

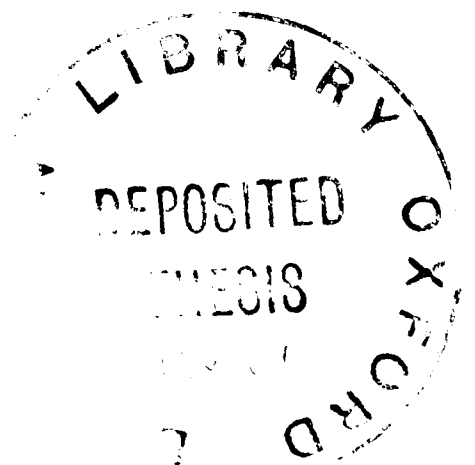
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**THE IMAGE OF THE STATE AND THE
EXPANSION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of D.Phil. in International Relations, in the Department
of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford

August 2006

Approx 100,000 words



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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I extend thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Jennifer Welsh and Dr. David Williams, for all of their inspiration and guidance during my graduate studies. I would also like to thank Sarah Wright and Tim Hill for their diligent proof reading, as well as Catherine Rothern and Alex Gajda for bringing fun to the process of writing a D.Phil. thesis.

Abstract

This thesis presents a history of the concept of the state as a political community. Beginning with the early-nineteenth century and using debates about state formation and state recognition as its source material, it uses the language of English-speaking policy makers and political commentators to explore understandings of statehood across different time periods.

The thesis argues that the meaning and connotations of the state have changed significantly in the past two hundred years, as it has become more salient in images of world politics. In particular, the state has evolved to incorporate the idea of the ‘nation,’ such that when governments act they are perceived to have their populations ‘in tow.’ These conceptual changes are surprisingly recent, solidified particularly since the Second World War.

Four broad themes structure the argument in each chapter. First, the historical ‘nation’ has become an increasingly dominant way of conceptualising the populations of states. Second, the state has come to be construed as the inevitable unit of world politics, corroborated by the assumption that each one arises out of a pre-existing ‘nation.’ Third, the state has increasingly been perceived as a unitary actor with its own consciousness, separate from ‘government.’ Finally, the state with its nationalist implications, has come to define the dynamics of international politics, a means of simplifying an ever more complex world.

The thesis roots contemporary (English language) understandings of the state in a particular historical and political context, defined by the contestation between ‘American’ and ‘British’ worldviews, the triumph of liberal internationalism and the

multiple interests at stake in the image of the state as a nation. The thesis thus exposes the intensely political nature of language and the complacency of International Relations with regard to its own use of words and conventional narratives.

Introduction

The true obstacle to any legitimate peace is what has been concisely described as ‘German militarism.’ German militarism is based not on the ambition of a few soldiers; it is based, unfortunately, on the fact that German writers and professionals, men of theory, men of action, those engaged in commerce, those engaged in historical speculation are all united in the view that the true policy of any *nation* which wishes to be great is a policy of universal domination.

Arthur James Balfour, 1918¹

I have no doubt at all that the vast majority of ordinary Iraqi people are desperate for a better and different future; for Iraq to be free, for its government to be representative of its people, for the human rights of the people to be cared for. And that is why - though, of course, our aim is to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and make our world more secure - the justice of our cause lies in the liberation of the *Iraqi people*. And to them we say: We will liberate you. The day of your freedom draws near.

Tony Blair, 2003²

The contrasting statements above are testament to an important shift within international politics in the twentieth century. Both are addresses from British statesmen in the context of war; the First World War in Balfour’s case, the recent Iraq war in Blair’s. Both attempt to legitimise military action by highlighting the dangers inherent in placating the enemy. Yet, the enemy takes a different form in the two examples. For Balfour, the enemy was militaristic ‘Germany’ taken as a physical, demographic and cultural whole, the scourge of the ‘bestial huns.’ For Blair, the enemy was only the Iraqi regime; the war was waged not against the Iraqi people but ‘for’ them.

¹ Arthur James Balfour, *The Obstacles to Peace*, (London, National War Aims Committee, 1918), p.1 (substance of speech to House of Commons as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 8 August 1918).

² Tony Blair, speech at Camp David, White House Briefing, Federal News Service, 27 March 2003.

The way that states act, and legitimise their actions, is linked to an evolving ideational climate. Within the discipline of International Relations, this is not an uncontroversial statement, but nor is it a new one, having been explicated by a variety of scholars under the guise of norms, ideas and political culture.³ One academic trend is to analyse norms that structure conceptions of legitimacy; determining morally or legally acceptable actions and the criteria that define the 'legitimate' state.⁴ During the First World War, the idea that the enemy was the 'mind' of the German nation underpinned the morality of the war effort and later the punitive reparations regime imposed on German people, inciting their resentment at the 'moral stigma of a criminal nation.'⁵ At the dawn of the twenty-first century, Western eyes look upon liberal democratic government as the font of state legitimacy, to the extent that human rights and popular sovereignty are used as part justifications for war.

This thesis is intricately related to changing conceptions of legitimacy, but legitimacy is not the focus. Instead, it is addressed to a related but distinct transformation displayed in the citations above. In Balfour's eyes, Germany, understood in national terms, was a coherent whole, its people and government an undivided actor. In Blair's eyes, the inhabitants of Saddam Hussein's Iraq were not only repressed by their government but also a separate actor from it. In this image, the shared physical space they inhabited was splintered and the neat relationship between government and citizen disrupted. At the same time, by liberating the singular 'Iraqi people,' Blair implicitly aspired to recreate the state of Iraq as a unitary entity in

³ See Michael Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs,' parts I and II, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12:3 (1983), pp.205-235; and 12:4 (1983), pp.323-353; Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,' *International Organization*, 52:4 (1998), pp.887-917.

⁴ For example, Samuel J. Barkin, 'The Evolution of the Constitution of Sovereignty and the Emergence of Human Rights Norms,' *Millennium*, 27:2 (1998), pp.229-252; Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵ See Anonymous author, *An Appeal to British Fair Play* (pamphlet) (Munich, 1924), p.7.

which government and people would again move as one. The quotations above not only highlight conceptions of the legitimate state, but also conceptions of what the state 'is,' as an actor in world politics.

What the state 'is' is the central theme of this thesis, which is addressed to the following question: How has the image of the state changed in the past two hundred years? The focus on the state does not derive from a presumption that this form of political organisation is timeless, legitimate or inevitable. Instead, the thesis aims to contextualise both the contemporary pre-eminence of the state and the particular understanding of it evident today. It does this by tracing the development of the state concept within the discourse of policy makers and commentators in international affairs, as well as scholars of Political Science and International Relations.

The State in International Relations

Since the discipline of International Relations has historically revolved around the state, it is ironic that, as John Gunnell has suggested, careful consideration of the concept has 'remained somewhat fallow.'⁶ The *relevance* of the state has been attacked from outside and inside, by those who point to patterns of interaction across state boundaries, as well as the range of competing interests and actors within them. However, International Relations has been characterised by a disinterest in more direct questions as to the *nature* of the state and the concept of statehood as a structural component of global politics.⁷ The discipline has operated under the

⁶ John G. Gunnell, 'In Search of the State: Political Science as an Emerging Discipline in the US,' in Peter Wagner, Björn Wittrock and Richard Whitley (eds.), *Discourses on Society: The Shaping of the Social Science Disciplines XV* (London, Kluwer, 1991), p.123.

⁷ See Martin Wight, 'Why is there no International Theory?' in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics*, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1966).

pervasive assumption that the state is the product of a 'limited range of possible political arrangements,' and, therefore, the inevitable unit of the international realm.⁸

Political science as a whole was not always characterised by such disinterest. According to Brian Schmidt, pre-First World War scholarship was intricately bound to political theory. The character of international affairs and international law, the possibility of a world state, of international organisation and of cooperation, were 'all determined with respect to the theory of the state.'⁹ However, with the development of the discipline of International Relations, which took the state as its starting point, interest in the concept declined. An essay by Arnold Wolfers, published in 1959, argued that clearer theorisation of the state as an actor was necessary, if it was to be accorded such a prominent role, but this was the last word on the subject for decades.¹⁰ As scholars comfortably debate the decline of the 'state' and the unbundling of 'sovereignty,' there is a glaring gulf between the significance and the intelligibility of statehood.

In recent years, the state has re-emerged as the object of theoretical analysis within International Relations, as the notion of 'structure' has assumed a place under the analytical spotlight. Within an expanding literature that casts the state as an 'intersubjective' or 'social' construct, the assumed physicality of the state and the relevance of lines on maps are waning, undermining systemic theory, with its reliance on an undisputed 'structure' of like units.¹¹ Yet, this 'problematisation' of the state is rarely rooted in empirical studies of the concept, with the consequence that significant

⁸ Francis Hinsley, 'The Sovereign State in the International System,' in Robert O'Neill and R. J. Vincent (eds.), *The West and the Third World: Essays in Honour of J.D.B. Miller* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990), p.18.

⁹ Brian C. Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1998), p.76.

¹⁰ Arnold Wolfers, 'The Actors in World Politics,' in William T.R. Fox, *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1959).

¹¹ See Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It; the Social Construction of Power Politics,' *International Organization*, 46:2 (1992), pp.391-425.

gaps exist in our knowledge. First, there is a lack of historical context behind the concept of the state, which is largely seen as a three hundred and fifty year-old constant. Second, there has been consistent inattention to ‘ontology’ over ‘legitimacy,’ what the state is, rather than what defines its legitimacy. Third, there has been little exploration of the intersection between the state and nation concepts, despite the plethora of terms (‘nation-state,’ ‘national self-determination’) that clearly connect the two.

Historical Narratives

The scholar of International Relations is spoilt for choice by the variety of insightful analyses of historical change, emanating especially from the ‘English’ school. Many of these contributions are addressed to the system of states, including Martin Wight’s classic *Systems of States* and more recently, Andreas Osiander’s *The States System of Europe*.¹² Others are addressed to the history of ‘international society,’ from the ancient to the global, such as Adam Watson’s *The Evolution of International Society*.¹³ Still others are analyses of the structures and systems of world politics more generally, such as Barry Buzan and Richard Little’s *International Systems in World History*, which commences with the rudimentary systems of hunter-gatherer life and culminates in the institutions of global international political economy.¹⁴

Yet, the history of the state itself tends to be dominated by a specific historical narrative, according to which the contemporary international system ‘began’ with the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, when the overlapping jurisdictions of medieval

¹² Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1977); Andreas Osiander, *The States System of Europe, 1640-1990; Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994).

¹³ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society; A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London, Routledge, 1992).

¹⁴ Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History; Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).

Christendom dissolved and the sovereign state was born.¹⁵ Prior to this, the rights of government were not exclusive and territorial but personal, and multiple titles existed to the same land. Rulers were part of a universal moral community of common laws, religion and customs. In contrast, the system of sovereign states is defined by clearly discernible and rigid dichotomies of domestic and international, a transformation of the very structure of world politics.¹⁶

Although the comfortable sense of 1648 as the ‘origin’ of the international system has tended to discourage further historical inquiry, the era of the French and American revolutions has come under scrutiny within a discipline otherwise preoccupied with the twentieth century onwards.¹⁷ In this period, the ‘structure’ of international politics was not transformed, but the meaning of the state supposedly changed, as national sovereignty began to replace the divine right of kings as the keynote of international legitimacy. In the French constitution of 1791, legitimate power became inseparable from the ‘body of the people,’ giving rise to broader questions about the rights of individuals, the delineation of political communities and their relationship to the state.¹⁸

Like Westphalia, the French Revolution has been distorted by the tendency to define it as an event that wrought instantaneous change. There is much scholarship that focuses on this vital turning point, but little that has traced the subsequent

¹⁵ See for example, Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1978 [1946]), p.25; Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London, Macmillan, 1977), pp.245-6; Richard Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.49. Also see Stephen D. Krasner, ‘Westphalia and All That’ in Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (eds.) *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (Ithaca N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1993).

¹⁶ See John Gerard Ruggie, ‘Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis,’ *World Politics* 35:2 (January 1983), pp.261-285.

¹⁷ See for example Friedrich Kratochwil and Yosef Lapid, ‘Revisiting the ‘National’: Toward an Identity Agenda in Neo-Realism,’ in Kratochwil and Lapid (eds.), *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (London, Boulder, 1996).

¹⁸ See Chimène Keitner, ‘Revolutionizing International Society: the Principle and Practice of National Self-Determination in the French Revolution and Beyond’ (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2000).

evolution of the popular sovereignty dynamic and its impact on the state.¹⁹ This reification of 1789 is especially dubious given the enormous physical and normative changes that have since occurred in world politics: the expansion of the international system; the evolution of norms and rules used to assess claims to statehood, such as the ‘standard of civilisation’ and *uti possidetis* (the fixity of boundaries); the growth of nationalism, which reached its epiphany in the two global wars of the twentieth century; the rise of representative democracy and human rights as components of state legitimacy; and the impact of ‘globalisation’ on the state, both materially, and as the harbinger of political community.

The reification of certain dates as pivotal points in the evolution of the ‘international system’ is not only crude; it also suggests that the contemporary world is predetermined by events prior and exogenous to contemporary human beings. Ironically, the rise of ‘constructivist’ approaches within International Relations has done little to improve this simplistic treatment of history. As Finnemore and Sikkink suggest, ‘much of the macrotheoretical equipment of constructivism is better at explaining stability than change,’ since the claim that actors conform to rules, norms and logics of ‘appropriateness’ tells us little about how these evolve.²⁰ For the sake of more sophisticated debates on the core concepts of the discipline, there is a need to widen the focus and to challenge conventional ‘stories,’ a feat this thesis attempts through a descriptive uncovering of the state concept in the past two hundred years.

Political Imagery

As mentioned above, existing analyses of the state also tend to focus on legitimacy; they depict the history of the state in terms of dominant ideas about its moral basis.

¹⁹ See Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999).

²⁰ Finnemore and Sikkink, ‘International Norm Dynamics,’ p.88.

For example, Reus-Smit's *The Moral Purpose of the State* argues that international societies, in their various historical forms, have constitutional structures shaped by ideas about justice and the moral purpose of the state. The modern era is characterised by a particular historical consciousness within which the 'self' and the individual emerged as values, such that the legitimate state provides avenues for political expression and 'human flowering.'²¹ Similarly, Daniel Philpott's *Revolutions in Sovereignty* explains the genesis and expansion of the sovereign states system in terms of two normative changes, the Protestant Reformation that ended medieval Christendom (culminating in Westphalia) and the norms of equality and colonial nationalism that brought a final end to the legitimacy of empire.²²

Yet, as John Gerard Ruggie has argued, sovereignty is supported by a framework of norms and meanings that renders the sovereign structure of international politics not only legitimate but also intelligible.²³ Against the variety of analyses described above, it is the more neglected side to this equation that is the focus here: the basis for the intelligibility of the state. For the sake of clarity, a conceptual distinction between 'norms' and 'images' will be used to distinguish ideas with moral content, from those that define basic parameters of reality and the relationships between them, a more rudimentary type of 'idea.'

Why should we be interested in the seemingly esoteric topic of political images? The first reason is that political images, as specific accounts of the kind of entities that exist in our universe and how they are interrelated, form understandings of how 'the world works.' In this way, they are also integral to the way the world *actually* works, since as Andreas Osiander has claimed, the international system:

²¹ Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, pp.126-8.

²² Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001).

²³ John Gerard Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London and New York, Routledge, 1998), p.55.

is what people think it is... a mental construct, resting entirely on shared assumptions. These assumptions are extremely complex, and, often, they are so deeply ingrained and pervasive that they may seem rock solid. However, unlike a rock, or individuals, or any other object with a physical reality, they can be 'deconstructed.'²⁴

Yet International Relations rarely considers how seemingly rock-solid assumptions are formed, debated and become conventional. Most scholars are more interested in proving that 'ideas' are important *explanatory* forces in contemporary world politics, a question of a different order.²⁵

Second and related, political imagery is an imperative component of power, so much so that images are often bitterly contested terrain in the political arena. In both the German and Iraqi cases cited above, the portrayals of the relationship between government and people were contested, by those who argued they were misleading and dangerous. In the modern world, in which knowledge is such a freely available commodity, the ability to 'spin,' to manipulate or package facts, has become a particularly central aspect of domestic and international politics. Political images are vital because they contain ideas about representation, which strike at the heart of all political contests, be it a party contesting an election, an NGO seeking a voice, or a government choosing a controversial foreign policy. They embody what has been called the 'defining characteristic of politics,' 'the manner in which individuals come together (or are brought together) to behave collectively.'²⁶

Nationalism and the Nation

The third problem with the treatment of the state in International Relations is the lack of attention to the concepts of the nation and nationalism. cursory historical analysis

²⁴ Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.4.

²⁵ See Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*.

²⁶ Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach, 'The Past as Prelude to the Future? Identities and Loyalties in Global Politics,' in Kratochwil and Lapid, *The Return of Culture and Identity*, p.43.

of the influence of nationalism tells us that it contributed to an aggressive and violent twentieth century. However, for political theorists and International Relations scholars alike, nationalism, despite being perhaps ‘the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time’ poses conceptual complications.²⁷ It is an incoherent doctrine, combining different ideas and sets of contradictory implications. Unlike other ‘isms,’ it has no grand thinker to offer an authoritative outline, as Marx does for communism or Hobbes for realism.²⁸ It does not fit neatly into patterns of thought within the discipline that divide causal factors into systemic, state-centric or bureaucratic categories. The result is that nationalism is often ignored.²⁹

In particular, analyses of how the nation and nationalism have shaped the image of the state have been rare. James Mayall traces the influence of nationalism on ‘international society’ and claims that it has constrained our ability to imagine political forms alternative to the nation-state. Yet at another level, he suggests that the nation did not really impact the basic vision of the state; the nationalists ‘moved into the building which had previously been occupied by dynastic rulers,’ but ‘left the building itself more or less intact.’³⁰ J. Samuel Barkin and Bruce Cronin see the nation as a distinct legitimising concept and argue that ‘state’ and ‘nation’ have alternated as the legitimate basis of rule, although they pay less attention to the conceptual relationship between the two.³¹

A recent focus of the constructivist analysis is the question of whether the state is a unitary actor, a single unit that feels and acts in the same way as a person.

²⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities; Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 1983), p.13.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.5.

²⁹ See Rogers Brubaker, ‘Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism,’ in Margaret Moore (ed.) *National Self-Determination and Secession* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.233-5.

³⁰ James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.26.

³¹ J. Samuel Barkin and Bruce Cronin, ‘The State and the Nation: Changing Norms and the Rules of Sovereignty in International Relations,’ *International Organization* 48:1 (1994), pp.107-130.

Many great political thinkers - Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, Durkheim and Spencer among others - have thought of the state in such organismic terms and the idea remains common in contemporary discourse. Alexander Wendt has suggested that the idea of the state having a corporate 'personality' is historically contingent and of medieval origin, and he notes in a footnote that the 'nature and causes' of variations in the state concept are 'interesting questions in themselves.'³² Like others, however, he leaves such questions unexplored.

There is an intuitive connection between this corporate or organismic model of the state and the concept of the 'nation.' The nation, widely considered to have risen to the fore during the nineteenth century, was intrinsically connected to the evolution of popular sovereignty following the French Revolution. The attribution of sovereignty to the 'people' depended on a conception of the 'people' as something coherent and whole, a 'nation.' Hence, according to Chimène Keitner, it 'dictat[ed] a certain monolithic quality in national self-construction and membership' and a 'new international legitimating discourse based on national sovereignty' emerged.³³ Today, the universal organisation of states is called the 'United Nations.' In International Relations, the dominant conception of world politics in terms of a system of billiard ball states resonates with the idea of the nation-state. In the words of William Bloom:

The image of world politics is that of relationships between nation states, or more subtly between states whose power 'rests in a popularly legitimised authority'... the state, it is thought, should be one with the people who are its nation. International politics, then, is not simply the relations between state structures, but is also the relations between the nations. In international politics, people, government and state fuse into the one image.³⁴

³² Alexander Wendt, 'The State as Person in International Theory,' *Review of International Studies*, 30:2 (2004), p.289.

³³ Keitner, 'Revolutionizing International Society,' pp.90, 168. See also Eugene Kamenka, 'Political Nationalism; The Evolution of the Idea,' in Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism; The Nature and Evolution of an Idea* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1976), pp.4-6.

³⁴ William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.1.

Yet the link between nationhood and corporate understandings of the state has not been explored, except incidentally.³⁵ Reus-Smit, for example, argues that the connection between ‘legitimate statehood’ and ‘the augmentation of individuals’ purposes and potentialities’ in the French Revolution resulted in a reconceptualisation of the political community, not as a ‘natural component of the divine order,’ but a ‘human artefact, the creation of its members.’³⁶ Thus, the changing normative context altered ideas about what denoted the state physically. John Agnew went further, to claim that as modern statehood became ‘underwritten by modern individualism,’ so states became ‘inscribed with the ontological and moral authority of their own personhood.’³⁷ For Agnew, the French Revolution transformed the state into a person, a new and abstract vocabulary. This thesis seeks to further such claims through a more focussed and deliberate examination of the interplay between the concepts of state and nation.

If the nation and nationalism are at one level incoherent, at another they are perhaps the most frequently trivialised ideas in the gamut of political theory. The nation is often depicted as a self-standing variable that grows and wanes across history, used to ‘explain’ complex events such as revolutions, wars and state formation.³⁸ Yet, as Michael Freeden has argued, norms and ideologies do not have ‘absolute boundaries’; their content changes over time.³⁹ Hence, the aim here is not to discover essential motifs that define different eras (‘the nation,’ ‘the state’). Instead, the mutual evolution of these terms is a vital aspect of the story.

³⁵ An exception is Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³⁶ Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*, p.122

³⁷ John Agnew, ‘Mapping Political Power Beyond State Boundaries: Territory, Identity, and Movement in World Politics,’ *Millennium*, 28:3 (1999), p.509.

³⁸ See Ernst Haas, ‘What is Nationalism and Why Should We Study It?,’ *International Organization*, 40:3 (1986), p.707; Arthur N. Waldron, ‘Theories of Nationalism and Historical Explanation,’ *World Politics*, 37:3 (1985), p.427.

³⁹ Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1996), p.162.

The problem this gives rise to is that of definition. As a constantly evolving concept, no definitive meaning shall be attributed to the nation here; instead, its multiple meanings and connotations are a focus in Chapter Two. However, since the nation is a core part of the argument of this thesis, it is necessary at least to provide some outline. At the most basic level, the nation (by which is meant the concept rather than any really existing iteration of it) is taken to mean a *community* (a body of people that can be conceptualised in the singular), with or without its own ‘state,’ that has a common *consciousness*. This is derived from a shared identity rooted in the supposed commonalities (be they real or perceived, historical, biological, emotional, political, etc.) of the individuals that comprise it. The essential element of the definition is that the singularity of the nation derives from common consciousness and not simply common interest or cohabitation of the same territory.

Methodology and Approach

The overarching methodological question arising from a focus on the ‘image of the state’ is that of how to find such images. Scholars interested in historicising the structures of world politics tend to choose certain kinds of historical ‘moments’ to highlight certain phenomena. Many select major wars as incidences of enormous upheaval, the culmination of the previous era and the foundation of the next.⁴⁰ Wars are windows onto understandings of power, the balance of power, and ideas of just cause. Others choose the peace conferences that follow wars as defining moments for exploring changes to international order and stability.⁴¹ Others still select revolutions

⁴⁰ Kalevi J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order 1648-1989* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991).

⁴¹ Osiander, *The States System of Europe*.

to investigate conceptions of legitimacy and the relationship between the domestic and international realms.⁴²

While these options have the advantage of clarity, there is no necessary link between them and the specific focus on images of the state. In fact, the selection of cases around war, peace or revolution could skew the analysis towards certain nationalistic or aggressive images of the state made prominent by conflict. Instead, it makes sense to look at instances when new states form, as has been done to analyse the evolution of ‘international society.’⁴³ Such a focus has both theoretical and methodological utility. Theoretically, it is the point at which the image of the state is most likely to be in a state of flux. Methodologically, it is the point at which images of the state will abound in discourse, as commentators are compelled to define a state’s emergence. As Sidney Verba said, looking at emerging states, ‘one is forced to deal with the most basic questions of politics – the entire set of questions involved in the creation and maintenance of political societies.’⁴⁴

State Formation and Recognition

However, defining the process by which new states form is a difficult task. The number of states in the international system has increased exponentially in the past two centuries, now encompassing the entire globe, except for the remaining two million people that inhabit non-self-governing territories. Yet, even international lawyers have no fixed answers as to what the process consists of, when an entity

⁴² Mark N. Katz, *Revolution: International Dimensions* (Washington, C.Q. Press, 2001).

⁴³ Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1984). Of course, since the formation of new states is frequently the *result* of a war or peace agreement, this approach is not devoid of potential selection bias.

⁴⁴ Sidney Verba, reviewing Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: A Quest for Modernity in Modern Africa*, in *American Political Science Review*, 58:1 (1964), p.110.

becomes a state, and whether this is a legal, social or empirical determination.⁴⁵ No satisfactory definition of the state exists within modern international law according to James Crawford, since the issue has not been addressed since the minimalist 1933 Montevideo Convention.⁴⁶

These legal questions are interesting windows onto understandings of the state, but are not directly problematic for the purpose of case selection, because this thesis analyses understandings of the state rather than the state itself. It is more important to isolate periods during which actors *believed* they were seeing new states emerge, than to specify whether states actually emerged legally. Hence the thesis analyses ‘state formation’ by assessing the debates surrounding the status of new entities. In many, but not all cases, such debate is centred on the issue of state recognition, the process whereby the governments of existing states signal their willingness to accept that a new state exists and that factual or legal consequences may flow from this.⁴⁷

State recognition is a practice that has become progressively institutionalised since the mid-eighteenth century, such that the right of states to recognise others is now unquestioned, even if the precise legal implications of that act remain unclear. According to Richard Caplan, it is an inherently conservative ‘regime’ that exists to safeguard the centrality of the state, sovereignty and the inviolability of borders, the ‘Westphalian’ order.⁴⁸ However, it is not necessarily governed by hard and fast rules.⁴⁹ Sometimes accorded almost automatically, it can also be a tool of statecraft to

⁴⁵ See James Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979); Brad R. Roth, *Governmental Illegitimacy in International Law* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴⁶ Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, p.31.

⁴⁷ Thomas D. Grant, *The Recognition of States; Law and Practice in Debate and Evolution* (London, Praeger, 1999), p.xix.

⁴⁸ Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States*, pp.85-86.

⁴⁹ See Grant, *The Recognition of States*, p.105.

satisfy narrow interests, a political bargaining chip to placate or galvanise domestic and international constituencies or even a means of conflict resolution. To see the state through the lens of state recognition is therefore to acknowledge the subjective and political nature of its existence.⁵⁰ A state, says Brad Roth, is essentially ‘a political community ... that existing states collectively decide *ought* to be self-governing’⁵¹

Case Selection

The enormous expansion of the international system in the past two hundred years demands that empirical choices be made for the purpose of this research. The methodology of this thesis involves an assessment of the break-up of long-standing empires, in particular the Spanish and Ottoman Empires and the British Empire in Africa. In all of these cases, the metropole governed areas that were vast, relatively unknown to Europeans and had not been part of the international sovereign states ‘system,’ at least during the preceding few centuries. The new states formed out of them can be seen as conceptual *tabulae rasae*, onto which ideas about sovereignty were projected. The final and most recent period under study will be tackled slightly differently, because the post-Cold War era presents us with no such ‘blank slates.’ Many of the entities in question had previously exercised sovereignty, and some had continued to be recognised as such during decades of effective occupation. Moreover, the collapse of the remaining ‘empire,’ that of the USSR, occurred so swiftly that it affords only a limited amount of source material. In contrast, the collapse of the former Yugoslavia occupied the international imagination throughout much of the 1990s. The final chapter thus focuses on various cases of state formation during the

⁵⁰ M.J. Peterson, *Recognition of Governments; Legal Doctrine and State Practice 1815 - 1995* (London, Macmillan, 1997), p.198.

⁵¹ Roth, *Governmental Illegitimacy*, p.131.

1990s, all of which involve secession from a larger state, with particular emphasis on the former Yugoslavia.

The focus on whole empires, rather than on a few specific states that emerged from them, has three other rationales. First, due to the political nature of state formation, individual cases are highly variable and have the potential to distort the analysis. Second, much of the discourse on state formation actually centres on the general break-up of an empire into states rather than on specific cases. Third, this approach widens the periods under study and allows for sensitivity to gradual change. Empires generally disintegrate gradually, so the transformation of one area of the globe may necessitate an analysis of several decades. This is advantageous in preventing an overly ‘snap shot’ approach.

Finally, this thesis commences with the period of South American independence for two main reasons. First, the emergence of new states has been a dominant feature of world politics since the revolutionary era. Second, the intersection between the concepts of state and nation is, as discussed above, a particular focus. The nineteenth century, commonly identified as the century of ‘nationalism,’ following the French Revolution, is thus a natural starting point. Third, 1815 can be regarded as the beginning of a distinct phase in the development of the global states system. By 1815, many of the major features of modern international law had been established. Under the doctrine of state continuity, governments were generally considered to be the agents of states, such that the state’s legal personality was not altered by regime change. Recognition of a state was an established practice and was considered irrevocable. Effective control of territory was, in general, a necessary but not sufficient criterion for statehood.⁵² This context provides a

⁵² Peterson, *Recognition of Governments*, pp.12, 20 ,49.

relatively stable background against which more subtle changes in understandings of the state can be assessed.

Narrowing the Focus

Having identified the historical focus, it is important to be clear about *whose* understandings and images are uncovered in this analysis. Crucially, the empirical focus of this thesis is on understandings of the state voiced in English, with a particular focus on commentators from Britain and the United States. This imposes important limitations. First, this thesis does not purport to be the entire history of the state image. Second, it is not a cross-cultural study, except in so far as different versions of the English language manifest different understandings. In particular, at several points in the thesis, a tension is identified between predominantly ‘American’ or ‘British’ understandings of statehood. Such comparisons relate to the English-speaking world only and are not intended to negate the influence of other political cultures on the concept of the state.

The justification for this approach is three-fold. First, it is dictated partly by pragmatism. It is not possible to analyse understandings of the state (already an expansive topic) across history, throughout the world and in every language, and regardless this would rather dilute the focus. Analysing images of a concept such as the state demands a relatively precise awareness of structures of meaning within discourse. For this reason, the task is quite language-specific.

Second, while the dominant language of diplomacy was Latin in the Middle Ages and French in the eighteenth century, English has become the most important

language in international affairs since the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵³ It is now the language of the dominant superpower, unrivalled as a global tongue and with French, is a working language of the UN. This means that the range of speakers that can be included in this analysis is large (and expands as the thesis progresses through time). It also suggests that as English language images are prevalent, they are also important and potentially influential.

Third, and related, English is the language of the Anglo-American International Relations tradition with which this thesis engages. It is a tradition that has historically been less interested in ‘theorising’ the international realm than its continental counterpart and generally operates under the assumption, derived from liberal social contract theory, that the state is a bounded political community. Moreover, partly because of its size, it is a particularly dominant tradition in the global field of International Relations.⁵⁴

Sources

A narrower question relates to the kind of sources used in this thesis. The state is a unit that has been dissected and imagined across the history of political thought, from Hobbes to Herder to Habermas. Indeed, the variety of understandings of the state contained in the works of ‘great thinkers’ is enough to suggest that the state is far from a predetermined, stable concept. However, while these works provide invaluable analytical tools, this thesis does not recount the history of ideas simply in terms of well-trodden political luminaries. As Quentin Skinner has noted, there is danger in such an exclusive focus, because great texts often derive infamy precisely by

⁵³ See Wilhelm G. Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, trans. Michael Byers (Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter, 2000), p.702.

⁵⁴ See Chris Brown, ‘Political Theory and International Relations,’ in Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas (eds.), *Handbook of Political Theory* (London, Sage, 2004).

challenging conventional wisdoms.⁵⁵ This thesis, addressed to the context of real political action, partakes of the broader constituencies of ‘thinkers,’ including the political movers and shakers and those that commented on their actions.

The sources used in this thesis therefore reflect its sociological nature, including written and (where available) verbal statements, from policy makers and other statesmen, but also the pamphlets and books of campaigners and political commentators, academic journals, newspapers and even novels.⁵⁶ Sources in the public eye, such as pamphlets and newspapers, are potential windows onto pervasive, popular understandings. They are, almost by definition, produced in a language people of the time could understand. Statements from politicians and academics enable analysis of how such understandings were refracted in the policy and academic worlds. Each chapter attempts to maintain a similar balance in the types of sources used, within certain limitations, such as changes in media and the relative absence of ‘International Relations’ scholarship before the twentieth century.

The range of sources used is both expansive and restrictive. It is restrictive in that the authors are, by definition, people who cared about the question of state formation, a subset of the population. Although this is important, it is a necessary limitation. The range is expansive in that hundreds of sources are used for each case, reducing the degree to which images of the state can be contextualised against the personal and social influences unique to individuals. However, this thesis is focussed, not on the complex reasons behind different understandings, but on the range of standpoints that *could* be expressed at a particular point in history, that made sense

⁵⁵ See James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context; Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge, Polity, 1988).

⁵⁶ Most of this data is directly accessed from archives and libraries; with some reliance on secondary sources.

and were utterable. The texts are windows onto the broader ideational framework that defined the limits of understanding.⁵⁷

An Outline

This thesis has five chapters. The first is an examination of the range of ways the state has been understood within political theory. Although the empirical analysis of this thesis is deliberately not focussed on the ‘great thinkers,’ their ideas are used in this chapter to generate a loose typology of understandings of the state, to facilitate analysis of the empirical material. These understandings are organised under four headings: the population or ‘people’ of the state; the process of state formation; the state as an actor; and the state in the context of world politics.

The empirical chapters are organised sequentially across the four historical periods used in this thesis, and are structured in accordance with Chapter One. Chapter Two is focused on the independence of South America in the early-nineteenth century and assesses how the revolutionary changes in Europe and the US were reflected in understandings of the South American state. Chapter Three is extensive, as it assesses the break-down of the Ottoman Empire from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the post-First World War period, tracing the emergence of new states during the age of ‘nationalism.’ Chapter Four addresses the independence of the former British colonies in Africa after the Second World War and hence analyses statehood in the context of its universalisation as a political form. Chapter Five assesses new states in the post-Cold War era, a time in which the solidity of the states system was increasingly challenged by the force of fragmentation. It

⁵⁷ See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London, Routledge, 2002).

investigates the contradictory ways in which the state has been understood in recent years.

The thesis argues that the concept of the state has evolved considerably in the past two hundred years, during which time it has become more important to understandings of world politics. More specifically, the thesis challenges a conventional understanding according to which the 'nation-state' was the dominant trope of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries but in the contemporary era has been undermined by globalisation, humanitarian intervention and human rights. Instead, it is argued that by the end of the twentieth century, the concept of the nation was more, not less, vital to understandings of the state in the English-speaking world than a century before.

These conclusions can be expanded upon in a four-part synopsis. First, the nation has become an increasingly dominant way of conceptualising the populations of states, partly as a result of the expansion of the states system widely associated with 'popular sovereignty,' and partly to disguise the lack of confidence in the rationale for many post-colonial borders.

Second, the state has only recently come to be construed as the inevitable endpoint of 'self-determination.' Whereas previous eras featured significant flexibility as to the best political form in which to package 'freedom,' the contemporary imagination is dominated by the 'sovereignty' paradigm, corroborated by the assumption that nations give rise to states, in that order.

Third, in the past two hundred years, the state has increasingly been thought of as a unitary actor in its own right, facilitated by a particular understanding of the representative relationship between governments and individuals. For all the

contemporary emphasis on democratic rule as the font of legitimacy, a sub-text construes all but the worst governments as the trustees of a 'general will.'

Fourth, the state has become the reified basis for the dynamics of international politics to an extent unprecedented before the Second World War. Forces historically equated with nationalism are now equated with sovereignty. Yet policy makers and academics make sense of an increasingly complex world by reference to a pared-down conception of the state that is implicitly 'nationalist.'

This analysis underscores that language, including that used by academics, is political. It is political in that it changes as the power to shape the dominant categories of understanding shifts. It is political in proposing a particular view of the world against which certain foreign policy options can or can not be reconciled. This is not to suggest that the contemporary language of world politics is entirely 'power'-driven; indeed the contingency of language is also a theme of this thesis. It is to suggest, however, that the politics of language merits a more significant place in the study of international affairs. The image of the state forms the heart of that politics and this thesis is an attempt to explore this most crudely treated political unit.

Chapter One: The State and its Multiple Meanings

As David Fromkin noted in his magisterial *A Peace to End all Peace...* the rivalries of tribes and clans 'made it difficult to achieve a single unified government that was at the same time representative, effective and widely supported.' There was even a problem with the Kurds, since the British could not make up their mind as to whether they should be absorbed into the new *state* of Iraq or allowed to form an independent Kurdistan.

*The Independent*¹

The main victims were communists, Kurds, Islamist Shia Muslims and leftist Ba'ath party members. But no one - not even relatives, lifelong friends and associates or London-based exiles - was immune to the killings inflicted on the Iraqi people over the years by the Iraqi *state*.

*Financial Times*²

Al-Qa'ida-linked suicide bombers blasting British targets in Turkey will not change America's policies. The war on terror will continue, but against a background of an escalating guerrilla conflict in Iraq ... The Iraqi *state* could break up, leaving the entire region desperately unstable.

*The Independent on Sunday*³

There is no time to be lost in restoring the Iraqi *state*. As the pieces are already there, why waste so many long and difficult months in unprofitable debate, when a viable constitution already exists?

*Australian Financial Review*⁴

The passages above, all taken from English language newspapers, paint a recognisable picture of a country currently under the media spotlight. The themes have become familiar; the internal divisions that have plagued Iraq's history, the suffering of people under a tyrannous regime, and the global political debate over the

¹ *The Independent*, 6 March 2003, p.8

² *Financial Times*, 15 December 2003, p.2

³ *Independent on Sunday*, 23 November 2003, p.26

⁴ *Australian Financial Review*, 2 December 2003, p.63

territory's invasion and occupation. While these passages contain various views on the problems of Iraq, they all refer to the 'state' of Iraq or the 'Iraqi state' in ways familiar to speakers of English.

However, a closer look at these excerpts reveals that the concept of the state within the English language is actually rather confusing. In the first excerpt, the Iraqi 'state' is something that contains its population; the historical problem of this 'state' lies in the question of which people belong there. Yet in the second, the people are not part of the 'state.' The state is external to them and has been persecuting them. The third passage expresses the concern that the Iraqi 'state' might disintegrate in the future. Yet in the fourth, written just a week later, the 'state' does not even exist, since it must be 'restored.'

This plethora of meanings and connotations is indicative of a puzzle at the heart of the 'state,' a concept that has existed in the English language since the sixteenth century. On the one hand, the term is deployed so frequently and unproblematically that it appears transparent. It features thirty-four times in the UN Charter, customarily in the scholarship of International Relations, and is a familiar referent in our everyday speech. On the other hand, this is one of the most confused and contradictory of concepts: composed of people but also above people; legal and political; abstract yet concrete.

This chapter explores the state by analysing the ideas contained across the historical gamut of political theory and legal thought. The function is not to offer one definitive understanding of the state but to assess the spectrum of possible ways of understanding it, so as to provide a loose conceptual framework for the empirical chapters. Whereas the thesis as a whole is organised across time periods, this chapter

discusses different treatments of the state in a non-chronological fashion, the function being purely analytical.

The chapter starts by introducing a fundamental distinction between two definitions of the state, as a political community and as an apparatus of government. It is the former of these concepts that is the focus of this thesis, and is explored in the subsequent four parts of the chapter. First, the chapter analyses understandings of the political community contained within the state. Second, it assesses how a political community becomes a ‘state,’ within the context of assumptions as to the dominant tendencies of political organisation. Third, it investigates the state as an actor within international politics, exploring the basis of the state’s conceptual unity within political theory. The final section moves to understandings of the state as part of a broader system, highlighting relationships between particular understandings of the state and particular perceptions of world politics.

Two States

The seeming simplicity of the ‘state’ is imparted by the superficially straightforward concept of sovereignty, which denotes the existence of ‘supreme authority within a territory’ or, more precisely, the ‘institutionalisation of public authority within mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains.’⁵ Yet, as the diverse scholarship surrounding sovereignty demonstrates, the term also has a perversely broad set of meanings and connotations. It is described as a ‘basic *rule* of coexistence’ between

⁵ Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, p.16; Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity*, p.147.

states but also an intrinsic '*property* of states' and elsewhere a *value*, linked to Western political culture.⁶

Indicative of this complexity, Stephen Krasner distinguishes four different types of sovereignty. The state has 'domestic' sovereignty in that it enjoys formal authority within its domestic borders, to the exclusion of rival sources; it is an institution of power and authority that 'governs' its 'society' or 'territory.' It has 'interdependence' sovereignty to the extent it has empirical power to regulate the flow of goods and people across its territorial borders. In the international realm, the state enjoys 'Westphalian' sovereignty (the right to independence and non-intervention in its territory) by dint of its domestic supremacy. Through its recognition as a subject of international affairs, the same state also enjoys 'international legal' sovereignty in Krasner's eyes.⁷

Yet, in Krasner's analysis, the sovereign 'state' does not always refer to the same object. He identifies the state with the institutions of authority within a territory but elsewhere to the 'territorial entities' themselves. The structure of authority *is* the (domestically sovereign) state yet also operates '*within* the state.' Interdependence sovereignty refers to the effective control enjoyed '*by* the state' but in regulating activity '*across the borders of* their state.' The state operates within a territory but also comprises it.⁸

Alexander Wendt's analysis of statehood reveals the same confusion. He depicts three stylised schools of thought that vary in their emphasis on an

⁶ Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, pp.26-7, 35; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.280; David Strang, 'Contested Sovereignty; The Social Construction of Colonial Imperialism,' in Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds.), *State Sovereignty as Social Construct* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.50, 45.

⁷ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999), ch 1.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp.3-12.

‘organizational actor’ and a ‘society.’ ‘Weberians’ think of the state as an ‘organizational actor’ separate from society, ‘Pluralists’ reduce the state to the individuals and dominant interest groups within a society, and ‘Marxists’ see the state as a structure of governance that binds society with the Weberian actor.⁹ Wendt’s definition combines elements of all three: ‘an organizational actor that is internally related to the society it governs by a structure of political authority.’ But the result is confusion; he claims that states act ‘with their societies conceptually “in tow”’ yet also that ‘society’ is as much a property of the state as the organisational actor itself.¹⁰ This remarkably common conflation of terms sheds light on the conundrum with which this chapter opened; the state is seen as an entity ‘above’ ‘society’ yet also one that comprises it.

The problem is that there are two different, albeit related, referents to which the term ‘state’ can apply. First, the state can refer to the institutions of governance, commonly referred to as the ‘government.’ It is characterised by Weber’s notion of a successful monopoly of legitimate violence within a given territory, a monopoly tied to a legal order and exerted through control of coercive agencies such as the police and army. The state in this vision is a locus of power and authority that may protect citizens, but also controls, punishes and taxes them, an external actor famously caricatured by George Orwell’s notion of ‘Big Brother.’¹¹ It is the definition implied in the belief that ‘The *state* should be small. We, the people, should be big.’¹²

Second, the state is a particular type of territorial political community that must have a structure of authority or ‘government’ as one component. This ‘state’ is an abstract form of community only and hence must be represented by the concrete

⁹ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.199.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.201.

¹¹ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1949).

¹² Michael Howard, *News of the World*, 4 January 2004, Opinion section.

institution of government. But it is the political community, and not the government, that actually possesses the legal personality of the 'state.'¹³ Although international law provides surprisingly little clarification on the definition of the state, its one codification – the Montevideo Convention of 1933 – supports this definition. It defines the state as something above government, because it must 'possess' a government in addition to population and territory.¹⁴ This meaning is also common in everyday language; the possibility of a 'Palestinian state,' for example, refers to the process of imparting legal personality to the Palestinian community, allowing it to become 'self-determining.'

The dualistic definition of the sovereign state described above leads to the confusing idea that the state (as a government, authority or 'organisational actor') represents the state (as a political community) in the international realm. In an attempt to avoid these semantic difficulties, different terms have been devised within the English language to capture the distinction. We might claim that the 'state' rules and represents the 'nation,' for example. But we might also say that the 'government' rules and represents the 'state.' Since these labels only exacerbate the confusion, this thesis will instead make use of a more wordy distinction between the state as a political community ('state-as-community') and the state as a governing apparatus ('state-as-apparatus').

State recognition can involve either of these definitions, a distinction international lawyers have labelled 'government' versus 'state' recognition.¹⁵ The recognition of the state-as-community is considered a one-off event, recognising the

¹³ See Roth, *Governmental Illegitimacy*, p.8.

¹⁴ 'Convention on the Rights and Duties of States' (Montevideo Convention), 26 December 1933, printed in *American Journal of International Law* 28:2 (1934), Supplement: Official Documents (April 1934), pp.75-8, article 1.

¹⁵ See Sean Murphy, 'Democratic Legitimacy and the Recognition of States and Governments,' *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 48:3 (1999), pp.545-581.

existence of a new international legal ‘person.’ In contrast, the recognition of the state-as-apparatus through diplomatic exchange is an ongoing activity that can be arrested when regimes do not meet with international approval.¹⁶ Thus while the US recognised China as a ‘state,’ until 1979 it diverged from most of the world in recognising the Taiwanese, not the mainland authority, as the ‘government.’

Yet, despite this clear legal distinction, very few people, including scholars of International Relations, adequately distinguish between the two notions of statehood. Modern-day political thought tends to construe them as synonymous, because of an assumption that states-as-governments do indeed act with their societies ‘in tow’ on the international stage. As Roth claims, the international realm is seen to be ‘abstractly composed of states *qua* political communities’ while ‘in concrete terms, composed of states *qua* ruling apparatuses.’¹⁷ The elision between government and people at the heart of the modern usage of the state, is an important focus of this thesis.

Conceptualising the People

The first necessary step in uncovering the state as a political community is to consider the attributes of the population at its core. In the contemporary international realm, we are attuned to thousands of different ‘communities.’ Some operate within states (political parties, ethnic or religious groups), such that in most states of the world, but especially in those conspicuously ‘multinational,’ one might conceptualise the population in terms of multiple ‘communities.’ Others operate across states (the women’s movement, religious groups) and some are even communities of states (the

¹⁶ See Grant, *The Recognition of States*, p.105.

¹⁷ Roth, *Governmental Illegitimacy*, pp.26-7.

European Union, the Organisation of African Unity). Moreover, while some individuals or societies may attach great meaning to the community of the state, others do not. Hence, to conceive of the entire population of a state as a 'community' is to deploy the minimal sense of that term – a group that can be subsumed under a single, politically relevant label - and not to suggest that it is characterised by any degree of 'communal' feeling or shared 'identity.'

The Community of the State

The most basic definition of this community is that it shares a determinate territory. The map of the states of the world is a map of shapes enclosing territorially bounded populations, such that the 'state' is sometimes identified with the territory itself. The importance of territory is linked to the historical connection between land and power, dating from a time when political power was crudely measured in terms of territorial control and individuals fell under the jurisdiction of a particular authority (or authorities) on the basis of the land they inhabited. The legacy of this tradition is such that today, 'the state,' as Michael Mann says, is still seen as 'a place.'¹⁸

Modern states also tend to occupy contiguous territories, forming a single, unbroken shape on the map. There are anomalies within this pattern. Some modern states are subdivided by water (New Zealand), have small sections separated by water (the United States) or may be archipelagos (Indonesia). But these are still basically continuous, not separated by thousands of miles. In some historical cases, sections of states have been separated from the rest by intermediate territories (the German enclave of East Prussia after the First World War, West Berlin after the Second), but these arrangements are usually temporary. The real exceptions are former imperial

¹⁸ Michael Mann, 'The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Nature, Causes and Consequences,' *Archives Europeenes de Sociologie*, 25 (1984), p.187.

states, which once occupied distant lands now incorporated into the state itself. France for example has several overseas territories (Départments d'Outre-Mer) such as Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Martinique and Réunion, which have the same status as metropolitan departments.

Yet very few peoples in the modern world base their claim to be a political unit on territorial proximity alone. Most state populations do see themselves, or are envisaged by others, as united by some purpose, at a very minimum by the 'social contract,' through which individuals cede certain rights to create the rules of coexistence necessary to circumvent the 'state of nature.' Such an idea was first articulated explicitly in the seventeenth century, in particular through Thomas Hobbes, for whom the contract created an all-powerful sovereign, and John Locke, who envisaged people contracting for a particular form of government, which they could later modify or even rebel against.¹⁹ By conceptualising a population in contractual terms, such theories ascribed to it a more definite legal form, albeit an abstract one.

In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's social contract, a psychological change is entailed, whereby individuals give up being their own judges and place themselves under the guidance of the 'general will.' The general will is a metaphor for a system of society geared to the collective good but more than this, it also constitutes the society or 'people' as a more meaningful single whole. Thus, said Rousseau, '[e]ach of us puts his person and his full power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and in a body we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.'²⁰

¹⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999 [1651]); John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967 [1689]).

²⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Social Contract* (1792), I, 6, reprinted in *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.50.

Since this step requires wisdom and restraint, Rousseau acknowledged that a generalised form of love is required to make the common good an object of true attachment. He described *patriotism* as a force binding the social contract and stated that a people fit for it is one ‘already bound together by some union of origin, interest, or convention.’²¹

The ‘Nation’

It is a miniscule step from Rousseau’s ‘people,’ to the concept of the ‘nation’ as it is used today.²² As discussed in the introduction, this is a term fraught with ambiguity, but for the purposes of this thesis, refers to a type of community, with or without its own state, that has a common consciousness based on the commonalities, or shared ‘identity,’ of the individuals that comprise it. Walzer’s term ‘communities of character’ captures it; a community that has characteristics aside from shared interest alone.²³ The problem is that there is no fixed agreement as to what ‘characteristics’ define a nation, which may involve factors that are historical, cultural, behavioural, emotional, mental, physical or biological. The definition proffered by Isaiah Berlin conjures this complexity:

A group ‘defined in terms of common history, customs, laws, memories, beliefs, language, artistic and religious expressions, social institutions, ways of life, to which some add heredity, kinship, racial characteristics’²⁴

Evidence indicates that populations within states have long been perceived as communities with shared identities, such as the Italians and Greeks in the fourth

²¹ *Ibid*, II, 10, p.77.

²² In accordance with the definition of the ‘nation’ stated in the introduction (a community with a common consciousness based on shared ‘identity’), Rousseau’s ‘people’ is a type of ‘nation’ for the purposes of this thesis.

²³ Michael Walzer, ‘The Distribution of Membership,’ in Peter G. Brown and Henry Shue (eds.), *Boundaries: National Autonomy and its Limits* (London, Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), p.32.

²⁴ Isaiah Berlin, ‘Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power,’ *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (London, Pimlico, 1997 [1979]), pp.341-3.

crusade, Frenchmen and Provencaux in the Albigensian crusade, Slavs and Teutons in fifteenth century conflicts and the French and English towards the end of the Hundred Years War.²⁵ The post-Renaissance composite states of Europe were also nationalistic, as absolutist monarchs began policies of internal homogenisation and external military and economic competition.²⁶ However, the concept of the nation is most often identified with the rise of popular sovereignty as the dominant force within European politics after the French Revolution.

In fact, there were two dominant ideas of the nation that featured during the revolutionary era. One was broadly ‘political’ or ‘liberal democratic,’ derived from Rousseau’s attribution of sovereignty to the ‘nation.’²⁷ In revolutionary France, for example, the nation referred to everyone within the borders of that country, including the Basques, German speakers and papal Avignon. The other was ‘cultural,’ and emerged from the conservative turn emanating from Germany, a reaction to the cold rationality of Enlightenment. Depicting the nation as a cultural whole through which individuals could achieve freedom, this conception of the nation was an end in itself and not the vehicle of popular sovereignty. Today, this distinction is commonly referred to as that between the ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ (or ‘civic-territorial’) kinds.²⁸ ‘Ethnic’ nations are historical categories based on language, culture, race and kinship and are often construed as ‘natural’ or at least deeply ingrained. In civic nations, the state-as-apparatus is itself a powerful aspect of the social process of definition and the binding force of the nation derives from shared values and commitment to a particular political culture, the US being the characteristic example.

²⁵ See Kamenka, ‘Political Nationalism.’

²⁶ As outlined by Istvan Hont, ‘The Permanent Crisis of a Divided Mankind: “Contemporary Crisis of the Nation State” in Historical Perspective,’ *Political Studies*, 42 (1994).

²⁷ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*.

²⁸ See Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging; Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London, BBC Books, 1993) for an exposition of these categories.

This distinction has collapsed in recent years due to awareness that governments have historically played a crucial role in defining ‘ethnic,’ as well as ‘civic,’ identities: by fashioning the national consciousness, purging unwanted identities through civil warfare and romanticising history.²⁹ The normal dynamic, it is said, is towards ‘making people fit the state rather than the state fit the people.’³⁰ Moreover, the ethnic - civic antithesis actually obscures a number of different ways of understanding ‘nations’ contained within it. The distinction remains useful for capturing the vague way modern commentators think about nations, and is used in this thesis for that reason. However, other typologies offer more rigorous ways of distinguishing ideal-types.

First, a basic distinction can be made between communities whose shared identity is independent of the state-as-apparatus and those for whom the identity is partly its product (it is important to reiterate here that these types refer to *perceptions* of nations, rather than to any actual ‘nations’). The first of these is nicely summed up by Etienne Balibar, as a community ‘which recognises itself in advance of the institution of the state,’ even if in reality this recognition is a ‘retrospective illusion.’³¹ It resonates with a Mazzinian conception of nationalism as a spontaneous and voluntary social form. Borrowing from Smith, it can be called a ‘prior’ nation, which is the essence of the ‘ethnic’ concept as commonly used.³² The second is a more Marxist or Gramscian form, a contingent conception of common identity that has won

²⁹ See for example Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975).

³⁰ Roland Dannreuther, ‘The Political Dimension; Authoritarianism and Democratisation,’ in Louise Fawcett and Yezid Sayigh (eds.), *The Third World Beyond the Cold War; Continuity and Change* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), p.44.

³¹ Etienne Balibar ‘The Nation Form: History and Ideology,’ trans. Chris Turner, in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (eds.), *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London, Verso, 1991), pp.92, 86.

³² Anthony Smith, ‘The Formation of National Identity,’ in Henry Harris (ed.), *Identity: Essays Based on Herbert Spencer Lectures Given in the University of Oxford* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995), p.136.

support through the power of the state. It can be described in Hinsley's terms as a 'state-nation,' for which the criteria for belonging are advanced by the state-as-apparatus.³³

However, the ideal type of the 'prior' nation can be further subdivided into various forms, here labelled 'natural,' 'cultural,' 'institutional' and 'political.' Whereas the last of these sees the nation as only slightly 'prior' to the state, the other three depict it as something deeply 'historical.' Primordialists have long argued that 'national' identity is deeply embedded in an organic structure of the globe; such that nations are natural human groupings.³⁴ Indeed, the word 'nation' is inextricably linked to the concept of nature; the Latin 'nationem' stems from nasci (or gnasci), which means 'to be born' and is the derivation of 'genus,' 'nascent,' 'natural,' 'native,' and 'innate.'³⁵ It reveals a deep presumption within language itself that the demarcations of political community are fundamental and immutable. Of course, the question of whether a person can have intrinsic or natural qualities is polemical within anthropology.³⁶ Many scholars argue that although 'biological' variation does exist in humans, social and cultural practices are responsible for determining which differences are definitive of identity.³⁷ The 'natural' nation is thus the farthest from any real example, though highly relevant as a classification of the way people think about nations.

The kind of ('ethnic') nationalism referred to by German romanticism was not strictly natural but cultural. It was not based on blood ties but on the power of shared

³³ See Francis. H. Hinsley, *Nationalism and the International System* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), p.38.

³⁴ Examples of 'primordialist' literature include Walker Connor, 'When is a Nation?' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 13:1 (1990), pp.92-103; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays* (London, Fontana, 1993 [1973]).

³⁵ Robert K. Barnhart (ed.), *The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology* (New York, H.W. Wilson, 1988), p.289.

³⁶ See Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, especially p.268.

³⁷ See for example Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1970), p.121.

language, traditions and conception of the good.³⁸ The seeds of this were planted in the late-eighteenth century by Johann Gottfried von Herder, for whom the nation (*Volk*) existed before the state and was an organically evolving community of language and culture.³⁹ Each nation was endowed with a unique character or spirit (*Volksgeist*), its purest expression to be found in folklore. In the early-nineteenth century, these ideas were reflected in the rejection of universal reason and an emphasis on culture, beauty and tradition and on the organismic social whole, contained in the works of German and French political philosophers Louis Bonald, Joseph De Maistre, Johann Fichte, 'Novalis' (Friedrich von Hardenberg), Friedrich Schlegel, Adam Müller and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. This image of the nation was a cultural whole through which individuals could achieve freedom.

Institutional nationalism is closely tied to cultural nationalism, again based on the power of tradition. The common identity at its core is derived, in the perception of its members, from the shared experience of living in a particular territory and under a particular set of institutions.⁴⁰ This form of nation is the product of history, in contrast to the mystical concept of the *Volksgeist*, which is pre-historical. Institutional nationalism can be equated to a particularly British or Burkean understanding of nationalism that is deeply rooted but less mysterious. In its emphasis on institutions, it also resembles state-based nationalism to some extent.

The final form of 'prior' nation is what will be called the 'political' kind, which is defined primarily by a common desire for statehood. This desire emanates

³⁸ See Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge, Mass. and London, MIT Press, 1986 [1925]).

³⁹ See Johann Gottfried Herder, 'Another Philosophy of History' (1774) in *Another Philosophy of History and Selected Political Writings*, trans. Ioannis D. Evrigenis and Daniel Pellerin (Cambridge, Hackett 2004); *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (New York, Bergmann, 1966 [1800]). Note that Herder's concept of the nation was not necessarily elitist; he believed in the value of diversity and hence in the possibility of harmony amongst the world's nations (see chapter 2).

⁴⁰ See Hinsley, *Nationalism and the International System*, p.47.

from political experience, the most likely form being that of a colonial society, motivated to aspire to self-determination by foreign rule. This type of nationhood bears even closer ties with 'state-based' nationhood, since institutions of authority (normally colonial ones) are often important in forming the national consciousness; in many cases the very boundaries of the community in question were defined by colonial policy. Moreover, whereas the biological, cultural and institutional forms are deeply historical, the political nation, like the state-based nation, is understood to be rooted only in the very recent past.⁴¹

Of course, few 'nations' resemble the ideal-types described above, or are experienced by their members in such simplistic categories. Most are based on a melange of understandings about history, culture, biology and territory. Many definitions of the nation thus abandon the attempt to define its roots and instead simply acknowledge the role of a nebulous common consciousness. The French philosopher Ernest Renan wrote, for example, that a nation 'is a group of people united by a *mistaken* view about the past and a hatred of their neighbours.'⁴² Likewise, Alfred Cobban defined the nation as 'any territorial community, the members of which are conscious of themselves as members of a community, and wish to maintain the identity of their community.'⁴³ Such definitions recognise that the very function of the nation concept is to be an ideal-type, the endpoint towards which the nationalist political programme can aim. For, as Michael Hughes has stated, '[n]ationalism must contain an element of aspiration. Like Peter Pan it never grows up.'⁴⁴

⁴¹ For this reason, the term 'historical nation' in this thesis refers to the biological, cultural or institutional varieties, but not the political or state-based varieties.

⁴² Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?*, trans. M. Snyder (Paris, Calmann-Levy, 1882), p.124.

⁴³ Alfred Cobban, *The Nation State and National Self-Determination* (New York, Crowell, 1969), p.107.

⁴⁴ Michael Hughes, *Nationalism and Society; Germany 1800-1945* (London, Arnold, 1988), p.17.

Creating States

One way of understanding the relationship between people and government at the heart of the state concept is through analysis of understandings of state formation. Such understandings tend to position people and government in a chronological relationship; either the people gives rise to government through ‘self-determination,’ or the people is itself defined by the existence of a government. By attributing priority to one or the other, these alternative narratives posit different understandings of the basic make-up of the state. Also vital to understanding the nature of the state are various assumptions as to the roles of territorial control, legitimacy and external actors during its formation.

People and Government

As implied in the description of the nation above, the dominant conception of state formation in the modern era positions the ‘people’ or community as ontologically ‘prior’ to the formation of government. This perception resonates with a specific form of social contract theory predicated on two separate contracts. The first is the basis for the existence of society and the second the political organisation of this society, essentially a contract between society and government. For Rousseau, the society in question is defined by its will and identified with the ‘general will.’ For more extreme ‘nationalists,’ such as Johann Bluntschli, the society is defined by a common identity and identified with the ‘nation,’ such that the original ‘contract’ is even more abstract.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, *The Theory of the State*, trans. various (Oxford, Clarendon, 1995 [1852]).

In a modern-day sense, the distinction between Rousseau's people and Bluntschli's nation links to that between 'self-determination' and 'national self-determination,' both processes by which a community existing prior to the state establishes its own independent government. National self-determination denotes both a process and a norm, that 'nations' do and should enjoy self-government via their own state. Explicitly articulated in the aftermath of the First World War, it embodies two strong assumptions: that 'nations' exist in an unproblematic and neat fashion and that this identity translates into the political desire for statehood. The idea is modelled on the perceived nature of Western European states and is intricately connected to the idea of the 'nation-state,' a condition in which 'in people's imagination their nationality and their territorial political unit ... become fused.'⁴⁶

After the Second World War, national self-determination was replaced by an updated concept that dropped the 'national' element and was applicable not to 'nations' but 'peoples,' especially within the idiom of the UN.⁴⁷ This was partly to limit the chaos of competing claims to 'nationhood' seen during the interwar period. But 'self-determination' also seemed more empirically appropriate as, within decades, the decolonisation process exposed the alienness of the 'nation' concept in many parts of the globe.⁴⁸ The groups accorded 'self-determination' were instead defined by former colonial boundaries, many of which had been arbitrarily drawn in the previous century.⁴⁹ The contradiction this gave rise to was articulated famously by Ivor Jennings. '[O]n the surface it seem[s] reasonable,' he said, 'let the people decide. It

⁴⁶ Hont, 'The Permanent Crisis,' p.182.

⁴⁷ See Charter of the United Nations, art.1, at <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/>; 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights,' UN General Assembly res. 217A (III), 10 December 1948, UN doc. A/810; 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,' UN General Assembly Res. 1514 (XV), 14 December 1960, UN doc. A/4684.

⁴⁸ See Fredrik Katz, 'The Legacy of Empire in International Relations,' *Comparative Strategy*, 12:4 (1993), p.367.

⁴⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1983), p.6.

[is] in fact ridiculous,' however, 'because the people cannot decide until somebody decides who are the people.'⁵⁰ The 'freedom' afforded by self-determination was therefore not an inner freedom for the 'nation' but one defined in relation to something external and negative; a liberation from repressive foreign 'yokes.'⁵¹

However, this conceptual distinction is an ambiguous one. Pondering the existence of post-colonial states, governed by regimes far more despotic than the previous colonial administration, Charles Beitz wonders, referring back to John Stuart Mill, why a 'domestic yoke' should be 'more acceptable than a foreign one.'⁵² The answer is perhaps that the domestic yoke is by definition an indigenous one; the new rulers emerging from 'self-determination' are 'national.' In other words, a domestic government is preferable to an external one because of an assumed intrinsic value in 'national' rule. Seen in this light, self-determination is simply a vaguer version of national self-determination, just as, for the purposes of this thesis, Rousseau's 'people' is a vaguer form of the nation.

Both versions of the principle of self-determination therefore run into the same basic problem, which Mayall has described as 'the indeterminacy of the concept of the collective self.'⁵³ For this reason, it is important to distinguish between the principle abstractly conceived and the principle in practice. Mayall points out that the early proponents of (national) self-determination erred in their belief that human groups were given by nature. Without this assumption, the principle, taken to its logical conclusion, would involve a never-ending process, constantly re-shaping the globe as peoples evolved new definitions of the collective. Moreover, it would be

⁵⁰ W. Ivor Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Government* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956), p.56.

⁵¹ The terminology of John Stuart Mill, 'A Few Words on Non-Intervention,' *Essays on Politics and Culture*, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Garden City, Doubleday, 1962), p.176.

⁵² Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979), p.96.

⁵³ Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, p.51.

internally contradictory, since one definition of the collective could contradict another. Hence, in the interests of stability (of borders, of political identities, of the international system), the ‘conventional’ interpretation of national self-determination conceives of it as a ‘one-off’ right reserved for former colonial societies.⁵⁴ Far from offering a new narrative of state formation, however, this practice simply reconciles the realities of human identity with the original assumption that nations or peoples exist unproblematically, by freezing the definition of the collective self.

At the other extreme, both national self-determination and self-determination are intricately tied to the question of individual freedom, in particular the right to political participation through democratic rule. As discussed above, ‘national self-determination’ has historically been associated with popular sovereignty. ‘Self-determination’ is invoked, not only with reference to the right to independence for colonial peoples and to secession for ethnic minorities, but also the rights of minorities and individuals within states, to certain basic freedoms. Moreover, if ‘self-determination’ is proclaimed as a right of ‘peoples’ within the UN family, it is firmly nested within the context of ‘fundamental human rights’ and the ‘dignity and worth of the human person.’⁵⁵ Understandings of both concepts thus tend to conflate the rights of the collective and the individual. The reason is perhaps that ‘free institutions’ are thought to depend, as famously articulated by Mill, on a degree of ‘fellow feeling’ among people. Democracy, liberty and the ‘nation’ are intimately intertwined in the modern understanding.⁵⁶

An alternative conception of the relationship between the government and people positions the former as the prior component. This is a less intuitive idea but

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp.50-57

⁵⁵ See ‘Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.’

⁵⁶ John Stuart Mill, ‘On Nationality,’ in *Considerations on Representative Government* (London, Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1884), pp.120-1.

nevertheless an equally plausible one and features strongly both in political theory and empirical reality. It is typified by Hobbes' notion of the state, since for Hobbes there was only one social contract and hence no social unity prior to government; the community emerged only when self-interested individuals contracted to produce a government for their own protection. Although the Hobbesian case is extreme, it is easy to apply this model to the absolutist monarchs on which it is based. Historically, a prince, ordained by God with the right to rule, defined a territorial political community through the exercise of his authority, as epitomised in Louis XIV's famous dictum 'l'etat c'est moi.'⁵⁷

A further narrative that places emphasis on the institutions of authority is that of Edmund Burke. Burke believed that people had distinctive identities as Englishmen and Frenchmen. But his image of the state was not one in which the institutions of authority were the outcrop of a 'people.' He rejected such abstract and mechanistic theorisations of the state and preferred to argue for its evolutionary nature, an organic social whole that was guided by tradition to make possible a full realisation of human potential and the common good. Key to this tradition was the responsible leadership of a hereditary aristocracy, which was contrasted to the dangers of an unguided and abstract democracy.⁵⁸ Other late-eighteenth century thinkers agreed that the state was guided by the tradition of authority rather than the abstraction of the people. De Maistre rejected the idea that the state could result from the methodical activity of individual human beings. Bonald depicted an opposition between liberal individualism and social solidarity.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ This chronology resonates with the 'state-based' understanding of the nation discussed above, which is applicable to much of Western Europe.

⁵⁸ See David P. Fidler and Jennifer M. Welsh (eds.), *Empire and Community: Edmund Burke's Writings and Speeches on International Relations* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1999).

⁵⁹ See Cyprian Blamires, 'Three Critiques of the French Revolution: Maistre, Bonald and Saint Simon' (D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1986).

The same conflict between individualism and an ethical order embedded in historically evolved laws and institutions is the important theme of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel went one step further, however, idealising the state-as-apparatus as an ethical entity in itself, an 'absolutely divine principle.'⁶⁰ He rejected the idea that a 'people' alone could possess shared and objectively ascertainable characteristics, since only through submission to the state could individuals experience unification with others and genuine individuality. Without the articulation of the state by the monarch, the 'people' was simply a 'formless mass.'⁶¹ Wars were therefore not struggles between different peoples but 'struggles for recognition in connection with something of specific *intrinsic* worth.'⁶² This prioritisation of the state-as-apparatus precipitated a distinctly German theory of the state reflected in the writings of Johann Fichte, Heinrich von Treitschke and Carl Schmidt, that endowed it with a divine and mystical character and interests, separable from those of its citizens.⁶³

Historical Forces

In contemporary discussions of (national) self-determination, there are three other debates about state formation that impact the image of the state. The first is whether the major historical tendency is towards the fragmentation or agglomeration of political units. Nations and peoples tend to secede from empires and multinational states and become 'self-determining,' fragmenting the map as they do so. Yet, there are alternative ways of conceptualising this process. Jules Michelet, for example,

⁶⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans, T. M. Knox (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1967 [1820]), pp.157.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p.183

⁶² *Ibid*, part 3(iii)(c).

⁶³ See Westel Woodbury Willoughby, 'The Prussian Theory of the State,' *American Journal of International Law*, 12:2 (1918).

believed the glory of France lay in the fact that she had fused, out of different provinces, nations, races and classes, a national union overcoming natural and traditional obstacles.⁶⁴ In his understanding, statehood was associated with the agglomeration of different groups within a large unit. A different, though similarly agglomerative vision featured strongly in post-war Europe, where one reaction to the horror of war was the promotion of federalism or integration *of* states, as a means to economic prosperity and the avoidance of war.⁶⁵

The second debate concerns the role of foreign powers. An assumption contained within the logic of (national) 'self'-determination is that states are created independently of external powers. The term suggests that the process is initiated by the 'self' which acquires the means to its 'determination.' This is clearly in contrast with the reality in many cases, in which external powers may be responsible, not only for influencing the necessary transfer of power, but also for defining the community that will become self-determining. In the 1990s, for example, both Europe and the US were subject to intense criticism over their handling of the collapse of the former Yugoslavia.

The third debate is whether state formation is a normative or an empirical matter. An assumption shared by the Hobbesian, Burkean, Hegelian and Rousseauan understandings is that statehood involves an ethical component; the process is tied to politically determined conceptions of legitimacy, from divine right, to tradition, to the ethics of the state itself, to the 'general will.' Although one form of 'legitimism' was overturned during the nineteenth century, as the historic dynastic prerogative was challenged, other forms have since been present. An alternative view is that of effectivism, espoused by nineteenth century legal scholars such as Henry Wheaton

⁶⁴ Hans Kohn, *Prophets and Peoples: Studies in Nineteenth Century Nationalism* (New York, Collier Macmillan, 1966 [1946]), p.51.

⁶⁵ David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago, Quadrangle, 1966 [1943]).

and James Lorimer, which links statehood to the question of effective control of a territory. This accounts, for example, for the disappearance of Austria-Hungary in 1918. In fact, even centuries before, entities where ‘effective government’ existed were often recognised as states subject to international law, including China, the Ottoman Empire, Afghanistan and Japan.⁶⁶ There is a tension then, between the state as an ethical product and the state as a ‘fact.’

The latter two debates, the role of external actors and the question of whether statehood is a fact or a social understanding, are both reflected in an ongoing legal debate regarding the acquisition of statehood. For declaratory theorists, a state is born when its government pronounces that fact.⁶⁷ It is ‘self’-determined, normally once a government has established sufficient authority to safeguard the existence of the state into the future. For constitutive theorists, statehood is only acquired when it is recognised by established states; in other words when the new state is admitted into a ‘society’ or network of others.⁶⁸ In this image, the state is determined by others, in accordance with political interests and understandings of legitimacy.

The State as an Actor

Another way of understanding the state-as-a-political community is through scrutiny of this entity as an actor, or in Wendt’s terms an ‘intentional actor.’ In essence, to say that the state ‘acts’ is not only to underscore its singularity, but also to ascribe it with desires, beliefs, feelings, will and purpose in the same way as human beings, to

⁶⁶ See Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*.

⁶⁷ See Ian Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998); Daniel O’Connell, *International Law* (London, Stevens & Sons, 1970); James Fawcett, *The Law of Nations* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971).

⁶⁸ See Hersch Lauterpacht, *Recognition in International Law* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1947); Satyavrata Ramdas Patel, *Recognition in the Law of Nations* (Bombay, N.M.Tripathi, 1959).

‘anthropomorphize’ it.⁶⁹ The subjectified and homogenised state thus becomes a notional ‘person,’ who is said to ‘take decisions, to communicate, to undertake responsibilities, to act.’⁷⁰ Thus spelt out, this understanding of the state, which academics call the ‘monist’ conception, seems far fetched. Yet it is exactly the image appealed to in any claim that an action has been taken neither by the ‘American people’ nor the ‘government’ but instead by ‘the US.’

Governments are often complex and sprawling entities, comprised of executive, judicial and legislative branches, local and national elements, and multiple bureaucracies, each with competing interests, capacities and influences. But as long as ultimate authority resides somewhere, this complexity does not negate its unity; it is therefore not difficult to attribute personhood to the state-as-apparatus. This conception of the state resonates with that painted by the early-twentieth century jurist Westel Woodbury Willoughby, who equated the sovereign state with a government, possessing legal rights and obligations distinguished from those of the individuals. The attribution of sovereignty, which gave the state jurisdiction over its territory, constituted it as ‘an essential unity,’ a ‘person in the legal sense of the word.’⁷¹

However, a cursory awareness of the array of interests and ideas contained within modern societies, from democracies to autocracies, renders this conception more problematic for the state as a political community. As its members protest in the street, a state’s foreign policies are still conceived of in unitary terms; the policies of the ‘UK’ and not simply the UK Government. Moreover, the state is often given a self, a body and even a gender, such that it acquires the quality of nonnegotiable

⁶⁹ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.195

⁷⁰ Alan James, ‘The Practice of Sovereign Statehood in Contemporary International Society,’ *Political Studies*, 47:3 (1999), p.459.

⁷¹ See Westel Woodbury Willoughby, ‘The Juristic Conception of the State,’ *American Political Science Review* 12:2 (1918), pp.194-7; also Willoughby, *An Examination of the Nature of the State* (New York, 1896).

wholeness, a bounded organic entity akin to the human body. It is even commonly attributed with a diachronic identity, the quality of sameness over time that is generally thought to hold for individual human beings. The contradiction between the domestic diversity integral to the very concept of 'politics' and the homogenous, unified state often found within international political discourse represents a conceptual puzzle at the heart of political theory.⁷²

Monism as Illusion

One explanation for the monist conception of the state as a political community is that it is a normal function of language to simplify the world by attributing agency to complex associations. After all, we talk about all sorts of associations - football teams, schools, parliaments - as single actors and even as people with feelings and intentions, but we are 'really' referring to individuals and groups of individuals within them. In fact, says Daniel Dennett, the intentional stance (the explanation of action in terms of the internal processes of the actor) is a problematic oversimplification of human agency, let alone that of other entities.⁷³ Some have therefore argued from the 'nominalist' position, that the state is merely a convenient and shared 'fiction' embedded in language practices, in David Singer's words, a 'comfortable resting place.'⁷⁴ Ironically, this suggests that the discipline of International Relations 'does not believe its main unit of analysis exists.'⁷⁵

⁷² See Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1982).

⁷³ Daniel Dennett, 'Intentional Systems,' *Brainstorms; Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology* (Brighton, Harvester, 1981).

⁷⁴ David Singer, 'The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations,' in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba (eds.), *The International System: Theoretical Essays* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961), pp.72-4.

⁷⁵ Colin Wight, 'State Agency: Social Action Without Human Activity?' *Review of International Studies*, 30:2 (2004), p.270.

However, language practices arise at certain historical moments for certain reasons. For example, Mike Emmison has argued that the term ‘economy’ rose to the fore during the twentieth century. Whereas previously, economic activity was simply part of social life, around 1930 the ‘economy’ assumed a substantive form. The work of John Maynard Keynes suggested a level of economic analysis above that of individual exchanges, something more abstract and separable from everyday social activity. Increases in governmental involvement in economic affairs gave rise to the idea of a ‘national’ economy. After 1945, the ‘economy’ was increasingly anthropomorphic, regarded as an active entity with needs of its own, which could go ‘off the rails’ or needed ‘priming.’ From the 1970s, it was even construed biologically, as the ‘disease’ of inflation and the notion of ‘ailing’ currencies entered discourse.⁷⁶ In other words, the attribution of agency to a concept has a particular context that is worthy of exploration.

That the conception of the state as a person is not merely an accident of language is also indicated by the continued controversy over this image. Alexander Wendt’s recent ‘scientific realist’ claim is that the state does refer to something real and irreducible to its components, to which ‘anthropomorphic qualities like desires, beliefs and intentionality’ can be attributed.⁷⁷ In essence, the state possesses a physiology of its own because it is ‘internally self-regulating,’ constituted by internal social structures that combine a collective ‘idea’ of the state with rules that institutionalise and authorise collective action.⁷⁸ ‘Germany,’ for example, has an identity produced through ‘the agency and discourse of those who call themselves Germans.’ Because of this ‘self-organising quality,’ states ‘resist denials or

⁷⁶ Mike Emmison, ‘The Economy; its Emergence in Media Discourse’ in H. Davies and P. Walton (eds.), *Language, Image, Media* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1983).

⁷⁷ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.197.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, pp.243-4.

misrepresentations of their existence' and can be seen as homeostatic actors existing prior to the states system.⁷⁹ Wendt's defence suggests that this image matters, because it sustains a way of making sense of world politics, through reference to holistic actors.

The Indivisibility of Sovereignty

The notion that the state is a unified actor is in fact a very old one, dating back to Bodin's understanding of sovereignty as 'it selfe a thing indivisible.'⁸⁰ The classic theoretical basis for this indivisibility is stated in Hobbes' social contract, involving the entirety of the commonwealth. Through this contract, the political community, a nebulous mass of individuals, became represented by one person, an 'artificial person':

A multitude of men are made one person when they are by one man, or one person, represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that multitude in particular. For it is the unity of the representer, not the unity of the represented, that maketh the person one. And it is the representer that beareth the person, and but one person: and unity cannot otherwise be understood in multitude.⁸¹

Thus, Hobbes, who frequently used the organic language of the human body to depict the state, regarded it as a concept dependent on representation.

Like Hobbes, Rousseau conceived of the state as a person. However, unlike Hobbes, its indivisibility was not dependent upon representation; it was instead a feature of the social whole. Rousseau claimed that sovereignty was indivisible because the general will alone could direct the forces of the State and 'either the will

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, pp.73-4, 238.

⁸⁰ Jean Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonweal*, ed. Kenneth D. Mcrae (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1962 [1576, trans. 1606]), p.185.

⁸¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch.XVI.

is general or it is not.’⁸² He argued that when the conditions existed for the actualisation of the general will: ‘the body politic, taken individually, may be considered as an organised, living body, resembling that of man.’⁸³ However, the sovereignty and unity pertained to the political community and not the government, which was its mere minister, and thus by definition provisional. Government, he claimed was ‘an intermediate body’ between individual subjects and the sovereign state, ‘so that they might conform to one another.’⁸⁴

A similar vision was offered by Otto Gierke, a late-nineteenth century German historian and philosopher of law. Gierke claimed Hobbes had shown that the language of the contract could generate a sovereignty that was single. But he did this via the concept of artificial personality, which Gierke found inadequate, depending as it did on the person of the sovereign which was simply a mask for ‘mere, naked power.’⁸⁵ He believed that Rousseau’s ‘person’ was also artificial, founded on an arrangement among unitary individuals. For Gierke, real group personality depended upon starting from the whole. He distinguished the idea of unity-in-plurality, where unity is dependent upon an arrangement between parts, and plurality-in-unity, where the unity itself was prior, and to some extent a determinant of the individuality of the group’s members. The latter conception of the state was dependent upon a shared end external to the whole, which was provided by God in medieval thought but might also be fulfilled by the nation-state.⁸⁶

⁸² Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, II, 2, p.58.

⁸³ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Discourse on Political Economy; and, The Social Contract*, trans. Christopher Betts (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), p.289.

⁸⁴ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, III, 1, p.83.

⁸⁵ Otto Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500-1800*, trans. Ernest Barker (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1950), p.61.

⁸⁶ See David Runciman, ‘The Concept of the State,’ in Quentin Skinner and Bo Strath (eds.), *States and Citizens: History, Theory, Prospects* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), ch.3.

In a more recent analysis, Michael Oakeshott has argued that the state's 'personality' depends not on questions of representation but on its purpose. Oakeshott claims that the Hobbesian Commonwealth is an example of a 'societas,' a formal 'partnership' or 'enterprise' association, within which individuals pursue their own ends and are united only by agreement as to the rules of this pursuit. This civil association is contained within many writings on the state, from Hobbes and Bodin, to Kant, Tocqueville and the American Declaration of Independence. The 'universitas,' in contrast, is a more substantive association of individuals with a collective purpose. It is only by embodying this collective purpose that the state becomes a singular and purposive entity capable of acting in its own right and hence possessed of personality.⁸⁷ Such a vision is associated with Francis Bacon and Comte de St Simon, but is also the idea reflected in the doctrines of nationalism, communism and national socialism.

The variety of different conceptions of the state as a unity is itself a point of interest. On the one hand, the state appears as a unity to the extent that it embodies a collective ideal, and thus incorporates the 'people.' Yet, organicism is not only attached to 'people power' but is also identified with the conservative idea that social entities are highly delicate. Burke argued, for example, that by opening up the state concept to the political complexity of the masses, the French Revolution destroyed 'the balances and counterpoises which serve to fix the state, and to give it a steady direction' and melted down 'the whole in to one incongruous, ill-connected mass.'⁸⁸ Linked to this, Edward Keene has argued that the very notion of state sovereignty, as an indivisible and inviolable concept, was actually invented in the aftermath of the

⁸⁷ Michael Oakeshott, 'On the Character of the Modern European State,' in Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975), p.199.

⁸⁸ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, cited in Fidler and Welsh (eds.), *Empire and Community*, p.31.

revolution, precisely to *delegitimise* Napoleonic expansion. In other words, there is no intrinsic linkage between popular sovereignty and organicism.⁸⁹

Indeed, common to many theories of the unitary state is an unnerving proximity to the danger of totalitarianism. In concrete historical cases where the state has most closely resembled a person rather than a mere association, the reality was often that it was controlled by one group that transcended all others, as in Germany after 1933. David Runciman has drawn an analogy between the concept of the state and the concept of money, which embodies a finely balanced relationship between the paper it is printed on and the gold it literally represents. Under conditions of extreme inflation, the paper becomes meaningless and the equation crumbles, while with extreme stagflation, it is the gold that loses any meaning. Likewise, when the state is identified with government, the people are exposed as powerless, and when it is identified purely with the people, it tends to collapse into an incoherent mass.⁹⁰ Finding a conception of the state's personality that avoids these extremes is an ongoing philosophical challenge.

For this reason, the notion of the state as a person has been challenged through the centuries. Hugo Grotius, for example, did not rule out the possibility that sovereignty was indivisible. But he also presented a series of possible exceptions that essentially nullified the idea. For instance, a ruler might hold all of the prerogatives of sovereignty but remain 'responsible' to the people. Power might be divided between a monarch and a senate. Or there may be circumstances under which the authority of a sovereign can be resisted.⁹¹ In the nineteenth century, Henry Sumner Maine developed a theory of 'historical jurisprudence' that echoed Bodin's

⁸⁹ Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.16.

⁹⁰ Runciman, 'The Concept of the State,' p.31.

⁹¹ Hugo Grotius, *De Iure Belli ac Pacis Libris Tres (The Rights of War and Peace)*, ed. Richard Tuck (Indianapolis, Liberty, 2005 [1625]).

seventeenth century critics. Responding to Austin's conception of the state, he claimed that the division of sovereignty, if theoretically problematic, worked perfectly well in practice.⁹²

In the twentieth century, Hersch Lauterpacht argued that sovereignty is a 'delegated bundle of rights' derived from a higher source (the international legal order) and is therefore divisible and modifiable.⁹³ Meanwhile, 'pluralists' such as Harold Laski, an English political scientist, argued that the indivisibility of the state was an excessive claim, because the state was only one of many associations to which individuals might belong (including unions, religious groups and civic associations).⁹⁴ After the First World War, pluralism waned, but was replaced by Marxism, depicting the state as the expression of class relations within a society. However, none of these arguments has fully succeeded in undermining the monist image as a linguistic tool.⁹⁵

The State over Time

One interesting and largely unexplored aspect of the monist state, is that, like a person, it can be attributed with an identity over time. In fact, there are two possible models for the diachronic identity of the state. In Willoughby's juristic model, the state's identity ceases if a new incumbent of the state apparatus takes control by 'unconstitutional' means. This 'formal' model conceives of the identity of the state as the identity of its rights and obligations, such that it ceases to exist once authority is no longer exercised. In contrast, the 'material' approach emphasises the socio-

⁹² Henry Sumner Maine, 'Sovereignty,' *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (New York, H. Holt, 1875), lecture XII.

⁹³ Lauterpacht, *Recognition in International Law*.

⁹⁴ See Harold J. Laski, *Authority in the Modern State* (New Haven, Yale Univ Press, 1919); Harold J. Laski, *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1921), p.240.

⁹⁵ 'Pluralism' has at least two meanings relevant to this thesis. Here, it refers to an understanding of the state as composed of multiple actors (and therefore not itself a singular actor). Elsewhere, it refers to an understanding of the international system as composed of multiple states with different value-systems.

historical and political elements of statehood. Socio-historical ‘people’ within the state constitute its international identity, so the state’s identity is more continuous.⁹⁶

This latter model is a feature of most modern political and legal thought, in contrast to the Middle Ages, during which each monarch’s reign was considered separately and was unfettered by previous treaty commitments. After 1815, the rule that a state’s personality was undisturbed by changes in government became firmly established.⁹⁷ However, the label ‘material’ for this idea is rather confusing. The term probably derives from the ‘material’ continuity of the land and population as opposed to the legal continuity of authority. However, there is a clear ‘ideational’ component to the idea that a present-day political community is the ‘same’ as another in the past, composed of different individuals under a different system of rule.

Political theory has made strikingly little attempt to explore this aspect of statehood. A cursory analysis suggests that territory is an important factor in the diachronic identity of the state. Individuals are born and die, governments rise and fall, but some conception of the state’s territory, its identification with a ‘place’ is reasonably constant. More than territory, however, the perception of the state as a unit through time also depends on some relationship between people across time. As Burke argued, the state is a partnership amongst the living, the dead, and those still to be born.⁹⁸ The idea of the state as a ‘nation’ offers a stronger conception of this link, albeit one Burke would have disliked, and may account for the fact that in the twentieth century, some states have continued to exist in the eyes of others, even when their territory has been completely occupied and their governments dismantled.

⁹⁶ See Krystyna Marek, *Identity and Continuity of States in Public International Law* (Geneva, Librairie E. Droz, 1954).

⁹⁷ Peterson, *Recognition of Governments* (1997), p.12.

⁹⁸ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003 [1790]).

Understandings of Representation

Finally, the conception of the state as a single actor depends not only on a broad political theory about the identity of government and governed, but also on a specific understanding that *actions* undertaken by governments can be considered those of the 'state' as a whole. To understand the monist image therefore requires an analysis of the concept of representation, which Hanna Pitkin defines as 'the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact.'⁹⁹ For the state to act, the government must 'make present' the broader political community in its actions.

To conceptualise the possible forms this representation may take, Kenneth Waltz's reading of Rousseau provides a useful starting point. In this reading, the unity of the state depends on one of two factors; the suppression of internal dissent by governmental power or a more voluntary acquiescence of people based on their loyalty to the state and conviction that 'in the long run it is to their advantage to go along with the national decision.' Waltz adds that:

The less good the state, by Rousseau's standards, the more important the first consideration, and in the ultimate case the unity of the state is simply the naked power of the de facto sovereign. On the other hand, the better the state, or, we can now add, the more nationalistic, the more the second consideration is sufficient; and in the ultimate case the agreement of the citizens with the government's formulation of foreign policy is complete. In either case, the state appears to other states as a unit.'¹⁰⁰

In other words, the appearance of unity depends on either the existence of sheer power that obscures the political community or the forces of nationalism or patriotism that enable the government to claim to embody this community.

⁹⁹ Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (University of California Press, Berkeley 1967), pp.8-9.

¹⁰⁰ Kenneth Waltz, *Man The State and War* (London and New York, Columbia University Press, 1969 [1959]), p.178

The notion that representation can occur through sheer power rests uncomfortably against modern day conceptions of the state and the ‘representative’ process. Pitkin for example is sceptical of the view that *any* government could represent the ‘nation,’ that representation occurs simply by dint of having power or authority over one’s subjects. Yet, she admits that at the international level, ‘[t]he government acts, and we say that the nation has acted.’¹⁰¹ Hence, when a despotic government imposes a domestic law, it is not generally seen as representative of its citizens, but when the same government signs an international treaty, this is potentially a representative act. The paradox is summed up by Brad Roth’s acknowledgment that although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that ‘the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government,’ what counts as an articulation of that will is generally considered a matter within the domestic jurisdiction.¹⁰²

Hobbe’s social contract again provides one way to interpret this form of representation. For Hobbes, every government is essentially ‘representative.’ Since, through the contract, subjects have authorised their rulers, anything done by the sovereign can be taken to be (indirectly) done by citizens.¹⁰³ In this model, the representativeness of the state revolves around the idea of a historical relationship between the community and governing apparatus, through which the community gave its consent to be ruled. Communities are thus seen as responsible for their governments because they reap the benefits of the protections government affords, even when these are outweighed by the cruelties. We see a government as a ‘product’ of its society.

¹⁰¹ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, p.228.

¹⁰² See Roth, *Governmental Illegitimacy*, p.27.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, ch 2.

The Hobbesian form of representation is one form of what Pitkin calls ‘acting for’ representation, involving an institutional arrangement that initiates representation by authorising representatives. A more advanced model of this type is democratic representation, that adds mechanisms to hold representatives to account, enabling representation to be terminated. In modern liberal democracies, we authorise representatives through parliamentary elections and keep them in check through constitutional checks and balances.¹⁰⁴ In the older model of direct democracy, citizens made direct decisions about what course of action to take, as well as decisions that authorise an individual or group to carry out these actions. In a democratic state, government is technically accountable to the will of the people.

Yet the democratic model is actually fairly weak when applied to the international level. The fact that the liberal democratic system enables different groups and interests to be heard domestically is precisely what renders problematic its representative adequacy on the international plane. Democratic representation ‘makes present’ the interest of the majority rather than the whole, a ‘perennial tension’ summed up by Jens Bartelson:

To say that a state is externally sovereign is in the context of international political theory another way of saying that it is a unity, whose indivisibility hinges on the presence of a monopoly of legitimate violence, and which thus ideally speaks with one voice to its neighbours. To say that a state is internally democratic is in the context of classical political thought another way of saying that it is a divisible manifold, in which a plurality of voices should be listened to.¹⁰⁵

That democratic representation is not a necessary basis for the monist model of the state, is also attested by the common conceptualisation of non-democratic states in the monist image.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, chs.2-3.

¹⁰⁵ Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, p.29.

Another possibility is found in Pitkin's second type of 'acting for' representation. Here, a representative is a person who undertakes actions that are substantively *for* the represented. The emphasis is on the activity of representation rather than the institutions that structure it. In the 'delegate' model, the representative is bound by instructions from the represented and therefore acts on the basis of an explicitly articulated interest. In the 'trustee' model, he or she can exercise independent judgement as to how to best promote their interests. The rationale is that the representative may have superior expertise than those he represents, on the paths of action that will benefit them.¹⁰⁶

Like the Hobbesian model, this idea of representation is much more capable of masking diversity than the democratic one, since it does not reveal societal differences. Without the institutional component, the relationship between government and governed is less individualised and allows for a different kind of interest to emerge, what is often called the 'national interest.' The national interest is what Pitkin calls an 'unattached interest,' like 'world peace' or 'agriculture.' It has an objective, fixed and discoverable reality independent of any of the individuals it might affect, akin to the Rousseauan notion of the 'general will.' Since delegates or trustees can promote the interests of disembodied groups (as opposed concrete majorities), they are capable of representing the 'national interest.'

This type of representation is not antithetical to liberal democracy, since in democratic states, governments can be the democratic voice of a majority and separately, the trustee or delegate of the 'national interest.' Many national constitutions even demand that *all* representatives serving in the representative bodies

¹⁰⁶ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, ch.3.

of government serve the ‘nation’ over and above their constituents.¹⁰⁷ Alternatively, Burke understood parliamentary democracy not as a process by which populations substantively impacted the running of government, but as a means of selecting a natural elite capable of exercising the necessary reason for government and arriving at a conception of the ‘national’ good. As he declared to the electors of Bristol, ‘Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole – where not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole.’¹⁰⁸

In the various forms of ‘acting for’ representation discussed above, the interests of individuals or society are represented. Arguably, this is a fairly weak mode of ‘making present’ people ‘not present literally or in fact’ since interests are only one component of what constitutes them; the government acts for, not as, the political community. In Pitkin’s second basic mode of representation, it is not the interests of the represented that are paramount but their ‘identity’ since the representative does not ‘act’ for, but ‘stands’ for, those absent.

In ‘descriptive’ representation, the person or group is made ‘present’ by resemblance with the representative, as in a mirror, a map, or a picture. Representatives ‘mirror’ the features of the represented in terms of gender, class, race, ethnicity, or other features judged to be socially important. Domestically, governments may attempt this by assigning quotas of legislative seats to women or particular minority groups, but they usually struggle to reflect the true diversity of society. By contrast, governing elites may ‘represent’ a society at the international level by embodying certain national stereotypes. British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s accent, dress and skin colour, for example, help him to ‘stand for’ the UK, especially

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p.216

¹⁰⁸ Edmund Burke, ‘Speech to the Electors of Bristol,’ 3 November 1774, in Burke, *Select Works of Edmund Burke*, ed. E.J. Payne, IV (Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 1999).

to the extent that outsiders lack knowledge of the complexity of British society. This understanding of representation therefore relies upon a notion of the political community as an identity community, a 'nation' that can be essentialised.¹⁰⁹

In the second sub-type, 'symbolic' representation, the process occurs not via direct resemblance but via symbols. The use of a particular object as a symbol is never arbitrary, but the link is rarely that of actual resemblance. The symbolism of a national flag for example, is rooted in the attitudes and beliefs of people; it evokes feelings and attitudes appropriate to the referent (in this case the state) without resembling any physical thing. Likewise, heads of state symbolise their state-as-community regardless of regime type. Adolf Hitler moulded his own image to symbolise the national identity and values of Germany while he was Fuhrer. Likewise, the US President stands for the authority and unity of the entire 'nation.' Such symbolism operates domestically but also internationally to the extent that outsiders understand it. For example, the head of state's symbolic representative role is strongly in play when foreign guests are received.¹¹⁰

This spectrum of modes of 'representation' provides a useful typology. Governments can be taken to 'act for' their communities either because of institutional mechanisms or because they define and promote the 'national' interest. They can also descriptively or symbolically 'stand for' their community.' This analysis of how governments can act with their societies 'in tow' affords an additional means of understanding the monist image of the state, supplementing more abstract conceptions of the state as a unit through time and space.

¹⁰⁹ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*, ch.4.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, ch.5.

The State in World Politics

The final way in which this thesis explores the concept of the state is by situating it within 'world politics.' Understanding the state at this level is of course a core aim of International Relations as a discipline. Yet, as Martin Wight famously argued, international theory is impoverished compared to political theory. Hence, understandings of the state tend to be embedded assumptions more than explicitly lauded theoretical positions. Investigating images of the state in the international environment necessitates an element of extrapolation from the work of International Relations scholars.¹¹¹

Most theoretical conceptions of the international realm start from Wight's three traditions of 'realism,' 'rationalism' and 'revolutionism.'¹¹² However, many crucial questions about world politics are bypassed using this approach. Hence, the spectrum of understandings below is organised around questions rather than approaches. First, the state is contextualised against other forms of political community relevant to world politics. Then, several questions about states and their relationships are posited: whether they operate in an autonomous realm; the role of structure versus other determinants of behaviour; the nature of states' social relationships; and the degree to which states' relationships can be abstracted. Finally, this chapter assesses differing approaches to a question that runs through most debates in International Relations: how far the state, at both the legal and political level, enjoys autonomy.

¹¹¹ See Wight, 'Why is there no International Theory?'

¹¹² See Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, eds. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1991).

The Spectrum of Political Communities

As discussed above, the state does not have a monopoly of political community; it acts alongside other forms that operate within and across state borders. At the transnational level, some such communities are tied to a certain region or language, such as the Arab world or the Kurds. Others are global, such as the Islamic religion, the Anglo-Saxon 'race,' or the women's movement. Even global corporations, to the extent that they have political interests and impact, can be thought of as political communities. In the era of 'globalisation,' defined by the ease and rapidity of flows of information, goods and people across state borders, it is argued that the state is under challenge as the predominant form of political community.¹¹³

The ultimate alternative form of political community is that of humankind, embodied in Bull's conception of a 'world society' in which individuals, and not sovereignty, are the font of legitimacy.¹¹⁴ Within political theory, this idea forms the core of the cosmopolitan tradition, which became an explicit doctrine during the eighteenth century. According to Immanuel Kant, all human beings are members of a single moral community. Like citizens of a republic, they share freedom, equality and independence and subject themselves to the law. However, Kant's vision for realising this community was weak, involving a 'league of nations.'¹¹⁵ Far more radical was another eighteenth century cosmopolitan Anarcharsis Cloots, who believed that the logic of the social contract should apply world-wide and argued for the establishment of a single world state subsuming all human beings.¹¹⁶ The eighteenth century also saw the emergence of an economic form of cosmopolitan theory, centred on the ideas

¹¹³ See for example Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹¹⁴ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp.269-70.

¹¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, 'Perpetual Peace' (1795), *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1983).

¹¹⁶ Anacharsis Cloots, 'La République Universelle' (1793), *Oeuvres* (München: Kraus Reprint, 1980).

of Adam Smith. He claimed the abolition of all tariffs on trade would benefit everyone economically and mitigate against war, causing states to diminish in stature as they were no longer required to regulate the national economy and defence.¹¹⁷

An Autonomous Realm

To the extent that states are the pre-eminent form of political community within world politics, understandings of the relationships between them are largely dominated by the concept of sovereignty. For International Relations, the major theoretical utility of sovereignty is the crystallisation of the international as an 'autonomous realm.'¹¹⁸ Since sovereignty denotes non-overlapping sites of supreme and exclusive authority, the space between states is not subject to any authority and relationships between states are thus characterised by 'anarchy,' the adjunct of sovereignty. By sealing the state within a strict boundary between 'inside' and 'outside,' sovereignty itself produces the antithesis of the 'domestic' and 'international' that constitutes the foundation of International Relations.¹¹⁹

Against this, some have argued that this structural treatment is out of touch with empirical reality at the international level. In the early-twentieth century, 'pluralists' challenged the external implications of sovereignty, arguing that the juristic relations between sovereign legal persons failed to incorporate the variety of relationships in the international realm. The external ramifications of absolute sovereignty are incompatible with the realities of international law in which

¹¹⁷ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1976 [1776]).

¹¹⁸ See Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York and London, McGraw-Hill, 1979); Rodney Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1990).

¹¹⁹ R. B. J. Walker, *Inside / Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.62.

limitations are placed upon its exercise.¹²⁰ More recently, Eli Lauterpacht has drawn the same conclusion, that notions of 'sovereignty' and 'anarchy' are negated by the very existence of customary international law. Sovereignty, he claims, is 'largely a myth' that ends where 'international obligations' begin.¹²¹ There is something in the space between states that structuralism fails to account for.

Within International Relations, a spin on this argument accepts anarchy as a structural feature of the international realm but denies that structure has any necessary implications. The most infamous statement of this comes from Alexander Wendt's claim that anarchy is partly 'what states make of it.'¹²² In fact, Wendt's claims are themselves indicative of the dominance of anarchy as a defining trope of contemporary International Relations, what Buzan and Little call its 'anarchophilia.'¹²³

Pessimism and Levels of Analysis

The structural force of anarchy is often used to corroborate a pessimistic vision of the potential of international life. Realists start from the Hobbesian claim that social life is only possible to the extent that men stand in awe of a common power. Because states are in a 'state of nature' (not a term Hobbes actually used) they are also in a state of war. The archetypal modern statement of this position is Kenneth Waltz' *Theory of International Politics*, both a seminal text and the most common object of criticism within International Relations. Starting from a structural analysis of the international system, Waltz argues that states are driven to self-seeking behaviour because they

¹²⁰ See James W. Garner, 'Limitations on National Sovereignty in International Relations,' *American Political Science Review* 19:1 (1925).

¹²¹ Eli Lauterpacht, 'Sovereignty - Myth or Reality?' *International Affairs*, 73:1 (1997), p.149.

¹²² Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It,' pp.391-425.

¹²³ Barry Buzan and Richard Little, 'The Idea of the International System,' *International Political Science Review* 15:3 (1994).

seek survival in conditions defined by the lack of overarching authority. The structure of anarchy dictates that they strategise purely on the basis of their interests, ‘balancing’ against threats but forming no lasting attachments.¹²⁴

However, there are two different ways of disrupting this analogy to the state of nature. The first accepts that the Hobbesian state of nature precludes social life at the domestic level, but argues that the international realm is dominated by different dynamics. For example, Bull notes that states, unlike human beings in the state of nature, are not entirely consumed by the task of providing security against one another. As composite entities, they are not as vulnerable and rarely extinguished completely by one single violent act.¹²⁵ In fact, even Hobbes saw the international realm differently to that of the domestic. Noting that sovereigns are ‘in continual jealousies and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another,’ he nevertheless maintained that ‘because they uphold thereby the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men.’ In contrast to domestic life, the possibility of war at the international level did not consume the lives of all men, nor make such lives ‘nasty, brutish, and short.’¹²⁶

The second argument suggests that there is no necessary link between the state of nature and the absence of social relationships. Indeed, some claim the ‘state of nature’ never precluded society even at the domestic level. A more positive conception of the human state of nature is the Lockean one, a ‘society’ without government.¹²⁷ Likewise, in the international realm, society is not precluded by the absence of authority; the absence of world government does not negate the possibility

¹²⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

¹²⁵ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp.46-51.

¹²⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch.XIII.

¹²⁷ Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*.

of industry, trade, agriculture, navigation or even understandings of right and wrong at the international level. Similarly, several scholars from different periods, notably Kant and Herder, made no necessary link between the absence of an overarching authority and conflict, suggesting in fact that diversity was a force for progress, moving humanity forward.¹²⁸

Many scholars thus accept the structural 'state of nature' but disagree with its negative consequences (in this sense Wendt's claim about anarchy was far from radical). The epitome of the 'English school,' Bull claimed the anarchical realm was in fact intrinsically orderly, because states by definition had common interests in the preservation of the states system and in establishing rules and institutions of coexistence and cooperation, his 'international society.'¹²⁹ From a different vantage point, 'neo-liberals,' in an adaptation of Waltz' arguments, suggest that cooperation for mutual benefit *is* possible even in an anarchical realm. States are not simply concerned with their relative position but with absolute gains afforded by such cooperation.¹³⁰

A different approach starts with the existence of war but argues it is not necessarily the result of 'structure.' This position is obscured by the prevalent depiction of International Relations in terms of a grand antithesis between realism and 'liberalism' or 'idealism.' Historically, 'liberal' scholars have differed to the extent that they accept structure as a defining element of world politics. Likewise, the term 'realism' was coined to make the case for seeing human nature, not anarchy, in a

¹²⁸ See Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*.

¹²⁹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp.9-16.

¹³⁰ See David Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1993).

‘realistic’ way. Morgenthau, for example, did not regard structure as the determining factor but instead ‘objective laws that have their roots in human nature.’¹³¹

Another possible determinant of the relationships between states is neither structure nor human nature but in between these, the nature of particular states. From a specific branch of liberalism with links to Kant, comes the idea that democracies do not tend to fight each other.¹³² The literature varies in the emphasis placed on different factors, such as the perception of ‘sameness’ between democracies; the constraints placed on leaders by the accountability built into democratic systems; the link between democracy and the rule of law; and the inherent peacefulness of the common man. It all suggests, however, that regime type is fundamental in world politics.

Likewise, many historians have thought of the ideology of nationalism, and the nationalistic regimes to which it gives rise, as vital determinants of war. The first half of the twentieth century, defined by the two global conflicts of the world’s history, is commonly described as the era of nationalism. As discussed, International Relations pays surprisingly little attention to nationalism as a force behind war. But some have argued that nationalism is prior to the very notion of ‘structure.’ Bartelson, for example, claims that the very separation of the domestic and international is based on a conception of political reality divided into ‘ethically opposed domains.’¹³³

Hierarchy and International Society

A further source of variation in understandings of world politics relates to the nature of ‘international society.’ The concept of ‘international society’ (or especially recently

¹³¹ Hans Joachim Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations; The Struggle for Power and Peace*, revised by Kenneth Thompson (New York and London, McGraw–Hill, 1993 [1949]), p.4.

¹³² Doyle, ‘Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs.’

¹³³ Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, p.241.

‘community’) reflects Bull’s understanding that states share certain values and ideas, and features regularly in contemporary discourse and in academic study. Yet it is deeply underspecified, as Terry Nardin and David Mapel describe it, ‘an abstraction that lies at some distance from the gritty particulars of international history.’¹³⁴

It is worth noting that the idea of a single ‘international society’ or ‘international system’ is not an intrinsic feature of world politics. David Gillard has argued, for example, that at the end of the eighteenth century, Eurasia contained four systems or societies of states: the European, Islamic, Indian and Chinese.¹³⁵ The Asian systems were all effectively shattered during the nineteenth century and then reabsorbed within a single ‘international’ one. The universality associated with these terms today is highly contingent.

In fact, the concept of international society was historically exclusionary rather than universal. The ‘international society’ that is most often the focus of study is that which took root in European Christendom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, comprising only Christian peoples and rulers. Grotius, writing in the seventeenth century, believed that the whole of humankind was bound by natural law, but also depicted an inner circle of Christians bound by the laws of Christ.¹³⁶ Statehood did not necessarily entitle membership of this exclusive association.

In the nineteenth century, the common ties of Christian civilisation gave way to a looser form of exclusivity, centred on the notion of civilisation, or what Gong calls the ‘standard of civilisation.’ This set of criteria for admission to international society, stimulated by the rise of non-European powers such as the US and Japan, involved basic ideas of human rights, efficiency, diplomacy and the rule of law. This

¹³⁴ David R. Mapel and Terry Nardin, ‘Introduction,’ Mapel and Nardin (eds.) *International Society; Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998), p.3.

¹³⁵ David Gillard, ‘British and Russian Relations with Asian Governments in the Nineteenth Century,’ in Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*.

¹³⁶ Grotius, *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*.

understanding of international society opened membership to a greater variety of states, but it remained an essentially club-like network, with clear insiders and outsiders. Legal scholars Lassa Oppenheim and Henry Wheaton, for example, were both adamant that statehood and membership were distinct categories and that only ‘civilised’ states could join.¹³⁷

The historical shift is relevant to a second categorisation of international societies, in terms of ‘pluralism’ versus ‘solidarism.’ The Christian and European society of Grotius’ time was a ‘society’ in the strongest sense of the term. It shared a common religion, values and history that were seen as intrinsic bonds. The society that emerged from its expansion in the twentieth centuries was in contrast, bound in a far looser sense. Paradoxically, its ultimate shared value was the value of difference, a shared commitment to sovereignty as a concept that allowed for the self-government of political communities with different values and ideals.¹³⁸ This is Bull’s ‘pluralist’ international society, primarily geared to the preservation of the states system upon which most of its members depend.¹³⁹ Pluralism here is used in a different sense to that of the ‘pluralists’ described above, referring not to the multiple actors within the state but to diversity in the international realm.¹⁴⁰

A third way of understanding different variants of international society is in terms of the concepts of hierarchy and equality. Important to contemporary international thought is the principle of sovereign equality, first elucidated by Swiss jurist Emerich de Vattel in the eighteenth century. In marked contrast to the political realities of his time, he argued that ‘[a] dwarf is as much of a man as a giant; a small

¹³⁷ See discussion in Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of Civilisation in International Society*, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1984).

¹³⁸ See Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*.

¹³⁹ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp.9-16.

¹⁴⁰ For an explanation of the two definitions of ‘pluralism,’ see footnote 95, chapter one.

republic is no less a sovereign state than a powerful kingdom.’¹⁴¹ Today, the same ideal is embodied in the notion of sovereign equality at the heart of the UN Charter. In contrast, much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were characterised by varying degrees of formal status, as states intermingled with self-governing dominions, protectorates, mandated and trust territories, dependencies and colonies. Under the system of ‘capitulations,’ entities resembling independent ‘states’ (Japan, China) were forced to submit to economic arrangements that privileged Western interests. Meanwhile, powerful states habitually intervened in the affairs of weaker states, even dividing up their territories amongst themselves.

Even today, as sovereign equality has become a fundamental norm within ‘international society,’ it contrasts starkly against the practical inequalities of international life, especially in what is often described as a ‘unipolar’ world. Inequality and hierarchy are far more obvious forces in the relationships between states than equality, and some argue are exacerbated by the nature of the contemporary world order.¹⁴² Moreover, states may be ranked conceptually, not only in terms of differences in their political, economic, military and technological weight, but also by their adherence to certain norms and rules, and their age and status in the international realm. Inequality can even be seen as an important element of the fabric of international society. Bull, for example, sees the role of the ‘great powers’ as vital to international life.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Emerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations, or the Principles of Natural Law Applied to the Conduct and to the Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns* (New York, AMS Press, 1982 [French original 1758]).

¹⁴² Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods (eds.), *Inequality, Globalization and World Politics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁴³ Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, pp.200-201.

The International System and the Mechanistic Image

Another factor in understandings of the state in world politics concerns the extent to which its relationships can be depicted abstractly. The concept of the international system is often associated with the behaviourist turn in International Relations, which oriented the discipline towards the use of measurable or categorisable variables. The international system is conceptualised by 'rationalist' scholars in 'systematic' terms; a rationalistic machine, composed of easily identifiable parts with fixed relationships. The forces upon them are universal and simple: anarchy, self-interest, the prisoner's dilemma, fear. The behaviours exhibited within this system are predictable and form patterns that render them accessible to human understanding and analysis.

However, the notion of a states system is not only important to rationalist theory, but to International Relations as a whole, although some choose to attack it.¹⁴⁴ After all, to suggest that no 'system' exists, is to say that the international is a realm of chaos, placing severe limits on the scope for knowledge about it. Hence Bull, an 'anti-behaviouralist,' uses the concept, defined simply as a group of states that have influence over each other.¹⁴⁵ In this way, he shares with the behaviourists a particular set of understandings. The state must have a stable identity across time (if states faded in and out of existence, their relationships would become too chaotic). States must also be 'like' units, since as Rousseau argued, it is 'impossible' 'to fix a true relation between things of different natures.' Only if the units of the international realm are morphologically similar can their relationships be thought of in standardised ways.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ See Richard Ashley, 'Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique,' *Millennium*, 17:2 (1988), pp. 227-262.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.9-13.

¹⁴⁶ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, I, 4, pp.46-7.

A number of forces might corroborate this conception of states as 'like' units. First is the idea of sovereign equality; hierarchies among states are inimical to the idea of congruence. Second is the idea of national self-determination, since it leads to a perception of every state as a 'nation.' Eugene Kamenka has argued, for example, that political nationalism brought the histories of all territories into line, 'making them part of a universal history.'¹⁴⁷ Third is the monist image of the state, since it casts states as people-like singular actors. These non-transgressible actors are 'black boxes' that can easily be modelled.

A further question raised by the concept of the system relates to its stability. Within a 'neo-realist' vision of the international realm as a system of like units competing over the balance of power, structural change is barely countenanced; Waltz once claimed that the state, and with it the system of states are 'part of nature.'¹⁴⁸ Yet this seems anomalous against a dominant historical narrative that claims the international system 'began' with the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, when the overlapping jurisdictions of medieval Christendom dissolved. It is also drawn into question by claims that 'globalisation' is altering the very structure of world politics.

States and Constraints

Finally, a question linked to many of the issues addressed above is that of the state's freedom of manoeuvre in relation to the international realm. A debate that has divided international lawyers, for example, is that between positivism and naturalism as the basis for international law. For adherents of natural law, the state is born into a structure of rules that are dictated by reason. First elaborated by the ancient Greeks, natural law went through various iterations in Christian thought before Grotius, often

¹⁴⁷ Kamenka, 'Political Nationalism,' p.3.

¹⁴⁸ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, p.161.

depicted as the ‘father of international law,’ who argued that law would have validity even if there was no God.¹⁴⁹ But in the eighteenth century, Vattel’s emphasis on actual practice prepared the ground for a shift away from natural law.¹⁵⁰ Legal positivism, which rose to prominence during the nineteenth century, has tended to argue that law must be posited by a sovereign lawmaker and is composed of rules to which states have given explicit or tacit consent.¹⁵¹

Realism bears clear connections to the legal doctrine of positivism, since both depict the state existing in a realm that is non-purposive and by definition does not impose an external conception of the good. Yet ironically, realism subjects the state to a different form of external constraint: that of the ‘structure’ or ‘system’ that compels it to certain ‘self-help’ behaviours. Because the state is effectively ‘stuck’ in the anarchical realm, its potential to circumvent the dictates of anarchy is extremely limited. The state lies at the heart of international law and yet is merely a pawn within the international ‘system.’

A more fundamental question (and a debate internal to legal positivism) is whether the state itself has an existence independent of international law or society.¹⁵² That statehood is itself constituted by international law was espoused by early-twentieth century ‘pluralists’ such as Hugo Krabbe, who saw the international realm as prior to the domestic one.¹⁵³ It also resonates with the position of constitutive theory, for which the state exists ‘under a system of law which determines its rights

¹⁴⁹ Grotius, *De Iure Belli ac Pacis*.

¹⁵⁰ See Andrew Hurrell, ‘Vattel: Pluralism and its Limits,’ in Ian Clark and Iver B. Neumann, *Classical Theories of International Relations* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996).

¹⁵¹ See John Austin, *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995[1832]); Lassa Oppenheim, *International Law* (London, 1967 [1905]).

¹⁵² Terry Nardin, ‘Legal Positivism as a Theory of International Society,’ in Nardin and Mapel (eds.) *International Society*.

¹⁵³ Hugo Krabbe, *The Modern Idea of the State* (New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1922).

and duties under that law.’¹⁵⁴ More recently, it is linked to the argument of ‘constructivists,’ who depict statehood as the outcome of social relations throughout history amongst ‘state-like’ entities. In this context, Wendt’s position is an attempt at a ‘via media.’ He argues that like individual people, each of whom has a biological existence, it is the nature and behaviour of states that are constituted through social interaction, not their actual existence.

Conclusion

This chapter has not presented one argument about what the state is, but rather a spectrum of arguments present in the theoretical literature about statehood. It has explored a wide range of images of the state across the history of political and legal thought, to provide the concepts for the conclusions of other chapters.

The chapter has generated a range of research avenues along four axes. The first relates to the nature of the state as a political community, and assesses the possible forms this community can take. How is the ‘people’ understood? What different understandings exist for the ‘nation’?

The second relates to the process of state formation and the relationship between government and people that process can imply. What is the relationship between people and government contained in understandings of the state’s emergence? How is this process informed by historical assumptions about the nature of political organisation?

The third questions the state as a unitary actor or person, assessing the theoretical basis for the elision of government and people at both the abstract and

¹⁵⁴ Ti-Chiang Chen, *The International Law of Recognition; With Special References to Practice in Great Britain and the United States* (London, Stevens and Sons Ltd., 1951), p.3.

concrete levels. What is the conceptual basis for understanding the state as a single actor and a stable actor across time? How are the actions of governments taken to be those of states?

The fourth turns to the state in the international realm and assesses understandings of world politics and their relationships to understandings of the state. What other kinds of political communities are relevant? Is the international realm considered an autonomous one? What level of analysis is used to explain the nature of states' relationships? What is the nature and extent of states' social relationships in common understandings? To what extent can international politics be understood abstractly and mechanistically? How constrained is the state believed to be, politically and legally?

It is to the historical analysis of these questions that this thesis now turns.

Chapter Two: South America, 1808-1830

The revolution which has severed the colonies of Spanish America from European thralldom, and left them to form self-dependent Governments as members of the society of civilized nations, is among the most important events in modern history. As a general movement in human affairs it is perhaps no more than a development of principles first brought into action by the separation of these States from Great Britain, and by the practical illustration, given in the form and establishment of our Union, to the doctrine that voluntary agreement is the only legitimate source of authority among men, and that all just Government is a compact... involving the whole theory of Government on the emphatically American foundation of the sovereignty of the people.

John Quincy Adams, 1823¹

In the early-nineteenth century, following three centuries of colonial rule, independence swept across nearly all of Spanish and Portuguese America. In the short period between 1808 and 1826, the number of states increased exponentially as European rule was rejected across the continent.² Ironically, this was not a period in which the question of state recognition was regarded as important; it was implemented quietly by sending diplomatic agents, rather than with more grandiose gestures. Yet, as this chapter will demonstrate, the dialogue entered into during the state recognition process was indicative of an underlying conceptual tension of significant impact.

This chapter accords with the structure of the previous one, but is characterised by two dominant themes. First is the rise of the 'nation' as a predominantly American corporate conception of the state, which fashioned an

¹¹ John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, to Richard Anderson, appointed US Minister to Columbia, 27 May 1823, in *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive of the United States, 1789-1859* V (Washington, Gales and Seaton, 1832-61), p.888.

² Exceptions included Cuba and Puerto Rico.

understanding of the state as a political community separate from government and endowed with its own will and purpose. Second, and paradoxically, is the emptiness of the concept of the nation, which in the thinking of the time, did not necessarily exist prior to the state, was not engaged in a process of ‘national self-determination’ and was not associated with conflict or difference. Despite its vagueness, the nation was at the heart of a tension between British and American conceptions of the state which was emerging during the period of South American independence.

The New States of South America

Particularly in the former Spanish colonies, the independence process owed much to the build-up of internal political tensions within the region. During the eighteenth century, Spanish reforms in South America had weakened the wealth and power of many Creoles (Spaniards born in South America). Finding themselves occupying a middle ground between ruler and ruled, they began to seek more autonomy and freedom, especially in trade. They were stimulated, albeit in a limited fashion, by the less radical branches of Enlightenment thought emanating from Europe and North America, ideas that influenced the ‘heroes’ of South American independence, Generals Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín.³

However the progress of this internal momentum was primarily determined by external events. In 1795 a Spanish alliance with France pitted her against Britain, the dominant naval power. British power restricted communications between Spain and her colonies, forcing Spain to loosen her monopoly of trade and stimulating the

³ The following general works were consulted for the purpose of this historical summary: Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States; An Historical Interpretation* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1943); Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States; A History of US Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1998); Charles K. Webster (ed.), *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812-1830*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1938).

independence movement. In 1808, Napoleon turned on Spain, imprisoning the new King Ferdinand and creating a vacuum of legitimate authority throughout Spanish America. Hence, between 1808 and 1810, provincial juntas, some but not all Creole-led, emerged to rule the provinces, ostensibly in the name of the Spanish King. Many were put down by loyalist troops, but by 1810, the transition towards self-government was well established.

Attempts to control the provinces only stimulated this movement. The Cortes (Parliament) established in Cádiz in 1810 to represent both Spain and Spanish America, proclaimed the colonies to be full members of the kingdom, but denied the Creoles equal representation and refused to concede free trade. Upon his return to the throne, Ferdinand attempted to subjugate Spanish America once more. However, when troops in Cádiz revolted in 1820, Ferdinand was forced to agree to more liberal measures. By the mid-1820s, the independence movement had wrested effective control of most of Spanish America from Spanish hands.

In Brazil, there were some inclinations towards independence in the late-eighteenth century, but this impulse was much less powerful than in Spanish America. Portuguese rule was less direct, restrictive and monopolising compared to that of Spain, and the Creoles shared many interests with their rulers, particularly in the African slave trade controlled by Portugal. Hence, independence in Brazil was brought about primarily by external events.

In 1807, the Spanish King granted Napoleon a passage through Spanish territory, which sent the Portuguese Prince Regent John fleeing to Brazil. He subsequently transformed Brazil into the economic and administrative hub of his empire, removing restrictions on manufacturing and trade, and stimulating development and urbanisation. At the end of the Napoleonic wars, there were calls for

John to return to Lisbon, which he delayed until 1821, realising this move might produce a rupture between Portugal and the newly empowered Brazil. He left his son Dom Pedro as Prince Regent in Brazil, but in an attempt to subdue Brazil, the Portuguese Cortes demanded his return as well. Dom Pedro insisted on staying, and proclaimed Brazil's independence in 1822, becoming its first emperor. Independence was thus affected with far greater ease than elsewhere in the continent and the question of recognition by foreign states aroused less controversy.

The policies of the US and Britain regarding the South American states were intimately bound to issues of realpolitik and self-interest. Both occupied formal positions of neutrality throughout the period of contest between Spain and her dominions. In reality, the US, facing war with Spain's ally Britain, was supportive of the revolutionaries, though it preferred to take advantage of Spanish exhaustion than to fight Spain. While adopting a policy of neutrality, the US began to send agents and consuls to the region in 1810-11 and continued to provide financial and military support to the revolutionaries, outfitting privateers to the great irritation of Spanish Minister Luis de Onís.⁴

By the early 1820s, the US had two priorities in its relations with Spain and her dominions. The first was trade, a topic which American agents were instructed to research meticulously.⁵ When pirates, operating under the flags of the new South American governments, began to attack neutral and American shipping, the government insisted something be done. The consequent revocation of all communications with the privateers by the Buenos Ayres Government, in October 1821, helped remove significant objections to recognition.

⁴ Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States*.

⁵ See Caesar Rodney and John Graham, Special Commissioners of the US to South America, *The Reports on the Present State of the United Provinces of South America*, laid before Congress (New York and London, Frederick A. Praeger, 1969 [1819]), p.44.

The second priority was security, as US policy became increasingly focused upon its southern borders. Seeking expansion, it managed to exploit Spanish weakness to secure the Floridas under the Florida treaty of 1819. More significant was the development of a broader identification between security and the idea of an 'American' hemisphere of independent states separate from Europe, an idea formally instantiated in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. With public opinion also firmly behind the revolutionaries, the momentum for recognition had long been built up when it was finally enacted for Greater Columbia, in June 1822, by sending and receiving diplomatic staff. The recognition of several other states (Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Central America) followed by the end of 1824.

Meanwhile, the South American revolutions were monitored by an enthusiastic liberal movement which saw the Spanish Empire as oppressive and deleterious to the welfare of South American inhabitants. But policy was also shaped by scepticism as to whether independence would bring about the 'free institutions' of the American political tradition. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams explained that although he supported the general claim to independence, he had 'not yet seen and do not now see any prospect that they will establish free or liberal institutions of government' since '[a]rbitrary power' is firmly entrenched within their societies.⁶ In fact, it took a direct order from President James Monroe for Adams to recognise the newly independent states.⁷

Upon recognition Adams changed course and as reflected in the above quotation, argued that the new states had gained not simply sovereignty, but popular sovereignty, in accordance with an 'American' understanding of government. 'The European alliance of Emperors and Kings has assumed, as the foundation of human

⁶ Adams, record of conversation with Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives in John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs*, V (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott, 1874-77), pp.324-25.

⁷ Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, p.1.

society, the doctrine of unalienable *allegiance*,’ he claimed. ‘Our doctrine is founded upon the principle of unalienable *right*.’⁸

British interests and attitudes were more ambiguous, since Spain was its ally in the coalition against Napoleon. Britain agreed not to support the revolutionaries as part of an 1814 alliance with Spain and attempted a policy of mediation between Spain and the colonies. But the primary concern of Britain’s statesmen was trade and commerce. At first, they were content to see commercial interests satisfied within the imperial system; by 1810, Britain had acquired rights to trade in the entire region by the Portuguese King and the Spanish Cadiz Government. But even more than for the US, the development of piratical warfare necessitated recognition, since the regulation of trade depended upon the attribution of South American states with legal responsibility.

The British attachment to monarchical legitimacy also complicated its attitude to the region, since the doctrine outlawed the recognition of a seceding state and had caused a diplomatic dispute with France over its recognition of the US in 1778. Moreover, the force of republicanism was strongly identified with the violence and disorder of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. From 1807, Robert Castlereagh drew attention to the danger of Jacobin or democratic governments arising in the New World, and suggested sending European princes to govern the territories, abandoning the idea once Britain became an ally of Spain. After the defeat of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, with its spirit of reviving dynastic legitimism, Europe was dominated by anti-republican attitudes and the movement was seen as a failure.⁹

⁸ Adams to Anderson, 27 May 1823, *op. cit.*, p.888.

⁹ See Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822* (London, Phoenix, 2000 [1957]).

Anti-republicanism was also a crucial aspect of realpolitik for Britain, since the rebellious US was strongly identified with the doctrine. Castlereagh was deliberately secretive with Adams, in order to prevent American recognition of the new republics, before Britain could secure a general European recognition of the states as independent monarchies. But Britain's relationship with France ultimately played into the hands of the revolutionaries. George Canning, like Castlereagh, favoured monarchy to republicanism, but was also highly suspicious of French intentions, especially after it was discovered in 1820, that the French had been negotiating with Juan Martin de Pueyrredón at Buenos Ayres, to install a Bourbon prince as ruler of Argentina.

Meanwhile, the US recognition decision of 1822 posed challenges to British commercial dominance in a region in which she was generally against using force. With merchant interests firmly behind recognition, both Castlereagh and then Canning were driven towards that policy. The recognitions of Argentina, Mexico and Columbia were announced at the end of 1824 and affected via commercial treaties.

Nonetheless, Canning never quite abandoned his preference for monarchical rule and even in 1823 authorised his commissioners in Mexico to respond positively and immediately to any Mexican suggestions along monarchical lines, hoping to see a Spanish Infanta on the Mexican throne. Likewise, that Brazil remained a kingdom was a cause of much celebration for those that aspired to exclude the multitude from participation in government. In contrast, British liberals saw independence as a means to a more free system of government. In fact, even monarchists legitimised their designs for the region in terms of the rights of the 'people.' In the years of attempted mediation, for example, the British Prince Regent called on Spain for a 'more liberal system of government ... congenial to the feelings of the natives' and made British

support for Spain dependent on the abolition of the slave trade in South America, a general amnesty for insurgents, equal status for South Americans and Spanish subjects and ‘free commercial intercourse with all nations.’¹⁰ Even more than in the US, British discussion of recognition reflected a broader debate as to the optimum form of government.

Conceptualising the People

In tandem with this concern for more liberal government, a dominant concept within the discourse of state recognition was the ‘people.’ The normative theme of the sovereignty of ‘the people’ affected conceptualisations of the state in important ways. As will be seen later in this chapter, it produced a shift whereby the concept of the state expanded to incorporate both population and government. Yet, the rise of the ‘people’ or ‘nation’ masked a degree of ambiguity as to their precise meaning. As this section will argue, the perception of the people or nation was largely an ‘empty’ one.

The Emptiness of the People

Although the state’s sovereignty was increasingly nested in the ‘people,’ this was an ambiguous concept. In particular, the recognition of South American states was performed with scant attention to the precise borders of the state. In France, political borders were clarified well before the revolution; Richelieu followed French jurists in deploying the idea of a ‘natural frontier’ to demarcate France from its neighbours. During the revolution Danton developed the idea of a rigid national boundary, in

¹⁰ ‘Confidential memorandum,’ Foreign Office, 20 August 1817, doc. FO/72/204, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, II, doc. 515, p.356.

order to solidify the state as a unity.¹¹ But in South America, the external powers did not regard the population as something rigidly defined. Adams, for example, in conference with the Government of La Plata, suggested a treaty so that ‘some definite idea might be formed, not of the precise boundaries, but of the general extent of the country thus recognised.’¹² Related to this, the conception of the population as an identity community was not apparent within the discourse. To the extent that the new independence belonged to the people, there was barely any interest in what constituted that ‘people.’

Even Simón Bolívar did not have a deep or consistent view of the population as a defined political community that existed prior to the state itself. He believed that laws ‘ought to be suited to the People making them,’ and noted that the ‘Anglo and Spanish American ... nations’ suited distinct models of government.¹³ But he conceptualised the new states in terms of the political values of their constitutions and not the ‘identity’ of the people. In fact, he embraced the contingent and composite nature of the Venezuelan population, ‘neither European nor North American,’ but rather ‘a middle race betwixt the Aborigines and the Spaniards’:

It is impossible to point out with propriety to what human family we belong... All children of the same mother, our fathers various in origin and in blood, are strangers, and differ all in figure and form from each other.¹⁴

Bolívar saw this heterogeneity as a distinctive marker of South American states, for whereas Europeans liberated from the Roman Empire had formed ‘independent

¹¹ See Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, p.326.

¹² Adams to President James Monroe, for transmission to the US House of Representatives, 25 March 1818, detailing conferences between Mr Aguirre (La Plata) and the US Secretary of State, in William R. Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations I* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1925), p.59.

¹³ Simón Bolívar, *Speech of his Excellency General Bolívar at the Installation of the Congress of Venezuela, in Angostura, on the 15th day of February, 1819*, trans. James Hamilton (Caracas, Comandancia General del Ejército de Venezuela, 1974), p.7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.9.

Nation[s]' in line with their 'original principles,' South Americans did not 'retain vestiges of what we were in other times.'¹⁵

The heterogeneity of the new South American populations is a plausible explanation for this conceptual 'emptiness.' Many of these states were based on former colonial boundaries and their demographics were complicated by the mixture of indigenous and Spanish elements. In the seventeenth century, the Spanish played upon the rich indigenous culture to manipulate political reality, drawing upon the mythical lineages of the ancient Amerindian empires to cast the conquerors as ancient Toltec heroes returned. But by the late-eighteenth century, identity politics had become more complex, as Spanish rule was increasingly resented. For Spaniards born in South America ('criollos'), place of birth and not blood ties, became the point of unity with other South Americans.¹⁶

Resistance to the relevance of identity politics was also rooted in more widespread assumptions about the nature of political life. Attempts to depict the population in terms of a prior and deep-rooted national identity were not well-received in Britain, for example, where politicians were confused by the notion that identity could be relevant to the question of political representation. Chamberlain reported to Canning that in Congress, a discussion had taken place as to 'whether it would be advisable to choose a descendant of one of the Incas as King of the New State,' a specific candidate having been selected. He saw this discussion as 'curious' and probably 'a stalking horse to cover other plans.'¹⁷ A pamphlet by a British author mocked imperial depictions of the connections between Spaniards and South Americans as 'ridiculous interpretations of silly prophecies':

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

¹⁶ See Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1998).

¹⁷ Henry Chamberlain to Viscount Castlereagh, Rio de Janeiro, 29 August 1816, FO 63/195 in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.63, p.178.

Will they at present find a Montezuma in the brave Interbide to offer them the crown of a defenceless people? in the victorious San Martin, an Inca weaker than the weakest of his women? in the gallant and patriotic O'Higgins, a Promaucian, who will enslave his own, and then aid an invader in subduing the country of his neighbours?¹⁸

In fact, the depictions of the South American populations as 'peoples' was consistent with the dominant thrusts of European political thought of the time. Of the two dominant conceptions of the 'nation' in the early-nineteenth century, it was the 'political' conception that dominated revolutionary South America as it did revolutionary France.¹⁹ As discussed above, it was *counter*-revolutionary thought that harked back to more historical or organic conceptions of change, as Burke and De Maistre both rejected the idea that peoples or states could be formed overnight and conformed to some abstract scheme. The reification of the 'people' that occurred with the advent of popular sovereignty did not imply a claim to prior ('ethnic') homogeneity.

The Emergence of the 'Nation'

This finding is corroborated by an analysis of the way in which the nation concept was used in the early-nineteenth century. Just as the French Revolution stimulated the emergence of the term within French political language, so the 'nation' also entered into English political language in a definite fashion. Prior to this, it had been used more vaguely to refer to the 'political nation' or aristocracy.²⁰ The advent of popular sovereignty transformed it into a synonym for the 'people.'

¹⁸ Anonymous, *Reflections on the State of the Late Spanish Americas and on the Expediency of the Recognition of their Independence by Great Britain* (London, J. Hatchard and Son, 1823), pp.24-5.

¹⁹ See Keitner, 'Revolutionizing International Society.'

²⁰ See Andrew Matthews, *Nationalism 1789-1945* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 2000).

However, it is important to note that, within English at least, this change was gradual. The term ‘nation’ probably entered the English language even before 1300.²¹ But by 1859, Wedgwood’s *Dictionary of English Etymology* still did not contain it (it did by 1872).²² In fact, in early-nineteenth century discourse, the explicit language of the ‘nation’ was broadly an American phenomenon, less prevalent within the discourse of British statesmen. American commentators frequently referred to European countries as the ‘great nations,’ the ‘civilized nations’ or the ‘ancient nations’ and South American ones as ‘new nations.’ Terms such as ‘national debt’ and ‘National Guard’ were coined in America in the late-eighteenth century.²³ British commentators concurred more occasionally.

Furthermore, the meaning of the ‘nation’ was nebulous and unstable in the early-nineteenth century. Johnson’s *English dictionary*, one of the first comprehensive dictionaries of the English language, contained shifting definitions across its various editions. The first (1755) and fourth (1773) editions described the nation in terms of culture and nature, as well as government and institutions: ‘a people distinguished from another people; generally by their language, origin or government,’ ‘a great number of families derived from the same blood, born in the same country, and living under the same government.’²⁴ In the nineteenth century, the meaning became even vaguer: ‘a distinct people, a country’ (1806), ‘a people distinguished from another people’ (1822).²⁵ The assumption that the nation’s distinctness was pre-political diminished with this vagueness, allowing for colonial understandings of community that stretched across oceans. As one British writer described, ‘Spanish Americans’ did

²¹ Robert K. Barnhart (ed.), *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology* (Edinburgh, Chambers, 1999).

²² Hensleigh Wedgwood, *A Dictionary of English Etymology*, 1st edition (London, 1859-65) and 2nd edition (London, 1872)

²³ Barnhart, *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology*.

²⁴ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755, 1773).

²⁵ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1806, 1822).

not ‘consider their European brethren, as a nation distinct from themselves’ despite the differences between them. They were instead one nation, comprising ‘European’ and ‘American’ Spain.²⁶

The concept of the nation as a natural or cultural community was not entirely absent in the early-nineteenth century. Europeans, more than their American equivalents, were often described as ‘nations’ and it was reasonably common to hear them discussed in terms of their ‘national’ character. Moreover, growing awareness of South America did spark a burgeoning interest in questions of identity in the region and an analysis of the alleged ‘national’ groups of the continent. The work of Professor Rafinesque, published in Philadelphia in 1836, and entitled *The American Nations* was emblematic. Describing ethnography as a ‘new science which undertakes to describe nations,’ Rafinesque explicitly described the impact of South American independence on modes of conceptualising societies:

Formerly, historians wrote chiefly chronicles of the empires, kingdoms and republics; which were often mere biographies of monarchs and chiefs, conquerors and tyrants. We begin now to think more of *mankind and the nations*. I shall follow this principle, and trace at last a *national history* of America; this subject is so new, that we have not even yet a good history of mankind in Europe, much less in Asia and Africa.²⁷

For Rafinesque, this shift was indicative of a process of discovery, of a world of nations that had always existed, but was made more conspicuous by political developments:

The modern history of America since 1492 presents a multitude of events with regular dates: but the historians of these later times instead of dwelling upon the native nations, appear to notice them merely en passant! while relating at length the discoveries, conquests and wars of the European adventurers and colonists.

²⁶ William Walton, *An Exposé on the Dissensions of Spanish America* (London, 1814), pp.56-7, 93, 126.

²⁷ Constantine Samuel Rafinesque, *The American Nations, Or Outlines of a National History of the Ancient and Modern Nations of North and South America*, I (Philadelphia, 1836) pp.55, 14 (italics added).

It is not thus that we are to notice them; but as *equal nations*. Now that after four ages, these colonies are also become *independent nations*, and begin to nurse American feelings, we ought to feel for them, and reveal the truth. It is not a number nor dominion alone that constitute a people; but *a peculiar language, and peculiar manners*.²⁸

As well as language and manners, Rafinesque claimed that the elucidation of national groupings required close attention to the body, including ‘the shapes of bodies, skulls, faces and limbs; the complexions of the skin, hairs and eyes.’²⁹ His understanding of the nation was deeply rooted in blood and biology, a natural identity group prior to the state.

A further complication was that the nation was not only used to refer to the people. It was also used, especially in the US, as a synonym for the state as a political community and actor, reflecting the idea that the ‘people’ was sovereign. President Monroe claimed for example, that the provinces had so successfully thrown off Spanish rule that ‘it merits the most profound consideration whether their right to the rank of independent nations ... is not complete.’³⁰ Adams, writing to Monroe in 1818 following consultations with the La Plata Government, made a vague reference to the ‘state or nation to be recognised.’³¹ In this way, they shared the understanding of Vattel, who used ‘nation’ and ‘state’ interchangeably, defining both as ‘bodies politic, societies of men united together for the purpose of promoting their mutual safety and advantage by the joint effort of their combined strength.’³² Despite this ambiguity, even authors such as Rafinesque, devoted entirely to the concept of the nation, never deigned to define it.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, I, p.106 (italics added).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p.56.

³⁰ President Monroe, communication to the House of Representatives, Washington, 8 March 1822, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, pp.146-7.

³¹ Adams to Monroe, 25 March 1818, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, p.59.

³² Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, preliminaries.

Creating States

This set of meanings of the ‘people’ and ‘nation’ in turn shaped understandings of the formation of new states. Most importantly, because of the predominant ‘emptiness’ of the concepts of people and nation, the conceptual logic of national self-determination had reached only an embryonic stage. Instead of portraying new states as the outcome of a nation’s ‘self-determination,’ actors more commonly envisaged the nation and state to be formed together. The weakness of the ‘nation-state’ model left room for alternative understandings and prolonged the assumption, especially from British commentators, that external powers could control the formation of new political units.

The Consent of the People

Contrary to American beliefs, the ideas of ‘unalienable allegiance’ and ‘divine right’ were notably absent from British discourse in the early-nineteenth century.³³ As described above, even many opposed to republicanism desired that the new governments enjoy the consent of the ‘people.’ In the case of the disputed territory of Montevideo, for example, Chamberlain proposed the creation of an independent state with an imposed European monarch, justified not in terms of dynastic legitimacy but on the basis that the inhabitants so desired.³⁴ Reporting from Rio de Janeiro on the revolution in Brazil, Edward Thornton argued against recognition by claiming that the revolution had been ‘brought about by Portuguese agency alone,’ without Brazilian

³³ See Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State*; and Osiander’s assessment of the Congress of Vienna in *The States System of Europe*, ch.4.

³⁴ Henry Chamberlain to Viscount Castlereagh (secret), Rio de Janeiro, 22 August 1818, FO 63/212, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.72, p.192.

support; Brazilian soldiers had simply become caught up in the ‘contagion.’³⁵ Popular sovereignty therefore shaped a misleading sense of unanimity among the ‘people.’

However, the language used to depict the people was variable across the Atlantic divide. American statesman comfortably dealt in abstractions; the sovereignty of the ‘people’ a concept that required no elaboration. In contrast, the ‘people’ was not yet understood or used as an abstract category in Britain, perhaps reflecting the more muted attachment to the principle of popular sovereignty. Instead, British statesmen manipulated political reality in more concrete ways. Independence for Montevideo was the ‘wish of the *majority* of the inhabitants.’³⁶ The revolution in Brazil was or was not supported by the ‘*mass* of the inhabitants.’³⁷ The discourse referenced actual soldiers and townsfolk, real people, rather than the abstraction of the ‘people.’

A second important aspect of popular sovereignty in the early-nineteenth century was that this concept lacked the connotations of ‘national self-determination,’ which was unworkable without a strong sense of the people as a well-formed community prior to the state. Rafinesque did posit a more meaningful link between the state and identity, asserting that the US should allow the ‘natives’ of the continent ‘to form peculiar states and territories, preserving their languages and laws.’³⁸ But this tentative endorsement of the idea that ‘states’ were preceded by well-defined ‘nations’ was largely undeveloped and not mirrored by many others. Instead, many commentators advanced the assumption that the ‘people’ and government came into existence almost simultaneously. For example, the nation was sometimes deemed an intermediary condition through which statehood was acquired. The Committee

³⁵ Edward Thornton to Viscount Castlereagh, Rio de Janeiro, 14 March 1821, FO 63/237, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.86, p.208.

³⁶ Chamberlain to Castlereagh, 22 August 1818, *op cit.*

³⁷ Edward Thornton to Viscount Castlereagh, 14 March 1821, *op cit.*

³⁸ Rafinesque, *The American Nations* I, p.113.

reporting to the House of Representatives stated that recognition of the provinces as ‘sovereign and independent States’ could occur ‘when those provinces shall have attained the condition of nations’ by which was understood that the people were unified in favour of independence.³⁹ Likewise, an anonymous British commentator stated that ‘[w]hen a colony is capable of providing for itself, it becomes a nation, and acquires the right ... of changing its own form of government.’⁴⁰ In this image, the ‘people’ or ‘nation’ preceded statehood by only a fraction.

Bolívar reversed this conceptual connection between government and community, linking the attainment of ‘nationhood’ with the virtuousness of government. In his speech to the Venezuelan Congress in 1819, it was the formation of republican institutions that led to the creation of a political community and not the reverse, the installation of Congress ‘constituting the creation of a political body, and as may be said even the creation of a whole Community.’⁴¹ In stark contrast to the idea of a pre-existing national community, the community that defined Venezuela was created on the spot, portrayed as an ‘incipient People.’⁴² Simultaneously, Venezuela became an abstraction, ‘one Republic, one, and indivisible’ in which ‘we melt the whole People down into one mass.’⁴³ Likewise in Muñoz Tébar’s ‘Ideas on the Union of All America,’ thought to have been prepared at Bolívar’s request, and read to the new Venezuelan Congress in December 1813, the absence of meaningful community prior to the state’s formation was openly lauded. ‘The nation which your

³⁹ ‘Report submitted to House of Representatives,’ 10 December 1811, cited in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, p.13.

⁴⁰ Anonymous, *Reflections on the State of the Late Spanish Americas*, p.46.

⁴¹ Bolívar, *Speech of his Excellency*, p.3.

⁴² *Ibid*, p.5.

⁴³ *Ibid*, pp.19-22.

Excellency has just liberated did not exist a short time ago,' he claimed. 'You have caused it suddenly to appear.'⁴⁴

One reason for this stance may have been directly political. By portraying a people as an incipient community instead of one that had consciously sought independence, Bolívar avoided questions about political loyalty to the Spanish realm. In this way, he echoed Thomas Jefferson's subtle argument regarding the American revolution, which avoided the accusation of a 'rebellion' by claiming that Americans were the loyal subjects of King George, until his government effectively turned them into a separate state. They literally had no time to be disloyal 'rebels,' because they went from being British to American from one moment to the next, through no wish or fault of their own.⁴⁵

The weakness of national self-determination should also be seen in the context of an era in which conquest was still considered legitimate and the transfer of territory an integral tool for the balance of power. In the late-eighteenth century, Burke and Rousseau argued that it was wrong to transfer 'peoples' from master to master. Revolutionary thought also espoused the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of another state. However, France itself violated the principle of non-intervention from 1792. At Vienna, the rights of nations lacked currency, as dynastic empires and hereditary monarchies once again triumphed. Poland, for example, was to be occupied throughout the nineteenth century and by 1863 had been totally extinguished as a separate political unit. National self-determination could not thrive in an era of dynastic legitimacy and imperialism.

⁴⁴ Antonio Muñoz Tébar to Venezuelan Congress, Caracas, 31 December 1813 in Gerald.E. Fitzgerald (ed.), *The Political Thought of Bolívar; Selected Writings* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p.23.

⁴⁵ See J. S. McClelland, *A History of Western Political Thought* (London, Routledge, 1996), p.354.

The Flexibility of Arrangements

Unsurprisingly therefore, the 'nation-state' was not seen as the defining unit of world politics in the early-nineteenth century. Instead, large units were considered preferable and more orderly both for Europe and the 'new world.' For example, Chamberlain advocated a cautious British policy towards Portugal, since he was concerned that the destruction of the imperial government might result in a further division of the continent 'into a variety of small independent republican States, wretched in themselves and the cause of wretchedness amongst their neighbours.'⁴⁶ In an English editor's introduction to the reports of US Commissioners, it was argued that with developing intercourse and the spread of liberty, the provinces 'will then naturally tend to an indissoluble union under one consolidated [continental] legislature.'⁴⁷ Even in Parliament, the idea that the state might not be the optimum form of political organisation was seriously entertained. The Marquess of Lansdown spoke in continental terms of a region:

extending from somewhere about 37 degrees of north, to 41 degrees of southern latitudes equalling in length the whole continent of Africa, and exceeding I believe in breadth, the whole of the vast Russian empire... a country already inhabited by a population of twenty one millions of persons – a population composed, it is true, of different races, but that difference of race, proved to be not inconsistent with the most perfect harmony of interests and community of feeling.⁴⁸

Political freedom was not the exclusive domain of the nation-state.

The dominant assumption of the early-nineteenth century was that political arrangements were imminently flexible. Bolívar acknowledged that the absence of

⁴⁶ Henry Chamberlain to George Canning (secret), Rio de Janeiro, 15 May 1824, FO 63/277, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.107, p.240.

⁴⁷ 'Introduction' (anonymous editor), Rodney and Graham, *The Reports on the Present State of the United Provinces*, p.43.

⁴⁸ Henry Fitzmaurice Petty, 'Speech of the Marquess of Lansdown, delivered 15 March 1824, on a motion for: The Immediate Recognition of the Independence of the Late Spanish Colonies in South America by the British Government' (London, John Murray, 1824), p.6.

even a residual prior ‘national’ identity within Venezuela was problematic but was able to envision this ‘delicate edifice’ as a viable model because he perceived political community to be malleable.⁴⁹ He questioned whether ‘[w]hen mankind was in its infancy, steeped in uncertainty,’ it was ‘possible to foresee what system it would adopt for its preservation... Who could venture to say that a certain nation would be a republic or a monarchy; this nation great, that nation small’? In this light, Bolívar argued, ‘[e]very conjecture relative to America’s future’ was ‘pure speculation.’⁵⁰ Speaking for Bolívar, his colleague Tébar expressed this malleability in an argument for regional unity:

If Spain was able, from a distance of two thousand leagues, and with no large forces, to subject America, from New Mexico to the Straits of Magellan, to its harsh despotism, why cannot a lasting union be effected between New Granada and Venezuela? And further, why should not all South America be united under a single, central government.⁵¹

Imperialism had thus demonstrated that political boundaries could be drawn to meet contingent contemporary needs.

It was the problematic implication of this malleability, that territories were constantly subject to dispute, which necessitated the principle of *uti possidetis* in South America, where its modern form originates.⁵² Literally, ‘as you possess,’ it was a rule that belligerents were entitled to retain territory they had gained during a war. Although intended to secure the new authorities against any renewal of European colonisation, its subsidiary role, preventing boundary conflicts between successor states, soon became its primary function. The acceptance of former Spanish administrative lines as state boundaries was expressed in many early constitutions and

⁴⁹ Bolívar, *Speech of his Excellency*, pp.10-15.

⁵⁰ Simón Bolívar, ‘The Jamaica Letter,’ Kingston, 6 September 1815, in Fitzgerald (ed.), *The Political Thought of Bolívar*, p.33.

⁵¹ Tébar to Venezuelan Congress, in Fitzgerald (ed.), *The Political Thought of Bolívar*, p.24.

⁵² See Suzanne Lalonde, *Determining Boundaries in a Conflicted World: The Role of Uti Possidetis* (Montréal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

declarations of independence, as well as certain inter-American treaties.⁵³ The documents often failed to mention the principle explicitly, however, and the first decades of independence were characterised by continual disputes over territory.⁵⁴ The nineteenth century can thus be seen as a transition period, between a world of malleable and contingent political arrangements and one of more rigidly defined state boundaries.

The Influence of External Power

American and British politicians to some extent reacted against this notion that boundaries could be drawn according to contingent interests. They insisted that their recognition policies were primarily determined by the ‘facts,’ whether the new governments had vested effective control from the hands of the imperial powers, and sent commissioners to the region to determine these ‘facts.’ Canning for example, claimed that ‘the Recognition of such of the New States as have established, *de facto*, their separate political existence, cannot be much longer delayed.’⁵⁵ Likewise, Adams noted that if the Government of Buenos Ayres maintained its stability, ‘it cannot be long before they will demand that acknowledgement of right’ which could not ‘rightfully be refused.’⁵⁶ Moreover, the methods used to enact recognition – sending and receiving envoys in the American case, signing commercial treaties in the British – conveyed that these powers were recognising the fact of independence rather than attempting to create it.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp.29-30.

⁵⁴ See Malcolm N. Shaw, ‘Peoples, Territorialism and Boundaries,’ *European Journal of International Law*, 8:3 (1997), pp.478-507.

⁵⁵ George Canning to Sir William À Court, 30 January 1824, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, II, doc. 551, p.414.

⁵⁶ Adams, 20 April 1818, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, I, p.61.

Such a concern with effectiveness was partly pragmatic; recognition was a pointless diplomatic move if the new governments were so weak as to make likely an imminent loss of status due to a renewed imperial offensive or civil war. It was also diplomatically useful, enabling President Monroe, for example, to argue that the recognition of the new states, merely an acknowledgement of fact, could not be interpreted as a hostile act by Spain. However, the argument was also rooted in the normative context. Unsurprisingly, the ‘modern’ theory of state recognition, associated with Vattel and advocating effectiveness as the most important guideline, was established after the American Declaration of Independence. Effectiveness was therefore rooted in a new claim that European governments did not have authority over the formation of states elsewhere in the globe.

Perhaps for this reason, the rhetorical commitment of British politicians to ‘effectiveness’ was far from entrenched. Canning claimed that ‘[e]vents over which we had no control and in which the British Government had no participation decided in each instance that separation.’⁵⁷ Yet at other times, he espoused precisely the opposite assumption. ‘I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old,’ he boasted in the House of Commons, referring to France’s ambitions to subjugate Spain and its empire.⁵⁸ Elsewhere, he argued that the recognition of new states by foreign powers ‘may undoubtedly be given or withholden at its own good pleasure and be made contingent or conditional.’⁵⁹ Consistent with the legal ‘constitutive’ position, Canning did not believe that a state could come into existence

⁵⁷ George Canning to Sir Charles Stuart, 14 March 1825, FO 13/1, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.116, p.263.

⁵⁸ Canning, 12 December 1826, in Harold Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning 1822-1827; England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World* (London, G. Bells and Sons, 1925), p.154.

⁵⁹ George Canning to Sir William À Court, 30 November 1822, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, II, doc. 541, p.400.

independent of its recognition by others and did not feel bound by any rules in this process. Statehood was a condition shaped by the powerful.

The State as an Actor

The early-nineteenth century was an era in which the image of the sovereign state, and the terminology used to encapsulate it, encompassed a spectrum of different models, from the nebulous mass, to the abstract unity, from a government's dominion to the nation-state. But it was in the US that the monist image of the state, an aggregate of government and people, was most clearly articulated. Indeed, the emergence of the very concept of the 'state' during this period was indicative of the growing assumption that a political community could be seen to act as one.

The Corporate Image

The difference between British and American understandings of the state was particularly captured in their perceptions of the independence process. British discourse remained, on the whole, intricately connected with the realities of the individuals, factions and movements on the ground and was primarily focussed on the power of the governing authority. Canning stressed the importance of the 'internal state of each of the colonies claiming recognition' and eventually made clear his view that 'all Spanish or Portuguese occupation and power has been utterly extinguished and effaced.'⁶⁰

By contrast, American discourse rooted power with the 'provinces' or the 'nation' in question, rather than with any government. Describing the defeat and

⁶⁰ George Canning, 'Speech concerning the recognition of the independence of South America,' 15 June 1824, *The Speeches of the Right Hon. George Canning* (ed. Roger Therry) V (London, James Ridgeway, 1828); Canning to Stuart, 14 March 1825, *op cit.*

expulsion of the Spanish, President Monroe's message to the House of Representatives in March 1822, noted that 'all those *provinces* are not only in the full enjoyment of their independence, but, considering the state of the war and other circumstances, that there is not the most remote prospect of their being deprived of it.'⁶¹ Adams, reiterating the principles stated in the American Declaration of Independence, observed that the question of independence turned on two elements: the right 'of the Nation itself' and the fact of its 'successful execution.'⁶² Power was exercised by the 'nation' and not by rebels or governments.

American commentators also tended towards corporate language in discussing emergent and existing states, attributing each of the former colonies with a particular agency and individuality. British diplomats tended to describe how the provinces 'became' independent or claimed that independence was proclaimed by a person or group. The Americans, in contrast, discussed the same event in terms of the agency of the new states themselves, which declared themselves independent. 'Chili has *declared itself* independent,' 'Venezuela has also *declared itself* independent,' claimed President Monroe to the US Congress in 1818.⁶³ The '*Spanish provinces*' have established 'independent sovereignties,' stated a committee reporting to the House of Representatives.⁶⁴ 'Chili,' 'Venezuela,' or the 'province' existed as meaningful single units capable of action.

The corporate image was underscored by continual reference to the idea that sovereignty resided in the 'people,' understood in an abstract sense. President Monroe described how the revolution had extended throughout all of the dominions of Spain,

⁶¹ Monroe, 8 March 1822, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I, op cit.*, p.147.

⁶² Adams, Secretary of State, to Joaquin de Anduaga, Spanish Minister to the US, 6 April 1822, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I*, p.156.

⁶³ Monroe, Message to the US Congress, 16 November 1818, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I*, p.81.

⁶⁴ Report submitted to House of Representatives, 10 December 1811, cited in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I*, p.13.

‘placing thereby the complete sovereignty over the whole in the hands of the people.’⁶⁵ Within South America, constitutions declared that all power, legislative, judicial, and executive, resided in the ‘nation’ or ‘people.’⁶⁶ In contrast, British language tended to identify the state with the agency of a single person, notably monarchs such as the Spanish King. Alternatively, it referred to multiple actors. Thus Castlereagh described a rift between the units of ‘Spain’ and ‘Portugal’ but also claimed the ‘Court of Rio Janeiro’ must do justice to the rights of his ‘Catholic Majesty in South America.’⁶⁷ Canning expressed acceptance of constitutional change in Brazil and Portugal because the change ‘originat[ed] in the sovereign authority’ *and* was ‘received with satisfaction by the Portuguese nation.’⁶⁸ Compared to that of the US, British discourse was unstable and confused with regard to the location of sovereignty.

The American monist image of the state was also reflected in referrals to the state in the abstract, as distinct from references to the government or sovereign. In particular, American statesmen depicted their own government’s actions as those of the ‘United States’ or ‘US,’ and were more likely than their British counterparts to describe other states as ‘Great Britain,’ ‘Spain’ or ‘Chile’ (rather than the ‘governments’ of those countries). The US was an actor capable of thoughts, feelings and actions; American agents and special commissioners asked to convey the ‘sentiments and policy of the United States,’ its ‘sincerest good will.’⁶⁹ It was assumed also that others would display ‘dispositions’ and attitudes not only towards

⁶⁵ Monroe, 8 March 1822, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I*, *op cit.*, p.147.

⁶⁶ See ‘General Congress of the United Provinces Provisional Constitution, 1817,’ in Rodney and Graham, *The Reports on the Present State of the United Provinces*, p.83.

⁶⁷ Viscount Castlereagh to Henry Chamberlain, 19 December 1816, FO 63/195, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.179, p.180.

⁶⁸ George Canning to Lord Ponsonby, 27 November 1826, FO6/13, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.142, p.316.

⁶⁹ Robert Smith, Secretary of State, to Joel Robert Poinsett, appointed Special Agent of the United States to South America, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I*, pp.6-7.

US policy but towards the 'United States.'⁷⁰ This language does not appear striking and was not novel even in the early-nineteenth century. Yet interestingly, such sweeping encapsulations of complex relationships were heard less frequently on the other side of the Atlantic. British observers tended less to refer to the new states by singular labels, such as 'Chile.' Such terms were to them mere abstractions.

The monist image also coincided with the changing nature of agreements forged by treaties, which also affected British discourse. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was widespread practice for monarchs to be listed in treaties by their title rather than their name, as treaties signified a commitment broader than the personal obligation of the sovereign. The 1815 treaty forming the Holy Alliance reversed this trend, but the English Prince Regent rejected the invitation to accede, on the grounds that it was by then constitutionally impossible for a British ruler to enter into a treaty personally.⁷¹ By the 1830s, the subject of a treaty was not only the sovereign but often the abstract name of the state itself. Within one four year period, for example, the US concluded commercial treaties with both the 'Republic of Chili' and 'His Majesty the Emperor of Brazil.'⁷² The monist conception of the state was partially rooted in the perceived (republican) nature of government.

Clearly then, the tension between republicanism and monarchy involved, not only different understandings of the legitimate state, but also different understandings as to what the state comprised. Whereas the American vision leaned towards an understanding of the state as a political community, the British view tended to envision it as an apparatus of government. On neither side was this distinction

⁷⁰ Richard Rush, Secretary of State, to Caesar A. Rodney and John Graham, Special Commissioners of the US to South America, 18 July 1817, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, p.44.

⁷¹ Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, p.361.

⁷² 'Convention of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation,' concluded 16 May 1832 between 'The United States of America and the Republic of Chili'; 'Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation,' concluded 12 December 1828 between 'The United States of America and His Majesty the Emperor of Brazil.' Accessed on the website of the Avalon Project: www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/ (March 2003).

understood. In the American vision, sovereignty resided entirely in the ‘people,’ so the question of government fell out of the equation. In the British vision, the state could not yet be conceptualised as an abstract legal entity.⁷³ A legitimate government satisfied the rights and interests of its population, but that population was a possession, not a component, of the state.

The Burgeoning ‘State’

Interestingly, the nineteenth century was also to witness, especially in the US, the emergence of the term ‘state’ as a broad, singular concept, separate from its more specific association with government or the ruling class. Words such as ‘statecraft’ and ‘statesmanship’ had been filtering into the English language since the seventeenth century.⁷⁴ But they referred primarily to the state as a governing apparatus, reflected in Marx’s depiction of it as a product of class struggle. This narrow sense of the term ‘state’ had been in existence at least since the fourteenth century, though Quentin Skinner claims that the emergence of the word state or ‘etat,’ without reference to any specific agency within the polity, coincided with the modern theory of sovereignty as articulated by Hobbes and Bodin.⁷⁵ As the state shifted from the ‘ruler’ to the ‘realm,’ its existence was increasingly independent of whoever controlled it at a particular time. Hobbes referred to his ‘Leviathan’ as a ‘Commonwealth or State.’⁷⁶

However, the idea of the state as a corporate entity and political community, a ‘body of people occupying a defined territory and organised under a sovereign government,’ emerged more slowly and was still not predominant at the beginning of

⁷³ Crawford, in *The Creation of States in International Law*, claims the separation of ‘state’ and ‘government’ only occurred from the mid-nineteenth century.

⁷⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, at www.oed.com (January 2004). ‘Statecraft’ dates from 1642, ‘statesmanship’ from 1764.

⁷⁵ See Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought II* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp.287-90.

⁷⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, intro.

the nineteenth century. Indeed, John Gunnell argues that one of the first usages of the state as something separate from the ‘nation’ or ‘government’ was contained in the *Encyclopædia Americana*, edited by the German-American publicist Francis Lieber from 1829-33.⁷⁷ Here, Lieber described the state as ‘a body politic, an association of men for political ends,’ and not simply a government. Moreover, whilst he criticised despotic regimes, he explicitly separated the state from government; ‘the form of government, important as it is, merely a means of obtaining the great objects of the state’ such as good order and security.⁷⁸ Interestingly, Gunnell portrays Lieber (and those that followed him) as engaged in a nineteenth century quest to ‘find’ the ‘state’ behind the (increasingly intrusive) government, to give ‘substance’ to democracy.⁷⁹ It reflected a desire to see a moral community behind political arrangements, the lack of which Alexis de Tocqueville had deemed a concern for America’s future.⁸⁰

A similar shift is reflected in the burgeoning legal doctrine of positivism or voluntarism. Until the nineteenth century, natural law had provided the dominant framework for conceptions of the international legal regime, reflected in the work of seventeenth century German jurist Samuel von Pufendorf.⁸¹ But in the revolutionary era, legal positivism received a powerful boost from two contradictory sources. First, conservative thinkers such as the English jurist Jeremy Bentham embraced the idea of law as the positive will of the sovereign as a counter to the Enlightenment naturalism of the revolution.⁸² Second, the norms of popular sovereignty and the independence of peoples, by implying equality between peoples and freedom of action in the

⁷⁷ Gunnell, ‘In Search of the State,’ p.131.

⁷⁸ Francis Lieber (ed.), *Encyclopædia Americana; A Popular Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, History, Politics and Biography*, XI (Philadelphia, Carey and Lea, 1832).

⁷⁹ Gunnell, ‘In Search of the State,’ pp.155-6.

⁸⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (ed. J.P. Mayer, trans. G. Lawrence) (London, Fontana, 1994).

⁸¹ See Leonard Krieger, *The Politics of Discretion: Pufendorf and the Acceptance of Natural Law* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965).

⁸² See H.L.A. Hart, *Essays on Bentham; Studies in Jurisprudence and Political Theory* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982).

international realm, also suggested that international legal obligations should be based on the free will of the state. This strand of thought implied an understanding of the state as an actor capable of consent.⁸³

Disjunction between Government and People

In this light, it is interesting to note that the qualities of government at the heart of the monist image were not the 'free institutions' of democracy. The dominance of the 'United States' or 'US' notation conveyed a sense that the entire 'state' was embodied in any action undertaken by governments. The government was not depicted as an expression of the people's democratic 'will,' because the synergy between people and government was portrayed so absolutely as to remove any question of discord. Instead, the government was a symbol that 'stood for' the people, or a trustee that 'acted for' the good of the whole.

For this reason, American statesmen keenly perceived a rupture between the actions of governments and the wishes of the people, independent of whether the country in question was democratic. In 1819, Adams noted that although the British Government was neutral, 'leaning of inclination on the side of authority and Spain ... the national feeling of England has been strongly manifested on the side of the South Americans,' indicated by the participation of 'thousands of British subjects' in the revolutionary armies.⁸⁴ When the Spanish King refused to ratify a treaty signed by a minister the year before, Adams angrily argued that the document committed 'Spain' because the minister had claimed to 'maintain the interests and pretensions of

⁸³ See Nardin, 'Legal Positivism as a Theory of International Society.'

⁸⁴ Adams, Secretary of State to George W. Campbell, US Minister to Russia, Washington, 3 June 1819, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, p.107.

Spain.’⁸⁵ In contrast, the disjunction between sovereign and people presented less of a practical problem for British diplomats. It seemed normal to Canning, for example, that the Brazilian and Portuguese populations were ‘allied in kindred and connected by long habits of intercourse, however their two Governments may be at variance.’⁸⁶

The State in World Politics

The conceptualisation of the people and its relationship to government had significant ramifications for wider understandings of world politics in this era. Despite the existence of nations, the exclusivist implications of this concept were not yet strong, such that global and regional groupings of humankind were considered as important as national. But the concept of the nation as a corporate term for the state did fashion an important change, especially within American understandings of the international. In particular, the nation was a primary vehicle for challenging the hierarchical underpinnings of traditional ‘international society’ and for fashioning a new and more abstract understanding of the international realm.

The Irrelevance of Nationalism

The weakness of the ‘nation’ as a concrete community existing prior to the state created space for two alternative understandings of human community in early-nineteenth century discourse. The first was the global community of mankind that preoccupied even those who wrote about ‘nationhood.’ Rafinesque, described above as a scholar of the ‘nations’ of the world, was as concerned with sameness as he was

⁸⁵ Adams, Secretary of State to General Francisco Dionisio Vives, Spanish Minister to the US, Washington, 8 May 1820 in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence* I, p.117.

⁸⁶ George Canning to Henry Chamberlain, Gloucester Lodge, 22 December 1823, FO 63/257, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.101, p.231.

with difference and a large portion of his second volume was devoted to the linguistic and ancient historical connections between South American, European and Asian nations. Cataloguing these ‘astonishing analogies,’ he relied heavily on language and argued that the stories told by different cultures demonstrated the shared ancient history of mankind. For example, he demonstrated parallels between the histories of China and of Moses to argue for the shared origin of Chinese and Western identity. Through these links, Rafinesque proffered a world in which nationalist and universal influences were adjoined, one radically divided but fundamentally united.⁸⁷

This conception of the international realm can be seen in the context of the French Revolution, which is depicted as an instigator of ‘nationalism,’ yet also advanced the idea of a universal human society derived from abstract principles of reason.⁸⁸ Keitner, for example, has argued the idea of the nation produced a tension between the particular and universal within French thought, inserted into an international society founded upon the common bond of European Christendom.⁸⁹ It resonated also with Herder and other romantic thinkers who did not equate the nation as a cultural entity with a vision of the international realm that was dangerous and conflictual. Herder said very little about the politics of nationality, but placed value on diversity, proffering a rosy view of a Europe in which each nation could realise its unique ‘nature’ in harmony with the rest.⁹⁰

From a conservative standpoint, this conception also resonated with Burke’s notion of nationality. An embryonic idea of British ‘nationality’ loomed in Burke’s writings on India and Ireland for example. Yet his organic view of society was also a malleable one; he was aware of the potential and need to actively define nationalism

⁸⁷ Rafinesque, *The American Nations* II, pp.110, 225-240.

⁸⁸ See Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

⁸⁹ Keitner, ‘Revolutionizing International Society.’

⁹⁰ Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*.

in a particular direction. For example, he was critical of the exclusion of Irish Catholics within the British nationality; indeed critical of any form of exclusive nationalism, calling on the British audience to exercise moral imagination and extend their sympathies to Indians. He condemned a geographically divided idea of 'morality,' in a world he believed was governed by universal moral and political standards.⁹¹

In fact, there was little to suggest, in the early-nineteenth century, that the existence of 'nations' was inconsistent with the idea of a global community. First, the concept of nationalism was weak and had not yet forcibly entered the English language.⁹² 'Nationalist' awareness did not correspond to all the trappings of 'nationalism' as a mass political movement, which is more accurately located in the late-nineteenth century.⁹³ It was a middle class force, which many Enlightenment thinkers believed to be epiphenomenal.⁹⁴ Second, prior to 1848, demands for 'national unity' or 'national freedom' went hand in hand with demands for liberalisation and republican government, spurred by industrialisation, urbanisation and a growing middle class. This was a liberal version of nationalism distinct from its modern associations with separatism and xenophobia.⁹⁵ Marx and Engels were rare in envisaging that nationalism could be arrogant and exclusive; a realisation that became more apparent after the events of 1848-9.

⁹¹ See Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire; The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005), p.77, p.92.

⁹² Barnhart, *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology*.

⁹³ This distinction is drawn by Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1966 [1953]). On the history of nationalism, see Hughes, *Nationalism and Society*.

⁹⁴ See John Gray, *Berlin* (London, Fontana Press, 1995), ch.4.

⁹⁵ See Erica Lenore Benner, *Really Existing Nationalisms; A Post-Communist View from Marx and Engels* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1995), p.9.

South American-ness

The second form of community openly discussed in the discourse of the early-nineteenth century was regional in form. US commissioner Rodney described how in his experience, South Americans saw themselves in regional terms. He claimed that it was ‘offensive’ to them to be called Spanish and that ‘they prefer to be identified with the aborigines.’ ‘The appellation which they have assumed, and in which they take a pride, is that of South Americans.’⁹⁶

Moreover, it was common for indigenous conceptions of identity to revolve around the regional dimension. The Peruvian Juan Pablo Viscardo, for example, wrote letters to Pitt, attempting to gain support for South American independence. His most famous *Letter Addressed to the Spanish Americans*, written in 1792, affirmed the right of the colonies to independence from Spain, through an appeal to the historical and cultural separateness of the New and Old Worlds.⁹⁷ This letter was an attempt to promote an understanding of the Amerindian world with reference to the cultural norms, not of individual provinces, but of ‘South America’ as a whole.⁹⁸ In books too, the designation ‘South American’ had a far more cogent meaning than any local or state identity for the ‘patriots.’ Palacio Fajardo Manuel, author of *An Outline of the Revolution in Spanish America*, identified himself not by name, but as ‘a South American’ on the front cover.⁹⁹ Another such author, J. M. Antepara, opened his

⁹⁶ ‘Mr Rodney’s Report to the Secretary of State,’ in Rodney and Graham, *The Reports on the Present State of the United Provinces of South America*, pp.101-2.

⁹⁷ See John Lynch, ‘British Policy and Spanish America,’ *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 1:1 (May 1969), pp.1-30.

⁹⁸ This is not to deny the existence of more localised ideas about identity.

⁹⁹ Palacio Fajardo Manuel, *An Outline of the Revolution in Spanish America by a South American* (London, Longman, 1817).

account with '[a] native of South America, I arrived in England' with the objective to obtain a 'free, independent and beneficent government in South America.'¹⁰⁰

In his novel about the rule of the real-life Paraguayan dictator Francia, set in the 1820s and published in 1851, Clarence Shephard played with the balance between state and regional affiliations. Early in the story, the young Paraguayan Jago justified the harsh foreign policy of the dictator Francia on the basis that loyalty to the state and suspicion of foreigners were necessitated by the forces of fear and competition. 'If Paraguay is to enjoy peace,' and maintain its 'national independence,' he maintained, 'it must be a country exclusively confined within itself' since 'all the neighbouring states look with envy and disfavour on our good fortune and tranquillity.'¹⁰¹ Later, however he sees that the depiction of other states as 'foreign' is part of the problem, a 'narrow egoism' blamed for undermining 'our freedom.'¹⁰² In a twist to the tale, Jago's 'foreigner' friend Rodrigo, who is murdered on Francia's authority, turns out to be the dictator's son, an ironic commentary on the harsh national boundaries he had so carefully constructed.

Likewise, Western observers rarely depicted the peoples of the South American colonies or states in terms of their 'national' or localised identities. Those fighting for independence were never described as 'nationalists' but consistently 'patriots,' loyal to the cause of independence rather than the self-determination of a 'nation.' As the US prepared to recognise the independence of the new states, it was the category of 'South Americans,' not national categories, that emerged for the first time in their depiction of events. The language of Adams' speech reverberated with

¹⁰⁰ José María Antepara, *South American Emancipation; Documents Historical and Explanatory, Shewing the Designs which have been in Progress and the Exertions Made by General Miranda, for the Attainment of that Object during the Last Twenty-Five Years* (London, 1810), p.iii.

¹⁰¹ E. Clarence Shepard, *Francia, A Tale of the Revolution of Paraguay* (London, Richard Bentley, 1851), pp.54-6.

¹⁰² Shepard, *Francia*, p.188.

references to the rights of 'South America' and the 'South Americans.' More negatively, he saw the entire continent as ignorant, superstitious and inferior.¹⁰³

Even with the advent of independence, the new states were often portrayed as one grand people. One author, celebrating that with independence, 'seventeen millions of names are blotted from the roll of slavery, and numbered on the list of freemen and citizens,' understood South America as a single political force:

The different infant states have solemnly recognised each other's independence, as has also North America; consequently all late Spanish America, during the continuance of the struggle, will form but one vast body; and Spain must now subjugate seventeen millions, or resign every inch of her late continental possessions. Were the ministers of any people so base, so infamous ... now to afford its aid to Spain in the endeavour to subject any part of her late colonies, the attempt would unify all America, south of Canada to Cape Hope (probably not even excepting the Brasils); and ... the patriotic citizens of America would triumph.¹⁰⁴

The dominance of regional affiliation and identity was partly related to the power-political realities of early-nineteenth century South America, for it was only through the combined force of many provinces that Spain was beaten and her rule overturned. Many of the provinces were linked together on the military pathway of two sweeping movements; that of Simón Bolívar from the north and José de San Martín from the South. Bolívar believed that the realities of international politics required the states to form a whole and in the early days he often talked of 'union.'¹⁰⁵ Moreover, he proposed the extension of the balance of power throughout the whole world, with the Americas on one side and Europe (excluding Britain, the balancer) on the other.¹⁰⁶ 'The enemies of the American cause will tremble before so formidable a

¹⁰³ Schoultz, *Beneath the United States*, p.5.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous, *Reflections on the State of the Late Spanish Americas*, p.15, 46-7.

¹⁰⁵ However, he subsequently became more realistic about the evolution of distinct states with their attached loyalties.

¹⁰⁶ See Fitzgerald (ed.), *The Political Thought of Bolívar*.

power,' he claimed, 'which, united, will be able to resist them on every side.'¹⁰⁷ Bolívar subsequently became more accepting of the evolution of distinct states with their attached loyalties. Following his death, territories he had unified broke away from each other, and in the late-nineteenth century, the continent saw major wars break out between the newly independent states.¹⁰⁸

A continental-level understanding of agency and loyalty was also supported in the US, where the idea of a Western hemisphere was rooted in evolving perceptions of security. In the early years of American independence, Thomas Jefferson called for a formal demarcation to separate the two hemispheres across the Atlantic. By the 1820s, French, British and Spanish territorial ambitions had been stemmed in North America by the Louisiana Purchase (1803), the Peace of Ghent (1815) and the Florida treaty (1819). The removal of Spain and Portugal from South America indelibly fixed the idea of the Americas being a home for 'Americans,' an extension of a long-established distinction between the 'Old' and 'New' worlds. In 1818, Henry Clay, Speaker in the House of Representatives, appealed to the need to build a distinctly American political and economic system. His views found ultimate expression in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which identified the US with the independence of South American states and sealed the hemisphere from European interference.

In addition, at least from a British perspective, the depiction of South American loyalties and agency in regional terms was linked to a lack of knowledge about the area. One English editor pointed to the fact that within popular perceptions, South America 'is one undivided kingdom... No distinction is made between the

¹⁰⁷ Tébar to Venezuelan Congress, in Fitzgerald (ed.), *The Political Thought of Bolívar*, p.23.

¹⁰⁸ For example, the Republic of Greater Colombia divided into (modern-day) Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador in 1830. Major wars included the War of the Triple Alliance (Paraguay versus Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, 1864-1870) and the War of the Pacific (Chile versus Bolivia and Peru, 1879-1884).

different parts of that continent.’ This error derived from a lack of contact with the region:

It has arisen naturally from the little knowledge, which the world had any means of acquiring concerning the colonies of Spain. The court of Madrid kept its foreign possessions shrouded in darkness, so that no distant eye could trace their distinguishing features. Spanish America seemed to present one uniform aspect. The generality of men were habituated to conceive of it as one great kingdom, because, shut out from communication with it, their thoughts had never been accustomed to dwell upon the peculiarities of its different parts....¹⁰⁹

In explaining the misperception, this editor highlighted an important connection between social, political and cultural awareness of other human beings and their demarcation into distinct identity categories, in other words between knowledge and difference. Historians have long drawn this link, acknowledging that during the nineteenth century, growing awareness of what was foreign being also *different* played a strong role in consolidating European national identities.¹¹⁰ By contrast, in the early-nineteenth century world of limited information about the actual loyalties, identities and agents of South America, the idea of dividing the continent into nation-states was anathema.

Civilisation and International Order

Although human community was not thought of wholly along state lines, the concept of an ‘international society’ of states was of fundamental importance in the early-nineteenth century. As described above, the recognition of South American states occurred during a period when the normative and legal framework of international society was in transition, as positivism gradually supplanted natural law as the

¹⁰⁹ ‘Introduction’ (anonymous editor), in Rodney and Graham, *The Reports on the Present State of the United Provinces*, pp.13-14.

¹¹⁰ See Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing; Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London, Granta, 2000), pp.69-102, 139-170.

dominant legal philosophy.¹¹¹ In 1758, Vattel had published *The Law of Nations*, which was to be the most influential book on international law for the next century.¹¹² Vattel's depiction of the law of nations as an extension of a rationalistic natural law was characteristic of the transition towards a secularised law removed from the dominant international 'society' of European Christendom. Indeed, by supplying a justification of liberal revolution, he guided the framing of the US constitution that presented the first major challenge to this unity.¹¹³

The system that emerged from the wreckage of the Napoleonic wars represented a hybrid of past and present norms, rather than a radical break. For a while, religion still formed the backbone of international society; treaties continued to underline its Christian character even as ties with the non-European world increased. However, the cultural unity of international society was increasingly under challenge, especially due to the independence of new states that rejected Europe's mores. The Congresses of 1820-22 represented the final attempt to establish an international order on the basis of Christian-European communitarianism and the cultural underpinnings of dynastic solidarity.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the foundation of international law shifted from Christianity to the formal concept of 'civilisation' (albeit still underpinned by Christianity). This ill-defined concept involved a range of criteria, including the protection of human rights and property, governmental effectiveness, the rule of law at the domestic level, adherence to international law and systems of diplomacy, and conformity to 'civilised norms' such as anti-slavery.¹¹⁴ It was a normative change that altered the meaning of the international society states were

¹¹¹ See Stephen Hall, 'The Persistent Spectre: Natural Law, International Order and the Limits of Legal Positivism,' *European Journal of International Law*, 12:2 (April 2001), pp.269-307.

¹¹² Vattel, *The Law of Nations*.

¹¹³ See Hurrell, 'Vattel: Pluralism and its Limits.'

¹¹⁴ For a theoretical account, see Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*.

admitted to, no longer the ‘Christian-European family of nations,’ but instead ‘the group of civilised nations.’

For British commentators, the concept of civilisation was a deeply cultural artefact, reflecting the norms of European civilisation and rooted in ‘the mores of Christendom.’¹¹⁵ It maintained a degree of social, political and cultural homogeneity across sovereign boundaries that was seen, in accordance with Burke, as intrinsically orderly.¹¹⁶ Canning’s conditions for recognition included the consistency and stability of government and the abolition of the slave trade.¹¹⁷ He claimed recognition would bring the new states ‘within the pale of those rights and duties which *civilised* nations are bound mutually to respect and are entitled reciprocally to claim from each other,’ in other words within the ‘club’ of the established order.¹¹⁸ Although American commentators also lauded the concept of ‘civilisation,’ they attached a more literal meaning to it, a label for states that adhered to standards of decency rather than an indication of common culture. Indeed, said Adams, the South American colonies had formed ‘self-dependent Governments as members of the society of *civilized nations*’ precisely because they had been ‘severed’ from ‘European thralldom.’¹¹⁹

Families and Hierarchies

Intrinsic to their conception of international order, the British understanding of international society was also inflected with the concept of a ‘family’ of states in the early-nineteenth century. Empires were included in this familial mode of understanding; in the lead-up to independence and beyond, Spain’s provinces were considered its ‘sister kingdoms’ or more commonly, the ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’ of the

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.15.

¹¹⁶ See Fidler and Welsh (eds.), *Empire and Community*.

¹¹⁷ Temperley, *The Foreign Policy of Canning*.

¹¹⁸ Canning to Stuart, 14 March 1825, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁹ Adams to Anderson, 27 May 1823, *op. cit.* p.888.

‘mother country,’ against which Bolívar depicted Spain as an ‘unnatural step-mother.’¹²⁰ The implication of this language was that the units of world politics were like units of a family, unequal like mother and daughter. Their relationships were akin to the relations of kindreds, complex, hierarchical and governed by interpersonal dynamics.

The British conception of inter-state relations clashed with more abstract understandings that removed states from this network of personal intimacy. In American discourse, the units of the international were not conceived of as individual members of a family, but as ‘nations.’ Even the 1776 Declaration of Independence stated that the US resolved to ‘hold the British nation as they hold the rest of mankind – enemies in war; in peace, friends.’¹²¹ In the later words of Monroe, Adams and Secretary of State Richard Rush, events were ‘important to both nations,’ differences existed between two ‘nations,’ ‘nations’ enjoyed a ‘spirit of conciliation,’ were ‘at peace,’ but could also take sides in war.¹²² The nation was also the unit for conceptualising the international links forged by commerce and law, as in expressions such as ‘most favoured nation’ and the ‘peaceful commerce of all Nations.’¹²³

The contrast between these languages highlights two sets of differing assumptions. First, the British conception of international society was more hierarchical, in the same way that relationships between family members are hierarchical. The mixture of republican governments, parliaments, ruling houses and local princes involved in international affairs (not to mention states, colonies and

¹²⁰ See for example Sir Charles Stuart to Viscount Castlereagh, Paris, 26 March 1818, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, II, doc.347, p.100. See also Bolívar, ‘The Jamaica Letter,’ p.29.

¹²¹ See Declaration of Independence in James Brown Scott (ed.), *The Declaration of Independence; the Articles of Confederation; the Constitution of the United States* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1917).

¹²² James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Richard Rush, various correspondence dated 1816-18, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I*, pp.21-66.

¹²³ Adams, various correspondence dated 1816-18, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence I*, pp.54, 83-4.

dependencies) rendered this realm highly complex. In contrast, in the American view, all states were seen abstractly as 'nations' (and non-independent territories as nations-in-waiting) and were thus rendered identical in type. Second, the British view was more social, rooted in images of personal intimacy and the family, and not the abstract relationships of 'nations.' As Andreas Osiander has remarked, European statesmen were highly conscious of their common responsibility to maintain the stability of the European peace and the relationship was seen as social and inter-personal.¹²⁴

The New International 'System'

The implications of these differing assumptions shaped the conceptual framework within which international life was understood. For British commentators, who saw the international as a realm governed by social and personal ties among dissimilar units, the international realm did not appear starkly different to the domestic. They did not see themselves existing in a broader international 'system' of states in which states were like units and responded almost mechanically to exogenous pressures.

The idea of a states 'system,' an emerging modern conception of Europe as a collection of great powers and nation-states, linked by the forces of war, peace and the balance of power, did in fact emerge in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. However, it was connected to the principle of mutual respect amongst the dynastic rulers of Europe, united in the common interest of curtailing disorder by preventing popular participation in public affairs.¹²⁵ The characterisation of the 'states system' penned by German historian Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren, thus echoed

¹²⁴ See Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.186.

¹²⁵ See Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p.20.

the older notion of a *society* of states, in existence in legal thought since the sixteenth century.¹²⁶

In a translation of Heeren's history of the European political system, the English translator even appended a 'note to the reader,' pointing to and explaining the use of the word 'States-System' throughout the work. It was the 'only term by which he could adequately express the author's meaning,' he explained, even though 'perhaps not strictly English.'¹²⁷ Heeren's vision of international society, as he himself claimed, depended on a conception of the units as 'independent individuals, variously related to each other.' He was therefore confounded by the 'peculiar use of modern phrase' which had begun to 'designate such states by the name of mere machines.'¹²⁸ Abstract conceptualisations of states and the states system, akin to the 'billiard ball' model of much contemporary thought, were considered unfamiliar and dangerous.

The American vision of the international as composed of like units helped to crystallise it as a realm distinct from the domestic, involving 'nations' rather than individuals. It thus constituted the international realm in the image of Rousseau, who had claimed that war was 'not a relationship between one man and another, but a relationship between one State and another.'¹²⁹ The fundamental characterisation of such a system of like units was the 'state of nature' and John Quincy Adams drew explicitly upon Vattel's idea of this, noting that nations 'live together in a state of nature and acknowledge no superior upon earth.'¹³⁰ However, Adams' use of Vattel is itself emblematic of a moment of transition. Cited as a source of the states 'system'

¹²⁶ Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeren, *A Manual of the History of the Political System of Europe and its Colonies*, trans. David A. Talboys (Oxford, D. A. Talboys, 1834 [1809]).

¹²⁷ Translator, note 'To the reader,' *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Heeren, preface to 1809 edition, *ibid.*, p.viii.

¹²⁹ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, I, 4, pp.46-7.

¹³⁰ Adams to Vives, 8 May 1820, *op. cit.*, p.119.

idea, *The Law of Nations* was also the first book to adopt the term ‘société des nations’ and Vattel’s work was fraught with the tension between pluralism and unity at the international level.¹³¹

Meanwhile, it was in the US where an academic interest in the international realm was burgeoning. Francis Lieber for example, saw ‘international law’ as a facet of political science, though he did not yet conceive of ‘international relations’ or ‘international politics.’ Other nineteenth century scholars in the US expressed an interest in the internal and external dimensions of the state but did not depict them as separate realms, instead teaching them together within ‘political science’ faculties.¹³² An understanding of the international as a realm governed by distinct forces was therefore only embryonic. On both sides of the Atlantic, the term ‘international’ was not yet entrenched or well-developed; by 1806, it had not yet entered the English dictionary.¹³³ Although Jeremy Bentham had coined the term ‘international law’ in 1780, the ‘law of nations’ was preferred by most.¹³⁴

Prospects for International Solidarity

The alternative visions of a hierarchical society of states and a system of equals created fundamentally different visions of the future of the new South American states. By bringing these states within the ambit of the European ‘family,’ British statesmen expressed hope that the family was intact. Canning celebrated the possibility that Brazil, ruled by the Portuguese Prince Regent, retained ‘a connection

¹³¹ Hurrell, ‘Vattel: Pluralism and its Limits,’ p.239.

¹³² See Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*.

¹³³ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1806). In the 1874 edition, ‘international’ was defined as ‘Relating to the intercourse between different nations.’

¹³⁴ Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles and Morals of Legislation* (Buffalo, N.Y., Prometheus Books, 1988 [1780]).

with its European parent.’¹³⁵ And in a letter to Chamberlain, he outlined the future of Brazil in terms of its family ties:

With Brazil the fact of Independence is practically assured; the only remaining question is how best to conciliate the establishment and Recognition of that Independence with the feelings which ought to prevail between kindred nations (in spite of temporary disagreement), with the indelible sentiments of paternal and filial piety.¹³⁶

In 1823, a British plan was devised to bond Portugal and Brazil, by alternating the monarch’s domicile down the generations, aspiring to keep Brazil within the traditional international order through a network of familial relations.¹³⁷

The American understanding of international relations was less presumptuous as to the prospects for solidarity among states. Despite portraying the South American states as ‘neighbours,’ they conceived states in more isolated terms and conceptualised state relationships starting from a blank slate. Secretary of State Robert Smith asked his Special Agent to South America to ‘diffuse the impression that the United States cherish the sincerest good will towards the people of Spanish America as neighbors.’ Yet he talked of ‘common interests,’ in peace rather than the common bonds of family, and the need to ‘cultivate’ and ‘promote’ friendly intercourse’ rather than to foster pre-existing ties.¹³⁸ The international realm, in this American vision, was a pluralist one of cooperation between distinct entities in a ‘state of nature,’ not a solidarist one in which the bonds were already formed out of a common heritage.

The American standpoint was at least partly related to a distinctly American tradition of relative ‘isolationism’ and neutrality, rooted in the historical experience of

¹³⁵ Canning to Stuart, 14 March 1825, *op. cit.*

¹³⁶ George Canning to Henry Chamberlain (confidential), 12 January 1825, FO 13/7, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc. 112, p.254.

¹³⁷ George Canning to Henry Chamberlain (secret), 5 August 1823, FO 63/257, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.98, p.226.

¹³⁸ Smith to Poinsett, *op. cit.*, pp.6-7.

throwing off European rule. In his farewell address, George Washington, concerned with the vulnerability of republican government, argued that ‘the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake,’ to the ‘baneful foe’ that is ‘foreign influence.’ He warned against the danger of having ‘special relationships’ with other states, which would detract from US power:

nothing is more essential than that permanent inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is, in some degree, a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.¹³⁹

This discourse not only advocated detachment; it rejected any possibility of states being ‘friends,’ since Washington believed that permanent attachment to a particular state facilitated ‘the illusion of an *imaginary* common interest.’ He was echoed by Jefferson’s mantra of ‘peace, commerce, and honest friendship, with all nations, entangling alliances with none’ and later by Adams’ claim that the ‘first and paramount principle’ of relations with the new states was to be ‘disinterestedness.’¹⁴⁰

Thus, in the early-nineteenth century, subtle differences were opening up between the British and American visions of the international realm. The British view conceptualised international relations in the language of a family. Governed by interpersonal dynamics, the international realm lacked any rigid separation from the domestic. In contrast, the American vision resembled a ‘system’ of congruent machine-like units in a ‘state of nature.’ In the British view, states were culturally bound within a solidarist society, intricately connected to European civilisation.

¹³⁹ George Washington, ‘Farewell Address to the People of the United States,’ 17 September 1796, in *American State Papers* I, p.34.

¹⁴⁰ ‘Inaugural Address of President Thomas Jefferson,’ 4 March 1801, in *American State Papers*, 1, p.56; Message from President John Quincy Adams to the US House of Representatives Regarding Participation in the Congress of Panama, 15 March 1826, in *American State Papers*, V, p.882.

Within the American view, long-term social bonds were not only infeasible but dangerous. These conceptual changes were linked to normative forces surrounding the French Revolution, such as nationhood, popular sovereignty and positivism. But they were also linked to the specific historical experience of the US in throwing off European rule and the American interest in disconnecting international law and politics from the traditions of European sovereigns.

The developing American vision was lent empirical and normative support by the emergence of new states within the 'American hemisphere.' The new states courted Europe to petition for recognition, but they declined overly restrictive affiliations to that continent and placed emphasis on their new independence from it. In the Brazilian case, the emperor rejected the attempt to restrain the new state within the bounds of tradition, informing Chamberlain that he was neither the 'heir nor the successor to his father, nor party to any treaties made with Portugal, but the new sovereign of an entirely new State, wholly free and unconnected with any other in the world.'¹⁴¹ He defined Brazil's place in international affairs in terms of its detachment from other states within a system lacking any social element. His words were a reflection of power politics, but also of a cynical sense that the solidarity of the European system was fraudulent and that generalised war would soon erupt again.

The Constraining Force of Order

Running through these debates was a fundamentally British - American difference over the constraints placed on states. From a legal perspective, the more positivist American view regarded the consent of the state as paramount to international law. American commentators thus regarded international law as fragile, a necessary set of

¹⁴¹ Henry Chamberlain to Gorge Canning (secret) Rio de Janeiro, 22 February 1825, FO 13/8, in Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*, I, doc.114, p.258.

policies chosen by states as a means to circumvent the dangers of the international system. For Adams, international obligations to fulfil promises were ‘necessary’ precisely because of the ‘state of nature.’¹⁴² In contrast, for many British commentators, international rules were based on the social ties that formed the fabric of the international realm. Canning expressed this in terms of states being *bound* by law: ‘all Political Communities are responsible to other Political Communities for their conduct, that is, they are bound to perform the ordinary international duties,’ in the same way that individuals born into domestic society are bound to respect its rules.¹⁴³ States were legally constrained, because law was intricately embedded within international society.

Yet ironically the American vision also suggested a more constrained international environment for the state, in political terms. Eighteenth century conceptions of the balance of power, Matthew Anderson has argued, reflected a common feature of the period, a belief in the ability of man to control his own fate. The European balance of power was regarded as a state of affairs but also a moral imperative and hence a policy, controlled by states rather than by external forces that determined automatic behaviours.¹⁴⁴ In the nineteenth century, the American vision of international affairs diverged from this model, as its understanding of the international realm was one dark and threatening, against which states were forced to defend themselves.

¹⁴² Adams to Vives, 8 May 1820, *op. cit.*, p.119.

¹⁴³ Canning, note to Spanish government, 25 March 1825, *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 12 (London, James Ridgway, 1846), p.909.

¹⁴⁴ See Matthew Smith Anderson, ‘Eighteenth-Century Theories of the Balance of Power,’ in Rahnild Hatton and Matthew Smith Anderson (eds.), *Studies in Diplomatic History; Essays in Memory of David Bayne Horn* (Archon Books, 1970), p.198.

Conclusion

The early-nineteenth century, seen through the lens of South American independence, was an era of competing and shifting images of the state, recalling in some ways the normative framework of the French Revolution but also suggesting important differences. In accordance with revolutionary logic, early-nineteenth century discourse on the independence of South America vested sovereignty with the 'people.' Yet this empirical finding requires qualification; if the norm of popular sovereignty was at an advanced stage, its meaning for the image of the state was still unfolding.

First, the conceptualisation of the state as something broader than the institutions of power was more predominant in the American hemisphere than in Europe. American commentators tended to relate events in the corporate terminology of nations and peoples and conceived inter-state relationships as inter-national ones. British statesmen generally still connected states to their governments or sovereigns. Moreover, to the extent that they professed an interest in the 'people,' this was a concrete term, nested in the diversity of real people. The image of the state as a corporate, singular unit or abstraction was dominant in the US but conceptually difficult across the Atlantic, where understandings of the locus of sovereignty were more variable.

Second, the 'peoples' and 'nations' that were dominant in discussions of the state were not conceived of as natural or cultural communities. There was growing interest in the history and culture of the region, expressed in terms of its 'national groups.' But there was a surprising lack of interest in defining the 'people' of a particular state, or explaining its origin; its particular delineation was seen as

irrelevant or infinitely malleable. Whereas 'South American' emerged as a crucial identity category, no intrinsic historical, cultural or moral meaning was attached to any particular South American 'nation.' The states system was not the template for the unfurling of identity politics.

Hence the nation was not seen as an entity historically prior to the institutions of government, in contrast with the later assumption that states were the product of the (national) self-determination of a community. Indeed, it was common to presume that national communities emerged in tandem with their new governments. 'Nationhood' was a condition attained on the verge of independence and communities were discussed as things created and moulded by the political process, 'incipient' at the point of their recognition. 'Nationalist' arguments were not used to legitimise the new political arrangements. If established states were called 'nations,' then this was simply a corporate depiction of and synonym for the state, as confirmed by dictionary evidence from the time.

That the nation as a pre-political community was not a dominant concept indicates that 'difference' was not yet very developed as a mode of interpreting the units of international politics. Sameness provided a far more resonant conceptualisation of humanity. The region or hemisphere was a more important level for differentiating human beings than the state. Even those interested in national differences offset this with claims as to the interconnectedness of the states system. Meanwhile, nationality was not considered a force preventing positive relationships across national borders.

What the nation concept did do was to challenge dominant modes of conceptualising inter-state relations. British commentators appear to have understood international relations as the interactions of kindred entities and hoped South

American states would foster links with their ‘parents.’ But conceptualising the state as a corporate unit or ‘compact,’ the American perception enabled it to acquire person-like qualities, and rooted it within a distinct realm of other person-like entities, reacting like machines towards each other. This systemic, rather than familial relationship between states was in turn related to an embryonic ‘anarchy’ assumption that was also rooted in a historical suspicion of Europe. The US saw its ideal relation to another state as being a blank slate of indifference, not a social tie.

For the new states of South America, the ‘emphatically American’ image, embodied in Adams’ words at the start of this chapter, was the more desirable. With regards to the image of the state, one US commissioner pointed to the fact that in the United Provinces of the Plata, ‘[e]ven the ordinary language has changed.’ ‘They speak of “the state,” “the people,” “the public,” “country,” and use other terms, as in the United States, implying the interest that each man takes in what appertains to the community. The first principle constantly inculcated is “that all power rightfully emanates from the people.”’¹⁴⁵ The US vision of the international system was also instinctively more appealing. South American leaders, rejecting the mores of Europe, expounded a vision of the international realm as one free from legal constraint. While European powers envisaged the expansion of their international ‘society,’ it was in fact the ‘anarchical system’ that was given a powerful boost.

¹⁴⁵ Rodney and Graham, *The Reports on the Present State of the United Provinces*, p.110.

Chapter Three: The Ottoman Empire, 1876-1939.

The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states.

Montevideo Convention, 1933¹

There is no such thing as the State.

W.H. Auden, 1939²

Contrary to the case of South America, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire occurred over decades rather than years, decades often described as the age of ‘nationalism’ and the ‘nation-state.’ This chapter qualifies that depiction by highlighting ways in which the image of the state was contested within the discourse of state formation during this period. First, the notion of a people as an objectively defined ‘nation’ was offset by the idea of nationality as a thinly veiled political tool. Second, the idea of the nation-state competed with more flexible understandings of political organisation controlled by external powers. Third, the idea of the state as an organism rose to prominence and yet was rejected by those who railed against the effects of the biological analogy. The twentieth century was in fact in full swing before an understanding of the world as a sinister, chaotic system of ‘nation’-states began to assert itself.

¹ ‘Convention on the Rights and Duties of States’ (Montevideo Convention), *op cit*.

² W.H. Auden, 1 September 1939, in Auden, *Selected Poems* (Knopf, 1979), p.88.

The Collapse of the Ottoman Empire

From the middle of the nineteenth century until the First World War, the ‘Eastern question’ dominated European affairs. Turkey’s empire, commonly referred to as the ‘Ottoman Empire,’ had been in decline since the end of the seventeenth century, gradually ceding its fringes in Eastern Europe, the Crimea and Central Asia under a series of treaties with the European powers. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, its survival was ensured for another century by the Treaty of Bucharest between Russia and Turkey. But the ‘sick man’s’ empire continued to shrink at an exponential pace, culminating in its decimation during the First World War. By 1923, all that remained was the mother country of Turkey, its once vast possessions extinguished from both Europe and the Middle East.³

During this period, the contours of the international system shifted decisively to include additional areas outside of Europe and the Americas. Japan came to be regarded as an equal member of international society following its victorious war against China in 1894-5 and its treaties with Germany in 1896 and Britain in 1902. Siam, China and Persia also participated as signatories equal to other states (though the actual term ‘state’ was not yet common) in the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907. However, they were designated inferior by the system of capitulations, treaties that conferred certain legal and economic privileges to external powers. Their lack of equality was likewise symbolised by Japan’s failure to secure a racial equality clause in the Versailles treaty. Turkey’s position in the world remained similarly ambiguous.

³ The following general works were consulted for the purpose of this historical summary: Patrick Balfour Kinross, *The Ottoman Empire* (London, Folio Society, 2003); Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire* (London, Arnold, 2001); R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997); Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf; The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1997); Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq; The Failure of Nation-Building and a History Denied* (London, Hurst, 2003).

She was formally admitted to the 'advantages of public law and the European concert' in 1856, yet was also subject to capitulations that epitomised Europe's dominance.

From the nineteenth century onwards, the decline of the Ottoman Empire was characterised not only by the ceding of territory to other great powers, but also by the formation of new states. The first movement for independence took the form of a co-ordinated series of revolts in Greece in the 1820s, which were savagely put down by Sultan Mahmud. Growing support from Britain, France and Russia turned the tide, culminating in a war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1828. The outcome was increased autonomy for Wallachia and Moldavia, virtual independence for Serbia, and under the Treaty of London, an independent Greece, to be governed by a monarch from outside the major European reigning families.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire received another stay of execution due to both internal and external forces. First, from 1839, a radical collection of reform instruments known as the 'Tanzimat' or 'Reorganisation' was introduced in the Empire, instantiating Western-style financial reforms and applicable to all Ottoman subjects independent of race and religion. By the middle of the century, however, the reform effort was losing its force. Meanwhile, Tsar Nicholas I maintained diplomatic pressure for the dismemberment of the Empire, under the guise of concern for the welfare of the Ottoman Christians. However, fear of Russian aggression tilted Britain towards a policy of support for the Ottomans. With France, she defended Turkey in the Crimean war of 1854. At the Treaty of Paris in 1856, the Christian powers agreed to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, considered integral to the European balance of power, and the Eastern question was calmed for two decades.

In 1876, a revolt in the Balkans erupted into a declaration of war by Serbia and Montenegro against the metropole, instigated by the Russians. The Ottomans defeated the Serbs but were checked from marching on Belgrade by Russia, who insisted on an armistice. The European powers were not united, however, and when the Ottomans rejected Russian demands, Russia decided to act alone and declared war in April 1877. Now the Ottoman Empire in Europe began to crumble. Romania, forged from the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, also declared war and proclaimed itself an independent state. The Tsar was received as a liberator in Bulgaria and Slavonic armies were victorious in all parts of the Balkans. The Greeks supported insurrections in Greek-inhabited provinces such as Crete. At the end of the year, the Turks surrendered at Plevna.

Throughout this period, Britain's position was ambiguous. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli retained the traditional support for the integrity of the Empire and did not involve Britain in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. But William Gladstone, leader of the Liberal opposition, campaigned against the Ottoman Government. Gladstone was staunchly Christian and a clear advocate of the concept of 'civilisation' at a time when despotism in Europe was increasingly giving way to constitutional monarchy. Influenced by the alleged massacres taking place in Bulgaria, he railed against Turkish oppression and corruption and argued for intervention. However, his argument was weakened by the despotic nature of Russia and by fear of alienating the Ottomans. At the end of the war, Britain showed support for the Porte by preventing Russia from entering Istanbul, and the powers gathered to settle the peace.

The Treaty of San Stephano, of March 1878, wrought significant changes to the map of the Ottoman Empire. Romania, and the two large Balkan states of Montenegro and Serbia were declared independent. Bulgaria was enlarged and placed

under the rule of a prince selected by Russia, but remained nominally subject to the Sultan's suzerainty. Bosnia and Herzegovina were given more autonomous institutions. However, the treaty was widely regarded as problematic since it overrode historical claims and religious differences. A British show of strength led to its revision at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, presided over by Bismarck. The Treaty of Berlin, a check to Russian ambitions and a reprieve for the Ottomans, divided the new Bulgaria into two provinces, one politically autonomous but under the suzerainty of the Sultan, the second and richer one (Eastern Rumelia) directly under him. The Ottoman Empire held onto many of its Christian areas in Crete, Macedonia, Thrace and Albania. Bosnia and Herzegovina were occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary.

By now, the threat to the Ottoman Empire emanated not only from Russian ambition but also from Balkan nationalism. In Bulgaria, Prince Alexander of Battenberg was portrayed as a liberator against the threat of Russian predominance. He called for 'Bulgaria for Bulgarians' and crystallised the movement for union between the areas of 'greater' Bulgaria split at Berlin. When Bulgarian troops staged an unopposed revolution, Sultan Hamid appointed Alexander as Governor of Eastern Rumelia for a five year term, a sign of apathy in the wake of the Empire's dwindling hold on Europe. He also did nothing when Serbia, demanding territorial compensation, attacked Bulgaria from the West and Austria intervened to restore the status quo. Meanwhile, the Sultan also lost his hold over Africa in the 1880s, ceding Tunisia to France and Egypt to Britain.

The Sultan now shifted his attention towards Asia, where the Empire was largely intact and he enjoyed an elevated status as defender of the Islamic faith. Under the Berlin Treaty, the Porte was obliged to protect minority groups such as the

Armenians. But the Sultan responded to growing Armenian nationalist sentiment by exploiting religious differences and sanctioning a campaign of massacres in 1894-5. The eighty-six year old Gladstone made his last great speech at Liverpool against the 'unspeakable Turk' and British liberal opinion cried out for intervention and the dethronement of the Sultan. Although no power proved prepared to use force for the Armenians, the Empire was now regarded as a stain on the map of 'civilised' world, courted only by Germany as it looked to extend its sphere of influence. In 1899, Britain negotiated control of Kuwaiti foreign affairs, effectively blocking the terminus of the prized Baghdad railway.

At the turn of the century, only one major Turkish province in Europe remained. Macedonia, a polyglot mixture of Serbs, Slavs, Bulgarians, Muslim Albanians and Greeks, now assumed the spotlight, as the plight of its Christian population contrasted with the relative order and progress of its independent Balkan neighbours. The European powers were alarmed but again not unified and the Mürzsteg conference of 1903 produced little action by the Sultan. In 1908, Britain proposed that the governor of the province should be approved by the European powers; the Sultan agreed, as did France and Russia.

Change in Macedonia accompanied a deeper process of constitutional crisis in the Ottoman Empire. Turkish reform had led to the growth of a middle class amongst which opposition to absolutism was now taking root, epitomised in the movement known as the 'Young Turks.' In the 1908 revolution, the Young Turks sought to save Macedonia for Turkey through a complete change of government, and the Sultan gave way. However, the Young Turks lacked the necessary experience to govern Macedonia and reasserted the principle of Ottomanism. When news of a counter-revolution reached Macedonia, an army of 'liberation' was despatched to Istanbul and

Sultan Hamid was deposed in 1909. The constitutional change that followed not only reduced the power of the Sultan but also prohibited separatist associations based on ethnicity or nationalism. However, the Ottoman dream of a multinational and multi-denominational empire had become unworkable. Alongside the nationalisms of the new states, Turkish nationalist consciousness was also developing, replacing 'Ottomanisation' with 'Turkification.'

The dismantling of the Empire was completed during the build-up to war and the war itself. In 1912-13, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro carved up Macedonia during two Balkan wars. Under European pressure, the peace treaty also recognised Albanian independence. Meanwhile in Africa, Italy claimed Libya and declared war on the Ottoman Empire in September 1911, eventually gaining Tripolitania as part of the peace in 1912. British policy towards Turkey was now transformed by her fear of alienating Russia, such that Turkey, in need of protection from a great power, made a secret alliance with Germany. When the First World War broke out in August 1914, Turkey at first remained neutral, but drifted into the conflict as popular opinion swung towards Germany. During the course of the war, the movement for Arab independence spread, encouraged by Britain, culminating in the Arab revolt of 1916. Meanwhile, a number of (contradictory) agreements and promises made by the European powers all envisioned the complete collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Asia.⁴

At the Paris Peace Conference, plans for the dismemberment of the Empire and even the partitioning of the Anatolian homeland, confirmed Turkey's worst fears. By the terms of the Sèvres Treaty of 1920, the Ottoman presence in the Middle East ended as its provinces became class 'A' mandates under the League of Nations. Iraq

⁴ Britain in particular, was caught between the contradictory implications of deals struck with the Arabs, the Zionist movement, and the French government. However, the one shared aspect of the deals was the envisaged end of the Ottoman Empire.

and Palestine were assigned to Britain, and Syria and Lebanon to France. Armenia was made independent and recognised by Europe. Subsequently, Kemal Atatürk's movement of national resistance drove out the Greeks, freed Turkey from foreign occupation and, with Bolshevik assistance, turned on Armenia, which came under Soviet rule in November 1920. However, although the Lausanne peace of 1923 preserved the frontiers of Turkey and secured territory back from Greece, it could not alter the collapse of Turkish imperialism. The proclamation of a Turkish republic, with a national parliament in Ankara, sanctified the continuity of Turkey as a 'nation-state,' but the Empire was no more.

In the post-war context, the new normative force behind 'self-determination,' coupled with British decline and American interest in open markets, spelled the beginning of the end for the very concept of empire. Britain proclaimed a protectorate over Egypt but independence was proclaimed in 1922, Britain retaining discretion only over defence and foreign affairs. Iraq, formed from three vilayets of the former Empire, was immediately engulfed in nationalist agitation, which Britain suppressed by force. It was hoped that King Faisal, proclaimed in 1921, would be open to manipulation and would appeal to moderate nationalist opinion, but instead he set about maximising his autonomy. In 1922, the League mandate was replaced with a treaty of alliance and in 1923, the duration of Britain's formal involvement was reduced. Iraq became the first mandated state to gain independence and enter the League of Nations in 1932 but it remained reliant on Britain both financially and militarily. Syria and Lebanon remained under the mandatory regime of France until the end of the Second World War. Palestine, bitterly divided over immigration and its future, was finally transferred to the UN after the Second World War.

Although many American commentators were interested in the Eastern question, the US played little significant part in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. During the nineteenth century, the US was largely preoccupied with its domestic affairs, such as the consolidation of territory and its civil war. In foreign policy, events in the American hemisphere monopolised attention. Towards the end of the century, many Americans, including Theodore Roosevelt, were advocating the establishment of an area of economic influence; by 1898 the Spanish-American war and the annexation of the Philippines defined the place of the US on the world stage. Beyond its own region, however, American foreign policy consisted of little more than economic agreements, prior to its involvement in the First World War. Despite the best efforts of President Woodrow Wilson, the Senate rejected the League of Nations Covenant drawn up at its conclusion, and demonstrated scant sympathy for Turkey as its remaining territories were carved up amongst the Europeans.

Conceptualising the People

By the late-nineteenth century, the concepts of 'nationality' and 'nationalism' had assumed a new political importance. Nationalism, combined with assistance from foreign powers, had been an important force behind the independence of Belgium and Greece in the 1830s and was the vehicle for opposition to existing regimes, in revolutions that swept through most of Europe in 1848. The principle of 'nationality' was supported by Napoleon III and held responsible for important political changes in Europe: the formation of the Italian Kingdom in 1861, the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1867 and a United Germany in 1871. While nationalist figures such as Giuseppe Garibaldi acquired a particular romantic symbolism, nationalism was also

stimulated by democracy, urbanisation and industrialisation and encouraged by existing states, through the expansion of education, military service and the promotion of national symbols and mythologies.⁵

Yet, the genuine importance of nationalism to the independence process will be a topic of debate *ad infinitum*. Many believe nineteenth century nationalism was actually a weak force, since in much of Europe there remained great indifference to nationalism amongst the masses.⁶ The widespread failure of revolutionary goals after 1848, as new constitutions were quickly overturned and nation-states not created, was partly related to the divided and narrow nature of the intellectual movements, especially in countries such as Poland. Moreover, late-nineteenth century nationalism lacked coherence as a political project; it leant on liberal, radical, religious and cultural values to different extents in different countries. Nationalism seemed to be a doctrine that could be manipulated to fit a wide range of political aims, especially in the later part of the century, when it was essentially hijacked by expansionist policy, epitomised by Prussia's Bismarck.

Depictions of the 'people' in the late-nineteenth century reflect this tension. On the one hand, in comparison to the South American case, the image of a state's population was more detailed, as the 'people' was often conceived as a homogenous natural or cultural group or 'nation.' As the differences between these groups were perceived to be ingrained, every human being was believed to have a single, 'authentic' national identity that could be uncovered by science. Yet the depiction of peoples in such homogenising terms was also resisted, to the extent that the very concept of nationality was drawn into question. Moreover, the precise meaning of the nation remained ambiguous.

⁵ See Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

⁶ See Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

The Science of National Identity

From the late-nineteenth century, the nation was a romantic concept and for its staunchest proponents an end in itself. Members of a nation, founder of the Young Italy movement Giuseppe Mazzini eloquently claimed, ‘speak the same language, they bear about them the impress of consanguinity, they kneel beside the same tombs, they glory in the same tradition and they demand to associate freely.’⁷ It was a principle, argued Mazzini, for which the map of Europe would have to be remade. Yet, the influence of nationalism was more widespread than this romantic vision. Many who were not primarily interested in ‘nationalism’ *per se*, nevertheless found the concepts of ‘nationality’ and ‘national character’ useful. John Stuart Mill, for example, though highly critical of racism, littered his language with references to the biological and physical differences between peoples.⁸ Statesmen openly discussed diplomacy with reference to differences in ‘national character.’⁹

More subtly, the idea of national character was reflected through a tendency to essentialise national populations, especially the Turks, for whom a stereotypical image was already established. Gladstone spoke infamously of the ‘unspeakable Turk’ and the British liberal politician Richard Cobden alluded to the ‘decay and helplessness of the Turks.’¹⁰ The tendency to demonise or romanticise the Turkish people was also more widespread; colourful depictions abounded of the ‘revengeful’ ‘lustful Turcoman,’ ‘the careless, good-natured Turk,’ ‘the grossly-injured and much-

⁷ Giuseppe Mazzini, ‘Europe: Its Condition and Prospects,’ (1852), in William Clark (ed.), *Essays: Selected from the Writings, Literary, Political and Religious of Joseph Mazzini* (London: Walter Scott, 1880), p.266.

⁸ See Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, p.20.

⁹ For example, British Foreign Secretary Curzon, with reference to France in 1918: ‘but their national character is different from ours, and their political interests collide with our own.’ Cited in Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and its Attempt to End War* (London, John Murray, 2001), p.384.

¹⁰ Richard Cobden, Speech on Russian War I, House of Commons, 22 December 1854, in John Bright and James E. Thorold Rogers (eds.), *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden, M.P.*, II (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1908), p.317.

enduring Turk' or the 'picturesque' Turk.¹¹ Titles of various books and articles, such as 'Typical Turks' or 'The Soul of a Turk' also reflected the assumption that they were one homogenous category.¹² Further, as an essential category, the Turk was also commonly thought of as an unchangeable category. 'We must remember the adage' said one author, 'The Turk is always a Turk.'¹³

The depiction of nations and peoples in terms of rigid national characteristics reflected not only historical biases but also a new assumption that peoples could be understood in terms of biology or 'nature.' In an argument against intervention in the affairs of continental Europe, author A.A. Paton claimed there are 'nations to whom nature appears to have refused the stubborn perseverance to conquer their liberties or the discriminating moderation to retain them.' While Saxon nations were naturally able to preserve their liberty and independence, he added, Slavic nations were not.¹⁴ Women were often seen as the emblems of a national identity, as well as the guarantors of racial purity (their 'violation' a common theme). The 'faces and forms' of the 'Turkesses' were said, by an anonymous British author, to display the qualities of a 'ruling race,' in comparison to their ugly 'Bulgarian sisters.'¹⁵

Such biological determinism was linked to a prevalent assumption in the late-nineteenth century that an 'original' identity lurked behind other features imposed by historical accident. One anonymous author saw language as a 'misleading and unreliable' index to identity, since contingent historical circumstances could lead to

¹¹ See for example, George Spencer, *War, The Turk in Arms and other Poems* (Southam, G. Spencer, 1878), p.10; Henry Noel Brailsford, *Macedonia, its Race and their Future* (London, Methuen and Co, 1906), p.x.

¹² Henry O. Dwight, 'Typical Turks,' *The Galaxy*, 24:2 (August 1877); Victoria de Bunsen, *The Soul of a Turk* (London and New York, John Lane, 1910).

¹³ Anonymous author, 'A Syrian,' *Personal Recollections of Turkish Misrule and Corruptions in Syria* (London, Cassell Petter and Galpin, 1877), p.3.

¹⁴ A.A. Paton, *The Bulgarian, The Turk and The German* (London, Longman Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855), pp.6-7.

¹⁵ Anonymous author, *Revelations from the Seat of War; Russians, Turks, Bulgarians, and Mr Gladstone* (London, J.A. Brook and Co, 1877), pp.34-35.

‘the adoption of an alien idiom.’ A people’s ‘original nationality’ could be deduced from its customs, traditions, religion and sympathies. So for example, he claimed that the ‘national character’ of the Albanians indicated they are ‘Greeks in their original and elementary condition’¹⁶ Religion too, was at times portrayed as obscuring ‘true’ identity. Bulgarian nationalists for example, were at pains to account for the more than 450,000 ‘Pomaks,’ who had embraced Islam during the Ottoman conquest but were really ‘true Bulgarians’ preserving ‘the customs and even the names of their nation.’¹⁷

As the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the identification of different peoples, nations and races, known as ‘ethnology,’ became an important new subject of study. In 1867, an ethnographic conference was held in Moscow, participated in by various exponents of Slavism. A map of the Slavic nationalities was prepared by the Russian geographer and ethnographer M. F. Mirkovich, and appeared in three editions in the next ten years.¹⁸ In response, similar maps were produced elsewhere, including an ‘ethnological map’ of European Turkey and Greece, printed in London in 1878 to elucidate the ‘actual relations’ and ‘true proportions’ of the different ethnic groups. Indicative of the assumed objectivity of its subject matter, this map was classified by the Bodleian library in a volume of ‘physics’ pamphlets, a statement of ‘scientific’ fact.¹⁹

For representatives of the ‘nationalist’ movements in the Ottoman provinces (and their allies), the idea of objectively determinable identity groups was a useful one. At the Berlin Conference, for example, Russia claimed the change to the frontier

¹⁶ Anonymous, *An Ethnological Map of European Turkey and Greece* (London, Edward Stanford, 1878), p.1,8,17.

¹⁷ D. Zancof and Marco D. Balabanow, *Bulgaria, by her two delegates*, trans ‘F.H.’ (London, Goubaud and son, 1876), p.8.

¹⁸ M.F. Mirkovich, *Ethnological Map of the Slavic People* (St. Petersburg, 1867).

¹⁹ Anonymous, *An Ethnological Map*, p.1.

of Bulgaria was a ‘mutilation,’ because it divided compact Bulgarian populations’ and deprived many of the name ‘Bulgaria.’²⁰ The Romanian delegates also appealed to their ancient nationality and the Greek Government asserted that its hopes for enlargement were ‘national aspirations.’²¹ The same preoccupation with identity politics would be seen during and after the First World War, as Bulgarian officials argued that Macedonia was ‘Bulgarian in population’ while Serbians stressed that Macedonia was ‘always Serb as long as she was Slav.’²²

The depiction of new peoples in such terms was partly facilitated by the proximity of the Ottoman Empire to Europe, which enabled the collection of knowledge about the region over several centuries. However, the collapse of the Empire also coincided with broader academic developments, notably the increasing application of science to the human species, as an intellectual revolution drew into question dominant religious conceptions of mankind’s origins. New disciplines such as anthropology and evolutionary biology were for several decades dominated by Darwin’s concept of evolution, which imparted academic authority to racial hierarchies and led to increasing interest in the ‘science’ of identifying human groups.²³

The Chimerical Concept of Nationality

Although the attribution of identity to ‘peoples’ was therefore more commonplace, homogenising depictions of ‘peoples’ also met with criticism and incredulity. One

²⁰ Russian delegation, 22 June 1878, cited in *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 38 (London, H.M.S.O., 1878), p.47.

²¹ M. Delyanni, Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs (trans.) 29 June 1878, cited in *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 38, p.133.

²² D. Misheff (former Secretary General of the Exarchate of Bulgaria), *The Truth about Macedonia* (Berne, 1917), pp.16, 4; Pavle Popovic (Professor of Literature, Belgrade University), *Serbian Macedonia; An Historical Survey* (London, The Near East Ltd., 1916), p.30.

²³ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London, John Murray, 1859).

author, pointing out that Gladstone's tirade against 'the unspeakable Turk' was a domestic political strategy against his rival Lord Beaconsfield, reacted directly to the misleading use of language:

For a statesman and a student of history to have suddenly discovered a whole people, whose antecedents are known to every child – for whom he himself waged, but twenty years ago, a bloody and prolonged war – whom he has repeatedly upheld in every way – to be hopelessly depraved and only fit for extermination, is a phenomenon as extraordinary as it is, happily, rare.²⁴

He accused 'atrocities' mongers, 'an entirely novel feature in European politics,' of manipulating people towards stylised images of the two sides.²⁵

Similarly St Clair, previously a consul for Bulgaria and Moldavia, reacted against Lord Salisbury's claim that the Russian - Turkish conflict was 'national.' Salisbury, he demanded, must 'inform the world how on earth he alone has been able to ascertain of what even the Emperor Alexander himself is totally ignorant' since in despotic Russia, there could be 'no possibility of knowing what people think.'²⁶ In contrast to the holistic images of romantic nationalist thought, several nineteenth century thinkers struggled to envision the population of a state as a homogenous community.

In addition, many saw the concept of nationality as little more than a tool of international power politics. Russia was frequently accused of manipulating the significance of difference to engender racial conflict in the Ottoman Empire, inciting cruelties to create 'bitter memories of mutual wrong.'²⁷ The Slavonic or Panslavistic Committees in Moscow were blamed by a British Member of Parliament for fostering the 'Slav movement in Turkey' and by the author of the 'ethnological map,' who

²⁴ Anonymous author, *Revelations from the Seat of War*, p.11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.16.

²⁶ A.B. St Clair, F.R.G.S., *Russian Imperial Freedom versus Turkish Constitutional Liberty, Or: The Eastern Question and its Only Solution*, (London, Vacher and Sons, 1877), p.31.

²⁷ Anonymous author, *Revelations from the Seat of War*, p.39.

argued they were manipulating Balkan ethnicity to secure access to the Ægean Sea for Slavs.²⁸ Such accusations led to a strong perception that nationalist insurrections were of ‘purely foreign importation.’²⁹

Cynicism as to the political motivations of ‘nationalists’ also led some to scrutinise the very concept of nationality. In the mid-nineteenth century, one of the arguments frequently invoked against Italian unification had been that ‘the principle of nationality’ itself was ‘chimerical.’³⁰ Towards the end of the century, similar ideas were used by a small number to critique the ideas of Herder and Mazzini. In a pamphlet, a peace movement member rejected as ‘hopeless’ the very attempt to ‘sort mankind according to races, or sympathies, to pigeon-hole and label them as belonging to this or that nationality or country, like so many museum species.’ The very attempt to establish ‘anything permanent in the way of political limits’ was, he argued, always a failure.³¹ This resistance was itself indicative of the strength of the ‘nation’ concept, but demonstrated it was far from uncontested.

The Vagueness of the Nation

In the late nineteenth century, the term ‘nation’ lacked a definite and specific meaning. First, it was often used interchangeably with ‘race.’ The various different peoples of the Ottoman Empire were frequently labelled the ‘subject races,’ by Gladstone and others. The Turks were an ‘oriental race’ with historic traditions of

²⁸ Thomas Brassey, *The Eastern Question and the Political Situation at Home* (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1877), p.6; Anonymous, *An Ethnological Map*, p.18.

²⁹ Algernon Borthwick, ‘An Address on the Eastern Question,’ St James Hall, 10 January 1878 (London, William Ridgeway, 1878), p.20.

³⁰ See Matthew Arnold, *England and the Italian Question* (London, Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1859), p.4.

³¹ Felix Moschelles, ‘Patriotism as an Incentive to Warfare,’ in International Arbitration and Peace Association, *Our Work in Italy* (London, 1887), p.15.

barbarism, but also a ‘brave, honest, and manly race.’³² The Bulgarians were ‘a well-to-do and a contented race’ and the Armenians ‘one of the most intelligent races in the world.’³³ Reference was made to the ‘different nations and races’ in European Turkey without any clear distinction between these two concepts; the list included ‘the Roumanians, the Serbs, the Bulgarians, the Albanians, the Greco-Wallachs, the Greeks, the Turks, the Jews, the Gypsies, the Armenians, the Tartars, the Circassians’³⁴

Second, as in the earlier-nineteenth century, the nation was not necessarily connected to ‘natural’ or ‘cultural’ characteristics. Although Mill reified the idea of the ‘nation’ and used ideas of biological difference in his writing, he defined nationality not through race, descent, geography or language, but through common sympathies and a desire for self-government.³⁵ The 1874 definition of the nation offered by Johnson’s English Dictionary, was simply ‘a people born under the same government.’³⁶ Meanwhile, US discourse, which continued to be littered with references to the nation and the ‘national,’ tended to use the nation as a synonym for the state as a political community.³⁷ President Hayes reminisced about when the US ‘became a nation.’³⁸ Woodrow Wilson used the term ‘peoples’ for those without self-government and ‘nations’ for existing states. After the war, academics described how

³² *Report Presented to the International Commission at Constantinople as to the State of Macedonia since the Treaty of Berlin* (London, Gilbert and Rivington, 1880), p.iii; Anonymous author, *Revelations from the Seat of War*, pp.10-11.

³³ Brassey, *The Eastern Question*, p.3; William Gladstone, ‘Speech at Chester,’ in Krikor Behesnilian, *In Bonds: An Armenian’s Experiences* (London, Morgan and Scott, 1896).

³⁴ Anonymous, *An Ethnological Map*, p.1.

³⁵ See Kohn, *Prophets and Peoples*, p.36.

³⁶ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1874).

³⁷ In German usage too, the words ‘state’ (Staat) and ‘nation’ (Nation) were used interchangeably in the nineteenth century. See Benner, *Really Existing Nationalisms*, p.16.

³⁸ Hayes, ‘Thanksgiving proclamation,’ 1 November 1880, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, X (New York, Bureau of National Literature), p.4551.

Turkey had reasserted its 'right to nationhood' or how Iraq was allegedly 'ready for full nationhood.'³⁹

The idea of nationality reached its political apotheosis after the First World War with the principle of national self-determination, which advocated a single state for each identifiable 'nation.' Yet even at this moment, the concept of nationhood was rather more vague than often assumed. Woodrow Wilson himself moved from 'prior' to 'state-based' understandings of the nation with little consciousness of their different implications. He spoke of the 'racial autonomy' of nations but his own nationalism was a mild, Christian form of patriotism far removed from race. He claimed governments should be derived from the consent of the people, but offered little guidance as to how to define this people. For nationality, according to Wilson, was a matter of consciousness rather than institutional or physical attributes. A nation, he claimed, is made 'of its thoughts' and 'no people can be a nation ... until the national thought and feeling have been developed and have become prevalent.'⁴⁰

Hence, by the later nineteenth century, the emptiness of the category of the 'people' had been replaced by an awareness of identity and its political implications. The image of a people as a clearly defined 'nation' offered a simple model for understanding the complexities of the Balkans and other regions. Yet this understanding was explicitly rejected by those sceptical of the concept.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the term nation lacked coherent meaning, competed with alternative terms and was often simply a synonym for the state.

³⁹ Leland James Gordon, Ph.D., *American Relations with Turkey; 1830-1930; An Economic Interpretation* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932), pp.4-5; Luther Harris Evans, Princeton University, 'The Emancipation of Iraq from the Mandates System,' *American Political Science Review*, 26:6 (1932), p.1037.

⁴⁰ Cited in John Milton Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World; Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.26.

⁴¹ Such scepticism allowed for worldviews that were subsequently challenged by the alignment of peoples along national lines, as opposed to those of class for example, during the First World War. See Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Imperialism; The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1982 [1917]).

Creating States

The variable status and meaning of the nation concept partly determined the influence of 'national self-determination' during the period of Ottoman decline. Contrary to the South American case, 'peoples' were understood to exist prior to states. Yet, only after the First World War did national expression crystallise as a basis for the formation of new states. Only then too, was nationalism connected to fragmentation. In the late-nineteenth century, 'nationalism' generally referred to a process whereby people were drawn towards the 'great nations' fundamental to world order. National self-determination thus brought about a change in perceptions of history. It challenged not only multinational empires, but the idea that the spectrum of political forms was determined by the great powers.

Freedom from Oppression

In the late-nineteenth century, British and American arguments for self-determination often focussed on freedom from oppression rather than the realisation of national identity. For example in Britain, the Balkan Committee believed Macedonia's future was 'inevitable as fate,' not because of any 'national' destiny, but because so many other provinces previously 'subject to Turkish misrule' had 'been granted a tolerable system of government.'⁴² In fact, as the boundaries of the new states were drawn, nationality was often explicitly rejected as the basis for policy. One British pamphlet writer, describing himself as a 'London physician,' claimed for example, that the 'hypocritical talk about Nationalities' was in opposition to 'sound policy and simple

⁴² P.W. Wilson, Treasurer, 'The General Situation,' The Balkan Committee, *Macedonia 1903* (London, 1903), p.9.

justice.’⁴³ In the treaties of both San Stephano and Berlin, guarantees of religious freedom were inserted as conditions for recognition, out of concern for ‘justice’ in what were clearly ethnically heterogeneous territories.

At the Berlin Conference, the powers discussed future territorial arrangements in terms of natural obstacles, strategic lines, treaty rights, fair exchange, rights of conquest and the wartime sacrifice of Russia, not nationality.⁴⁴ Count Schouvaloff even remarked that the Conference had sought to efface ethnographical frontiers, and to replace them with strategic ones.⁴⁵ Similarly, representatives at the Constantinople conference of 1876 did not include in the delineation of ‘Bulgaria,’ any regions not subject to the Ottoman abuses of the previous summer. The Marquis of Salisbury claimed that ‘Bulgaria’ was a ‘practical,’ not definitive concept.’⁴⁶ After all, another anonymous commentator argued, ‘Every race’ in Europe had acquired its territory by conquest, so any principle sanctioning the transfer of land from the Ottoman conquerors back to the ‘subject races’ would lead to utter chaos.⁴⁷

In addition, ‘freedom’ for oppressed people was not yet associated with the institutionalisation of indigenous (‘national’) rule. Instead, princely authority and religion were the important factors in determining a legitimate ruler. Gladstone’s only stipulation for Bulgaria’s ruler was that he be a Christian prince from somewhere other than Bulgaria. Similarly, the inclination of those assembled at Berlin was to apportion semi-autonomous provinces to members of the royal families of Europe. Restoring the province of ‘Eastern Roumelia’ to Turkish authority, the treaty stipulated that the Governor-General should simply be ‘Christian.’ It also placed

⁴³ William Augustus Guy, *The Crimean War, or The Turk Avenged and Vindicated* (London, Harrison and Henry Renshaw, 1877 [1876]), p.3.

⁴⁴ See *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 38, pp.123-137.

⁴⁵ Count Schouvaloff, 26 June 1878, *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 38, p.93.

⁴⁶ Marquis of Salisbury (1876), cited in Misheff, *The Truth about Macedonia*, p.13.

⁴⁷ Anonymous author, *Revelations from the Seat of War*, p.68.

Bosnia and Herzegovina under Austria-Hungary's administration, on the basis that a strong power was best suited to ruling such a mixed demographic.⁴⁸

This pattern of thought resonated with a normative framework in which the nation-state was not necessarily seen as an ideal form of polity, despite the fact that dynastic dominion had been shattered as a source of legitimacy.⁴⁹ Mill, regarded as one of the fathers of national self-determination, actually encapsulated a certain ambiguity towards the concept. He claimed that a necessary condition of free institutions is that the boundaries of governments coincide with those of nationalities, but added that 'uncivilised' peoples had 'no rights as a nation.' He also supported the north in the American civil war against the 'national self-determination' of the south.⁵⁰ Moreover, he advanced the ideal of the multinational state, claiming that 'whatever really tends to the admixture of nationalities, and the blending of their attributes and peculiarities in a common union, is a benefit to the human race.' For example, it was better for a Breton 'to be brought into the current of ideas of a highly civilised French people' than 'to sulk on his own rocks.'⁵¹

More strongly, Mill's contemporary Lord Acton believed that diversity and liberty were mutually reinforcing. Acton foresaw that a state identifying itself with a single object such as nationality would tend towards absolutism and believed the developing theory that each state should contain one race was a 'retrograde' step.⁵² Other outspoken liberals such as Richard Cobden and John Bright, acknowledged the existence of nationalities suffering under tyranny but consistently argued against

⁴⁸ 'Treaty of Berlin,' *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 69 (London, William Ridgway, 1885), arts. XIII, XXV, pp.755, 758.

⁴⁹ See Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, p.543.

⁵⁰ See Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*.

⁵¹ Mill, 'England and Ireland' (1868), cited in Kohn, *Prophets and Peoples*, p.38.

⁵² John E. Acton, 'Nationality' (1862), reprinted in Acton, *The History of Freedom; And Other Essays* (London, Macmillan, 1907).

interventions ‘in favour of some nationality or some people abroad.’⁵³ At the end of the nineteenth century, one Irish historian therefore argued that the doctrine of the ‘indefeasible right of nationalities to determine their own form of government’ was now ‘less prominent among the political elite of the world than it was in 1848.’⁵⁴

Nationality and Agglomeration

In this context, other forms of political organisation could be toyed with as viable alternatives. In fact, in 1882, the German legal and political philosopher Georg Jellinek distinguished no less than 37 different forms of federation, confederation and alliance, including the US federal system and the British Commonwealth.⁵⁵ The notion of an international administration was one acceptable model. For example, the Balkan Committee advocated for Macedonia the ‘creation of certain provinces, to be administered by a European civil service’ in perpetuity.⁵⁶ Likewise, multinational alternatives were lauded as practical alternatives before the turn of the century, such as a ‘liberal union’ with Russia for co-habitation ‘with kindred races which boast an older and more developed civilisation.’⁵⁷ Those more suspicious of Russian designs called for a ‘liberty-loving Balkan Confederation,’ to circumvent the dangers of Balkan nationalism, or a radical reorganisation of the Balkans into a ‘coherent mass under a centralized government.’⁵⁸

Furthermore, the equation between nationalism and the break-up of states was not universally recognised within the mindset of the late-nineteenth century. In an

⁵³ Cobden, Speech on Foreign Policy IX, Rochdale, 23 November 1864, in Bright and Rogers (eds.), *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden*, II, p.486.

⁵⁴ William E.H. Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, I (London and New York, Longmans, Green and Co, 1899 [1896]), p.504.

⁵⁵ George Jellinek, *Die Lehre von den Staatenverbindungen* (1882), cited in Charles E. Merriam, *Systematic Politics* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1945), p.268.

⁵⁶ Wilson, ‘The General Situation,’ p.13.

⁵⁷ Brailsford, *Macedonia*, p.316.

⁵⁸ Wilson, ‘The General Situation,’ p.15; Edwin Munsell Bliss, ‘The Eastern Question and Questions,’ *The Century*, 51:3 (1896), p.474.

American journal article on the 'Forces in European Politics,' for example, George Pond described the development of 'nations' (the 'ultimate welding of nobility, clergy and commons into that which we call a nation') as a 'wholly modern development' towards *centralisation* and 'solidification.' He claimed that 'one of the most striking tendencies' of recent history was 'the tendency of small states to merge into larger ones,' which was occurring increasingly rapidly because of the 'theory of nationality.' Pond saw this tendency as antithetical to the 'spirit of liberty' and 'free government.' In the future, he envisioned 'Germany extending herself in all directions' the Slav race on a 'march of supremacy' and a Scandinavian nation 'achieved through a union of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark.'⁵⁹

The same presumption that global political organisation tended towards agglomeration was embedded in the distinction between 'great' and 'small' nations, which was a dominant motif of the era. 'Great nations' were considered to be the major political players but also the basic components of the international system, to which 'small nations' were inexorably drawn and absorbed. For example, a pamphlet by Matthew Arnold, published in Britain and written in the context of Italian unification, argued that '[s]mall nationalities inevitably gravitate towards the larger nationalities in their immediate neighbourhood. Their ultimate fusion is so natural and irresistible that even the sentiment of the absorbed race ceases, with time, to struggle against it.'⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the author of the 'ethnological map' on which 'Roumans, Serbs, Bulgars, Albanians, Turks and Greeks' were carved into contiguous blocs, described each of these 'larger indigenous masses' as 'a materially solid body' into

⁵⁹ George E. Pond, 'Forces in European Politics,' *The Galaxy*, 24:2 (1877), pp.230-41.

⁶⁰ Arnold, *England and the Italian Question*, p.11.

which, 'lesser nationalities' such as Armenians and Jews, were 'of necessity' destined to be 'politically absorbed.'⁶¹

That 'small' nations naturally belonged within larger political units provided arguments against the independence of new states. First, it was believed that the survival of a 'great nation' depended on the integrity of its conquered territories, since as Napoleon III said, 'a great nation is like a star – it cannot live without satellites.'⁶² Second, it was presumed that allowing small territories to become independent was pointless in the long term. For example, the Marquis of Salisbury claimed in 1878 that the populations of Asiatic Turkey, with 'no aspirations for independence' would, upon realising the weakness of the Ottoman position, simply 'turn their eyes towards its successor.'⁶³ The same year, British peer Algernon Borthwick warned an audience in St James Hall, that 'an autonomous Bulgaria' would quickly enjoy the same fate as other Balkan provinces, becoming little more than the tools of an encroaching Russia.⁶⁴

The distinction between great and small nations was underscored not only by an attachment to multi-nationalism but also by a normative association between large territorial units and progress within nineteenth century thought.⁶⁵ As part of the system of huge multinational states that prevailed in Europe, the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian Empires were seen as integral to the balance of power. In contrast, the idea of a system of small states drawn on national lines was seen as dangerous and scarcely imaginable. Even Irish historian William Lecky, who regarded 'nationality' as a progressive force, questioned whether 'a great and ancient nation is obliged to

⁶¹ Anonymous, *An Ethnological Map*, pp.1-2.

⁶² Robert Tombs, *France 1814-1914* (London, Longman, 1996), p.403.

⁶³ Marquis of Salisbury to Sir A.H. Layard, F.O., 30 May 1878, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1878 (Washington, Government Printing Office), p.887.

⁶⁴ Borthwick, *An Address on the Eastern Question*.

⁶⁵ See Benner, *Really Existing Nationalisms*.

acquiesce in its own disintegration' simply because a minority group 'can be persuaded to desire a separate political existence.' If the 'unity of the State' could be so easily compromised, he continued, 'the whole public order of Europe must give way.'⁶⁶ In America too, there was acknowledgement that the principle of 'national unification,' carried to its logical consequences 'would end in some striking revolutions.'⁶⁷

The juxtaposition of great and small nations created space for only a weak version of the national self-determination principle applicable to a limited number of units. For example, Matthew Arnold argued that the principle of nationality could be invoked reasonably when 'the parties connected should themselves, one or other of them, be dissatisfied with their connection.' He continued that 'the dissatisfied party, connected by constraint and against his will by an alien nation, should belong, by nature and origin, to a great nationality.' Otherwise, the principle of 'nationality' would prevent the 'natural and beneficial union of conterminous or neighbouring territories into one great state, upon which the grandeur of nations and the progress of civilisation depends.'⁶⁸ This argument was later to be adopted by Lenin, who claimed that a number of territories, including Finland, Poland and the Ukraine, were peopled by 'non-Great Russians.'⁶⁹

The definition of a great nation involved various different components. For the author of the ethnological map, it was a question of population distribution; minority national groups were obstructed by necessity from statehood. For others, great nation status revolved around power and wealth. One British pamphlet writer argued, for example, that England, France and Italy had 'bought' the right to greatness 'with their

⁶⁶ Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, I, p.481.

⁶⁷ Thomas M. Anderson, 'The Irrepressible Conflict in the East,' *The Galaxy*, 24:5 (1877), p.691.

⁶⁸ Arnold, *England and the Italian Question*, pp.10-11.

⁶⁹ Lenin, *Imperialism*, pp.6-7.

blood and treasure.’⁷⁰ Another claimed it was a question of historical solidity; Austria and Turkey were ‘realities,’ ‘built up by the slow hand of centuries,’ it was said, while plans to erect a German or Polish buffer to Russian ambitions were merely ‘airy projects.’⁷¹ In this rather Burkean conception, the state was a product of history and tradition, not abstract ‘airy’ ideas such as nationality or popular sovereignty.

Several others expressed great nation status in explicitly cultural terms. For Arnold, it was deeply historical, derived from considering the ‘sense of self-esteem generated’ by ‘the figure’ a nation ‘makes in history,’ its achievements ‘in war, government, arts, literature, or industry.’ Poland, Hungary and Ireland did not qualify whereas Italy did, despite its ‘mixed’ population, since the Italian ‘people’ had been ‘the most brilliant in Europe in the Middle Ages’ and had ‘all the glories of the Roman Empire.’⁷² Likewise, writer S. G. W. Benjamin argued, in an 1891 *Atlantic Monthly*, that the world had been summoned to the aid of Greece by ‘the arts, the poetry, the great men, the wonderful romance and history.’ Armenia, in contrast, lacked any ‘positive outline that the imagination can easily grasp.’⁷³

National Self-Determination

At the end of the First World War, however, a major change occurred as the norm of ‘national self-determination’ entered into the vision of a future Europe and world. The principle is commonly associated with American President Woodrow Wilson, who believed that peace would ensue if each nationality was given its own state and adopted a democratic constitution to reconcile minorities. For this reason, he acquired

⁷⁰ William Augustus Guy, *War with Russia; the Interest and Duty of England* (London, Harrison and Henry Renshaw, 1977), p.7.

⁷¹ Paton, *The Bulgarian, The Turk and The German*, p.6.

⁷² Arnold, *England and the Italian Question*, pp.12-14.

⁷³ S.G.W. Benjamin, ‘The Armenians and the Porte,’ *The Atlantic Monthly*, 67:402 (April 1891), pp.524-5.

the status of a 'prophet of a new age.'⁷⁴ However, the emergence of the 'national' principle in Europe was also facilitated by force of circumstances. The Allies had encouraged nationalism against both the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires during the war and now needed to appear to honour their promises, especially as nationalist armies began gathering. Meanwhile, having claimed to be fighting for the rights of 'small nations,' they were accused of hypocrisy by the Central Powers vis-à-vis the Irish, Boers and North Africans.⁷⁵ A British Government memorandum thus announced that the 'principle of nationality' should be one of the 'governing factors in the consideration of territorial arrangements after the war.'⁷⁶

The principle was inconsistently applied, particularly to the territories of the 'enemy' states, but the Paris peace treaties did reduce the number of nationals living under foreign rule by almost a half. Moreover, the mandate system of the League of Nations, although established primarily with the interests of Britain and France in mind, did attribute group rights to territories outside of Europe for the first time. Disregarding the possibility of large multinational empires, the preamble to the Covenant opened up the possibility of future membership for 'organised peoples' currently under foreign control. Article XXII of the Covenant defined trust territories as those 'inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves in the strenuous conditions of the modern world,' the phrase 'not yet' implying that all 'peoples' would some day attain independence. National self-determination shaped a radical new understanding of global history in terms of fragmentation rather than agglomeration.

⁷⁴ Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.254.

⁷⁵ Alfred Cobban, *National Self-Determination* (London, Oxford University Press, 1944), p.11.

⁷⁶ 'Memorandum on Territorial Settlement to F.C.O.,' cited in Cobban, *National Self-Determination*, p.13.

However, 'national self-determination' was not clearly defined, because it could not be, embodying a complex of different ideas about group identity, individualism and democracy. In Britain, the 'nation' contained within it was commonly tied to ideas of race and culture. In 1918, for example, Lloyd George made a speech calling for Mesopotamia and other non-Turkish areas of the Ottoman Empire to be recognised as having 'their own separate national conditions.'⁷⁷ A British proclamation, prepared in London, told the people of Baghdad they would be 'united with your kinsmen in the north, east, south and west, in realising the aspirations of your Race.'⁷⁸ However, Britain was simply creating rationales for its new oil-rich mandate. The world looked to Wilson to articulate a more coherent vision of the principle.

Wilson's *Fourteen Points* stated that 'nationalities,' such as those previously under the Turks, should be assured 'an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development.'⁷⁹ He also consistently reiterated the importance of democratic rule. However, he left open the question of how to define the 'nationalities' that could be self-determining, in a world where such groups did not exist in neat enclaves. He suggested that the borders of the Balkans be settled in accordance with 'historically established lines of allegiance and nationality.'⁸⁰ But otherwise he strayed from historical or cultural definition, conforming to the vaguer American conception of the nation, which he connected to consciousness and political maturity. Less confident that nations were objectively definable, Wilson's great speeches of 1918 actually referred only to 'self-determination' and never 'national

⁷⁷ Lloyd George, cited in Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, p.11.

⁷⁸ General Maude, cited by Seton Lloyd, F.S.A, *Twin Rivers; A Brief History of Iraq from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1947 [1943]), p.210.

⁷⁹ Cited in MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, p.387.

⁸⁰ Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.287. The idea of a historical determination of boundaries meshed with the French argument regarding Alsace-Lorraine, where the population had become predominantly German only since 1870.

self-determination.’⁸¹ Yet this was so ambiguous that during the peace conferences, the head of the US delegation in Vienna sent repeated requests to Washington, and to Wilson in Paris, for an explanation of the term. None ever came back, and Wilson later admitted that ‘[w]hen I gave utterance to those words, I said them without the knowledge that nationalities existed, which are coming to us day after day.’⁸² In his naiveté, he had dangled the promise of a principle that could not be fulfilled in practice, with enormous implications for the world ever after.

Great Power Decline

Concurrent with the shift towards ‘national self-determination’ was a change in understandings of the role of external power in the formation of states. In the late-nineteenth century, as in the earlier half, it was presumed in Europe that all claims to statehood were determined by external actors; Bismarck argued that ‘Europe alone has the power to sanction independence.’⁸³ Recognition was considered an act of state creation and the powers assembled at the San Stephano and Berlin Conferences imagined themselves to be re-drawing the map of Europe. There was pride attached to this role, as one British commentator claimed state formation was ‘a favourite project with British statesmen’ and another recalled Britain’s ‘honourable’ and ‘leading’ role at the ‘birth’ of new states.⁸⁴

After the war, changes in the law surrounding statehood challenged the notion that great powers determined state formation. At Paris, a debate ensued as to whether membership of the League of Nations constituted recognition of a state or instead required it as a prerequisite. The latter option was preferred by the British delegation,

⁸¹ See Martin Wight, ‘International Legitimacy,’ in Wight, *Systems of States*, p.161.

⁸² Cited in MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, pp.19, 21.

⁸³ Bismarck, 29 June 1878, cited in *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 38, p.153.

⁸⁴ Brassey, *The Eastern Question*, p.23; D.M. Mason, Hon. Secretary, Home Counties Liberal Foundation, *Macedonia and Great Britain’s Responsibility* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), p.8.

especially Lord Cecil, who believed recognition of statehood should remain subject to great power deliberations. However, the US argued that admission to the League and recognition were identical. Ultimately, the argument of Chilean jurist Alejandro Alvarez, that membership constituted collective ‘automatic recognition’ of a state, was accepted by the League of Nations Assembly from 1921. This change detracted from the requirement of *de jure* recognition by the great powers and effectively constrained their policy options by forcing them to align, making it less likely that a powerful government could block the emergence of a new state.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the very importance of recognition was also questioned, as declaratory theory, according to which statehood did not depend upon recognition, increasingly challenged nineteenth century constitutive theory. As lawyers started to believe that statehood was a question of fact rather than subjective recognition, the need for an elaborated set of criteria for statehood arose.⁸⁶ A predilection for the codification of norms among South American states produced the best known formulation of the criteria for statehood, the Montevideo Convention of 1933, cited above.⁸⁷ The Montevideo definition was fairly limited; it demanded simply that a state have a permanent population, a defined territory, a government and a capacity to enter into relations with other states. Yet, it signalled that the state could, in theory, be defined objectively and independently of foreign powers.

A broader change in understandings of state formation was epitomised by the writings of Gertrude Bell, a senior British civil servant in post-war Iraq. More sympathetic than most to Arab nationalism, she also recognised that the new era called for a new language of state formation. Reflecting the ongoing power of existing

⁸⁵ See Malbone W. Graham, *The League of Nations and the Recognition of States* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1933), pp.10-11, 31-43.

⁸⁶ See Grant, *The Recognition of States*.

⁸⁷ ‘Convention on the Rights and Duties of States’ (Montevideo Convention), *op. cit.*

states to define new boundaries in practice, Bell regularly referred to her work as ‘setting up an Arab state,’ ‘creating kings’ or forging the future for the ‘happy nation which has no history.’⁸⁸ At times, she regarded the construction of this edifice with dismissive triviality, laughing at how ‘remarkable’ a thing had been created with ‘five weeks work.’⁸⁹ Yet Bell also wanted the world to see Iraq as a self-made entity. Anxious for Faisal to be perceived as a legitimate king, she stated: ‘Somehow or other the country must be got to declare itself.’⁹⁰ She resented the Colonial Office’s attempts to curb Faisal’s quest for independence and for failing to realise ‘that we are not building here with lifeless stones; we’re encouraging the living thing to grow and we feel it pulsing in our hands. We can direct it, to a great extent, but we can’t prevent it growing upwards.’⁹¹

Meanwhile, there was a fundamental sense of uncertainty regarding the state in the post-war world. While increasingly recognised as a fact, it was not yet seen as a permanent fact, as the harmful potential of states encouraged many to think of alternatives to this historically contingent and European edifice. Bell wondered for example, whether, in the hands of the people, the state was really a likely or natural form of political unit. ‘The tribes don’t want to form part of a unified state,’ she said, because they were revolted by ‘an organisation of the universe which could produce anything so destructive to civilisation as the war.’ Perhaps, she mused, the world would ‘sink back into the dark ages of chaos’ and evolve some other form of political organisation.⁹² Even E. H. Carr, a founding father of ‘realism’ in International

⁸⁸ Gertrude Bell, Baghdad, 30 January 1923, 8 July 1921, 11 June 1924, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987), pp.536, 492, 563.

⁸⁹ Bell, Baghdad, 31 July 1921, *ibid.*, p.497.

⁹⁰ Bell, Baghdad, 30 June 1921, *ibid.*, p.488. In events indicative of the ongoing manipulations of the ‘great powers,’ Faisal had been awarded the throne of Iraq as a consolation prize, after failing in his bid for leadership of an independent greater Syria.

⁹¹ Bell, Baghdad, 21 August 1921, *ibid.*, p.500.

⁹² Bell, Baghdad, 5 September 1920, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*, p.404.

Relations lacked confidence in the state. 'Few things are permanent in history,' he said, 'and it would be rash to assume that the territorial unit of power is one of them.'⁹³

The State as an Actor

In the period defined by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the concept of the state came alive in ways not previously seen. In the late-nineteenth century it was commonly depicted as a person with thoughts, feelings and character. In the early-twentieth century, it also acquired a lifespan, a stable identity through time and a definite gender. Moreover, the term 'state' itself emerged forcefully after the turn of the century, reflecting increasing interest in the concept and recognition of its distinction from 'government.' Several commentators heralded the dangers attached to such a vision of the state as a unity, but they were largely unheeded.

The Life of the State

Bell's image of the state as a living and breathing entity was echoed by others in the early-twentieth century, indicative of a new notion, compared to the period of South American independence, that the state had a lifespan. New states (or in American discourse: 'nations') were frequently described as 'young states' or 'young nations,' for whom the powerful had 'watched over their cradle.'⁹⁴ Like humans, they grew older over time. President Taft claimed the US was, in 1912, at 'the threshold of our

⁹³ E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London, Macmillan, 1940), p.293.

⁹⁴ Henry F.B. Lynch, M.P., *Europe in Macedonia, Being Five Articles Reprinted from the 'Morning Post'* (London, Edward Stanford, 1908), p.9.

middle age as a Nation.’⁹⁵ An American legal journal described a 1930 Anglo-Iraq treaty as a ‘birthmark on the independent state of Iraq’ and referred to Iraq’s period of ‘adolescence in the family of nations.’⁹⁶ At its entry into the League, the British delegation claimed to have brought Iraq through this ‘period of adolescence to the full status of manhood.’⁹⁷

One conception of the life cycle, particularly dominant within British discourse, imagined the state’s life to extend back to ancient times. In the nineteenth century, the ‘great’ cultural nations such as Italy and Greece were romanticised. After the First World War, a wider fascination with the history of the new states emerged. Several books were published on Iraq, in particular, with such names as *The Land of the Two Rivers* and *Marvellous Mesopotamia; The World’s Wonderland*.⁹⁸ The former aimed to uncover what ‘Mesopotamia stood for in the past’ and glorified Iraq by recall to its ancient Babylonian and Assyrian civilisations, maintaining that only depopulation stood in the way of a ‘vision of a regenerated Babylonia.’⁹⁹ In the field, Gertrude Bell was thrilled to recite to Faisal the romance of ancient Iraq, ‘the story of the Arab conquest as Tabari records it, the fording of the river and the rest of the magnificent tale.’¹⁰⁰ In this particular ordering of history, the unity of the state was attributed centuries back through time.

This interest in the great civilisations of the past nurtured the view that new states were not simply recent additions to the international system but entities

⁹⁵ President Taft, ‘4th Annual Message,’ 3 December 1912, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, XV, p.7790.

⁹⁶ Manley O. Hudson, ‘The Admission of Iraq to Membership in the League of Nations,’ *American Journal of International Law*, 27:1 (1933), pp.136-7.

⁹⁷ Sir John Simon (UK), 3 October 1932, League of Nations Assembly 6th plenary meeting, *Verbatim Record of the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations* (League of Nations, Geneva), p.5.

⁹⁸ Edwyn Bevan, *The Land of the Two Rivers* (London, 1917); Joseph T. Parfit, *Marvellous Mesopotamia; the World’s Wonderland* (London, S. W. Partridge, 1920).

⁹⁹ Bevan, *The Land of the Two Rivers*, pp.v, 126.

¹⁰⁰ Bell, Baghdad, 6 August 1921, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*, p.498.

resuscitated from a prior dormant form, facilitated in the Iraq case by the cultural resonance of 'Babylon' in the West. In the League of Nations, British representative Sir John Simon described Iraq as 'the country that has been the source of religion and of civilisation for half the world,' 'enclos[ing] within its boundaries the place that was the Garden of Eden.'¹⁰¹ Later that day, French representative Béranger added his good wishes, on 'the occasion of the resurrection of one of the oldest States, which today becomes also the youngest State in the world.'¹⁰² *The Times* called Iraq 'Most Ancient of Countries' in its coverage of the event, describing how Iraq had 'recovered her liberty' and was a 'great civilisation.'¹⁰³ Iraq had not gained independent statehood but somehow regained it.

Meanwhile, from a legal perspective, the socio-historical conception of the state began to replace the formal emphasis on effective control, underscoring the historicity of the state. In keeping with the nineteenth century tradition, the Montevideo Convention reflected the importance of effectiveness in its emphasis on territory.¹⁰⁴ However, several shifts in effective power went unrecognised in the interwar period. The US refused to recognise Manchukuo or the Italian Empire in Abyssinia. The League of Nations' membership also refused to recognise Manchukuo, although its stance over Abyssinia was weaker. In 1932, the League adopted the Stimson doctrine, refusing to recognise situations brought about by non-peaceful means. Consolidated further by the non-recognition of territorial conquests during the Second World War, these events moved the image of the state away from

¹⁰¹ Sir John Simon (UK), 3 October 1932, League of Nations Assembly 6th plenary meeting, *Verbatim Record*, p.5.

¹⁰² M. Béranger (France), 3 October 1932, League of Nations Assembly 7th plenary meeting, *Verbatim Record*, p.2.

¹⁰³ 'Iraq Admitted to League,' *The Times*, 4 October 1932, p.13.

¹⁰⁴ Grant, *The Recognition of States*, p.6.

effectiveness and towards a ‘material’ understanding of the state as a socio-historical entity across time.¹⁰⁵

The State as Person and Caricature

The oneness of the state was also underlined by an increasingly widespread tendency to regard the state as a person. This was reflected first in changes to legal language. Although the early-nineteenth century had seen a shift from persons to titles as the contractors, treaties were still effectively forged between sovereigns. In an 1878 defensive alliance between Great Britain and Turkey, for example, the actors were ‘Her Majesty the Queen’ and ‘His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan.’¹⁰⁶ Likewise, the Treaty of Berlin was cast between monarchs (‘His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias’ etc).¹⁰⁷ But in treaties involving the US, that state was depicted in the abstract, as in an 1862 commercial agreement between ‘The United States of America’ and ‘His Imperial Majesty the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.’¹⁰⁸ In the interwar period, legal practice elsewhere made this transition towards abstract contracting parties, with the exception of certain British treaties (to accommodate the unique relationship between the British monarch and the Commonwealth).¹⁰⁹ This change was also mirrored in non-legal language, in which simple names such as ‘Chile’ and ‘Germany’ were increasingly preferred over the ‘Republic of Chile’ or ‘the German Empire.’

In the early-twentieth century, it also became commonplace to hear the state depicted as a *gendered* person. This was particularly prevalent within US discourse,

¹⁰⁵ See chapter one for an explanation of the term ‘material’ in this context.

¹⁰⁶ See *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1878, doc.516, p.888.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Treaty of Berlin,’ *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁸ ‘Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between the United States and the Ottoman Empire,’ 25 February 1862. Accessed on the website of the Avalon Project: www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/ (March 2003).

¹⁰⁹ Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, p.608.

where the possessive adjective 'her' was used to feminise the state, from 'her population' and 'her possessions' to 'her revolution,' 'struggle,' 'independence' and 'freedom.' Woodrow Wilson commonly referred to Germany as 'she' during the First World War. By the time Iraq gained independence, this language was entrenched. The President of the League of Nations Assembly described how Iraq had been rewarded for 'the praiseworthy efforts *she* has made during the past few years to organise the country, to establish *her* political status, to delimit *her* frontiers and to cope with the multiple problems confronting *her* rulers.'¹¹⁰

This personification built upon a more established tendency to depict relationships between states in terms of singular actors with national labels. As discussed above, the use of labels such as 'the Turk' reflected stereotyped understandings of particular populations. However, they were also used as synonyms for states themselves. Titles of books and pamphlets that described relationships between states often did so in terms of essentialised characters; Paton's *The Bulgarian, The Turk and The German* (1855), William Eleroy Curtis' *The Turk and His Lost Provinces* (1903).¹¹¹ In the context of Kemal Atatürk's campaign after the First World War, the Turk was again particularly vilified. *The New York Times* contemplated the 'return of the Turk' to the Balkans and the fear that 'he' might cross the Straits as 'he did centuries ago.'¹¹² Turkey became 'a victorious Turk,' elided with Kemal, the 'wily Turk.'¹¹³

The tendency to depict states in stylised terms was reflected also in the prevalence of caricature in the late-nineteenth century, especially around the Berlin

¹¹⁰ President (trans.), 3 October 1932, League of Nations Assembly 6th plenary meeting, *Verbatim Record*, p.3.

¹¹¹ William Eleroy Curtis, *The Turk and His Lost Provinces; Greece Bulgaria Servia Bosnia* (New York and London, Fleming H. Revell, 1903).

¹¹² 'Events in the Balkans and Great Defeat with the Threat of the Turk's Return,' *The New York Times*, 1 January 1923, p.12.

¹¹³ 'Kemal's Overtures to Allies Arrogant,' *The New York Times*, 9 July 1921, p.2.

Conference. One author's account described Russia as a 'great overgrown colossal baby,' 'grasping convulsively' at the possessions of others, 'with the glee of a demon.'¹¹⁴ Others used stories involving human and animal characters to convey caricatured images of states. In one, Turkey was a brat who caused havoc in 'Mrs Christian's' nursery but was indulged by his guardians 'Daddy Bull' and 'Cousin Kaiser.'¹¹⁵ In another, the central metaphor used was a farmyard of animals including the Russian pig 'in a semi-wild state' and the 'sick' Turkey who 'lay panting and gaping under his coop.'¹¹⁶ The use of such heavily stylised, monolithic images demonstrated an understanding of the state as possessing a distinct personality.

That the analogy of the state as a living person was increasingly powerful was indicated by Norman Angell's intense frustration with this image as the First World War loomed nearer. Angell found the depiction of the state as a 'homogenous whole' both dangerous and non-sensical. He argued that 'the fine-spun theories' propounding that 'the relationship between nations can only be determined by force ... all arise from this fatal analogy, which in truth corresponds to very few of the facts.' He stressed in particular that many in a divided Germany were opposed to the building of warships and told readers that the 'German' attempting to destroy the British Empire was a non-existent abstraction.¹¹⁷ Yet by the eve of the Second World War, such arguments were largely left to the realm of poetry, as Auden reminded readers there was 'no such thing as the State.'¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Guy, *War with Russia*, p.4.

¹¹⁵ Anonymous author, *A Regular Little Turk, or Mrs Christian's Troublesome Brat* (London, Goubald and Jon, 1877).

¹¹⁶ John Bull (fictional name), *What's to be done with the Turkey? Or John Bull's Dilemma* (London, and Belfast, William Mullan and Son, 1877).

¹¹⁷ Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion; A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), p.297, p.315.

¹¹⁸ Auden, *op. cit.*

The Emergence of the State

In the early-twentieth century, the term 'state' itself emerged more obviously in the discourse of world politics. The nineteenth century saw the 'state' used infrequently and amidst other terms, such as 'nations,' 'countries' or 'powers.' Abstract concepts of 'states' rights' and 'statehood' were first written down in American English, in the mid-nineteenth century, and there was great interest in 'state-building' there after the civil war. But the term 'state' commonly and interchangeably referred to the US 'states.' Scholar Edward Atkinson, for example, regarded the 'separate and partly or wholly *independent* nations or states' of Europe as the same kinds of entity as the '*interdependent* states' of the US.¹¹⁹

The concept of the state as a distinct model of political organisation emerged in the early-twentieth century, partly out of concern, particularly in the US, to advance the science of political studies and distinguish the discipline from other social sciences.¹²⁰ Anna Haddow's survey of the political science literature before the end of the nineteenth century revealed only scarce references to the concept.¹²¹ Subsequently, with the formation of the American Political Science Association in 1903, academic analyses of statehood began to arise.¹²² In this context, the Montevideo Convention signalled that the state had truly arrived as a dominant mode of thinking about political organisation.

Interestingly, as the term 'state' gradually emerged, it was often written in upper case form. From newspapers to government officials, the discourse featured the 'young State,' 'new State,' 'Balkan State,' 'Arab State,' 'autonomous State' and

¹¹⁹ Edward Atkinson, 'The Relative Strength and Weakness of Nations; Two Studies in the Application of Statistics to Social Science' *The Century*, 33:3 (1887), p.428.

¹²⁰ See Gunnell, 'In Search of the State.'

¹²¹ Anna Haddow, *Political Science in American Colleges and Universities, 1639-1900* (New York, Appleton-Century, 1939).

¹²² See for example, the criteria outlined by Stephen Leacock, *Elements of Political Science* (London, 1906), p.12.

‘independent State.’ The League of Nations Covenant also used the upper case form, in contrast to the later UN Charter. One potential reason is that the state was not a universal form of political unit but instead a mark of distinction; President Hayes for example divided the Western hemisphere into ‘States and sovereignties.’¹²³ But perhaps too, the notation reflected the glorification of the state in some circles, exemplified to the extreme by the German nationalist celebration of it as a cultural and political expression of the ‘nation.’ That this could affect grammatical practice was incidentally pointed out by Franklin Giddings, who blamed the First World War on the ‘Teutonic philosophy of authority’ that had ‘seized upon a creation of demoniac imagination and called it The State, spelled with a large “T” and a capital “S.”’¹²⁴ Like Auden, Giddings saw the ‘State’ as a dangerous illusion, to which mankind had succumbed.

Forces for Unity

The developing monism of the late-nineteenth century was partly a product of the growth of nationalism, as the state became the embodiment of supposed ‘national’ ideals. The replacement of standing armies with general conscription confirmed the image of the state as a unit above government, implicating the legal relationships between individuals across borders.¹²⁵ But a number of other interlinked forces also shaped the state as a unity. A decisive one was the continued collapse of natural law and the rise of a positivist view, in which international law derived from the voluntary will of states. Building on the work of Bentham described in the previous chapter, positivists such as John Austin and later Lassa Oppenheim advocated a more

¹²³ President Hayes, ‘1st Annual Message,’ *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, X, p.4421.

¹²⁴ Franklin Henry Giddings, *The Responsible State* (London, 1919), p.48.

¹²⁵ Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, p.535.

‘scientific’ approach to law, separable from questions of morality.¹²⁶ This vision placed the state and its consent at the centre of international law, a perspective that imported into English legal thought the statism common to German political thought.

Second, while an English theory of the state was underdeveloped, a small body of late-nineteenth century American scholars was developing the state concept in a particular direction. They rejected the idea of the social contract and with it the image of the state compartmentalised into government and society, characterising it instead as an ‘organic intellectual and political internal unity.’¹²⁷ Influential by the 1880s, this ‘organic’ theory was corroborated by the nationalist viewpoints of a generation of scholars trained in Germany and France, who sanctified national power, rejected natural rights and saw nationalism as a force overriding political difference within the state. John Burgess’ Teutonic conception of the state, for example, construed it as a locus of the nation and of unlimited sovereignty, distinct from the government that merely exercised that sovereignty.¹²⁸

Burgess was criticised by Willoughby who equated the state with authorised government.¹²⁹ Furthermore, after the First World War, the monist image of the state was attacked by a so-called ‘pluralist’ critique that pointed to the range of associations to which human beings belonged.¹³⁰ However, the organic vision of the state did not decline. Instead, it was core to the principle of national self-determination that arose in the post-war era. Wilson’s conception of national self-determination, revolving around the idea of political maturity described above, was closely linked to his belief

¹²⁶ See Austin, *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined*; Oppenheim, *International Law*.

¹²⁷ Francis Lieber, *Miscellaneous Writings*, II (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott, 1881), p.228

¹²⁸ John W. Burgess, *The Foundations of Political Science* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1933).

¹²⁹ Willoughby, *An Examination of the Nature of the State*.

¹³⁰ See Laski, *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays*, p.240.

in the organic nature of the state as a fully-fledged, organic entity or 'person.' Self-government, he claimed, was 'a form of character and not a form of constitution.'¹³¹

Representation and Images of the Enemy

Of course, the nineteenth century was also an era in which bourgeois society was striving against the omnipotence of the State to protect the sphere of individual freedom.'¹³² Undercutting the monist image of the state, was the acknowledgement that in reality, the actions of governments did not always represent the wishes of the people. Cobden, for example, often argued that the policies of European governments did not enjoy popular support.¹³³ While Gladstone claimed that Turkish Muslims looked upon the perpetrators of atrocities against Christians as 'heroes,' others denied that the leaders and population of Turkey were synonymous, arguing that the problem of persecution was a 'question of government.'¹³⁴

In this respect, wartime discourse was highly variable. On the one hand, the practices of elision and caricature reached a pinnacle in government propaganda and media hysteria against the 'bestial Huns.' In Britain for example, a 1915 government report detailed German atrocities against Belgians and a 1918 Ministry of Information Film was entitled 'Once a Hun, Always a Hun.'¹³⁵ Such images promoted an understanding of Germany as a unity and partially accounted for the slow recovery of trade with Germany in the war's aftermath. Yet, another discourse separated out the government and people of enemy states. President Wilson claimed that despite being

¹³¹ Cited in Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World*, p.25.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p.483.

¹³³ See Cobden, Speech on Russian War II, House of Commons, June 5 1855, in Bright and Rogers (eds.), *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden*, II, p.330.

¹³⁴ W.E. Gladstone, *Lessons in Massacre, or The Conduct of the Turkish Government in and about Bulgaria since May 1876* (London, John Murray, 1877), p.61; Sir Oliver Lodge, *Macedonia, or the Problem of the Near East*, substance of town meeting address, Birmingham, 9 October 1903 (Birmingham, Cornish Brothers, 1903), p.4.

¹³⁵ Michael Sanders and Philip Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18* (London, Macmillan, 1982), pp.137-162.

at war with Germany, 'we act without animus, not in enmity toward a people nor with the desire to bring any injury or disadvantage upon them, but only in armed opposition to an irresponsible Government.'¹³⁶ Later, he told Congress that the US 'shall regard the war as won only when the German people say to us, through properly accredited representatives, that they are ready to agree to a settlement based upon justice and reparations of the wrongs their rulers have done'¹³⁷

Enemy populations played upon this conceptual split. In 1919, *The New York Times* reported that 'as in all capitals of the defeated countries,' Turkish statesmen were trying to convince the Allies that the war had been fought against the desires of the country at large, that the Pasha had returned from Berlin infatuated with Germany and speaking 'like a German, not like a Turk.'¹³⁸ However, such arguments had limited impact. In particular, the punitive regime of German reparations was based on the idea of its 'national' guilt.

Moreover, the disjunction between government and people was always conceptualised in negative terms, a feature of the illegitimate state. Cobden asked his associates in the Commons how they would 'like the United States to accept that doctrine with regard to this country?'¹³⁹ For American politicians in particular, the painful history of civil war underscored the importance of cementing national unity. President Taft argued that in 'its foreign affairs the United States should present to the world a united front,' because national solidarity was 'indispensable' to the attainment of national ideals.¹⁴⁰ Woodrow Wilson also projected the 'oneness' of the US 'as a

¹³⁶ Woodrow Wilson, 'War Message,' 2 April 1917, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, XVI, p.8232.

¹³⁷ Woodrow Wilson, 'Address to Congress,' 4 December 1917, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, XVI, p.8401.

¹³⁸ 'Disorders in Turkey,' *The New York Times*, 22 February 1919, p.2; 'Says Turkey was Dragged into War,' *The New York Times*, 17 March 1919, p.2.

¹³⁹ Cobden, Speech on Russian War I, *op. cit.* p.313.

¹⁴⁰ William Howard Taft, '4th Annual Message,' 3 December 1912, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, XV, p.7767.

single personality in the great company of nations.’¹⁴¹ He was convinced that none of the other statesmen assembled at the Paris peace conference ‘represent[ed] their own people,’ even though his own Congress was by this time dominated by his political opponents.¹⁴²

As in the period of South American independence, the understanding of representation contained in this discourse was surprisingly disconnected from the principle of democracy. Governments were not portrayed as representing the majority will of their populations but were seen as trustees for a more general and universal will, expressed in ideas of ‘oneness’ and ‘unity.’ Thus, even as democracy became increasingly important to the legitimacy of the state, the image of the state as a person revolved around a more doctrinaire, albeit not contradictory, conception of domestic political life. E.H. Carr, writing during the First World War, expressed this shift. ‘We can no longer find much meaning in the distinction familiar to nineteenth century thought between “society” and “state,”’ he said, because ideas of universal right are always tied to the ‘national interest.’¹⁴³

The State in World Politics

The period of Ottoman decline was one in which some of the embryonic themes of world politics described in the previous chapter developed. Many of the distinctions and hierarchies dominant in the nineteenth century broke down, such that states became more ‘equal.’ Further, the systemic understanding of world politics identified in the early-nineteenth century became stronger and was formalised through

¹⁴¹ Woodrow Wilson, cited in Derek Heater, *National Self-Determination; Woodrow Wilson and his Legacy* (St. Martin’s Press, 1994), p.23.

¹⁴² Cited in MacMillan, *Peacemakers*, p.17.

¹⁴³ Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, p.100.

theoretical conceptions of the 'state of nature.' At the same time, the post-war period left unresolved certain questions regarding the forces behind world politics, such as rationality versus irrationality and sovereignty versus nationalism. These were the implicit debates of the discipline of 'International Relations' that arose in a more definite and self-conscious manner between the two World Wars.

Francis Lieber, who died in 1872, described his age as the 'national' period because nationalism had emerged as an important force in the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁴ Yet, the true implications of nationalism for world politics were not understood until much later. They came to be comprehended not simply because of the direct effect of nationalism during the First World War, but also its indirect effect of fashioning the state into an abstract person and moral entity, providing the perfect fodder for a developing realism.

Race, Religion and Humanity

In the late-nineteenth century, the developing concept of national identity continued to compete alongside other conceptions of human identity based, not on difference, but sameness across national boundaries. In the South American case, community was often thought about in regional terms. In the Ottoman case it was religion, deeply embedded in the history of the region, which was most salient. Events in Bulgaria, for example, were most commonly described in terms of the 'Christian' and the 'Turk.' The depiction of suffering populations as 'Christian' appealed to the populations of Europe. Indeed, efforts to protect Christian populations within the Ottoman Empire

¹⁴⁴ Lieber, *Miscellaneous Writings*, II, p.228.

provided the only major examples of alleged 'humanitarian intervention' prior to the UN Charter.¹⁴⁵

However, in the late-nineteenth century, religion also stood for something broader, intrinsically connected to the cultural attribute of 'Europeaness.' An advocate of the Serbian cause claimed the Serbs were 'champions of the West against the East.'¹⁴⁶ An Armenian reverend appealed to 'English Christians,' for help on the grounds of common religion and the role of Armenian language and literature in 'the general development of Indo-European philology.'¹⁴⁷ Likewise, a wealth of literature identified 'Turkey' absolutely with 'Islam.' The poet George Spencer depicted the 'Christian's blood' spilling in Bulgaria under the light of the crescent shaped moon.¹⁴⁸ G. W. Cross distinguished between the Christian and Muslim Gods, the one just, the other a 'God of Blood' presiding over the 'Turkish Tyrant' and 'Moslem brood.'¹⁴⁹

Although the concept of race was often applied to small national groups, it could also encapsulate broad delineations of human identity, such as 'Slavs' or 'Anglo-Saxons.' Victoria de Bunsen's travel writing for example, referred continually to religion, but also to the distinctions of Orient and Occident, and Northern and Southern Europe. She described the energetic spirit of the 'strong races of the North' and the sleepy warmth of the South.¹⁵⁰ The achievements of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' were widely celebrated, this race perceived to be a 'great brotherhood,' 'one in history, religion and race' whose power might be realised through a 'federation of all the Anglo-Saxon peoples.'¹⁵¹ In the era of 'national' self-determination, Iraq was also

¹⁴⁵ Simon Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace? Humanitarian Intervention and International Law* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), p.25. The examples in question are Greece (1827) and Syria (1860-1).

¹⁴⁶ Popovic, *Serbian Macedonia*, pp.30-31.

¹⁴⁷ Behesnilian, *In Bonds*, p.9.

¹⁴⁸ Spencer, *War, The Turk in Arms*, pp.6-14.

¹⁴⁹ G.W. Cross, *Bulgaria's Woes: A Ballad for Britons* (Belfast, Aitchison and Erskine Mayne, 1876).

¹⁵⁰ Bunsen, *The Soul of a Turk*, p.266.

¹⁵¹ Brassey, *The Eastern Question*, pp.40-1.

celebrated in the League of Nations as the first ‘direct representative of the Arab race, that noble race which has played so remarkable a role in history.’¹⁵²

As in the period of South American independence, many late-nineteenth century studies also addressed the idea of a world community of humankind. Its particular formulation did not emphasise the need for tolerance across religious or national communities but the forces of sameness that contradicted their very existence. For example, Guy, an author who described himself only as a ‘London physician,’ argued in support of Turkey on the basis that the creeds of Islam, Judaism and Christianity all believed in ‘one God, and one Prophet.’¹⁵³ The International Arbitration and Peace Association, part of the British peace movement, produced a pamphlet on the ‘Unity of Man’ in 1886, stating that up to four hundred years ago, all great writers ‘wrote for the world, and not for their own small country.’ It argued that the greatest tie between men was ‘identity of thought and purpose’ rather than ‘the accidents of birth, or class, or race, or language.’¹⁵⁴ In the era of supposed ‘nationalism,’ this was a rejection of the concept of difference.

The Implications of Nationhood

Meanwhile, as in the early-nineteenth century, the nation-state lacked the panoply of ‘nationalist’ implications associated with it today. By the 1830s, nationalism referred to the specific doctrine of the divine election of nations and not an attachment to one’s own ‘nation.’ As nationalism grew towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was used to refer to an imperial and xenophobic movement of the extreme right, the very

¹⁵² M. Rosso (Italy) (trans.), 3 October 1932, League of Nations Assembly 7th plenary meeting, *Verbatim Record*, p.4.

¹⁵³ Guy, *War with Russia*, pp.13-14.

¹⁵⁴ ‘The Unity of Man’ (1886), in International Arbitration and Peace Association, *Our Work in Italy*, pp.1-2.

opposite of a mass movement.¹⁵⁵ In the same vein, the use of the noun 'national,' to refer to the citizen of a nation, was only recorded in 1904.

Thus, 'nationalism' was not necessarily understood as a force for conflict. The late-nineteenth century was the era of social Darwinism, and some believed that struggle amongst nations was healthy, natural and necessary, because it contributed to the 'survival of the fittest.'¹⁵⁶ For many others, however, the association between the nation and conflict was weak. In a pamphlet produced by the International Arbitration and Peace Association, Felix Moschelless wrote:

We hesitate as we pen the words that stand at the head of these pages. Do they at a glance give an adequate idea of the bill of indictment we would prefer against patriotism? Do they imply that love of the fatherland seems to have become practically inseparable, in modern life, from covetousness of the neighbourland? Do they assert that patriotism, in its essence a virtue, has been strained and twisted, until it has assumed the shape of a vice - that is has licensed bloodshed and sanctioned warfare?¹⁵⁷

Moschelless expressed genuine incredulity at what he implied was a new realisation: that nationalism or 'patriotism' had negative possibilities.

In late-nineteenth century political thought, nationalism was not a major focus as a source of conflict. Many English liberals, for example, were dismissive of its negative potential. Mill, like Constant, Tocqueville and Berlin, perceived in nationality an important source of social solidarity. To the extent that he saw its dangers, he believed these pertained to a past era, 'which made the good of the whole human race a subordinate consideration to the good of the country of one's birth.'¹⁵⁸ Cobden and Bright rejected intervention to save a 'nationality' but otherwise barely mentioned the concepts of nationalism or nationality. Instead, they depicted the

¹⁵⁵ Benner, *Really Existing Nationalisms*, p.16.

¹⁵⁶ See for example, Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics, Or Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of 'Natural Selection' and 'Inheritance' to Political Society* (New York, D. Appleton, 1890).

¹⁵⁷ Moschelless, 'Patriotism,' pp.1-3.

¹⁵⁸ Kohn, *Prophets and Peoples*, p.41.

harmony of interests among states in rationalistic, economic terms. They did not attack nationalism as a source of conflict, but instead the false rationale of the 'balance of power.'¹⁵⁹

In addition, as in the early-nineteenth century, nationalist figures themselves often failed to perceive any intrinsic link between the nation and conflict. While German nationalists such as Treitschke viewed conflict as endemic to international affairs, Guiseppe Mazzini associated the flourishing of national states with progress towards a brotherhood of nations and claimed cosmopolitanism and nationalism were linked. Since nations were not in conflict with each other, but only with multinational empires, the age of nationality would usher in a new organisation of Europe as a league of democratic peoples. Every people, he claimed, has a special mission which constitutes its nationality, but which also contributes to the fulfilment of the general mission of humanity. His ultimate stated goal was not the liberation of Italy but the regeneration of mankind it would bring about.¹⁶⁰

In contrast, by the First World War, the link between the nation-state, expansionism and conflict had become obvious; the war itself was called the 'Great War' but also the 'war of the nations.'¹⁶¹ Many now saw the nation-state as the main obstacle to consciousness of community and unity in world relations, including prominent 'idealists.' American Scholar Pitman Potter for example, claimed that cosmopolitanism and nationalism alternated as the dominant 'modes of human life.' He believed cosmopolitanism was likely to win out eventually, but acknowledged that people 'cannot, so long as human psychology and culture is what it is today, forget

¹⁵⁹ See Donald Read, *Cobden and Bright; A Victorian Political Partnership* (London, Edward Arnold, 1967).

¹⁶⁰ See Kohn, *Prophets and Peoples*, pp.86-93.

¹⁶¹ See Edward Raymond Turner, 'War Literature,' *American Political Science Review* 9:1 (1915), p.142.

their national kinships and national traditions in a universal brotherhood.’¹⁶² Moreover, those that continued to object to the claim that ‘nations’ were ‘competing units’ necessarily driven to expansionism, no longer thought of the idea as new. Angell inadvertently captured this shift, describing the idea that ‘a nation’ is ‘necessarily pushed to territorial expansion and the exercise of political force against others’ as a ‘universal assumption.’¹⁶³ His thought became more cautious after the war, emphasising international organisation rather than faith in progress and human reason.¹⁶⁴

Hierarchy and International Society

Another force that mitigated against the perception of the nation as a moral absolute, was the hierarchical way in which nations and states continued to be conceptualised. The distinction that dominated late-nineteenth century debate was the well-documented one between civilised and non-civilised ‘nations.’ Although the Ottoman Empire was effectively included, for balance-of-power reasons, in the international society of Europe from 1856, it was always regarded as a cultural pariah. It was accorded a second-class status even in 1907, when the second Hague conference sanctified the use of capitulations and prohibited it from nominating a permanent member to the Court of Arbitration. The development of the so-called ‘standard of civilisation’ codified a deeply felt sense of European cultural and political superiority, that delegitimised the ‘barbarian’ policies of the Ottoman Porte towards its subject races, while also legitimising European imperialism.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Pitman B. Potter, *An Introduction to the Study of International Organization* (New York, Century Co., 1922), pp.15-19.

¹⁶³ Angell, *The Great Illusion*, pp.ix-xiii.

¹⁶⁴ See Lucian M. Ashworth, *Creating International Studies; Angell, Mitrany and the Liberal Tradition* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999), p.6.

¹⁶⁵ See Gong, *The Standard of Civilization*.

Thus in the nineteenth century, international society became an increasingly exclusive concept, both in theory and practice.¹⁶⁶ According to Benedict Kingsbury and Adam Roberts, nineteenth century writers increasingly assumed that international law was generated only by the states of Europe and America, a product of 'civilisation' that did not exist elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ James Lorimer subdivided mankind into several categories based on stages of civilisation and argued that 'semi-barbarous' nations such as Turkey were entitled only to 'partial recognition,' a justification for the regime of capitulations.¹⁶⁸ 'Civilised nations' composed the 'civilised world' and 'civilised Europe.' Burgess claimed the state itself represented the apogee of human civilisation which non-European cultures could only learn from and not replicate.¹⁶⁹

Yet, the degree to which nations or states were hierarchically ordered was to alter gradually after the First World War. The distinction between civilised and uncivilised parts of the world remained, but was considerably weakened at a moment at which European 'civilisation' appeared particularly dubious. In practical terms, capitulations were dismantled everywhere except China. In normative terms, the international legal community was increasingly understood as a universal one, especially in the US. For example, President Wilson did not seek an association of civilised nations, but a 'general association of nations' to guarantee independence and territorial integrity to 'great and small states alike.'¹⁷⁰ Henry Ford argued that the political science conception of state was overly focussed on the Western world and

¹⁶⁶ See Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*.

¹⁶⁷ Benedict Kingsbury and Adam Roberts, 'Grotian Thought in International Relations,' in Hedley Bull, Benedict Kingsbury and Adam Roberts (eds.), *Hugo Grotius and International Relations* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), p.48.

¹⁶⁸ James Lorimer, *The Institutes of the Law of Nations; A Treatise of the Jural Relations of Separate Political Communities* (Edinburgh and London, W. Blackwood, 1884).

¹⁶⁹ John W. Burgess, 'The Ideal of the American Commonwealth,' *Political Science Quarterly*, 10:3 (1895).

¹⁷⁰ Woodrow Wilson, cited in Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, p.583.

needed to be widened to incorporate forms other than the 'civilised' state.¹⁷¹ The image of the international realm moved away from the bifurcated world of the nineteenth century.¹⁷²

In this context, one of Woodrow Wilson's distinctive contributions to the discourse of international affairs was his emphasis on the idea of sovereignty. Sovereignty was a meaningful term in the earlier nineteenth century, but was used largely to discuss domestic systems of rule, as in the 'sovereignty of the people' or 'sovereignty over a territory.' In the post-war world, the idea of 'national sovereignty' emerged more strongly, supported by the Americans, British and many small states. But the conceptual link between national sovereignty and sovereign equality was best understood by the Americans. Described by Secretary of State Lansing as 'fundamental' and 'imposed by the very nature of sovereignty,' sovereign equality was a particularly strong theme of the American delegation during the peace process.¹⁷³ It caused a debate regarding the structure of the League of Nations, which culminated in equal votes for League members in the Assembly (though not in the Council). In fact, membership of the League came to be regarded as a sign of 'sovereignty' in the post-war era.

The League of Nations mandates system actually represented a half-way house between hierarchy and formal equality. The Covenant referred to the mandatory powers' responsibilities as the 'sacred trust of civilisation' and erected different classes of mandates based on a territory's capacity for self-rule. However, it made no mention of the distinction between civilised and non-civilised territories and ushered in a new vision of a world of peoples with *equal* rights. In effect, the 'standard' for

¹⁷¹ Henry Jones Ford, 'The Scope of Political Statecraft,' *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association*, II (1905).

¹⁷² See Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*.

¹⁷³ Cited in Cobban, *National Self-Determination*, p.29. See also Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.258.

independence had been lowered. Sir Francis Humphrys, High Commissioner for Iraq, claimed that Iraq was 'fit to stand alone' despite being less smoothly run, efficient or advanced than other established nations and the prominent academic Stephen Longrigg agreed.¹⁷⁴ In a Special Report of 1931, Britain claimed it did not regard the attainment of 'an ideal standard of administrative efficiency and stability' as a necessary condition for statehood.¹⁷⁵

Another type of distinction which declined in the early-twentieth century was that between the states of different hemispheres. The US commitment to the Western hemisphere idea had waned since the 1823 proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine, which had been regarded elsewhere as a projection of hegemony. The US gradually rescinded its promises of protection and tended not to participate in pan-American conferences and initiatives.¹⁷⁶ In the later-nineteenth century, rising US economic strength demanded an 'open door' policy and after the First World War, treaties based on spheres of interest virtually disappeared altogether. The US delegation to the Washington Conference in 1922 supported a campaign against the demarcation of spheres of interest and the nine-power treaty included a clause directly against this.¹⁷⁷

The distinction between great and small nations was also to alter after the First World War. As the norm of national self-determination flourished, it no longer appeared likely or acceptable that the 'small' would be absorbed by the 'great.' It was also no longer valid to ordain that certain nations had a more noble and 'great' history than others. Stripped of its historical and cultural connotations, the distinction now referred only to relative power, such that the term 'great power' became more

¹⁷⁴ Sir Francis Humphry, opening statement to 16th meeting of 20th session of Permanent Mandates Commission, cited in Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, p.40; Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (Reading, Garnet, 2002 [1925]), p.322.

¹⁷⁵ See Evans, 'The Emancipation of Iraq.'

¹⁷⁶ See Arthur Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1954).

¹⁷⁷ *League of Nations Treaty Series*, 38, p.278.

common than ‘great nation.’ Even the term ‘great power,’ which once implied a special status, became more military in meaning.¹⁷⁸ A great power, said a *Morning Post* article, must be able ‘to face the world in arms,’ must be ‘incapable of fear.’¹⁷⁹ ‘Recognition as a Great Power,’ said E. H. Carr, is normally the reward of ‘fighting a successful large-scale war.’¹⁸⁰ Meanwhile, the concept of the ‘superpower’ also emerged after the First World War, a pure description of power unrelated to a people’s ‘glorious’ history.

The emergence of the term ‘state,’ described above, was perhaps linked to this decline of hierarchy. In the late-nineteenth century, new entities were described as ‘independent sovereignties’ ‘independent principalities’ or ‘little independencies.’¹⁸¹ Bulgaria, under the Treaty of Berlin, became an ‘autonomous and tributary Principality under the suzerainty of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan.’¹⁸² After all, it was fairly meaningless to attribute ‘sovereign statehood’ while sovereignty operated on a sliding scale; this was the era of colonies, capitulations and the attribution of legal personality to trading companies. It was only as states actually became more equal in practice that the concept of the state became more meaningful, denoting what were increasingly the ‘like’ units of the international realm.

An International System of Like Units

By promoting a vision of states as homogenous units, the collapse of hierarchy also contributed to the emergence of a more systemic understanding of world politics. Just as a declining sense of hierarchy facilitated the emergence of a non-exclusionary form

¹⁷⁸ See Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, ch.4.

¹⁷⁹ *Morning Post*, 6 January 1908, cited in Lynch, *Europe in Macedonia*, pp.47-8.

¹⁸⁰ Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, p.140.

¹⁸¹ See for example, Annual Message of President, Dec 1 1879, in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1879, p.xv.

¹⁸² ‘Treaty of Berlin,’ *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. 69, art. I, p.751.

of international law, so it universalised other aspects of the relationships between states and made possible the vision of a universal 'system.' In fact, Potter stated explicitly that the multiplication of states, through a 'subdivision of homogenous units,' increased the prospects of conceptual order, homogeneity being the necessary basis for 'law among units of any order.'¹⁸³

The period thus ushered in a new vocabulary for describing the relationships of states in terms of simple and universal concepts. This began in the nineteenth century, when the integration of Russia, the rise of the US as a global power and the expansion of the states system, caused categories such as 'world politics' (introduced by Friedrich List in 1846) and the 'world State system' to become more visible. Likewise, the 'European law of nations' increasingly gave way to Bentham's 'international law,' especially in Anglo-American circles, and 'international law' materialised as a more self-aware field.¹⁸⁴ In the interwar period, the term 'international community' emerged in place of 'family.' According to one American author, the League of Nations constituted an effort to supplant 'the old, informal, ill organized Family of States' by a 'better organized international community.'¹⁸⁵

In fact, even the concept of the 'family' of nations had become more organised and less intimate, reflecting a particularly American and asocial understanding of it that was perfectly compatible with war-like behaviour. In the late-nineteenth century, President Garfield described how the US had 'conquered a place in the family of nations' through the war of independence.¹⁸⁶ Wilson hoped that 'some part of the great family of nations' could keep the process of peace alive even as the rest of the

¹⁸³ Potter, *An Introduction to the Study of International Organization*, p.9

¹⁸⁴ Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civiliser of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870-1960* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), introduction.

¹⁸⁵ Graham, *The League of Nations*, p.1.

¹⁸⁶ James A. Garfield, 'Inaugural Address,' 4 March 1881, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, X, p.4596.

‘family’ fought each other at war.¹⁸⁷ Likewise, the meaning of friendship was limited in American discourse to mere neutrality. President Harrison, demanding indemnities from Chile for the deaths of American sailors, claimed his policy was in accordance with a policy ‘of the most absolute fairness and friendliness.’¹⁸⁸ Wilson described the US as a ‘true friend to all the nations of the world’ because ‘we threaten none, covet the possessions of none, desire the overthrow of none.’¹⁸⁹ In a world of equals, friendship and family were no longer indicative of social relationships.

Within this universal international realm of homogenous units, states were increasingly assumed to exhibit certain universal behaviours. At the end of the nineteenth century, academic Paul Reinsch argued that the dominant characteristic of world politics was the existence of independent nation-states striving to assert their national identities in an environment of actors with similar goals.¹⁹⁰ Another article, written in an 1896 American journal, stated that the ‘concomitants’ of ‘national existence’ were a desire for and tendency towards ‘political influence and territorial expansion.’¹⁹¹

For others, states shared the characteristic of ‘rationality.’ In a series of letters to the *Morning Post*, for example, Sir Edward Sullivan rejected ‘moral obligation’ as a source of policy and claimed that true ‘statesmanship’ was about ‘common sense.’ He argued that ‘*chacun pour soi, quid pro quo*’ described the instincts of communities more than individuals.¹⁹² In the US, an article by Henry Tuckerman also linked the state with rationality. The advance of ‘true principles’ such as popular sovereignty

¹⁸⁷ Woodrow Wilson, ‘3rd Annual Address,’ 7 December 1915, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, XVI, p.8102.

¹⁸⁸ Benjamin Harrison, ‘4th Annual Message, 6 December 1892, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, XII, p.5750.

¹⁸⁹ Woodrow Wilson, ‘2nd Annual Address,’ 8 December 1914, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, XVI, p.8021.

¹⁹⁰ Paul S. Reinsch, *World Politics at the End of the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1900).

¹⁹¹ Bliss, ‘The Eastern Question and Questions,’ p.473.

¹⁹² Sir Edward Sullivan, *Common Sense in Politics; Letters Written to the Morning Post* (London, Office of the Morning Post, 1883), p.28.

had, by enhancing the power of public opinion, increased the influence of rationality and 'science' on states. This rendered moribund the 'elaborate formulas of diplomacy' which were replaced by automatic forces.¹⁹³ Congress regarded 'foreign representation' as 'superfluous' because states' relationships were automatic rather than social.¹⁹⁴

During the interwar period, the horrors of war cast doubt on the 'rationality' of states' behaviours. Carr suggested that the world had now realised international relations were governed by irrational forces and that rational arguments about the harmony of interests between states were, therefore, missing the point.¹⁹⁵ While liberals such as Angell continued to make such arguments, others such as Potter no longer saw rationality as an attribute of the state. Instead, extraneous forces of rationality had to be created in an ever more dangerous world. The multiplicity of states created 'a more urgent demand' for the new concept of 'international organization,' to 'supervise and foster' the international realm and an adequate 'science of international relations' was needed to 'explain existing conditions and suggest the elaboration of new legal and political institutions.'¹⁹⁶

The State of Nature

Linked to this contrast between rationality and irrationality, the reasons cited for war were also variable. In the early-twentieth century, as the state concept was crystallised, the theoretical discourse of the state increasingly reached out to analyse the external ramifications of sovereignty. In the early 1900s, juristic theory, exemplified by Willoughby, became popular, and with it the notion of anarchy in the

¹⁹³ Henry T. Tuckerman, 'American Diplomacy,' *The Atlantic Monthly*, 22:131 (1868), p.350.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.349-51.

¹⁹⁵ Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, p.288.

¹⁹⁶ Potter, *An Introduction to the Study of International Organization*, p.12

international realm, as the logical corollary of state sovereignty. Just years before, Paul Reinsch had been notable for his exclusive focus on international relations, since a discrete discourse devoted to this area had not yet been developed by other scholars.¹⁹⁷ Now, as the state was pared down to its logical fundamentals and the idea of sovereignty came to mean something more than domestic power, the international came into focus as a discrete realm governed by forces different to those of domestic politics.

The essence of this realm, and the dominant motif of its study throughout the twentieth century, was the concept of the 'state of nature.' In the post-World War One period, the concepts of the state of nature and international anarchy were stated increasingly explicitly, as Brian Schmidt demonstrates. British scholar James Bryce, for example, stripped the state back to its essentials, arguing that 'every political community, whatever its form, be it republican or monarchical, is in a State of Nature towards every other community.' Fellow historian Goldworthy Lowes Dickinson described how the turning point towards 'international anarchy' had been 'the emergence of the sovereign State at the end of the fifteenth century.'¹⁹⁸ In the 1930s and into the post-Second World War period, the 'realists' such as Carr, Lasswell, Neibuhr and Herz reiterated the absence of central authority as the defining element of the international realm.

However, there are three important qualifications regarding the 'state of nature' in the post-war period. First, is that the external ramifications of sovereignty were subject to challenge, especially by the so-called 'pluralist' school, which attacked the notion of state equality as incompatible with the realities of international

¹⁹⁷ See Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*, p.75.

¹⁹⁸ James Bryce, *International Relations; Eight Lectures Delivered in the United States in August, 1921* (New York, Macmillan, 1922); G. Lowes Dickinson, *The European Anarchy*, cited in Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*, pp.159, 161.

law. It also developed the concept of a 'society' of states, thus highlighting the link between society and hierarchy on the one hand, and anarchy and equality on the other.¹⁹⁹ From a broader variety of scholars, a number of books were published in the interwar period with titles relating to the society of nations or 'international society,' alongside increasing attention to international organisation and especially the League of Nations.

Second, and related, the state of nature was not yet seen as an insurmountable state of affairs. Potter, a 'liberal' scholar, argued that sovereignty itself was an invention of political science.²⁰⁰ Far from the state of nature, he equated the existence of international organisation with a type of 'world government.'²⁰¹ But realists too did not yet regard the state of nature as a permanent mode of world politics. Carr acknowledged that sovereignty itself was a fairly meaningless concept likely to 'become in the future even more blurred and indistinct.' He claimed the term was 'invented after the break-up of the mediaeval system' and was 'never more than a convenient label.'²⁰²

Third, in this period, sovereignty was not the only force that dictated the nature of the international realm. In fact, now that nationalism was recognised as a potentially negative force, the nation-state was often seen as the source of war. Carr, part of a Royal Institute of International Affairs 'study group' of nationalism, saw the existence of nation-states as a defining element of his reality. It militated against international government since 'independent power is the basis of the nation-state'

¹⁹⁹ See Edwin M. Borchard, 'Political Theory and International Law,' in Charles Merriam and Harry Barnes (eds.), *A History of Political Theories; Recent Times* (New York, Macmillan, 1924); James W. Garner, *Political Science and Government* (New York, American Book Company, 1928).

²⁰⁰ Pitman B. Potter, 'Political Science in the International Field,' *American Political Science Review*, 27:3 (1923), p.382.

²⁰¹ Potter, *An Introduction to the Study of International Organization*, p.13

²⁰² Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, p.296.

and thus ‘the internationalisation of power is really a contradiction in terms.’²⁰³ It also explained why power was an end in itself in world politics. Citing Reinhold Niebuhr’s claim that there was no sharp divide between ‘the will-to-live and the will-to-power,’ he argued that ‘[n]ationalism, having attained its first objective in the form of national unity and independence, develops almost automatically into imperialism.’²⁰⁴ He concluded his treatise with an explicit statement that the ‘current form of international politics is due to the fact that the effective units are nation-states.’²⁰⁵

Moreover, Norman Angell’s engagement with realism was primarily an engagement with the argument that the nation dictated the security dilemma. He claimed it was ‘commonly argued that the principle of Nationality must stand in the way of cooperation between States.’ Yet, he continued, ‘the facts do not justify that conclusion for a moment.’²⁰⁶ Angell cited Homer Lea’s argument that the attempt to prevent war was an unwise meddling with universal law because nations are governed like all other living things, by the laws of survival. He argued not only that the analogy was misplaced, but that nationality would give way to a cosmopolitan form of political organisation in the future, that would lead to peace.²⁰⁷

Thus, by the end of the period in question, the equality of states, one of Woodrow Wilson’s core principles for the reform of international relations, had revealed itself to be Janus-faced. As much as the post-war period did away with many of the cultural, political and legal inequalities that had previously constrained progress in the world, it also gave birth to a new set of assumptions in which equality was linked to the trappings of juristic theory, including the idea of anarchy, the state of nature and the lack of potential for social relations in the international realm. At the

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.137.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.144.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.290.

²⁰⁶ Angell, *The Great Illusion*, p.312.

²⁰⁷ Homer Lea, ‘The Valor of Ignorance,’ cited in Angell, *The Great Illusion*, p.161.

same time, these forces were contested. As the discipline of International Relations emerged, differences of emphasis on rationality versus irrationality and the state versus the nation cut across the oft-cited distinction between idealists and realists.

The State's New Power

During this time, changes in understandings of international law carved out an increasingly privileged position for the state, compared to the South American period. Sovereign equality and pluralism began to replace the bifurcated European vision of the world.²⁰⁸ The Montevideo criteria implied that the state was defined and protected by law rather than the vagaries of the powerful. At the same time, individual states were strengthened by a contradictory development, the influence of legal positivism and its notion of state consent. Austin claimed the state possessed the ultimate power to define and enforce the law. Oppenheim's vision of the 'family of nations' was new in its statist and pluralist direction, as he regarded states as free to pursue 'different interests and values.'²⁰⁹

Meanwhile, at a political level, the state was far more dominant. Hegel's conception of the nation-state as an 'absolute power on earth' dictated that 'every state is sovereign and autonomous against its neighbours.'²¹⁰ So too the 'State' with a capital 'S' encapsulated a vision of power and force unique to the era. Yet the corollary of this vision, that the international realm was an anarchical one defined by the security dilemma, imposed a constraint on states that was increasingly recognised, leading to an emphasis on the supposed 'realities' of international politics.

²⁰⁸ See Krabbe, *The Modern Idea of the State*.

²⁰⁹ See Benedict Kingsbury, 'Legal Positivism as Normative Politics: International Society, Balance of Power and Lassa Oppenheim's Positive International Law,' *European Journal of International Law*, 13:2 (2002), pp.401-436.

²¹⁰ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, cited in Evan Luard (ed.), *Basic Texts in International Relations* (London, Macmillan, 1992), p.195.

Conclusion

The period defined by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was one of transition for the concept of the state and that of the nation. The late-nineteenth century was allegedly the era of European nationalism, involving a shift from the notion of human uniformity to human heterogeneity.²¹¹ Indeed, the idea of an essential, original or at least objectively discernible national identity was important. Yet, this was contradicted in several ways. First, ideas of nationhood and identity politics were fundamentally distrusted as veils for more sinister and selfish intentions. Second, the meaning of the nation was still unclear, shifting between prior and state-based forms. Lastly, ideas about nationhood existed in a multi-layered and somewhat confused structure of understandings about identity, which included the bonds of religion, race and civilisation. That a people was distinct from all others competed against the concept of sameness as a legitimising tool.

Hence, at least in the earlier part of the period in question, the world was not conceptualised as a world of nation-states and stateless nations. Self-determination was celebrated not as the expression of nationhood but as a means to freedom from oppression, so it mattered little whether the ruler of a new state was actually indigenous to the state or not. The weakness of the nation-state image created space for a variety of other models, such as the federation and the multinational state, and it was presumed that the dominant tendency of global political organisation was not towards fragmentation but agglomeration. Small nations were deemed to be drawn to 'great nations,' forming the large units essential to progress. As some 'nations' were seen as more worthy of statehood than others, it was the role of existing powers to

²¹¹ Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, p.19.

adjudicate and control the state formation process, such that new states were created by existing ones.

However, the post-1918 world witnessed fundamental changes in this set of understandings. The concept of 'national self-determination,' though not as clear-cut as often imagined, relied on a vision of the world divisible into 'peoples.' These peoples were seen as having unique national conditions and their independence was increasingly cast as a function of their national consciousness, and not the tinkering of existing powers, even though such tinkering remained widespread.

In tandem, the locus of sovereignty moved from the monarch or government to the broader and more abstract concept of the state. Influenced by nationalism, legal positivism and by an American academic community drawn towards 'state-building' in the aftermath of civil war, the state emerged as an organic 'person' broader than the government and people that comprised it. It became a living entity, with a lifecycle often extending into the ancient past, together with personality, feelings and behaviours. The organic conception of the state as a person was the basis for Wilson's vision of a liberal world order composed of politically mature peoples. Conversely, it was the core of a more sinister image of the state as a nationalistic, ego-maniacal being, the 'State.'

In turn, understandings of the international realm began to shift. Prior to the twentieth century, nationalism was poorly understood. In a world where civilisation and cultural greatness were supposedly shared values, there was no presumption that members of a 'nation' shared a distinctive and exclusionary conception of the good. Nationalism was thus not perceived as a driver of conflict. In the twentieth century, however, the 'nation'-state rose to prominence, at the same time as images of world politics overlain with the bonds of shared religion, culture and civilisation receded. As

states were perceived as organic 'people,' they became moral entities unto themselves.

International society was also transformed in the early-twentieth century, as various hierarchies and distinctions collapsed in tandem with the idea of formal equality between states. The expansion of the states system, now composed of 'like' units, created a new, more 'systemic' or mechanical vision of what was now 'international' politics. States were now subject to universal forces and their behaviour could be abstracted along a few basic principles. Theoretical treatments of sovereignty produced the 'state of nature' as its logical corollary and the world assumed a more sinister appearance. At the same time, however, much of this pessimism remained attached not to the structure of sovereignty but to the contingent force of nationalism, as realists relied on a far wider range of factors than 'structure.' Paradoxically, nationalism was simultaneously the cause of war, and in Wilson's national self-determination, the basis for peace.

The League of Nations Covenant stands as a testimony to these changes, but also a reminder that this was a moment of transition. Forged between the 'High Contracting Parties,' the members of the League were not quite yet 'states' but the 'signatories' to the Covenant. Indeed, membership was not actually restricted to states but open to 'Any fully self-governing State, Dominion or Colony' which was not expressly excluded in the annex, phrasing designed to allow for the pattern of British imperial devolution.²¹² In short, the structure of world politics was not yet recognised as a system of states exclusively. While some perceived the League as a voluntary association of independent states, others saw it as a form of federal government.²¹³

²¹² See Graham, *The League of Nations*, pp.5-6.

²¹³ Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*, p.200.

Furthermore, contrary to the UN, based on 'respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples,' there was no formal mention of equality. Even the 'State' concept, used infrequently and capitalised, denoted a form of status. Yet, the members did accept obligations not to resort to war and to regard international law as the guide to their relations with each other. There was also no mention of hierarchy related to civilisation or cultural 'greatness.' The only formally distinct group was that of the powerful, those states that sat on the League Council. Meanwhile, while the drafters preferred to refer to 'world' peace or 'world' problems, the term 'international' was also used as this realm adopted the rudimentary appearance of an international 'system.'

Although the contrast between American and British visions of the state was more muted in this area, many of the understandings that were new were also broadly 'American' ones. Americans tended to regard the state as an outcome of self-determination rather than the creation of external power and resisted the British desire to retain great power prerogatives. They took more interest in the theory of the state and explicitly propounded an organic conception of the state that solidified the state as a unified actor. Finally, Americans promoted the conception of sovereign equality which not only challenged the hierarchies of international society but also gave rise to a more systematic understanding of the international realm.

In the post-Second World War period, many of the understandings developed in this chapter emerged more clearly. As will be seen, however, it was soon forgotten that a dominant cluster of interrelated concepts – the state, equality, anarchy, the state of nature, the system - had not always characterised understandings of the way the world worked. Liberals still aimed to counteract the negative forces that surrounded these concepts. But they increasingly accepted them as inimical to international

politics, and did not see that some of their own favoured norms - self-determination and equality – were complicit in the building of the anarchical realm.

Chapter Four: British Africa, 1945-1979

It is a consequence of nineteenth century nationalism that we personify a power, calling it 'she,' and saying that Britain does this, American demands that... These shorthand terms are of course unavoidable in political writing, but they are dangerous if they lead us into thinking that powers are inscrutable and awesome monsters following predestined laws of their own.

Martin Wight, 1946.¹

In the decades after the Second World War, a change occurred within international politics that was as momentous as the war itself. Decolonisation expanded the international system of states to encompass nearly the whole world, fundamentally altering the political relationships between the world's richest and poorest regions forever. In doing so, it significantly impacted dominant understandings of the nature of world politics. Moreover, it did so with startling rapidity, a pace of change unimagined by those that attended the San Francisco conference in 1945 to establish the post-war order.

The paradox of this chapter is that the main shift during the decolonisation period was the rise of the nation concept, despite its seeming irrelevance to many post-colonial contexts. As discussed in the previous chapter, the nation had long been a significant term of reference. Now, however, it assumed centre stage as broader identity categories such as race, religion and civilisation faded. As the states system expanded, the nation concept became a convenient means to simplify human societies and world politics. Expressed in the institution of the 'United Nations,' the post-war world was not a world of states, but also 'nations.'

¹ Wight, *Power Politics*, pp.28-29.

The Collapse of the British Empire in Africa

During the nineteenth century, colonies became the badge of great power status, demonstrated by the declining influence of former imperial centres such as Portugal, Spain and Turkey. The future seemed to lie with large states, such as the US and the German Reich, and with overseas possessions. In the years 1884 to 1891, Africa became the battleground of this competition for prestige, formally partitioned amongst the European powers in the ‘scramble’ for Africa.² By the end of the century, Europe controlled the entire continent except for Liberia and Ethiopia. On the map of this enormous land mass, vast swathes were coloured pink, the distinctive marker of British authority.³

Paradoxically, the global extension of British authority occurred against a backdrop of rapid and fundamental change within British imperial policy. By the end of the nineteenth century, the white dominions had achieved near autonomy in domestic legislation and an unspecified right to be consulted on foreign policy decisions affecting them; their ‘dominion’ status was defined at the 1907 Imperial Conference. Elsewhere, British colonial administration, which had always allowed a greater degree of local autonomy than the French model, came under the influence of Frederick Lugard’s concept of ‘indirect rule,’ an unobtrusive approach relying on the traditional elite groups of African societies.⁴ In 1914, Britain accepted, even as it

² The ‘scramble for Africa’ also allowed European inter-state hostilities to be played out far away from mainland Europe, thus avoiding a generalised war.

³ The following general works were consulted for the purpose of this historical summary: John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation; The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988); William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1977); W. David McIntyre, *British Decolonization 1946-1997: When, Why and How did the British Empire Fall?* (London, Macmillan, 1998); David Ryan and Victor Pungong (eds.), *The United States and Decolonization; Power and Freedom* (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 2000); Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa; Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁴ Lugard was High Commissioner in Nigeria from 1900.

dragged the Empire into war, that the colonies themselves would determine their contribution to the war effort. The war also produced the first promise of a 'gradual' move towards self-government for a non-white colony (India), declared by Secretary of State Lord Montagu in 1917.

After the First World War, the African context also began to change, albeit slowly. Although the League of Nations mandates system consigned most African colonies to external rule in perpetuity, it also aspired to a more humane and progressive form of rule encapsulated in the notion of a 'sacred trust.'⁵ Meanwhile, the resistance movement blossomed as many Africans confronted concepts of Western political thought whilst studying in the US and Europe. They argued that Britain should extend the precedent set by the white dominions and lead African peoples to greater self-government. During the interwar period, a number of European conferences were convened on the subject by such figures. 'African nationalism' was becoming increasingly prominent.⁶

The Second World War was the crucial turning point in the history of European empire. First, the economic and political weight of the European powers was irrevocably diminished; the British Empire in particular faced a problem of 'overstretch.' Second, economic prowess now depended less on capturing territories than on dominating markets. For this reason, colonies were increasingly recognised as encumbrances rather than assets, although both the US and France were interested in asserting themselves in Indochina. Third, African desires for 'self-determination' became more prominent, encouraged by the idea that the war had been fought in the

⁵ League of Nations Covenant, Peace Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919, article 22. Accessed on the website of the Avalon Project: www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/ (March 2004).

⁶ 'African nationalism' has many connotations, including the reclamation of Africa for 'Africans,' the unification of Africa and self-determination for colonies. In this thesis, African nationalism refers primarily to the political campaign for independence and 'self-determination' for African territories. Pan-Africanism denotes broader aspirations for continental unity.

name of 'freedom.' Fourth, a normative shift away from colonialism occurred at a global level, as Europe's status as a bastion of 'civilisation' was undermined and the anti-imperialist US assumed unquestioned power. Finally, superpower rivalry played into the hands of the self-determination movement, as both the US and USSR presented itself as the 'friend' of 'Third World' peoples.

The precise balance and timing of these forces is disputed, but the outcome was undeniable, as the pace of independence increased exponentially, first in Asia, and then in Africa. Three years after the war, independence had been accorded to a partitioned India, as well as to Burma and Ceylon, and the Palestine mandate had been surrendered and transformed into the state of Israel. The British political elite, increasingly aware of its limited capacity to maintain the Empire, refashioned the Colonial Office into an institution for planning the transition to 'self-government.' Nevertheless, adaptation to the new political circumstances was not immediate; in the 1950s, the Churchill and Eden governments tried to slow the process.

A new phase of decolonisation was initiated at the end of that decade by two events. In 1956, the Suez crisis dealt an embarrassing blow to British (and French) prestige. In 1957, the Gold Coast ('Ghana') became the first country in Black Africa to gain independence. Harold Macmillan, who had taken over as Prime Minister after Eden's resignation, instructed a celebrated 'profit and loss' analysis to analyse the state of the Empire and, during a tour of Africa in 1959-60, gave a speech that described the 'winds of change' sweeping across that continent.⁷ He actually hoped that independence could be confined to West Africa, where there was no settled European population.⁸ However, in 1960, the year of independence for Nigeria, Togo

⁷ Harold Macmillan, UK Prime Minister, 'Address to the Houses of Parliament,' Cape Town, 3 February 1960, PRO PREM 11/4937, p.15.

⁸ See Dan Horowitz, 'Attitudes of British Conservatives towards decolonization in Africa during the period of the Macmillan government 1957-1963' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1967).

and Somalia, there was a decisive swing away from tolerance of colonialism at the UN. In a steady stream, independence arrived in Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Gambia and Botswana in the space of six years. Decolonisation was not unfolding as the British had hoped and planned.⁹

The process of decolonisation varied considerably from case to case. For Ghana, the post-war Labour government anticipated gradual reform, since despite the long tradition of protest, the 'nationalist' movement was mainly composed of right-wing, Western-educated traditionalists, who sought change without revolution. However, the revised constitution of 1946 did not satisfy a newer brand of more radical and populist nationalists such as Kwame Nkrumah.¹⁰ Nkrumah was sent to prison after serious rioting in 1948, but was released and invited to lead the government when his party enjoyed success in the 1951 elections. Now, the previously model colony rapidly accelerated towards independence. Although Ghana soon became a one-party state, it seemed to promise political stability and economic development and became a symbol of the triumph of 'African nationalism.'

In Nigeria, a vast and internally divided territory in which Britain had relied heavily on indirect rule, a series of constitutional revisions in the 1950s aspired to shape a federalist political structure protective of minorities. Independence with a federal constitution came in 1960 and Nigeria became a republic in 1963. From the start, however, Nigeria was plagued by conflict between the three regions. It was continually marred by internal stresses resulting in coups, counter-coups, massacres, and a civil war sparked by the attempted secession of Biafra in 1967-70.

Elsewhere, federalism provided a means to circumscribe the nationalist movement and preserve the authority of white settlers. In East Africa, the concept was

⁹ See McIntyre, *British Decolonization*, p.8.

¹⁰ Colin Legum, 'Action and Reaction in Ghana,' *The Political Quarterly*, 29:3 (1958), p.269.

staunchly resisted for this reason. The leader of the powerful Bugandan Kingdom, Kabaka Mutesa II, was bitterly opposed to the model of an East African Federation, sparking a debate in the House of Commons which led to the idea being dropped. Independence for Uganda was achieved in 1962 and the Kabaka became President. However, the internal relations of the country deteriorated, paving the way for a 1966 coup and an extremely violent period following the assumption of power by Idi Amin in 1971. Meanwhile, Tanzania gained independence in 1961, spurred by a nationalist movement lead by Julius Nyerere. It enjoyed years of relative tranquillity and was united with Zanzibar in 1964.

In Kenya, white settlers hoped for independence along a similar model to that of Australia, but the British Government recognised that Kenya was primarily an African territory. White pretensions were further diminished when, in the early 1950s, British troops were needed to suppress Mau Mau terrorist outbreaks. In 1963, the party of Jomo Kenyatta won an election and Kenya became a peaceful state, albeit in practice a one-party one. The idea of an East African Federation was revived, as nascent African governments recognised the advantages of centralised economic planning to remedy trade and industrial imbalances. Yet, although a timetable and a draft constitution were established in 1963, the process was blocked by disputes over relative advantages. Kenya never ratified the agreement and the idea receded once more.

The one federation brought to fruition was the Central African Federation, formed in 1953 out of Nyasaland, and North and South Rhodesia (now Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe). It was designed to create a viable economic unit and to counter-balance a number of conflicting forces: racism and Afrikaner nationalism in South Africa, white Rhodesian pressure for closer association with South Africa and

African nationalism in the north. The system designated the whites of Southern Rhodesia the senior partners, leading to serious labour and trade union troubles. In 1960, the Monckton Commission concluded that each territory should have the right to secede. In the face of growing nationalist sentiment, the federation was dissolved in 1963, a move welcomed by Washington.

Subsequently, Malawi and Zambia became independent members of the Commonwealth in 1964. Southern Rhodesia (by this time 'Rhodesia') reverted to a self-governing colony. Many white people there felt stranded and disgruntled, believing that the experiment with federation had denied them the chance of independence and white rule. In 1965, the white government under Ian Smith made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, which was only surrendered in 1979. Following formal independence in 1980, Robert Mugabe came to power and fashioned the now 'Zimbabwe' into a one-party state.

From the late 1960s, the Empire declined in its importance to Britain, as Europe assumed increasing importance for British trade. Only the Commonwealth remained as the evolutionary outgrowth of the Empire. In 1947, India and Pakistan became its first members with mainly non-European populations. As it continued to expand, a Secretariat was established in London in 1965. Now a free association of sovereign states, the Commonwealth comprised the United Kingdom and those former dependencies that chose to maintain ties of friendship and to acknowledge the British monarch as a symbolic head. Only Burma (Myanmar) rejected membership altogether after its independence in 1948, but some members did later withdraw, including Ireland (from 1949), South Africa (from 1961 to 1994) and Pakistan (from 1972 to 1989).

In the US, anti-imperialism had long been a pivotal aspect of foreign policy and its anti-colonial rhetoric provided a constant source of irritation for European powers.¹¹ However, as the Cold War developed, and relations between the 'Third World' and the West were increasingly seen through bipolar lenses, US policy was somewhat inconsistent. President Franklin Roosevelt sympathised with the aspirations of the colonial peoples but also sought to maintain unity with US allies and prevent the creation of power vacuums in strategically important regions.¹² His death in 1945 marked a turning point, for whereas he had sought an international trusteeship for Indochina, President Truman did not oppose, and from 1950 publicly supported, French ambitions to re-exert control there. Meanwhile, the early Cold War period saw the US reaching out to Africa through the establishment of embassies and disbursement of loans. In 1958, at the behest of Vice President Nixon, a separate Bureau of African Affairs was created within the State Department under Joseph Satterthwaite.

With the accession of John F. Kennedy to the presidency, US policy changed course again and reached the pinnacle of anti-colonialism. Identified with the civil rights struggle occurring domestically, such a policy was also regarded as a crucial Cold War weapon. Africa, said Kennedy, would look either East or West 'for sympathy, help and guidance in their effort to recapitulate, in a few decades, the entire history of modern Europe and America.'¹³ However, beneath the surface of this moralising worldview, US policy was still primarily reactive.¹⁴ In 1960, due to a direct appeal from Macmillan, the US abstained from a General Assembly vote on the

¹¹ By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the US had acquired overseas territories, such as Hawaii, the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

¹² See Christopher Thorne, 'Indochina and Anglo-American Relations, 1942-45, *Pacific Historical Review*, 45:1 (1976), pp.73-96.

¹³ John F. Kennedy, 'The New Nations of Africa,' in Theodore C. Sorensen, '*Let the World Go Forth*': *The Speeches, Statements and Writings of John F. Kennedy* (New York, Delacorte Press, 1988), p.365.

¹⁴ See Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy*, p.2.

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the archetypal anti-colonial statement of the post-war period.¹⁵

Conceptualising the People

On the surface, the nation concept was not a dominant theme during the decolonisation of Africa, especially in a natural or cultural form that implied it existed ‘prior’ to the state. The process of African decolonisation was impacted by a perception previously central to the maintenance of empire, that Africa had no ‘history’ and hence no meaningful categories of human identity. This explained why ‘African nationalism,’ at least in British Africa, was primarily a political movement for independence within colonial boundaries, not a cultural expression.

Yet this claim was contradicted by a discourse that brought the ‘nations’ of the world within a universal history, despite the various types of nationhood that now became visible. The nation concept actually became increasingly vague and yet increasingly powerful and all-subsuming; a convenient distortion with a long-lasting legacy of confusion.

Historical Nationalism and Fear of the Arbitrary

The claim that Africa lacked ‘history’ was especially associated with the historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who believed that Africa’s ‘past’ before the arrival of the Europeans was merely ‘the unrewarding gyrations of picturesque tribes.’¹⁶ His dismissive stance reflected a commonly held colonial view; the Governor of Kenya stated in 1947, for example, that ‘[t]here is no “African nation”’ and ‘no purely

¹⁵ See David A. Kay, ‘The Politics of Decolonization: The New Nations and the United Nations Political Process,’ *International Organization*, 21:4 (1967), pp.786-811.

¹⁶ Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The Rise of Christian Europe,’ *The Listener*, 28 November 1963, p.871.

African history or culture.’¹⁷ The image of Africa as a ‘tabula rasa’ was not necessarily a negative one, for some believed that the lack of ‘entrenched cultural obstacles’ rendered Africa fertile ground for Western models of governance.¹⁸ For example, US Under-Secretary of State George Ball justified support for the integrity of the Congo (against the force of ‘Balkanization’ construed as fertile soil for Soviet influence) on the basis that the administrative structure created by Belgium was ‘the only political structure the Congo has ever known.’¹⁹

For others, the alleged ‘blankness’ of African society presented a conceptual problem, as African societies were gradually carved up into independent states along former colonial boundaries. Commentators were concerned by the seemingly ‘arbitrary’ delineation of state boundaries according to ‘the quirks of fate and the whims of the colonial powers’ rather than ‘natural geographical and tribal frontiers.’²⁰ Whereas in the nineteenth century, ‘nationalism’ was a heavily resisted concept, now the implicit assumption was that state boundaries both should, and usually were, based on deep national ties. Thus Satterthwaite, then US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, described ‘Africa’s currently artificial political boundaries.’²¹ Macmillan compared the countries fraught with racial tensions to the ‘countries of homogenous nations.’²² UN idiom, reflecting the legal implications of the crisis in

¹⁷ ‘Despatch from the Sir P. Mitchell (Governor of Kenya) to Mr. Creech Jones,’ 30 May 1947, annex, doc. CO 847/35/6, in Ronald Hyam (ed.), *The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-51*, 1 (London, H.M.S.O., 1992), p.141.

¹⁸ William Persen, ‘Africa in Transition,’ *Worldview*, 2:7 (1959), p.3.

¹⁹ George W. Ball, Under-Secretary of State, ‘The Elements in our Congo Policy,’ *Department of State Publication 7326, African Series 25* (Department of State, 1961), pp.13-14.

²⁰ Colin Morris, ‘Nationalism in Africa,’ *Christian Focus Pamphlet*, no.19 (London, Edinburgh House Press, 1963), p.32.

²¹ Joseph C. Satterthwaite, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, ‘The United States and the New Africa,’ Address to Southern Regional Assembly, 17 January 1959, *Department of State Bulletin* (Department of State, 9 February 1959), p.14.

²² Macmillan, ‘Address to the Houses of Parliament,’ p.15.

confidence, deliberately reverted to the plural 'peoples' to describe a population and truncated the concept of 'national self-determination' to 'self-determination.'²³

The gnawing sense that Africa's boundaries were 'artificial' or 'arbitrary' created some support for 'ethnic' secessionist movements. In the 1960s, there were two major cases of breakaway entities, Katanga from Congo and Biafra from Nigeria. These appealed to a body of opinion that favoured 'natural' small entities to 'artificial' large ones and envisaged the reconstitution of African society on tribal lines. Biafra, said one commentator in *The New York Times*, was 'unique' in being 'the first truly black African republic,' 'a nation ... conceived in violence, hardened in war, united in suffering.'²⁴ In contrast, Nigeria, according to some American journals, was 'little more than a geographical expression,' existing only 'because some white men, in an almost playful mood, sat down at the turn of the century and drew some lines on a vague map.'²⁵

A similar current of thought was also evident in Britain. A feature article in *The Times* emphasised the heterogeneity of Nigeria, noting that its 'frontiers nowhere coincide with physical divisions, nor are they the boundaries of ethnic groups.'²⁶ It sparked letters from those concerned by the 'arbitrary creation of territorial units.' comprising 'kaleidoscope' populations.²⁷ British writer Elspeth Huxley, a strong defender of colonialism, concurred that Nigeria, 'is not a nation, never has been a

²³ See Charter of the United Nations, ch.XII, art.76; 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,' art.2.

²⁴ Lloyd Garrison, 'Odumegwu Ojukwu Is Biafra,' *The New York Times Magazine*, 22 June 1969, p.9, cited in Martin Staniland, *American Intellectuals and African Nationalists, 1955-1970* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1991), p.130.

²⁵ Claire Sterling, 'Can Nigeria Catch Up with Its Reputation?' *Reporter*, 19 May 1966, p.39, cited in Staniland, *American Intellectuals*, p.131; Stanley Meisler, 'Break-up in Nigeria,' *The Nation*, 9 October 1967, p.336.

²⁶ Daryll Forde, 'Peoples of Nigeria,' *The Times*, 3 June 1960, p.19.

²⁷ 'Administration of Nigeria,' Michael Langley, letter to the editor, *The Times* (11 January 1960), p.13.

nation and lacks even the makings of one.’²⁸ Another distinguished historian, Margery Perham, Reader in Colonial Administration at Oxford University, claimed that the Congo ‘is not a nation’ but ‘a region enclosed within the broken framework of a colonial state.’²⁹ Nations, she continued, were defined by a variety of elements such as a common territory, history, customs, language, religion, and way of life. The ‘astonishing fact’ she went on, ‘is that nearly all the new African nations lacked *all* these elements except a common territory, and even that has been lately and arbitrarily demarcated by alien power.’³⁰

That ‘real’ nations were deeply historical groups existing ‘prior’ to the state, caused some to reject any connection between events in Africa and ‘nationalism,’ which was supposedly not natural to the endemically ‘tribal’ African continent.³¹ In Britain, Lord Hailey rejected the term as a misnomer in the African context. ‘In Europe nationalism is a readily recognisable force, even though it may not be easily definable,’ he said. In Africa, the term ‘Africanism’ was more accurate.³² Meanwhile Perham asked ‘is this nationalism as we have known it during the last few centuries in the Europe where it was bred, or is it something new?’ If it was to be called ‘nationalism,’ she believed it had distinctive features, since many of the early African nationalists had been in a ‘pathological state of mind.’³³

Perham pondered whether in fact, ‘the British people do not understand nationalism, do not recognise it, or at least its strength, in others’ because ‘our exceptional unity, our island position, and the confidence arising from our former

²⁸ Elspeth Huxley, ‘Sacred Cow,’ *National Review* (24 September 1968), p.962.

²⁹ Margery Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning; The Reith Lectures, 1961* (London, Collins, 1963), p.115.

³⁰ Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, p.19.

³¹ See Margaret C. Hubbard, ‘The Threat of African Tribalism,’ *Atlantic Monthly* (January 1961), pp.45-7; Edward Sheehan, ‘It’s Still the Heart of Darkness,’ *The New York Times Magazine* (30 October 1966), pp.76-99.

³² Lord Hailey, *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara*, 3rd edition (London, Oxford University Press, 1957), pp.251-2, cited in Morris, *Nationalism in Africa*, p.32.

³³ Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, pp.19,28.

power, may have bred in us an unconscious kind of nationalism, one that seldom needed to assert or even to know itself.’³⁴ She highlighted the crux of the problem, that in the British mentality, nationalism was not equated with the sudden movement towards independence but was built over centuries. In the late-nineteenth century, many had thought of nationalism and the nation as ‘chimerical,’ conceptual devices used for narrow political purposes. Now, nationhood was cast as a historical force at the heart of political life.

Political Nationalism and a New Merger

Perham was correct that nationalism was now a concept with multiple meanings. In Africa, it was of course far from monolithic. In some territories, its platform *was* cultural or allegedly ‘natural,’ involving a rejection of Western values that had distorted and denigrated African ideas and ways of life. In much of British Africa, however, it was more political, involving a collective desire for independence and self-determination, emerging from a shared experience of colonial rule.³⁵ This was the form of nationalism that so confused some British commentators.

Political nationalism was the form used to justify the formation of states within seemingly arbitrary boundaries. This was a conception of the ‘nation’ akin to Woodrow Wilson’s, an organic community derived from a recently derived political maturity rather than nature or culture. International liberals saw the Second World War as proof that tribalism and ethnicity were passé and dangerous, and pointed to the US as the ultimate example of a state whose success and unity were irrespective of ‘ethnic’ cohesion. Indeed, this vision was particularly common within the US itself.

³⁴ Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, p.86.

³⁵ See Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965).

Americans, who generally saw nations as entities aspiring to 'self-determination' were comfortable using the term 'nation' to describe an African population.³⁶

Although these different versions of nationalism now seem obvious, in the early post-war period, the distinction was poorly understood. Within academia, the concept of the nation was probed with new interest, but was often rooted in the European experience. Thus Hans Kohn coined the classic distinction in 1944, between a 'Western' form that was political, voluntary and rooted in liberal citizenship, and an 'Eastern' form that was more organic, cultural and ethnographic. However, his focus on Europe was distorting; he claimed, for example, that the political form of nationalism was made possible only by the cultural unity characteristic of Western European states.³⁷ Only decades later, no doubt partly as a result of the experience of decolonisation, did other typologies and continuums emerge, allowing for the possibility of a nationalism rooted almost entirely in shared political aspirations.³⁸

Mirroring this conceptual confusion in the early post-war period, the 'nation' that emerged in more everyday language encompassed a melange of different ideas, historical, cultural and political. In particular, there arose the concept of a universal history, according to which 'nations' were all on a common trajectory. Macmillan, for example, equated African nationalism with the 'emergence of independent nations' in Europe, which since the decline of the Roman Empire had been 'one of the constant facts of political life.' Each was, he said, 'inspired by a deep, keen feeling of nationalism.'³⁹ The British socialist writer and former Labour politician John Strachey, called his lecture series on the subject 'The Great Awakening,' implying

³⁶ See Staniland, *American Intellectuals*, pp.58-63.

³⁷ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York, Macmillan, 1944). See also John Plamenatz, 'Two Types of Nationalism,' in Kamenka (ed.) *Nationalism*; Tilly, *The Formation of National States*.

³⁸ See, for example, Anthony Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (New York, Holmes and Meier, 1983 [1971]).

³⁹ Macmillan, 'Address to the Houses of Parliament,' p.12-13.

that in the undeveloped world, 'national consciousness' was re-emerging out of a period of historical dormancy. The 'passionate desire' of 'every nation in the undeveloped world' for independence was, he claimed, not only 'right' but 'natural.'⁴⁰

In the US, there was a similar sense of a universal, 'irresistible trend' dictating that African nationalism would 'inevitably and everywhere triumph in the end.'⁴¹ Although nationalism was seen as a political movement more than a cultural one, there was no attempt to differentiate such types. Dominant liberal voices, such as Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson and Michigan Governor G. Mennen Williams, defined nationalism in terms of the 'flames of freedom' that had spread across the globe since the American Revolution.⁴² All movements for self-determination, whether based on historical, cultural, natural or political understandings of nationhood, were synonymous in this vision. In other words, there was no real attempt to dispel the dubious historical and cultural connotations of nationalism.

Adding to the confusion, the nation was used to describe both prior communities and the state itself. Writing about 'nationalism' in Africa, prominent Methodist missionary and writer (and subsequently BBC broadcaster) Colin Morris saw the nation as the state, since 'new nations' were being born. But it was also the stateless community, since 'whole nations' had risen up 'in rebellion' against colonialism.⁴³ The same vagueness was reflected in American demands for 'an end to the Empire of nations over other nations' and in the UN Charter which espoused 'equal rights' for 'nations large and small.'⁴⁴ Academic Charles Merriam was aware

⁴⁰ John Strachey, 'The Great Awakening, Or: From Imperialism to Freedom,' *Encounter Pamphlet Series*, no.5 (London, 1961), pp.1,15.

⁴¹ Harry R. Rudin, 'The International Position of Africa Today,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 306 (July 1956), cited in Staniland, *American Intellectuals*, pp.68-69.

⁴² Adlai Stevenson, 'The American Revolution in Our Time,' *Progressive* (June 1960), cited in Staniland, *American Intellectuals*, p.76.

⁴³ Morris, *Nationalism in Africa*, pp.13,29.

⁴⁴ See Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.199; Charter of the United Nations, preamble.

of the ‘confusing fashion’ in which the concept was used, and complained that ‘it is not always clear whether the material dealt with is the political unitary group or a cultural group aspiring to political autonomy.’⁴⁵ Yet he only underscored the confusion, since he assumed that a people *awaiting* independence was a ‘cultural’ one.

The resonance of the historical or cultural nation was also reflected in the legitimisation of new states through reference to historic nationhood. A UN Commission’s report on the future of Eritrea, for example, claimed that Eritrea’s population was too ethnically heterogeneous for statehood, a ‘mosaic of religious and linguistic groups’ with ‘different economic habits’ and ‘different forms of social organisation.’ Yet, proposing a federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the report discerned ‘the most intimate bonds’ between the Eritreans and northern Ethiopians and emphasised the ‘close historical, ethnic and social associations’ between the territories.⁴⁶ Similarly, when British Togoland was joined to Ghana, UN delegates focussed not on the recent plebiscite that confirmed the political desire for independence, but the (contested) ethnic commonalities, arguing that ‘these people are one and the same.’⁴⁷ In both cases, the sovereignty of the new composite entity was underscored by a sub-text centred on the historical ties of the population.

The retention of the historical connotations of nationalism served the interests of many parties. For Africans, the nation provided a model of a meaningful and viable society to counter the argument that African populations were too divided to be accorded self-government. ‘Today the rest of the world is seeking to sublimate nationalism,’ said Perham, ‘but upon what other model could the Africans have sought to integrate their small broken societies and regain their lost sense of

⁴⁵ Merriam, *Systematic Politics*, p.264.

⁴⁶ ‘Report of the UN Commission for Eritrea,’ 8 June 1950, UN doc. A/1285, pars.158, 167.

⁴⁷ Mr Asha (Syria), General Assembly, 8 March 1957, UN doc. A/PV.668, par. 63.

autonomy and dignity?’⁴⁸ That cultural communities or ‘nations’ already existed was thus a shared deception that promoted independence through the often ‘fictitious’ view that the populations of sovereign states were, or would become, a ‘people.’⁴⁹

For advocates of self-determination, the historical connotation quietened the lingering fear that institutions of liberal governance functioned best when a population shared a common sense of identity.⁵⁰ It also resolved anxieties surrounding questions of borders, since in contrast to the nineteenth century, when external rule was still considered widely legitimate, it was no longer deemed acceptable for powerful states to determine such questions. The decolonisation process thus raised fundamental anxieties for liberal internationalists, perturbed by the role of external powers in deciding, in Ivor Jennings’ terms, ‘who are the people.’⁵¹ As James Mayall points out, their thought was not only ‘explicitly statist’ but also ‘implicitly nationalist,’ relying on the idea that the new ‘nations’ were in fact historically meaningful.⁵²

Finally, from the perspective of colonial powers, the concept of the historical nation imparted the decolonisation process with a semblance of inevitability, thus countering the conservative claim that the process constituted a denigration of political responsibility on their part.⁵³ Elie Kedourie, a Baghdad-born historian who spent almost his entire career at the London School of Economics, railed against the British loss of imperial confidence, arguing that nationalism was an ideological temptation rather than a deeply rooted sociological phenomenon, and national self-

⁴⁸ Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, p.29.

⁴⁹ David Williams, ‘Aid and Sovereignty: Quasi-States and the International Financial Institutions,’ *Review of International Studies*, 26:4 (2000), p.562.

⁵⁰ See ‘Report of the Commission of Enquiry into South West African Affairs, 1962-3,’ under the Chairmanship of Mr F. H. Odendaal, cited in *A Principle in Torment III: The United Nations and Namibia*, (New York, United Nations Office of Public Information, 1971), p.67.

⁵¹ Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Government*, p.56.

⁵² Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, p.151.

⁵³ Staniland, *American Intellectuals*, p.227.

determination a principle of disorder.⁵⁴ Yet his was an unusual and controversial voice. As political momentum shifted decisively away from British hands, it was increasingly accepted that the nation was an endemic form of political community and nationalism universal and irreversible. Macmillan's 'winds of change' speech provided the metaphor for a sweeping and implacable force, an unstoppable 'wave.' *The Times* described 'the winds that are blowing with increasing force through Africa.'⁵⁵ Britain could feel no responsibility, and suffer no lack of prestige, against such a powerful dynamic.

With regard to understandings of nationalism, therefore, the post-1945 era was defined by ambiguity and paradox. It was an era in which the historical nation-state model did not seem to fit the realities of new political communities. Yet, the concept of nationhood, complete with its historical connotations, became more dominant than ever. This was in stark contrast to the late-nineteenth century, when many saw it as subversive and 'chimerical.' The nation was a requisite concept for new leaders anxious to rally citizens around their flags, for defining 'peoples' in a normative context demanding self-determination for all, and for enabling former colonial powers to acquiesce to the 'irreversible' thrust of nationalism. Centred on so many different interests and ideas, the term 'nation' was increasingly difficult to define, yet seemingly so familiar that it generally did not need to be. In this era, it was not simply that nationalism challenged political ideas and interests, but that these ideas and interests influenced the concept of nationalism itself.

⁵⁴ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1993 [1960]).

⁵⁵ Special Correspondent, 'No Nigeria Invitation to London Meeting; Mr. Macmillan on Need for Independence First,' *The Times* (Monday 11 Jan 1960), p.12.

Creating States

The unexplored tension between the historical and political forms of nationhood, a defining premise of the post-1945 era, was of course also a tension between the ideas of ‘national self-determination’ and ‘self-determination,’ discussed in Chapter One. In formal terms, as Barkin and Cronin have argued, the post-Second World War period was defined by ‘self-determination,’ which was becoming a peremptory international norm.⁵⁶ For example, new states were not based on the boundaries of ethnic ‘nations’ but on inherited colonial borders. The sanctity of existing borders became paramount as a means to protect existing states. Nationalism, associated with war and tyranny, lost legitimacy. Yet as discussed above, state and nation were not so easy to distinguish, as the concept of the state remained closely linked to the idea of a historical ‘nation-state.’ ‘National’ self-determination was far from extinguished as an undercurrent of international political thought.

The post-war period also witnessed broader shifts in assumptions about the nature of the state. First, the state became understood as *the*, not *a* form of political organisation. Second, images of state formation were increasingly ‘bottom-up,’ independent of external power. Both of these shifts were resisted by British observers. Yet as British power declined, so did its ability to shape, not only the future of the world, but the imagery of world politics. The rise of a more American vision, corroborated by the new governments themselves, caused British commentators to rethink their conceptual categories and to accept the state as a universal, inevitable and self-made unit of the international realm.

⁵⁶ Barkin and Cronin, ‘The State and the Nation.’

Independence versus Self-Government

In the post-war period, the Western consensus around 'self-determination,' derived from concerns about Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, masked a range of differences as to its scope and nature outside of that region. During and immediately after the war, Roosevelt's espousal of 'equality of peoples' clashed with Churchill's vision of the Empire's future. In the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, both powers committed to 'respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live' and to 'see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.'⁵⁷ However, Churchill had in mind self-determination only for the conquered nations of Europe. He was quick to clarify that the 'evolution of self-governing institutions' in regions owing 'allegiance to the British Crown,' was 'a separate problem.'⁵⁸ In contrast, Roosevelt argued that Europe's colonial empires should be replaced by a network of independent nation-states and trusteeships. 'A new period has opened in the world's history,' he told Churchill, 'and you will have to adjust to it.'⁵⁹

In March 1942, Secretary of State Cordell Hull's 'Declaration on National Liberation' proposed that the colonial powers prepare their dependent peoples for independence. British policy makers feared that the plan to 'internationalise' strategically important colonies was merely a synonym for American domination. But they were also simply horrified by the vision of a world of independent states. Senior government officials, including Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Colonial Secretary Viscount Cranbourne, argued that

⁵⁷ Joint Statement by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, Atlantic Conference, 14 August 1941. Accessed on the website of the Avalon Project: www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/ (March 2003).

⁵⁸ Churchill (1941) cited in T. Walter Wallbank, *Documents on Modern Africa* (New York, D. Van Nostrand Company, 1964), pp.68-9.

⁵⁹ Roosevelt (1942), cited in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.123.

‘[t]he multiplication of small and completely independent entities all over the world could only be a retrograde step,’ encouraging ‘separatist tendencies.’ Moreover, it was ‘impracticable and quite unrealistic to deal in one document with Czechoslovakia and Gambia, Poland and Barbados.’⁶⁰ Surely, wrote a Parliamentary Under-Secretary, ‘Hull simply had not thought through the implications of national independence.’⁶¹

This rift was a defining feature of the San Francisco conference of 1945, where, according to one observer, ‘[i]ndependence was not mentioned as a goal, for the simple reason that no colonial power *except the United States* look[ed] upon it as a normal and natural outcome of colonial status’⁶² Cold War fears benefited Britain however, as the US shrank away from the Soviet Union’s anti-imperialism. Senior US adviser John Foster Dulles was convinced, by a member of the US delegation, that a commitment to independence belonged to a ‘past’ era of nationalism and should be dropped.⁶³ Thus, the UN Charter was coined without reference to independence as an ultimate and exclusive goal. Chapter XI, the Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories, outlined that trustees should assist colonial peoples to develop ‘free political institutions’ in accordance with their ‘varying stages of advancement.’ Chapter XII committed members to assist dependencies towards ‘self-government *or* independence’ as appropriate to the ‘particular circumstances’ of the territory.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Ministerial Meeting, 3 May 1942, doc. CO 323/1858/9057B, cited in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.250.

⁶¹ Minute by Richard Law, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, 5 July 1943, doc. FO371/35311, cited in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.243.

⁶² Huntingdon Gilchrist, ‘Colonial Questions at the San Francisco Conference,’ *American Political Science Review*, 39:5 (1945), p.987.

⁶³ Harold Stassen, US delegate to UN Conference at San Francisco, ‘Foreign Relations: 1945: United Nations’ (speech), cited in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.535.

⁶⁴ Charter of the United Nations, ch.XI, art.73, ch.XII, art.76.

The British - American disagreement over the future order reflected their normative attachments to empire versus self-determination, as well as British eagerness to retain the advantages of imperial preference. However, it also demonstrated a deeper conflict between different historical assumptions. Rooseveltian idealism depicted national independence as inherent in the natural order of things.⁶⁵ In contrast, British commentators, especially up to the mid-1950s, simply did not see independence as inevitable. During the Labour government of 1945-51, a special committee of enquiry consisting of officials, historians and Members of Parliament, discussed twenty-one of the smaller territories; they assumed that none would become independent.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, the acting Governor-General of Congo predicted that an electoral system providing 'mixed black and white representative government' might take '20 to 30 years' with 'self-government' following 'in something less than 100 years.'⁶⁷ Just eight years later, in June 1959, the Congo was only a year from independence and another government report predicted the area north would soon resemble 'an emerging patchwork of independent or semi-independent States.'⁶⁸

For British policy makers in the early post-war period, the natural order was not a world of nation-states but one composed of diverse units, reminiscent of the fluidity of nineteenth century political arrangements. The Colonial Office maintained diversity as the hallmark of its policy, Assistant Under-Secretary of State Christopher Eastwood commenting that '[w]e have always been rather proud of the degree of

⁶⁵ Victor Pungong, 'The United States and the International Trusteeship System,' in Ryan and Pungong (eds.), *The United States and Decolonization*, p.93.

⁶⁶ McIntyre, *British Decolonization*, p.37.

⁶⁷ Interview published in the *Herald Tribune*, November 25 1951, cited in Isaacs, 'Africa: New Crises in the Making,' *Headline Series*, 91 (Foreign Policy Association, 1952), p.28.

⁶⁸ 'Africa in the next ten years': report of committee of officials (Chairman S StJ Trend), June 1959, F.O.371/137972, no.24, in Ronald Hyam and William Roger Louis (eds.) *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire, 1957-64* (London, Stationary Office, 2000), I, doc.20, p.114.

variation that our colonial system ... permits.'⁶⁹ Constitutional debates in the post-war era continued as if the range of possible categories was endless. In 1957 Noel Hutton, Parliamentary Counsel to the Treasury, described this with some bewilderment:

Within the last ten years we have seen a part of Her Majesty's dominions turned into a foreign country without frills (Burma); a part of these dominions converted into two separate Dominions, and subsequently recognised as independent Republics within the Commonwealth (India and Pakistan); a colony converted into a Dominion without frills (Ceylon); as association of a colony, a protectorate and a trust territory converted into a Dominion, in this case involving an element of annexation (Gold Coast); a colony and two protectorates federated without annexation (Rhodesia); and other operations in respect of Southern Ireland and Palestine.⁷⁰

The key question in the 1950s was not whether a territory could aspire to independent statehood but to full Commonwealth membership, the status of an 'independent Commonwealth nation.'⁷¹ When Nkrumah insisted on dominion status for the Gold Coast in 1951, for example, a debate was provoked as to whether full self-government was the same as equal membership of the Commonwealth. Officials toyed with the idea of a 'limbo' status without full membership. In 1953, Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton still aspired to create a 'mezzanine' status and others talked of an 'independence minus' category.⁷² British peer Lord Hailey pointed to the need to specify in 'strict constitutional idiom' the meaning of 'self-government.'⁷³ Despite being a traditionalist and defender of empire, he recognised ahead of his time that political organisation was a question of law, not political whim.⁷⁴

In this context, British officials denied that there existed a separate category of 'independence' unrelated to Commonwealth membership. Replying to the Bugandan

⁶⁹ Christopher Eastwood to J.M. Martin (Churchill's Private Secretary), 1 September 1941, PREM4/42/9, cited in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.128.

⁷⁰ Cited in McIntyre, *British Decolonization*, p.45.

⁷¹ Vincent Harlow, "'Colonialism' and the Transfer of Power,' *United Empire*, 47:5 (1956), p.4.

⁷² Cited in McIntyre, *British Decolonization*, pp.38-39.

⁷³ Lord Hailey, 'A Turning Point in Colonial Rule,' *International Affairs*, 28:2 (1952), p.183.

⁷⁴ See Suke Wolton, *Lord Hailey, the Colonial Office and the Politics of Race and Empire in the Second World War: The Loss of White Prestige* (New York, St Martins, 2000).

King's case for independence, Governor Sir Andrew Cohen responded that it was 'not clear to the Secretary of State from your letter exactly what is meant by "independence."' Presumably, he continued, 'you are not asking to go outside the Commonwealth' but simply seeking 'to safeguard Buganda against the possibility of East African federation in the future.'⁷⁵ Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd also presumed 'independence' meant 'internal self-government,' with Britain remaining responsible for defence and external relations.⁷⁶

In the midst of this confusion, even the term 'state' was not necessarily connected with the concept of sovereignty in British eyes. A Labour Party policy statement of 1942 suggested abolishing the 'status of colony' and substituting 'that of States named according to the country in which they are situated.'⁷⁷ Again, however, 'statehood' denoted equality only within the Commonwealth; there was no mention of independence or sovereignty. Likewise, the post-war Labour government's Special Committee of Enquiry, meeting to discuss the twenty-one smallest territories, suggested a range of new categories, including 'Island' and 'City State,' ideas buried when Clement Attlee left office a month later.⁷⁸ They also suggested 'Statehood,' a status lower than dominion, but it was rejected when first offered to Singapore in 1956.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ A. B. Cohen, Governor of Uganda, to His Highness the Kabaka, 27 October 1953, *British Parliamentary Papers*, cmd. 9028, p.35.

⁷⁶ Minute by Mr. Lennox-Boyd, 15 Feb 1957, CAB 134/1555, CPC (57)6, in Hyam and Louis (eds.), *The Conservative Government*, I, doc.1, p.2.

⁷⁷ *Report of the 41st Annual Conference of the Labour Party*, reproduced in Wallbank, *Documents on Modern Africa*, pp.75-6.

⁷⁸ McIntyre, *British Decolonization*, p.37.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.40.

Independence and Progress

One reason British commentators did not see independence as inevitable was that the phenomenon seemed at odds with the times. First, it was associated with a past era in which independent states had engineered global conflicts and suffering. Christopher Eastwood, for example, saw the creation of new states as ‘disastrous’ because ‘we are suffering at the moment from too much *independence* and too little *interdependence*.’⁸⁰ On the academic side, Margery Perham speculated that the ‘old shape’ of the world would never return. ‘Do not imagine,’ she told Africans under British rule, ‘that your struggle is going to be for self-government of the old kind, for your independence as little native states with your own little independent parliaments and separate economic systems.’ Instead, she envisaged ‘large new groupings for defence and economic cooperation.’⁸¹ Her words, uttered prior to the inception of the European Community, reflected the assumption that prosperity and peace demanded a model of political organisation beyond the state.

Second, horror at the concept of independence was linked to a concern that the new states were too small or economically vulnerable to be viable. Harry Hopkinson, Minister of State in the Colonial Office in 1954, claimed that ‘it has always been understood’ that certain territories ‘owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent.’⁸² Territories such as Gambia, Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus were regarded as too small to stand alone, together with the Virgin Islands, New Zealand’s Cook Islands or Australia’s Christmas Island.⁸³ The concern was also shared by some US commentators. Assistant Secretary of State Mennon Williams, for

⁸⁰ Minute by Christopher Eastwood, 21 April 1943, CO 323/1858/9057B, cited in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.247.

⁸¹ Margery Perham, *Africans and British Rule* (London, Oxford University Press, 1941), p.92.

⁸² Cited in McIntyre, *British Decolonization*, p.40.

⁸³ Rupert Emerson, ‘Colonialism, Political Development and the UN,’ *International Organization*, 19:3 (1965), p.499.

example, noted that the ‘Balkanization of Africa will lead to markets too small for fruitful development.’⁸⁴

A more radical discourse depicted the state as an ‘artificial institution,’ no longer suited to the economic and political conditions of the modern world. At the end of the war, Merriam wrote that ‘the future of international associations remains in doubt, pending the outcome of the war and the form of the resulting peace.’ He described proposals ranging from alliances and regional understandings, to ‘the formation of a world state.’⁸⁵ Even in the 1960s, it seemed he had been correct. The economist Charles Kindleberger claimed that the nation-state was no longer a significant economic unit.⁸⁶ Functionalists David Mitrany and Ernst Haas argued on economic grounds for the inevitability of European integration, ultimately superseding the nation-state.⁸⁷

Alternative Models of Political Organisation

The understanding of independence as neither natural nor desirable, as well as the powerful example presented by European integration, created the space for alternative models of political organisation to be propounded. These often took the form of larger units. British Labour politician Gordon Walker, for example, noted that the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa and West Indies ‘became nations by the federation of self-governing colonies’ and believed that the process ‘may well continue.’⁸⁸ The historian Christopher Carrington saw the development of large political units as being

⁸⁴ G. Mennen Williams, US Assistance Secretary of State, ‘The United States and Africa,’ speech to African Studies Association, October 12 1962, US State Department Release, reproduced in Wallbank, *Documents on Modern Africa*, p.144.

⁸⁵ Merriam, *Systematic Politics*, p.271.

⁸⁶ Charles P. Kindleberger, *International Economics*, 4th edition (Homewood, R.D. Irwin, 1968).

⁸⁷ Mitrany, *A Working Peace System*; Ernst Haas, *Beyond the Nation-State; Functionalism and International Organization* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1964).

⁸⁸ Patrick Gordon Walker, *The Commonwealth* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1962), p.363.

in accordance with 'the older precedents' of the Western world and wondered whether even Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific states might form a 'loose confederation.'⁸⁹ Meanwhile in the US, Merriam claimed the 'national state' had already been modified by federalism (the US), regional associations (Russia) and by economic cooperation. He argued that historical trends pointed to ever 'larger areas of authority.'⁹⁰ In contrast to the nineteenth century however, 'nationalism' was regarded as a force leading to fragmentation, not agglomeration.

In policy terms, as discussed above, the amalgamation or 'federation' of territories was entertained as a serious possibility for Africa in the early post-war period. It was also envisaged for other parts of the world, such as the Middle East, the Caribbean, and South East Asia. The idea was encouraged by the US; in 1960 a National Security Council report expressed support for 'the formation of federations or other forms of association' among newly emerging states, to 'enhance their political and economic viability.'⁹¹

In Africa itself, a similar attachment to large political units was expressed through the movement for African unity, rooted in early-twentieth century pan-Africanism (intellectuals such as H. Sylvester Williams and William Du Bois) and adopted by Africans such as Nkrumah, Nyerere, Kenyatta, Wallace Johnson and Peter Abrahams.⁹² In its original form, African unity was proffered as an alternative to a continent of independent states and frequently coined in terms of a 'United States of Africa,' a single federal country organised along similar lines to the United States of America. The idea was supported by some Europeans, concerned that Africa should

⁸⁹ C. E. Carrington, 'Decolonization: The Last Stages,' *International Affairs*, 38:1 (1962), pp.37,39.

⁹⁰ Merriam, *Systematic Politics*, p.290.

⁹¹ 'National Security Council Report; Statement of US Policy Toward South, Central and East Africa,' NSC 6001, 19 January 1960, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-60*, XIV ('Africa') (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1992), doc.22.

⁹² Morris, *Nationalism in Africa*, p.5.

avoid Europe's 'disunity,' such as British Lecturer in Colonial History Sir Reginald Coupland.⁹³ It also found favour amongst those with more sinister interests, such as South African Captain Desmond-Smith, who argued that a United States of Africa, dominated by South Africa, would be established 'as a logical fact' after the war.⁹⁴

Although the 'United States of Africa' idea appealed to various colonial and anti-colonial viewpoints, its advocates shared the assumption that political arrangements were fluid. Desmond-Smith for example, saw differences in language, religion or tribe as merely 'small irritating questions' that time would heal. He predicted the genesis of a new language combining various traditional ones, and new enormous power centres to mirror the United States of Africa, such as a 'Greater Britain' including Iceland and most of Scandinavia and a 'Greater Turkey' including Asia Minor, Yugoslavia, Syria, Arabia, Persia, Iraq and Iran.⁹⁵ In the second half of the twentieth century, the experience of war heralded a return to the nineteenth century association between large units and progress.

Sovereignty as Value and Myth

Ultimately, however, concepts of federation and association were largely rejected in Africa. As the UN General Assembly increasingly became the vehicle of Third World states, it was dominated by a post-colonial mentality that saw all alternatives to independent statehood as 'colonial.'⁹⁶ Sovereignty, a term notably absent from the discourse of previous eras, despite its origins in the seventeenth century, quickly became the touchstone of freedom and an absolute value. Already, the 'state' of the

⁹³ Sir Reginald Coupland, 'The Destiny of Africa,' Address to Annual Meeting of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, 17 July 1947 (London, Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, 1947), p.8.

⁹⁴ Capt. Nicholas John Desmond-Smith, *United States of Africa* (Pretoria, M.P. Pty. Ltd., 1945), pp.1-5, 44-50.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.14.

⁹⁶ Kenneth Robinson, 'Alternatives to Independence,' *Political Studies*, 4:3 (1956), p.249.

League of Nations Covenant had become the 'sovereign state' in the UN Charter. The 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples stressed the rights of all peoples to 'complete independence' and 'sovereign rights.'⁹⁷ The Nigerian Prime Minister, proclaiming his support for the Organisation of African Unity's 1964 resolution on the 'Intangibility of Frontiers,' celebrated that the new states of Africa 'are all sovereign and their sovereignty is sovereignty.'⁹⁸

Yet the meaning of sovereignty was, in practice, unclear. The UN's criteria for membership were minimal: that a state be peace-loving, accept its Charter obligations, and be able and willing to carry them out. The policy of providing the colonies with tutelage towards stable, effective and democratic successor states declined, in the face of limited resources and increasingly virulent demands for 'self-determination.' In contrast to the nineteenth century, even the criterion of effectiveness was now challenged, resulting in the emergence, according to Robert Jackson, of 'quasi-states,' whose sovereignty was a right and not a capacity. Many Third World states were, he argues, not 'self-standing structures with domestic foundations' but 'territorial jurisdictions supported from above by international law and material aid.'⁹⁹ This was recognised to some extent at the time, as states were depicted as struggling infants, 'Togoland so tiny and helpless,' 'Somalia born bankrupt.'¹⁰⁰

British-oriented commentators such as Christopher Carrington regarded the 'fissiparous tendency' as both new and *non-Western*.¹⁰¹ Eventually, however, they were forced to accept, as Britain's physical and normative power dwindled, that colonialism was an interim political arrangement which must necessarily be replaced

⁹⁷ 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,' *op. cit.*

⁹⁸ H.E. Sir Abubakar Balewa (Nigeria), cited in *OAU Review*, 1:1 (1964).

⁹⁹ Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.5.

¹⁰⁰ Dr. C.W. De Kiewiet, President of University of Rochester, N.Y., 'America's Role in Africa,' presented to University of Natal, July 1960 (National Conference on Education, 1960), p.6.

¹⁰¹ Carrington, 'Decolonization,' p.37.

by 'independence.'¹⁰² By September 1963, independence had become the proclaimed or expected objective for twenty-four of the forty remaining British territories.¹⁰³ In the 1970s, even small Pacific islands, previously regarded as utterly ineligible, were said to be developing towards 'full sovereign independence.'¹⁰⁴ The concept of sovereignty had taken on a life of its own.

Yet, while independence and sovereignty were accepted, their meanings remained poorly understood in Britain. Employing a bizarrely literal definition, the House of Lords voted in 1957 to stop development assistance to Ghana, on the basis that its 'independence' must be recognised as absolute.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, the assumption that independence implied absolute insulation from the outside world led some to argue it was merely a 'myth.'¹⁰⁶ New countries were 'not really independent' said writer Brian Crozier, who claimed that French President Charles De Gaulle refused to use the misleading word.¹⁰⁷ The term 'sovereignty' was also seen as a misnomer by many, including Americans, recognising that modern governments rarely enjoyed absolute control over their territories. 'The effort to regain human dignity is confused with the achievement of national sovereignty,' said American scholar Harold Isaacs, 'in an age when such sovereignty has become obsolete and largely useless as an instrument of progress.'¹⁰⁸

The irony was then, that as words such as sovereignty and independence became widely used for the first time, they also appeared *less* relevant as descriptions

¹⁰² Robinson, 'Alternatives to Independence,' p.225.

¹⁰³ 'The future of British colonial territories': CO memorandum, 27 September 1963, FO 371/172610, no.13, in Hyam and Louis (eds.) *The Conservative Government*, I, doc. 46, p.211.

¹⁰⁴ Richard N. Posnett, Dependent Territories Adviser, FCO, speech to Tuvalu Constitutional Conference, London, February 1978, *British Parliamentary Papers*, cmd. 7144, p.15.

¹⁰⁵ See 'Finance for Ghana After Independence; Minister Promises Second Look at C.D.C. Investment,' *The Times* (1 February 1957), p.11.

¹⁰⁶ Brian Crozier, *The Morning After: A Study of Independence* (London, Methuen, 1963), ch.1, 'The Myth Examined.'

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, pp.17-18, 213.

¹⁰⁸ Isaacs, 'Africa: New Crises in the Making,' p.18.

of what was happening. Bewildered, Macmillan did his best to carve out a position, protesting that ‘we should not be afraid of the double argument.’ ‘We are independent because that is the right of a sovereign people,’ he said, and ‘we are inter-dependent because that is the need of the modern world.’ At the same time, even he seemed confused as to what sovereignty might actually mean in such a world and groped around for answers. ‘[H]as anyone got a copy of what the President’s guidance was to the Press?’ he asked his staff. ‘I believe there was a telegram mentioning the Sovereign right of a state which might be very helpful for me to quote.’¹⁰⁹

Relinquishing External Control

This transition, from fluidity and diversity to acceptance of the sovereign state, was intricately linked to the British Government’s estimation of its own influence, which waned as time went on. In the early years of the period, it was common to hear that decolonisation was consistent with established policy. Colonial self-government has a ‘long pedigree,’ said one colonial historian (actually from New Zealand), with ‘[a]ssemblies representing, in some manner, the opinion of the people’ going back to seventeenth century plantations in the New World.’¹¹⁰ Likewise, officials argued that ‘[t]he colonial policies of the United Kingdom have themselves led the African peoples to believe that independence is the ultimate goal to which they are being directed.’¹¹¹ In the dying days of empire, decolonisation was feverishly lauded as its crowning achievement, in an attempt to preserve a historical narrative that legitimised imperialism. ‘We are operating Colonialism in its highest and most constructive form’ argued the academic Vincent Harlow, while in the UN, British representative

¹⁰⁹ ‘The task ahead,’ minute by Mr. Macmillan to T.J. Bligh (Prime Minister’s Office), 26 December 1962, PREM11/4412, in Hyam and Louis (eds.), *The Conservative Government*, I, doc. 42, p.205.

¹¹⁰ W. David McIntyre, *Colonies into Commonwealth* (London, Blandford Press, 1968), p.6.

¹¹¹ ‘Africa in the next ten years,’ p.123.

Ormesby-Gore asserted that 'colonialism was dying only in the sense that the phoenix dies at the moment of its greatest glory, giving birth to new nations.'¹¹²

That Britain was in control was also expressed through the metaphor of a gigantic 'experiment,' in which the government assumed the mantle of scientist. 'We are engaged in a world-wide experiment in nation building' with the aim of 'creating' independence, said a Colonial Office paper.¹¹³ Likewise, Perham described the Central African Federation as 'a highly precarious experiment' and Huxley wondered whether Britain had in Africa 'attempted the impossible.'¹¹⁴ Arthur Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, spoke of 'growing pains' in the territories subjected to this experiment, where the task was to make peoples 'ready to receive the essential features of modern civilisation.'¹¹⁵

The idea that Britain was *creating* states clashed subtly with a more bottom-up, American conception of state formation. British officials and media claimed territories were 'given' or 'granted' their independence. For example, a *Times* editorial argued that the 'decision to *create*' an independent Ghana was taken by Colonial Secretary Creech Jones.¹¹⁶ In contrast, Americans tended to claim that territories had themselves 'declared' independence or 'became' independent, thus attributing the entities in question with agency in anticipation of statehood.¹¹⁷ Their understanding of Britain's role, as expressed by the US representative in the Security

¹¹² Harlow, "'Colonialism' and the Transfer of Power,' p.5; Ormesby-Gore (1960), cited in Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, p.108.

¹¹³ 'The colonial empire today; summary of our main problems and policies,' C.O. International Relations Department paper, May 1950, in Hyam (ed.), *The Labour Government*, I, doc 72, p.334

¹¹⁴ Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, p.73; Elspeth Huxley, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice; A Journey through East Africa* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1948), p.365

¹¹⁵ Arthur Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Conference Address, 19 August 1948, CO 852/1053/1, in Hyam (ed.), *The Labour Government*, I, doc.51, p.165.

¹¹⁶ See for example: 'Africa in the next ten years,' p.123; 'Ghana' (editorial), *The Times* (Wednesday 6 March 1957), p.9.

¹¹⁷ See for example Sears to Lodge (both American UN representatives), 29 January 1959, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, XIV, doc.11.

Council, was one of ‘encouraging and assisting’ independence.¹¹⁸ This tension was itself a source of conflict. In the Colonial Office, an irritated Lord Perth asked Macmillan to stress to the Americans that ‘what we are doing in our colonial territories has no relation to their out-of-date conception of “Colonialism” but is, on the contrary, a constructive job of *nation-building* which is of the utmost importance to the free world.’¹¹⁹ Welcoming new members to the UN, Eisenhower’s language was entirely different. ‘The drive of self-determination and of rising human aspirations is creating a new world of independent nations in Africa,’ he said, locating the impetus squarely in the territories themselves.¹²⁰

However, a developing undercurrent of British thinking, reflected in the conception of a nationalist ‘wave’ discussed above, acknowledged the limits of imperial power. ‘The emotional fervour attached to nationalism infects and spreads,’ said Creech Jones in an address in 1948.¹²¹ Nationalism, said Macmillan in later years, was a ‘stubborn’ force which ‘can be led’ but ‘cannot be driven back.’¹²² Linked to this crisis of confidence in British influence was a broader anxiety about the degree to which world politics could be controlled at all. Creech Jones, in a lecture at Nottingham University in 1951, described the ‘sense of powerlessness’ leading policy makers to ‘become sceptical of our ability to control effectively the powerful influences at work in the modern world.’¹²³ He saw this change as one connected to the

¹¹⁸ Mr Lodge, Security Council, cited in ‘UN Members Welcome Ghana; Security Council’s Unanimous Vote,’ *The Times* (Friday, 8 March 1957), p.9

¹¹⁹ ‘Colonialism,’ minute by Lord Perth to Macmillan, 23 Feb 1957, PREM 11/3239, in Hyam and Louis (eds.), *The Conservative Government*, II, doc. 374, p.224.

¹²⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower, ‘Address before the 15th General Assembly of the United Nations,’ 22 September 1960, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States; Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960* (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1961), doc.302.

¹²¹ Creech Jones, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Conference Address, 19 August 1948, *op. cit.*, p.166.

¹²² Macmillan, Bedford, 1957 (speech), cited in Horowitz, ‘Attitudes of British Conservatives,’ p.72.

¹²³ Arthur Creech Jones, ‘The Future of the African Colonies,’ Cust Foundation Lecture 1951 (University of Nottingham, 1951).

physical unity of the modern world, where ‘historic forces too strong to stem’ crossed international borders at great speed.¹²⁴

Reflecting this shift away from external control and the supremacy of the American conception of state formation, the dominant trend in international law moved towards the declaratory position. In practice, external powers still often exerted significant control over the destinies of colonies. Further, the question of statehood was seen to be answered by admission to the UN, and was thereby dependent on existing states. Yet in formal terms the vast majority of specialists, by 1975, accepted that states came to existence by their own declaration of independence, not external recognition.¹²⁵ State formation was increasingly seen as a bottom-up process.

The State as an Actor

In the post-war era, the state became a central feature of the discourse of international diplomacy and the discipline of International Relations. Contrary to the League Covenant, the UN Charter described all units of the international realm as states.¹²⁶ Unlike the period of Ottoman collapse, however, this state was rarely portrayed as an animalistic caricature and it was not the demonic or glorified ‘State.’ Nevertheless, in two subtle ways it had more ‘flesh’ than its previous form. First, building on the pre-war trend and in line with the idea of ‘universal history’ centred on the nation-state, it was now standard to portray new states as entities resurrected from the ancient past and as people with stable identities across time and space. Second, even as the number of despotic regimes in the world actually increased, governments were cast as the

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p.10.

¹²⁵ For example, see Brownlie, *Principles*, p.94.

¹²⁶ There are 13 mentions of the word ‘state’ in the League Covenant; 30 in the UN.

‘representatives’ of their peoples. Despite the vulnerability of these new fledgling units, their presence was solidified by the depiction of a people, government and territory moving as one.

The Authentic Life of the State

Building on the discourse surrounding the formation of Iraq after the First World War, the state that emerged after the Second World War was perceived to have a life cycle, akin to a person. Images of birth, childhood, adolescence and adulthood were used to describe states at different stages of maturity, with new states being small infants. The Duchess of Kent, speaking during the ceremonies for Ghana’s independence, celebrated ‘the *birth* of a new and independent African State.’¹²⁷ Roosevelt regarded the trusteeship system as a way to help the ‘many minor children among the peoples of the world’ and to bring ‘many adult nations or peoples’ into a ‘spirit of good conduct.’¹²⁸

A particular variant of this theme, that flung the life cycle of states backwards through time, gained credence in this era of African nationalism and pan-Africanism.¹²⁹ As during other periods, the political transformation was accompanied by an ‘African Renaissance’ both in Africa and the West, involving the rediscovery of the African past and African political thought.¹³⁰ Against the claim that Africa had ‘no history,’ some asserted its past was characterised by the existence of organised political communities. One historian, for example, argued that in large areas scattered over most of the continent, ‘organised states’ existed, ‘comparable in population and

¹²⁷ ‘Ghana Ties with Commonwealth; Assurances by Dr. Nkrumah,’ *The Times*, 5 March 1957, p.8.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.148.

¹²⁹ See Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (London, Pall Mall Press, 1962).

¹³⁰ See Kenneth W. Grundy, ‘Recent Contributions to the Study of African Political Thought,’ *World Politics*, 18:4 (1966), pp.674-689; W. E. Abraham, *The Mind of Africa* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962).

perhaps in law and order, with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England.’¹³¹ The socialist writer Raymond Michelet set forth a story of ‘well organised and prosperous communities,’ or ‘States’ such as the Empire of Ghana, the Sosso Empire and the Fula Kingdom, existing between the fourth and seventeenth centuries.¹³² Professor of African History J.D. Fage claimed that in West Africa especially, ‘the state’ was ‘an institution of some antiquity,’ existing by the eighth century.¹³³

In extreme form, this renaissance propagated a history of Africa according to which the period of European colonialism had made virtually no impact. Fage depicted these past communities in the language of states and nations, arguing that certain symbols had provided ‘national foci of allegiance’ that transcended underlying kinship ties. Ashanti, he claimed, was practically a ‘nation-state’ before it was confronted by British power in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the political boundaries established by colonial rulers reflected those already established by the African polities; the boundaries of modern Ghana, for example, closely resembled the limits of ancient Ashanti power. In Fage’s history of Africa, the impact of European domination was merely ‘superficial and evanescent.’¹³⁴

That the state was an ‘authentic’ reincarnation of the past was widely perceived to be legitimising. The Bugandan King, aiming to secure recognition for his break-away territory, stressed to the British that the ‘the Kingdom of Buganda’ had been, prior to the advent of the Europeans, ‘a self-governing Sovereign State’ with its own dependencies.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, some states chose to rename themselves using

¹³¹ Roland Oliver (ed.), *The Dawn of African History* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1961), p.99.

¹³² Raymond Michelet, ‘African Empires and Civilisation,’ *International African Service Bureau Publications*, 4 (London, Planaf Service, 1945), p.2.

¹³³ J.D. Fage, ‘On the Nature of African History,’ Lecture, delivered 10 March 1965 (Birmingham, University of Birmingham, 1965), p.6.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.17-18.

¹³⁵ Mutesa Kabaka, King of Buganda, to A.B. Cohen, Governor of Uganda, 6 August 1953, *British Parliamentary Papers*, cmd. 9028, p.27.

terms of ancient political significance in order to return to their authentic ‘roots.’ ‘Ghana,’ for example, was named after an empire that flourished until the thirteenth century and was located in what is now western Sudan (there is no geographical overlap with modern Ghana).¹³⁶ Later, Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) renamed cities, towns and streets as well as its country name, in an effort to eradicate the symbols of colonialism.

The image of the resurrected state also resonated within the UN General Assembly. As Ghana’s membership was approved, members superimposed the identity of the ancient state on its modern namesake, describing it as an ‘ancient State,’ ‘more advanced than Europe’s of the same period,’ and a ‘rich storehouse of history’ from which modern Ghana could ‘draw sustenance.’¹³⁷ The modern state was perceived as the same entity; delegates welcomed ‘the new, reborn State of Ghana,’ ‘the re-emergence, the rebirth of an ancient culture and an ancient State.’¹³⁸ Later incidences of decolonisation drew similar allusions to such timelessness. The Madagascan ‘political personality’ had ‘made itself felt for centuries,’ the Ivory Coast was ‘an old country with deeply rooted traditions,’ and the Central African Republic ‘a country of old traditions, isolated for a thousand years, but now in touch with the world.’¹³⁹ The UK delegate described Sierra Leone in a similarly mythologising tone, asserting it had ‘a long history and a very fine tradition’ having been discovered ‘some five hundred years before Christ’ and known by its current name for five

¹³⁶ See Daniel Miles McFarland, *Historical Dictionary of Ghana* (Metuchen, N.J, Scarecrow Press, 1985), pp.34-49; Ernest Amano Boateng, *A Geography of Ghana* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp.134-67.

¹³⁷ Mr. Mir Khan (Pakistan), Mr. Joja (Romania), Mr. Eskelund (Denmark), General Assembly, 8 March 1957, UN doc. A/PV/668, pars.24, 123, 108.

¹³⁸ Mr. Lall (India), Mr. Asha (Syria), *ibid.*, pars.36-7, 53.

¹³⁹ Mr. Couve de Murville (France), in *ibid.*, par.92.

centuries.¹⁴⁰ It was not simply the age of the physical landscape or cultural traditions that was implied here, but the timelessness of ‘Sierra Leone’ itself.

Indeed, the General Assembly regarded the history of political organisation as highly relevant to questions of statehood. In the 1970s, Western Sahara was laid claim to by Morocco, Mauritania and an internal movement for self-determination. The General Assembly, referring the case to the International Court of Justice in 1975, asked it to analyse the legal ties between the territory and others prior to Spanish colonisation in the nineteenth century. Essentially, it sought to establish whether either Moroccan or Mauritanian sovereignty had an ‘authentic’ historical precedent. Mauritania argued that Western Sahara and itself were historically ‘indissociable parts of a single entity.’ But the Court refuted this claim on the basis that Mauritania lacked at the time ‘the character of a personality or corporate entity,’ distinct from its several tribes.¹⁴¹ Western Sahara’s future depended not only on the desires of its current population but on the political structures of the past.

As discussed above, the conception of a state as a historical nation, by forging a link between a people and a defined territory, provided the semblance of a solution to the vexed question of how to justify borders. An additional effect of this preoccupation with the state as an authentic historical unit was to underscore the unity of the state as an actor. As Marshall Berman claimed, the modern quest for ‘authenticity’ is fundamentally tied to the rise of individualism; it reflects a ‘concern with *being oneself*.’¹⁴² To claim that a new state is a modern form of an ancient polity is to cast that polity as a unitary person or ‘self’ across time.

¹⁴⁰ Lord Home (UK), General Assembly, 27 September 1961, UN doc A/PV/1018, par. 239.

¹⁴¹ I.C.J. Case Summary, Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion of 16 October 1975 (accessed at <http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/idecisions/isummaries/isasummary751016.htm>, March 2006).

¹⁴² See Marshall Berman, *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1971), pp.xv-xxiv.

In the context of the decline of effectivism, this connection between people and land further underscored the so-called ‘material’ approach to the identity of the state, which emphasised the socio-historical facets of statehood.¹⁴³ During the Second World War, Poland was briefly extinguished, but it was regarded as the same state in 1945 as it had been in 1939 (in contrast, ephemeral war-time states such as Manchukuo went unrecognised). During the Cold War era of superpower penetration, some states, especially in Eastern Europe, enjoyed only notional independence under puppet governments, yet they were still described as sovereign ‘states.’ The Syrian Government effectively extinguished itself by forming the conglomerate United Arab Republic with Egypt in 1958, but was not made to reapply for its old seat in the UN after seceding in 1961. Only when the loss of effective power was permanent, as in the case of Tibet from 1950, did a state’s identity disappear almost completely. In this period, the units of the international realm were defined by a perceived connection between a ‘people’ and land that trumped effective control.

The Integrity of the State

Another normative change relevant to the conceptual unity of the state was the shift towards ‘non-intervention,’ the corollary of the UN Charter’s prohibition of the use of force.¹⁴⁴ Ironically, this was a period in which Cold War competition induced numerous incidences of intervention, including the use of force, to protect or overturn regimes in sovereign territories. Yet as a norm, non-intervention achieved a salience hitherto unknown, continually reified by the Non-Aligned Movement in the General Assembly. It produced a new emphasis on the ideas of ‘political’ or ‘national unity’ and ‘territorial integrity’ of sovereign states, contained in the 1960 Declaration on the

¹⁴³ See chapter one for an explanation of the term ‘material’ in this context.

¹⁴⁴ Charter of the United Nations, art.2:4.

Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations.¹⁴⁵

Fernando Tesón has described the rise of non-intervention as the product of the ‘fetishization’ of the state as a morally free entity, and hence the unity of the state as an actor. He traces its roots to legal positivism, in particular the replacement of the natural law limits to sovereignty recognised by Grotius and Vattel, with Hegel’s vision of the state as a rational and ethical entity.¹⁴⁶ Yet an explanation centred on positivism and romantic thought fails to explain the particular strength of non-intervention and the perceived unity of the state after the Second World War. This nexus of ideas was intricately linked to international liberal thought made prominent in this era. Indeed, as Charles Beitz pointed out at the time, the right of a state to non-intervention actually depends on analogising it to a person, since liberals believe that a person’s pursuit of ends has a value which cannot be overridden by considerations of the social good alone.¹⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the unity of the state was also underscored by the end of the great period of British migration between the two World Wars. Between 1815 and 1914, millions of people had moved to the US, and to lesser extents Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Post-First World War immigration controls imposed by the US began to change this pattern, however. In the English-speaking countries of the Western world, the state was an increasingly enclosed political community impermeable to the outside. The significance of the end of large-scale migration was

¹⁴⁵ ‘Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,’ *op cit.*; ‘Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,’ UN General Assembly Resolution 2625, (XXV), 24 Oct 1970, UN doc. A/80229.

¹⁴⁶ Fernando R Tesón, *Humanitarian Intervention: An Inquiry into Law and Morality* (Irvington-on-Hudson, Transnational Publishers, 1997). For discussion, see Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace?*, pp.20-1.

¹⁴⁷ Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, p.76.

recognised by some at the time. E. H. Carr, for example, viewed it as a 'fateful step' towards the clash between nations that was the Second World War.¹⁴⁸

Finally, during the period of decolonisation, legal language moved decisively towards the idea that states were themselves capable of entering into treaties. As discussed above, the early-twentieth century saw a partial shift from monarchs to governments and states as the subjects of treaties. In the UN Charter, the members are states, not sovereigns. In the post-war era, this shift was completed. Treaties in the early period were sometimes still between 'high contracting parties' 'contracting parties' or 'governments.' But in the 1950s and 1960s, a change occurred and later conventions referred to states or 'states parties.' This movement was also reflected in the actual law of treaties. The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties referred to parties to a treaty as 'contracting States,' and 'negotiating States' and outlined the criteria by which a person could be 'considered as representing a State' (not a government) for the purposes of treaty law.¹⁴⁹

The shift is demonstrated in a comparison of human rights treaties. The conventions on Genocide (1948), Trafficking of Persons (1949) and Political Rights of Women (1952), as well as the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949) all referred to subjects as 'Contracting Parties' or 'High Contracting Parties.'¹⁵⁰ In contrast, later conventions, on Racial Discrimination (1965), Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) Civil and Political Rights (1966), Apartheid (1973),

¹⁴⁸ E.H. Carr, *Nationalism and After* (London, Macmillan, 1945), p.22.

¹⁴⁹ 'Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties' (1969), art. 2, accessed from International Law Commission website, www.un.org/law/ilc/texts/treatfra.htm (January 2005).

¹⁵⁰ 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' (1948), 'Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others' (1949), 'Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War' (1949), 'Convention on the Political Rights of Women' (1952), accessed at UNHCHR website: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/> (March 2006).

Discrimination against Women (1979), Torture (1984) and the Rights of the Child (1990), consistently used the term 'states parties.'¹⁵¹

The Representative Assumption

Finally, the image of the state as a unity was compounded by the understanding that movements for independence and new governments 'represented' their peoples, a way of legitimising the emergence of weak, poorly qualified leaderships. The UN itself embodied a new assumption about representativeness, attributing governments to 'peoples' regardless of regime type. In comparison to the League Covenant, the members of the international organisation were no longer 'High Contracting Parties' but 'We the Peoples.' The actors in its chambers were not 'Representatives of the Members' but the 'Members' themselves. Hence, 'We the Peoples' were to take their seats in the General Assembly and Security Council, the real persons in those seats 'standing for' them.¹⁵²

Meanwhile, understandings of representation were inflected by the assumption of a 'general will.' Even the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that 'the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government.'¹⁵³ This avoided the controversial trappings of electoral democracy, but thereby cast the ideal form of government as a trustee of a unified nation. Even British administrators acknowledged that new governments must not only democratically represent majority will, but also embody the wholeness of the people, especially in the context of ethnic

¹⁵¹ 'International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination' (1965), 'International Conventions on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' (1966) and on 'Civil and Political Rights' (1966), 'International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid' (1973), 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women' (1979), 'Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment' (1984), 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (1990), accessed at UNHCHR website: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/> (March 2006).

¹⁵² League of Nations Covenant, *op. cit.*, arts. 3,4; Charter of the United Nations, arts. 9,23.

¹⁵³ 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' art.21.

and racial divides. Colonial Secretary Alan Lennox-Boyd, for example, sought to put in place constitutional change that would 'provide for public men to think in terms of the interests of the country as a whole.'¹⁵⁴ Lord Milverton, Governor of Nigeria, was concerned that establishing a government in Nigeria would be difficult because Nigeria was 'not a unified whole.'¹⁵⁵ Governments were expected to be trustees of the national unity and interest.

At the same time, and ironically, Western leaders were uneasy about African conceptions of democracy that emphasised the incarnation of the 'general will' of the masses, at the expense of the institution of democracy. Tanganyika's President Nyerere argued that Western-style parties were necessary only in the context of class conflict and not when the 'opposition' was the colonial power. The 'struggle for freedom ... leaves no room for difference,' he claimed.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, Ghana's President Nkrumah claimed that '[a] people's parliamentary democracy with a one-party system is better able to express and satisfy the common aspirations of a nation as a whole, than a multiple-party parliamentary system.'¹⁵⁷ Images of unity were vital tools for leaders as they struggled to create a genuine national unity to overcome internal tensions.

The assumption of representativeness was inadvertently underscored by the gradual abandonment of *government* recognition, beginning with France after the 1963 overthrow of the Diem government in South Vietnam. One reason was that government recognition proved highly polemical in the Cold War context. Established

¹⁵⁴ Despatch, Alan Lennox-Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Governor, Northern Rhodesia, 10 September 1958, *British Parliamentary Papers*, cmd. 530, p.6.

¹⁵⁵ Lord Milverton, Governor of Nigeria, 'Constitutional development in Africa,' African Governors' Conference draft minute 5 (2nd session), November 1947, CO 847/37/7, in Hyam (ed.), *The Labour Government*, I, doc.67, p.305.

¹⁵⁶ Julius Nyerere, 'One-Party Rule' in *Spearhead* (Dar es Salaam, November, 1961), cited in Wallbank, *Documents on Modern Africa*, p.98.

¹⁵⁷ Kwame Nkrumah, *Conscientism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970 [1964]), pp.100-101, cited in Roth, *Governmental Illegitimacy*, p.115.

states often faced a dilemma: either bestow legitimacy on a disliked regime, or recognise an alternative one lacking effective territorial control, often causing considerable embarrassment. For example, until the US announced its 'two China' policy in 1971, the Taiwan-based Republic of China, and not the People's Republic of China, cast the Chinese vote in the General Assembly, causing endless debate and resentment. Many Western governments also recognised General Lon Nol's pro-Western Cambodian government in 1970, attempting to argue the change was constitutional, even as the regime was exiled in Beijing.

The cessation of government recognition also occurred because it seemed, for multiple reasons, increasingly irrelevant. First, trade, aid and investment policies had become more effective tools of influence than recognition. Second, at least a minimal degree of cooperation between governments was now deemed essential, to avoid the global economic slumps of an interconnected world. Third, in the 1970s, new legislation on state immunity underscored the doctrine of state continuity, which negated the effects of non-recognition.¹⁵⁸ Fourth, a growing number of governments separated recognition from the establishment of diplomatic or friendly relations with a regime. For example, in 1969, the US Senate passed a resolution clarifying that recognition of a government did not entail moral approval of that government.¹⁵⁹ Hence, Western governments formed relationships with most effective regimes, with the exception of cases where vital interests were at stake.¹⁶⁰ The unintended effect was to erode the difference between state and government, as the legal distinction was seldom made.

¹⁵⁸ See Peterson, *Recognition of Governments*, p.199.

¹⁵⁹ See L. Thomas Galloway, *Recognizing Foreign Governments; the Practice of the United States* (Washington D.C., American Enterprise Institute, 1978), p.103.

¹⁶⁰ See Peterson, *Recognition of Governments*, p.23.

Understandings of representation were also shifting within academia. From communitarian political theorists such as Michael Walzer, came the explicit assertion that the state was 'constituted by the union of people and government' and that foreigners were 'in no position to deny the reality of that union,' having no 'direct experience' of it. Walzer acknowledged that the 'fit' between people and government was a 'morally necessary presumption' at a time when representativeness was the font of global legitimacy.¹⁶¹ Yet this necessity was a powerful force. Even the renowned legal scholar Professor James Crawford asserted that '[w]here the territory in question is a self-determination unit it may be presumed that any secessionary government possesses the general support of the people.'¹⁶² Trusteeship and symbolism trumped democracy in such cases.

Within International Relations, the presumption that governments 'represented' peoples was intricately linked to the expansion of the international system. In 1949, Morgenthau argued that the 'power of a nation' depended on the representativeness of the government, not only in a democratic sense, but also its ability to 'translate the inarticulate convictions and aspirations of the people into international objectives and policies.'¹⁶³ For him, international representation occurred via the articulation of the 'general will.' Just ten years later, Kenneth Waltz, a new rising star in the discipline, fashioned an alternative understanding, one that also enabled the increasing number of post-colonial states with despotic governments to be cast as unified actors. He argued that the unity of the state could derive from two possible sources: feelings of national loyalty or the power of a government to

¹⁶¹ Michael Walzer, 'The Moral Standing of States: A Response to Four Critics,' *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 9:3 (1980), p.212.

¹⁶² Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, p.258.

¹⁶³ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p.154.

suppress dissenting voices. In other words, governments could 'represent' the state as a political community through sheer power alone.

In an acknowledgement of the underlying dangers of this vision, Waltz stated 'it does violence to one's common sense to speak of the state, which is after all an abstraction and consequently inanimate, as acting.'¹⁶⁴ Yet, he claimed, when a government neither engendered the loyalty of its citizens nor constrained them from dissenting, the political unit in question was by definition no longer a state.¹⁶⁵ Hence, all states could be seen as unified whole persons, capable of 'seeking survival.'

Contrary to the first half of the twentieth century, this monist vision was not vociferously contested. Scholars continued to look 'inside' the state to explain state behaviours; Graham Allison, for example, claimed his models of 'bureaucratic politics' provided better explanations of foreign policy than the 'state-as-actor' model.¹⁶⁶ But, in contrast to scholars of the interwar period, he did not seek to deny that the state could be thought of in the singular. In general, academia took a decreasing interest in theories of the state, as the reality of unitary actors called 'states' now defined the discipline itself.

The State in World Politics

The expansion of the international system wrought fundamental conceptual change, as whole regions were brought onto the world stage and into the Western mindset. Asia had 'crashed in upon the American consciousness with almost cataclysmic effect,' said Harold Isaacs, a US correspondent and author in 1952, noting that Africa was

¹⁶⁴ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, pp.175-6.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p.178.

¹⁶⁶ Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision; Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York, Longman, 1999 [1971]).

soon to follow.¹⁶⁷ Alan Pifer, an academic from the Carnegie Corporation, predicted that the independence of Nigeria in 1960, the twelfth largest independent nation in the world at the time, would have ‘an impact on the American consciousness of Africa greater than anything that has yet happened.’¹⁶⁸ Of course, the most significant change was that the world was now composed of states, even as the UN Charter and international law asserted the importance of individuals and their rights. The image was one of formally equal states existing in a confusing, disordered environment, resisted by British understandings still rooted in the paternalistic and ordered image of the family.

Although International Relations had taken off during the interwar period, it became a stronger, more clearly defined field after the Second World War, as it responded to a Cold War context that demanded ‘answers’ to problems of growing complexity. The development of International Relations theory reflected this new impetus. However, explanations of world politics moved in a particular direction, away from the particularities of ideology and nationalism and towards a bundle of ideas centred on statehood, universality, sovereign equality and rationality. By viewing the state from above, academia brought order to a realm increasingly thought of as menacingly chaotic.

Mankind versus the Nation-State

The influence of decolonisation on images of human community is perhaps best described in Christopher Carrington’s words: ‘The world has at last become one place,’ he said, ‘and the human race must apply itself to the problem of world-

¹⁶⁷ Isaacs, ‘Africa: New Crises in the Making,’ pp.3-4.

¹⁶⁸ Alan Pifer, ‘American Interest in Africa,’ lecture at University College, Ibadan, Nigeria, 16 November 1958 (Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1958), p.10.

government.’¹⁶⁹ This idea had multiple meanings. It referred first to the concept of a universal human community, which became a defining element of international life in the post-1945 era, as the UN Charter, replete with references to ‘mankind,’ ‘universal peace’ and the ‘worth of the human person,’ sought to promote ‘human rights’ and ‘fundamental freedoms’ for all.¹⁷⁰ The clearest ever political consensus on the value of the individual was reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). It was also manifested in legal conventions governing genocide (1948) and racial discrimination (1965), as well as in the Covenants on ‘Civil and Political Rights’ and ‘Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ (1966).¹⁷¹

Second, the new consciousness of the world as ‘one place’ had a connotation, centred not on the formal equality of individuals but on that of states, the other fundamental tenet of the UN Charter. The norm of sovereign equality emerged as a more explicit theme in international affairs, notwithstanding the obvious disparity between permanent members of the Security Council and the rest. Compared to the nineteenth century, when a strong distinction existed between the ‘recognised’ and ‘non-recognised,’ statehood was regarded as a near-universal phenomenon and distinctions between states based on judgements of civilisation, greatness or culture gradually disappeared from official discourse.

Transnational forms of identity dominant in the nineteenth century, such as race and religion, also declined in relevance. In the early years of the post-1945 period, race was still a dominant term for capturing ideas about non-European peoples and acquired new connotations as a result of tensions between Africans and white settlers. In Britain, ‘kith and kin’ arguments, that cast settlers as British importers of

¹⁶⁹ Carrington, ‘Decolonization’, p.29.

¹⁷⁰ Charter of the United Nations, art.1:3.

¹⁷¹ All *op. cit.*

civilisation to the continent, were used to garner support for their cause.¹⁷² Even Sumner Welles, in charge of post-war planning in the US State Department, claimed that ‘Negroes are in the lowest rank of human beings.’¹⁷³

Yet, with the development of a normative consensus around the ‘equal rights’ of ‘all peoples,’ conceptualisations of peoples that smacked of hierarchy were dismissed and the category of race acquired the negative connotations of racialism.¹⁷⁴ Nationhood, free of such illiberal connotations, was embraced as an equalising concept. ‘We reject the idea of any inherent superiority of one nation over another’ claimed British Chancellor Selwyn Lloyd in a speech to the General Assembly. Our policy is ‘non-racial.’¹⁷⁵ Contrary to the South American case, even regional and continental notions of identity were unnecessary and unfashionable. Western policy makers depicted African freedom fighters not in continental terms, but as ‘nationalists.’

The Collapse of Hierarchy and Society

In tandem with the rise of sovereign equality, the term ‘great nation,’ once an indication of cultural and historical merit, was now barely used, except as a romantic notion for nationalist movements. Again, this was not instantaneous. According to Ronald Hyam, the post-war Labour government assumed that Britain would remain ‘great’ because of a belief that it retained the qualities of a ‘desirable ally,’ prestige, political maturity, moral leadership and cultural and linguistic eminence.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² See Lord Coleraine, House of Lords, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Lords Official Report* (London, H.M.S.O.), vol.229, col.466, cited in Horowitz, ‘Attitudes of British Conservatives,’ p.282.

¹⁷³ Sumner Welles, cited in John Kent, ‘The United States and the Decolonization of Black Africa, 1945-63,’ in Ryan and Pungong (eds.), *The United States and Decolonization*, p.168.

¹⁷⁴ See Horowitz, ‘Attitudes of British Conservatives,’ p.265.

¹⁷⁵ Selwyn Lloyd, speech to UN General Assembly, 17 September 1959, cited in Horowitz, ‘Attitudes of British Conservatives,’ p.268.

¹⁷⁶ Hyam (ed.), *The Labour Government*, I, Introduction, p.xliv.

Morgenthau, writing in the German tradition, stated that nations were not equal and ‘national character’ was a qualitative source of power.¹⁷⁷ However, continuing the trend of the interwar period, it was now much more prevalent to draw distinctions in terms of hard power, and hence to talk of ‘great powers’ or ‘super powers.’ Martin Wight, writing on the subject, defined a ‘great power’ as one that could ‘confidently contemplate war against any other existing single power.’¹⁷⁸

Meanwhile, since alliances were primarily based on evolving material and ideological factors, questions of national prestige and culture were made even more irrelevant in the Cold War period. The existence of huge disparities in wealth and power gave rise to comparisons between ‘super-powers,’ ‘middle powers,’ the ‘Third World’ and at the bottom of the ladder, ‘microstates.’ Differences in domestic economic systems also created the dominant distinction between the ‘capitalist West’ and the ‘communist East.’ Waltz’ ‘neo-realist’ approach to International Relations saw states depicted in terms of material capabilities and not national character.

In the post-1945 period, one social distinction that remained important in the British mindset was that of the British Commonwealth. United by a common allegiance to the Crown and a cultural and historical connection to Britain, this term had replaced the idea of ‘empire’ around the turn of the twentieth century and was popularised during the First World War.¹⁷⁹ Yet after 1945, as Commonwealth membership soared, its image changed. The April 1949 declaration enabling republics to remain in the Commonwealth was the first to discard the adjective ‘British,’ such that the official name became the ‘Commonwealth of Nations,’ or simply the ‘Commonwealth.’ By the end of the 1960s, it was described as a ‘voluntary association of extremely diverse, fully sovereign states,’ sharing not a cultural affinity

¹⁷⁷ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p.147.

¹⁷⁸ Wight, *Power Politics*, pp.52-53.

¹⁷⁹ McIntyre, *British Decolonization*, p.17.

to Britain, so much as a history of 'British rule' and a political evolution to 'responsible government.'¹⁸⁰

In Britain, some resisted the undermining of the Commonwealth's cultural and political cohesion, complaining that it was losing its 'British' character.¹⁸¹ Prime Minister Macmillan told reporters in 1959: 'Don't let anyone in America think it's the sun setting on the British Empire. It's the dawn rising on the new Commonwealth, and it's all part of the same story.'¹⁸² In the 1960s, efforts were made to reverse the declining resonance of the Commonwealth, such as the proposal for a union of Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. But as Britain rolled back its responsibility for the security of the Commonwealth, and increasingly forced members to undertake strategic responsibilities, its resistance to the language of sovereign equality declined.¹⁸³

British politicians also continued to emphasise the concept of family in discussions of the system of states. The British had reconciled the independence of the United States, and subsequently the self-government of the dominions, through the claim that independence was as 'natural' as the growth of children to manhood.¹⁸⁴ Now they applied the same parental metaphor to non-white territories; Macmillan described the stance towards new states in terms of 'the relationship of parents,' hoping 'to see our children take after us.'¹⁸⁵ However, as in the case of South American independence, this mindset was resisted by many of the new African states.

¹⁸⁰ McIntyre, *Colonies into Commonwealth*, p.9.

¹⁸¹ Lord Salisbury, House of Lords, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Lords*, vol. 299, col. 1246, cited in Horowitz, 'Attitudes of British Conservatives,' p.309.

¹⁸² Macmillan, 'Radio and Television Broadcast' with President Eisenhower in London, 31 August 1959, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States; Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1959* (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1960), doc.196.

¹⁸³ See Walker, *The Commonwealth*, pp.371-2.

¹⁸⁴ See Muriel E. Chamberlain, *Decolonization: the Fall of the European Empires*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, Blackwell, 1999).

¹⁸⁵ Harold Macmillan, 'An Address to the Meeting of the Joint Commonwealth Societies,' 13 April 1960, *African Affairs* (July 1960), p.193.

‘The first real difficulty,’ read a statement from the Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1968, ‘is to convince an ex-metropolitan power that her ex-colony is really independent’ and to change her attitude from ‘overlordship’ to ‘national respect and cooperation on the basis of equality.’¹⁸⁶ The claim to ‘equality’ went hand in hand with the decline of shared values, reflected in demands for a complete overhaul of international law from an expanded General Assembly.¹⁸⁷

In a similar rejection of the paternalistic framework, American statesmen omitted the phrase ‘Parent State’ from the original British draft of the principles of independence, and replaced it with ‘those... charged with responsibilities for the future of colonial areas’¹⁸⁸ Whilst US recognition rhetoric sometimes alluded to the ‘family of independent nations’ or the ‘Community of Nations,’ they emphasised sovereignty and self-determination far more than social, cultural and familial bonds. The model of a ‘pluralist’ system tolerant of diversity was a useful Cold War bargaining chip, juxtaposed against the crushing monolithic system of communism that aimed to ‘amalgamate’ newly independent peoples.¹⁸⁹ But it was also deeply ingrained in American political thought, a contradiction aptly conjured by Lord Halifax, British Ambassador to the US, during a wartime debate on self-determination. ‘We are accustomed to proceed from the particular to the general,’ he said, ‘but the Americans do exactly the opposite.’¹⁹⁰ American sweeping statements of principle left no room for the bifurcated, hierarchical world to which many British politicians still aspired.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Uganda’s Foreign Policy Since Independence,’ Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statement, 1968, cited in Tarsis B. Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation; the Nature and Effects of Colonialism in Uganda* (Kampala, East African Literature Bureau, 1974), p.247.

¹⁸⁷ Bull and Watson (eds.), *The Expansion of International Society*.

¹⁸⁸ Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.245.

¹⁸⁹ Satterthwaite, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, ‘The United States and the New Africa,’ *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁰ Halifax to Eden, 23 April 1943, no.1916, FO 371/35311, cited in Louis, *Imperialism at Bay*, p.246.

Pluralism, Chaos and Competition

Regardless of these differing viewpoints, it was widely acknowledged that a world of many equal states was a complex and chaotic one, a theme that became more dominant as the UN General Assembly expanded. In the journal *International Organization*, for example, Rupert Emerson argued that by ‘crowd[ing] the UN benches’ with new states, it would be impossible for the organisation to make any decisions or coordinate action.¹⁹¹ Christopher Carrington also claimed that the UN had ‘been made into a nonsense by opening the door so wide’ and would be ‘diluted by the admission of small States with no evident qualifications.’¹⁹² That all states had equal voting power in the General Assembly seemed especially ridiculous, described by British author and Foreign Office researcher Brian Crozier as an ‘absurdity’ through which ‘illusion is piled upon illusion.’¹⁹³ As sovereignty became increasingly universal, the practical implications of sovereign equality were keenly felt.

The existence of numerous equal states also seemed bewildering outside of the UN context. ‘A pluralistic world is a far more difficult and confusing world than the world of the five great powers at San Francisco’ said one commentator, advocating increases in American aid and development assistance to Africa.¹⁹⁴ Perham concurred that international life was now more arduous and complex in ‘a world of over a hundred nations’ in which ‘the greater part of these seem determined to visit or be visited.’¹⁹⁵ A British Foreign Office brief also contemplated this development with a certain woe. ‘Merely holding on to our present international position is bound to

¹⁹¹ Emerson, ‘Colonialism, Political Development and the UN,’ p.494.

¹⁹² Carrington, ‘Decolonization,’ pp.37, 39.

¹⁹³ Brian Crozier, *The Morning After*, pp.136-7. Note that in the decades following the Charter’s adoption, alternatives such as weighted voting were suggested by various parties, including John Foster Dulles. See Gerry Simpson, ‘The Great Powers, Sovereign Equality and the Making of the United Nations Charter,’ *Australian Yearbook of International Law*, 21 (2002), p.156

¹⁹⁴ De Kiewiet, ‘America’s Role in Africa,’ p.6.

¹⁹⁵ Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, p.49.

become increasingly expensive,' it claimed. 'In a sharply competitive world we have to do more in order to maintain our relative position; like the Red Queen, we must run very fast in order to stay in the same place.'¹⁹⁶

British commentators were also pessimistic about the capacities of any state to move beyond narrow conceptions of interest. Perham, for example, claimed new states were 'no more immune than the older nations from the inescapable temptations of the national state.'¹⁹⁷ Government officials predicted an African future of 'jealousy and friction between each State and its neighbours, mainly over issues of boundaries and frontiers,' leading to 'the accumulation of arms.'¹⁹⁸ Many African academics shared this pessimism, arguing that the future of Africa was 'bound to be tortuous,' because 'no man's land' had been eradicated and replaced by a 'new ethos' centred on zero-sum relations.¹⁹⁹ More broadly, it was reflected in the continued rise to prominence of the realist paradigm, the basic tenet of which was that insufficient attention had been paid to the power-driven aspects of international politics.

Science versus the New Nationalism

However, the forces behind this pessimistic vision altered significantly in the post-war period. In the first decades after the Second World War, scholars approached the problem in a variety of ways. While some explored the 'anarchic' nature of the international system, others looked inside the state, at issues of ideology and nationalism, to explain war.²⁰⁰ In 1945, E. H. Carr published a review of nationalism, differentiating various historical phases, the last of which involved the socialisation of

¹⁹⁶ P. E. Ramsbotham, F.O. brief for a permanent under-secretaries meeting to discuss future policy,' F.O. 371/135624, no.9, in Hyam and Louis (eds.), *The Conservative Government*, I, doc.4, pp.39-40.

¹⁹⁷ Perham, *The Colonial Reckoning*, p.107.

¹⁹⁸ 'Africa in the next ten years,' p.120.

¹⁹⁹ See A. H. Jamal, *The Critical Phase of Emergent African States* (Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1965), p.10; Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation*, p.65.

²⁰⁰ See for example Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*.

the nation concept between 1870 and the period of the two World Wars. Believing that the malignancy of nationalism was now fully exposed, Carr pondered how the world would recover in the 'aftermath of the age of nationalism.'²⁰¹

Similarly, realist scholar Hans Morgenthau, writing in the immediate post-war period, placed the blame for aggression and war on irrational forces and particularly the destructive force of nationalism. His 'struggle for power' was intricately connected to his perception of recent history characterised by vigorously nationalistic foreign policy. Since the Napoleonic wars, he argued in 1948, people had looked for ways to avoid 'the self-destructive wars to which the struggle for power among modern nation states gives rise.' Now, it was obvious, he claimed, that the 'main stumbling block' was 'national sovereignty itself.'²⁰² He was convinced that the 'national' interest and 'national' character of states (not their sovereignty alone) was critical to explanations of international politics, describing governments as the 'standard-bearers of ethical systems.'²⁰³

Rather differently, some connected states' behaviour not only to nationalism, now well-documented as a source of conflict, but to an intensified, post-war form of nationalism. In a 1969 edition of *International Studies Quarterly*, Leon Gordenker, who later became a specialist in international organisation, claimed that the tension between sovereignty and cooperation had intensified in recent years because of the 'new nationalism' of the modern world.²⁰⁴ This was reflected, he claimed, in the heightened significance of the 'national interest' and in states' concerns to restrict

²⁰¹ Carr, *Nationalism and After*, p.73. For further discussion See Jan Jindy Pettman, 'Nationalism and After,' in Tim Dunne, Michael Cox and Ken Booth, *The Eighty Years' Crisis: International Relations 1919-1999* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²⁰² Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p.323.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.242. See also, Hans Joachim Morgenthau, *In Defence of the National Interest; A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (New York, Knopf, 1951).

²⁰⁴ Leon Gordenker, 'The "New Nationalism" and International Organizations,' *International Studies Quarterly*, 13:1 (1969), pp.31-2.

foreign influence in the post-war world.²⁰⁵ It arose in new states as an attempt to ‘cement national ties or to identify nationhood,’ but was also applicable to established states in the context of ‘military or political defeat’ and ‘structural change in the international system.’²⁰⁶

In the 1950s, Kenneth Waltz described three different levels for approaching problems of international politics: individuals, societies and structure.²⁰⁷ In the 1970s, his focus shifted to the latter and the structural force of anarchy was said to dictate the nature and behaviour of all states. Nationalism was rejected as a variable by this brand of realism, which regarded itself as purely ‘structural’ and hence saw the security dilemma not as a contingent product of national fervour, but an entirely fixed feature of international politics.²⁰⁸ Despite having featured in a major academic journal, the ‘new nationalism’ rapidly disappeared as a prevalent concept within International Relations. With it, the emphasis on irrationality, an important theme of the interwar period, declined.

Structural realism coincided with a widespread behaviouralist movement that permeated the social and political sciences from the 1950s. The movement stressed the advantages of rigorous testing in an attempt to enhance the ‘scientific’ credentials of social science disciplines, and thereby involved the simplification of entire fields down to testable variables and verifiable models. Scholars such as Morgenthau were critical of this shift, seeing it as distorting rather than illuminating the ‘realities’ of international politics. But rationalistic modelling and scientific testing soon found plenty of advocates, especially from the ranks of American International Relations.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.32.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.34, 40-1.

²⁰⁷ Waltz, *Man The State and War*.

²⁰⁸ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

²⁰⁹ See Morton Kaplan, *Systems and Process in International Politics* (New York, Wiley, 1957); Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge. Mass., Harvard University Press, 1960);

Resistance came especially from the ‘English School,’ symbolised by a famous interchange between the ‘classical’ Hedley Bull and ‘scientific’ Morton Kaplan in 1966.²¹⁰

As the ‘science’ of International Relations acquired more cogency, liberals also moved towards a simpler vision of international life centred on the concepts of rationality, material gain and the constraints imposed by the structure of sovereign states. Structural approaches which took the state as the starting point became dominant, especially after Haas dismissed his own functionalist theory in the 1970s.²¹¹ European integration became a test case, not for the question of whether anarchy could be overcome, but instead for narrower debates between neo-realists and neo-liberalists, for whom the structure of anarchy was a shared assumption.²¹² Ignoring the warning of classical realists contained in the opening quotation of this chapter, scholars increasingly cast states as ‘inscrutable and awesome monsters following predestined laws of their own.’²¹³

The State as Simplifier

Yet to depict the rise of structural approaches as a reflection of a new ‘science’ of International Relations masks a broader set of changes within understandings of world politics. Structural realism was not simply a product of behaviouralism but a broader process of making sense of the massively expanded and complicated international system by paring it down to fundamentals. First, it was often assumed that states

David Singer and Melvin Small, *The Wages of War, 1816-1965: a Statistical Handbook* (New York, Wiley, 1972).

²¹⁰ Hedley Bull, ‘International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach,’ *World Politics*, 18:3 (1966); Morton Kaplan, ‘The New Great Debate: Traditionalism versus Science in International Relations,’ *World Politics*, 19:1 (1966).

²¹¹ Ernst Haas, *The Obsolescence of Regional Integration Theory* (Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, 1975).

²¹² See Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism*.

²¹³ Wight, *Power Politics*, p.29.

themselves were ‘simplifying’ their vision of the international system as it grew. Robert Keohane for example, writing in 1967, claimed that states would behave more systematically and ‘rationally’ as they became more ‘sophisticated’ at navigating the international system. Thus, he predicted (wrongly) that the General Assembly would become more practical and less ideological over time.²¹⁴ Second, even academics who rejected science as the dominant mode of discovery, sought tools with which to make sense of this expanded world. Morgenthau, Raymond Aron and Nicholas Spykman for example, were all considered ‘brilliant simplifiers,’ who ‘populated the world stage only with sovereign states’ because it was ‘convenient to write’ as if this was the case.²¹⁵

The ‘English school’ of International Relations is commonly seen as antithetical to structural realism, since it negates the necessary ramifications of structure, pays attention to history and rejects the scientific method. However, the English school also underwent a perceptible shift in the post-war period, as it gained strength and became a more self-conscious body of thought. In the early years, its scholars were particularly attentive to the contingent forces of different historical periods. For example, Martin Wight, an early ‘English school’ scholar, depicted modern power politics in terms of the ‘emancipation of power from moral restraints’ and defined the dominant forces of world affairs as war, the state, nationalism and revolution.²¹⁶ Another early English school scholar, Herbert Butterfield, saw the great problem of his time as an excessive moralism wrought by the nation-state and claimed that the ‘greatest menace to civilisation’ was ‘the conflict between giant organised

²¹⁴ Robert Keohane, ‘The Study of Political Influence in the General Assembly,’ *International Organization*, 21:2 (1967), p.232.

²¹⁵ William T. R. Fox, ‘Pluralism, the Science of Politics and the World System,’ *World Politics*, 27:4 (1975), pp.601, 610.

²¹⁶ See Martin Wight, ‘The Church, Russia and the West,’ *Ecumenical Review*, 1:1 (1948), p.30.

systems of self-righteousness.’²¹⁷ Whereas eighteenth century foreign policy had been restrained by a shared diplomatic code, he argued that democracy had allowed the ‘vagaries of public opinion’ to induce a ‘moral factor’ in the twentieth century.²¹⁸

Over time, however, the English school began to concern itself not with the particular nature of states or the contingent forces controlling them but with highly generalised treatments of ‘international society.’ English school scholars remained interested in values and ideas. But attention shifted from the particular values of states to broad ideational patterns that defined ‘international society’ and its subdivisions. Wight himself was part of this trend, as he came to focus on very general ideas about international life: ‘international society,’ the ‘maintenance of order,’ ‘intervention’ and ‘international morality.’²¹⁹

Australian scholar Hedley Bull, who rose to prominence in the ‘English school’ in the late 1960s and 1970s, was most indicative of the shift towards a ‘big picture’ view. Bull addressed macro questions of international order, rejecting ‘structure’ as a force that ruled out social life at the international level, but taking the system of states as a starting point. He focussed on the shared norms that defined or influenced international society and explained war, not as an outcome of irrational, demonic forces, but as part of the ‘functioning’ of this ‘society.’²²⁰ While not disinterested in history, he outlined a pared-down version of it that posited the state as the outcome of ‘Westphalia.’

²¹⁷ Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity, Diplomacy and War* (London, Epworth Press, 1953), p.43, cited in Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998), p.76.

²¹⁸ Herbert Butterfield, ‘The New Diplomacy and Historical Diplomacy,’ in Butterfield and Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations*, pp.182-7, 190.

²¹⁹ Martin Wight, ‘Western Values in International Relations,’ in Butterfield and Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations*, pp.89-131.

²²⁰ Hedley Bull, ‘Society and Anarchy in International Relations’ (1966), in Kai Alderson and Andrew Hurrell (eds.), *Hedley Bull on International Society* (London, Macmillan, 2000), p.87.

Meanwhile, a widespread simplification of world politics was indicated by vocabulary changes, in particular the rise of various terms demarcating the international system from the domestic realm. The term ‘international’ occurred only sixteen times in the League Covenant but fifty-one in the UN Charter, used with reference to ‘instruments,’ ‘officials,’ ‘disputes,’ ‘systems’ and ‘bodies.’²²¹ Whereas the League Council dealt with all issues ‘affecting the peace of the *world*,’ the UN Security Council was given ‘primary responsibility for the maintenance of *international* peace and security.’ Academic texts referred to ‘inter-state’ relations and especially from the 1960s, the ‘international system.’²²² The discipline concerned with this area was increasingly known as ‘International Politics’ or ‘International Relations.’ Its scope, said one scholar, encompassed ‘the questions that arise in the relations between autonomous political groups, in a world system in which power is not centred at one point.’²²³

The need to pare down international life to the state and its interactions was linked to many factors beyond behaviouralism. First, it facilitated understanding of an increasingly complex world, especially necessary in the context of the Cold War. According to Stanley Hoffmann, the demand for ‘solutions’ to international problems was nowhere felt more strongly than in the US, where unsurprisingly, International Relations developed along a particularly rationalistic and systemic path.²²⁴ Second, it served a disciplinary function, defining an independent area of study for the growing

²²¹ The UN Charter is over twice as long as the League Covenant. The above figures do not include the numerous references to the International Court of Justice contained in the UN Charter, or references to international law, which occur three times in each document.

²²² See for example, Wight, *Systems of States*. Evidence of the broader emergence of the ‘international system’ taken from survey of Bath Information and Data Services (BIDS).

²²³ Frederick S. Dunn, ‘The Scope of International Relations,’ *World Politics* 1:1 (1948), p.143, cited in Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy*, p.217.

²²⁴ Stanley Hoffman, ‘An American Social Science: International Relations,’ *Daedalus*, 103:3 (1977), pp.41-60.

discipline.²²⁵ Wight for example, admitted that International Relations was dominated by the informal assumption ‘that the structure of international society is unalterable, and the division of the world into sovereign states is necessary and natural.’²²⁶ Whereas resistance to this idea had been widespread and powerful in the interwar period, it now emanated from only one main source, the Chicago school centred on Harold Lasswell, Quincy Wright and Charles Merriam.²²⁷

Finally, it is possible, though suggested rather than proven here, that the reification of sovereignty was value-laden, a reaction to the claim that the state was declining in importance, implied by scholars of globalisation, transnationalism and early European integration.²²⁸ This claim was problematic in the political context of the Cold War, during which threats to the state were associated with ‘communism.’ Although sovereignty had acquired new meaning due to its importance to post-colonial governments, it was still, like democracy and the free market, part of the Western normative armoury.

The State's Supremacy

Reflecting a period of momentous change, the state in the post-1945 period appeared to be buffeted on all sides by conflicting constraints and supposed freedoms. From the British perspective, existing states were ever more constrained, as international law moved from an enabling to a constraining force. At the same time, this provided protection for nascent states. Building on the ‘objective’ Montevideo description of statehood in the interwar period, British influence on the boundaries of the international system was declining. Lauterpacht wrote in 1947 that the ‘predominant

²²⁵ See Stefano Guzzini, *Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy: The Continuing Story of a Death Foretold* (London, Routledge, 1998).

²²⁶ Wight, ‘Why is there no International Theory?’ p.23.

²²⁷ See Merriam, *Systematic Politics*.

²²⁸ See Kindleberger, *International Economics*; Mitrany, *A Working Peace System*.

view in the literature of international law' was that 'recognition of States is not a matter governed by law but a question of policy.'²²⁹ But this was to change, as colonial powers were encouraged, in this era of 'self-determination' and 'equality,' to remove obstacles in the way of their dependencies' statehood. Meanwhile, the declaratory conception of statehood negated the relevance of their recognition decisions.

More dramatically, and contrary to the interwar period, law and norms now appeared to structure the shape of the international realm itself. In the early period, British policy-makers believed that law could be moulded to suit them. Hearing that the formula created for fitting republics such as India into the Commonwealth might not stand up legally, Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Chancellor Stafford Cripps retorted that international law would just have to adjust!²³⁰ By the end of the period, international law not only curtailed the variegated view of sovereignty held by British policy-makers, but also supported the existence of states that hitherto would not have survived as sovereign entities.²³¹

For Third World states, this period was to a large extent one of liberation and many flexed their muscles by rejecting aspects of pre-existing international law. In the early years of decolonisation, the British Government entered into devolution agreements with the governments of newly independent territories, in which the latter accepted the rights and obligations afforded to the territory by past treaties. But Tanganyika refused to sign such an agreement and instead claimed it would review and renegotiate all bilateral treaties in its first two years (multilateral treaties remained in force). Other territories followed suit and the Vienna conventions on the law of

²²⁹ Lauterpacht, *Recognition in International Law*, p.1

²³⁰ Cited in Hyam (ed.), *The Labour Government*, I, Introduction, p.lxx.

²³¹ Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p.5.

succession, held in 1979 and 1983, ended in failure.²³² Meanwhile, in the 1960s and 1970s, the growing Third World membership of the UN aspired to reshape the structure of norms, laws and economic relations that defined the international realm.

Although Third World states briefly felt empowered, many recognised that the statehood they had acquired was no longer Hegelian; they were not supremely powerful, ethical entities unconstrained by international norms. In a world composed entirely of sovereign states, the state itself was a more banal form of political entity, not the unshackled Teutonic conception. In fact, legal positivism, and the importance of state consent, began to decline in this period. The ongoing codification of international law, and in particular the development of *jus cogens* (peremptory) norms, reflected an agenda at odds with the supremacy of the sovereign state.

At the political level too, these states were heavily constrained. The disputes of the Cold War continued to be played out in non-Western countries and were settled by political rather than juridical means. Meanwhile, many states were plagued by domestic tensions and economic problems. Frameworks such as Immanuel Wallerstein's 'world systems theory' arose to explain how the Third World had been condemned to a junior political and economic status by the powerful.²³³ Sovereignty, it was said, was a 'paradox,' which protected the state from unwanted interference but also, misleadingly, cast it as free and self-sufficient.²³⁴

Meanwhile, the dominance of structural realism repositioned the state once and for all in relation to its external environment. Earlier realist scholars had studied war with a view to overcoming it; Morgenthau even envisaged the possibility of a

²³² See Chris Whomersley, 'The Impact of Recent Developments on Succession in International Law,' in Malcolm D. Evans (ed.), *Aspects of Statehood and Institutionalism in Contemporary Europe* (Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1997), p.46.

²³³ Ref Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York, Academic Press, 1974).

²³⁴ David L. Blaney and Naeem Inayatullah, 'The Third World and a Problem with Borders,' in Mark E. Denham and Mark Owen Lombardi (eds.), *Perspectives on Third-World Sovereignty: the Postmodern Paradox* (New York, St. Martin's, 1996), p.96.

world without power politics. Structural realists held out no such hope, since they believed states were constrained by the anarchical composition of the international system. With no scope for individuals or societies to counter the influence of 'structure,' states were compelled towards the selfish behaviours of the 'security dilemma.' Whereas once war and fear had been the product of irrational forces that could be tamed, now they were rational outcomes produced by the external environment. States became less free as academia increasingly viewed them from 'above.'

Moreover, in their quest for scientific 'laws,' structural realism rendered this system fixed and inevitable; Waltz explicitly claimed the sovereign state was 'part of nature.'²³⁵ As Jennifer Welsh argues, realism became more conservative under this guise.²³⁶ Meanwhile, simplistic accounts of international history corroborated the idea that the state had emerged with the decline of feudalism and papal authority, an inevitable end point which would be circumvented only by the unlikely formation of a world state. The state as a concept was trapped within itself.

Conclusion

The period of decolonisation was defined by a tension between two frameworks and the virtual replacement of one by the other. Especially in Britain, the framework of traditionalism dictated resistance to the universality of sovereignty and a desire to continue to shape the units of world politics. Conceptually, this did not mesh with a system of states in the monist image, each with its own identity, agency and history, or an understanding of the states system as a rationalistic, asocial realm. However,

²³⁵ Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, p.160.

²³⁶ Jennifer Welsh, "'I' is for Ideology: Conservatism in International Affairs,' *Global Society*, 17:2 (2003), p.177.

with the decline of British power, a different understanding matured, in which states were equal and unitary actors, forged out of a bottom-up process of self-determination and removed from the social and parental ties of the imperial era. The period, during which the rules and institutions of international politics created in 1945 remained relatively constant, was one of enormous conceptual transition.

At the beginning of the period, allegations of 'arbitrariness' left many uncomfortable with the process of change occurring in Africa, as states were created along seemingly 'arbitrary' boundaries. This view was challenged, however, by a particularly 'American' view of nationalism centred not on traditionalism and culture but on the organic nature of a politically mature community, as liberal hopes of a world of free societies flew high. What was really happening, however, was the merging of the historical and political conceptions of the nation, as historical nationalism, associated with embeddedness, 'authenticity' or 'naturalness,' continued to be an essential legitimising framework. The metaphor of an intractable nationalist wave engulfing a world naturally divided into 'nations,' imparted an air of inevitability to the independence process and solved many problems of legitimacy at both the domestic and international levels. All societies became 'nations,' as nationalism conceptually engulfed the world in a universal and unidirectional historical trajectory that did not allow for alternatives.

Meanwhile, the state formation process was fraught with a conceptual tension between images of sameness versus difference, a world of formally equal sovereign states versus the hierarchical, bifurcated world Europe had presided over for centuries. British officials were horrified in the early years of the period by the 'multiplication of national sovereignties,' since they did not see national independence as a natural progression, but a dangerous relic from the past. They

sought instead to manipulate legal categories and experiment with amalgamations and federations.

This sense of fluidity was mirrored in the model of European integration, calls for African unity and in a more radical discourse centred on the transcendence of the state. But in the context of an increasingly vituperative UN membership preoccupied with sovereignty, as well as a US bent on 'national independence' as a Cold War bargaining chip, the moment for questioning was soon eclipsed. Nationhood, once associated with the agglomeration of territory, became firmly attached to independence and sovereignty. The structure of world politics itself assumed an untouchable legal status. The result was an implicit and unsettling crisis of confidence, as the powerful foresaw the emergence of fragile states and a states system over which they exerted decreasing control.

With this shift, the image of the state was simultaneously transformed, from an entity created by external powers, to one that had forged its own place in the world through its fight for freedom. The state was thus attributed with a diachronic identity, which was often cast back in time; it was an incarnation of its own glorious past. This connection between a people and land also solidified the synchronic identity of the state, underscored by the language of 'nations,' and the depiction of governments as representatives of a 'general will.' Paradoxically, the discourse of world politics suggested an increasingly strong link between government and people, precisely as the international realm was newly populated by autocratic regimes.

Hence as the world became 'one place,' it became a world of states. The state subsumed other categories of identity in an era dominated by the memories of war between states, the expansion of the states system and the political incorrectness of racial delineations. The contradictory discourse of human rights and humanity, a

universal framework above the level of the state, existed in tension with the ontology of the states system, both reflected in the UN Charter.

In this new universal states system, understandings of the links between states also altered. The Eurocentric framework that defined hierarchical norms of cultural greatness and civilisation, collapsed under the weight of a formal system of sovereign equality. The metaphor of the family as a way of conceptualising relationships and the British tendency to start from the ‘particular,’ were rejected by many. In its place, the idea of a pluralistic system of states, bound by a rhetorical commitment to international law rather than a shared sense of common origin and culture, took root. With equality thus came a weakening of the social vision of the states system and a new international realm that appeared more chaotic, complex and competitive. The idea of an ‘international society’ did not disappear, but it was often cast as minimal, and defended rather than presumed.

In the early part of the period, pessimism about international life was explicitly linked to the nation-state or ‘new nationalism,’ the territorial state as the container of a discrete conception of the good. But gradually, such contingent forces as nationalism were disregarded in the context of simplified visions of world politics most obviously, but not exclusively, epitomised by structural realism. In tandem, the language of world politics became one of statehood, sovereignty, inter-state relations, and ‘rationality.’ At the dawn of the 1980s, as the decolonisation of the Third World was virtually complete, International Relations was dominated by macro-level understandings of the ‘international system’ and ‘international society,’ contained in books such as *Theory of International Politics* and *Anarchical Society*.²³⁷

²³⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*; Bull, *The Anarchical Society*.

These macro-level accounts suggested a new paradox regarding the state. On the one hand, in the post-war era, states were increasingly cast as the embodiments of their societies, produced by a universal 'nationalist' wave that engulfed the world. They were people-like entities distinct from governments; they had values and interests and could 'seek survival.' On the other hand, the state shifted from being a mark of status to a mark of ordinariness. Whereas at the beginning of the period, statesmen were suffering an acute lack of faith in the very concepts of sovereignty and independence, by the 1970s, these ideas defined the entire world. The state was no longer Hegel's reified locus of power and energy or Wight's 'inscrutable and awesome monster' following its own 'predestined laws.' It was instead the banal unit of world politics, a self-explanatory entity congruent with all others and constrained from many angles.

At the heart of these changes was the force of liberal internationalism, supposedly a force of modernism over conservatism. The liberal assumptions espoused in the early post-1945 period underscored the state as the container of human society and thus also corroborated the monist image of the state as an actor. In advancing self-determination and equality for all, liberalism demanded that every human be deemed a component of a 'people' responsible unto itself, and delegitimised alternative conceptions of human identity such as race or empire. Moreover, it fashioned a world composed entirely of states, equally sovereign and equally ordinary. In this way, decolonisation wrought fundamental changes to understandings of the state, which by the end of this period had become the unquestioned person of the international realm.

Chapter Five: New States after the Cold War, 1990-2005

‘Let me start with a set of questions. They go to the heart of what’s happening today in Bosnia and Kosovo, but they also resonate through history and around the world. These are questions that have never been answered with total clarity and permanence either in theory or in practice. Moreover the attempt to answer them has been over the centuries more or less a constant source of war.

The questions are these: What exactly is a nation? What is a state?... What, indeed, is sovereignty, and what are its limits?’

Strobe Talbott, 1999.¹

In the 1990s, the world changed in ways unforeseen. It was a decade of surprise, defined by the unexpected end of the Cold War and the rapid replacement of a bipolar international system with a unipolar one. It was also a decade of expansion for the institution of the state, as the removal of the Cold War ‘overlay’ unleashed fragmentary forces. In the 1980s, only seven new states had emerged, as decolonisation waned and the states system appeared to be virtually global. Between 1990 and 2002, however, UN membership soared from 159 to 191.² This was partly a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, but also a consequence of the secession of territories from existing states, a force vigorously constrained during the Cold War.³ This period of fragmentation, during which the question of state boundaries assumed the analytical spotlight, challenged the assumption that the states system would ever

¹ Strobe Talbott, US Deputy Secretary of State, ‘The Balkan Question and the European Answer,’ Address at the Aspen Institute, Aspen, Colorado, 24 August 1999, *US Department of State Dispatch*, 10:7 (1999), p.12.

² Some of the new members, such as Switzerland, were already established states.

³ Between 1947 and 1991, there was only one case of successful secession (Bangladesh).

be complete and ushered in a new century in which struggles for 'self-determination' are ongoing.⁴

This chapter focuses on various cases of new state formation, from the Baltics to East Timor and Eritrea, but with particular emphasis on the former Yugoslavia, for reasons explained in the introduction. It argues that during the post-Cold War period, the question of political organisation was revisited as never before, as fragmentation brought the 'state' and 'nation' under the spotlight. However, this did not inculcate a shift in understanding, but instead the emergence of various contradictory strands of thought. On the one hand, the nation-state and sovereign state appeared passé and dangerous. On the other hand, they remained an essential basis for English language understandings of world politics.

New States in the 1990s

The disintegration of the Soviet Union occurred two to three years after the collapse of communist rule, which brought the Cold War to a close. In Eastern Europe, communism was abandoned and new regimes rejected even the reformed Soviet Union. Despite his shock, Mikhail Gorbachev refused to sanction the use of force to stymie this challenge, setting a precedent for republics within the 'inner empire,' such as Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.⁵ Boris Yeltsin, President of Russia from 1991, catalysed the break-up by demanding independence from the Union for Russia itself. Horrified conservative communists mounted a coup, but lacked resolve in the face of

⁴ Examples include Palestine, Kashmir and the Punjab, Northern Ireland, South Sudan, Tamil-controlled Sri Lanka, Quebec, Catalonia, Spanish Basque country and the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Turkey.

⁵ For general historical background see Kristian Gerner and Stefan Hedlund, *The Baltic States and the End of the Soviet Empire* (Routledge, London, 1993); Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1993).

defiance from Yeltsin and thousands of Russian citizens. The formal end came when leaders of the three Slavic republics (Russia, Ukraine and Belarus) jointly stated that the USSR was 'ceasing its existence as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality' and agreed to establish a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).⁶ On 25 December 1991, the Soviet Union was replaced by fifteen new states, eleven of which were members of the CIS.

The collapse of the Soviet Union provided a powerful example for other regions of the world, but also had direct geopolitical ramifications. For example, during the Cold War, Indonesia had been regarded as the bulwark of the US East Asian security system. The territorial integrity of the island archipelago was therefore an overriding strategic objective. Human rights activists denounced the Indonesian occupation of East Timor from 1975, but Western states did not exert decisive pressure until communism was no longer a credible threat in East Asia. Likewise Eritrean statehood owed much to the Soviet Union's abandonment of its client regime in Addis Ababa in 1991, creating a power vacuum into which the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and its allies could move.⁷

However, the region that posed the most difficult questions of recognition, and that dominated legal debates of the time, was that of the former Yugoslavia, inflected by a different dynamic caused by the death of Marshal Tito in 1980.⁸ For decades,

⁶ As cited in *The New York Times*, 9 December 1991, p.8.

⁷ As outlined by James Mayall, 'Sovereignty, Nationalism and Self-determination,' *Political Studies*, 47:3 (1999), p.490.

⁸ Sources used in discussion of Yugoslavia include Wayne Bert, *The Reluctant Superpower; United States' Policy in Bosnia, 1991-5* (London, Macmillan, 1997); Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States*; Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton; The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (Washington D.C., Brookings Institution, 2000); Alex Danchev and Thomas Halverson (eds.), *International Perspectives on the Yugoslav Conflict* (London, Macmillan, 1996); Nicholas Morris, 'Humanitarian Intervention in the Balkans,' in Jennifer Welsh (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004); David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse; Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (London, Vintage, 1995); Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour; Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London, Allen Lane, 2001); John Williams, *Legitimacy in International*

Tito's rule, centred on his own brand of communism, had provided the semblance of ethnic tranquillity and economic success. His death, and the questioning of communism as it declined elsewhere, resulted in the exercise of power by the governments of the various republics and the election of leaders on 'nationalist' platforms. Slobodan Milosevic, who came to power in Serbia in 1989, abandoned the commitment to respecting Kosovo's autonomy. He also sparked wider fears by espousing a 'greater Serbia,' an idea which allowed for the secession of some republics but not their Serb-dominated areas. In June 1991, both Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence, and the Federal Yugoslav Army (JNA) moved into Slovenia and parts of Croatia. It shortly withdrew from the former while in the latter, a ceasefire left Croatian Serbs in control of three areas. In October, independence was also declared in Bosnia.

As Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, EC countries and the US warned that they would not recognise the independence of break-away states; US Secretary of State James Baker visited Belgrade in June 1991 to lobby for unity. The George H. W. Bush administration perceived Serbia as the main culprit, but would not countenance the use of US or NATO force, even as the world watched the shelling of Vukovar and Dubrovnik during the autumn of 1991. A year before the presidential election, this issue was seen as a 'loser' and deferred to Europe. Meanwhile, the EC negotiated fourteen ceasefires during the latter half of 1991, none of which lasted more than a few days. It also set up the Yugoslav Peace Conference at The Hague in September 1991, under the direction of former British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington. The EC was convinced that Yugoslavia could be held together by an association arrangement, but the republics refused this gesture.

Relations and the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia (London, Macmillan, 1998); Gazmen Xhudo, *Diplomacy and Crisis Management in the Balkans; A US Foreign Policy Perspective* (London, Macmillan, 1996).

In December 1991, European Foreign Ministers agreed to recognise the independence of former-Yugoslav republics that fulfilled certain conditions, including commitments to the rule of law, democracy and human rights, as well as guarantees of ethnic and minority rights and the acceptance of the inviolability of frontiers.⁹ It fell to the Badinter Commission, an arbitration body composed of five Presidents from among the various Constitutional Courts of Europe, to judge whether the four applicants - Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia – met the criteria. However, dissension arose as Germany recognised Croatia and Slovenia before the Commission had returned its opinions. Although the Commission concluded Croatia did not meet the conditions, the rest of the EC also recognised these two republics on 15 January, and the US followed suit in April. Full recognition of Macedonia was delayed until December 1993, due to persistent Greek objections.

The Badinter Commission was unable to advocate recognition for Bosnia, since it argued, the ‘will of the peoples’ for independent statehood had not been established.¹⁰ Hence a referendum was held in late February. The result was 99.4 percent in favour of independence, but the turnout was only 63.4 percent, the result of a Serbian boycott. This was immediately followed by fighting amongst different ethnic groups and Serb paramilitary units started entering Bosnia in April 1992. On 6 April, the same day the siege of Sarajevo began, Bosnia-Herzegovina was recognised by European Foreign Ministers, followed the next day by the US. War in Bosnia now seemed inevitable, to determine the boundaries of the new state.

The botched recognition process was one element of a wider failure to deal with the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, reflecting badly on institutions and

⁹ ‘Declaration on the “Guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union,”’ and ‘Declaration on Yugoslavia,’ Extraordinary EPC Ministerial Meeting, Brussels, 16 December 1991, both printed in *European Journal of International Law*, 4:1 (1993), pp.72-3.

¹⁰ ‘Badinter Commission Opinion No.8,’ *European Journal of International Law*, 4:1 (1992), p.83.

Western governments. The EC negotiated an agreement to end the violence in Slovenia but was less successful in Croatia, where a fragile peace was secured by the UN and peacekeepers deployed. The international community did not attempt to prevent war in Bosnia and once it broke out, sent peacekeepers only to mitigate the humanitarian consequences. The UN Security Council and NATO were divided as to the importance of establishing stability versus ensuring a just settlement. The Europeans tended towards a more pragmatic stance that came under severe criticism, while Americans generally sympathised with the Bosnian Muslims. Yet, although Clinton election campaign rhetoric advocated a proactive approach, he did little in practice to break with the reactive strategy of the Bush administration, wary of undermining the unity of NATO.

In 1993, the debate over Bosnia's future centred on the Vance-Owen peace plan, which proposed to divide the country into ten semi-autonomous cantons (three each for the Serbs, Croats and Muslims and a Greater Sarajevo under shared control). However, the plan was rejected by the Serbs and initially also by President Clinton, who was reluctant to endorse a settlement that awarded Serb aggression. It unravelled completely as events on the ground divided Bosnia into three military zones of control. In March 1994, the Washington Agreement arranged power-sharing between Bosnian Muslims and Croats and paved the way for permanent partition, following the commencement of NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb targets in late August.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace, brokered in November at US-led talks in Dayton, Ohio, established Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state comprising two entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation, each with a high degree of autonomy. A civilian peace implementation agency (the Office of the High Representative, or OHR) was established to replace the UN civilian leadership and

remains in place. In addition, an international peacekeeping force was deployed, handed over from NATO to a European-Union led force in December 2004.

The agreement did not, however, address the problem of Kosovo, where many Kosovo Albanians also hoped for independence. Following a 1998 crackdown by Serb security forces against Kosovo Albanians accused of supporting the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), NATO launched air strikes against Yugoslavia in 1999. NATO forces arrived in the province as President Milosevic agreed to withdraw troops and the KLA to disarm. Sporadic violence continued however, as the region moved towards UN-sponsored talks on Kosovo's future status, beginning in February 2006. Meanwhile, in a May 2006 referendum, Montenegro's population narrowly voted for independence from Serbia. In June, the Republic of Montenegro became the newest member of the UN.

In other parts of the world, statehood was the product of decades of struggle.¹¹ Eritrea, which originated in the Italian occupation of the Red Sea area after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, was designated a non-self-governing territory after the Second World War. As it contained a plethora of 'ethnic' and religious groups and was economically weak, a 1950 UN Commission federated it with Ethiopia, thereby also giving Ethiopia access to the sea.¹² But the federal model did not last long, as Eritrea was effectively absorbed into Ethiopia in the 1960s. An armed struggle broke out, but despite the annual appeals for international support, the issue did not appear on the UN Security Council agenda between 1952 and 1990. Eritrea's

¹¹ Sources used on Eritrea include Tekie Fessehazion (ed.), *Eritrea and Ethiopia: From Conflict to Cooperation to Conflict* (Lawrenceville, N.J, Red Sea Press, 1999); Addia Birhan, *Eritrea, A Problem Child of Ethiopia; Causes, Consequences and Strategic Implications of the Conflict* (Addis Ababa, Marran Books, 1998); Ruth Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence; Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941-1993* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995); Dominique Jacquin-Berdal, 'State and War in the Formation of Eritrean National Identity,' in Sarah Owen Vandersluis, (ed.), *The State and Identity Construction in International Relations* (New York, Macmillan, 2000), pp.49-74.

¹² See 'Report of the UN Commission for Eritrea,' UN doc. A/1285, 8 June 1950, especially pars. 99-100, 142.

self-determination was hindered by its geographic and economic marginalisation, the fear that its secession would lead to the ‘balkanisation’ of Africa, and by the Cold War, during which Ethiopia was coveted as an ally by both sides. Some autonomy was granted in September 1987, and Former President Carter sponsored talks from 1989. But the US remained formally attached to the integrity of Ethiopia until the last possible moment, nervous of setting a precedent for independence that might influence the situation in the Balkans.¹³

Eritrea’s statehood was made possible by the disintegration of the Ethiopian army and the assumption of control by the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) in May 1991. As the EPLF moved to establish a transitional government, it became clear that Eritreans would accept nothing less than a referendum.¹⁴ In April 1993, 98 percent of the population participated in a vote monitored by the OAU and UN, 99.8 percent in support of independence. In May 1993, independence was declared, immediately recognised by Western governments and followed by UN membership. Ethiopia accepted Eritrea’s transition to sovereignty, but disagreements ensued over terms of trade and Ethiopian access to ports. Border disputes erupted into open hostilities between 1998 and 2000 and despite a ruling by an international demarcation commission, tensions remain high.

The case of East Timor is distinctive because its absorption into Indonesia was never recognised by most members of the UN.¹⁵ East Timor, occupying one half of an island at the edge of the Indonesian archipelago, was a Portuguese colony from the sixteenth century. Portuguese legislation provided for a gradual transition to

¹³ Evelyn Farkas, *Fractured States and US Foreign Policy: Iraq, Ethiopia and Bosnia in the 1990s* (New York, Palgrave, 2003), p.60.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.69.

¹⁵ General sources on East Timor include Simon Chesterman, *You, The People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration, and State-Building* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004); Farkas, *Fractured States and US Foreign Policy*; Don Greenless and Robert Garran, *Deliverance: The Inside Story of East Timor’s Fight for Freedom* (Crow’s Nest, NSW, Allen and Unwin, 2002).

independence in 1978. But in 1975, animosity grew between pro-independence and pro-Indonesian parties, leading to a civil war. When independence was declared by Fretilin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor), Indonesia launched an offensive and integrated the territory. The annexation was condemned in the UN but international actors showed no inclination to resolve the issue during the Cold War. Indeed recent evidence suggests the acquiescence of both the US and Australia to the move.¹⁶

At the end of the Cold War, however, more attention was paid to the territory, as events put East Timor in the news. In 1991, one hundred people were killed when troops in Dili fired on mourners at the funeral of a Fretilin supporter. In 1996, Carlos Belo, Acting Bishop of Dili and Jose Ramos Horta, a resistance leader, were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. But real change came after the 1997 Asian economic crisis, which saw the value of the Indonesian rupiah plummet. The next year, widespread protests and rioting led to the replacement of President Suharto by President Habibie. Habibie loosened the Indonesian grip over East Timor and even suggested, in 1999, that the territory might become independent if its population rejected proposals for increased 'autonomy.' It is unclear how much this shift owed to international pressure, versus Habibie's own political considerations.¹⁷

The same year, violence broke out in East Timor between pro- and anti-independence activists and Indonesia agreed, in a UN-endorsed deal, to allow the East Timorese to vote on their future. Militias continued to kill and displace the population in the lead-up to the popular consultation, but they failed to compromise the universality of the ballot. In August, over 98 percent of registered voters went to the polls and 78.5 percent opted to begin a process of transition towards independence.

¹⁶ See Ian Martin, 'International Intervention in East Timor,' in Welsh (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention*, p.143.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.144.

The violence then escalated and East Timor assumed the media spotlight, as several governments and human rights organisations demanded action. Habibie, under strong international pressure, eventually agreed to an international peace-keeping force. A Security Council-authorised, Australian-led force (INTERFET) was deployed in September.

In October 1999, a UN transitional administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established by the Security Council.¹⁸ Its mandate included the provision of security, the development of civil and social services and the establishment of conditions for sustainable development as well as the building of infrastructure to maintain democratic governance, the rule of law and human rights. Elections for the new Constituent Assembly and Presidency were held in 2001 and 2002. Following the approval by the Assembly of a draft constitution envisaging a parliamentary form of government, independence celebrations were held in May 2002 and East Timor (now ‘Timor-Leste’) became a member of the UN in September 2002.¹⁹ However, the renewed outbreak of tensions in 2006 compromised its image as the UN’s ‘statebuilding’ success story.

The remaining increases in UN membership during the post-Cold War period are attributable to three factors. First, the final stage of the decolonisation process brought independence to many tiny territories in the Pacific, including the Marshall Islands (1991), Micronesia (1991), Palau (1994), Kiribati (1999), Nauru (1999), Tonga (1999) and Tuvalu (2000). Second, three tiny European territories were recognised as entities with international legal personality, the Republic of San Marino (1992), the Principality of Monaco (1993) and the Co-Principality of Andorra (1993).

¹⁸ Established by Security Council Resolution 1272, 25 October 1999, UN doc. S/RES/1272.

¹⁹ See Chesterman, *You, the People*, ch.2.

Third, UN membership was granted to new applicants long regarded as sovereign states, North and South Korea (1991) and Switzerland (2002).

Conceptualising the People

In the post-Cold War period, understandings of the ‘people’ of the state were characterised by a basic ambiguity. A strong normative attachment to diversity and multiculturalism was an explicit feature of this period. Yet an undercurrent of feeling espoused the ingrained assumption that a state’s population should ideally be a homogenous, deeply historical ‘nation.’ As in the period of African decolonisation, this created a desire for ‘authenticity,’ to detract from the ‘arbitrary’ borders of many states. However, more than ever before, this was also a period in which different ideas about political community were opened to scrutiny. Commentators started to wonder how to define the state, as control of it continued to engender violence.

A Distaste for Ethnicity

The experiences of the 1990s left a lingering distaste for the concept of ethnicity and the primordial behaviours associated with ‘ethnic’ cleansing, amongst both intellectuals and policy makers. Striving to distance themselves from this concept, and building on legal and political developments pre-dating the period, international actors instead emphasised norms related to governance in discussions of statehood. These included human rights, tolerance, diversity, democracy and the rule of law, as contained in the EC’s ‘declaration’ on recognition guidelines for Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia. The problem, in this vision, was not the lack of ‘history,’ a dominant theme forty years before, but its painful abundance, and the need to establish more

‘modern’ ideas about identity, based not on ethnicity, culture or ‘nationality,’ but common citizenship. Answering the call, political theory developed a preoccupation with innovative understandings of citizenship for the ‘post-national’ or ‘post-Westphalian’ state.²⁰

This normative shift impacted the way states were described, both by their governments and others. Prior to April 1992, for example, Alija Izetbegović had been the leader of a Muslim national party, concerned primarily with the rights and needs of Bosnian Muslims. He resumed the emphasis on Islam later as, disillusioned with the West, he turned for support to Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.²¹ But for a brief period after 1992, Izetbegović was a ‘Bosnian leader’ and was keen to stress the ‘multinational and multicultural’ composition of Bosnian society, an attempt to safeguard its integrity by appeal to Western norms.²² Likewise, in the Baltics, formal language stressed that the rights of Russians would be safeguarded. Latvian Popular Front leader Ivars Godmanis asserted that ‘[s]overeignty and independence are not questions of nationality... Every ethnic group in Latvia is guaranteed equal rights.’²³ This language was contradicted by the reality of domestic politics in Latvia, where resident Russians were frequently labelled ‘colonists.’

In the West, a similar aversion to ethnicity was intricately linked with the desire to steer clear of the question of boundaries. ‘An important presumption to which we should all adhere,’ said a British Minister, ‘is that existing frontiers, however inconvenient and however arbitrarily they may have been drawn, are the

²⁰ See for example Andrew Linklater, ‘Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State,’ *European Journal of International Relations* 2:1 (1996), pp.77-103.

²¹ Rieff, *Slaughterhouse*, p.11.

²² Alija Izetbegović, Former President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, ‘Bosnia; On the Historical Border,’ lecture given at the Examination Schools, Oxford, 2 April 2001 (Oxford, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 2001), p.16.

²³ Cited in Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution*, p.303.

lines from which we start.’²⁴ Many others agreed that even ‘artificial’ ‘or ‘arbitrary’ borders should not be altered and recognised that few borders were ‘natural’ anyway. A Dutch diplomat, commenting in a private letter, claimed that the proposal to redraw borders along ethnic lines met with the objection from Western Europeans, that it was not in keeping with ‘our age.’²⁵ Likewise, the framers of the Vance-Owen peace plan avoided the issue of ethnicity. ‘We were careful not to label any provinces Serb, Croat or Muslim,’ said David Owen, ‘putting only numbers and place names on the map.’²⁶ That the plan rewarded ‘ethnic cleansing’ made some US policy makers reluctant to support it.²⁷

In fact, in continuity with the post-Second World War period, boundary changes based on ‘ethnic’ claims were extremely rare. The new states of the 1990s were all based on administrative boundaries previously in place.²⁸ Those of the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia were federal entities, existing within defined boundaries for several decades. East Timor was a colony and Eritrea a non-self-governing territory after the Second World War; both were therefore entitled to self-determination as peoples subject to external subjugation. Constitutional guarantees for the protection of minorities were indicative of the formal embrace of the multiethnic state, as too were depictions of states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina in terms of its three constituent ‘peoples.’ In contrast, groups such as the Kurds and Basques, whose claims to statehood imply changes to the boundaries of other states, have been the least successful aspirants.

²⁴ Mr. Hogg, Minister of State, House of Commons, 13 November 1991, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons Official Report* (London, H.M.S.O.), col. 1206.

²⁵ Private correspondence shared with the author. The Netherlands held the EC presidency in the second half of 1991.

²⁶ David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (London, Indigo, 1996), p.95.

²⁷ See Daalder, *Getting to Dayton*, pp.10-11.

²⁸ Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, pp.152-67.

In legal terms, this trend reflects the dominance of the concept of *uti possidetis*, the rule that state boundaries are firm, as contained in the 1975 Helsinki agreement which fixed Europe's post-war borders. The Badinter Commission recommended that the internal boundaries dividing the former Yugoslavia should be the boundaries of the new states in 1992, evidence, according to Suzanne Lalonde, that policy makers have embraced *uti possidetis* as a binding principle to an extent previously unknown.²⁹ As described in the Canadian Supreme Court's decision on Quebec, under international law, a 'people' is entitled to secede only if it is part of a colonial empire, subject to alien domination or denied meaningful exercise of its right to self-determination within the state. 'Ethnic' or cultural factors are not by themselves sufficient.³⁰

The Limits of Multiculturalism

Yet the discourse of Western governments has not always been consistent with a commitment to the proclaimed ideals of multiculturalism, tolerance and shared citizenship. During the period of decolonisation, the vagueness of 'nationalism' and the celebration of 'self-determination' obscured the realities of multiethnic states. By the post-Cold War period, such confidence had been shaken. Particularly outside of the US, many commentators stressed the multiethnic composition of Yugoslavia as the reason for its demise, over and above factors such as leadership and geopolitics. The dissolution of Yugoslavia, said one British Member of Parliament, was 'almost inevitable' given the lack of 'unifying factors' in that country and the predominance

²⁹ See Lalonde, *Determining Boundaries in a Conflicted World*.

³⁰ See Reference re. Secession of Quebec, Opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada (1998), Supreme Court Reports, 2 (1998), p.217.

of 'old national realities.'³¹ David Owen, co-chair of the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, described Yugoslavia as a 'crossroad civilisation' where three religions 'divided communities and on occasions become the marks of identification in a dark and virulent nationalism.' He reminded readers that the First World War was 'triggered in Sarajevo.'³²

Likewise, governments were sometimes reluctant to celebrate multiculturalism in the *new* states. In the Baltics, according to Anatol Lieven, the Western media stuck steadfastly to the stereotype of 'gallant little freedom-loving peoples, fighting against wicked empires,' therefore ignoring the presence of Russian minorities and the discrimination they faced.³³ On Bosnia's admission to the UN, there was a distinct lack of reference to its multiethnic composition except by its own representative, who described it as 'a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious society.'³⁴ Even the UN Secretary-General did not verbally defend the concept of a multiethnic state, according to David Rieff, reflecting a lack of confidence in its very viability or legitimacy.³⁵ Meanwhile, Macedonia was, according to Richard Caplan, handicapped 'by the weakness of its identity.'³⁶ Divided during the Balkan wars and subsumed by Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, many saw the modern existence of Macedonia to be a contingent creation of Tito's, and thus placated Greek concerns over its recognition for two years, allowing its neighbours to conspire towards a possible partition.

Meanwhile, the multiethnic composition of Bosnia was frequently described in negative terms. In Britain, Bosnia was described by Prime Minister John Major as a

³¹ Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.465.

³² Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, pp.3-6.

³³ Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution*, p.381.

³⁴ Mr Haris Silajdzic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), General Assembly, 22 May 1992, UN doc. A/46/PV/86.

³⁵ Rieff, *Slaughterhouse*, p.22.

³⁶ Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States*, p.134.

‘tinderbox in history’ and by Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg as an ‘unholy cocktail.’³⁷ ‘We are wrestling ... with ancient disorders’ claimed Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. ‘It has been so through the centuries.’³⁸ The emphasis on endemic ‘ethnic’ conflict dispelled the call for immediate action in the territory, against which Margaret Thatcher became the loudest government critic. It also underscored what support there was for solutions centred on the division of Bosnia into ‘workable’ ethnically-based units, such as the Vance-Owen plan, and ultimately the Dayton Agreement.

The US continued to believe in the possibility of a multiethnic solution. Yet even in this exemplar of the ‘melting pot’ society, Bosnia was scrutinised as a country consumed by ancient ‘ethnic’ hatred.³⁹ George H. W. Bush, for example, described the war as a ‘complex, convoluted conflict that grows out of age-old animosities,’ a ‘blood feud’ to which he would not contemplate sending American soldiers.⁴⁰ Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger argued that Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims were responsible unto themselves because they were ‘intent on killing each other.’⁴¹ Asked whether the US would take enforcement action against the Serbs, President Clinton also emphasised the ‘ancient ethnic hatreds that have consumed people.’⁴² Influenced by Robert Kaplan’s book, *Balkan Ghosts*, Clinton centred his views on a reified concept of ‘ethnicity.’ ‘Biologically, there is not much difference

³⁷ John Major, 31 May 1995, cited in Riikka Kuusisto, *Western Definitions of War in the Gulf and in Bosnia: The Rhetorical Frameworks of the United States, British and French Leaders in Action* (Helsinki, Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 1999), p.115; Douglas Hogg, House of Commons, 12 December 1991, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col. 1167.

³⁸ Hurd, 29 April 1993, cited in Kuusisto, *Western Definitions of War*, p.103.

³⁹ See Bert, *The Reluctant Superpower*.

⁴⁰ George Bush, ‘Remarks on the Situation in Bosnia and an Exchange With Reporters in Colorado Springs,’ 6 August 1992, and ‘Question and Answer Session in Secaucus, New Jersey,’ 22 October 1992, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States; George Bush, 1992-3* (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1993), book 2, pp.1315-6, 1932.

⁴¹ Eagleburger, *The New York Times*, 10 January 1993, IV, p.4, cited in Bert, *The Reluctant Superpower*, p.102.

⁴² President Clinton, ‘Remarks at a Town Meeting in Detroit,’ 10 February 1993, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States; William J. Clinton, 1993*, (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1994), book 1, p.79.

between the Muslims, the Croatians and the Serbians,' he claimed, but the 'ethnic differences ... rooted in religious and historical factors' constitute a 'very, very difficult problem.'⁴³

In contrast to the decolonisation period, it was not simply vague 'nationalism' that was a central force, but nationalism in a deeply rooted and implacable form. 'The age of naked nationalism had begun' said former US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmerman in the mid-1990s.⁴⁴ Nationalism was often depicted as an almost natural force, only temporarily suppressed by the bipolar dynamic. '[W]e must begin by realising that the sense of self-determination, national consciousness and national identity is not a temporary phenomenon' said one British Member of Parliament, referring to the distinctive patterns that characterised 'the life and activity of every identifiable community.'⁴⁵ Owen too described how people had been lulled into a false security that 'the old nationalisms' of Yugoslavia 'had been forgotten,' when they were merely 'suppressed.'⁴⁶

The Quest for Authenticity.

The image of the people along 'ethnic' lines reinforced the pointlessness of any more dramatic Western intervention in the civil war. However, it also revealed an assumption that 'real' or 'good' states were ethnically 'homogenous' ones, and fixated some observers on the challenge of finding 'authentic' boundaries removed from the 'arbitrary' vacillations of twentieth century politics. A British Member of Parliament stressed that Yugoslavia was, after all, only an 'artificial creation of the

⁴³ President Clinton, 'Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With High School Students in Bensonville, Illinois, 11 May 1993, in *ibid.* p.622.

⁴⁴ Warren Zimmermann, 'The Last Ambassador; A Memoir of the Collapse of Yugoslavia,' *Foreign Affairs*, 74:2 (1995), p.7.

⁴⁵ Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, cols.484-5.

⁴⁶ Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, p.11.

great powers after the First World War.’⁴⁷ US Secretary of Defence William Perry was sceptical as to whether Yugoslavia ‘ever was one country.’⁴⁸ Perceived in the image of an ethnic maelstrom, Bosnia was also regarded as non-‘authentic.’ President Clinton questioned its ‘ethnic coherence.’⁴⁹ A British Member of Parliament, sceptical about the wisdom of recognition, asserted that ‘the boundaries of the various Yugoslav republics were determined by the arbitrary decision of the communist Tito.’⁵⁰

In the case of Eritrea, the quest for ‘authenticity’ was played out in images of history more than ‘ethnicity,’ the most appropriate boundaries understood to be those of the past. For example, parts of the Western media dwelt on the ancient past, debating the links between former Ethiopian ruler Haile Selassie and the larger ancient ‘dynasty’ founded by the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon.⁵¹ Eritrean academic Ruth Iyob notes that in the post-Second World War period, including the 1990s, thinking on the question of Eritrea’s future was oriented around only two main possibilities. The first was based on the idea of a pan-Ethiopian culture and saw Ethiopia as the ‘quintessential nation of liberated Africa.’ By emphasising the historical relations between the two peoples going back millennia, it perpetuated the argument that Ethiopians and Eritreans were separated only by historical accident. The second posited Eritrea as a ‘nation’ in the past, ‘colonised’ by Ethiopia, and never accorded ‘self-determination.’⁵² In other words, proponents of Eritrean independence

⁴⁷ Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.478

⁴⁸ William Perry, US Secretary of Defence, 9 March 1995, cited in Kuusisto, *Western Definitions of War*, p.114.

⁴⁹ President Clinton, ‘Question and Answer Session With the Newspaper Association of America in Boston’ 25 April 1993, *Public Papers of ... William J. Clinton, 1993*, book 1, p.505.

⁵⁰ Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, cols.463-4.

⁵¹ See for example Stephanie Gray, ‘Independence within reach at last for rebellious Eritrea,’ *Financial Times*, 29 May 1991, p.5.

⁵² See Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence*, p.27.

were forced to portray Eritrea as an historic 'nation.' A third possibility, that Eritrean nationalism was a very real but *recent* political development, was rarely conceded.⁵³

Some scholars did criticise the spurious assumptions made about nationalism as an endemic force, arguing instead that nationalism was contingent, and often exploited by local leaders for narrower political purposes. Yugoslavia's 'supposedly primordial hatreds' were a 'twentieth century phenomenon,' said William Pfaff.⁵⁴ To explain the crisis as a result of ethnic hatred was, continued Susan Woodward, to put the cart before the horse.⁵⁵ A response to Kaplan's book also stressed that the very idea of 'ethnicity' was invented in the nineteenth century by intellectuals and politicians trying to impose the theory of the homogenous state on their heterogeneous homelands.⁵⁶ In this light, states like the former Yugoslavia and the new Bosnia were no more unnatural and 'artificially' held together than many others.

The 1990s thus continued and exacerbated the dominant tension of the decolonisation era. On the one hand, the deeply rooted historical (now 'ethnic') nation was emphatically rejected as the basis of the ideal state, which was supposedly tolerant, multiethnic and democratic. It was dismissed at a factual level too, by newer, more sophisticated analyses of history and politics that exposed the realities of state formation. Yet, 'ethnicity' continued to be seen as the basis for an 'authentic' state. Ethnic nationalism was thus simultaneously a manipulated misnomer, abused by power-hungry leaders, and an endemic force.

⁵³ See Jacquin-Berdal, 'State and War in the Formation of Eritrean National Identity.'

⁵⁴ William Pfaff, 'Invitation to War,' *Foreign Affairs*, 72:3 (1993), p.97.

⁵⁵ See Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (Washington, DC, Brookings Institution, 1995), p.18.

⁵⁶ Noel Malcolm, 'Seeing Ghosts' *The National Interest*, 32 (1993), cited in Bert, *The Reluctant Superpower*, p.101.

The Wavering Nation

An important difference, however, was that the 1990s saw a greater consciousness of different understandings of the 'people' and a proliferation of theoretical works on 'nationalism.'⁵⁷ In particular, and as implied by the continual references to 'ethnicity' above, a strong distinction emerged between 'ethnic' and 'civic' nationalism, made explicit by Michael Ignatieff.⁵⁸ Ethnic nationalism, derived from the German Romantics, was described as having a linguistic or cultural base, and tending towards authoritarianism. Civic nationalism, derived from the Enlightenment emphasis on individual equality, was seen as more political and democratic. Such a distinction was built on theoretical foundations already laid by Hans Kohn and others during the period of decolonisation. In the 1990s, however, the distinction became less Eurocentric and infiltrated non-academic discourse in ways hitherto unforeseen.

The importance of the 'ethnic' component is indicated by dictionary evidence regarding the 'nation' concept. In the late-nineteenth century, Johnson's English Dictionary defined the nation in terms devoid of 'ethnic' content (simply 'a people born under the same government').⁵⁹ More than a century later, in contrast, the Oxford English Dictionary defined the nation as '[a]n extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history, as to form a distinct race or people.'⁶⁰ Hence, biology, history and culture had become more, rather than less, important to the definition.⁶¹

⁵⁷ See Antoine Roger, *Les Grandes Théories Du Nationalisme* (Paris, Éditions Dalloz, 2001), p.1.

⁵⁸ See Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*.

⁵⁹ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1874).

⁶⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (January 2004).

⁶¹ Interestingly, the definition has very recently changed again. Augmenting the territorial component, the nation, by January 2005, was defined by a variety of factors including 'occupation of the same territory.' This broadening perhaps derives from acknowledgment of the ethnically divided cases made prominent in the 1990s.

Creating States

Reflecting the same tension between the 'ethnic' and 'civic' bases of the people, a strange aspect of the post-Cold War era was the range of contradictory ideas about the character of the 'normal' state and the dominant tendencies behind state formation. While some believed the dominant tendency was towards the model of the tolerant and multiethnic state, others emphasised fragmentation, in keeping with the spread of the 'nation-state' since Westphalia. Although self-determination was increasingly regarded as a *jus cogens* (peremptory) norm, deep ambiguity about the concept led some to urge a re-consideration of the principles of political organisation.⁶² Yet at the same time, external powers were constrained from conceptualising alternatives by the centrality of the sovereign state in international discourse.

The 'Normal' State

Reflecting the composite nature of new states such as Bosnia and Eritrea in the 1990s, many believed the modern trend was towards *multiethnic* forms of political organisation based on a common citizenship and democratic rights and exemplified by the US. In 1999, US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott hoped that Yugoslavia could be brought 'into the orbit of those innovations in national identity and international relations that Western Europe is putting in place,' enabling self-determination to flourish 'without requiring the proliferation of ethnically based microstates.'⁶³ In the *Herald Tribune*, a writer likewise claimed the new governments must realise that the 'ethnic definition of national boundaries precludes growth as

⁶² See Antonio Cassese, *Self-Determination of Peoples: A Legal Appraisal* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.134.

⁶³ Talbott, 'The Balkan Question,' p.15.

players in the international community.’⁶⁴ This commitment was also a policy priority, since as Owen highlighted in the Balkans, the ‘prevailing wisdom’ was ‘no fragmentation.’⁶⁵

In this context, some were surprised to see nationalism re-emerge, believing it was out of kilter with the times. As one member of the British Select Committee on Foreign Affairs put it, policy makers were ‘facing issues that we did not believe that we would have to face in Europe again.’ He claimed that the ‘younger generation’ was ‘astonished’ by the rise of ‘what they thought were old-fashioned concepts’ such as nationalism, never imagined as part of the ‘new European experience.’ In other words, to the generation born after the Second World War, nationalism and ‘national’ self-determination were elements of the past.⁶⁶

Yet this was a view with limited reach. As claims to self-determination proliferated and states disintegrated, it seemed to many observers that the dominant modern tendency was in fact fragmentation, or as US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger referred to it, ‘cantonization.’⁶⁷ The process represented, said the *Herald Tribune* writer above, a ‘reorganization’ of nations in which the state was realigned and defined with reference to the dominant ethnic group.⁶⁸ This was a stark contrast to the nineteenth century assumption that agglomeration was the usual trend, which had perpetuated even beyond 1945. As a new terminology of ‘little nation,’ ‘mini-nation’ or ‘microstate’ arose to reflect this sense of fragmentation, many were nervous that a

⁶⁴ William Curtis Conner, ‘Shun Ethnic Nationalists,’ *International Herald Tribune*, 21 May 1992, Opinion section.

⁶⁵ Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, p.11.

⁶⁶ Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.484-6.

⁶⁷ Farkas, *Fractured States and US Foreign Policy*, p.93.

⁶⁸ Conner, ‘Shun Ethnic Nationalists,’ *International Herald Tribune*, *op. cit.*

secessionist precedent was being created, and it seemed there was ‘nothing sacred on the map anymore.’⁶⁹

Within this discourse, some juxtaposed the resultant ‘nation’-states against ‘multinational states,’ which were, according to Zimmerman, ‘a majority in the world.’⁷⁰ The multiethnic state was often depicted as a ‘twentieth century phenomenon’ and especially a post-Second World War phenomenon, a perception linked to the prevalence of post-colonial states with seemingly ‘arbitrary’ but ‘sacrosanct’ boundaries.⁷¹ However, others ignored multinational states in history and depicted the ethnically or culturally homogenous nation-state as the classical model of political organisation extending far back through time. Talbott, for all that he aspired to multinationalism, described the ‘nation-state’ as ‘a venerable fixture in Europe since the mid-seventeenth century,’ when the Treaty of Westphalia ‘broke up the Holy Roman Empire and established a country called France for the French and a country called Sweden for the Swedes.’⁷² George W. Bush identified the warring of great powers with ‘the rise of the nation-state in the seventeenth century.’⁷³ This trajectory, a relatively new theme, embodied the idea that the nation-state was historically ‘normal.’

The Implications of National Self-Determination

These contradictory assumptions were linked to another disagreement as to whether national self-determination was a positive or negative doctrine. On the one hand, as in

⁶⁹ Annika Savill, ‘Inside File: Nothing sacred on the map any more,’ *The Independent*, 29 May 1991, *The Independent*, 29 May 1991, p.10.

⁷⁰ Zimmermann, ‘The Last Ambassador,’ p.19.

⁷¹ Savill, ‘Inside File: Nothing sacred,’ p.10.

⁷² Talbott, ‘The Balkan Question,’ p.13.

⁷³ President George W. Bush, Remarks at the 2002 Graduating Class at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, 1 June, 2002, White House News Release, available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html> (January 2005).

the era of African decolonisation, nationalism was identified with ‘liberation’ from oppression. It was hardly surprising that President H. W. Bush, for example, connected the emergence of ‘independent nations’ from the Soviet Empire with the ‘liberation of its peoples.’⁷⁴ Likewise, a British newspaper described how the ‘new nation’ of East Timor was preparing to ‘set its own course in freedom.’⁷⁵ A twist on this theme was that nationalism was also sometimes cast in terms of liberation from ‘illogical’ boundaries.⁷⁶

Others saw national self-determination as a negative force. As during African decolonisation, there was some concern, albeit rather more muted, that the proliferation of small sovereign units might lead to ‘small, unviable and uneconomic’ units.⁷⁷ A deeper problem, however, was the threat to human freedom posed by nationalism in its perverse ethnic guise. ‘National independence’ and ‘national self-determination’ had been regarded as normal and progressive for two centuries in the US. But in late-twentieth century form, these concepts appeared morally dubious. Zimmerman asserted that ‘nationalism’ was ‘*by nature* uncivil, antidemocratic, and separatist’ and the ‘single nation-state’ ‘a deeply uncivilized concept.’⁷⁸

Five weeks into the fighting in Croatia and Slovenia, George H. W. Bush, who favoured Yugoslav unity, expressed the contradiction succinctly, noting that ‘[f]reedom is not the same as independence.’ ‘Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far off tyranny with a local despotism,’ he continued. ‘They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon

⁷⁴ President Bush, ‘US Welcomes New Commonwealth of Independent States,’ Address to the Nation, Washington, 25 December 1991, *Dispatch* 2:52 (30 December 1991), p.911.

⁷⁵ Jon Swain, ‘From Hell to Hope in Two Years,’ *The Sunday Times*, 7 April 2002, features section.

⁷⁶ Savill, ‘Inside File: Nothing sacred,’ p.10.

⁷⁷ Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford), House of Commons, 2 July 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.1031.

⁷⁸ Zimmermann, ‘The Last Ambassador,’ pp.7,19.

ethnic hatred.’⁷⁹ Bush expressed in concrete terms the decline of the liberal assumption that national independence and human freedom were synonymous. But conceptually, this awareness also created a problem. Contrary to the period of decolonisation, when the independent state was the bastion of freedom against ‘foreign’ tyranny, it seemed that ‘freedom’ no longer came in a convenient package.

The Need for ‘New Answers’

In this context, there arose a novel tendency to ‘rethink’ the boundaries of human political community, to search for ‘new answers to those old questions about nationhood, statehood, democracy, and self-determination.’⁸⁰ As Talbott’s words at the opening of this chapter indicate, these questions had never actually been satisfactorily answered across history. The difference was that now they seemed to matter and the lack of answers was exposed. It was suddenly urgent to demand: ‘What exactly is a nation?’ ‘What is a state?’ ‘When does a nation become a state?’ ‘What, indeed, is sovereignty?’⁸¹ On the academic side, the appearance of an aptly named article, ‘When is a nation?’ by North American scholar Walker Connor, signified a similar disquiet.⁸²

Across the Atlantic, the same tendency was apparent, as Members of Parliament expressed their fundamental confusion and sense of the need for innovation. ‘What is a nation-state?’ asked one. ‘Was Yugoslavia a nation-state?’ even though it contained ‘six or seven nationalities?’ And what about the UK, which

⁷⁹ Remarks by President Bush in Address to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Kiev, 1 August 1991, cited in Thomas Halverson, ‘American Perspectives,’ in Danchev and Halverson, *International Perspectives on the Yugoslav Conflict*, p.5.

⁸⁰ Talbott, ‘The Balkan Question,’ p.14.

⁸¹ Talbott, ‘The Balkan Question,’ p.12.

⁸² Connor, ‘When is a Nation?’

contains four?⁸³ ‘What is the definition of ‘national sovereignty?’ demanded another. When can ‘the component parts of a state ... legitimately demand self-determination for themselves?’ ‘Where were the limits? Was it a question of size? Where could one stop?’⁸⁴ A member of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs claimed there was a need to establish ‘new political arrangements and a new order’ to resolve these tensions.⁸⁵

To a certain extent, the 1990s saw many innovations related to political organisation and particularly to the concept of sovereignty. As discussed above, recognition itself was rendered conditional on the new governments’ commitments to human rights and the protection of minorities.⁸⁶ This was reflected in the EC’s ‘guidelines,’ although whether Croatia, and even more so Bosnia, attained the standards required is somewhat dubious. The existing sovereignty of governments was also increasingly regarded by Western powers as being ‘conditional’ on respect for certain standards of good governance and peacefulness, reflected in new rhetorics such as ‘sovereignty as responsibility’ or the ‘responsibility to protect.’⁸⁷ Forceful intervention occurred not only in the Balkans but also in Africa, East Timor and Haiti, and more recently for regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq (each case, though, involving different factors and levels of consent).

However, the depiction of these changes as a quantum shift needs some qualification. By comparison with previous eras, the discourse of ‘sovereignty as

⁸³ Sir Russell Johnston, House of Commons, 21 May 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.537.

⁸⁴ Donald Anderson (Swansea, East), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.466.

⁸⁵ Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.484.

⁸⁶ See Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States*.

⁸⁷ See Francis Deng et al., *Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington, Brookings Institution, 1996); *The Responsibility to Protect; Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (IDRC Books, Ottawa, 2001); Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace?* The ‘responsibility to protect’ was endorsed by the UN General Assembly during its summit of September 2005.

responsibility' was firmly entrenched within the broader sovereignty paradigm. While the right of a government to non-intervention (Krasner's 'Westphalian' sovereignty) became increasingly conditional, the institution of 'international legal' sovereignty, the status of a territory as a member of the international system of states, was never questioned. Even Iraq never lost its 'statehood' or UN membership, because its occupation was regarded as temporary. In contrast to the post-1945 era, the sovereign state was not one possible unit of political organisation amongst an infinite variety, but the only one.

The new states of the 1990s benefited from this lack of options. In the former Yugoslavia for example, conditional recognition proved unworkable because, short of being reabsorbed back into Yugoslavia, the candidates were destined to form their own states. The dominance of the sovereignty paradigm curtailed any other choices for international policy makers. The supreme authority of the OHR detracted only from Bosnia's Westphalian sovereignty, not its existence as a state. Likewise the international administration in East Timor came about only as a means to prepare the territory for its independent statehood.⁸⁸ Kosovo too looks likely to benefit from the absence of alternatives.

One example of innovative thinking was provided by the Badinter Commission, which recognised that the tension between the rights of individuals and majorities constituted the single greatest problem in assessing claims to self-determination. Noting that the right to self-determination 'serves to safeguard human rights,' the Committee stated that a 'possible consequence ... might be for the members of the Serbian population in Bosnia and Croatia to be recognised under agreements between the Republics as having the nationality of their choice, with all

⁸⁸ See Dominik Zaum, 'The Sovereignty Paradox: Norms and the Politics of Statebuilding by the International Community' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2005).

the rights and obligations which that entails with respect to the states concerned.' This vague pronouncement hinted at the possibility of a divided jurisdiction, allowing an individual to have 'citizenship' of one state but 'nationality' pertaining to another. However, the Commission did not develop this idea, beyond stating that the peremptory norm of 'respect for the rights of minorities,' should include the right to 'choose their nationality.'⁸⁹

During the recognition debates of the 1990s, there were some proposals centred on the idea of cooperation or federation amongst sovereign states, based on models of the European Union. One British Member of Parliament noted that the fragmentation of the modern world was offset by the concurrent desire of communities 'to belong to workable and successful organisations and communities that are bigger than themselves.'⁹⁰ Another suggested the idea of a 'Balkan community' to operate in parallel with the EU.⁹¹ However, all of these examples were communities of states. Contrary to the nineteenth century proposal for a Balkan 'liberal union' with Russia, or the 1950s proposal for a Central African Federation under one centralised government, these models did not suggest alternatives to states, simply additional layers of cooperation between them.

Thus, if this was an era in which questions could be asked about the nature of political organisation, it was not one in which creative answers were forthcoming. Forty years before, British politicians had toyed with ideas of federation, incorporation and association and sketched out intermediate categories between dependency and sovereignty. Now, if alternatives were voiced in policy debates, few made it to the public domain. Critical of American timidity over Yugoslavia, William

⁸⁹ 'Badinter Commission Opinion No.2,' *European Journal of International Law*, 3:1 (1992), p.183.

⁹⁰ Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.486.

⁹¹ Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.472.

Safire wrote in *The New York Times* that ‘we should get creative: we should stop mumbling vaguely about “loose confederation” and propose serious global talks on semi-sovereignty.’⁹² Yet the creativity he aspired to was no longer feasible. In debates surrounding recognition, no one really believed they could ‘recognise’ the new units as anything other than sovereign.

The Paradox of External Power

The constraint imposed by the sovereignty paradigm is paradoxical, given the practical influence of foreign powers over questions of political organisation. Although Western powers seemed unable to stem the force of fragmentation regarded as a threat to international order, they often determined whether aspiring candidates for statehood achieved their aims. In legal terms, the 1990s saw a partial swing back towards constitutive theory, the idea that new states were constituted through recognition by others. In 1979, Crawford had written that declaratory theory was dominant; by the 1990s he acknowledged the debate had ‘shifted perceptibly.’⁹³ The Badinter Commission declared that the effects of recognition would be purely declaratory, yet its very existence implied that the recognition process had far greater import.⁹⁴ So too, did the furore over the recognition of Yugoslavia, resulting in tensions between governments within Europe and a struggle for control of the process between the US Congress and the administration.⁹⁵

⁹² William Safire, *The New York Times*, July 8 1991, p.13, cited in Bert, *The Reluctant Superpower*, p.140.

⁹³ Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, p.216. Crawford cites Thomas Grant in this extract.

⁹⁴ Badinter Commission Opinion No.1, *European Journal of International Law*, 3:1 (1992). See also Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States*, p.56.

⁹⁵ See Grant, *The Recognition of States*, ch.2.

In addition, the recognition process itself was increasingly driven by politics rather than rules.⁹⁶ The use of conditionality as a tool of recognition policy, most explicitly by the EC, marked a return to nineteenth century ideas of the standard of 'civilisation.' Yet it was also, as Richard Caplan has observed, a tool of conflict resolution, designed around the specific context.⁹⁷ That the powers of Europe chose to collectivise the recognition process reflected a desire to utilise due process and international law.⁹⁸ At the same time, various states asserted that they would not be bound by this process, as indicated by Germany's early recognitions. Moreover, the process was in practice subject to a series of subtle bilateral deals. In return for acquiescence, Chancellor Kohl placated the French Government through concessions on European monetary union and allowed Britain to opt out of the Maastricht treaty's social charter.

The results that emanated from the process were also uneven and political. Macedonia was not recognised until 1993, even though there were no Serbian troops in the territory from March 1992. Yet Bosnia and Croatia were recognised despite the lack of full territorial control by their governments. Recognition of Bosnia in particular, was driven by the need to create stability in the troubled region and was seen not as a confirmation of effective authority, but a means to establish it, to 'create a fact.'⁹⁹ Likewise, in East Timor, it was the UN that helped build the infrastructure for the exercise of effective territorial control, after the path to independence had

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.168, 215.

⁹⁷ Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States*.

⁹⁸ Grant, *The Recognition of States*, p.168.

⁹⁹ Roland Rich, 'Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union,' *European Journal of International Law*, 4:1 (1993), p.56. See also Christian Hillgruber, 'The Admission of New States to the International Community,' *European Journal of International Law*, 9:3 (1998), pp. 491-509.

begun. Thus, as *The Washington Post* commented, it seemed that in the 1990s, 'no element of international policy has gone more askew' than recognition.¹⁰⁰

To some extent, Western politicians expressed cogently their sense of power and influence over the shape of the future. They regarded recognition as a political strategy with great significance, a message to the Serbs, a bargaining chip to encourage negotiation, and a means to end war. The concepts of 'nation-' or 'state-building,' commonly heard in the 1990s, were also indicative of this awareness, since both referred to the role of international actors in building the infrastructure of new, fragile or failed states. 'Nation-building' also referred to attempts to unify a divided population, through the creation of national symbols, narrative and nomenclature. Though an age-old process, explicit acceptance of the role of external actors was a departure, as in post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the OHR helped fashion distinctive passports, license plates and currency. Notwithstanding the widely acknowledged importance of securing 'national' ownership in these processes, the 'building' metaphor was an admission that external actors could help form states.

Yet in the 1990s, even more than during the period of decolonisation, Western policy makers were anxious to assert that states arose out of endogenous forces independent of foreign powers' interests. President Clinton asserted for example, that neither the US nor the UN could simply 'redraw the lines, geographical lines of republics within what was Yugoslavia.'¹⁰¹ In Britain, the break-up of Yugoslavia was largely seen as 'inevitable,' an especially favourite theme of Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, who claimed that 'countries that assert their independence ... will not be denied that' and that the only thing to discuss was the 'timing and style.' Indeed for him, the Yugoslav crisis had demonstrated that Westerners should 'recognise the

¹⁰⁰ *The Washington Post*, 16 May 1992, p.9, cited in Rich, 'Recognition of States.'

¹⁰¹ President Clinton, 'Question and Answer Session With the Newspaper Association of America in Boston' 25 April 1993, *Public Papers of ... William J. Clinton, 1993*, book 1, p.505.

limits of what outsiders can do.’¹⁰² In contrast to the period of decolonisation, states were regarded as having forged their *own* independence. Even within British discourse, independence was not granted, awarded or accorded but ‘achieved,’ ‘declared,’ or ‘asserted.’¹⁰³ The attribution of agency to entities prior to statehood was now widespread.

As in the case of African decolonisation, the reasons for this language were complex. First, the forces of nationalism had indeed been given vent by the ending of the Cold War. The extent of ‘ethnic cleansing’ made it seem unlikely that former Yugoslav peoples could ever live in peace again within the same state. Second, Western governments were keen to dispel the accusation that they should have acted faster or more definitively. Again, therefore, the discourse of endogenous state creation constituted, to a certain extent, a denigration of responsibility. Third, in the context of the global normative commitment to self-determination, reinforced by celebration of the collapse of the Soviet Union, policy makers sought to avoid accusations of ‘meddling’ in the affairs of others. The norm of sovereign equality constrained them from acknowledging their own influence.

The State as an Actor

As the previous chapter revealed, during the period of decolonisation, states were often attributed with firm identities or ‘oneness’ across both time and space. To a certain extent, the post-Cold War period departed from this trend, as from both the policy and academic communities, the idea of the state as a unified whole was increasingly scrutinised. Yet, consistent with the discussion of state formation above,

¹⁰² Douglas Hurd, House of Commons, 1 November 1991, 18 December 1991, 2 July 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, cols. 122, 261, 977.

¹⁰³ Surmised from review of *Hansard* and British media.

this was a period in which new questions were more common than new answers. In fact, for various reasons, the monist image of the state remained largely intact, despite dramatic demonstrations that many governments did not ‘move as one’ with their population.

The Life of the State

As during the period of decolonisation, it remained common in the 1990s to regard the state as a living entity at a certain point in the life-cycle; new states were portrayed as ‘young’ or ‘new-born’ by policy makers and in newspaper headlines.¹⁰⁴ In addition, states were often depicted as resurrected entities, particularly by representatives from the states in question. Croatian President Tudjman, for example claimed that ‘[t]he Croatian nation is one of the oldest nations in present-day Europe.’¹⁰⁵ Izetbegović said that ‘as a geopolitical entity, Bosnia has an almost unbroken history from the mid-medieval period to the present.’¹⁰⁶ Likewise, the Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki, described the independence celebrations as a ‘moment of joy and resurrection for Eritrea.’¹⁰⁷

Others too celebrated the new states as entities reborn. Welcoming Eritrea and Monaco to UN membership in 1993, for example, one delegate described the two as ‘contemporaries in their timeless maturity,’ eliding Eritrea with an entity that was territorially defined in the twelfth century.¹⁰⁸ In continuity with the period of decolonisation, the connection between a people and land was portrayed as intrinsic, linked to the conception of the new state as an historically ‘authentic’ entity.

¹⁰⁴ John Balzar, ‘Horror to Hope: Birth of a Nation,’ *Los Angeles Times*, 23 May 1995, p.1; Richard Dowden, ‘Eritrea emerges as world’s newest nation,’ *The Independent*, 25 May 1993, p.10.

¹⁰⁵ Mr Franjo Tudjman (Croatia), General Assembly, 22 May 1992, UN. doc. A/46/PV/86.

¹⁰⁶ Izetbegović, ‘Bosnia; On the Historical Border,’ p.12.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Eritrea Marks Independence After Years Under Ethiopia,’ *The New York Times*, 25 May 1993, p.8.

¹⁰⁸ Mr. Jona (Bolivia), General Assembly, 28 May 1993, UN doc. A/47/PV.104.

Also in common with the decolonisation period, understandings of the state's identity were predominantly 'material' rather than 'formal'; the state was a connection between a historical people and a land, more than a monopoly of legitimate violence.¹⁰⁹ For this reason, changes in effective authority and legal status did not always affect questions of statehood. Since the Baltic states had continued to be recognised as *de jure* independent states during the Cold War, statements regarding these states referred not to the 'recognition' but instead the 'restoration' of sovereignty, including the EC statement of 27 August 1991.¹¹⁰ As the 'parent' state of the former USSR, Russia was allowed to assume the USSR's seat on the UN Security Council, and thereby inherited its international identity, even though Russia had been party to a declaration that the USSR no longer existed.¹¹¹ The only entity that suffered a loss of identity was Yugoslavia, as Serbia, like all the other new states, was made to reapply for a seat in the UN General Assembly. This case was distinct, however, because it was less clear that any of the new states could be designated the 'parent' state of the former Yugoslavia.

The Personhood of the State

In comparison to the nineteenth century and to the era of the two World Wars, the tendency to gender states, or to negatively caricature them using national stereotypes, was rare after the Cold War. However, states were still attributed with personality. Macedonia, for example, was said by Deputy Secretary Talbott to be deserving of 'special care and attention' because it was 'a brave, young, independent state'

¹⁰⁹ See chapter one for an explanation of the term 'material' in this context.

¹¹⁰ Rich, 'Recognition of States,' pp.37-8.

¹¹¹ Yehuda Z. Blum, 'Russia Takes Over the Soviet Union's Seat at the United Nations,' *European Journal of International Law*, 3:2 (1992), pp.354-361. Note that Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali played an important role in ensuring Russia's assumption of the seat was a 'non-issue.'

attempting to promote democracy.¹¹² Eritrea, as a poor and vulnerable country, came in for particularly affectionate depictions. 'Eritrea' said one American journalist, was the world's 'most spirited and expectant' nation, 'a blend of national idealism, innocence, hope, sentimentalism, sacrifice, daydreams and determination.'¹¹³ States had personalities, needs and desires; like people, they could be brave, spirited, lonely or joyful.

Within academia, the 'monist' image of the state remained the bedrock of International Relations theory but was also increasingly contested. Perhaps the biggest concession in this debate was that of Alexander Wendt, who otherwise challenged much of the realist legacy, but conceded the usefulness of organic theory. He cast the state as unitary on the basis that it was 'self-organising' and thus an intentional actor.¹¹⁴ However, other post-Cold War scholars were more critical in scrutinising the basis of monism, leading to an uneasy awareness that the personhood of the state was perhaps merely a 'useful fiction.'¹¹⁵ Some explicitly linked the unitary concept of the state with authoritarianism or fascism, a tool for regimes to legitimise their rule with reference to the social whole.¹¹⁶ Thus, while International Relations embraced the monist state as a reductionist concept (an essential predictive and explanatory tool), the question of whether states 'really' acted as people became important as never before.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Talbott, 'The Balkan Question,' p.14.

¹¹³ John Balzar, 'Horror to Hope: Birth of a Nation,' *Los Angeles Times*, 23 May 1995, p.1.

¹¹⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory*.

¹¹⁵ See Wight, 'State Agency,' p.271.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of this see Pheng Cheah, 'The Rationality of Life: On the Organismic Metaphor of the State,' *Radical Philosophy* 112 (2002), pp.9-24.

¹¹⁷ See Wendt, 'The State as Person,' p.289.

Regimes and Representation

In the post-Cold War era, the dominant discourse of democracy and democratic decision-making mitigated against the image of the state as a unified actor by highlighting the specific relationship between people and government. With Cold War rivalries removed and decolonisation largely completed, there was generally less compulsion to misrepresent the unanimity of a population. Thus, new states of the 1990s were often cast as a product of *majority* will for self-determination, not a unified, 'general' will.¹¹⁸ George H. W. Bush claimed that the US recognised Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia as sovereign states because it acknowledged 'the peaceful and *democratic* expression' of citizens in favour of sovereignty.¹¹⁹ The US delegate in the UN concurred that all three were joining the body 'with the demonstrated support of a *majority* of their peoples.'¹²⁰ In many cases, a plebiscite or an election, indicating majority consent to secession, was a condition of recognition.

In addition to the democratic nature of the decision for independence, the democratic credentials of the new governments were also honed in upon (and were often a formal condition for recognition of statehood). The emergence of new states was often associated with the victory for democracy. President George H. W. Bush, announcing the recognition of former Soviet republics, spoke of 'the historic and revolutionary transformation of a totalitarian dictatorship' and 'the emergence of a free, independent, and democratic Russia.' He made diplomatic relations with Moldova, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan conditional on the commitments of their governments to 'democratic principles' (as well as

¹¹⁸ In many.

¹¹⁹ George Bush, 'Statement on United States Recognition of the Former Yugoslav Republics,' 7 April 1992, *Public Papers of ... George Bush, 1992-3*, book 1, p.553.

¹²⁰ Mr Perkins (USA), General Assembly, 22 May 1992, UN doc. A/46/PV.86, pp.22-3.

‘responsible security policies’).¹²¹ During the independence of East Timor, President Clinton likewise claimed that the US was contributing ‘to the birth of two new democracies [East Timor and Indonesia] in a region where freedom and tolerance are taking root.’¹²²

Yet English language depictions of international affairs still tended to depict the will of a majority as the ‘general’ will, and thereby to deny the diversity at the heart of the democratic model. In East Timor, Secretary Albright claimed in 1999 that it was essential to devise a means for determining ‘the will’ of the people so that a settlement could be designed to ‘reflect that will.’¹²³ When 78.5 percent of the voting population of East Timor opted for independence, delegates in the UN claimed that the result ‘clearly expressed the sovereign will of the East Timorese.’¹²⁴ Likewise, Bosnia was continually depicted as a unitary entity even as it was wrenched apart by civil war. Its supporters described the population as a ‘people,’ struggling against an external aggression ‘confronting them’ or being inflicted ‘*on* them,’ a unified land attempting to ‘preserve its territorial integrity’ from a purely outside attack.¹²⁵ Depicted in accordance with the language of sovereignty, both East Timor and Bosnia became communities ‘imagined’ by international observers.¹²⁶

In addition, there was, and remains, a tendency, especially within American discourse, to elide a government or regime with the state as a political community. This tendency reflects a particularly American understanding implicitly alluded to by

¹²¹ President Bush, ‘US Welcomes New Commonwealth of Independent States,’ Address to the Nation, Washington, 25 December 1991, *Dispatch* 2:52 (30 December 1991), pp.911-2.

¹²² President Clinton, ‘Statement on Peacekeeping Efforts in East Timor,’ 11 February 2000, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States; William J. Clinton, 2000-1* (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 2001), book 1, p.237.

¹²³ Secretary Albright, ‘Indonesia, the United States, and Democracy,’ Remarks at Borobudur Intercontinental Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia, 5 March 1999, *Dispatch* 10:2 (1999), p.8.

¹²⁴ Mr Eldon (UK), Mr Fonseca (Brazil), 11 September 1999, UN doc. S/PV.4043.

¹²⁵ Mr Samhan (Argentina), Mr Florean (Romania), Mr Aksin (Turkey), 22 May 1992, UN doc. A/46/PV/86; Mr Watson (USA), 24 August 1992, UN doc. A/46/PV.90.

¹²⁶ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

Talbott as he probed questions of statehood and nationhood. There was, he claimed, ‘an American answer,’ which was that ‘[a] state should let its people choose their leaders through elections, it should derive strength and cohesion from the diversity of its population; and it should protect the rights of minorities.’¹²⁷ The existence of the US as a state was therefore synonymous with a form of government. Similarly, the US State Department today has a separate visa application procedure for individuals coming from ‘state sponsors of terrorism.’ Here the term ‘state’ refers to both the territory (where the individual is ‘from’) and the regime (the ‘sponsor’ of terrorism), such that the entire territory is tainted by government policy.¹²⁸ In such examples, government and people are still synonymous, as the former ‘stands for’ the latter.

State as Nation

The image of the state as a unified actor has also been corroborated by the increasing equation of ‘state’ and ‘nation.’ In the 1990s, the Oxford English Dictionary definition of the ‘nation’ stated that it was ‘usually’ organised into a state. In contrast, the current definition specifically notes that the term nation also means the ‘political state’ itself. In fact, added text in the dictionary points out that the meaning of ‘nation’ has moved towards ‘notions of territory, political unity, and independence’ and that although some still make a ‘pointed distinction’ between nation and state, the terms have become increasingly elided.¹²⁹ In the US, this elision was well-established. In the UK, however, it resulted in some semantic confusion. A British Member of Parliament pondered whether ‘Yugoslavia was ‘a single nation’ or ‘a group of

¹²⁷ Talbott, ‘The Balkan Question,’ p.12.

¹²⁸ See State Department website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/info/info_1300.html.

¹²⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (January 2005).

different nations.'¹³⁰ Another pondered whether Britain was 'a nation' since his own 'nation' was 'Scotland.'¹³¹

If the elision of state and nation became increasingly prevalent, it remained especially common in the US. Here, the term 'state' was barely used except to refer to the fifty 'United States,' or in certain phrases such as 'weak' states or 'state' sponsors of terrorism.¹³² Whereas British politicians and newspapers referred to Asian states, Baltic states, communist states, predatory states, big states, member states or inequality between states, their American counterparts were more likely to refer to Arab nations, African nations, wealthy nations, donor nations and cooperation between nations. For example, American journalists tended to describe Eritrea as the 'world's newest nation,' or a new 'African nation,' while British newspapers used words such as 'state' or 'country.'¹³³ Today, members of the EU are referred to as 'member states,' while those of NATO are called 'member nations' (or sometimes 'member countries').¹³⁴ British speakers of English use the term 'state-building,' while Americans are comfortable with 'nation-building.'

Hence, the post-Cold War era was characterised by two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, the state was scrutinised and picked apart, by academics suddenly curious about the nature of the 'billiard ball' model, and by Western policy makers concerned with democracy, failing states and regime change abroad. At the same time, and as demonstrated by the tendency to refer to states as 'nations,' states were still portrayed as unified wholes, a simplification perpetuated by the logic of sovereignty that pervaded the discourse of international affairs. In this context, the

¹³⁰ Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.477.

¹³¹ Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East), House of Commons, 19 December 1991, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col. 517

¹³² US policy makers do refer to the possibility of a 'Palestinian state.'

¹³³ See for example, 'Newest Nation: Eritrea,' *The Washington Post*, 25 May 1993, p.15.

¹³⁴ Compare <http://europa.eu.int/> with <http://www.nato.int/>

preoccupation with regimes merely created a double language, in which regimes were at times counterpoised to peoples but at other times incorporated and defined them.

The State in World Politics

The same tension, between the state as a unit and the state opened up into its components, was reflected in images of community at the international level. To some extent, states became the containers of human 'community' more than ever before, as the states system was virtually completed and a number of peoples achieved 'self-determination' through secession. From 1975, all persons were attributed with a legal 'nationality,' based on the state in which they were born, under the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.¹³⁵ Yet the collapse of states and the apparent prevalence of civil conflicts after 1989 explicitly problematised the state as the harbinger of human community. In addition, the growing resonance of the concept of globalisation raised the possibility of alternative, transnational and 'global' communities.

Meanwhile the relationships between states continued to be shaped by the contradiction between practical hierarchies and formal equality. As described above, notions of community or society were far looser than the European-dominated equivalents of yesteryear. In addition, the 'equality' of states continued to facilitate the development of grandiose, 'global' theories, now central to the discipline of International Relations. The monist image of the state as a unitary person, while increasingly scrutinised, remained the crucial element of such visions.

¹³⁵ 'Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,' adopted 1961, entered into force 1975, at <http://www.unhcr.lk/archives.asp> (January 2005).

The Powerful Hold of the Nation-State

In continuity with the period of decolonisation, cross-cutting racial conceptions of human community were increasingly extinguished during the 1990s. The transition of South Africa from apartheid to multiracial democracy diminished the salience of racial issues on the international agenda, though they did not drop off entirely. The idea of cross-cutting *religious* communities did, however, become more salient. Conflicts over self-determination in Yugoslavia, Ethiopia and Indonesia all involved a religious dimension, which was seized upon by commentators wary of a religious 'crisis.'¹³⁶ Such depictions have been underscored more recently by the increasing attention accorded to Islamic fundamentalism in the wake of the terrorist attacks on US soil in September 2001. Samuel Huntingdon's prediction of a 'clash of civilisations' enjoyed a revival in this context.¹³⁷ Against this threat, in 2005, Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched an 'Alliance of Civilisations' initiative within the UN.¹³⁸

Meanwhile, one of the defining academic themes of this era was the 'decline' of the sovereign state. This claim was derived from a number of intersecting sources, drawing heavily on the example of European integration but also falling under the underspecified banner of 'globalisation,' a term generally, though not exclusively, associated with the later twentieth century.¹³⁹ Much of the globalisation literature pitted the state as a weakening institution against the increasing rapidity and power of global flows of information, images, interests and most importantly, finance. The

¹³⁶ Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion), House of Commons, 5 March 1992, *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons*, col.471.

¹³⁷ Samuel Huntingdon, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1996).

¹³⁸ 'Secretary-General Announces Launch of 'Alliance of Civilizations' Aimed at Bridging Divides between Societies Exploited by Extremists,' Press Release, UN doc. SG/SM/10004.

¹³⁹ See, for example, Ian Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997). For Clark, 'globalisation' is a long-established trend.

freedom of financial flows, it was argued, made governments beholden to market forces that favoured 'deregulated' environments, orienting states towards fiscal discipline, financial liberalisation, privatisation and decreased public spending. The rapid movement of goods, people and money rendered governments decreasingly able to control their own borders, economies and security.¹⁴⁰ In this context, some scholars argued that new models of governance were arising that transcended the sovereign state, from the autonomous financial regulator to the federal supra-state or even the 'world state.'¹⁴¹

In addition to the state's economic and political influence, the globalisation literature highlighted transformations in patterns of identity and loyalty. At the transnational level, it documented a growth of communities transcending state boundaries, in line with certain interests and identities (the global women's movement, Christianity, employees of General Electric). Such groups arose in tandem with the increasing influence of non-state actors (from NGOs and lobby groups, to corporations and terrorists), facilitated by the media, the internet and the ease of international travel. At the global level, the literature emphasised the idea of a 'global' community or 'world society,' reflected in attention to global problems such as environmental degradation and in the universalising discourse of human rights, contained in debates surrounding 'humanitarian intervention,' democracy promotion and the International Criminal Court. Such debates altered the imagery of world politics, bringing concepts such as 'world order,' 'global civil society,' the 'global

¹⁴⁰ See Strange, *The Retreat of the State*; James N. Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel, *Governance Without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁴¹ Alexander Wendt, 'Why a World State is Inevitable,' *European Journal of International Relations*, 9:4 (2003), pp.491-542.

commons' and 'crimes against humanity' to the fore and challenging the state as the harbinger of human community.¹⁴²

Yet realists, and others sceptical of the frenzy surrounding 'globalisation,' produced powerful counter-arguments. One was that the institution of the sovereign state was resisting the assault upon it. So, for example, Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson argued that the state was still the key source of international legitimacy, the main delegator of authority to powers above and below, and the main source of human loyalty.¹⁴³ They saw this reflected in the victories of social democratic parties in Europe in the 1990s, the increase in movements for self-determination across the world and the continuation of nationalistic inter-state tensions such as those between India and Pakistan. A second argument stated that globalisation was itself an element of the realist, state-centric dynamic, a process promoted by powerful states such as the US as an economic policy or a Cold War strategy.¹⁴⁴

Paradoxically, the globalisation literature's fixation with sovereignty and the state often highlighted the dominance of the sovereignty paradigm and the 'nation-state' image. By contrasting contemporary forms of social and political community with a past era, when human identity and loyalty were circumscribed by state boundaries, it underscored the assumption discussed above, that the world was, at least until recently, a world of 'nation'-states. 'Will the nation-state survive globalization?' asked Martin Wolf in *Foreign Affairs* in 2001.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the titles of many books on the topic reflect the conceptual dominance of the nation-state, such as *Globalization and the Nation-State*, *The Nation-State in Question*, or *The End of*

¹⁴² John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁴³ Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁴ Robert Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000).

¹⁴⁵ Martin Wolf, 'Will the Nation-State Survive Globalization?' *Foreign Affairs*, 80:1 (January / February 2001).

the Nation State.¹⁴⁶ In the latter, the ‘crumbling’ ‘nation-state’ was construed as a ‘long-familiar building block,’ an ‘artefact of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ that enabled us to say ‘[t]hese are our people; these are not.’¹⁴⁷ The very question of the nation-state’s future was presaged on its ‘golden’ age, a misunderstanding of history that revealed the limits of the contemporary political imagination.

Meanwhile, political theorists continued to debate whether the redistribution of resources inherent in social justice depended on some prior sense of community, as David Miller argued.¹⁴⁸ In the post-Cold War era, there occurred a proliferation of ethical accounts of alternative forms of political community that transcended the exclusionary nation-state. Advocates of cosmopolitan democracy, for example, envisaged the creation of democratic global institutions to replace local jurisdictions.¹⁴⁹ They were challenged by intellectual justifications of the Westphalian order, centred on the value of pluralism and the importance of states as the local agents of a common good (in particular, the ‘good’ of national identity).¹⁵⁰

The Equalising Power of Sovereignty

Regarding the states system itself, the post-Cold War period remained fraught with the same fundamental tension discussed in the previous chapter, between blatant power disparities and the formal system of equality. Even more than during the period of African decolonisation, the acknowledged hierarchies of the post-Cold War period

¹⁴⁶ Anthony G. McGrew, Paul G. Lewis et al. (eds), *Global Politics: Globalization and the Nation-State* (Cambridge, Polity, 1992); T.V. Paul, G. John Ikenberry and John A. Hall (eds.), *The Nation-State in Question* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2003), Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (London, Harper Collins, 1995).

¹⁴⁷ Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State*, p.7.

¹⁴⁸ David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1995).

¹⁴⁹ See Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998); Daniele Archibugi, David Held and Martin Köhler (eds.), *Re-imagining Political Community: Studies in Cosmopolitan Democracy* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998);

¹⁵⁰ See Michael Walzer, ‘The New Tribalism,’ *Dissent* (Spring 1992). See also Chris Brown, ‘Political Theory and International Relations.’

were material, not cultural (notwithstanding the more recent cultural dimension of the ‘war on terror,’ muted for reasons of political correctness). There were no longer ‘great’ states in the nineteenth century sense, though in a material sense there was still a ‘superpower’ (in a ‘unipolar’ world, now a ‘hyperpower’). Even the historical distinction between the ‘West’ and ‘Third World’ declined in resonance, with the semblance of an ‘Atlantic’ divide and the rise of China and India.

The concept of ‘civilisation,’ as a marker of states, enjoyed a renaissance in the wake of terrorist threats and practices of ethnic cleansing. With reference to the Balkans, for example, Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger claimed ‘[t]he civilised world simply cannot afford to allow this cancer in the heart of Europe to flourish.’¹⁵¹ As discussed above, ‘good governance’ often trumped non-intervention, especially when the international community was united. However, the connotations of civilisation had changed. No longer referring to a Eurocentric cultural community, only true pariah states were actually excluded from the definition of the ‘civilised world.’ As a social bond, ‘civilisation,’ no longer connected to the ‘white man’s burden,’ lacked the cultural significance it once held.

In this context, the concept of the family was now marginal within the discourse of world politics, having declined throughout the twentieth century. Occasionally, the system of states was referred to as the ‘family of nations,’ especially in recognition discourse in which states were welcomed to the ‘family.’¹⁵² But the family did not function as a hierarchical social concept, separating out ‘parents’ and ‘children.’ The shift was particularly notable within British discourse in which the language of parenthood was previously common. Moreover, the Commonwealth,

¹⁵¹ Acting Secretary Eagleburger, Intervention at the London Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, 26 August 1992, *Dispatch* 3:35 (August 31, 1992), p.673.

¹⁵² ‘US Recognition of Eritrea,’ Statement by Department Spokesman Richard Boucher, Washington, 28 April 1993, *Dispatch* 4:18 (3 May 1993) p.320.

once regarded by many Britons as a close-knit family of states bound by common allegiance to a sovereign, did not reverse its decline in political and cultural relevance.

Hierarchical orderings of states were likewise undermined by the continued dominance of the norm of 'sovereign equality' on the political landscape. Since 'sovereignty' no longer provided states with absolute protection, it was deconstructed by an academic literature that pointed to its different meanings and ramifications.¹⁵³ Yet it remained the keynote of international affairs, especially in the UN General Assembly where the allegation of a violation of 'sovereignty' was still the *sine qua non* of opposition. In that body, it was not only the humanitarian situation but the vulnerability of Bosnia's prized 'sovereignty' that was cited as a call for action.¹⁵⁴ The popular interpretation of 'sovereignty' was now completely removed from the empirical reality, that states had always been impacted by others and had usually accepted the basic parameters of international law.¹⁵⁵

New Terminology

To suggest that 'sovereign equality' predominated over concepts of family or community is not to suggest that understandings of world politics were predominantly asocial. The concept of 'international society' enjoyed a minor resurgence, in tandem with the revitalisation of multilateral institutions, especially in the first half of the 1990s. However, understandings of 'international society' were conceptually weaker than those of the nineteenth century, based on ties of cooperation and reciprocity rather than on close familial bonds. Moreover, they were often contested and unstable. George H. W. Bush spoke of a 'new world order, where diverse nations are drawn

¹⁵³ See Jackson, *Quasi-States*; Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*.

¹⁵⁴ See General Assembly plenary session, 22 May 1992, UN doc. A/46/PV/86.

¹⁵⁵ See Lauterpacht, 'Sovereignty - Myth or Reality?' p.149.

together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind.’¹⁵⁶ Yet the concept declined within a few years, as the optimism of the early post-Cold War period faltered.

Another term that rose to prominence was that of the ‘international community,’ which only entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 2003, although it was certainly prevalent earlier. It denotes a particularly social conception of the states system, referring to ‘the countries of the world, or a particular group among them, regarded as forming a community’ and especially ‘one sharing a common interest or opinion’¹⁵⁷ British Prime Minister Tony Blair has been a strong proponent of the concept, and claimed in 1999 that the world was witnessing ‘the beginnings of a new doctrine of international community’ involving a recognition of mutual dependence and the importance of international collaboration to the national interest.¹⁵⁸ Again, however, this community was based on interdependence and interests, not intrinsic communal feeling. Moreover, many saw the term as synonymous with the West. ‘The West or, as we tactfully liked to call it, “international community,” would prevail over Saddam Hussein,’ claimed former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.¹⁵⁹ Since some also include non-state actors (the EU, UN, World Bank, large NGOs etc) within the ‘international community,’ the term has been rejected by some scholars as vague and confusing.¹⁶⁰

Meanwhile, evidence from newspapers indicates that the concept of the ‘international system’ had at least two meanings in the post-Cold war era, one more

¹⁵⁶ George H. Bush, 2nd State of the Union Address, 29 January 1991, full text at: <http://www.theamericanpresidency.us/1991.htm>.

¹⁵⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (January 2005).

¹⁵⁸ Speech by Prime Minister Tony Blair to the Economic Club of Chicago, 22 April 1999, cited in Dino Kritsiotis, ‘Imagining the International Community,’ *European Journal of International Law*, 13:4 (2002), p.969.

¹⁵⁹ Margaret Thatcher, *The Path to Power* (London, Harper Collins, 1995), cited in *ibid.*, p.974.

¹⁶⁰ See Kritsiotis, ‘Imagining the International Community,’ p.974.

social than the other. At the height of American hegemony, symbolised by the forceful toppling of regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, many pro-war accounts justified the war on the basis of the realities of the 'international system.' Understood in an exogenous sense, autonomous from real human beings, this 'system' exerted pressures on the states composing it, resulting in a competitive logic. Thus, pre-emption, wrote Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, is a 'fact of life in the international system' because of the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction proliferation.¹⁶¹ Moreover, the system was fragile and at all times risked spiralling out of control without careful management. As a journalist in the *Chicago Tribune* claimed, the 'stability of the international system rests on American strength.'¹⁶²

The alternative interpretation of the international system was not exogenous to states but forged by them, referring to the 'system' of rules, norms, institutions and alliances pertaining to the post-1945 era. It was this 'system' to which UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan pointedly referred during the Iraq war, remarking that after the Second World War, 'Americans joined with others to build a new international system,' based on the UN, an open economy, human rights, decolonisation and the rule of law.¹⁶³ Likewise, newspapers reflected this understanding. Following the attacks of 11 September 2001, Blair feared that America would 'jump out of the international system in pursuit of its enemies,' said an article in the *International Herald Tribune*.¹⁶⁴ The *Financial Times* suggested that British Foreign Office

¹⁶¹ Robert Kagan, cited in Robin Wright, 'Iraq Occupation Erodes Bush Doctrine,' *The Washington Post*, 28 June 2004, p.1.

¹⁶² R.C. Longworth, 'Quicksand; Exit plan will define strategy,' *Chicago Tribune*, 16 May 2004, p.C1.

¹⁶³ Kofi Annan, address at Harvard, 10 June 2004, cited in 'Annan Calls for US Leadership,' *The Miami Herald*, 12 June 2004, p.20.

¹⁶⁴ Patrick E. Tyler, 'On EU, Blair places new political wager,' *International Herald Tribune*, 21 April 2004, p.1.

officials ‘feel the international system that was built up, nurtured and used has been thrown out of the window.’¹⁶⁵

The Power of Abstraction

Notwithstanding its multiple definitions, the notion of an ‘international system’ illustrated certain assumptions about world politics. The first was that the ‘international’ was a unique realm of political activity, subject to distinct tendencies. The second was that international life was abstractable, because it was characterised by patterns or rules (a ‘system’). For this reason, Hedley Bull had previously argued (unsuccessfully) in the context of the ‘British Committee,’ that the term be restricted to the functional or mechanistic models of the behaviouralists.¹⁶⁶ The concept, in its exogenous, structural sense, remained primarily a tool of the rational-choice approach to International Relations, common to a predominantly American core, which Ole Waever suggested was increasingly disconnected from European and other scholars.¹⁶⁷ However, the second type of ‘international system,’ of norms and institutions, was also a rule-bound conception of world politics, albeit of a different sort. It too contrasted sharply with the sense of chaos expressed during the emergence of new states in the post-war era.

In the late-twentieth century, the discipline of International Relations expanded to the extent that no cursory summary could hope to capture its diversity. The end of the Cold War increased the influence of liberal and other theories vis-à-vis structuralism, but also diversified scholarly attention from the enduring ‘neo-realism – neo-liberalism’ debate. Regardless, however, the discipline as a whole was by now

¹⁶⁵ Christopher Adams, ‘A message from the mandarins,’ *Financial Times*, 1 May 2004, p.9.

¹⁶⁶ Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, pp.129-130

¹⁶⁷ Ole Waever, ‘The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline’ *International Organization*, 52:4 (1998), pp.687-727.

engaged in the quest to answer questions of global importance and the use of conceptual tools such as the 'international system' or 'global politics' facilitated this. Seminal 'liberal' texts, from theories of interdependence to the spread of capitalism and liberal democracy, included such grandiose titles as *World Politics in Transition* and *The End of History*.¹⁶⁸ Likewise, the English school, now broadened beyond the community of the former British Committee, continued to take a macro view of world politics, as in *International Systems in World History* or *Human Rights in Global Politics*.¹⁶⁹

This is not to assert that scholars of International Relations were disinterested in investigating the nature of the international system and its units. Indeed, as discussed above, the conception of a states system composed of 'billiard ball' states became a focus of critique, from 'post-positivists' engaged in ontological and epistemological battles against 'metanarratives' but also from a variety of other scholars.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, 'globalisation,' for all it encouraged abstracted 'global' views of politics, also problematised the conceptual tools of International Relations theory. 'If globalisation means anything,' Ian Clark noted, 'then it assuredly means the end of the view of international relations as a realm governed by its own, and distinct, interstate political logic.'¹⁷¹ International Relations increasingly incorporated the rise of non-state actors, from multinationals to non-government organisations and terrorist networks, and looked inside the state at the plurality of actors influencing 'foreign policy.' Regime type was scrutinised, especially by scholars of 'democratic peace

¹⁶⁸ Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston, 1977); Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London, Penguin, 1992).

¹⁶⁹ See Dunne, *Inventing International Society*, especially chs.7-8. Titles taken from Buzan and Little, *International Systems in World History*; Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler (eds.), *Human Rights in Global Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹⁷⁰ For example see Richard Ashley, 'The Poverty of New-Realism,' in Robert Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986); Walker, *Inside / Outside*; but also Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹⁷¹ Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation*, p.6.

theory,' which had been revived from its Kantian roots in the 1960s and 1970s but took shape in the 1980s and 1990s, through the work of Bruce Russett and Michael Doyle.¹⁷²

Into this *mélange*, nationalism also received more attention, as the events of the 1990s made it impossible to ignore. In particular, there was increased interest in 'national self-determination' and 'ethnic nationalism' as political forces fragmenting the states system.¹⁷³ Many such works had an historical or sociological bent, such as Ignatieff's depiction of six different 'nationalist' struggles.¹⁷⁴ Others attempted to fit the ethnic nationalism of the 1990s into existing theoretical approaches. Barry Posen's work on 'security dilemmas' applied a realist logic to situations when 'proximate groups of people suddenly find themselves newly responsible for their own security.'¹⁷⁵ Stephen Van Evera argued that when one group is left at the mercy of another, the likelihood of violence increases when the possibility of 'rescue' (by secession or intervention from members of the same ethnic group) exists.¹⁷⁶ Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder refined democratic peace theory through analysis of why democratising states tended towards nationalistic and aggressive behaviours.¹⁷⁷

By the late 1990s, therefore, nationalism had re-entered International Relations as a core interest. Michael Brown's 1998 volume on *Theories of War and Peace* organised different explanations of conflict along three broad lines: realism,

¹⁷² Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs.'

¹⁷³ See Moore (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession*; Thomas D. Musgrave, *Self-Determination and National Minorities* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997). New journals also arose (not necessarily specific to International Relations), such as *Nations and Nationalism* and *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*.

¹⁷⁴ Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*.

¹⁷⁵ Barry R. Posen, 'The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,' *Survival*, 35:1 (1993), pp.27-47.

¹⁷⁶ Stephen Van Evera, 'Hypotheses on Nationalism and War,' *International Security*, 18:4 (1994), pp.5-39.

¹⁷⁷ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, 'Democratization and the Danger of War,' *International Security*, 20:1 (1995), pp.8-10.

democracy and 'nationalism and ethnicity.'¹⁷⁸ However, what was missing from this range of treatments was a more general understanding of nationalism and the nation as concepts broader than their 'ethnic' variants and relevant beyond the maelstroms of the Balkans and Northern Ireland. The post-positivist critique perhaps understood this best, as it sought to 'deconstruct' the nationalistic content of concepts and of foreign policy discourse.¹⁷⁹ However, its epistemological position constrained it from constructive analysis of the ways nationalism and the nation shaped world politics. James Mayall's book remains one of very few analyses of nationalism as a concept with multiple meanings and wide-ranging constitutive effects.¹⁸⁰ Thus, although states were commonly presumed to be nations, little credit was given to 'nationalism' or the nation as components of world politics, compared to 'sovereignty.' This contrasted sharply with Morgenthau's earlier understanding of the state as the ethical embodiment of a nation.

The Ambiguous yet Universal State

The story of the 1990s is that the state, politically, legally and conceptually, became more constrained than ever before. At the legal level, the emergence of a set of norms with peremptory status, known as *jus cogens*, was a partial blow to the positivist model of the state as the supreme lawmaker. Likewise, the redefinition of sovereignty as a conditional right compromised the once supreme status of the state, rendering it beneath international law. Meanwhile, the lack of a substantive definition of the state,

¹⁷⁸ Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Theories of War and Peace: An International Security Reader* (Cambridge, Mass, MIT Press, 1998).

¹⁷⁹ See Richard Ashley, 'The Poverty of New-Realism,' in Keohane, Robert (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986); David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992); 'Reimagining the Nation' special issue, *Millennium*, 20 (1991).

¹⁸⁰ Mayall himself notes that: 'Except to a handful of scholars, nationalism is not a problem; rather national sentiment is so pervasive and self-evident that it has become invisible.' *Nationalism and International Society*, p.25.

six decades on from Montevideo, was made clear by the extremely political and contingent nature of state recognition in the 1990s.

The saving grace for the state was that it achieved not only dominance but pre-eminence as a form of political community, since other models had long since become politically unacceptable. Yet, the state that emerged was not the great ethical entity of the nineteenth century but instead the banal unit of the international realm, spelt with a lower case 's.' This state was buffeted by the constraints of structural or systemic factors such as anarchy, interdependence and globalisation. Meanwhile, more critical approaches attacked the 'billiard ball' model of the state as the font of the discipline's conceptual short-sightedness.

Conclusion

Whereas the two previous chapters described periods of transition, the post-Cold War period was defined by unresolved contradictions between divergent discourses, as concepts such as the state and the international system shifted in various directions. On the one hand, there was a movement away from ethnicity, from the nation-state, and even from sovereignty, to the extent it was challenged by 'globalisation' and 'intervention.' On the other hand, genuine innovation was constrained by underlying conceptual assumptions about the ideal state and by political limitations on the development of new models. Importantly, this indicates that many of the normative shifts we believe characterise the post-Cold War world, actually mask the degree to which our political imagination has been limited by recent history.

The post-Cold War period witnessed an increasing disgust at the very notion of ethnicity, especially within the West, and an embrace of the multicultural state,

representing tolerance and democracy. In legal terms, this was reflected in the dominance of *uti possidetis*, a preference for boundaries to be based on existing administrative lines rather than the fuzzy contours of identity. Yet in practical terms, genuine celebration of multiculturalism was often muted. During the collapse of Yugoslavia, the preoccupation of both the British and American Governments with ‘ancient’ ethnic hatreds partly served to justify inaction but also revealed an understanding of the ideal state as one forged from deep ethnic or historical roots, rather than the ‘arbitrary’ vacillations of political power. This framework pitted nationalism, defined with reference to ‘ethnic’ and cultural factors, as the archetypal, ‘authentic’ human drive.

The dominance of the ‘ethnic’ nation-state model was at the heart of another confusion regarding the dominant patterns of world politics. In contrast even to the period of decolonisation, many believed that the major historical tendency was towards fragmentation rather than agglomeration; ethnic politics were breaking apart the multinational state. Others depicted the nation-state, strongly connected with Westphalia, as the classical model and described, or hoped for, a ‘modern’ shift towards multiethnic democracy. Nationalism was therefore the new but simultaneously the traditional force of world politics. Its implications were also unclear. Many still saw the birth of new nation-states as synonymous with the end of tyranny, while for others, the link between independence and political freedom that characterised the decolonisation period, had been ruptured by the prevalence of despotic post-colonial regimes.

This lack of confidence created a demand for ‘new answers,’ and indeed for new questions (what is a state and what is a nation?) hitherto largely unexplored. The sense that the structure of world politics was changing came not only from the force

of fragmentation but also from three other discourses. First was the view that sovereignty was conditional on standards of good governance and human rights. Second was the argument that 'globalisation' was leading to the decline of the state against the force of the market. Third was the attention paid to economic and political cooperation on a regional and global level, epitomised but not restricted to the European Union.

However, these debates were primarily focussed on the Westphalian and transborder sovereignty of governments, rather than on the international legal sovereignty of the state. If governments were subject to increasing constraints, there was little questioning of the state concept as the keystone of international political organisation, oddly reified by the frenzy surrounding the state's 'decline.' Alternative visions amounted to little more than cooperation between states, while more radical ones were now considered utopian. The potential for innovation was confounded by a pragmatic awareness of the centrality of the sovereign state. Western policy-makers exerted considerable power in deciding the future of territories, but few could imagine a world not composed exclusively of sovereign states.

By the late-twentieth century, this world of states was also a world of people-like entities. States were perceived to have lifespans like people, often projected deep into the past. They had personalities and were capable of acting in their own right; legal and political discourses no longer suggested the state was merely 'represented' in the actions of government. The monist image of the state was superficially undermined by the modern preoccupation with regimes and democracy. Yet especially from within the US, there was a tendency to elide the government and territory or population of the state, a practice also reflected in the dominance of the term 'nation' to describe the actions of governments. Moreover, despotic pariah

regimes were counterpoised against the supposedly predominant model of international organisation, 'unified' nation-states in which governments were trustees of a general will.

Internationally, understandings of community were also centred around a tension. On the one hand the monist image was problematised by transnational and universalising discourses that undermined the states system as the container of human identity and loyalty, from transnational interest groups, to *jus cogens* norms and 'global' civil society. Yet sovereignty continued to provide an enormously powerful basis for conceptualising human communities, as described in the notion of an 'inside / outside' dichotomy, according to which a population can be cast as unified even in the midst of civil conflict.¹⁸¹

Meanwhile, understandings of world politics were dominated by the concept of the state as an autonomous bounded actor. By now, the language of sovereign equality had undermined hierarchical, familial understandings of the relationships between states. Continuous with the period of decolonisation, sovereignty was central to ideas of rights and obligations, in contrast to the actual utility or relevance of the concept. The absence of familial understandings did not signify that world politics was now asocial, but as is well documented, understandings of international society became more contested and unstable, as told by the uncertain status of concepts such as 'new world order' and 'international community.' Even the 'international system' had two different meanings, one referring to the shared norms and institutions built up by states, and the other a system exogenous to states, constraining their behaviour.

The increasing use of terms such as the 'international system' indicated that world politics could now be conceived of in abstract, 'macro' terms. As seen in the

¹⁸¹ See Walker, *Inside / Outside*.

previous chapter, this was not only the terrain of realists. The international system and the dynamics of 'International Relations' were by now truly global in reach and 'global' questions thus occupied most of the discipline. In this context, the monist image was scrutinised but remained a central tool for simplifying the complex world of political actors.

The irony of the post-Cold War era is that for all the emphasis on democracy and the rights of the people, and the castigation of 'nationalism,' the image of the state as a unified nation remained central, at an implicit level, to understandings of world politics. 'Nationalism' received renewed attention within International Relations, but analyses of the dynamics of ethnic conflicts were more common than those of nationalism as a broader constitutive force. Although an increasing number of scholars pointed to the strange relationship between the state and nation, few could quite capture it, or indeed explain it.

So too, the sovereignty paradigm dominated thinking even as scholars lamented or celebrated the 'decline of sovereignty.' The 1990s was a time of renewed attention to certain big questions of world politics, related to its units and their delineation. Yet it also demonstrated that with the expansion of the international system in the second half of the twentieth century, the world soon forgot that there ever existed understandings of world politics not centred on state 'persons.' In just a matter of decades, thinking outside the framework of sovereignty had become the domain of radicals and quirky political theorists.

Conclusion

Political institutions can nevertheless have a life of their own seemingly independent of the human agents who invent or operate them... This most definitely is the case with sovereign statehood which is now so ingrained in the public life of humankind and imprinted in the minds of people that it seems like a natural phenomenon beyond the control of statesmen or anybody else.

Robert Jackson, 1990¹

The overriding claim of this thesis is two-fold. First, the concept of the state has been subject to fundamental change in the past two hundred years. It has varied in its meaning, from government to political community. It has varied in its meaningfulness, from a negligible concept to the defining unit of international politics. Finally, it has varied in its use, from a marker of eminence to a form of standardisation. Despite being the ‘essentially uncontested ... foundation of modern political discourse,’ historical analysis suggests that the sovereign state has been contested and moulded over time.²

Second and more specifically, in the past two hundred years the state has evolved to incorporate the idea of the ‘nation.’ Just as the nation has multiple meanings and connotations, so too this conclusion is multi-faceted. First, the historical ‘nation’ has become an increasingly dominant way of conceptualising the populations of states and hence the process of state-formation. Second, the state has increasingly been perceived as a unitary, implicitly ‘nationalistic’ actor and the nation has become a synonym for it. The concepts of the nation and nationalism are commonly identified with the nineteenth century, and said to have reached their

¹ Jackson, *Quasi-States*, p.7.

² Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, p.14.

pinnacle in the early-twentieth century era of global warfare. Yet this thesis demonstrates that it is in the past sixty years that the nation has particularly informed patterns of thought and terms of reference in the English-speaking world.

The Image of the State

These claims are elaborated below in terms of the four themes that pervade this thesis. However, there are three important caveats that frame these conclusions. First, this thesis does not tell an entirely neat, linear story, but rather presents a disjointed and multifaceted process of change to the language of world politics. While the following section is a summary of main findings, the history of the state cannot be packaged too definitely into a convenient historical pattern. Second, this is a particular type of history, concerned with a particular set of actors (mostly policy makers and political commentators of various types), in a particular language group (English), for the most part assessing a particular phenomenon (the emergence of new states). It does not purport to be a history of statehood *per se* but a history of the state through certain eyes. Third, this thesis, like any that involves the interpretation of words, cannot purport to absolute objectivity or to perfect understanding of the intentions of those who uttered them. It starts from the presumption that the inevitable limitations of such analysis should not dissuade us from the attempt.

Conceptualising the People

In the early-nineteenth century period of South American independence, the 'nation' was predominantly an American term and was used as a corporate synonym for both a people and a state. No deep historical or cultural meaning was attached to new

‘nations,’ despite a growing interest in the region’s history and culture. ‘Nationhood’ was a vague concept and was often simply a condition attained on the verge of independence. The category of ‘South American’ was a more important descriptive tool for capturing ideas about identity politics in that region.

In the late-nineteenth century, more concrete ideas about nationhood formed part of a multi-layered conception of identity which also emphasised religion, race and civilisation. There was increasing interest in the ‘origins’ of a ‘nation’ and an assumption that national identity was objectively discernible. But this was offset by a deep scepticism towards the ‘chimerical’ and politically loaded concept of nationalism. As sameness was an important legitimising tool, the distinctness of different peoples was not yet a universally relevant theme, notwithstanding the concurrent creation of ‘nation-states’ such as Italy and Germany. Self-determination was lauded as a means to freedom from oppression more than national expression.

However, as the great powers finalised the process of Ottoman collapse, through the creation of mandates and then states after the First World War, the understanding of a people as having a distinct origin and momentum became more dominant. Peoples were seen as having unique ‘national’ conditions and their independence was increasingly cast as a function of their ‘national’ consciousness, rather than the tinkering of external powers. Although the American vision of the ‘nation’ was linked to political consciousness rather than historically rooted identity, it was also notoriously vague. Hence Wilson’s framework of ‘national self-determination’ became tied to a vision of the world divisible into pre-existing ‘peoples.’

In the period of African decolonisation, the understanding of a population as a ‘nation’ became more dominant and yet once again more ambiguous. That ‘normal’

states contained 'homogenous' populations was by now an entrenched assumption, so much so that there was initially discomfort surrounding the 'arbitrary' boundaries of many African states. Yet gradually, the new states themselves came to be called 'nations.' Images of the population were sometimes distorted in this image. But more generally, the distinction between historical and political conceptions of the nation was simply blurred, so that all peoples became part of a universal history centred on the idea of 'self-determination' and the intractable 'nationalist' wave. The vagueness of this image satisfied international liberals bent on ending colonialism, new leaders bent on 'nation-building' and even former colonial powers, for whom the seeming universality of 'nationalism' masked the decline of European power.

The period since the end of the Cold War has seen a more astute investigation of the concepts of state, nation and identity. An increasing disgust with ethnic nationalism and its tyrannical implications led to the embrace of multiculturalism. It also inculcated a demand for 'new answers' to previously unexplored questions: the meaning of the state and the nation. But beneath this formal embrace, the dominant assumption was that 'real' or 'proper' states were composed of authentic historical 'nations' and that nationalism in its perverse 'ethnic' guise was a fundamental human force that could not be eradicated.³ In contrast to the nineteenth century era of nationalism, it was in the 1990s that the concept of the nation was defined most strongly with reference to deep-seated historical ('ethnic') factors, although it was also the era in which this was most recognised and rejected.

³ These conceptual assumptions mesh with the communitarian argument that the accommodation of nationalism is necessary, so that international order can be based on just foundations. See Michael Walzer, 'The Reform of the State System' in Øyvind Østerud (ed.), *Studies of War and Peace* (Oslo, Norwegian University Press, 1986).

Barkin and Cronin have suggested that after 1945, world politics was dominated by the interests of states over nations.⁴ As an analysis of practice, this may be correct; during the Cold War, for example, superpower support to regimes certainly suppressed the forces of national self-determination. However, this thesis suggests that at the same time, the state was also redefined as encompassing a 'nation,' albeit vaguely defined. During the nineteenth century, it was far more accepted that 'peoples' were delineated primarily by considerations of power. With the rejection of the right of conquest in the twentieth century, the idea of an 'authentic' political community stepped up to fill the void, defining a prior existing 'people' that could be recognised and enfranchised. For all the lauding of freedom, democracy and the end of destructive nationalism, it is in the past sixty years that the nation has become the 'terminal community.'⁵

Creating States

An additional set of changes to the concept of the state relates to its formation. First, very slowly, there arose the assumption that the dominant tendency of political organisation was towards fragmentation. In the nineteenth century, it was assumed that the trend was agglomeration; in fact this was what 'nationalism' often meant. Small nations were said to be drawn to the 'great nations,' forming the large units essential to progress. Only in the twentieth century did nationhood gradually, and against strong resistance, become firmly attached to the concepts of independence and sovereignty. By the post-Cold War era, the connection between nationalism and fragmentation was assumed. The nation-state not only became the 'normal' model,

⁴ Barkin and Cronin, 'The State and the Nation.'

⁵ J. A. Scholte, 'Globalization and Collective Identities,' in Jill Krause and Neil Renwick, *Identities in International Relations* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996), p.38.

but was also cast by many as the ‘classical’ form of political organisation and identified with ‘Westphalia.’

Second, the nation concept supported a language in which states emerged from a bottom-up process separate from the vagaries of world politics. In the nineteenth century, the powerful states were keenly conscious of their ability to shape the formation of new states, both in South America and later the Ottoman Empire. Yet while British commentators openly described new states as the creations of external actors, the dominant American language depicted states as having forged their own existence. It was this latter vision that won out in the twentieth century, as the norm of self-determination, with its emphasis on the ‘self,’ fashioned a world in which pre-formed communities ‘determined’ their own independence. The 1990s was a decade in which powerful states had significant influence over the destinies of aspirants to independence, yet the language in which new states were conceptualised was predominantly ‘bottom-up’ on both sides of the Atlantic.

Third, and related, the perceived flexibility of the structure of world politics decreased over time. During the nineteenth century, the weakness of the nation-state image created space for other models, including the federation and the multinational state. Less well known is that even after the Second World War, the ‘multiplication of national sovereignties’ was regarded with horror by many, particularly in Britain. ‘Independence’ was seen, not as inevitable, but as a dangerous relic from the past. Officials continued to experiment with different legal categories and with amalgamations and federations, spurred on by the model of European integration, calls for African unity and a radical discourse centred on the transcendence of the state. Yet the moment was lost as the 1960s progressed and the sovereign state

became the reified prize of decolonisation. Part of a vigorous normative stance against empire, sovereignty became a 'religion.'⁶

The post-Cold War era ushered in a pervading sense that the structure of world politics might be changing, as the norm of non-intervention was brought into question and 'globalisation' and 'interdependence' became buzz words. Both normative and empirical questions were asked about the state as a form of political organisation. Yet concern about the 'decline of the state' referred primarily to the declining ability of governments to regulate their own territories and borders. Sovereignty as an international legal keystone remained untouched, even as its 'constructed,' social nature was ever more apparent. This was primarily due to the political impossibility of proposing anything less than sovereign status for a territory, now that 'sovereignty' had become the antithesis of 'colonialism.' Yet it also reflected a lack of imagination produced by that reification of sovereignty since 1945. It now seemed obvious that the world was composed of states. The contingency of that model is only appreciable in contrast to the bifurcated and contradictory nature of international order in the past.⁷

The State as an Actor

The third set of changes relates to the portrayal of the state as a unified actor across time and space. In the nineteenth century, the corporate conception of the state as a 'nation' was distinctly American, in line with an American normative preference for popular sovereignty. In Britain, where understandings of the locus of sovereignty were less rigid, commentators preferred a more literal language in which the actions of states were identified with governments or sovereigns. The corporate, monist conception of the state was not yet dominant. In fact, even the term 'state' was rare.

⁶ Mark Owen Lombardi, 'Third-World Problem Solving and the 'Religion' of Sovereignty: Trends and Prospects,' in Denham and Lombardi (eds.), *Perspectives on Third-World Sovereignty*, p.154.

⁷ Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, p.150.

After the First World War, a conjunction of forces, particularly nationalism, legal positivism and the organicism of American political science, combined to promote the monist image of the state. Peoples and governments were frequently elided and personified and the state, more than before, became a single living thing. After the Second World War, as the number of autocratic regimes actually increased, states were still attributed with personality and agency, and the assumption that governments both ‘acted for’ and ‘stood for’ peoples became stronger. Meanwhile, the actors in international treaties changed from leaders in name, to leaders in the abstract, to ‘governments’ and ultimately to ‘states.’

As the state was increasingly conceived as a singular actor, so its identity was also projected back in time. The state, like a person, came to be seen as having a past and a future and was described as being at a certain point in a life cycle. At times, it was even portrayed as the ‘authentic’ re-incarnation of itself from a glorious past. Perceptions of such unity even protected certain states from losing their identities as a result of foreign occupation. In the twentieth century, historicity became a value in the ideational framework of world politics, having been absent, as Osiander has pointed out, from the peace agreements of Utrecht or Vienna.⁸

In the contemporary era, we are confronted by two contradictory discourses. On the one hand, the world of states is implicitly also a world of people-like entities or nation-states, the universal organisation of states the ‘United Nations.’ At the same time, in a foreign policy terrain dominated by concerns over oppressive regimes and rogue governments, it is clear that peoples and governments are often unaligned. Yet to emphasise this reality masks the contradiction embedded in contemporary discourse, that it is still common to elide state and government by portraying the

⁸ Osiander, *The States System of Europe*, p.287.

actions of a government as those of a state or nation. Moreover, by highlighting the disjunction between ‘people’ and government within despotic pariah states, contemporary foreign policy discourse often propounds the assumption that ‘normal’ states are unified nations that fit the monist model.

The State in World Politics

The fourth set of changes concerns the way the state is conceived within the broader context of world politics. First, the state has become more important as a tool for delineating group identity. In the era of South American independence, sameness (across the religious group, race, or hemisphere) was a dominant trope for conceptualising humanity. However, in the twentieth century, images of world politics overlain with the bonds of shared religion and culture became less relevant and images of race and civilisation less acceptable. In tandem with the liberal idea of equality between states, the ‘nation’-state gradually became the dominant, albeit not exclusive unit for understanding human identity. Hence today, ‘we live – or at least *think* we live – in a world of nation-states.’⁹

Second, the social elements of international life were increasingly diluted in discourse, notwithstanding the existence of an ‘English school’ within academic International Relations that still takes great interest in the embedded social elements of world politics. In the period of South American independence, British commentators defined states’ relationships as those of parents and children or sisters and brothers, a conception that was hierarchical but also social, based on the family. In contrast, the American vision conceptualised the state as an abstraction existing in a state of nature, an image that gradually supplanted that of the family. In subsequent

⁹ Keitner, ‘National Self-Determination,’ p.5.

history, equality and anarchy emerged in tandem. As hierarchy was castigated on the altar of formal 'sovereign equality' after the Second World War, so too the 'particularism' of the British image of world politics was emphatically rejected and with it assumptions that states were bound by the ties of family, empire and history.

This finding is of particular interest for two reasons. First, the linkage between equality and anarchy goes against the common association between equality and society. Especially in the West, growing equality amongst people (the decline of class hierarchies and the development of the concept of citizenship) was paralleled by a keener sense of society, in the form of provision for fellow citizens (in particular through the development of the welfare state). Thus, whereas domestically equality was connected to social support for all individuals to realise their potential, in the international realm, it denoted release from the constraints of a seemingly oppressive 'social' world. Second, since the real effects of this linkage were only reflected in post-Second World War discourse, the prevalent assumption that 'sovereign equality' was the dominant feature of 'Westphalia' merits some considerable qualification.

Closely connected to the dyad of equality and anarchy, world politics came to be seen in increasingly 'systemic' terms. In the twentieth century, the state became the unit of world politics rather than a badge of distinction and fashioned a world more chaotic, complex and competitive. As states became more equal, they also became more similar and were increasingly understood as subject to universal forces distinct to the international realm, bringing order to the complexity. In academia, structural realism was the extreme form of this tendency, since it construed states as rational actors driven towards self-help by the structure of anarchy. But other parts of the field also moved towards more 'macro-level' views of world politics as a means to make sense of its expanded scope.

In the post-Cold War era, the vision of a rationalistic states system has been supplemented by the resurgence of a discourse of 'human rights,' 'international society' and the 'international community.' The 'international system' is both a system of shared norms and institutions and an exogenous, constraining force. Yet the language of inter-state relations is still often universalising and rationalistic. If this thesis depicts changes to the state in line with the physical expansion of the international 'system,' it also outlines the development of the 'system' as a concept for understanding world politics.

Amidst these changes, the forces blamed for the nature of world politics have also altered. The connotations of nationalism were once very different. Prior to the twentieth century, nationalism did not necessarily refer to a widespread attachment to one's own nation. In a world where ideas of civilisation and cultural greatness were supposedly shared values, nations did not denote absolute moral systems isolated from each other. Nationalism was thus not perceived as a driver of conflict. Only in the twentieth century, well after 'nationalism' had taken root, did it come to be seen as a predominantly negative force, and states cast as potentially irrational entities.

In the post-war period, this link was explicit, as competition between states was frequently linked to the nation-state or 'new nationalism' in both academia and the policy world. Yet, although the implications of nationalism had only recently been fully appreciated, they were quickly forgotten, even as the nation-state arose as the dominant mode of understanding the units of world politics. In academia, 'big picture' approaches, concerned to simplify this complex world, to advance the 'science' of international relations and to carve out a distinct niche for it, made asocial behaviour a characteristic of *states* rather than nation-states. Although there was renewed interest

in nationalism from the 1990s, the focus was primarily on the ethnic conflicts of that decade. Nationalism was treated as an *explanandum*, not an *explanans*.

The paradox is that while nationalism is misunderstood and marginalised within International Relations, the concepts on which scholars and other commentators rely depend on a conception of the state as a corporate body with a single consciousness. That 'states' themselves make choices or 'seek survival' makes little sense otherwise (unless the state is construed as a supremely powerful entity capable of suppressing all forms of dissent, particularly anomalous in the modern world).¹⁰ In Wendt's *Social Theory*, there is a clear, albeit implicit link, between the conception of the state as a unified actor with its society 'in tow' and 'systemic' theory.¹¹ Such 'statist anthropomorphism' is ignored by most scholars yet condemned vehemently by those who blame it for the theoretical 'amoralization of interstate unsociety.'¹²

Finally, changes in understandings of world politics have continually repositioned the state within its environment. In the twentieth century, as the state became a dominant form, it was increasingly thought of as being defined, and thereby protected, by law. The rise of pluralism and sovereign equality prevented the powerful from fashioning political organisation in more flexible and hierarchical ways, as 'sovereignty' acquired a life of its own. Meanwhile, the definition of statehood, the rise of declaratory theory and the practice of collective recognition made questions of statehood seemingly more 'objective.' Despite the power of Western states in the 1990s to influence the process of fragmentation, they lacked the legal flexibility to do anything more than establish a temporary international administration within the

¹⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

¹¹ Wendt, *Social Theory*.

¹² Philip Allot, *Eunomia: New Order for a New World* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.248.

context of the recognition of ‘sovereignty.’¹³ International law is fixated on the state and the sovereignty paradigm.

At the same time, individual states are buffeted from all angles by the forces of law and politics. In the nineteenth century, legal positivism, with its notion of state consent, supplanted natural law. But in the twentieth century, the pendulum swung back slightly, with the rise of *jus cogens* norms and more recently, the redefinition of sovereignty as ‘responsibility.’ Meanwhile, late-nineteenth century understandings of the state were partly oriented around the Teutonic, Hegelian conception of it as a supreme ethical entity. In contrast, despite the celebration of sovereignty in the post-1945 period, the state is now the banal ‘like’ unit of the international realm, rather than a mark of distinction. Contemporary understandings also see the state as constrained by the inevitable tensions of the international realm, whether construed as a pluralist international society or a system of anarchy.

‘Something Deeper...’

The importance of these findings is that they shed historical light on a conceptual puzzle that plagues our understanding and navigation of the international system. As Chimène Keitner hints, ‘there is something deeper at work in the frequent conflation of the terms “nation” and “state” in popular, political, and even scholarly discourse.’¹⁴ Yet few scholars, policy makers or others seem quite able to explain this deeper ‘something,’ or to articulate the way it distorts their world. Although there are a myriad of possible reasons and implications behind the language of the nation-state,

¹³ See Jim Falk and Joseph A. Camilleri, *The End of Sovereignty? The Politics of a Shrinking and Fragmenting World* (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1992), p.63.

¹⁴ Chimène Keitner, ‘National Self-Determination in Historical Perspective; The Legacy of the French Revolution for Today’s Debates,’ *International Studies Review*, 2:3 (2000), p.6.

this thesis suggests three potential elements, related to its function, its derivation and the complicity of liberal political thought in its rise.

The Nation-State in Foreign Policy

Against the backdrop of an increasing concern with regime type within American and British political discourse, the argument that the nation-state is a defining trope of international affairs may seem perverse. For George W. Bush, for example, regime type and the terrorist threat are two sides of the same coin. His 'axis of evil' speech was careful to define regimes with reference to both their international and domestic records. North Korea, he said, is 'a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens,' Iran 'exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom.' Iraq, 'flaunt[ed] its hostility toward America' while the 'Iraqi regime' 'used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens.'¹⁵

Yet rather than questioning the idea of a system of unitary states, the foreign policy discourse of the Bush administration has often used and confirmed it. First, it frequently conflates regimes and populations, particularly through use of the term 'nation.' Thus, after 11 September 2001, Bush claimed that 'every nation has a choice to make' and warned Afghanistan that any 'nation' offering sanctuary to terrorists would face the 'full wrath' of the US.¹⁶ Second, it tends to explain actions in terms of realigning the relationship between government and people to form a coherent whole once more, creating a world of 'nations' and not states. Hence the Taliban was construed not only as an oppressive and dangerous force but as a 'foreign' force

¹⁵ George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, Washington D.C., January 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html> (January 2005).

¹⁶ George W. Bush, cited in Steven Thomma, 'Afghanistan Faces Ultimatum,' *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 September 2001, p.1; 'Attack on Afghanistan: Bush,' *The Guardian*, 8 October 2001, p.5.

within Afghanistan.¹⁷ It had to be removed so that the Afghan people could establish a more 'authentic' society and the 'nation' could be 'reborn.'¹⁸

Likewise, in both the US and Britain, the debate over the Iraq war has been replete with references to the ubiquitous 'Iraqi people.' The hope was that with Saddam Hussein removed, a legitimate and united state would emerge spontaneously from a virtuous Iraqi 'society.' Policy makers were aware of the divided nature of Iraq, but the prediction that Iraq was really a unitary 'nation'-in-waiting made the policy of war easier to sell. Of course, the opposing side of the debate made use of the same corporate understanding, claiming that foreign 'peoples' should be left to 'govern themselves.'

In essence then, one aspect of the 'something deeper' at the heart of the nation-state image is the utility of the image, which serves multiple purposes. It legitimises the power of governments in world affairs and safeguards their sovereignty, by construing each government and people as an inviolable whole. It justifies 'collateral damage' in war by connecting or disconnecting entire populations with regimes. Moreover, it authenticates existing borders and the states system itself by assigning to them historical or cultural meaning. It has this power despite the obvious disconnect between the image and reality.

This disjunction between language and reality complicates attempts to define the state, because any realistic description would expose the fallacy of unity. Hence, despite being the unquestioned unit of world politics, the characteristics of the state have remained notoriously underspecified since the minimalist list provided at Montevideo.¹⁹ Meanwhile, since decolonisation, English-speaking commentators

¹⁷ Donald Rumsfeld, cited in Toby Harnden and Michael Smith, 'War on the Taliban,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 October 2001, p.1.

¹⁸ Robert McFadden, 'New Leaders in Kabul,' *The New York Times*, 23 December 2001, p.1.

¹⁹ Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law*, p.31.

have been content to ignore the contradictions inherent in regarding states as unified (nation-)states. One result was that when policy makers finally grappled explicitly with the meaning of statehood, their recognition policies went awry. Another, as a group of senior international mediators recently acknowledged, has been a post-colonial tendency to 'assume a level of homogeneity which did not in fact exist,' complicating policies towards many of the failed states of the future.²⁰

The Politics of Language

Another unarticulated element of the mystery relates to the genesis of the nation-state image in a particular set of cultural and political understandings. The contestation between what have been labelled 'British' versus 'American' views is a key theme of this thesis, although it is qualified for two reasons. First, the identities 'British' and 'American' are neither mutually exclusive nor all-encompassing. Indeed, one reason the distinction was less relevant by the later twentieth century was the increased movement of peoples and ideas across the Atlantic. Second, the ideas discussed are not unique to these countries. There are overlaps between 'American' and 'French' political thought of the past two hundred years, for example, but these are beyond the scope here.

Yet the comparison of British and American viewpoints highlights the importance of the politics of language. It has long been recognised that the particular experience of the US played a vital role in defining the kind of 'nationhood' it acquired. Its short history, civil war, mass immigration to the 'melting pot,' doctrine of manifest destiny, geographical isolation and wealth of natural resources are commonly used to explain American political culture, in particular its 'isolationism'

²⁰ Public Report of the 2005 Mediators' Retreat, Oslo, June 26-27 2005 (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, 2005), accessed at: <http://www.hdcentre.org/Forum+Oslo+and+Mediators+Retreats>

and its 'civic' rather than 'ethnic' conception of nationhood. Its entry into the world, says Michael Foley, is conceived as 'an autonomous act by a nation moving of its own volition and in pursuit of its own destiny.'²¹ However, this historical experience did not only influence the American perception of the US. This thesis demonstrates that it also shaped the way that Americans, and over time non-Americans, understood the world as a whole.

That the nation-state image represents a peculiarly 'American' discourse should be seen against the backdrop of broader differences between American and British variants of the English language.²² In the nineteenth century, there were various strides to delineate a specifically American form of language, through dictionaries of Americanisms and histories of American English.²³ One figure with decisive impact was Noah Webster, who published the two-volume *An American Dictionary of English Language*, as well as *The American Spelling Book*, which sold an estimated eighty million copies in one hundred years.²⁴ Webster was a patriot who perceived that a national language was important to cement national unity and thus aimed to make the English language in the US a distinctly American phenomenon, especially by changing spellings. Language differences were thus rooted in politics, and not simply accidental.

The comparison between British and American languages of world politics highlights the role of power in forging understandings of the world. Britain's emphasis on ties of family and culture preserved her position at the pinnacle of a

²¹ Michael Foley, *American Political Ideas; Traditions and Usages* (Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1991), pp.186-9.

²² See Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 5th edition (Upper Saddle River, Prentice Hall, 2002).

²³ The first dictionary of Americanisms was John Pickering, *A Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases which has been supposed to be Peculiar to the United States of America* (Boston, Cummings and Hilliard, 1816). See also William Craigie and James Hulbert, *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1938).

²⁴ Noah Webster, *The American Spelling Book* (Brattleborough, Vt., John Holbrook, 1819); *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York, S. Converse, 1828).

hierarchical social network. The US emphasis on equality reflected the fact that its rise to power depended on rupturing those ties. Frequently, policy makers engaged explicitly with the contradictory language of the other, especially during the period of decolonisation in which the relevance and meaning of 'independence' were bitterly contested. The language of nations and a singular international system became dominant with the rise of the US to pre-eminent power.

However, if language has political roots, it also has powerful legacies. Robert Kagan has argued that whereas in the US, people view the world as 'Hobbesian,' filled with dangers that necessitate the use of force and coercion, in Western Europe, the image is of a 'Kantian' world, in which the vital tools are patient diplomacy, problem solving, and faith in international law. Kagan views these differences as the result of political reality; the US has to behave as the powerful nation it is, while European powers have turned to multilateralism for want of a better option.²⁵ Yet this thesis indicates that differences between American and British viewpoints were evident even in the early-nineteenth century, long before the decline of British power. Far from simply reflecting cynical calculations of interest, understandings of world politics are often historically and culturally rooted.

The Ambiguity of Liberalism

The third and final element of the mystery behind the nation-state image is the role of liberal internationalist thought. The tension at the heart of liberal internationalism, between the rights of individuals and those of communities, has been well-documented. It was embodied in the French Revolution which gave rise to both popular sovereignty and nationalism. It was contained in Jennings' warning that the

²⁵ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York, Knopf, 2003).

people cannot decide until someone defines 'the people.'²⁶ It was expressed by the Badinter Commission as it debated the relative weights of individual versus group rights in Yugoslavia. It is heard today in the UN General Assembly as states resist as 'neo-imperialist' the right to intervene for humanitarian purposes in the affairs of other states.

In fact, a historical analysis of liberal internationalism highlights that it tends to lurch from one extreme to the other. Jennifer Pitts claims that in the 1780s, there was the promise of a critical approach to European expansion within British and French political thought, contained in the works of Adam-Smith, Bentham, Kant, Diderot and Condorcet. It was displaced by a different form of liberalism, including that of Tocqueville and Mill, which by the 1830s furnished well-developed arguments for imperialism. It seems that in the twentieth century, this 'liberal turn to empire' was again reversed, creating an impetus towards decolonisation. But once again, proponents of 'empire,' or at least of intervention and transitional administration are re-emerging, as domestic yokes have proven to be no better and often worse, than foreign ones.²⁷

Notwithstanding this ongoing tension, liberal internationalism has played a fundamental role in shaping a particular form of political organisation within discourse. In particular, liberalism has become fundamentally connected, not only to the image of the nation, but the conception of the state as a unified actor or person. As Iyob has described, the pre-Second World War colonial order was characterised by a clear distinction between the 'civilizing' rulers and the 'natives.' By contrast, the post-colonial order emphasised the organic unity of both the ruler and the ruled, justified by the advent of the 'nation-state' which purported to encompass the various

²⁶ Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Government*, p.56.

²⁷ Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*.

societal elements within its ambit.²⁸ The nation provided a convenient delineation for liberal thought to package ‘freedom.’

In fact the relationship is two-way, for liberal internationalism not only encouraged the depiction of states as nations but relied upon it. As Wendt points out, one of the attractions of the ‘reductionist, “as if” view of state persons’ is that it provides a ‘metaphysical basis for liberalism,’ casting states as individuals who can bear rights and responsibilities.²⁹ In other words, the linkage between liberalism and nationalism is not simply a result of the tensions within liberalism as a political project, but also liberalism as a particular ontology, one so firmly embedded in modern understanding as to define the categories of political language itself.³⁰

Finally, to suggest the ‘complicity’ of liberal thought is also to suggest the complicity of those who benefited from its contradictions. If the nation image was vital to new governments attempting to create the foundations of social stability, it also had benefits for many others too. The idea of an international realm of equally sovereign ‘nations’ privileged the US from its inception, by defining world politics away from the traditional European order. Later, the perception of decolonisation as the ‘self-determination’ of pre-existing ‘nations’ assuaged the consciences and pride of Britain and other former colonial powers, as they effectively (though not entirely through their own free will) relinquished responsibility for the far-flung corners of the world.

²⁸ Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence*, p.18.

²⁹ Wendt, ‘The State as Person,’ p.292.

³⁰ See also Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, p.148.

The State in International Relations

This thesis bears various implications for the discipline of International Relations. Although this discipline is characterised by immense variety, its central debates, such as structure versus process, or objectivism versus interpretism, are ones long since dealt with by other social sciences. This fact is partly accounted for by the recency of the discipline itself. However, International Relations has also been constrained from tackling core ontological and epistemological issues by its dependency on certain assumptions about world politics, notably the existence of sovereignty and anarchy. With the advancing maturity of the discipline of International Relations, the aversion to self-reflexivity carries the risk of academic marginalisation. In particular, more scrupulous analysis is needed of the images of the state it uses and the conventional stories it tells.

The Importance of Images

This thesis suggests that images of the state are vital elements of the foreign policy arsenal. They are given scant scholarly attention because of an unspoken assumption that 'norms' are the only ideas worthy of investigation. Yet norms do not function without certain images that render them coherent. We know, for example, that decolonisation occurred as the legitimacy of foreign conquest waned. However, it was also facilitated by the metaphor of an unstoppable 'nationalist' wave engulfing the Third World. Likewise today, the stylised concept of the nation within political discourse exerts a powerful hold over notions of legitimacy. For example, assertions that 'there was never a "Palestinian nation,"' or that 'a separate South Ossetian nation has never existed' delegitimise claims to statehood via a distorted understanding of

other states as deeply rooted historical ‘nations.’³¹ It is worth restating the basic tenet of social science here, that ‘if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.’³²

One aspect of ideational change that is particularly neglected is the role of knowledge. It is clear that the image of the state as a nation arose in tandem with the legitimising framework of ‘people power.’ Yet the degree of knowledge about the world also played a vital role. In the era of South American independence, for example, the scant level of knowledge about that vast continent precluded the depiction of new states in national terms. In contrast, the societies that emerged out of the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire in Africa had been widely researched and documented and could be romanticised and historicised. This is a twist on an established claim, that the forces of globalisation that connect individuals through enhanced communication and information have the dialectical effect of ‘fragmentation.’³³

Conventional Stories.

This thesis also challenges dominant approaches to the history of ideas within International Relations. One problem within the discipline as a whole is its propensity to take concepts, such as the ‘state,’ ‘system,’ ‘society’ or ‘nationalism’ and to depict their history in simple ‘rise and fall’ terms, ignoring changes in content. Another is the practice of reifying certain dates, none more so than ‘Westphalia’ or the ‘French Revolution.’ By depicting these as vital turning points, scholars overemphasise the embeddedness of current understandings and inevitably prioritise particular

³¹ Emanuel Fischer, ‘Guns Before Butter’ (Letters to the Editor), *The Jerusalem Post*, 26 August 2002, p.6; Pavel Felgenhauer, ‘Into the Ossetian Quagmire,’ *Moscow Times*, 17 August 2004.

³² Ole R. Holsti, ‘Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy,’ in John C. Farrell and Asa P. Smith (eds.), *Image and Reality in World Politics* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1968), p.16.

³³ See Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation*.

components of the state concept, imposing assumptions about the nature of international order.³⁴

Another tendency challenged here is a more implicit one, the sequencing of international life in terms of the development of social ties between states existing in a state of nature. In essence, much International Relations scholarship takes for granted that the 'system' of states precedes 'society' in the same way that people must exist before they can form relationships. Yet, as shown here, the idea of an international 'society' is older than that of the state of nature or 'system' of pre-social states.

In this way, International Relations has relied on the same sharp contour between domestic 'society' and international 'anarchy' on which national mythologies are based. David Hendrickson, in his analysis of the founding of the United States, suggests that the dominant challenge at the time was to secure cooperation among separate colonies and states in North America. The making of the union was a peace pact, an 'experiment in international cooperation,' such that the 'US' did not exist prior to its inception into the international realm.³⁵ Yet, conventional understandings portray the US as a pre-political national unit which rejected external rule to establish its domestic institutions. The linkage between this parable and the foundations of International Relations are striking.

Hence, this thesis highlights the need for a more critical appreciation of International Relations' own history. Scholars acknowledge the role of norms in shaping the discipline; the interwar tension between idealism and realism is seen as a founding debate. Yet it is less sensitive to the role of ideas more generally, and decidedly uncritical of its own project to 'describe' the world. Conscious of its origins

³⁴ See also Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society*, intro.

³⁵ David C. Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2003), pp.257, ix.

in the post-First World War need for answers, it is rarely cognisant of the impact of history on the design of its questions.³⁶

The State into the Future

This thesis has focussed on the history of the state and makes no claim to predict its future. However, it suggests that the state's 'power' as a concept should not be underestimated. As the state has continually undergone a process of redefinition, the empirics of statehood have not necessarily been vital to its conceptual resonance. It was at the very moment when real states were at their weakest, both materially and in their claim to represent their 'peoples,' that they became the seemingly solid and fixed infrastructure of international life and acquired increasingly definite personhoods.

Thus, even as new forms of community and new patterns of material power arise, the state may emerge unscathed, because as Jackson describes above, it has acquired a 'life' of its own, 'ingrained' within the contemporary imagination. In this sense, the state is truly 'the ground of both our freedoms and our unfreedoms.'³⁷

³⁶ See also Hoffman, 'An American Social Science.'

³⁷ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State; How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1998), p.7.

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- Reports of UN Commissions
- Verbatim records of the Security Council
- Resolutions of Security Council

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Parent organ

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| A/ | General Assembly |
| S/ | Security Council |
| SG | Secretary-General |
| ST/ | Secretariat |
| E/ | Economic and Social Council |

Subsidiary bodies

- | | |
|-------|------------------|
| /AC | Ad hoc committee |
| /C | Main committee |
| /CN | Commission |
| /CONF | Conference |
| /SC | Subcommittee |

Nature of document

- | | |
|------|-----------------|
| /PV | Verbatim Record |
| /SR | Summary Record |
| /RES | Resolution |

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