalism's recurrent crises of over-accumulation through a 'spatial fix'. These problems, it was argued, were at the heart of the urban crises of the 1960s and early 1970s. This strand of urbanism, at the centre of which was a normative concern with social justice, also attempted to theorise the nature of exclusion, community, race, and ethnicity that had been largely absent from urban studies in the past. Castells, in particular, examined the potential of social movements to bring about political change within cities.

The crises that wracked cities in the 1960s and 1970s were eventually resolved, or, perhaps, deferred, with the economic restructuring of the global economy in the 1970s, which was accompanied by waves of deindustrialisation that reshaped many formerly dynamic industrial metropolises. It is at this point that the global city discourse begins to emerge, and the relationship between city and state is rescaled. This fourth urban revolution will be investigated in chapter six. In the next section I want to discuss these urban revolutions in the wider context of the transformation of historical international systems.

Correlating Periodicity for Cities and International Systems

This chapter has argued that cities must be understood as both form and process. It has highlighted the unique economic generative power of cities. It has also argued that using Soja's concept of *city space* is a valuable way to understand important transitional points between different types of cities in history. In this way, it has been possible to distinguish between proto-cities, agrarian cities, and industrial cities, and, in chapter six, I outline the changes that mark out the global city as a new urban form. In this section I seek to relate the periodisation of these changes in city form to the various ways in which the transformation of international systems has

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[420] Castells (1977) Harvey (1973) Dear and Scott (1981)
[421] This theme is picked up again in the conclusion.

been conceived. In this way, the contribution of urban transformation to changes in international systems may be brought into focus.

It should be recognised that historical periodisation is itself a fundamentally theoretical activity. Dividing the continuum of history is an analytical choice that serves to highlight certain important features, necessarily at the expense of others. It is a theoretical property of writing history that reflects choices about the nature of continuity and change.[422] As such, there are a wide variety of competing periodisations available that correspond to different analytical standpoints and explanatory problematiques. IR theorists, for example, have been particularly concerned with the rise of the system of territorially sovereign states, and with the characteristics of the international system in the modern period.[423] This periodicity reflects an obsession with the modern state. But periodicity may also be a reflection of an interest in the economic relationship of people to their means of subsistence, as in the Marxian tradition of 'modes of production'. Or it may reflect an emphasis upon the importance of technology, or of scientific, political or religious ideas and worldviews. Buzan and Little outline some of the many contending approaches to periodising world history.
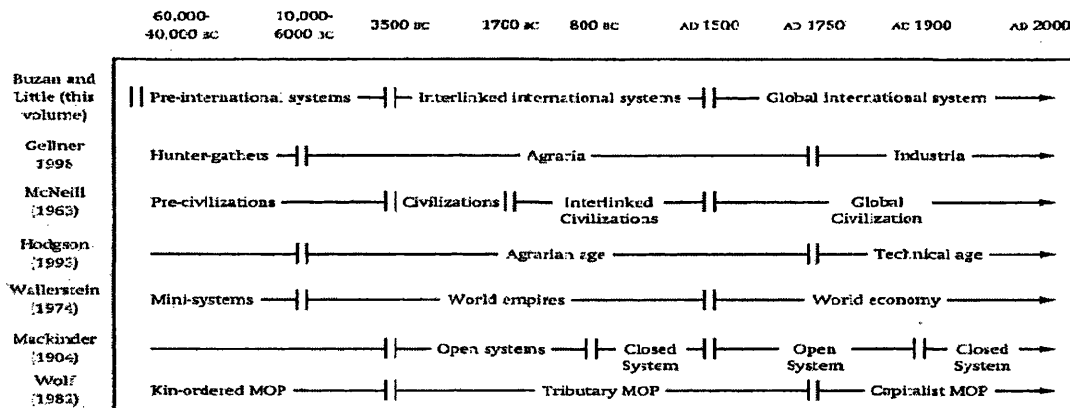
Periodising World History
Source: Buzan and Little (2000: 394)

They point out that there is a generally accepted tendency to use three broad categories for dividing history; the ancient, medieval and modern periods. But even here, they suggest, such a division lays itself open to the charge of Eurocentrism: the medieval period may be seen as applying to a local European phenomenon, with limited relevance beyond its particular geographical space.[424]

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[422] Green (1992) Bentley (1996) Buzan and Little (2000: 386-389)
[423] Structural realists, given their assertion that the structural imperatives of anarchy apply equally to all historical periods, largely deny the importance of periodicity in history. This is an effect of their ahistoricism.
[424] Buzan and Little (2000: 388)

Their own particular take on the problem is to divide history into three primary turning points based upon their international systems framework, followed by a number of lesser turning points within these three general chunks of time. This provides an initial vast period of time characterised by pre-international systems composed of nomadic hunter gathering bands, which lasts from the beginnings of pre-history to the rise of the first true cities in 3500BC. From this point, where the first political units begin to form and interact, and recognisably international behaviour develops among them, there follows a period of expansion and interlinkage of spatially separate international systems. This period is ended by the rise of a global-scale international system at around 1500, when the Americas are incorporated into the geographical reach of the other systems, the modern territorial state emerges and its successful institutional competition against other units begins, a world-scale economy begins to operate (as Wallerstein has emphasised), and Europe begins the move towards the modernity that would enhance its relative power with respect to the rest of the world.[425] These choices match up with the second major transformation in the form of the city, the rise of the first true cities around 3500BC, and their central role in the emergence of city-states, city-based empires and agrarian civilizations, which dominate until the rise of the modern state around 1500. Buzan and Little's scheme does not make room for the proto-city in its characterisation of pre-international systems, but that is perhaps of little consequence given the spatially limited nature of these early settlements. The real divergence is between the 1500 turning point that they argue for with respect to the international system, and the nineteenth century transition to the industrial city. This would seem to be the key point of contestation for matching urban transformation to the transformation of the international system. The divergence points to a mismatch between the scale of the territorial state system and the scale of the industrial capitalist city that would bring with it a series of consequences.

However, Buzan and Little's account, although adopting a mainstream approach to periodisation, by no means exhausts the possibilities, either for the periods that they offer, or for the reasons that they offer for those choices. IR has tended to afford the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 an epochal significance in formalising the state system,[426] and Buzan and Little's emphasis on 1500 already diverges by over a century from this date. They are more in line with Charles Tilly's emphasis upon the 1490s as the origin of the modern state's rise to dominance over other institutional forms – symbolized by the invasion of the city-states of the Italian peninsular by Charles VIII in 1494.[427] Martin Wight also stresses the fifteenth century, emphasising the earlier

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[425] McNeill (1963) Buzan and Little (2000: 401-403)
[426] Gilpin (1987) uses 1648 as a dividing line between hegemonic international systems and international systems characterised by a balance of power, whether multipolar or bipolar.
[427] Tilly (1990) Bobbitt (2002)

Council of Constance as the true origins of the European state system.[428] The 1500 date is also compatible with Ruggie's view of the emergence of new social structures of space and time, the adoption of single point perspective, and changes in the medieval worldview, all working towards facilitating a new political imaginary of territorially sovereign bounded units.[429] The discovery of the new world, incorporating the wealth of the Americas into the European system, also adds further credence to the circa 1500 mark as a fundamental turning point in world history.

What this date does not cover, however, is the impact of the growth of capitalism on the international system, particularly after its great expansion during the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century. This is an event that does, of course, coincide with the third revolutionary transformation of city space: the rise of the industrial city. This is no small matter, because the relationship between capitalism, modernity and territoriality is fundamental in defining how we understand the nature of the modern international system. Indeed, the debate over the emergence of the modern international system is at its strongest between those that argue for the nineteenth century emergence of a distinctively capitalist modern international system, and those that argue for the distinctiveness of the modern territorial state in the late-fifteen or sixteenth century.[430]

Given the earlier discussion of the distinctive economic contribution of cities, it is noteworthy that a city perspective emphasizes the rise of industrial capitalism as a historical turning point. This divergence between city space and systemic transformation may be viewed as the result of looking at two different sectors of the international system: the economic and the military/political sectors. But Buzan and Little are clear that their concept of dividing international systems into sectors is simply an analytical device. What we really need to do with this historical problem is to see how the economic and political sectors interrelate in the modern period to produce the distinctively modern international system.

Marxists have tended to offer a periodisation of world history based upon distinctive 'modes of production'. A mode of production refers to the social relationships that form a particular, historically specific, type of economy. Each mode of production is organised to achieve a particular economic goal, and this goal specifies social relationships. In a capitalist economy, the economic goal is the accumulation of profit, and social relations are characterised by a divide between those who own the means of producing capital, and those who exchange their labour in

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[428] Wight (1977)
[429] Ruggie (1998
[430] Rosenberg (1994) argues that both capitalism and the modern state system are a product of the late-eighteenth century, and that this is the point where sovereignty really begins to emerge, as political power is separated from economic production and exchange, and citizens become equals in their relationship to state authority in civil society.

return for wages. This is a very basic definition, and there are those that argue that capitalism itself contains within it, and has a history of, many possible modes of production.[431] But, in terms of splitting world history into epochal periods, the Marxian position has generally been to work with a division that emphasizes fundamentally different modes of production. Marx himself posited a periodisation that distinguished between slavery, feudalism and capitalism. Ernst Gellner argued for a division between hunter-gatherers, agrarian economies and industrial capitalism, which maps precisely onto the epochal history of cities outlined above (avoiding the problem of a distinctive feudal period, with its Eurocentric overtones).[432] Eric Wolf adopts a similar argument, with his kin-based mode of production, tributary mode of production and capitalist mode of production.[433] These two thinkers stress the development of agriculture around 3500BC, and the attendant social redistribution of agricultural surplus, as a crucial turning point in world history. This lines up with most mainstream accounts of world history. But, again, the emphasis given to the emergence of capitalism in the nineteenth century as crucial to understanding world history and the modern international system is in direct contradiction to those that stress a 1500 turning point, and, also, to Wallerstein's world systems perspective, which sees 1500 as the significant date for the advent of a capitalist world economy.[434]

It should be stressed that the 1500 turning point is also questioned by those who do not highlight economic considerations. In particular, the linking of the fully modern concept of territorial sovereignty to the emergence of the quintessentially modern state system in the sixteenth century, and its applicability beyond its European origins, has been questioned. One of the key problems with this date for the modern state system is its spatially limited extent. Territorial states may have began to show their superior war-making capacity over other institutional forms in the sixteenth century, but their spread around the globe was a very drawn out process, lasting four centuries, and becoming entwined with the advent of nationalism and industrial capitalism along the way. This contingent historical process means that the political theory of sovereignty, as it emerged in the sixteenth century, has, in practice, resulted in a very different type of contemporary modern international system. Indeed, the idea that the Westphalian system ever worked in the way that its norms of territorial sovereignty, legal equality and non-intervention specified has been effectively questioned on empirical grounds, as has the notion that many sovereign powers actually had the capacity to realize a monopoly of power within their own borders.[435] What is clear, however, is that these norms only come to be applied universally in the twentieth century, with the completion of the extension of nationhood (a concept itself properly

[431] Thompson (1978)
[432] Gellner (1988)
[433] Wolf (1982)
[434] See Buzan and Little (2000: 402)
[435] Krasner (1999) Brown (2002: 19-37)

located in the nineteenth century) to the former colonial possessions in Asia and Africa.[436] And, as Gellner's influential argument has stressed, it is certainly possible to interpret the rise of nations as fulfilling the functional requirements of capitalism.[437] In this light, the simple correlation of the rise of the modern international system with rise of the territorial state is less clear, and the linkage of the industrial city to the rise of the national-state begins to line up historically.

What these debates signal is that the relationship between sovereignty, territory, capitalism and modernity is crucial to understanding the nature of the modern international system, and, consequently, any transformation that may be underway in the contemporary world. It is important to take into account, when considering this relationship, that the *territorial* state system preceded the advent of a truly capitalist society, and that the insertion of capitalism into this pre-existing geo-spatial arrangement has important implications, both for capitalism and for the nature of the international system.[438] The pre-existence of a nascent system of territorial states helps to answer the question of why capitalism should have developed within sharply demarcated political spaces. There is nothing in the logic of capitalism itself, which would appear to be a fundamentally transnational form of economic organization, which suggests that it would be responsible for such a geopolitical arrangement. This is a problem that, as Lacher points out, undermines Marxist accounts that would seek a total explanation for the organizational and institutional form of the state system in capitalism:

> Capitalist political forms...took shape in institutions of domination that had been generated in the process of state formation since the late feudal period.[439]

This points again to the contingent historical interplay of territoriality and non-territorial forms of social and economic organisation, which are a feature of every historical period, and find their resolution in different combinations in different periods.[440] These historical combinations, I have been arguing, are what the concept of the international system allows us to identify and compare. Whether this interplay takes the form of states, empires, cities or other forms, is an empirical question that needs to be solved for each period. The changing nature of this interplay in the late-modern period is what gives the rise of global cities significance.

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[436] The extension of the principles of sovereignty and nationhood to the former African and Asian colonies as *universal* principles has unleashed a whole host of problems to do with the deferral of difference: the relocating of ethnically and religiously diverse populations into spatial containers: Inayatullah and Blaney (2003: 21-44). Before the spread of territorial statehood, empire had been the most historically successful way to accommodate such difference: Walzer (1997). The rise of the heterogeneous global city, and the hollowing out of the national polity associated with it, speak to this issue, which I will come back to in the conclusion.
[437] Gellner (1983) Anderson (1983)
[438] Lacher (2006)
[439] Lacher (2006: 58) Strayer (1970)
[440] Walker (1993)

In the modern period, the entry of the fundamentally transnational economic system of capitalism into the existing territorial political and military spatial framework of the state system has produced a number of effects. Perhaps the most important is a result of modern capitalisms historically specific separation of the economic sphere from the political sphere. Capitalism is the only configuration of social relations to have operated in this fashion: in all previous periods the economic and the political spheres were fused together. Thus, in the period of the absolutist state, and in all previous periods, political authority was, in a sense, also a form of property. Only under modern capitalism are relations of domination impersonal. It is this change that led Justin Rosenberg to argue that the system of sovereign states, and its attendant anarchical structure, are actually a product of the late-eighteenth century.[441]

Many IR theorists have taken the disjuncture of the modern polity and economy as a justification to develop a sharp methodological pluralism. This results, for example, in realists arguing that the economic fortunes of a state effect only its relative power capabilities within the international system, and have no bearing on the social constitution of the state itself. The separation of economics and politics becomes naturalised. However, as Karl Polanyi argued in the 1950s, the separation of economic and political power, only effectively achieved in the nineteenth century, is a function of social power. The creation of the capitalist state involved concerted political agency, and has had the effect of privatising many aspects of formerly political power, by relocating them to the economic sphere.[442] This results in a hollowing out of the content of the political, pushing non-economic matters into a weakened public sphere.[443]

The containment of capitalism within territorial political space has important implications for relations between states. Marx assumed that the territorial state was a function of the requirements of the capitalist class, needed to guarantee personal property rights and the integrity of markets. But, as Lacher argues, Marx failed to properly theorise the interaction between territorial states and the world market. Marxian theories of imperialism, such as those offered by Lenin and, later, the neo-Marxist dependency theorists, did make this relationship the core of their arguments.[444] They argued that, in order to overcome the internal contradictions and crises that Marx had identified as inherent to the process of capitalist accumulation, nation-states were pushed to increase the size of their national markets, through empire building and inter-state warfare to acquire new territory, which were clearly features of the late-nineteenth century up until the second world war (and, for the dependency theorists, beyond). The disjuncture between

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[441] Rosenberg (1994)
[442] Polanyi (1957)
[443] Wood (1995)
[444] Lenin (1948) Frank (1967)

the rise of the industrial city, confined within the territorial state, and the much earlier transformation of the international system into distinct bounded units, brings out the fundamentally conflictual logics of two systems that operate at different scales. This conflictual relationship, between the territorial state system and the capitalism that was confined within it, continues to play a central role in contemporary debates about globalisation and the potential demise of the modern state system. The subsequent emergence of the global city reflects a new stage in the relationship between these two logics.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the general nature of cities, which will be used later as a framework for understanding the historically specific emergence of the global city. It has shown the difficulty of pinning down the city to a precise and all-encompassing definition, and sought to emphasise instead the interplay of urban morphology and urban process, of ideas and their instantiation in material form. In this way, alongside a processual, relational and non-essentialist understanding of the entities that form international systems, the city can be incorporated into IR theory within a neat conceptual unity.

Focussing upon the points at which we may observe major epochal shifts in the form of cities in world history, I have argued, offers certain insights into what is important in debates about the periodicity attributed to the transformation of international systems. In particular, it highlights the centrality of the interaction of territorial and non-territorial elements of international systems, and how these elements are configured in different ways in different historical periods. In the case of the transition to the modern international system, thinking about the rise of cities formed by industrial capitalism forces us to ask important questions about how the emergence of this economic form is related to the earlier territorial state system into which it developed, and how this relationship has effected both the nature of the state system, and the development of capitalism.

Indeed, this relationship is an ongoing process. As I argued earlier, we should see the political and economic units of international systems in processual terms, as transient configurations, as particular crystallisations of the underlying contingent processes and mechanisms that drive history. In this way, we can see more clearly the interplay of some of the crucial mechanisms that shape the changing historical relationship between cities and states: the drive to accumulate a monopoly of coercive power that underlay state formation and the subjugation of cities to states;[445] the logic of capital accumulation that exerts pressure on the form of the territorial state,

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[445] Tilly (1990, 2008)

and, as I will go on to argue, is working to free global cities from their territorial states; [446] the drawing of the boundaries of political communities and the social production of space.[447] The interaction of these processes helped shape the modern international system, and their ongoing interaction will underlay its eventual transformation. The next chapter looks more closely at the nature of the modern international system, and the late-modern conditions in which the global city has arisen. Chapter six then looks at the nature of the global city.

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[446] Brenner (1998)
[447] Linklater (1998) Walker (1993)

5 Beyond Modernity?

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the question of whether the international system is undergoing a significant transformation in the late-modern period, and, if so, how we would recognise such a transformation. Such a possibility arises from signs that the state, as a political entity that reserves to itself all the functions of government within its territory, and, as such, generates the distinctive characteristics of the modern international system (territorial sovereignty, anarchy, and the types of activity that regulate order under these organising principles), is under pressure, particularly from the emergence of a globalised economy. The late-twentieth century is notable for the emergence of many powerful non-state actors on the world stage, some of them seeming to take on functions and responsibilities previously reserved as the responsibility of states. Although the emergence and power of non-state actors owes much to political decisions made by states themselves, under various pressures and with certain political and ideological aims in mind, it is quite possible that states have altered the international environment in which they exist in ways that make it less hospitable to their own historically derived form. In this chapter I will examine in more detail the debates around whether contemporary society is moving from a modern to a post-modern configuration, what underlies this perception, and what it may mean.

If one wishes to argue that the international system that has accompanied modernity is breaking down in some sense, then it is crucial to have a firm understanding of what modernity itself means, and what particular historical features its international system exhibits. Only then will it be possible to fully grasp what a move beyond this system would entail. There has been a great deal of debate in recent years about the processes and meanings inherent to the phenomenon of globalisation. The globalisation debates are essentially concerned with this question of transformation: does globalisation signal the emergence of a new type of international system, a new form of global politics with fundamentally novel characteristics? But the globalisation debates are multi-faceted, and often lack analytical clarity of the type that a focus on international systems can offer. A further set of issues relates to the many speculations about the end of modernity that are prefixed with a '–post': post-modernism, post-modernity, post-industrialism, post-fordism. These concepts also hint at the prospect of the disintegration of modernity, or, at least, the transformation of many of its central aspects across a range of political, economic, social and cultural phenomena.

In chapter three I outlined some of the key insights about transformation that are offered by an international systems perspective. These included ideas about changes in the dominant units and

structures of the international system, and the notion that a change in the dominant sector of the system offered a key indication of an epochal transformation of some kind, as in Buzan and Little's suggestion that the contemporary international system may be in the process of moving from a dominant political/military sector to a dominant economic sector. I also argued that a transformation in the structures of space and time embodied within a historically situated international system would be a crucial element of any transformation, and would result in the emergence of new spatial and temporal structures.

In this chapter I discuss how debates about modernity, postmodernity and globalisation, which are intrinsically connected, bear upon this question of the transformation of the contemporary international system. This is clearly a huge subject, and within the confines of this chapter I will only be able to touch upon some of the key issues. However, these issues form an important context for my subsequent discussion of the emergence of global cities, and this chapter should be viewed with this goal in mind. In an effort to impose some order on this material, I have arranged the chapter into three sections that discuss the relationship between modernity, postmodernity and globalisation in turn. The overall argument is intended to show how a historically specific culture of modernity is integrated into the structural form of the sovereign state system, and how the structures, ideologies and dynamics that have driven modernity forwards appear to be undergoing crisis and reassessment.

Modernity

In this section I investigate the nature of modernity as both historical period and intellectual and cultural sensibility. The purpose of this investigation is to link the broader features of modernity to the character of the modern international system. This provides the necessary context to discuss those theories that are concerned with the transformation, demise, or evolution of modernity. Theories of postmodernity, post-fordism, the information society, the network society and globalisation are all manifestations of a perception that the character of modernity and modern industrial capitalist societies is changing. Without the necessary foundation of an understanding of the nature of modernity and its historically specific features, it is not possible to comprehend these interlinked discussions of its transformation.

Modernity can be considered to be the cumulative effect of the series of intellectual, social, political and economic changes that brought the modern world into existence. Broadly, modernity refers to the distinctive form of social life that slowly emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century, although it is important to understand that some of its foundations need to be traced to developments in the fifteenth-century European Renaissance, which inaugurated

many of the features of modernity, but, because of the dominant Christian context of the day, remained ambivalent about following the new modes of thinking to their conclusion.[448] Modern societies went on to spread around the globe over the course of the next four hundred years. As Anthony Giddens notes, such a definition allocates modernity a timeframe and a place of origin, but leaves its character, driving forces and logics open. It also points to a discontinuist interpretation of social development: modernity represents a significant break with the past, and in order to understand it we must analyse the nature of the rupture.[449] Indeed, the modern period is what makes the periodisation of history possible: without the advent of the modern person, distinctions between ancient, medieval and modern would make no sense.

Modernity didn't arrive all at once. Its unfolding and expansion involved a slow and intricate process, combining the interplay of ideas about religion, science, economic, social and political organisation: a complex evolution to trace. The cultural and intellectual precedents that emerged in the European Renaissance were followed by the European Reformation, which questioned the legitimacy of clerical authority. They continued their rise to prominence in the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and culminated in the great democratic American and French Revolutions that undermined the legitimacy of the divine right of absolute monarchs. But it was the nineteenth century that witnessed the birth of the industrial revolution, creating the great industrial cities that we first associate with truly modern ways of life, and providing the ideological and intellectual content of modernity with its material substance. In the twentieth century the spread of industrial capitalist economies around the world has removed modernity from its European context: it has exposed other cultures to modern industrial ways of life, but, equally, it exposes modernity to non-Eurocentric interpretations. The nature of this expansion has underpinned contemporary debates on globalisation, and opened up the possibility that we may also speak of alternative or multiple modernities.

The effects of industrialism became an urgent social concern in the nineteenth century, and gave rise to the discipline of sociology. The foremost classical sociological thinkers, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, all wrote in response to the great social upheavals of their day. Before considering their legacy however, it is important not to equate modernity simply with industrialism and industrial economy and society. These are the visible traces of the impact of modernity on the face of the world, but a deeper understanding of its driving logics requires consideration of the history of ideas, and, particularly, elements of European thought that emerged in the preceding centuries.

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[448] Kumar (2005: 98) Toulmin (1990)
[449] Giddens (1990: 1-3)

Here there are two broad, competing interpretations. Modernity is often distinguished, in relation to the European medieval life that preceded it, by the loosening of the bonds of religious thought and their replacement with a secular, rational culture whose key feature is the concept of progress. Beginning with the rediscovery of the classical texts of ancient Greece and Rome following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, these currents of thought reached their maturity during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The diverse works of the European *philosophes*, their projects for improving the condition of humanity in this world rather than the next, are often seen as inaugurating an age of reason.

This became entrenched as the standard interpretation of the Enlightenment, although it is not the only one available. Historical knowledge constantly moves and adapts to the needs of its audience and the historians who write it. Such is the case with the historiography of the Enlightenment, which is now beginning to reflect the divides in key debates about the nature of modernity. In the decades following the Second World War, as the liberal democratic nations emerged from the implosion of their supposedly civilised societies, there was felt a pressing need for historical interpretations that affirmed the progress of reason, and reinforced the foundations of Western liberal democracy. Such arguments came to define an orthodox historiography of the Enlightenment in the twenty-five years following the war.[450] But, reinvigorated by the rise of postmodern thought, these views have now been disturbed in their occupancy of the centre ground by an older, pre-war interpretation. During the 1930s, Carl Becker's *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* put forward the view that the new faith in earthly progress and the perfectibility of humanity in time was, in reality, the simple substitution of a secular version of the very Christian philosophy that the *philosophes* had sought to undermine.[451] The philosophy of time that underpinned modernity's intellectual foundations was, in Becker's view, a secularised inheritance of the many millenarian philosophies on offer in the medieval period.[452]

Becker argued that, in their attempt to place secular rationality at the heart of their worldview, Enlightenment thinkers were unable to surmount the problem of the existence of evil in the world, to which the Christian system had offered a particular solution. In the medieval Christian worldview, humanity was to be rescued at the end of days in Augustine's heavenly city of perfect justice. For Becker, the solutions offered by the majority of the *philosophes* were ultimately a retreat

> down the path paved by their Christian predecessors, seeking consolation in the fantasy of *historical* rescue from the problem of evil. For the Enlightenment, this meant faith in the advent of a secular equivalent of the 'heavenly city' of Christian

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[450] Cassirer (1951) Gay (1966)
[451] Becker (1932/2003)
[452] Gray (2007)

eschatology, a terrestrial paradise of liberty, equality, and fraternity. In fact, Becker suggested ... these millennial expectations bore fruit almost immediately – in the form of the French Revolution, whose fundamentally *religious* character was recognized, among others, by Tocqueville.[453]

In this fashion, the idea of progress in historical time becomes the central feature of modernity, to be realised through the application of human rationality and scientifically derived technical knowledge.

The early positivists of the eighteenth century led the way in this respect. Comte's universal laws, once discovered, would point the way to history's ultimate destination:

> according to positivism, science is the motor of historical change. New technology drives out inefficient modes of production and engenders new forms of social life. This process is at work throughout history. Its end-point is a world unified by a single economic system. The ultimate result of scientific knowledge is a universal civilisation, governed by a secular 'terrestrial' morality.[454]

The underlying laws governing the development of society would apply for all places, driving history onward, as society passed through a series of stages of development, successively eliminating sources of social conflict on the road to a utopian future. Saint-Simon declared that 'the laws of history are the laws of destiny, which will inevitably conduct society to a determined end'.

That the culture of modernity retained this essentially Christian heritage from the beginning is important. Bounding historical time within the territorial space of the state imbued the politics of modernity with an orientation towards the future. It provided history with a purpose: the project to uncover, through the application of reason, the principles by which humanity could perfect itself in time. In Becker's memorable phrase, this became the project of rebuilding the heavenly city of Augustine with more 'up-to-date materials'.[455] Different inclinations as to how this political and social project was to be achieved became a source of ideological conflict that would drive much of the history of the following centuries. The twentieth century saw a number of ideological interpretations of humanity's historical destination struggle for the soul of modernity. The two principle candidates for universal truth, liberalism and socialism, both appealed to reason as offering access to the underlying motor of history, and both pointed towards different versions of earthly salvation in historical time. An insurmountable problem with the substitution of a secular, rational truth for the revealed truth of god was disagreement as to the nature of what that rational truth might be. As Nietzsche realised, the death of god removed the arbiter among contending perspectives. Scientific rationality was supposed to provide this foundation, but the

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[453] Wright: foreword in Becker (1932/2003: xii)
[454] Gray (2003: 42)
[455] Becker (1932/2003: 31)

confidence of the early positivists remained unfounded in this respect. Without a final position to fall back on, competing relative versions of the truth may ultimately resolve their differences by recourse to strength.[456]

The culture of modernity, then, incorporated, almost subliminally, an eschatological philosophy of time, where the entirety of history could only finally be understood when viewed from the perspective of its utopian culmination. The past, now linear and irreversible, in contrast to the cyclical or changeless philosophies of time to be found in other non-European cultures, gained meaning retrospectively, from its end-point.[457] Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, this was indeed one interpretation that rose to prominence, most powerfully elaborated in Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*.[458] Fukuyama's neo-Hegelian argument viewed the engine of history as the dialectical clash of opposing ideologies, a clash which had finally culminated in the victory of liberal democratic, free market political and economic institutions as the perfection of human government.

But if one of the central strands of modernity was this orientation towards the future, and the strong urge to apply scientific and technical rationalism to utopian political and social projects, this should not obscure the fundamentally ambivalent nature of modernity, as both a set of ideas and a historical period. This ambivalence remains strong in late-modernity, as the contemporary period is sometimes called, and finds further echoes in the theories of postmodernity. Modernity encompasses not just the political, economic and social changes that combine to make the modern world, but also the aesthetic appreciation of those changes. This aesthetic appreciation is commonly known as modernism, and can be viewed as modernity's cultural expression. It is partly in this sense that modern men and women are distinguished from those of earlier periods. Stephen Kern has outlined how the culture of modernity found expression in the art, literature and social theory of the turn of the twentieth-century *belle epoch* societies of Europe and North America.[459] The culture of early modernity was suffused with speed, transience, novelty. To this can be added notions of a linear rush towards the future, of crisis and renewal, reflected in the works of Marx, and of constant revolution, destruction, transformation and impermanence, embodied in the theories of the Viennese economist Joseph Schumpeter.[460] The culture of modernity reflected its reliance upon a permanent revolution in ideas and institutions. In many ways modernism was a celebration of the future oriented nature of modernity, of its ceaseless change and utopian desires. But, as a complex cultural movement, it also contained many

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[456] Connelly (1993: 1-15)
[457] Kumar (2005: 92)
[458] Fukuyama (1992)
[459] Kern (1983)
[460] Schumpeter (1942)

elements of rejection, resistance and critique of the undermining of traditional ways of life and the ceaseless 'creative destruction' embodied within modern society. These strands gained expression in such counter-cultural movements as romanticism and primitivism.[461] Such counter-cultural movements later feed into, and find their fullest expression, in the theories and culture of postmodernism, which lie in complex relation to modernity.

Postmodernity

The label postmodernity at first appears to imply that modern society has been transcended in some way, that the contemporary world is experiencing a fundamental discontinuity that separates it from the earlier historical epoch of the modern. This is not, however, an entirely accurate summation of the nature of postmodern theory. Rather, the notion of postmodernity is most often seen as modernity in a late, radicalised and self-reflexive phase, where the tendencies inherent within it, both mainstream and counter-cultural, are amplified.[462] For many, postmodernism is an extension of cultural modernism, with clear lines of continuity. However, this simplifies the nature of postmodern theory somewhat. As Krishan Kumar makes clear, the relationship of postmodern culture to late modern or radicalised modernity is more complex than the relationship of modernism to modernity. Modernism can be legitimately viewed as the cultural manifestation of modern industrial capitalist society, but postmodernism is not simply the culture of post-industrial society: it is intrinsically bound up with the material changes taking place within the economy and society.[463] This is a complex point, and requires some elucidation, but it will be important when I go on to consider theories of globalisation.

Postmodernism can, and has been, viewed as both a development in the sphere of culture, a technique for deconstructing established and unquestioned truths, and as a fundamental discontinuity in the material foundations of modern society. There is, however, a further position that links these types of change in culture, economy and society together, which views postmodernism as an expression of changes to the way in which capitalism is constituted and operates. In this synthetic position, the central idea is that capitalism has moved into a new phase, where the source of value in the economy has shifted from industrial manufacturing to the production of services and cultural goods. This perspective sees a fundamental structural discontinuity between industrial society and an emerging post-industrial society. This line of thinking first began to emerge in the 1970s, finding its central statement in the work of Alain Touraine in France and Daniel Bell in the United States, whose work I discuss later.[464] As the

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[461] Kumar (2005: 107)
[462] Giddens (1990) Beck (1992)
[463] Kumar (2005: 135)
[464] Bell (1999)

economy becomes reoriented towards the production of cultural goods, information production, and consumer and producer services, culture and economy lose their distinctive boundaries and merge into each other. Culture becomes a product, and lies at the heart of the new form of capitalism. It is in this sense that, where modernism became a cultural response to the material transformations embodied in modern society, postmodern culture is actually a crucial element of post-industrial society's material structure.[465] This is, as Kumar points out, an inversion of Marx's formulation of the economic base, on which a super-structure of culture, knowledge and ideology rest. In postmodernity, knowledge and culture become merged with the base: culture and economy are fused.[466]

This linkage of culture and economy, which has been further entrenched by the development of a set of electronic information technologies since the late 1960s, lies at the heart of theoretical claims by postmodernists that modernity is in some way being transformed (although not, perhaps, transcended). It is in this sense that postmodernism is not concerned simply with matters of cultural expression or aesthetic value, but grapples directly with the question of the potential future of modern industrial society.[467] Whether late capitalist or post-industrial society is interpreted ideologically as either a positive development, or as a further intensification of the grip of capitalism over modern society, is clearly an important political question. The position generally associated with the political right regards changes to the nature of capitalism as a historic rupture, after which the old problems and restrictions of classical capitalism are transcended. Here, the empowerment of the individual, particularly through the multiplication of their creativity and productivity by way of new information technologies, is seen to move society beyond the class struggles of the past, while the rise of the multinational corporation moves society beyond the old monopoly capitalism and its imperial temptations.[468] This interpretation is rejected by the left, which sees in the superficiality and commercialism of postmodern culture, and the increasing commoditisation of all aspects of everyday life, a dangerous shift in the nature of class struggle and political consciousness, and a further degeneration of the problems associated with modern capitalism.[469]

Whether theories of postmodern and post-industrial society do indeed point to a fundamental discontinuity with earlier forms of economy and society relates to my examination of the potential transformation of the international system as a whole, and, thus, to the nature and emergence of global cities as fundamentally novel urban forms tightly linked to those changes.

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[465] Jameson (1991)
[466] Kumar (2005: 137)
[467] Kumar (2005: 133-134)
[468] Jameson (1991: xviii)
[469] Jameson (1991: 60)

The broad thrust of the argument of this thesis is that the emergence of global cities, as a physical manifestation of these developments in the nature of the world economy, highlights how the form of the international system is responding to these processes. In essence, the argument presented here is that the various theories of postmodernity, post-industrialism and post-fordism, of the information society and the network society, and theories of globalisation, are all intertwined facets of the same fundamental problematique. They seek to assess the nature of some real change in the experience of modernity. What, then, are the central characteristics of the postmodern condition? An often-cited central feature of postmodernism is its 'incredulity towards grand narratives'. As we have seen, grand narratives of progress, such as liberalism and socialism, have been a central feature of modernity, a legacy of its Christian inheritance as developed during the Enlightenment. Postmodernism rejects all teleological interpretations of history, and views all utopian projects as narratives of power. Postmodernism questions and deconstructs the foundations of dominant accounts of truth, knowledge and reality, in an attempt to reveal the alternative ways of apprehending the world and living within it that hegemonic accounts exclude.

In rejecting all confident certainties, and all grand political projects, or meta-narratives, postmodernism tends to view narrative itself as an element of the modern mindset.[470] The notion of the rational mind comes under attack in postmodern theory. Descartes' philosophical method, one of the foundation stones of modernity, comes under pressure from the turn to language in the work of Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Dewey, who stress that language forms the mind, rather than the mind forming language. The implication of this insight is that language is a fundamentally unstable medium, and so the prospect of timeless, universal truth is destabilised. Descartes' abstract rationality is replaced with a multiplicity of relative rationalities and competing perspectives. Science itself, which had claimed a uniquely universal and transcendental truth, is revealed as just one more narrative.

Postmodern culture, as a result of these philosophical underpinnings, places great emphasis upon choice and individualism, and takes on a character of fragmentation and pluralism. One of the key features that emerge from the rejection of master narratives for society is a rejection of the distinction between high and low culture. This is reflected in the typical artistic expressions of postmodernity, which feature irreverence, playfulness, kitsch and superficiality. One of its key artistic techniques is the collage or montage, and this format brings us back to the question of time. I previously argued that temporal structures are an important indication of fundamental discontinuities within international systems, and, as we have seen, in postmodern cultural expressions we can find intimations of a new culture of time. This is an echo of the way in which

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[470] Lyotard (1984)

modernity was characterised by a new appreciation of time, and the related category of space.[471] Time, under modernity, was a rush towards the future, where 'the present was indefinable, a vertigo or velocity rather than a habitat.[472] The collages of postmodernism emphasise the movement's depthlessness and superficiality, but they also portray the deliberate mixing of historical periods, historical cultures and styles together, in a representation of simultaneity.[473] In this way, the early forms of postmodern thought that found their way into cultural and artistic expression began to reflect the perception of a change in the relationship between past, present and future. In particular, changing styles of architecture in the 1970s brought this new perspective to the forefront of public life, led by the work of Robert Venturi.[474] The postmodern style in architecture incorporated a mixture of fragments from diverse periods of time; its dominant practices were collage and citation, a mixing of the universal and the local.

It is no coincidence that this nascent cultural appreciation of a change in the temporal structure of modernity emerges at around the same time as substantial growth in the capacity and quality of information and communications technologies. For it is these technologies that can allow the deepest implications of postmodern thought to achieve their full potential to undermine the modern structures of space and time. In architecture, the mixing of several different temporal periods were represented superficially in the façade of a building. The convergence of information and communications technologies allows a refiguring of our sequential understanding of time by offering the practical experience of simultaneity:

> the past is for the first time included in the present as a result of technologies that allow the large scale storage, access and reproduction of records of the past...the ratio of past and present has therefore changed.[475]

A truly postmodern structure flows from the information communications revolution of the last third of the twentieth century. It is this technology that offers the prospect of that fundamental redrawing of time and space that postmodernism, as an intellectual movement, anticipates. In the modern period it was the flow of history and the destination of the future that mattered. Postmodernity must contend with a 'perpetual present' that includes, stored in the vast digital memory of its new technological paradigm, records of all cultures and all times.

The aesthetic and cultural developments of postmodernism, which result from the interplay of its intellectual, philosophical and material foundations, also find expression in the political and

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[471] Kern (1983)
[472] Connor (2004: 10)
[473] Recall here the image of the mixing of the skylines of Hong Kong, London and New York featured in the introduction.
[474] Connor (2004: 10) Venturi, Brown et al. (1977)
[475] Connor (2004: 10)

economic spheres, and thus, in changes to the dynamics of the international system. Postmodern politics tend to be built around an acknowledgement of difference and a defence of pluralist and particularistic identities. As such, they tend to reject those great containers of the cultural identity of modernity, nation-states, and the mass political parties that sought to take control of them, which were often built around class based projects. The postmodern perspective results in a questioning of the legitimacy of national culture, and the assertion of alternative forms of identity politics and social movements: gender, ethnicity, religion, environmental movements.[476] At the same time, such movements often seek to locate themselves at a scale that is different to the national: there has been a notable reinvigoration of the local, the sub-national, the regional and the transnational as the locus of new forms of identity. These tendencies are a familiar aspect of the debates about globalisation, and this is one of the ways in which these theories show their commonality.

At the same time, as I have outlined, postmodernity is intrinsically linked to economic change. It is in the economic sphere that some of the most powerful and convincing analyses of the nature of postmodernity have been developed. Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge* was a headline grabbing statement that linked the postmodern sensibility explicitly to the workings of the global capitalist economy.[477] Lyotard viewed postmodernism as the spent force of modernity: modernity's revolutionary power exhausted from becoming enmeshed in the bureaucratic, technocratic and consumerist society that it had brought into being.[478] Daniel Bell developed the thesis of postmodernism as the cultural expression of capitalism in a late stage, characterised by mass markets and mass consumption.[479] But perhaps the most influential statement connecting postmodernism with a new economic paradigm is Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.[480] Here, postmodernism is seen as a result of the restructuring of global capitalism in the mid-1970s, and linked to the new paradigm of information and communications technology that emerges in the same period. It is argued that these changes have resulted in a more decentralised and flexible global economic system. The affinities with globalisation theory are again clear, as are the connections with theories of the information society that begin to emerge at this time, which argue that the new technologies are altering the fundamental economic structures of modern capitalist societies.

Thinkers such as Lyotard, Bell, Harvey and Jameson are pointing to the wider effects of the restructuring of capitalism in the wake of the collapse of the post-war Bretton Woods system: the

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[476] Kumar (2005: 42) Castells (1997)
[477] Lyotard (1984)
[478] Kumar (2005: 131)
[479] Bell (1976)
[480] Jameson (1991) Harvey (1989)

emergence of the transnational corporation as a key economic actor, the relocation of manufacturing and production from the core developed nations to the former third world and attendant deindustrialisation of modern cities and regions, the related move into service based sectors of the economy, the rise of international banking, finance and exchange, the growth of the computer, automation and the 'control revolution' that these technologies are linked to. But a further distinctive feature of these theorists work is their insistence that these changes have fundamentally altered the nature of economic production and consumption. A distinctive set of theories have evolved here that argue that modern industrial society is transforming into post-industrial society, where value comes not primarily from transforming natural resources through labour, but from the development and exchange of codified theoretical knowledge between people. Information begins to replace capital and land as the most important inputs in economic production.[481] It is worth pausing to register the point that the value of land, in the form of political territory, was at the centre of motivations for inter-state warfare in earlier periods, including the two world wars of the twentieth century, and that any move towards informationalism in the economic sector of the international system will figure importantly in the changing character of the political sector of the international system. This argument is presented in the work of Richard Rosecrance on the rise of 'trading' and 'virtual' states.[482]

Bell argues that post-industrial society relates to the techno-economic sphere, although bringing with it political consequences, as 'political scales of sovereignty and authority [no longer] match the economic scales'.[483] In this respect, post-industrial modes of economic production are overlain upon industrial and pre-industrial modes of production, which continue to operate in the world, but are themselves modified by the effects of post-industrial society.[484] The difference between these types of techno-economic organisation are summarised by Bell in a comparative table.[485]

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[481] Stonier (1983) Masuda (1980)
[482] Rosecrance (1985, 1999)
[483] Bell (1999: 83)
[484] Bell (1999: 11)
[485] Table adapted from Bell (1999: 85)

	Pre-Industrial	Industrial	Post-Industrial
Mode of Production	Extractive	Fabrication	Processing, Information
Economic Sector	Primary Agriculture, mining, fishing, timber, oil and gas	Secondary Manufactured goods, heavy construction	*Services Sectors* Transportation, utilities Trade, finance, insurance
Transforming Resource	Natural power: wind, water, draft, animal, human muscle	Created energy: oil, gas, nuclear	Information and knowledge: programming and algorithems computer and data transmission
Strategic Resource	Raw materials	Financial capital	Human capital
Technology	Craft	Machine technology	Intellectual technology
Mode of Work	Physical labour	Division of labour	Networking
Methodology	Trial and error	Empiricism	Models, simulations, descision theory,
Axial Principle	Traditionalism	Productivity	Codification of theoretical knowledge

Services are the predominant form of economic activity in the post-industrial society: the mode of production of the industrial age was fabrication, in the post-industrial it is the processing of information in sectors such as finance, insurance, media, health, education, leisure, and design. This marks a major shift from the earlier paradigms, because it represents an economy where value can be produced entirely from interaction among human beings. The pre-industrial age can be seen as a struggle against nature to produce advances in human life, the industrial can be characterised as the taming, transformation and increasing fabrication of nature. But in a post-industrial society information and knowledge become the key resources: human capital and intellectual technology supersede the finance capital and machine technologies that provided the inputs for the industrial paradigm. Networking replaces the older concept of the division of labour.

The coming of post-industrial society can be seen, in a sense, as the outcome of a two hundred year 'axial age of technology', which has witnessed humankind fundamentally transform nature and the material world, both in theory and practice.[486] The world was first transformed by the industrial revolution: by the application of a new understanding of physics to the development of fabricated energy. Steam power, coal and electricity were harnessed to undertake an enormous transformation of the natural and social world. This new mastery over nature was augmented by a second development: the possibility of producing a variety of synthetic materials through the advent of modern chemistry. Growing out of these beginnings, which sprang from the rational world view of modernity, came the new science of economics, the division of labour and the principle of productivity (the release of greater levels of output from less inputs of labour).[487]

Post-industrial theory argues that the economy has undergone another equally profound shift in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the defining characteristic or principle of which is the

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[486] Bell (1999: 13)
[487] Bell (1999: 12)

codification of theoretical knowledge. For Bell, this principle supersedes the principle of productivity. Value is not based primarily on physical labour in the post-industrial society, as it had been in the economic theories of thinkers such as Ricardo and Marx, but on the knowledge produced by invention, innovation, and creativity. A key point here is that *theoretical* knowledge is now produced for its own sake – its production is institutionalised in universities and corporate research and development laboratories, without necessarily having an immediate application. It is from this deliberate codification of knowledge, the creation of 'self-conscious' research programmes, that many of the technological underpinnings of the information age have emerged. Bell identifies as key to this process the revolutions in physics and biology that have grown from the theoretical work of Einstein, Bohr and Bloch in relativity, optics and quantum mechanics. From this knowledge base have come the technologies that make the information-society possible: telecommunications, computers, transistors, semi-conductors, microprocessors, fibre-optics. These technologies distinguish the post-industrial society, with its electronically mediated global economy based upon an infrastructure of communication, from the industrial society, whose infrastructure was transportation. Ports, railways, motorways and airports are still vital today, but it is the communications infrastructure that is becoming the key driver of value in the contemporary world, an infrastructure shaped by cables and satellites, fibre-optics, digital communications devices, ISDN channels that can combine streams of data, images, text and sound, and, now, the 'complex adaptive system' of the internet, housed predominantly in global cities.[488]

In the work of the postmodernists who have considered these developments, there is the radical argument that, rather than simply transforming nature, these developments have produced a 'second nature'. In Jameson's seminal essay, for example, nature itself disappears now that modernity is complete. Culture becomes a second nature in this electronically mediated artificial environment: sign and signifier become indistinct, and the image or sign takes the place of that which it is supposed to refer to.[489] Reality becomes composed of representations and signs that have been shaken loose from their original moorings, and are open to manipulation.[490] A central plank in this type of argument is that the new informational and communications technologies offer qualitatively new kinds of social and economic interaction. This is one of the reasons why, as argued earlier, the digital age allows access to a perpetual present, including the records of all cultures and all times, with the potentially dangerous possibility that they become unmediated and unencumbered by the limitations of sequence and history.

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[488] Bell (1999: 27)
[489] Kumar (2005: 136-137) Jameson (1991)
[490] Baudrillard (1983) Lash (1990) Lash and Urry (1987, 1993)

Globalisation

The preceding discussion has attempted to clarify the nature of modernity, and set some foundations for the question of whether modernity is being transcended. Postmodern theories point towards a change in our understanding of modernity: they reflect a movement towards late-modernity, towards a modernity conscious of itself. But does this mean that modernity has been transcended? Postmodern theory is, at least partially, a radicalised strand of modern thought that has been with modernity since its beginning. In this section I discuss a further set of theories surrounding the issue of globalisation, which are also bound up with theories of modernity and postmodernity. Globalisation theories also strike directly at the heart of debates about the modern international system. In particular, they highlight the changing relationship between territoriality and deterritorialisation, and between the modern state and the global economy, a discussion from the preceding chapter that will be extended here.

Theories of postmodernism and of the post-industrial or information society can be seen as early forerunners of the take off of globalisation debates in the 1990s. In a recent review of globalisation theory we find the statement that 'the globalisation debate crashed almost without warning on the social sciences and policy world in the 1990s.'[491] But, as we have seen, this is an overstatement: the globalisation debate had clear forerunners that stretched back to the 1960s. What changed in the 1990s was the intensity of the radicalising tendencies in late-modernity. The sum of all of the social, economic and political consequences of these tensions within modernity has come to be known as globalisation, but any term that tries to take on so many different variables is likely to be unfocussed. This has been the fate of globalisation theory, where globalisation has been seen as both process and end-state or condition, blurring its analytical utility.[492] The standard definitions of globalisation show the strain of the amount of weight that the concept is asked to bear. Globalisation is thus

> A process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and the exercise of power.[493]

These vague assertions about globalisation only begin to come into focus when applied to specific issues: the globalisation of financial markets, the internationalisation of production and the new international division of labour, the spread of political ideas about the state system, the interpenetration of previously separate cultures. These are processes already covered in the

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[491] Bisley (2007)
[492] Rosenberg (2000)
[493] Held (1999: 16)

theories of postmodernity and post-industrial society. 'Globalisation' is itself a misleading term: the processes under consideration are always unevenly distributed around the international system. Globalisation can, then, only take its meaning when applied to particular processes viewed from particular perspectives.[494] Liberals, clinging to their particular vision of the meaning of modernity, feel that the globalisation of free markets, and the concomitant growth of cosmopolitan sentiment, is the answer to the endemic problem of conflict among human societies. But, the uneven nature of the spread of trade and the growth of wealth under globalisation may well point in precisely the opposite direction. At the same time, in the realm of security, the globalisation of warfare, in terms of the fragmentation and privatisation of the modern war economy that has been underway since the end of the Cold War, has greatly enhanced the potency of transnational terrorist and organised crime networks.[495] The material equipment of warfare is now widely available to private actors, as are the means of financing non-state violence. Eric Hobsbawm argues that the territorial state has thus lost some of its grip on the traditional monopoly of force, and that the balance between the state and non-state organisations has been altered.[496]

This multifaceted nature of globalisation theory, which is, in effect, a number of interrelated theories about different elements of the international system, has been reflected in the controversy surrounding the notion that the international system is undergoing some kind of profound transformation. The globalisation literature has moved through five different stages.[497] The late 1980s saw confident assertions that great changes were taking place that would sweep away the modern system of sovereign states, perhaps best symbolised by Ohmae's overstated assertion of the new 'borderless world', and the 'end of the nation-state'.[498] Clearly this was a misreading of the situation: the state was not about to disappear as the primary organising unit of social life. The next wave of globalisation theory sought to investigate the processes affecting the state more carefully, and argued that modernity was indeed being radicalised, and was moving into tension with a new 'globality', that was redrawing the economic landscape, and placing sovereignty and national identity in question.[499]

Then came the critical backlash. In the late 1990s a flurry of work refuted and reinterpreted the arguments that globalisation was fundamentally altering the international system and taking the world into a new epoch. It was argued that state sovereignty was not about to be lost, and that

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[494] Bisley (2007: 2)
[495] Kaldor (1999)
[496] Hobsbawm (2007: 25)
[497] Bisley (2007: 11-17)
[498] Ohmae (1990, 1995)
[499] Rosenau (1990) Giddens (1994) Scholte (1993, 2000)

the concept was far more flexible in practice than any strict legal interpretation could show.[500] There were economic arguments that refuted the notion that the economy was becoming any more globalised than the international economy of the *belle epoch* era, and was perhaps less so.[501] There began, at this point, to emerge a wave of anti-globalisation writings, which sought to understand the processes of globalisation as arising from the vested interests of multi-national business corporations.[502]

The fourth wave of writing on globalisation has been the 'transformationalist' synthesis, which sought to respond to the criticisms laid out, but argued that a significant set of developments are altering the environment of the international system and, thus, forcing change on entities such as states and national economies.[503] A final development comes in the form of those authors that seek to defend the normative elements of globalisation as a neoliberal project, arguing for the universal benefits of open markets and free trade, the vast flows of capital now available to the system, and a flexible system of globalised production and labour.[504]

Making sense of the relative weight of these claims for and against a fundamental rupture in the international system of modernity, I have argued, is a pursuit most effectively undertaken with a clear understanding of modernity in mind. In the remainder of this section I wish to outline how the features of modernity, outlined in the first section of this chapter, find expression in the modern international system. I then discuss the central issues of globalisation theory in order to assess if, and where, the modern system is being transformed.

The Political Projects of Modernity

Rob Walker provides a useful starting point for relating the features of modernity to the modern international system. He has argued that one way to understand the changing configuration of international systems over time is to see how a number of perennial philosophical problems are solved by successive historical societies. For Walker, there are three major issues for all human societies to resolve; the way they reconcile ideas of the universal and the particular, their conception of the self and its other, and their construction of the relationship between space and time.[505] In the international system that forms the political settlement of modernity, it is argued, state sovereignty represents the elegant solution to all of these questions, and thus takes its place as the organising principle of the system.

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[500] Gelber (1997) Krasner (1999)
[501] Hirst and Thompson (1999)
[502] Gray (2002a)
[503] Held (1999) Giddens (1999) Beck (1999) Castells (1996, 1997, 1998)
[504] Bhagwati (2004) Friedman (2000, 2007) Wolf (2004)
[505] Walker (1993) See Rosenberg (2000: 45-85) for a useful critique.

Sovereignty provides a solution to the first of these issues by distinguishing between a number of particular, territorially bounded, communities: a division of the universal category of humanity as a whole. These boundaries then generate a distinctive 'inside/outside' configuration that constructs a category of otherness against which the self may be comprehended. Identity becomes rooted in a spatially bounded, imagined community: a very different type of allegiance to the multiple and overlapping loyalties characteristic of medieval Christendom, or the kingdoms and empires of the ancient and classical era. In the modern international system this form of identity has taken the form of nationalism, which, as James Mayall argues, is the essential cultural foundation of modern international society.[506] We begin to see a familiar international landscape evolve, initially on a small, European scale, but exhibiting the characteristics that give the modern state system its international problematic. The final existential problem that Walker identifies, the resolution of ways of organising social space and time, provides the modern international system with its abiding features, and generates many of its most deep rooted problems.

By organising space into separate, contiguous, but bounded, units, and by denying the right of outside interference in the self-contained government of . those bounded spaces, the inside/outside distinction splits not just social space, but social time as well. It creates the space of anarchy, in which time takes on the features of repetition and recurrence. A historical perspective on the international system can distinguish this modern anarchy from those historical systems with relations based, for example, upon empire or dominion. Within the state we can begin to find the emergence of the features of modernity described earlier: secular, linear, time and a temporal movement towards of progress. This prospect of progress in civil society, in law, in ethics and in the development of political philosophy and domestic political institutions, in the protection of particularistic diversity within the universal category of humanity, is bought at the price of the generation of the anarchical realm in-between states, where such progress is difficult, or, in some views, impossible to achieve. The realm between states thus takes on the character of atemporality that political realists describe, giving rise to the game of power politics and survival that states must play in order to protect their domestic achievements and the prospect of further progress within their borders.[507] For Walker, this settlement represents the modern attempt to 'fix and tame' time within spatial co-ordinates:

> it is especially important to remember the degree to which early-modern thought
> involved a struggle to take the temporal realm seriously in relation to the claims of
> Heaven. In the shadow of Augustine's grand schism, of the devaluation of life on
> earth in relation to the transcendental guarantees of eternity, a Machiavelli or a

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[506] Mayall (1990)
[507] Wight (1960)

> Hobbes can be read... as moments in a broader attempt to constitute a positive vision of human existence in time.[508]

The modern international system, then, has a particular social construction of space and time built into its very structure. Any transformation of this system will display evidence of new ways of organising time and space.

Walker sees the principle of state sovereignty as the 'spatial resolution of all philosophical options', conditioning much of the way that modernity has unfolded. He claims that, not only does this resolution structure the contemporary world, it also draws in our horizons with respect to the type of international political theories that we are able to imagine.[509] Even as late as the 1960s, Martin Wight, in a famous article, lamented the impoverished state of theories of the international, in comparison to the sophisticated nature of domestic political theory, a problem which stems from the spatial and temporal settlement represented by sovereignty as the 'consummation of political experience'.[510]

The key question for globalisation theorists has arisen from the possibility that these modern arrangements are breaking down. There are signs that some of them clearly are; particularly the temporal and spatial structures that characterise modernity. However, it could easily be argued that two of its main strands of linear and utopian political thinking, liberalism and socialism, are still very much alive.

Influential bodies of liberal theory that describe such phenomena as the growth of interdependence among states, the possibility of working towards a democratic peace, the deepening of the bonds of international society, the development of a world state, the advance of globalised capital or the continued operation of the balance of power, can all be said to operate well within the bounds of the discourse of modernity. In the seeming victory of liberalism since the defeat of state directed socialism in 1989, it appears that one of modernity's master discourses is transcendent. This perception informs Fukuyama's melancholic reflections on the end of the ideological struggles that have driven history: that modernity was essentially about the shaping of the world to conform to liberal principles, which, alone of all historical options, has offered a path to peace and prosperity. In this he follows in a long tradition, whose lineage looks

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[508] Walker (1993: 185)

[509] Walker's (1993: 5-6) argument is partly aimed at explaining the dominance of realist categories of thought and behaviour in the understanding and conduct of international life. From this critical perspective, theories of international relations do not simply describe the modern international system: they are an expression of it.

[510] Wight (1960: 35-48) argues that 'the principle that every individual requires the protection of a state, which represents him in the international community, is a juristic expression of the belief in the sovereign state as the consummation of political experience and activity which has marked Western political thought since the Renaissance'.

back to the thought of Immanuel Kant. Kant argued that liberal principles offered a double solution to the problem of how to organise domestic society and the relations between societies. Liberal principles would remove war and lead to a pacific union between nations.[511] This idealism retains a powerful ideological force in international affairs today: a strong idealistic belief in the notion that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other. The democratic peace theory has provided the intellectual underpinnings of attempts to promote and extend democracy abroad that have characterised the foreign policy of the United States and the European Union since the 1990s. Liberal ideas also underpin the global political economy: since the 1970s these ideas have received powerful enforcement by the rise of neoliberal economic philosophies that posit that resources are most efficiently and beneficially allocated by the invisible hand of the free-market, operating with minimum interference from government.[512] Communism, and softer mixes of state directed capitalism, such as Keynesianism, are argued to have failed to provide the desired levels of growth and efficiency. Fukuyama argues that history, as an unfolding journey towards the salvation of humanity in historical time, has essentially played itself out, and, ultimately, all societies will converge on liberal ideology and institutions, which hold universal appeal. Politics, in such a world, are reduced to mere regulation and the pursuit of greater efficiency in solutions to technical problems.[513]

These ideas gained strength and expanded to fill the vacuum of the 1990s, driven on by the hegemonic power of the United States as it embraced its unipolar moment. However, both in the practice of nations and in the realm of intellectual fashion, there is opposition to this ascendancy. Some have argued that globalisation, which in many ways derived its extension and dynamism from liberal ideological underpinnings, linked to US power, appears to be in retreat.[514] The liberal democratic solution, it appears, is not an internally consistent set of ideas. Furthermore, there is a great gap between their theoretical elaboration and the way that these ideas have been applied to the world. In terms of its internal consistency as a unified ideology, there is an inherent tension between different types of liberty, and between liberalism and democracy.[515] The economic component of the liberal argument is undermined by its failure to recognise that capitalism does not operate on a level playing field, but in an arena distorted by the inequalities engendered by private ownership. Power gained and held in economic markets for some can restrain the ability to practice political liberty for others. The extension of liberal political and economic principles to the global scale has highlighted great inequalities in the international system – these inequalities retain the potential to create conflict and indicate that history, in Fukuyama's sense,

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[511] Doyle (1986: 1115-1169)
[512] Hayek (1944) Friedmann (1962)
[513] Hall, Held et al. (1992: 21)
[514] Saul (2005)
[515] See Berlin (1997: 1-16) on the incompatibility of different types of liberty.

may be far from over: that forms of political and economic organisation that we have not foreseen may emerge. Recurrent economic crises lend credence to this view.

The sense that conflict, injustice and inequality remain inherent to the global system, and, indeed, that they are exacerbated by the ascendancy of liberalism after 1989, has meant that socialist interpretations of the ultimate direction of modernity have not died.[516] In this interpretation, 1989 saw the victory not of democracy, but of capitalism. Alex Callinicos has argued that the real meaning of the revolutions that brought down the Soviet Union was not the victory of the democratic ideal, but the fuller insertion of the ruling political classes and the economic resources of Eastern Europe into the global capitalist system.[517] In many respects, the terms under which former Warsaw Pact states are being incorporated into the European Union bear this interpretation out.[518] The type of actually existing socialism practised during the twentieth century, Stalinism imposed from above, was a perversion of the type of socialism from below imagined by Marx as the historical successor to capitalism. Capital still retains an inherent tendency towards centralisation and concentration, in this reading, and will not be capable of delivering the equitable distribution of resources envisioned by those neo-classical economists championing the inherent equilibrating tendencies of free markets. The pattern of economic development in the years since 1989 lend credence to this interpretation.[519]

However, all this is not to say that the socialist interpretation of the historical thrust of modernity rings true. Although the socialist societies of the Soviet experiment may have been warped by Stalinism, there remains an inherent tendency with this type of political organisation towards the build up of public resources at the centre that works to sustain and ossify authority. Stalinism was, on such a reading, not just a perversion, but also a manifestation of the structural tendency within Marxism towards authoritarianism. Critics have also pointed out that Marxist analysis and political solutions have tended to emphasise the economic at the expense of the political, and that this tendency has led to a failure to properly theorise the role of power in society. In particular, the analytical focus on social class as the driver of history fails to appreciate the problem of the need to restrain recourse to violence at the level of individuals, groups and the state itself.[520] In reducing modernity to the playing out of the logic of capitalism, such

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[516] The argument of Derrida (1994) is that capitalism and socialism are inseparable from each other, and thus while one remains, so must the other, even in spectral form. The spectre of capitalism haunted the Soviet Union, and emerged easily from its ruins, just as the Communist Manifesto declared a spectre of communism to be haunting the industrialising societies of Europe in the nineteenth century.
[517] Callinicos (1991)
[518] Anderson (2007)
[519] Desai (2002)
[520] Hall, Held et al. (1992: 31)

interpretations, as argued earlier, also fail to note the significance of the prior existence of the state system and the way in which it shapes and constrains the development of modernity.[521]

Both socialist and liberal free market ideologies have inspired a near religious faith in their ability to provide the perfection of human society in historical time, fully in keeping with the Christian culture from which modernity was born. They maintain their adherents, but, with recognition of their many failings, it would also seem that a more complex, doubtful interpretation has begun to settle in on the reflexive late-modern or post-modern period. A good deal of the problem here is related to the dark history of the twentieth century, leading some to argue that the technical rationality of the Enlightenment contains an inherent logic of destruction in its drive for progress.[522] Certainly, as I outlined earlier, the culture of postmodernity, and the theoretical and political interventions made by postmodernists, show a rejection of the linear, utopian narratives of history offered by both liberals and socialists. Postmodern politics tends towards the politics of identity and particular projects, rather than attempts to gain control of the centralised political apparatus. One of the reasons for this may well be the separation of the political and economic spheres under capitalism.

The exhaustion of the political theory behind the projects of modernity, if not, with the ascendency of neoliberalism, their practical application, has led to attempts to theorise society in new ways. Earlier, I made reference to the classical sociologists who sought to understand the causes of the great changes that were transforming the social and economic relationships in their societies. Clearly one of them, Marx, was instrumental in formulating one of the great ideologies that sought to reveal the structure, and take command of the direction, of modernity. The work of Anthony Giddens has been inspired by the recognition that the interpretations of these classical sociologists have not, taken in isolation, been able to provide a satisfactory interpretation of the logic of modernity, especially in their identification of a single, mono-causal logic. Giddens seeks to reformulate sociology for the period of 'late-modernity'. He argues that society in the late-twentieth century, because of the complex multiple driving logics of modernity, has moved beyond the issues that the classical sociologists sought to understand. For Giddens, modernity must be seen as 'multi-dimensional at the level of institutions'. It cannot be reduced to single causes, but involves a whole complex of causal patterns between its institutional dimensions, which are defined as capitalism, industrialism, surveillance and military power. In particular, the notion that 'society' can be bounded and enclosed by the nation-state, and then studied within these self-contained systems, is no longer tenable.[523] This position has made *The Consequences of*

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[521] Lacher (2006)

[522] Bauman (1989) Adorno and Horkheimer (1986)

[523] Giddens (1990: 13). This is, of course, the position that defined International Relations as a discipline long before the advent of globalisation theory: see Rosenberg (2000).

Modernity a seminal text within the globalisation literature. Giddens notes the importance of technological developments in the disembedding of social relations from their immediate context, and their stretching across space and time. Giddens' perspective is useful because it is an attempt to imagine a future beyond modernity very different from the monolithic ideologies of the twentieth century. Giddens describes this position as 'realistic utopianism', which we might contrast with the eschatological visions of liberalism and socialism.

In their attempt to envision radical new directions for modernity, such thinkers are firm in the belief that there are clear signs that the legal and territorial sovereignty of nation-states has weakened considerably over the past three decades. Modern sovereignty had endowed states, and only states, with the legitimacy to wage warfare on behalf of their peoples, with a monopoly on violence in the domestic sphere, with the right to demand finance, loyalty and sacrifice from their populations in return for both physical and economic security. It may well be the case, however, that the organisational form of the nation-state reached its apogee during the twentieth century. As a consequence the rights and responsibilities of the state, and thus its very nature as an institutional form, may be undergoing some form of shift. Support for such an interpretation comes with the weakening of the state's legitimacy in two important areas: its original role as provider of external and internal security, and, in response to the rise of democratic norms, its later role in redistributing national wealth. We might label these two competencies as warfare and welfare. Events in the twentieth century have placed the capacity of the state to fulfil both of these functions in doubt.

Despite the state's rise to dominance being related to its superior war-making capacity,[524] since 1939-45 there have been no wars between major states for purposes of territorial expansion, competition for resources or perceived self-preservation. Such a prospect has seemed to be a decreasing probability during a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity for the mature democracies, albeit largely in the shadow of the Cold War. There are a number of possible explanations for this seeming trend towards a decline of major inter-state warfare. The spread of democratic government, in addition to the diffusion of nationalism, has made the conquest of territory by force unprofitable and unattractive.[525] A further crucial deterrent has been the technological development of nuclear weapons, which have raised the stakes of warfare to unacceptable limits. Robert Cooper has argued that the need to manage the impact of nuclear weapons on the international system has undermined the traditional balance of power, by initiating a system of mutual transparency between the hostile parties of the Cold War, enshrined

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[524] Tilly (1990)
[525] Van Creveld (1999: 349-351)

in the 1957 Treaty of Rome and the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty.[526] These developments, Cooper argues, have damaged two of the supports legitimising state sovereignty: the ability to wage war and the ability to defend its population. The principles developed to deal with the nuclear issue have gradually been extended to other areas. The Organisation for Security in Europe deals with the monitoring of democratic and human rights standards, while the International Criminal Court seeks to replace power politics with international law.[527] The conclusion Cooper draws from this is that the nuclear Cold War has allowed breathing space for a new type of international system to emerge, which he labels a 'post-modern security system'.

The second plank of legitimacy for the state under modernity is the idea that the state must also provide economic and social security for its citizens. The period from the 1840s to the 1970s can be seen as one of increasing intervention in economic life by the state, not just to extract ever-greater revenues, but also to attempt to use the state apparatus to improve the lives of citizens. Early interventions were aimed at softening the social impact of the industrial revolution. By the 1960s, the state was deeply entrenched in the fabric of the economy, attempting to use its finances and technical knowledge to tame and control the cycles and volatility that threatened its citizen's economic security.[528] As socialist movements gained purchase on the levers of political power, the state began to use its power to redistribute wealth. After the Great Depression of the 1930's, the temper of the times was reflected in Keynesian economic theories, and the Atlantic Charter of 1942, in which Western leaders declared a primary goal of policy to be 'freedom from want'. After the end of the Second World War, these aims and theories were translated into the Welfare State in much of the developed world. National welfare systems became increasingly comprehensive, drawing in more sectors of the population, while advances in medicine, education provision and gender equality worked to change demographic profiles, loading a bigger proportion of elderly dependents onto a system supported by a shrinking workforce.[529]

This model became unsustainable in the 1970s, undermined by a deep economic recession stemming in part from the oil prices resulting from the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, and exacerbated by new competition from the developing world. This recession was resistant to Keynesian economic strategies, and the pendulum of political thought swung back to the arguments of economists such as Hayek and Friedman, who argued that state intervention in economic life necessarily distorted the efficient movement of economic exchange and wealth creation. Thus began the long processes of reversing the trend towards the intervention of the state in the economy, from which it had increasingly drawn legitimacy since the mid-twentieth century. The

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[526] Cooper (2003: 3)
[527] Cooper (2003: 31)
[528] Van Creveld (1999: 354)
[529] Van Creveld (1999: 363)

welfare state, in many countries where neoliberal policies have taken root, is in the process of being dismantled.[530] The state is in retreat in many aspects of its citizen's lives, and those citizens have now to look at new ways to provide for their own security and safety, often physical as well as economic. Some have argued that these developments indicate a further shift in the basis of legitimacy for the state, which, rather than seeking to provide welfare for its citizens, is now seen as providing an environment of opportunity in which theoretically equal citizens can allow their natural talents and abilities to flourish in pursuit of goals that they set themselves.[531]

Beyond the National Economy?

The idea of a distinct national economy has always been problematic, as Marxist have long pointed out.[532] But, at the same time, the bounded political territories of the modern period have pursued policies that assume the spatial extent of their polity and economy operate at the same scale. Globalisation theorists have tended to work on the premise that the state and the market are operating in a zero-sum game: that the rise of the global market is weakening the state. Those precursors to the globalisation literature, the theories of post-industrialism and the information society, highlight the centrality of the development of new technologies in radicalising and destabilising modernity. The industrial capitalism that had characterised capitalist society up until this point could now be discerned to be undergoing some kind of shift, placing in question national economic sovereignty. Those that have considered this question have often come to divergent conclusions. We may link their positions in globalisation theory back to those outlined earlier: the hyper-globalisers, the sceptics and the transformationalists.

Capitalism has undergone a number of structural shifts during its interaction with the modern state system. In the nineteenth and early-twentieth century the limited scale of the national market led some states into strategies of territorial aggrandisement. A key problem for the victorious powers in 1945 was how to rebuild the world trading system, especially given its dramatic collapse in the 1930s. Where the earlier colonial empires and informal spheres of influence formed a core-periphery model, with the colonial periphery providing raw materials, foodstuffs and markets for the core to sell its manufactured goods back to, now a more complex trading system was required to take into account the growth of new sovereignties and nationalisms in the wake of decolonisation.[533] A new international division of labour emerged, more intricate and fragmented than before, with a shift in the locus of economic production,

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[530] Harvey (2005)
[531] Bobbitt (2002, 2008) Rosecrance (1985, 1999)
[532] The concept of bounded social units has been brought into question before, in particular by the world-systems theorists who take the position that the world has been organised as a single social system, with a global division of labour, for around five hundred years: Wallerstein (1974).
[533] Dicken (2003: 9)

particularly in manufacturing, from west to east. The period from 1945 to the recession of the 1970s was one long economic boom for the international economy, despite, or perhaps partly because, of the continuing Cold War.

However, this newly fashioned multilateral trading system, led by and guaranteed by the hegemonic power of the United States, took two different forms in the fifty years following the war. For the first period, up until the 1970s, the system was founded on Keynesian economic theories: a kind of state controlled capitalism, with national governments making regular interventions in the domestic economy to stimulate growth and keep unemployment down. International stability came from a monetary system based upon convertibility of the US dollar pegged to gold, and a trading system administered by three new international institutions: the International Monetary Fund, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

This first system, the Bretton Woods regime, was dismantled during the global economic crisis of the 1970s, when the Nixon government released the US dollar from its fixed peg to gold, initiating an era of floating exchange rates determined by market forces. This decision represented the ascendency of neoliberal economic principles: faith in the self-regulating tendencies of free markets towards equilibrium of supply and demand. Between 1978-1980, the United States, the United Kingdom and Deng Xiaoping's China all moved towards liberal market principles.[534] In China, this was a response to the economic failure of statism. In Britain and the United States it was a response to the crisis of 'embedded liberalism': that form of political-organisation in which the state played a crucial interventionist and regulatory role in protecting its citizens from market forces. The neoliberal project disembeds market forces and capital from such restraints. Its ideological core argues that human dignity and individual freedom are best protected by allowing individuals to pursue their own fortunes and projects. According to this vision, the failure of 'embedded liberalism' was due to the distorting influence of the state in the operation of free markets. Because the state can never obtain enough information to make choices for the allocation of resources on behalf of the whole of society, its interventions must necessarily be distorted by powerful vested interest groups.[535] This, indeed, chimes with some of the insights of the postmodern critique of power discussed earlier. The relocation of market decisions to individuals and firms also helps to explain how neoliberalism and the information technology revolution are symbiotic, as the earlier discussion of the social shaping of technology laid out.[536] The new technological paradigm greatly increases the market information available to

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[534] Harvey (2005: 1)
[535] Harvey (2005: 2-3)
[536] Castells (1996)

decision makers, empowering actors at scales below the level of the state in ways that would have been impossible in earlier historical periods.

The economic restructuring of the 1970s facilitated the emergence of a number of significant new features; the creation of a new system of trade and finance, a new form of micro-economic organisation in the shape of the multinational and transnational corporation, the increasing importance of international economic institutions in coordinating economic activity in the realm beyond the nation-state. National firms and markets were privatised, credit controls removed, an interest rate regime set by market mechanisms was embraced, and capital and stock markets were deregulated during the 1980s. These markets have been further integrated by increasingly powerful communications technologies.[537] Technology has increased the speed at which transactions can take place, and at which flows of capital and currency can move.

The co-evolution of neoliberalism and information technology has had a highly visible effect upon social and economic life. Social relations are stretched out across space and time. The idea of the bounded social container of the state and the national economy has been destabilised. As Giddens' theory sets out, the technological advances of the twentieth century radicalise the disembedding and abstracting mechanisms already present in modernity, drawing in 'larger and larger numbers of people [who now] live in circumstances in which disembedded institutions, linking local practices with globalised social relations, organize major aspects of day-to-day life'.[538] Giddens outlines how social relations no longer rest on face to face contact, creating new logics, identities and behaviours that involve a complex relation between distant locales. Local labour markets, for example, are effected by financial decisions taken in multi-national companies operating out of distant locales. The seemingly paradoxical dual effect of integration and fragmentation (for example, the integration of transnational corporations in an increasingly sophisticated global trading system, and the fragmentation and disempowerment of local labour markets), have led some to speak of 'glocalization'.[539] As I will outline in the next chapter, global cities are vital to this process.

The distortion of modern space is accompanied by the technologically induced speeding up of social time. Harvey locates this process in the competitive logic built into the capitalist economy.[540] Trading on financial markets increasingly relies upon the technological annihilation of time in the search for the perfectly flat market of neo-classical economics. For some, the ultimate destination of modernity was always incipient within its cultural premises:

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[537] Dicken (2003: 85-119)
[538] Giddens (1990: 79)
[539] Robertson (1994: 33-52)
[540] Harvey (1990)

once the distance passed in a unit of time came to be dependent on technology, on artificial means of transportation, all extant, inherited limits to the speed of movement could be in principle transgressed. Only the sky (or, as it transpired later, the speed of light) was now the limit, and modernity was one continuous, unstoppable, and fast accelerating attempt to reach it.[541]

Electronic networks go hand in hand with a new form of social organisation that has evolved to succeed in the new economic environment: the transnational corporation. For if electronic networks provide the means for a faster and qualitatively different type of information rich economic environment, then it is powerful, private firms that operate and direct these networks and their flows of trade and finance. These firms have thrived and multiplied in the last three decades, to the point where they now produce over half of the worlds GDP. Some of the largest can claim to have an internal economy larger than many national economies. The emergence of this new social form, and the power that it has come to wield, raises significant questions about political power and representation. Their control over the construction and application of technological networks, their centrality in global wealth generation and distribution, places a large question mark against the traditional role and function of the sovereign state.

However, powerful states are by no means impotent in this global economy. In particular, the growing salience of international institutions to regulate and control private organisations and to implement the rules of the economic game is a feature of the global economy. The most prominent of these institutions have, in practice, been vessels for the powerful vested interests of some national governments. In addition to gaining control over transnational firms, such institutions have been used to set the rules for new countries seeking to find their place in the international economy. In particular, the history of the last four decades is characterised by the use of institutions such as the IMF and World Bank to force states to open their markets to foreign investment and promote neoliberal principles through a series of structural adjustment programmes.[542] In this sense then, globalisation can be seen as the expansion of OECD economic values and principles through structural dominance, cultural hegemony and economic might.

There are, however, dissenting voices who reject the novelty of arguments about economic globalisation. Hirst and Thompson argue that in an imaginary 'ideal typical' global economy, national economies would be 'subsumed and rearticulated into the system' by international processes and transactions.[543] The national level itself would be completely transformed by forces and actors located in the international sphere, while conflict and competition to control and

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[541] Bauman (2000: 8) Virilio (1997)
[542] Harvey (2005: 29)
[543] Hirst and Thompson (1999: 10)

regulate international forces would break out at all levels. Transnational corporations and actors would be truly global, without national identifying marks or interests, with the capacity to base their operations at any global location dictated by pure market forces, and the ability to evade international regulatory standards. Global capital would be much empowered over global labour. On the political level, Hirst and Thompson anticipate that a truly global economy would tend towards multi-polarity, as hegemonic control would be thwarted by the inability to impose one particular regulatory regime. Legitimacy would rest on competing appeals to transnational corporations and the citizens of nation-states whose traditional identities are under threat. Military force would be decoupled from economic interests.

Although some of these trends would appear to be in effect, it is clear that the contemporary situation falls far short of meeting this 'ideal type' global economy. Hirst and Thompson argue that the primary movers in the international economy are clearly still national economies. Genuinely transnational companies are in fact a rarity: most focus on a particular national market, and can be regulated by a national government agency. Capital, trade and financial flows, rather than being global in scope, turn out to be concentrated on three regions: Europe, Japan and North America.[544] This points to the conclusion that economic 'globalisation' is not a global process, but an increase in the intensity, speed and depth of the economic ties and networks between the advanced industrial nations. The much-heralded increase in capital mobility is not reallocating funds, in terms of foreign direct investment, to the poorer parts of the world. Rather than a process of globalisation, Hirst and Thompson see a process of regionalisation, reinforced by the development of regional free trade agreements, and regional associations such as the EU, NAFTA and ASEAN.

However, in their attempt to dismiss the arguments for a more globally integrated economy, Leslie Sklair argues that Hirst and Thompson go too far. He suggests that, in viewing the contemporary international economy as no more global than that of the period leading up to the first world war, their arguments fail to fully comprehend the far reaching qualitative nature of the technological advances of the late 1960s, which have:

> transformed the quantitative possibilities of transferring cash and money capital into qualitatively new forms of corporate and personal financing, entrepreneurship and, crucially, the system of credit on which the global culture and ideology of consumerism largely rests.[545]

Dicken, writing from a geographical perspective, also emphasises the qualitative changes occurring in the world economy, arguing that economic integration is much deeper now than in

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[544] Hirst and Thompson (1999: 2)
[545] Sklair (1999: 143-163)

the past. Globalization is viewed as a 'syndrome of processes and outcomes that are manifestly very uneven in both time and space.'[546] Dicken dismisses the idea of a simple dichotomy between global and local as overly simplistic. He argues that geographers have much to offer in bringing the concept of scale to bear on the problem of understanding the contemporary transformations. He

> sees the process as being one of an increasing multiplication of scales – local, national, regional, global – that overlap in increasingly complex ways. Globalization ... is not simply about one scale (the global) becoming more important than the others but about *changes in the relationships between geographical scales*.[547]

As an alternative to this territorial conception of scale, Amin conceptualises scale in topological and relational terms:

> the scalar interpretation of the geography of globalization ... has to do with the possibility that the very ontology of place and territoriality itself is becoming altered by the rise of world-scale processes and transnational connectivity.[548]

These geographical and scalar arguments show that the practice of constructing two ideal types for the global and international economy, as Hirst and Thompson do, does not properly capture the processes at work. What is needed is an analysis of the relationship between different scales. In this sense, the premise and language of the globalisation debate is faulty. Capitalism has long had global tendencies – its emergence within a pre-existing system of territorial political spaces has been at the heart of the contradictions of modernity.[549] In the contemporary era, therefore, there is not so much a general movement from the national to the global, as a renegotiation of the relationships between the local, regional, national and global scales. As Hirst and Thompson's arguments do make clear, there is nothing particularly global about globalisation. There are, however, clearly discernable trends that place the political and economic settlement of modernity into question. This question of the rescaling of the international system is an important part of the arguments for seeing global cities as indicators of transformation. In the next chapter I assess the nature of global cities, and the particular contribution that they can make to our understanding of the changing relationship between territory and capitalism.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the nature of the historically modern form of the international system, and the ways in which modern ideas have become incorporated within the territorial political spaces of the international system. It has also examined the weakening of this modern settlement,

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[546] Dicken (2004)
[547] Dicken (2004: 8)
[548] Amin (2002)
[549] Lacher (2006: 153)

through the internal contradictions of modernity, and through the development of new ideas, technologies and practices. These issues were examined in the light of two complex discourses that concern themselves with the question of the transcendence of modernity: the discourses of postmodernity and globalisation. The chapter used the framework of the international system to bring order and analytical purchase to the interplay of these complex discourses and processes. I would argue that, by using this organising framework, many of the tensions and contradictions inherent within modernity are brought into clearer focus. The most important of these tensions for the future of the international system are the continuing renegotiation of the relationship between the territorial and non-territorial elements of the system.

In particular, the continuing problematic relationship between capitalism and the territorial state system in which it developed, in historically contingent fashion, is at the heart of discussions about the transcendence of modernity. These two central features of the modern international system have separate causal logics, yet their interaction has shaped the modern international system. Marxists have tended to substitute the concept of capitalism for modernity. Liberal and statist perspectives have tended to stress the political expression of modernity in the territorial state. Neither of these positions adequately recognises the interaction between these elements. This point is crucial when it comes to considering changes in the modern international system. Postmodernists have emphasised the changes to the structure of capitalism in late-modernity. Globalisation theorists have highlighted the move from the national to the global scale. Neither of these positions can fully capture the nature of contemporary transformation, which comes from a renegotiation of the relationships between different scales of activity within the international system.[550]

An important part of my argument so far has been that periods of turbulence and transformation result in the reconstitution of social space. This can be decoded by reference to changes in the material world: in the form that the international system takes, or in different arrangements of city space, for example. The way in which the relationship between the spatial scale of the city and the state changes through time may also be seen as an important resource for analysing transformation within the international system. In the modern period, cities have been systematically integrated into national state spaces, and stripped of many of their former historical functions. Only the economic generative properties were deemed valuable. The industrial revolution changed the form of cities, as they became growth engines for particular national capitals within the wider global market. With the crisis-led restructuring of capitalism in the 1970s this relationship has been altered, as I will show in the next chapter. The advent of new

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[550] Sassen (2006a)

information technologies is also an integral part of this restructuring, allowing the relationship between spatial scales to be renegotiated.

Does all of this point us beyond modernity? The signs are often contradictory, and yet, I would argue, there are certainly some developments that do point strongly in this direction. The discourse of postmodernity sums this tension up. In one sense, postmodernity is modernity conscious of itself, and, thus, remains within modernity's frame of reference. However, I would argue that the historical confluence of information technology and postmodern thought has created a material infrastructure that disrupts the spatial and temporal structures of modernity. This, I have argued, is an intrinsic part of the transformation of international systems.

The relationship of capitalism to modernity is also problematic with regard to positing a fundamental epochal rupture. Bell, Harvey and other theorists of post-industrialism see a structurally different form of capitalism emerging in the 1970s. However, others, such as Ellen Meiksins Wood, tend towards the idea that this is not some fundamental change in capitalism, but that capitalism has only now evolved to become a universal system. The epochal shift being discussed becomes not, then, a discontinuity in capitalism, but capitalism reaching maturity and moving beyond the capacity of territorial states to alleviate its periodic crises through various 'fixes': imperialism, warfare, embedded liberalism. Capitalism has, in such a reading, destroyed modernity by subsuming its non-economic features, and must now 'live alone with its internal contradictions'.[551] Not least of these are the vast disparities in wealth, and the reproduction of global poverty, inequality and exclusion, which have been exacerbated under neoliberalism in the last thirty years, and have been deeply inscribed in urban space, as the next chapter will show.

Finally, although states have abdicated many of the traditional rights and responsibilities of sovereignty, they still remain the most important unit within the international system. But, the changing nature of the international environment, and the rise of other units to challenge them, does seem to indicate the potential for a kind of institutional selection of the sort that brought the state to prominence in the early modern period.[552] It opens the state up to competition from other actors and processes that operate with deterritoralised logics that conflict with its own logic of territoriality. One of these is the global city, and it is to the reasons for its rise, and its implications for the state and the wider international system, to which the argument turns next.

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[551] Wood (1997: 558-559)
[552] Spruyt (1994)

6   Global Cities and Transnational Urbanism

Introduction

The core of the argument presented here is that the emergence of a fundamentally novel urban form in the late-twentieth century offers a powerful indication that the particular international system that has characterised modernity is undergoing transformation. The emergence of this new urban form may be viewed as a fourth historical urban revolution: the move to the post-industrial or post-modern urban form marks such cities off as distinct from the pre-agrarian, agrarian and industrial city.[553] Observations of material changes to the form of certain cities in the late-twentieth century have given rise to a literature of ever-increasing size and sophistication, which seeks to understand the sources and nature of these changes. This literature expands and extends what has come to be known as the 'global cities thesis'. This chapter investigates the global city concept and the material changes to cities that it seeks to chart. This is a concept that is likely to be unfamiliar to many IR scholars, having been developed in the domains of urban studies and political geography. These are fields of study with their own distinctive characteristics, which have coloured the development of the concept. The chapter also seeks to draw out some of the wider implications of this literature, especially in relation to some key concerns of IR scholars; the implications of the rise of the global city for how we understand the contemporary international system, the role of such cities in the core processes of globalisation, and the implications of their emergence for the modern arrangements of sovereignty and territoriality.

A number of the key arguments of earlier chapters are brought into more detailed focus in this chapter. Firstly, the emergence of global cities and contemporary transnational urban spaces will be shown to be intrinsically bound up with the movement from modernity towards postmodernity, and the connected processes of contemporary globalisation, as discussed in the previous chapter. Secondly, earlier arguments about the social production of social space show their usefulness in highlighting the unprecedented nature of the changes to the form of both urban life and the wider international system, where new forms of transnational space push beyond modern territorial arrangements. Following Lefebvre, earlier chapters argued that every society must necessarily produce a distinctive configuration of social space that reflects its underlying principles, dominant ideas and processes.[554] It will be argued here that the new forms of transnational urban space are just such a reflection: that they embody in material form a number of important ideological, social, political and economic practices and paradigms. In

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[553] Soja (2000: 149)
[554] Lefebvre (1991)

particular, the production of these spaces is bound up with the interplay of capitalist restructuring, neoliberalism and technological revolution.[555] This is a complex nexus of relationships, and will form a central element of the discussion that follows.

It should be stressed at the outset that the global city concept is itself problematic. The literature surrounding it has often been criticised for an excessive preoccupation with the economic construction and function of global cities, at the expense of other global flows and networks: demographic, cultural, epidemiological or ecological flows, for example.[556] This chapter will take a broad view of the global city phenomenon, engaging with the wider set of effects accompanying the new urban form. This would include the dark side of an often sanitised discourse, including, for example, the unprecedented growth of global slum production, as much a part of the production of the new social space as are the networked business districts of glass and steel that control and direct the vast financial flows of the global economy.[557] Such a holistic perspective is very much in the tradition of the kind of systems thinking advocated earlier in the course of this argument: only at the systemic level do the patterns of inequality and bifurcation linked to this urban phenomenon become visible. Equally, only from a historically informed perspective can we truly comprehend the changes being wrought upon the global urban fabric. The developments under consideration here bear upon the historical relationship between the city and the state, the relationship of capitalism to territoriality, and the relationship of society to the spaces in which it is expressed.

The chapter proceeds in two stages. The first section seeks to provide an answer to the question: what is the global city? This is not a straightforward endeavour. Just as it was argued earlier that a simple definition of the city is in itself of little value, so it is with the global city. Michael Smith has argued that it is unlikely that any such entity as the global city can be identified empirically to any satisfactory degree: 'there is no solid object known as the 'global city', but an interplay of networks, practices and power relations'.[558] Such a perspective would view all cities as globalising to some extent, for, as this chapter will go on to discuss, the processes altering the urban fabric are uneven, lifting some areas and districts from out of their local context and plugging them into global networks, while neighbourhoods that may be physically contiguous to these valued spaces may be switched off and left in darkness.[559] And yet, as I will show, many attempts have been made to develop hierarchies of global cities, suggesting an exclusive set to which non-global cities might aspire. In the view adopted here, it is perhaps better to understand the global city as a

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[555] Castells (1996)
[556] Smith (2001)
[557] United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (2001) Davis (2006)
[558] Smith (2001: 49)
[559] Taylor (2003)

conceptual tool or heuristic device that has been specially designed to shed light on important processes that are redrawing urban form in the wake of globalisation and reflexive late-modernity. This section of the chapter brings out the tensions between the different approaches by examining the way in which the concept has developed in the literature, highlighting the conceptual strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches.

The second section outlines how global cities and associated transnational spaces are intrinsically bound up with the creation of the technological infrastructure of what Manuel Castells has termed the 'space of flows'.[560] Global cities are seen as crucial nodal points that form part of the material infrastructure of this space of flows. They are the physical sites and locations that link the space of flows to the material world. They provide the place specific and non-substitutable enabling socio-technological infrastructure that forms the backbone for globalisation.[561] This type of infrastructural paradigm is intrinsically bound up with the social context in which it developed. In this case it has become imbued with a particular set of ideas that contrast strikingly with the model of integrated national infrastructure that characterised modernity and its territorial national states.[562] This is the interaction of social context and technological development referred to by historians and sociologists of technology as the 'social shaping of technology', and consideration of the particular interplay of context and technology informs an important part of the discussion here: this technological paradigm, first emerging in the early 1970s, was shaped by the rise of the set of ideas and values that came to dominate at that time.[563] The subsequent emergence and refinement of a transnational space of flows, connecting distant parts of the globe together in new configurations, while dislocating and fragmenting national spaces, is at the heart of a reconfiguring of the relationship between territory, cities and states in the contemporary international system. It will be clear that the new structures of space and time represented here fit in with the arguments about the transformation of international systems outlined earlier. The conclusion will attempt to draw out some of the implications of these arguments about this new composition of transnational urban space for the international system in the late-modern period, and this topic will be investigated further in the subsequent general conclusion.

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[560] Castells (1996)
[561] Storper (1997)
[562] Graham and Marvin (2001)
[563] Mackenzie and Wajcman (1999) Bijker (1995)

What is the Global City?

A New Urban Morphology

This section introduces the concept of the global city and shows how it has been deployed as a tool by analysts seeking to understand a number of late-modern developments. The global cities literature has crystallised around a number of important questions that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but increasingly diversified and expanded with the great growth of the globalisation literature in the late 1980s and 1990s. At its core, the research programme developing around global cities is about the changing nature of capitalism in the late-modern period, the relationship between national states and the global economy, and the changing relationship between states and cities in the contemporary period. The seminal theoretical insight that gave rise to these debates was the observation by John Friedmann that it was no longer adequate to seek to understand cities as simply being part of national urban systems, as urban studies had previously sought to do.[564] As global forces impacted on cities, an approach built around methodological nationalism was no longer satisfactory. Global cities would now come to be seen as an essential element of economic globalisation, both shaping and shaped by global processes and relationships. But, as this chapter will go on to show, the implications of arguments about global cities' economic functions are also profound for the wider political, social and cultural aspects of the international system.

Despite my assertion that the global city be viewed as a conceptual tool, it is clear that the concept refers to real changes in the material form of cities in the late-modern period. As argued in chapter four, cities must be viewed as both form and process. It should also be remembered that the concept of the global city is itself interacting reflexively with the processes that it seeks to comprehend: the dominant theoretical perspectives emerging in these debates will go on to shape the future development of urban form, through policy and planning. Therefore, debates over how we come to perceive global cities and their meaning are intensely political.[565] In the following discussion it remains important to bear in mind this linkage between the material and the ideational, between form and process.

What, then, are the material features of this qualitatively new form of urbanism that mark it off from earlier forms? The earlier form or morphology of the industrial city was characterised by the centrality of factories and industrial buildings, along with the low quality housing and tenements of the industrial proletariat. This urban form was very different to the organised and

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[564] Friedmann (1986)
[565] Massey (2007)

centralised religious and administrative spaces of the pre-industrial city. As cities in the developed world de-industrialised in the latter half of the nineteenth century, so urban morphology began to change again. Technological development, as we have seen, is necessarily at the heart of revolutionary changes in urban morphology: the development of agricultural technologies in ancient river valleys, the set of technologies associated with the industrial revolution. Technology enables the manipulation of space and time necessary to alter the urban fabric. The emergence of a revolution in information and communications technologies, linked to the changing geography of the international division of labour and to the restructuring of capitalism in the wake of deindustrialisation in the developed world, is key to understanding the urban morphology represented by global cities. The development of earlier technologies of transportation had already had an effect on the form of the industrial city: the railways and the automobile, linked to the growth of the middle class, had led to the development of the type suburbia characteristic of twentieth century urban life in many places. But it was the development of the Internet that reversed the short run exodus from the centre of cities, and reaffirmed their centrality in economic life.

For the urbanist Peter Hall, the work involved in building and extending the infrastructural network of the Internet adds up to as great a piece of infrastructure construction as the building of the railways in the 1830s and 1840s, the underground mass transit systems of the 1890s and 1900s, and the motorways of the 1950s and 1960s.[566] Just as the railways had turned English cities inside out, or the model-T Ford had created a novel urban form in Los Angeles, an era in which vital parts of the economy are being relocated to cyberspace must have profound implications for urban form. Yet, where many have argued that the city would become obsolete in a world where distant communities are connected in cyberspace, and where bandwidth and connectivity are more valuable than land, Hall refutes such a suggestion.[567] The city, maintaining its historical function as crucible of creativity, will still be required for its role in facilitating interpersonal interaction. In an economic climate that values artistic creativity and the consumption of ideas, brand identities and informational and cultural products, the city continues to play a crucial role, just as Jane Jacobs had argued that it must.[568] Where earlier forms of city networks relied upon land and sea trade routes, the paths through cyberspace that link modern cities make communications instantaneous, enabling new network patterns and linkages, enhancing productivity and efficiency. In principle the new technologies are not tied to any particular location, but, in practice, and when viewed in historical context, it is in certain cities that transnational companies place their headquarters, where financial centres are housed, and where the fixed infrastructure of the space of flows is built and maintained.

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[566] Hall (1998: 957)
[567] Hall (1998: 960-961)
[568] Jacobs (1969, 1984)

A brief description of the physical changes to urban form accompanying the rise of the global city will help to distinguish it from earlier forms. The similarity in the change of form in the major cities of the world is striking. The airports, the international hotels, the peripheral scrubland, areas of poor or slum housing, sites where historic buildings or features are preserved, and, at the centre, a downtown of steel and glass, a globally ubiquitous architecture of business, wealth, consumption. The flight from the inner city that accompanied de-industrialisation has been reversed in many cities, their centres reinvigorated and gentrified. Centres have grown vertically, often reaching unprecedented levels of density in their business districts. In Shanghai, over five thousand towers over eighty stories tall have been constructed in the last twenty-five years.[569] The architecture of city centres has taken on a recognised globalised form, although often with a superficial local twist.[570] The reinvigoration of the city centre is a direct result of the need for businesses to agglomerate in certain physical locations: the synergy of clustering. It is also a result of the need for centres of co-ordination and control in the technologically dispersed global economy, which I discuss below. The gentrification of the inner city around these centres is related to the high level wages available to those employed in the high value sectors of the economy related to such control: the financial and insurance sector, corporate headquarters and advanced producer services.[571] Cities around the world are also showing a great polarisation of wealth that is leading to the segregation and privatisation of certain spaces, exemplified by the growth of the gated community: the creation of the dual city. Vast wealth disparities, a shrinking middle class, immigration and slum production, uneven access to services, the creation of private spaces and networks: these trends pull at the cohesion of cities.[572]

At the same time as the centre is reinforced and its vertical growth boosted, cities are also being stretched horizontally by information communication and transportation technologies that allow them to reach across ever greater expanses of physical space.[573] Networks of air and high-speed rail transportation have shrunk selected stretches of global and regional space. This has led to debates about the formation of global city regions – integrated and polycentric urban agglomerations of quasi-continental size. Such regions may be viewed as the driving force of globalisation, offering a size and scale more appropriate for the contemporary global economy than the historical city. Over twenty global city regions have been identified with populations of over ten million; some arranged around a core city, such as London or Mexico City, others taking

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[569] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 104-126)
[570] Sklair (2005, 2006)
[571] Sassen (1991: 13)
[572] Burdett, Sudjic et al. (2007: 1-54)
[573] Brenner and Keil (2006: 4)

polycentric form, such as the Dutch Randstad. [574] Castells puts it this way: 'the entire planet is being reorganised around gigantic metropolitan nodes that absorb an increasing proportion of the urban population, itself the majority of the population of the planet'.[575]

In the more advanced regions of the world economy, large transnational metropolitan regions are forming around high value global city nodes, using improvements in transport technologies and infrastructures to connect huge numbers of people to those cities. Castells points to regional urban formations such as the New Jersey-New York-Long Island-Rhode Island-Connecticut metropolitan region, the Hong Kong-Shenzhen-Canton-Macau-Zuhai-Pearl River Delta region, or the London-Paris-Lille-Brussels-Netherlands-Frankfurt-Cologne network.[576] With their vast populations, these geographic formations often far surpass the size of nation-states. Driving the growth of these dense economic clusters, it is argued, is the heightened competition that has accompanied economic globalisation: such clustering brings with it greater operational flexibility and enhanced learning and innovation. They are also a result of great migration flows, which have swelled global city regions and brought with them complex mixtures of cultural and ethnic diversity. Such cultural and demographic heterogeneity has meant that wealth polarisation tends to peak in global city regions. A focus for the future is likely to be on how the levels of political integration, and the institutions of governance and representation, lag far behind the levels of economic integration.[577]

The notion of global city regions, although capturing one aspect of the changing urban morphology, remains rooted in contiguous territoriality. An alternative, although complementary, development is the idea of the global city network. This concept was picked up in the opening pages of the introduction, which highlighted the New York-London-Hong Kong network, and the entrenched historical, personal and infrastructural connections that have enabled these cities to operate as a functional whole. The growth in network connections between global cities is enabled by the information technology revolution: it allows distant, non-contiguous city spaces to develop patterned and durable interactions of a density and scope unavailable before. Recent work has attempted to map empirically the types and intensity of network interactions between different cities and sets of cities.[578] These two different features of the new urban form — global city regions and global city networks — are both dependent upon new technological developments, and, in this sense, represent fundamental novelty in urban form.

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[574] Scott (2000: 1-14)
[575] Castells (2001: 225)
[576] Castells (2001: 230)
[577] Scott (2000: 19)
[578] Taylor (2003)

Despite the clear emergence of a new urban form, there is also a fundamental continuity in viewing cities as playing a key role in the world economy. Before moving on to address the developments in urban form outlined above more fully, it is perhaps useful to dwell a little on the issue of the difference between the nature of the contemporary global city, and the historical variants that have preceded it. This is an important issue, for there are those that have argued against the novelty of the contemporary global city.

There are broadly two ways in which global cities have been conceptualised. The first sees them as a crucial feature of the world economy of consecutive historical periods. This approach is the one taken by those who have tended to view the world economy in *la longue durée*, and they draw on the traditions of the *Annales* School, and Fernand Braudel in particular. In the third volume of Braudel's giant work on *Civilization and Capitalism* he argues that there is, in a capitalist world economy, a nexus between a dominant capitalist city, economic power and hegemonic political rule.[579] He sees a sequence of dominant capitalist world cities: Venice, Antwerp, Genoa, Amsterdam, London. Braudel's concept of a world economy, with a dominant city at its core, later becomes the inspiration for the world systems theorists, with their notion of an advanced capitalist core, a semi-peripheral zone, and a vast underdeveloped periphery. It is this long-run historical perspective that has tended to free these types of thinkers from the narrow state-centrism that afflicts much of IR, and has led them to an appreciation of the historical role that cities have played in successive world systems.[580] Key recent figures in this tradition are Christopher Chase-Dunn, Giovanni Arrighi and Janet Abu-Lughod.[581] In particular, Abu-Lughod is sceptical about the novelty of the contemporary global city. Although she accepts that some of its features are striking, she seeks to place them in a much longer perspective, in which urban systems and networks are a central feature of long-term capitalist development.[582]

The alternative possibility is to see global cities as a specifically late-modern phenomenon, or, at least, a phenomenon that takes on unprecedented characteristics in late-modernity. Here, the global city becomes the *spatial expression* of a fundamentally new form of global capitalism. It is in this sense that I wish to use the term global cities, considering them to be, although in a long tradition of cities within international systems, historically unique because of their integration with late capitalism and new forms of information and communications technologies. It is

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[579] Braudel (1984)
[580] The intention here is to highlight the importance of cities in historical international systems. See Buzan and Little (2000: 32-33) for a differentiation of the world systems literature and terminology from the international systems literature and terminology.
[581] Chase-Dunn (1997) Arrighi (1994) Abu-Lughod (1989, 1999)
[582] Abu-Lughod (1999)

because of this association that I prefer the term 'global cities', which specifically links these urban forms to elements of globalisation theory. The term 'global city' marks a distinctive late-modern development, whereas the term 'world city' may be reserved for those working within a world systems framework.

The evolution of the concept shows how the original interest in the political and cultural features of 'world cities' has gradually been refocused on their global economic functions. In the earliest recorded usage, Goethe defined 'world cities' as urban centres whose cultural force dominates the worlds of their day. His emphasis was upon the cultural dominance and influence of the Paris of the early-nineteenth century.[583] The cultural theme was also followed by Peter Hall in his influential *World Cities*, where he sought to distinguish a particular type of city as standing out qualitatively from other cities in the world.[584] Hall also sought to expand the concept beyond culture and wealth to include political power and influence. World cities would be seats of national or international government, and house the headquarters of professional bodies, of trade unions and powerful corporate federations. They would be hubs of trade and finance, and of communications. As such, and in response to the historical need for communication, they were often ports. Their creative and civilizational achievements would leave an ongoing legacy in medicine and education, culture and art. This would be reflected in their universities and hospitals, concert halls and museums (that which Lefebvre describes as the city's '*oeuvre*', or 'body of work'). Hall judged the world cities of his day to be London, Paris, Amsterdam, Moscow and New York, and the metropolitan conurbations of Randstad-Holland (Rotterdam/Amsterdam) and Rhine-Rhur (Düsseldorf/Cologne). There is a clear sense of Euro-centrism in this formulation, although the later development of the literature has attempted to move very forcefully away from this narrow vision.

Immediately we can see that world cities, for Hall, are not necessarily capital cities, or the centres of major states. The inclusion of Rotterdam/Amsterdam and Düsseldorf/Cologne highlights the development of metropolitan regions – a prototype of the global city region. These moves begin the tradition of seeing global cities as intrinsically bound up with the world economy. In this sense they are entities operating primarily in the economic sector of international systems, and may be separate from centres of political power. Another key feature is that population size or density are not seen as useful ways in which to understand global cities. If we are to ask the question why a small city like Hong Kong or Singapore frequently gets attributed global city status in the literature, and yet huge, sprawling mega-cities such as Lagos or Jakarta do not, then the answer clearly lies in the fact that size, population density or land area are not central factors

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[583] Gottmann (1989: 62)
[584] Hall (1966)

in describing the global city phenomenon. Additionally, being a capital city of a nation-state is no guarantee of global city status. New York, Shanghai, and, increasingly, Mumbai are frequently cited as global cities. Washington, Beijing and Delhi are not. What matters is connectivity and function, not size, status or traditional political power in the narrow sense. It is the range and extent of a city's influence over global flows, and the particular, specialised, function that a city performs in the world economy that is important.[585] In facilitating these connections, it is also the concentration of powerful corporate actors within a city, and the quality of the technological infrastructure that the city possesses, which help to give it global city capability. What distinguishes the leading cities is the very high number of network connections that they have developed, and their control over the infrastructure and processes of the space of flows: they are the command and control centres of the post-industrial, informational economy.

In its contemporary formulation, the *concept* of the world or global city must then be seen as posing questions about the nature of structural changes to the world economy in the late-twentieth century. The material changes to urban morphology described in the paragraphs above are then linked to these structural changes through the use of this concept. The global cities research programme is organised around a coherent question: an attempt to understand the changing relationship between the world economy, major cities and the territorial states in which they have been embedded under modernity. The global city research agenda is a response to the notion that a globalised configuration of capitalism has resulted in a new form for the city, but, equally importantly, that the framework of the national economy is becoming obsolete. As Peter Taylor remarks:

> the world city literature as a cumulative and collective enterprise begins only when the economic restructuring of the world economy makes the idea of a mosaic of separate urban systems appear anachronistic and irrelevant.[586]

The implication here is that global cities and their regions are to be seen as more useful units for understanding how the global economy is working in its late-modern configuration. In the following sections I will trace the development of the literature, noting, in particular, the tension between a hierarchical approach, and a networked or relational understanding of global cities.

The World City Hypothesis

It is important to note that the global city thesis emerged out of a particular tradition of urban sociology that informed its content. The focus of urban studies, from its inception at the turn of the century up until the 1980s, had been to understand cities as either self-contained systems, as

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585 Clark (1996: 163)
586 Taylor (2003: 21)

with the pre-war Chicago School, or, later, the role of cities within national economies. The intellectual energies of geographers and urban planners were also shaped by the context of a period when the power of the state to organise and direct people and knowledge was moving towards its zenith.[587] The early focus of urban studies was the production of knowledge for the purposes of the state. Cities, and their relationships with each other, came to be studied predominantly as urban systems *within* particular territorial states.

By the 1950s, lasting through to the 1980s, this way of conceptualising cities dominated the research agenda of urban studies. Cities were seen as hierarchically organised within national boundaries: they formed *national* urban systems. In choosing to adopt a systems approach for the study of cities, urban scholars were suggesting that the life of a single city could no longer be understood in isolation: its fortunes, its growth or decline, needed to be related to the larger system of which it is a part. The application of tools borrowed from economic theory allowed the development of seemingly powerful explanatory theories, such as the rank size-rule, that allowed predictions about the size of urban centres in a national hierarchy.[588] Cities were viewed as interdependent, with the activities of firms with multiple locations across the system enmeshing them in an interlocking network structure.[589] This was the background into which concept of the world city would be inserted, resulting in new and revolutionary insights. But the new concept resulted from the combination of a number of intellectual strands in the late 1970s and early1980s.

One notion clearly missing from the work on bounded cities, and then on national systems of cities, is the international. It was this element that was brought back with John Friedmann's pioneering article '*The World City Hypothesis*'. Friedmann's hypothesis was strongly influenced by the neo-marxian theories of dependency and structural imperialism that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. He merged these insights with the work on systems of cities. There was a strong emphasis upon the economic aspects of the relationships between cities, only now reconceptualised at a level beyond the national. Friedmann was responding to the changing structure of the world economy: the breakdown of the post-war Bretton Woods system and the formation of global financial markets, the emergence of offshore banking and export processing zones, the rise of the multi-national corporation as an organisational form, and the emergence of a new international division of labour, as manufacturing jobs moved out of the developed core into the developing world.[590] He argued that the world city connections that he was attempting to

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[587] Taylor (2003: 15-16)
[588] Clark (1996: 32) Zipf (1949)
[589] Bourne (1975) Bourne and Simmons (1978) Pred (1977)
[590] Sassen (2006b: 4) Taylor (2008)

chart were something novel in the history of urban settlement.[591] Friedmann's international perspective on cities linked with the dependency theory and world-systems approaches of Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein.[592] These theorists were also trying to understand the emergence of the new international division of labour, as well as seeking to re-evaluate why Marx's predication of the spread of industrial society to the entire planet was not occurring. Instead, many areas of the third world remained dependent, underdeveloped and peripheral, their economies simply providing raw materials for processing in the developed regions of the world system.

Friedmann's article was, then, the hybrid creation of an urban studies hierarchical thesis linked to a world systems framework. The world systems approach views the world economy as a globally integrated market, and refuses to recognise the national economies of single states as distinct economic units. Friedmann added the insight that global economic processes are organised through cities. Cities are the places of articulation, where people and products link themselves to the wider world and its markets. Friedmann was mapping the changing global geography of economic development.

The original contribution that Friedmann made was to describe how the form that a city takes, its morphology, its built environment, is prescribed by the functions that it fulfils in the world economy. Rather than cities responding to their own internal dynamics, or to the smaller national systems of which they are also a part, they adapt to, and are shaped by, external economic forces. From the perspective of Lefebvre's work, these new types of urban form can be seen as the spatial expression of developments in the world economic system.

For Friedmann, such cities still formed a spatial hierarchy. He retained from his urban school roots the hierarchical elements of national urban studies, transposing it to the larger canvas of the world economic system. Friedmann realised that the national urban systems modelled by urban studies were not closed systems, but must be understood in terms of their relationship to the world economic system in which they are embedded. If it were true that one particular city, such as New York, sat at the top of a national urban hierarchy, there were reasons why this was so that could not simply be explained by looking at the national urban system. New York received inputs from outside the system as a result of its important economic, cultural and political ties in the wider world. Therefore, cities such as New York should be studied for their role in linking the world economy to particular regional and national economies, which, in turn, get 'articulated' back into the system.

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[591] Taylor (2003: 23)
[592] Frank (1967) Wallerstein (1974, 1979, 1980, 189)

Friedmann identifies a number of levels in his spatial hierarchy, linked to Wallerstein's conceptualisation of the world economy as consisting of a core, semi-periphery and periphery. Friedmann's core cities are 'basing points' for capital: the places where dominant economic players organise world production and marketing. It is the way that other cities link to such core cities to gain access to this capital, knowledge and organisational power that creates a spatial hierarchy of cities. In coming to his particular distribution (outlined in the figure below), Friedmann considers the relative weight of different cities in a number of respects; as financial centres, as hosts of corporate headquarters and international institutions, business services and manufacturing, of their position in the global networks of transportation, and of their relative population size.[593]
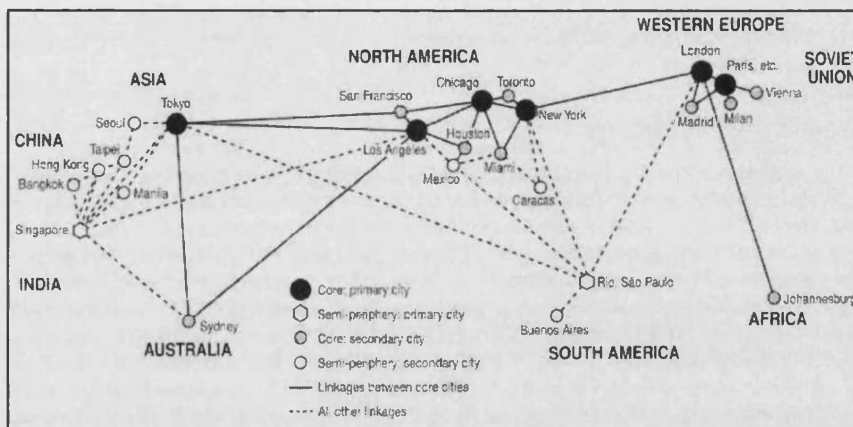
Friedmann's World City Hierarchy
Source: Taylor (2003: 23)

Friedmann's ideas can be seen as an early attempt to liberate the study of cities from the grip of state-centric, state-directed knowledge. His focus on the relationships between world cities helps to restore the transnational elements of global society that get missed or marginalised with a state centric approach. Friedmann's work also began the task of assessing the structural relationships between the inhabitants of cities in different parts of the world. In this sense there are parallels with Johan Galtung's structural theory of imperialism, in which he outlines how the elites of core parts of the developing world develop a harmony of interests with the elites in the developed world, which serve to maintain an unequal and dependent relationship.[594] From a wider perspective still, it may be seen that, as the settlement and structures of modernity began to show signs of weakening, the world of urban studies, erected for the technical purposes of the state, has seen some of its founding assumptions undermined by the growth of an interdependent world economy in the late-twentieth century. Those thinking about cities began to look back to

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[593] Friedmann (1986: 69-74) Taylor (2003: 22-24)
[594] Galtung (1971, 1980). The conclusion returns to this argument.

some of the conceptualisations and understandings of cities that people had held before the rise to dominance of the state.[595]

Friedmann's conceptualisation of world cities is highly functionalist, concerned with how different cities take on essential roles that the world economy, as a system, requires for its operation. So a particular world city, such as New York, will provide headquarters locations for firms instrumental in organising global production, while others, like London, will take on the function of a global financial centre, organising and making available flows of capital. Large, functionally important global cities, such as London, New York and Tokyo (consistently considered the triumvirate of pre-eminent global cities) use their financial prowess, economic might and political capital to articulate a regional subsystem (including, but not restricted to, the old notion of a national urban system) into the world economy. A key proposition here is the idea of urban specialisation. In an influential article, Nestor Rodriguez and Joe Feagin investigated empirically and theoretically a set of cities that had taken up specialised tasks within the world economy, whether they be financially specialised, such as London and Tokyo, or specialised in a particular industry or sector, such as Houston in the oil sector, or Detroit in the automobile sector.[596] In this sense, a global city develops its specialisation in relation to other global cities in the system, and also in relation to its own particular history, resources and geographical location.[597] The global urban hierarchy, on this reading, is empirically mappable and identifiable.

Globalisation and the Global City

In the 1990s these theoretical foundations intertwined with the acceleration of economic globalisation and its burgeoning literature. The technological advances in information and communications now developed to higher levels of sophistication, and their effects became more visible. The role of global cities as material supports and strategic points vital to the processes of globalisation became of great interest to scholars. There is an obvious attraction in linking global cities to the observable phenomena of globalisation: the deepening connections between far flung locales, the inter-penetration of formerly discreet national societies, the increasing complexity of global economic relations, the emergence of one world from the three that had comprised the Cold War geopolitical settlement.[598] Cities form the points of articulation through which a series of transnational flows move unevenly around the world: flows of people, capital, goods, ideas, disease.

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[595] Abu-Lughod (1989) Tilly (1990)
[596] Rodriguez and Feagin (1986)
[597] King (1989)
[598] Knight and Gappert (1989)

A leading figure in the debates over the role of cities in globalisation is Saskia Sassen, whose book, *The Global City*, produced a central theoretical statement. Her work is clearly influenced by Friedmann in its attempt to understand the life of major cities from the perspective of the global economy. Yet it pushes beyond Friedmann's formulation in the sophistication of its analysis of the linkage between cities and economic globalisation, and in its capacity to account directly for many of the physical changes to the urban fabric noted earlier. Another factor that sets Sassen's contribution apart is her emphasis upon how digital networks are producing new functions for certain cities. Where relationships of dependency formed the focus of the world systems approach, the emphasis here is on how certain cities get marginalised and excluded by the development of exclusive sets of global cities. It is a significant trend that, as those cities central to the command and control of the world economy grow richer, other cities within the same country may become steadily poorer.[599] Many of the former industrial and manufacturing cities of the developed world continue to decline, while cities in the same national territory with significant transnational links grow ever more successful. The global city thesis seeks to reframe our perception of how the world is organised, highlighting a new configuration of geography, industry and institutional organisation.

The Global City features an array of empirical evidence linked to the theoretical construct of the 'global city'. It should be stressed that Sassen's 'global city', as a model, is not necessarily conterminous with each city and city economy to which it is applied. Rather, it is designed to reveal the processes working on cities:

> The development of global city functions, the endogenising of the dynamics and conditionalities of economic globalisation in the space of the city, is a strategic, but not all encompassing event.[600]

The question guiding Sassen's research is to understand the *parallel* spatial, economic and social transformation of various cities around the world. In this particular study, London, New York and Tokyo are central, although other cities are examined in later research collaborations.[601] Despite their very different histories and cultures, many cities have experienced a similar set of changes over the last four decades. For Sassen, this parallel development can only be explained by a common response to global processes.[602] Under globalisation, a seemingly paradoxical trend in the economy was becoming ever-clearer during the 1990s: the increasing spatial dispersion of economic activity around the world, as manufacturing relocated to areas of low cost labour, while, at the same time, the global economy became ever-more integrated. Sassen's theory of the

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[599] Sassen (2006b: 7)
[600] Sassen (1991: 350-351)
[601] Sassen (2002)
[602] Sassen (1991: 5)

global city provides an explanation for this double movement of dispersal and integration. She argues that the advent of the new international division of labour, the rise of the new organisational form of the multi-national corporation, and the emergence of digital networks and new working practices, have created a need for a new form of strategic command and control. The technologically enabled decentralisation of the economy undercuts the traditional controlling and organising function of the state in economic life. At the same time it opens up both a space and a need for new forms of global economic governance. This strategic function is being fulfilled by global cities. The form of decentralised decision-making they offer can match the speed and flexibility of the flows of the global economy in a way that the centralised state cannot. It is the decentralised and fragmented nature of global cities that makes them appropriate for governance in a world of flows, linking them to the post-modern and post-structural intellectual and cultural trends that we have seen begin to emerge at the same time as the global cities discourse.

Sassen argues that certain cities have taken on four new global city functions in the contemporary period that go beyond the traditional role of cities as nodes in international trading and banking systems. Firstly, global cities are centres of strategic command and control for global economic activity. As such, they fulfil a second function of being key locations for financial and specialised service firms, which have replaced manufacturing as the leading sector of the economy in producing value and innovation. The third and fourth functions of global cities are, then, to act as production sites and also as markets for these products and services.[603]

Multinational corporations, now operating global networks and assembly lines of dispersed manufacturing factories, offices and sales outlets, require centralised command. At the same time, the drive towards efficiency, and the networking paradigm redrawing business practices, has led to the outsourcing of key operations, making leading corporations reliant upon what Sassen terms 'advanced producer services'. These would include such services as management consulting, legal services, public relations, accounting, financial services, design and real estate. These firms agglomerate in global city centres. This has reinvigorated the city as a 'creative milieu': the innovation and synergy created by of face-to-face contact. It is this development that is behind the dense physical concentration and vertical growth of new state-of-the-art office construction in global city centres. Beginning in the 1980s, and picking up pace throughout the 1990s to the present day, the central areas and business districts of leading cities have been undergoing a renaissance. There has been huge demand for, and investment in, the latest high-end office buildings and real estate, in high-class shopping centres and business and leisure hotels

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[603] Sassen (1991: 3-4)

and services.[604] The high remuneration of the skilled professionals working in these business districts has also led to the gentrification of formerly decaying inner cities. The requirements of both firms and their wealthy elites also brings low paid work for unskilled labour: receptionists, janitors, maintenance workers, cleaners, drivers. Sassen argues that the middle class thus becomes squeezed, and that the extreme economic polarization that results from income disparities is given form in the social production of a type of city space where inequalities and segmentation are highly visible. This focus on cities also highlights the places and actors that construct globalisation: the highly mobile international corporate elite, but also the migrants and work cultures transforming the composition and character of global cities.[605]

Sassen stresses that the emergence of global city functions in a number of cities around the world need not mean that these cities are competing with each other. An important part of her argument is that global cities take on different complementary functions in response to the dynamic requirements of the global economy. It is argued that the core global cities of London, New York and Tokyo function as a triadic trans-territorial marketplace in which they each fulfil distinct functions: Tokyo as a centre for export capital, London as a centre of processing capital, New York as a receiver of capital and a centre for investment decisions and production innovations.[606]

For Sassen, then, global cities represent a new form of territorial centralisation appropriate for an era in which technology is redrawing the relationships of time and space. Global cities become a new type of centralised territorial node through which the flows of the world economy are channelled and articulated. Much of the globalisation literature has had the tendency to deemphasise the role of geography, and to discuss the phenomenon as if it were not operating through particular physical places. At the same time, the very technological infrastructure that underpins much of the activity of globalisation is, in fact, tied to cities. The material supports of the information age can be seen to run through cities, and cities are the sites in which the information and communication sector of the economy is produced.[607]

Sassen views the world economy in successive historical periods as distinguished by a distinctive configuration of geography, industries, and institutional arrangements.[608] The current conjuncture is viewed as a historically specific combination of these elements. Market deregulation and liberalisation have led to the emergence of new forms of transnational territorial space for

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[604] Sassen (2006b: 3)
[605] Sassen (2007: 13)
[606] Sassen (1991: 333)
[607] Castells (2001)
[608] Sassen (2006a)

economic activities: offshore export processing zones, offshore banking centres, and global cities: a set of linked, transnational locations for complex international economic transactions. This trans-territoriality begins to raise certain questions about elements of the competitive hierarchical tradition of the world and global cities hypotheses carried over from the urban studies tradition. Even in Sassen's earlier work there can be seen the remnants of the 'hierarchy fetish' inherited from the urban studies tradition, with New York, London and Tokyo as the pre-eminent centres through which the world economy is directed; Chicago, Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Sydney, Sao Paolo forming a second tier.[609] Recent interpretations have taken a relational approach to global cities, looking at the nature and shape of the networked relationships that characterise these novel urban forms.

Network and Relational Approaches to Global Cities

Where the first attempts to understand the rise of the global city were centred on its economic functions, latterly scholars have gone on to broaden the scope, investigating the types of social relations that tie global cities together, the material infrastructure of these new transnational spaces, and their implications for our geographical imagination of the contemporary world. There arises from the work of thinkers such as Manuel Castells, Peter Taylor and Doreen Massey the sense that the meta-geographies and spatial imaginaries of modernity are being challenged, and that the emerging outline of a new spatial arrangement is slowly being revealed. This section briefly outlines some of the key insights and promise of the relational approach, and its advocates' attempts to develop analytical tools and theoretical insights that reveal the empirical basis of global city networks and interrogate their social and political implications.

Manuel Castells work on the network society is a central text for many of those analysing global city networks. Castells early career as an influential urbanist has fed into his later work on technological and social networks, and global cities are an important aspect of his social theory of the network society. [610] Castells sees global cities as an integral component of the changing nature of global social relations. His influence has helped to move the global cities literature away from a narrow concern with economic and urban issues and into the realm of social relations.

Castells argues that the new technologies associated with the information and communications revolution of the late-twentieth century are fundamentally altering the material basis of society. In the modern era (and all previous eras), time and space are connected, with actors occupying the same space and time when performing some kind of interaction. But information

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[609] Taylor (2003: 25)
[610] Castells (1989)

communications technologies overcome this by allowing two or more actors to interact simultaneously without occupying the same space: the contiguity of space is separated from the simultaneity of time. For Castells, the form that social relations take in a post-industrial, informational age is that of the network. Social relations are carried out, at a variety of levels, through networks. This is the new shape, or 'morphology', that social relations take after contiguous space is parted from simultaneous time. Following this line of argument, Castells goes on to provide a sophisticated theoretical and empirical analysis of both the social relations, and the material supports for those relations, which earlier theorists of globalisation had noted as providing the effect of space-time compression.[611]

Global cities are both a manifestation of this development and part of its material infrastructure. Castells formulation involves a triple layered picture of the 'network society'; the first layer is comprised of the infrastructural supports for the space of flows: electronic devices, computers, transportation technologies. The third layer consists of the spatial organisation of economic elites and the networks of places that they live and work in. The middle layer, which incorporates global cities, connects the two outer layers: it is the space where economic, cultural and social activities take place. It links localities to the larger network of which they become a part. These are the nodes and hubs where agents carry out strategically and politically important activities. In conceptualising global cities in this way, it is possible to retain the important observations from the earlier literature, that global cities are points of control for the global economy, while replacing the unnecessary hierarchical preoccupation of urban studies with a more social perspective on how power and influence gets articulated in the networks of the material world. The focus moves from individual cities to the shifting networks of global cities, and the types of connections that are made between them.

Castells seeks to show empirically how the material infrastructure for the new forms social practice is located and maintained within global cities. Global cities do not simply benefit from the coming of post-industrial forms of economy and society: they are intrinsic to their creation and existence. They are synonymous with the material structure of globalisation. Castells' analysis of the geography of the Internet leads him to reject the recurrent argument that the advent of digital technologies that enable new socio-economic practices, such as remote teleworking, may lead to the death of cities and the irrelevance of physical geography.[612] Castells argues that it is vital to distinguish between two different groups of Internet users: the consumers and producers of Internet content and services. A frequent failure to make this distinction is the reason for the persistence of the myth that the Internet transcends geography. It is Internet content providers

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[611] Giddens (1990)
[612] Castells (2001: 208)

that define and control the vast majority of the Internet's potential applications, and the Internet content providers are primarily those global service firms that Sassen showed locate in the centre of global cities; finance firms, insurance, consulting, accounting, legal services, advertising, marketing, and the cultural and creative industries such as media, art, publishing, fashion, museums.[613] These industries have an urban geography; a web of relationships between firms who use each other's services. This geography has also been shaped historically by the role of the venture capital industry. The provision of Internet content is a highly specialised activity, requiring a particular set of knowledge and skills, a network of suppliers, and often a creative element that needs to be financed at the point of start-up. Much technical know-how in the information communications sector has, from the earliest point, been concentrated on the San Francisco and Boston areas, while the ready availability of investment finance in the cities of New York, Los Angeles and London was instrumental in making those cities vibrant centers of Internet content.[614] These cities and metropolitan areas, and their networks of financiers, firms and entrepreneurs, continue to play a dominant role in defining the shape of the economic geography of Internet production. The relationship is mutually reinforcing in entrenching the centrality of particular global cities. It evokes the ancient function of cities as creative milieu: 'the geography of the Internet is the geography of cultural innovation...historically rooted in the major urban centers of the world'.[615] The economic geography of the Internet follows a particular global distribution of wealth, education and technology.

This is also true of its technical geography, in terms of bandwidth or fibre optic cable, for example. Although almost universally urban, the spatial pattern of the Internet is by no means universal. Its technological geography is extremely uneven on a global scale: some locales are better connected than others. The quality of technology infrastructure is constantly being upgraded, as competitive advantage accrues to those locales that have the best telecommunications infrastructure.[616] Sometimes this upgrading is carried out by private firms, sometimes by metropolitan authorities, sometimes by governments. And it is not just on the global or national level that inequality in the technological infrastructure of the Internet can be found: at the metropolitan scale certain districts or areas within a city may have significantly better technological infrastructure than others.

The uneven distribution of superior technological infrastructure allows the creation of selective global networks of value. This raises questions about the new patterns of inequality that are being generated, a growing 'digital divide' that separates the information rich from vast numbers of

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[613] Castells (2001: 228)
[614] Castells (2001: 223) Gupta (2000)
[615] Castells (2001: 223) Hall (1998)
[616] Castells (2001: 229)

rural poor, the slums of mega-cities, or the disconnected neighborhoods of global cities. In some ways this new pattern matches the growing wealth gap between the rich and poor countries of the world, but in other ways it is considerably more complex, because the digital divide exists not just between countries, but also within countries, and also within cities themselves. Such a situation suggests that a networked understanding of social relations cleaves more closely to the new realities than the old meta-geography of a world of nation-states. Technology is shaped by historical context, and the Internet emerged in, and was intrinsic to, the neoliberal zenith of the 1990s, which witnessed the stretching of global wealth inequalities. Its geography consequently both reflects and reinforces these inequalities. Given the dominance of certain global cities, these patterns are likely to be cumulative in the future, and the current development trajectory may well become locked in. [617]

Castells work has, then, provided the basis for moving beyond Friedmann and Sassen's hierarchical approaches, to a networked view of global cities. It has influenced the urban geographer Peter Taylor and his colleagues' attempts to develop an empirical analysis of global city networks.[618] Taylor's work seeks to remedy what he sees as the 'evidential crisis' in much of the global cities discourse. It also innovates theoretically, drawing on Castells' 'space of flows', taking a processual view of cities. He argues that in the 1990s the theoretical literature on global cities had outrun its empirical foundations to the extent that the research programme was undermined. A particular problem was that most data on cities was accumulated by states, which sought to measure city attributes rather than their global relationships: they measured the nodes, but not their networked relations. This is one of the reasons why hierarchical approaches had previously dominated the literature.[619] This problem led to a wide-ranging attempt to gather new relational data and develop network models, which are described in Taylor's *World City Network*.[620] The global city networks mapped so far include airline routes, Internet pathways, and the locational strategies of global office networks in producer services such as finance, accountancy, law, advertising.[621] Continuing efforts to map these networks will eventually show the rise and fall in the connectivity of various global cities.

One of the key tensions that remains in this formulation is over the question of whether global cities refer to a particular class or set of cities, or whether globalising processes effect all cities in similar ways: whether, in effect, all cities are globalising cities. There is an intrinsic ontological

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[617] Castells (2001: 264-265)

[618] Taylor (2003)

[619] Taylor (2008: 2)

[620] This work has grown out of the extensive empirical and theoretical research programme, *Globalization and World Cities*, hosted by Loughborough University and documented at: http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/.

[621] Keeling (1995) Taylor (2003)

issue here that goes back to the problem of identifying a boundary that defines a particular city. In this, the idea of a global city is as problematic as identifying any city as a bounded entity or object. As I argued earlier, it may be a mistake to try to characterise the nature of cities in this way. As Taylor has argued, under globalisation all cities and urban regions are responding to similar pressures, integrating parts of themselves into technological networks and circuits of value, while other parts remain switched off. Behind his work is the ontological conviction that cities should not be viewed simply as bounded places, but as ongoing processes, comprised of various flows.

Such relational approaches have tended to deal narrowly with the economic relations of global cities, but the way in which such places draw in material and social flows from around the globe, and extend their influence outwards, should also be a feature of a relational framework. Doreen Massey, in a recent investigation of the nature of London as a global city, argues that, from the centres of global cities a 'geography of dependencies, relations and effects' radiates around the globe. This relational perspective clearly challenges many of the unified and essentialised notions of entities found in much of IR, and offers a profound redrawing of our geographical and geopolitical imaginations. Massey argues that

> world cities, as indeed all places, also have lines that run out from them: trade routes, investments, political and cultural influence, the cultural connections of the internal multiplicity; power relations of all sorts that run around the globe and that link the fate of other places to what is done [in world cities]. This is the other geography, the external geography, if you like, of a global sense of place. For each place this geography, this tentacular stretching of power relations, will be particular.[622]

So, Massey argues, London, building on the historical legacy of the British Empire, has been a crucial site of agency for the construction of the institutional and cultural infrastructure of neoliberalism and market deregulation. The global is thus produced and maintained within particular local nodes, which can provide an analytic bridge between the elusive global scale and specific localities.[623] At the same time, Massey wants to argue for a relational politics of responsibility that recognise the effects of London's global reach, both on far-flung locales and on London's urban fabric. She argues that London's current model, which privileges the financial district, works to ensure that London can only reproduce itself by drawing in flows of key workers from other parts of the world. London is 'dependent, for instance, on nurses from Asia and Africa [who] can ill afford to lose such workers [having] paid for their training'. This represents a 'perverse subsidy, flowing from poor to rich'.[624]

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[622] Massey (2007: 7)
[623] Sassen (2007: 13)
[624] Massey (2007: 175)

Massey forcefully makes the point that if global cities are to reap the benefits from their privileged positions, there must also be a consideration of their global responsibilities: their extensive environmental footprints, their impact on other economies and regions, and their responsibilities to those who come there. These issues of accountability challenge the current scalar imagination and institutions of representation, which operate at the national level. Massey advocates a new political imagination that is against localism but for place, a politics of place that stretches the geographical imagination. This type of thinking is a logical outcome of a relational view of global cities that, in many ways, seeks to transcend the original limits of the global cities discourse.

Beyond the Global Cities Discourse

I have earlier presented Lefebvre's arguments that all major developments in society and economy must be realised in space, and that all meaningful change must therefore be reflected in a revolution in urban form.[625] Following this line of argument, the rise of neoliberal politics, in combination with the restructuring of global capitalism to more flexible forms, is reflected in the emergence of global city networks and regions. But this revolution in space also applies to those outside the privileged spaces. The advent of global cities has reshaped city space to allow certain areas of the city privileged access to information and technology, while switching others off from the network. Such developments may be characterised as a process of urban 'splintering'. The ideal of the integrated city, with equal access for all citizens to the provision of services, dominant for much of the twentieth century, is being replaced by unequal and private access to infrastructure. [626] The twin causal logics of the crisis of Fordist capitalism and the emergence of neoliberal political projects in the 1970s led to the opening up of new markets for liberal finance capital to be invested privately in previously public infrastructure projects, allowing for the creation of areas of high quality technological infrastructure that create and link privileged transnational spaces, while excluding others. [627]

As a result, a number of tensions and logical conflicts emerge between this new infrastructure, and the values and organising logics of the modern infrastructure that it is beginning to replace. Although international systems have historically contained some form of bifurcation between the privileged and the poor, the particular form of transnational space that has emerged under the new technological paradigm has altered the nature of how this bifurcation is realised in social space. Whereas previously such divides have been characterised as between a territorial core and periphery, the new shape takes on a networked form. In the global cities of the developed world,

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[625] Lefebvre (1991)
[626] Graham and Marvin (2001)
[627] Harvey (1990)

islands of wealth, power and connectivity coexist alongside poverty stricken neighbourhoods. In those cities of the developing world that are connected to the global city network, such islands of connectivity are likely to be surrounded by the physical manifestation of extreme poverty and inequality: the exponential growth of the worlds slums.[628] The argument presented here is that these trends are, in fact, inseparable from each other – they are different aspects of the wide-ranging transformation of social and economic life embodied in the move towards networks as a central organizing social form. Key to understanding this transformation is the social, economic and cultural context in which the new paradigm developed: a nexus of neoliberal economic ideas, technological innovation and cultural practices based around ideas of individual freedom and autonomy.

The recent surveys of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme identify a number of contemporary urban trends that take us beyond the global cities discourse. These trends include those that have enabled global cities to emerge as vital strategic nodes in the world economy. But the report is concerned with global urban life as a whole, and so also focuses on many dramatic developments that do not make it into the global cities discourse. A central theme of the reports is that neoliberal strategies are weakening and dispersing central political authority. Conditions in cities, and the shape that urban forms are taking, are a direct result of the interlinked logic of political decentralisation and economic liberalism. These trends have brought huge levels of growth in recent decades, showing that, as Jane Jacobs argued, under the right conditions, cities are unparalleled engines of economic generative force. However, the economic growth bought by the liberalisation of markets has come at the cost of a weakening of the powers of national public institutions in the face of external market forces. Global flows of finance capital weaken the tax base of governments and municipal authorities, and loosen their grip on their ability to control and plan the development of urban environments. In addition to this, the growing flexibility of work, and an increase in the proportion of income earned in the unregulated sections of the employment market, also deprives governments and city authorities of the tax revenues needed to provide comprehensive public services and govern cities.[629] The large numbers of international migrants that move between the world's cities further complicate the picture: remittances back to the country of a migrant's origin constitute the second largest flow of international money. The value of territory is in sharp decline in relation to the value of the 'spatially extended networks' through which resources such as information, money, and social capital, flow.

This trend towards the decentralization and weakening of public institutions relative to the

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[628] Davis (2006)
[629] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2004: 3)

structural forces of global capital is seen by the UN report as having the visible impact on the changing spatial structure of cities charted at the beginning of this chapter; flows of migration into cities have expanded their size, creating large polycentric conglomerated city regions, with a proliferation of administrative entities springing up to coordinate them. Transport nodes and infrastructures become sites of concentrated economic activity. The informational nature of value in the restructured economy leads to the polarization of the employment market, the spatial segregation of cities, and unequal access to services and resources.[630]

This polarisation and segregation is to be seen operating in complex ways and at multiple scales, with one of the clearest manifestations of segregation and disconnection being the startling growth of the world's slum populations. It is estimated that one third of the world's urban population now lives in a slum of some kind. This massive growth in slum populations, however, like the emergence of global cities, is a relatively recent development, and linked to neoliberal strategies. It is, in many ways, the flip side of the global cities discourse: the physical manifestation of the poverty and exclusion that results from being disconnected from the global city network. Mike Davis has charted how, in much of the developing world, huge urbanisations recapitulate those of the period of the industrial revolution on a scale that confounds the type of social responses of the nineteenth century. But much of this decline in the global peasantry is seen as a 'perverse urban boom', where the growing urban population bears little relation to the size of a city's economy, and the classical link between urbanisation and manufacturing and industrial growth has been broken.[631]

The reason for this trend may be viewed as associated with the propensity for informational capitalism to delink productivity and growth from overall employment levels. But Davis also relates how the neoliberal debt restructuring programs pursued by the International Monetary Fund in the developing world have deregulated agricultural markets and pushed vast numbers of rural labourers into cities, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, a situation exacerbated by endemic warfare and environmental degradation. The resulting imbalance between growing urban population and stagnant or negative city-economy growth has been a recipe for global slum production.

Bringing back in those excluded from the glamour of the technological networks and wealth creation of the global cities discourse is a necessary step. In the view of Michael Smith, the dominant early global cities literature fails because of its excessive emphasis on economism, functionalism, and its reliance on a structural logic that serves to hide from view the past role of

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[630] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2004: 5)
[631] Davis (2006: 13)

political action in building the global city network, as well as the possibility of reshaping it.[632] In Smith's view, the global cities literature has taken on the qualities of a self-referential discourse, divorcing these cities from the wider social reality of which they are a part. This is not to deny that the literature focuses upon a crucial aspect of contemporary reality, but simply to maintain that reification serves to hide many other important developments. It is vital to examine how the networks of power and wealth are created, and how they work. The final section now turns to the issue of how the transnational urban spaces represented by the global city network are splintering the national spaces of modernity.

'Splintering' Urban Space and the Retreat of National Integration

The transnational formation embodied in the network of global cities, inextricably connected to the technologies that give rise to it and whose infrastructure is synonymous with it, can be viewed as a form of trans-locality construction.[633] In essence, this is the social construction of a new type of social space. It indicates a changing dynamic in the relationship between cities and states in the contemporary international system. This unprecedented form of transnational social space contrasts sharply with the territorially bounded spaces of modernity. The modern nation-state worked hard to integrate its territorial space: cities were tied into national urban systems. It is the collapse of confidence in the capacity and legitimacy of the integrated, centralised state, and the privatisation of many of its functions (in those countries where they existed), that has helped to create the complex contemporary global urban landscape. The combination of novel technological forms and the move towards the privatisation of all of the major systems of formerly national infrastructure is leading to a process of fragmentation of the modern city that Graham and Marvin have called 'splintering urbanism'. They argue that

> practices of splintering urbanism are starting to emerge in virtually all cities across the globe, whether in the developed, developing, newly industrialising or post-communist worlds, as local histories, cultures and modernities are enrolled into internationalising capitalist political economies in various ways.[634]

The key to this notion of splintering is to place it in contrast with that which is being splintered. It is possible to argue, as Graham and Marvin do, that this is no less than the 'integrated ideal': the unifying force of modernity itself. As discussed in chapter five, modernity has a complex history of ideas underpinning it. It also has an infrastructure that embodies those ideas. The restructuring of this infrastructure is an expression of the restructuring of modernity itself.

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[632] Smith (2001: 50)
[633] Beauregard and Body-Gendrot (1999: 119-40)
[634] Graham and Marvin (2001: 35)

Benedict Anderson famously coined the term 'imagined community' to describe how the creation of the modern political unit of the territorial nation-state required the invention of a collective identity.[635] Graham and Marvin are arguing that such political and social constructions are not possible without the material infrastructure that builds the particular spatial construct. The term 'networked infrastructure' includes infrastructures of transportation, communications, energy, water, highways and urban streets, ducts, conduits, wires and tunnels. These are seen to be 'the tendrils that connect people to modernity'.[636] It is one thing to imagine a community, but it is another to put in place the infrastructures and connections that make it function as such. The focus in Graham and Marvin moves beyond the realm of ideas, ideology and identity to those socio-technical process that they see as the 'very essence' of modernity.[637] Networked infrastructures have been key to the project of building the integrated nation-state, which, in many respects, reached its apogee in the years following the Second World War, where the state moved to reconstitute the basis of its legitimacy on welfare rather than warfare:

> In the Western world especially, a powerful ideology, built up particularly since World War II, dominates the way we consider such urban infrastructure networks. Here, street, power, water, waste or communications networks are usually imagined to deliver broadly similar, essential, services to (virtually) everyone at similar cost across cities and regions, often on a monopolistic basis. Fundamentally, infrastructure networks are thus widely assumed to be integrators of urban spaces. They are believed to bind cities, regions and nations into functioning geographical wholes. Traditionally, they have been seen to be systems that require public regulation so that they somehow add cohesion to territory, often in the name of 'public interest'.[638]

The infrastructures that have traditionally delivered these standardised essential services to the citizens of nation-states have come to seem so ubiquitous a part of life that access to them is taken for granted in much of the developed world. They have become almost invisible: underpinning modern life, yet unobtrusive and reliable. They are simply taken to be a feature of the instrumental rationality of modern society. The only time that they become visible is when they cease to work properly, or when they are in danger of being disrupted. The vulnerability of urban infrastructure networks, and the dependence of highly complex societies upon them, suggests an important linkage between security and cities in an era marked by the so-called 'global war on terror'. The issue of the security of global cities and the role of the state is one I will come back to in the conclusion.

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[635] Anderson (1983)

[636] Graham and Marvin (2001: 3)

[637] Graham and Marvin (2001: 8-13). In this sense there are strong parallels with the actor-network-theory discussed in chapter two.

[638] Graham and Marvin (2001: 8)

The liberalisation and privatisation of many of the markets for networked infrastructures that has taken place over the last three decades has served to problematise them. The political ideals underpinning equality of access, and the binding of cities, regions and nations into 'functioning geographical wholes' have been revealed to be under re-negotiation. The cohesion of urban space that characterises modernity is being undermined. The ideal of creating a unified and cohesive urban space can be traced back at least as far as the 1850s, where Haussmann's grand scheme for regularising Paris sought to provide ubiquitous access to road and sewer networks.[639] Such notions of rational and comprehensive urban planning share the common theme of progress through the application of science and technology that epitomises the modernist mindset. They belong to the linear and technologically determinist vision of history outlined in chapter five. The unravelling of faith in this linear movement towards a utopian future recalls certain historical parallels. In the ancient world, Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Roman city inhabitants were familiar with unequal and partial access to infrastructure and services: the sewer, the aqueduct and the paved road were only available to those with wealth, power and status.[640] It is only with the modern nation-state that ubiquity was set as a political goal in the developed world. The post Second World War period saw the attempted, and largely successful, creation of regulated utility infrastructure monopolies that would 'roll out a national space economy'.[641] Legitimated as an ideal of the democratic welfare state, the development of an efficient networked infrastructure was also seen as essential for national economic performance in the international economy. Only with the end of the dominance of Keynesian economic ideas in the 1970s did this state of affairs come to a close.

The new model of infrastructure provision is a clear retreat from the attempt to unify city space and homogenise nation space. It replaces the concept of universal access with customised and privatised networks: premium spaces and infrastructures tailored to the need of specific users. There is also a clear trend towards the integration and connectivity of local to global spaces, bypassing the national space altogether. There are a number of inter-connected reasons for these developments, arguably the most fundamental being the crises of fiscal management and legitimacy of the Keynesian model during the 1970s, which discredited the principles of collective decision-making and provision of public goods in a number of crucial areas. The crisis of statism and the failure of Communist regimes to deliver on their economic promises added to the sense that another model was needed. In addition, in the urban context, this fiscal crisis of the state was becoming evident in the obvious signs of physical decay and degeneration of cities and their infrastructures.[642] In much of the developing world, the crisis of the state occurred not

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[639] Kostof (1991)
[640] Hall (1998: 24-69)
[641] Graham and Marvin (2001: 81)
[642] Graham and Marvin (2001: 91-92)

long after independence. As the fiscal crisis of the developed world negated the Keynesian model of state provision, the impact in the developing world, where such public infrastructures were minimal or non-existent, had a profound effect on the direction in which infrastructure provision would develop, exacerbated by rapid demographic acceleration.[643]

The response to the fiscal crisis of the state was the embrace of neoliberal orthodoxy and the development of a range of institutions to implement it.[644] The result was the selling off of public assets and the opening up of markets to finance capital and investment funds. These developments have had the profound effects on modern cities and their relationship to the structures and sentiments of modernity outlined in this chapter. These swings in the political climate, and the restructuring of the capitalist economy, effectively mean that the grand, unified infrastructural projects that shaped cities in the past are no longer feasible. Reliance upon private finance capital and dependency upon investment fund manager's strategies and risk assessments means that the building of new infrastructure is being developed globally on an ad hoc project-by-project basis. This has a number of implications. It leads to a set of customised infrastructures that have specific users in mind. It also works in response to the logic of global capital, so that infrastructure is developed that links different local spaces into a global infrastructure grid.[645] The restructuring of capitalism to transcend the limits of the national economy has resulted in geographically and technologically integrated networks at the global scale. They are not, as in the past, tying the nation-state together, but tying different pieces of a global economy together.[646] As a result,

> infrastructure networks can simultaneously be 'unbundled' locally whilst being integrated internationally. This fundamentally challenges the modern notion that a 'city' or 'nation' necessarily has territorial coherence in its own right, as a spatial container for economic activity which is somehow 'naturally' separate from surrounding spaces.[647]

These customised and specialised pieces of local-to-global network infrastructure are a requirement of the more flexible form of capitalism that replaced the Fordist model. The new smaller and more flexible flows are catered for reliably with specialised airport hubs, logistics zones and telecommunications and information infrastructures. By opening up infrastructure markets to international investment flows, national states have initiated a period where cities and urban regions have to compete for international finance. In this respect, cities are under pressure to offer conditions where business interests will be satisfied in terms of local/global connectivity:

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[643] Potter and Lloyd-Evans (1998) Davis (2006)
[644] Harvey (2005) Davis (2006)
[645] Clark (1999)
[646] Giannopoulos and Gillespie (1993)
[647] Graham and Marvin (2001: 100)

the technological geography discussed in the previous section. Major global cities now develop brands and strategic plans to attract investment for new business areas and tourist spaces.[648]

These developments are beginning to have a profound, observable effect on the world's cities, particularly in the inside/outside divide that their network logic dictates. The trend towards the privatisation of urban streets, and the security measures put in place to keep them private, is creating new enclaves of exclusivity based upon wealth. Graham and Marvin relay numerous vignettes highlighting the effects. The exclusive access to piped water available to gated communities in Mumbai, where the pipelines supplying these exclusive communities run past the living quarters of poorer residents who have no access to them. Large swathes of Russia suffer from periodic failures of the electricity grid, while powerful business elites ensure private supplies of electricity reach their gated communities. In many cities, public transport infrastructures are overwhelmed by sheer numbers, and are often dangerous and subject to crime. In Sao Paulo the personal helicopter fleet of the wealthy business elite is growing faster than any other place in the world: an escape from the dangers of a public space that reflects one of the world's most unequal societies. In cities such as Toronto, Los Angeles and Melbourne, 'smart highways' that rely on computerised tolling technology are used to create a space for those able to pay to cut through the gridlock. And, as we have seen, in the centres and elite business districts of cities, the development of small, ring-fenced, high capacity fibre optic communications systems provides for the needs of international firms: a 'rapidly emerging archipelago of urban optic fibre grids concentrated in the urban cores of the world's fifty financial capitals in Asia, Europe, Australasia and North America.'[649]

The import of such trends seems reasonably clear:

> The physical fabric of many cities across the world is starting to fragment into cellular clusters – packaged landscapes made up of customised and carefully protected corporate, consumption, research, transit, exchange, domestic and even health care spaces.

This is the model that is emerging from the ruins of modernity's integrated ideal.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to go beyond the global cities discourse in order to show that the emergence of global cities and their network infrastructure is part of a wider worldwide

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[648] Hall (1998) Knight and Gappert (1989)
[649] Graham and Marvin (2001: 2-6)

revolution in the nature of urban space. In order to understand the import of the global city phenomena, it is essential to place it in this wider context.

In line with the overall theoretical approach to the physical shape of cities as giving form to dominant social and economic processes, the complex and exclusive transnational spaces embodied by the global city network are representative of the conjuncture of the political project of neoliberalism and its interaction with a new technological paradigm, as it has unfolded over the last three and a half decades. The political element, a response to the failure of state led economic models, has weakened the unified state and the integrated city that typified modernity, and created a new type of space through the selective application of information and communications technologies and networked infrastructures.

This new form of space provides a far more complex layered geography than that of modernity, with its territorially bounded spaces. It expresses a structural logic of exclusivity and exclusion, as many of these new local to global networked infrastructures are financed and designed with particular customers and economic imperatives in mind. These new metropolitan formations, despite their central role in global production, only incorporate a small minority of the world's population. The era when networked utilities and services were available equally and to all appears to have drawn to a close, with the failure of collectivised decision-making to finance the political visions of modernity. The successful become a highly mobile, highly educated, breed of workers: a global elite, who are, in turn, attracted to all that cities have to offer.[650]

Zygmunt Bauman has argued that the nature of this emerging social formation means that the nature of power in society is changing. Power is no longer about domination of particular territories or resources, but about mobility and escape: the capability to move across borders and jurisdictions.[651] Outside of these privileged spaces and capabilities, much of the world lives a life driven by industrial or pre-industrial imperatives, in disconnected mega-cities, slums or traditional agrarian societies. We can characterise this bifurcation in many ways, but, perhaps most fittingly, it has been described as a disjuncture between the fast world and the slow.[652] As a technologically advanced set of economic networks evolve to create an incredibly complex web of connections, increasing the depth of their codified knowledge base and institutionalizing their practices, the slow world is left further behind, in a different economic time zone, increasingly unable to compete, or even imagine the conditions under which it might one day compete. These developments are redrawing the character of cities, and also of states, and their relationship will change as a result, just as it has at many other points in history.

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[650] Pjil (1998) Kotkin (2000)
[651] Bauman (2000)
[652] Knox and Taylor (1995: 11)

General Conclusion

The Rise of the Global City and the Transformation of the International System

This thesis has argued that the rise of global cities is an important phenomenon for IR to engage with, and that IR has a set of theoretical frameworks that can draw out the wider implications of the global city for international transformation. It has argued that a phenomenon such as the global city, which represents a challenge to the logic of the modern territorial sovereign state system, is best comprehended within the conceptual framework offered by the international system. This concept must, however, be formulated in a fashion that is sensitive to the diversity of world history: the international system must be viewed as a transhistorical phenomenon, taking on different forms and configurations in different historical periods. Only by looking to the historical record is it possible to understand the rise and fall of different types of political, economic and social units. When the historical record contains so much diversity, how could we expect the future to offer no further innovation; for history, in the sense that Fukuyama intended, to have exhausted its institutional development?[653]

Given the great complexity of international politics, understanding international systemic transformation, I have argued, requires us to fully utilise the range of conceptual tools and theories of transformation that have been developed within IR. These resources include a more thorough appreciation of the nature and range of systemic theorising in IR than is typically acknowledged. Using the concept of the international system in theory also requires an appreciation of the systemic ontologies that underpin this type of theorising. It is important to appreciate the nature of systemic theorising, and the types of insights that such an approach makes available. Specifying the nature of the international system carefully is an essential step before tackling the problem of its transformation.

This thesis has argued that three key theoretical perspectives developed within IR to interrogate the problem of international transformation can help analysts to understand the nature and impact of the rise of the global city. These three theoretical perspectives are; consideration of the relationship between units, structures and sectors in international systems; institutional competition between units; and historical structures of social space and time. Furthermore, these approaches may be viewed as complementary, and, as such, multiply our power to understand systemic transformation.

In this conclusion I reassert the value of a historically sensitive systemic approach to understanding international change, and show how this approach can help us to integrate global

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[653] Fukuyama (1992)

cities into IR theory. Such an approach offers something of a challenge to mainstream IR theory, particularly in its opposition to state-centrism, and in its advocacy of an anti-essentialist and processual understanding of international systems. However, this challenge only demands a shift in emphasis, not the wholesale rejection of traditional IR theory, which, I have argued, has been moving towards more historicist and relational perspectives in recent years. The first section of the conclusion brings out the wider implications of the rise of global cities for the ways in which IR scholars have understood international systems in the past, and outlines the shift in ontology that is required to coneptualise their impact while maintaining the most valuable insights of IR. The second section discusses the rise of the global city within the context of the three key theories of transformation mentioned above. It draws out and clarifies how each theory contributes to our understanding of the impact of the global city on the modern international system. The final section looks at the emergence of the global city in the context of the changing relationship between cities and states, which has been a very old feature of world history, and offers some concluding thoughts on the implications of the contemporary transformation.

Ontologies of the International System

As I argued in the earlier chapters, the choice that an analyst makes when approaching a question of international politics is inherently ontological. This choice will inevitably highlight some things about the world, while obscuring others. With the rise of social constructivism, which tends to be grounded in scientific realism, IR scholars have begun to realise that different ontologies lead to very different possibilities for theory. The turn towards social constructivism in IR has allowed the impact of ideas to be applied to thinking about the international system, moving the discipline away from a narrow positivist fixation with material power and capabilities. This has broadened out the scope for conceptualising the transformation of international systems. The move towards alternative philosophies of social science has also weakened the positivist insistence that social science be a search for causal laws. Social science, freed from the positivist reliance on observable phenomena, can now legitimately be formulated as an endeavour to identify the interplay of important historical processes and causal mechanisms, which will certainly assume different forms and have different effects depending on the nature of the historical context under analysis. In this investigation of the emergence of the global city, I have highlighted the historically contingent interplay of ideational structures, processes of capital accumulation, mechanisms of territorialisation and deterritorialisation, the role of technological development. The interaction of these processes, as well as many others, I have argued, result in the different material forms that international systems take in different historical periods.

This describes a processual ontology of the international system, rather than an essentialist ontology. The tension between these two perspectives has been brought to the fore in recent debates in IR as a way to problematise the ontological primacy of the state, and reinforce the value of a historical perspective.[654] The constructivist critique of structural realist conceptions of the international system by Alexander Wendt, for example, which really drove home the importance of ideas and of philosophical ontology for IR theory, did not question the primacy of the state and the state system as objects of analysis.[655] A processual approach sees the state, and other forms, as the transient solidification of the processes that have created it, which have a historical origin, and will most likely have a historical endpoint. This would apply, for example, to the process of the accumulation of the monopoly of violence, which Tilly argued was a core mechanism of state formation in the early-modern period.[656] Some of the arguments presented here would suggest that this process of the accumulation of state control over violence may well be receding in the contemporary period, with the privatization of certain aspects of warfare, the rise of mafias and terrorist networks, the privatization of security and the rise of the gated community, for example.

The processual conceptualisation of the international system is comfortable with analysing such change. Process ontology would see the state, or the city, as 'more instructively and adequately understood as instantiations of certain sets of process-complexes' than as reified objects.[657] Just as states have formed and endured as the result of particular processes, so they may dissolve, or take new forms. One of the advantages of this kind of ontology, which links form and process together, I have argued, is that it enables us to view different types of units, such as cities and states, in compatible and symmetrical fashion, and, thus, offers the possibility of theorising them together within international systems. Form becomes the container for dominant social ideas, linking those realms of mind and matter that were separated in the modern philosophical system of Descartes. As we have seen, international systems incorporate sets of philosophical ideas within their material form. The modern international system's particular material form results from the imperatives of state sovereignty. The international system of modernity takes the distinctive shape of a set of contiguous political spaces, inside of which time flows towards progress in the future of domestic institutions, outside of which time and progress are suspended, and states watch each other carefully. The changes in the material world examined here, the emergence of new forms of transnational space, the nascent novel structures of time and space that result from the manipulation of these categories through information technology, point to the weakening of the organising principle of territorial state sovereignty.

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[654] Jackson and Nexon (1999)
[655] Wendt (1999)
[656] Tilly (1990)
[657] Rescher (1996: 33)

The processual understanding of political units adopted here has been wedded to a systemic ontology or worldview.[658] A systemic ontology, as the philosopher of science Mario Bunge argues, views all phenomena as a component in a system of some kind. This applies equally to material phenomena, to ideational phenomena, and to theoretical knowledge.[659] Theorising international life in this way requires us to investigate how the components of international systems are related and organised, what the linkages are, what dynamics of the system operate to allow these relationships to persist over time, or to be transformed. In international systems, as we have seen, some of the key concepts utilised by analysts in this type of investigation have been units, structures and organising principles. The processes by which these elements of international systems are formed, held constant, or reformed, were discussed firstly in relation to the agent/structure problem in the social sciences.

The high levels of stability that exist over time in social life are the consequence of ideational and material structures that serve to constrain actors by presenting them with a landscape of unevenly distributed opportunities. Structures are also seen, however, as the essential pre-existing material necessary for the possibility of agency.[660] In this way, structures of different kinds fold the past into the present, and, once again, affirm the importance of history in our theories. In recent decades, the contribution of social constructivism has been to show how structures should be viewed as ideational as well as material, and how inter-subjectively held identities, rules and discourses largely provide material structures with their meaning. In IR, this has allowed theorists to open up the concept of the international system to incorporate the impact of ideas, as in Wendt's formulation that the organising structure of anarchy may be modified by the development of different shared, collective cultures between states.[661] In this way, he argues, the security dilemma may be mitigated, as states may move from a culture of rivalry to one of co-operation, or even friendship.

This has been an important contribution to the theory of international systems, and has laid the groundwork for an understanding of how the current liberal trading regime that characterises much of world politics has emerged. However, I have argued here that Wendt's theory stops unnecessarily short because of its essentialist conception of the state system. Wendt does not attempt to anticipate how developments in world politics may lead to a change in the nature of the state, or the rise of new forms of unit. I have argued that both of these developments appear

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[658] See Rescher (1996: 37) on the compatibility of processual and systemic ontologies.
[659] Bunge (2004: 190)
[660] Giddens (1984)
[661] The classical English School thinkers also thought of structure in this way, although they did not draw explicitly on philosophy of science debates as Wendt does.

to be underway at the contemporary conjuncture, as a result of a fundamental crisis in the global economic system in the 1970s, and the historically contingent interaction of this period of restructuring with the emergence of a new technological paradigm.[662] This was a project led by states, but has taken on complex dynamics that they may well not have predicted, as the spatial scale of economic activity was reconstituted globally. One unforeseen consequence is the emergence of global cities, acting as strategic hubs in response to the need for command and control functions in a decentralised global economy. Thus, the relationship between capitalism and the territorial state, which has formed a central component of the international relations of modernity, has been altered: global capital flows have been deterritoralised at the national level, and are now channelled through the strategic physical sites offered by networks of global cities.

As I argued in chapter two, epochal changes such as these become apparent in signs of the reconstitution of social space. I discussed two contributions to the agent/structure problem that are somewhat marginal in social theory, yet are valuable in discerning signs of transformation. The first of these is the actor-network-theory that has found its central statement in the work of Bruno Latour. Latour argues that society is the product of networks of ideational and material hybrids: we cannot understand how collective agency or corporate bodies endure in time and space without also recognising the ways in which they are 'assembled' from combinations of people, ideas, and material elements such as architecture and technology. The value of this position, Latour argues, really comes to the fore in times of great change: the idea of a 'national society' may have been adequate for the past one hundred years or so, but, now that it appears to be under strain, we must look to see how new ideas, groups of people and material objects are being constituted in novel ways.[663] This, I have been arguing, is the type of process that is at work in the emergence of the global city.

The second, very similar, position is offered by Lefebvre's seminal work on the social production of space, which has featured heavily in these chapters.[664] Lefebvre's emphasis on how each distinctive society produces its own social space is an essential backdrop to the new arrangements of space and time that have been examined in this thesis. Lefebvre also emphasises how periods of instability and crisis result in the constitution of new forms of social space: the breakdown of those 'spatial codes' that Ruggie also identified as crucial to understanding epochal shifts between international systems. The modern spatial structure of contiguous and bounded spaces has been modified, or added to, with the creation of a crosscutting space of flows, supported by a physical infrastructure of information and communications technologies. This new spatial structure does not transcend the modern international system's spatial structure, but it does operate in tension

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[662] Castells (1996)
[663] Latour (2005: 12)
[664] Lefebvre (1991)

and contradiction with the philosophical and practical foundations of that earlier system. Furthermore, Lefebvre argued that, in any complex society, such changes manifest most clearly in urban form. The changing nature of urban form embodied by global cities and new transnational spaces, as well as in global slum production, is a material manifestation of deep-rooted change.

Global Cities and the Three Theories of International Transformation

This section examines what implications each of the three major theoretical positions on international transformation have for our understanding of the rise of the global city, and for how we may come to understand the contemporary conjuncture of global politics. It considers the implications of global cities as emerging units, the theory of punctuated equilibrium and institutional competition, and the changing structures of space and time.

The first of these theoretical positions allows us to understand the rise of global cities as a new kind of unit within a changing international system. Such a perspective would allow us to bracket the period of the modern international system by noting how, as a historical period, it has been characterised by isomorphic territorial state units. Before this period we find a mixture of different units: empires, city-leagues, city-states, proto-states. Now, with the emergence of global cities, we may discern the re-emergence of unit diversity, which would include changes to the nature of the previously dominant unit, the state, which does not disappear, but whose functions change.

This situation may be seen as a result of actions that states themselves have taken, as they responded to the intellectual and material crises of the 1970s: embracing a historically contingent mixture of neoliberal political philosophy, and facilitating the development of new technologies. This has had the effect, perhaps largely unexpected and unforeseen, of altering the environment in which states operate. One way in which this development may be understood within an international systems framework is as an exercise of state agency that has altered the structure of the system. Here, the distinction drawn by Wendt between system-level macro-structure, and unit-level micro-structure, is a pertinent theoretical device.[665] The macro-structure of the international system remains anarchical in the formal sense: no over-arching political authority emerges. In fact, the analysis of the emergence of global cities points precisely in the opposite direction, towards increasing decentralisation. But, at the micro-structural level, leading states have built amongst themselves a sophisticated set of deterritorialised economic networks,

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[665] Wendt (1999: 147)

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technological infrastructures, and social spaces that alter the nature of important social processes. It is this development that has created both the possibility of, and the need for, global cities.

The final element of this framework, elaborated in chapter one, is the systems theory concept of the pattern of organisation. This is the principle that ties together units and structures in particular configurations. It links ideational elements to the material units in which they are manifest, in systems that are durable over time. The modern international system is constituted by like units, linked through a pattern of organisation rooted in the concept of territorial sovereignty. Its demise would necessarily lead us to consider alternative patterns of organisation that could link together a system containing different types of units. There is a precedent here, as I outlined in chapter three, in the work of Adam Watson, who sought to define a spectrum of patterns of organisation for the many varieties of international systems that have existed in the long run of history.[666] These include the hypothetical possibility of a world empire, many different forms of empire, domination or hegemony, through to the independent units of the modern state system. The key issue here, in terms of international politics, is the issue of order: how is stability maintained in a world of competing interests. Watson shows us that there are many ways in which order has been achieved historically, and that the balance of power, that mechanism or institution that provides order in the modern international system, is simply one historical option. Another core concern of Watson's, arising from this theoretical and historical perspective, was the relationship between homogeneity and heterogeneity in international systems. He sought to show how too much of either tendency within the system resulted in the reassertion of the opposite tendency. It may be argued that the modern international system, with its isomorphic political spaces and narratives, has veered towards homogeneity. This has been challenged by the political and cultural discourses of postmodernity outlined in chapter five, and heterogeneous, ethnically, racially and culturally diverse global cities may well be a manifestation of the historical tendency to correction that Watson identified.

Furthermore, the emergence of new technologies, and the new form of social space represented by the 'space of flows', mean that the pattern of organisation of any emerging international system may well be relatively novel. One distinct possibility for such a pattern, which has arisen frequently during the course of this argument, is that of the network. This is a non-hierarchical and open-ended pattern of organisation, but one that creates its own kind of order, develops its own distinctive inside/outside arrangement, and offers a distinctive logic of process. Castells has made great strides in theorising the impact of networked forms of organisation on social life, and, in particular, the way in which network logics are beginning to effect the relationships between different units, such as firms, states, cities, criminal networks and social movements. Castells'

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[666] Watson (1992)

form of global sociology thus offers a potentially fruitful avenue of research for IR scholars trying to come to terms with the emerging dynamics of international politics, fitting well with the temper of the times, which eschews centralisation, and is suspicious of the kind of teleology and grand narrative that have been discredited by the failed political projects of modernity. Intellectual currents and sensibilities that embrace decentralisation and bottom-up forms of social order lie behind the form of the global city, and also account for the 'hollowing out' of the state, as it drops many of the functions that it held in its modern guise.

A further consideration that emerges within this theoretical paradigm is Buzan and Little's arguments about sectors of the international system. They identify a historical pattern where the economic sector tends to expand faster and further than the political and military sectors.[667] This pattern may well be repeating itself with the emergence of the 'space of flows', which has, so far, been dominated by economic flows and processes. The speed and flexibility with which global cities operate as nodal linkages within this new environment gives them many advantages over states and other territorially bound actors. This point brings us to the second theory of transformation, that of institutional competition.

The economic crisis-led restructuring of the 1970s may be viewed as an example of punctuated equilibrium, the dominant evolutionary metaphor in theories of social transformation. As we have seen, Hendrik Spruyt used this concept to build a two-step theory of the dissolution of the European feudal system and the following rise to dominance of the territorial state. Spruyt saw the reason for the demise of the variety of units that characterised the European middle-ages (the Catholic Church, the Holy Roman Empire, the Hanseatic League, the many city-communes), as facilitating the rise of the state, but not leading inevitably to the modern international system. The revolutionary event that altered the environment in which the previous institutional forms had thrived was the great expansion of the European economy. This led to a period of institutional competition, which uncovered those units best suited to the new environment. Spruyt argues that the territorial logic of the sovereign state was ultimately incompatible with the non-territorial logics of its competitors, and that the superior ability of the territorial state to mobilise economic and military resources gave it a logic of domination that ultimately accounts for the demise of any viable institutional alternatives.[668]

A feature of the developments in late-modernity that I have been discussing involve the deterritorialisation of certain aspects of the international system, and the reconstitution of the relationships between different geographical scales. In chapter five I argued that the globalisation

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[667] Buzan and Little (2000: 110)
[668] Spruyt (1994)

debates should properly be viewed as being concerned with the renegotiation of the relations between multiple spatial scales, rather than as a simple zero-sum movement from the national to the global. It is this complex renegotiation that has re-invigorated cities in the contemporary period, freeing them from a long period of unprecedented subjugation to the state under modernity. At the heart of this renegotiation of spatial scales is the advent of the new technologies of information and communication, which redraw the meaning, content and structures of social time and space. Any new round of institutional competition will favour institutional forms that are comfortable operating within this de-territorialising environment, as global cities are, and as many transnational networks, social movements, and corporations are learning to become.

The impact of the new technologies brings us to the third theory of international transformation, elaborated by John Ruggie, which focuses upon how different international systems may be distinguished by their different spatial and temporal structures. I have discussed at length how the modern international system incorporates a set of distinctive ideas within the spatial and temporal co-ordinates set by exclusively bounded territorial states, giving the modern international system its distinctive inside/outside configuration, effectively creating two different forms of temporality. As Rob Walker has argued, any transformation of this system would necessarily involve a transformation of its spatial and temporal structures.[669]

I have argued that such a modification to the spatial and temporal structures of modernity is underway, arising from the complex interplay of the postmodern sensibility, which rejects many of the dominant philosophical underpinnings of modernity, and the social shaping of a new technological paradigm, which embodies many of these ideas about the decentralisation of authority and personal freedom. These developments have interacted with a further historically contingent event: the restructuring of the global economy along neoliberal principles. The categories developed by Castells to describe the effects on the global social structure (the network society), and its related structures of space and time (the 'space of flows' and 'timeless time'), I have argued, offer a starting point for the analysis of how the modern structures are being unevenly modified. These are distinctively new forms of space and time, and link together different pieces of the globe in a set of networked relationships unknown in earlier modernity.

In relation to the question of whether the modern international system has been transformed, it is, perhaps, these spatial and temporal structures that point most strongly to the transformation of modernity, and lead us to contemplate the nature of the new type of system that is emerging. This has implications for the changing nature of the modern territorial state unit, which sees its

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[669] Walker (1993)

foundations in the ideas and structures of modernity undermined. Consideration of the rise of the global city has offered a way of throwing some of these important issues into relief. But, more than this, it has shown how global cities are actually intrinsic to the creation of these new social structures of space and time, by providing a major part of the material infrastructural support for the technology that facilitates them. In this way global cities are important strategic sites, but they are also very vulnerable sites. In the remainder of this conclusion I consider this issue in the context of the changing relationship between the city and the state.

The Changing Relationship between Cities and States

In this final section I want to draw out some of the implications of the developments that this thesis has examined for the changing relationship between cities and states in the twenty-first century. I discuss the changing nature of the city and state relationship in terms of the renegotiation of territorial scales, and the potential implications for the nation-state and its territorial boundaries. The section then discusses the strategic weakness of global cities, and the implications of their dependency on state security functions in an era where the state is losing its grip on the monopoly on violence.

The rise of the global city in the research agendas of urban theorists and urban sociologists, and the changes to the material form of these cities, is a result, as we have seen, of the restructuring of the capitalist world economy in the late-modern period. The central characteristic of this process, located in the dynamics and crisis generating tendencies of capitalism, has been a move towards decentralisation and deterritorialisation.[670] As chapter five argued, these developments, often discussed under the somewhat misleading discourse of globalisation, entail a renegotiation of the relationship between different spatial scales. It is this change in the organisation and content of space, when viewed through the lens of the concept of the international system, which differentiates this arrangement from modernity. This development has broad implications for both cities and states.

As noted in chapter four, the fundamentally transnational character of capitalism as an economic system has been in constant tension with the prior existence of the system of territorial political spaces into which it was inserted. The history of national state capitalism has been characterised by periodic crisis and reconstruction, as capitalist logic sought to overcome the limits placed on it by this territorial system through various 'spatial fixes', including war and imperialism, and the work of international institutions for trade and finance. However, arguments for the necessary development of a global state to match the global scale of capital accumulation, or, alternatively,

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[670] Brenner (1998)

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arguments for the intransigence and permanence of the territorial state system, fall down in their inability to imagine other forms of institutional unit for a future international system. The rehabilitation of cities in the contemporary period has provided just such an alternative scale at which to envisage another way out of the inherent conflict between capital and territorial state space, although not, perhaps, out of the inherent contradictions of capitalism itself, which is now seen by many to be finally constituted as a universal system.[671] Some of capitalism's continuing contradictions may be seen as manifest in the great and growing inequalities visible in, and between, cities in the contemporary world, and in the continuing reproduction of global poverty, which were discussed in chapter six.

The reproduction and accentuation of poverty and inequality has been a historic feature of the capitalist economic system. The present conjuncture has, however, provided this historic tendency with a number of novel features. These arise from the changing nature of spatial relationships under the new technological paradigm, and the move to informational sources of value in the economy. One way to highlight these changes is to look at the concerns of the neo-Marxian dependency theorists in the 1970s, when the global city began to emerge, and contrast them to the dynamics at work today. There are many important continuities, but, also, some crucial differences. In 1971, when Johan Galtung wrote *A Structural Theory of Imperialism*, he was concerned to explain how the mechanism of imperialism produces and reproduces the structural logic of inequality and uneven development.[672] He noted how structural imperialism worked by creating a disharmony of interests within nations at the periphery of the world economy, as it tied particular elites and core regions of peripheral states into the projects of elites in the core countries. This harmony of interests between valued spaces of peripheral nations and the core nations of the world economy served to perpetuate inequality: a form of structural violence. In many ways, the developments that I have discussed here in relation to global cities describe this situation very well: global cities develop interests at odds with the wider states in which they remain rooted in the physical world. As we have seen, the rise of global cities is a global phenomenon, occurring in areas of what used to be the second and third worlds, as well as the core OECD states. But, there are important distinctions that move us beyond the world envisioned by Galtung.

Galtung's theory is circumscribed by his methodological nationalism, and by an understanding of the global economy more appropriate to the industrial era (he was writing at a time before the maturity of the technological developments that created the contemporary space of flows). The developments discussed in this thesis point to different dynamics. Galtung stressed how the

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[671] Wood (1997: 558) Lacher (2006: 162-163)
[672] Galtung (1971: 81)

extraction of raw materials from the periphery by the core regions of the economy resulted in under-development. But, as we have seen, in the last four decades the primary source of value in the economy has shifted to information generation, combination and re-combination, and to advanced producer services. At the same time, the national economy has been called into serious question as the most suitable unit and scale for understanding the global economy. We now have a much more complex picture of the spatial relationships at work in the international system than Galtung put forward. Rather than a core-periphery meta-geography, this thesis has argued for a meta-geography based on technological and social networks, where valued spaces are linked together in much more highly fragmented and complex ways than a core-periphery model allows. In this way it is not just cores, not just, indeed, cities, that demarcate the constantly shifting networks of value within the space of flows, but specific segments of nations, or districts of cities, which exist adjacent to marginal regions and disconnected neighbourhoods.

It is, thus, in large part, technological change that has moved us beyond Galtung's vision of cores and peripheries. The set of technological networks examined in chapter six support a fundamentally new type of social and economic space, digitalised and dematerialised, yet also reliant upon an extremely concentrated localised material infrastructure. Dematerialisation, although essential to the renegotiation of scale, requires the construction and maintenance of a 'state-of-the-art built environment', which forms at the core of global city nodes. The splintering of the national spaces of modernity has the effect of redefining the context of these valued physical sites. Thus, Sassen argues,

> for instance, the financial districts in most cities have infrastructures for digital networks that are confined to those districts: they do not spread across the city, but they do span the globe and connect those districts to one another. This separateness allows for the continuous upgrading in the infrastructure of connectivity within the district without the added costs of upgrading even the immediate environment.[673]

There are two juxtaposed implications of this type of development. Firstly, it illustrates how the global scale is produced at the local scale, and how such production works to fragment and disrupt the national space. At the same time, it shows how the type of political and economic regime that allows for this kind of development within global cities is endangering the reproduction of the city itself. Investment in developing global city infrastructure is aimed at tying valued privatised global spatial fragments together, while the physical spaces of these cities decay and move ever further from concepts of social justice.

The neoliberal state is directly implicated in this renegotiation of scale and the augmentation of global city capabilities, both in the logic of its political philosophy, and as an investor in global

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[673] Sassen (2007: 230-231)

city infrastructure. Globalisation turns out not to be a zero-sum game, where the state is destroyed as the global grows in significance, but a tendency that involves the complex rescaling, reorganisation and reterritorialisation of the state. Neil Brenner has argued that global city formation and state rescaling are 'dialectically intertwined moments of a single dynamic of global capitalist restructuring'.[674] State agency is a prime mover behind global city formation, as states recognise that investing in and upgrading global city infrastructure can work to attract global capital flows into their territory. Such activity, Brenner argues, represents the 'glocal' state's move into supply-side entrepreneurialism. But, at the same time, as we have seen, such states can no longer contain the process of capital accumulation and urbanisation within their borders. They become both complicit in this rescaling, but also increasingly constrained by it, while global cities and their regions emerge as the fundamental territorial capitalist infrastructure and unit of economic globalisation.

What becomes, then, of the nation-state? Just as the turn to neoliberalism, and the move away from 'embedded' liberalism, has created the global city, so too has it altered the form and function of the national state. The breaching of national territorial borders in the economic sector of the international system would appear to have profound consequences. Indeed, such transborder and transnational developments are not confined to the economic sphere: the emergence of diasporic public spheres, transnational identity politics, and post-national imaginaries have been discerned in the realm of culture, where Arjun Appadurai has noted that the gradual dissolution of the hyphen linking nation to state means that nation-states are not likely to be the 'long-term arbiters of the relationship between globality and modernity'.[675] But economic logic has raced ahead of politics and culture, both in terms of the mismatch between a global scale economy and the political scale of the representative institutions of the nation-state, and in terms of the emergence of regimes of private authority that are designed to cope with specific economic developments at the global level. Sassen charts how private authority, in a move to fill the global economic governance responsibilities left vacant by the nation-state, has created a 'global web of bordered spaces', each with a specific function, such as commercial arbitration, or specific industry regulation regimes often dominated by large firms. By disembedding selective elements that were previously located at the national level, non-state economic actors are putting together a distinct space that 'assembles bits of national territory, authority and rights into new types of specialised and highly particularized fields' that 'destabilise conventional understandings of national borders'.[676]

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[674] Brenner (1998: 1)
[675] Appadurai (1996: 19)
[676] Sassen (2007: 221-222)

These developments are, to a large extent, clearly compatible with the logic of neoliberal philosophy, which advocates a minimal role for the state as the creator (where necessary) and guarantor of free markets, the protector of private property, the guardian of the integrity of money and legal structures.[677] This inevitably encourages the expansion of private authority. As some have argued, the character and purpose of the state under this form of relatively unfettered market capitalism is very different from that which provided the legitimacy of the welfare state under embedded liberalism.[678] This incipient change in the very function of the state has been characterised as the move from the nation-state to the market-state, whose rationale, from where it draws its legitimacy, is to maximise not the welfare of its citizens, but their opportunity. [679] Rather than utilising resources directly, this form of state is seen as redistributing resources into private hands. This is the risk society of reflexive late-modernity described by Ulrich Beck, where 'individuals are now expected to seek biological solutions to systemic contradictions', suggesting that the historical capacity of the nation-state to protect its citizens from the economic and political hazards beyond its borders is at an end.[680] Philip Bobbitt suggests that the change in the new constitutional basis of the state represented by the market-state also brings forth other forms in its own image: just as the market-state takes on a networked, decentralised and outsourced form, so too do social movements, criminal and terrorist networks (and so, of course, do global cities).

Neoliberal philosophy sees its project as working to protect the freedom and dignity of the individual by unleashing their natural entrepreneurialism, and, in this sense, it is in line with the liberal strand of utopianism that is a feature of Enlightenment modernity. However, as Karl Polanyi and Isaiah Berlin have both argued, there is a distinction to be made between the freedom of association and choice, and the freedom to exploit others.[681] Polanyi argued that the theory of neoliberalism offered the latter type of freedom. As such, the inequality that must result would inevitably force neoliberalism into avenues of violence and authoritarianism, as it sought to enforce its rationale of personal safety over social protection. In this discussion of the nature of global urban form, we have seen clearly how great disparities of wealth and poverty are intrinsically linked. This has led to the emergence of a number of developments in urban form: the gated community, the privatisation of infrastructure, the segregation of communities, the citadelisation of corporate environments. One aspect of the rise of the global city, after its long modern embedding within the nation-state, is that it no longer has the historical defensive capability that cities had in earlier periods. As global cities are key strategic sites in the global

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[677] Harvey (2005: 2-12)
[678] Rosecrance (1985, 1999)
[679] Bobbitt (2002, 2008)
[680] Beck (1992)
[681] Polanyi (1957) Berlin (1997: 191-243) Harvey (2005: 36-37)

economy, this strategic weakness provides a strong motivation for the market-state to extend this function.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11th, 2001, the security of cities has been high on the political agenda. The analysis presented here, however, would suggest that the security of cities was already a growing concern before 2001. Thus the terrorist attacks on these American cities, and later, on others such as Madrid, London, Delhi and Istanbul, and the subsequent security measures implemented in cities as part of the 'global war on terror', are more properly seen as a reflection of an established trend than as a consequence of that one event. In this sense, the 'global war on terror' can be seen as intrinsically bound up with the logics of the neoliberal discourse outlined above: the tendency that Polanyi saw for such a system to move towards violence and authoritarianism, reinforcing the pre-existing trends towards the creation of a segregated, securitised and privatised social space outlined in chapter six.[682] Indeed, Zygmunt Bauman suggests that it is the new role that the state is lately finding for itself in the 'global war on terror' that is restoring to it that 'monopoly of redemption' that we have seen to be a facet of its origins in modernity:

> non-economic varieties of vulnerability and uncertainty on which to rest its legitimacy...threats and fears to human bodies, possessions, and habitats arising from criminal activities, anti-social conduct, of the 'underclass', and most recently global terrorism. Unlike insecurity born of the market, which is if anything all too visible and obvious for comfort, that alternative insecurity which is hoped to restore the state's lost monopoly of redemption must be artificially beefed up, or at least highly dramatized...[683]

But a further feature of the analysis presented here is that the issue of security for cities and their fragile networks is by no means illusory. Global cities house and maintain a non-substitutable material infrastructure for the space of flows that has rescaled the global capitalist economy and enabled it to move beyond the confines of national territory. They are the intersection between physical space and the new digital spaces of social networks and economic markets. These networks have become integral to the liberal economic system. As we have seen, the informational economy relies on an electronically mediated environment of symbols and signs. In this sense, the neoliberal economy and the information technology revolution are symbiotic.[684] This electronically mediated environment, which Jameson foretold with his analysis of postmodern culture, and which Castells sees as the root of a new culture of 'real virtuality', can be seen as the fulfilment of the Enlightenment dream of mastery over the natural world.[685]

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[682] Marcuse (2004: 263)
[683] Bauman (2004: 118-119)
[684] Harvey (2005: 3)
[685] Graham (2004: 30)

The material supports of the technological infrastructure underpinning this digital economy and culture are extremely vulnerable to attack. The work of Graham and Marvin on the large-scale technological infrastructures of information, communications, transport and energy that support complex societies makes this point clear.[686] In a world where the state has lost its effective control over the monopoly of violence, where the globalisation of warfare has increased the availability of military hardware to transnational criminal and terrorist networks, and where power disparities have put asymmetric warfare at the forefront of state's concerns, this vulnerability is a striking feature of the contemporary world.[687] It could be argued that, just as capitalism has been reconstituted at a different spatial scale, so too, with the decline of major inter-state warfare, has political violence. Some theorists have suggested that, as cities have become globalised, political violence has become urbanised:

> In the 'new' wars of the post-Cold War era – which increasingly straddle the 'technology gaps' separating advanced industrial nations from informal fighters – cities are the key sites. Indeed, urban areas are now the 'lightening conductors' for the world's political violence. Warfare, like everything else, is becoming urbanised. The great geopolitical contests of cultural change, ethnic conflict, diasporic social mixing; of economic regulation, and ecological change are, to a growing extent, boiling down to often violent conflicts in the key strategic sites of our age: contemporary cities.[688]

In the current renegotiation of the relationship between the state and the city, the ability of the state to offer security seems to be necessary both to cities, that have forgotten how to defend themselves, and to states, whose security function seems now to be one of its major claims to legitimacy. Indeed, there is an echo here of the ancient distinction between the state's role as a guardian entrusted with the force and power to bring order and control, and the city's role as a cosmopolitan and commercial centre that generates dynamism, diversity, growth and wealth.[689] These two functions were fused in the nation-state: now they appear to have been separated again. Under the neoliberal paradigm, however, there is a clear danger that the social fabric of global cities may break down. Since September 11th, 2001, this new nexus between city vulnerability and state security provision has resulted in a number of distinctively regressive trends in urban form, which augur a further decline of public space.[690] There is an accelerated tendency towards polycentrism, and of de-agglomeration in the main business districts of major cities, as firms have come to fear density. There has been a trend towards citadelisation: the notion that a corporate centre be located on a major transport link, and planned so as to provide all of the daily needs of workers, so that they may entirely bypass the fabric of the city in which they work. Truly, this development conforms to Jameson's notion of the simulacrum: the

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[686] Graham and Marvin (2001)
[687] Kaldor (1999)
[688] Graham (2004: 4)
[689] Taylor (2007)
[690] Marcuse (2004: 268-275)

replacement of the city with its equivalent, the bounding of a private, miniature, self-sufficient city.[691]

The urbanisation of political violence is a particular manifestation of how many features of global politics have become 'telescoped' into the contemporary global city, in an 'implosion of global and national politics into the urban world'.[692] Global cities become key sites of political contestation, amplifying both systemic contradictions and historical possibilities. All of the many contradictions that globalisation theorists have discovered in the dialectical interplay of global and local are present in the global city today: the great disparities of wealth and poverty, the great heterogeneous mixing of cultures, ethnicities and diasporic diversity. Such heterogeneity is often seen as a threat to established identities: it has led to the resurgence of fundamentalisms, both religious and national, just as it has led to the ongoing crisis of coherence and meaning that attends the modern state in the late-modern age.[693] For many of the scholars that have written on global cities and urban life in the twenty-first century, there is an inherently normative dimension to their work. They believe that global cities should be the political spaces in which tolerance and the cosmopolitan sensibility are nurtured. The old saying about cities, 'stadtluft macht freie' (city air brings freedom), first heard in Europe before the rise of the modern state, rings forth again for them, renewed for the hopes and fears of a new era. But, at the same time, it should be recognised that order and diversity are difficult to reconcile. In the past such ethnic diversity has only been successfully integrated within empires, and the international system of modernity represents a historically specific solution whereby the problem of the self and 'other' is 'fixed and tamed' within the spatial and temporal co-ordinates of the territorial state.[694]

Appadurai argues that the unravelling of the territorial state is further compounded by the possibility, in the contemporary world, that not all emergent nationalisms are exclusively territorial. Where Benedict Anderson showed how the social construction of an imagined national community depended upon the diffusion of newspapers, novels and print media, Appadurai argues that electronic technology is enabling various post-national imaginaries through the construction of 'diasporic public spheres'.[695] The transnations and diasporic politics that Appadurai documents cut across established boundaries and national spaces. For a historian of nations and nationalism such as Eric Hobsbawm, 'the process which turned peasants into Frenchmen and immigrants into American citizens is reversing, and it crumbles larger nation-

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[691] Jameson (1991: 38-45)
[692] Appadurai (1996: 152-153) Graham (2004: 7)
[693] Castells (1997) Habermas (2001) Runciman (2001, 2002)
[694] Walzer (1997) Walker (1993)
[695] Appadurai (1996: 21-22)

state identities into self-regarding group identities'.[696] Such developments may signify the beginning of a rescaling of culture and politics to match the scale of the decentred and networked global economy.

The direction of this kind of analysis, and of the arguments presented throughout this thesis, point towards a particular type of future for the international system. Against those that would argue for the continuation of the modern states system, it posits transformation in the dominant unit of that system, and the emergence of other units. Against the possibility of the emergence of larger territorial units, such as Huntington's essentialised civilizational blocs, or a global state to match the global scale of capital, it points to the dynamics of fragmentation and decentralisation visible in the contemporary international system. These dynamics owe much of their force to the embrace of a political philosophy that sought to overcome some of the limits of the modern international system. There are clear signs that the high tide of neoliberalism is beginning to ebb, and that a reconsideration of the excesses of this model is underway. However, global city regions and transnational networks are now an established reality: the agency of the neoliberal project has created new material and social structures that any future global politics will need to engage with.

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[696] Hobsbawm (2007: 93)

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