Structures of Militarized Conflict in a Post-Sovereign World

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By way of introduction…

- ## No t-tests $\quad$ 42.9** (21.8) 🚫

- ## Approach is historical-theoretical
  - "The longer you look back, the farther you can look forward." Winston Churchill

- ## Grad students:
  - tenured presenter
  - do not try this at home
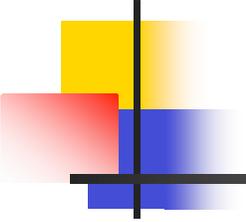
The Westphalian-Clausewitzian-realist paradigm

- Westphalian
  - the dominant actors in the international system are sovereign, territorial nation-states exercising a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within their borders;
    - As will be noted shortly, this in fact has very little to do with the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia;
- Clausewitzian
  - states legitimately use violence against each other through professional militaries supported by, and in the service of, the state;
- Realist
  - international politics is predominantly driven by the pursuit of some vaguely defined "national interest" in a quasi-anarchic system employing balance of power politics.
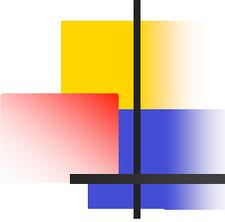
Standard introductory IR "origin of nation-state"

- Greek city-states (Thucydides) look like nation states
- Chinese "Warring States" period (all 60 years!) looks like nation states. We're cross-cultural!
- Italian city-states (Machiavelli) look like nation states
- The medieval system was, well, just too "medieval," but religious warfare (ca. 1520-1648) wasn't too cool either
- Hugo Grotius figured out a better system
- The Treaty of Westphalia implemented it
- This was so wonderful that it spread throughout the world!
- End of history: it's all nation states
  - and yes, this will be on the test…stop checking Facebook on your iPhone…
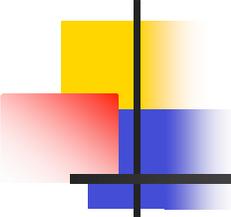
Problems with this approach

- ## Blindingly obvious
  - Rome, ca. 400BCE - 450CE
  - Medieval Europe, ca. 450CE - 1600CE
  - China, 200 BCE - present, minus a couple more inter-dynastic periods
- ## Requires some homework
  - Byzantium, 300CE-1456CE
  - Treaty of Augsburg, 1555
  - Treaty of Westphalia had almost nothing to do with the political transition
  - All that unpleasantness we called "imperialism" might have something to do with the spread of the system. U.S. post-imperialism might explain most of the rest

Inflated impressions of Treaty of Westphalia aren't not confined to IR theory…

Allegory of the Peace of
Westphalia
Jacob Jordaens, 1654
National Gallery of Norway, Oslo
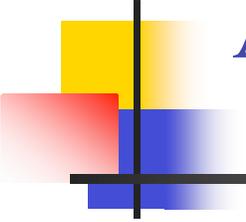
A more sophisticated approach…

- Relevant theorists: Joseph Strayer, William McNeil, Charles Tilly, Mancur Olson
- Issues
  - Medieval: elite violence and absence of secular control
  - Late medieval: peasant revolts
  - Religious war is an irritant, particularly with Philip II, but controllable
- Technological change
  - Gunpowder
  - Plague
  - Global trade
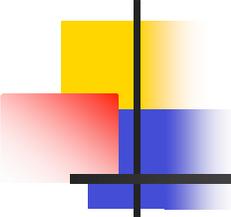
MOST "Westphalian" transition

- Trade and manufacturing by economic elites provide a source of revenue
- Which supports centralized bureaucratic states
- Which support increasingly apolitical professional militaries
- Which provide domestic security and imperial conquest to support trade and manufacturing
- [However, this is a fairly idiosyncratic set of circumstances, not some teleological imperative]
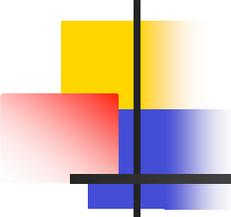
Nation-Statiness, 1648-1880

- European colonial ventures
- European internal empires
  - Hapsburg, Russian
- Militarized colonial corporations
  - Hudson Bay, Dutch East India, British East India
- Non-European empires
  - Ottoman, Qing
- Lack of consolidation of Germany and Italy
- Pirates
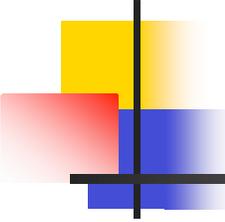
Nation-Statiness, 1880-1914

- European colonial ventures: new, improved with direct rule!
  - Treaty of Berlin 1885
- New colonial powers: Germany, Japan, USA
- Imperial crises
  - Fashoda, 1st Morocco, Agadir
  - Assorted Balkans wars at Hapsburg-Ottoman interface
  - "Great Game":Anglo-Russo competition in Central Asia
  - Spanish-American, Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars
- Anti-colonial resistance movements: Boer, Boxer, Cuban
- Transnational terrorism: anarchism
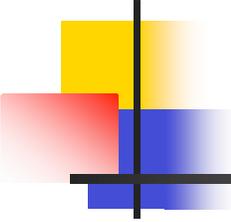
Nation-Statiness, 1914-1918

- Empires involved in WWI
  - British
  - French
  - Austria-Hungarian
  - Russian
  - Ottoman
- Non-imperial powers (sort of)
  - Germany (subsequently blamed for everything)
  - US (couldn't take the heat, got out of the kitchen)
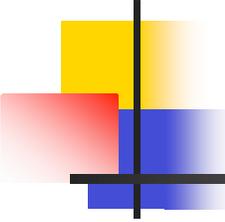
Nation-Statiness, 1918-1945

- Still have those pesky British and French empires
  - Also Dutch, Belgian, Portuguese, US, Japanese

- Third Reich
  - Whatever it was, it wasn't a nation-state
  - Lasts only 12 years, despite coverage on the History Channel proportional to that of a Thousand-Year Reich

- US-Japanese imperial competition in Asia
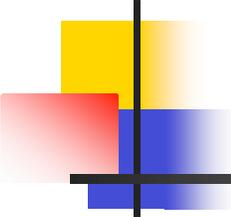
# Birth of the Nation-State System: ~~1648~~ 1956

- Key elements of British empire rapidly disintegrating: 1948
- French defeat at Dienbienphu: 1954
- US and Soviet Union terminate British and French reassertion of colonial control in Suez Crisis: 1956
- Decolonization follows the Westphalian-Clausewitzian model
- Cold War follows the realist model
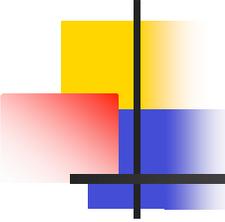
Challenges to Westphalian-Clausewitzian System by 1987

- Iran-Iraq, the last Clausewitzian war, is winding down

- Soviets nearly defeated by Afghan *mujihadeen*

    - Soviet Union would subsequently disintegrate more or less peacefully

- First Palestinian *intifada* begins in December
- Hezbollah has emerged as the major anti-Israel force in Lebanon
- Development of various post-colonial wars in Africa

Decline of interstate conflict 1948-2003
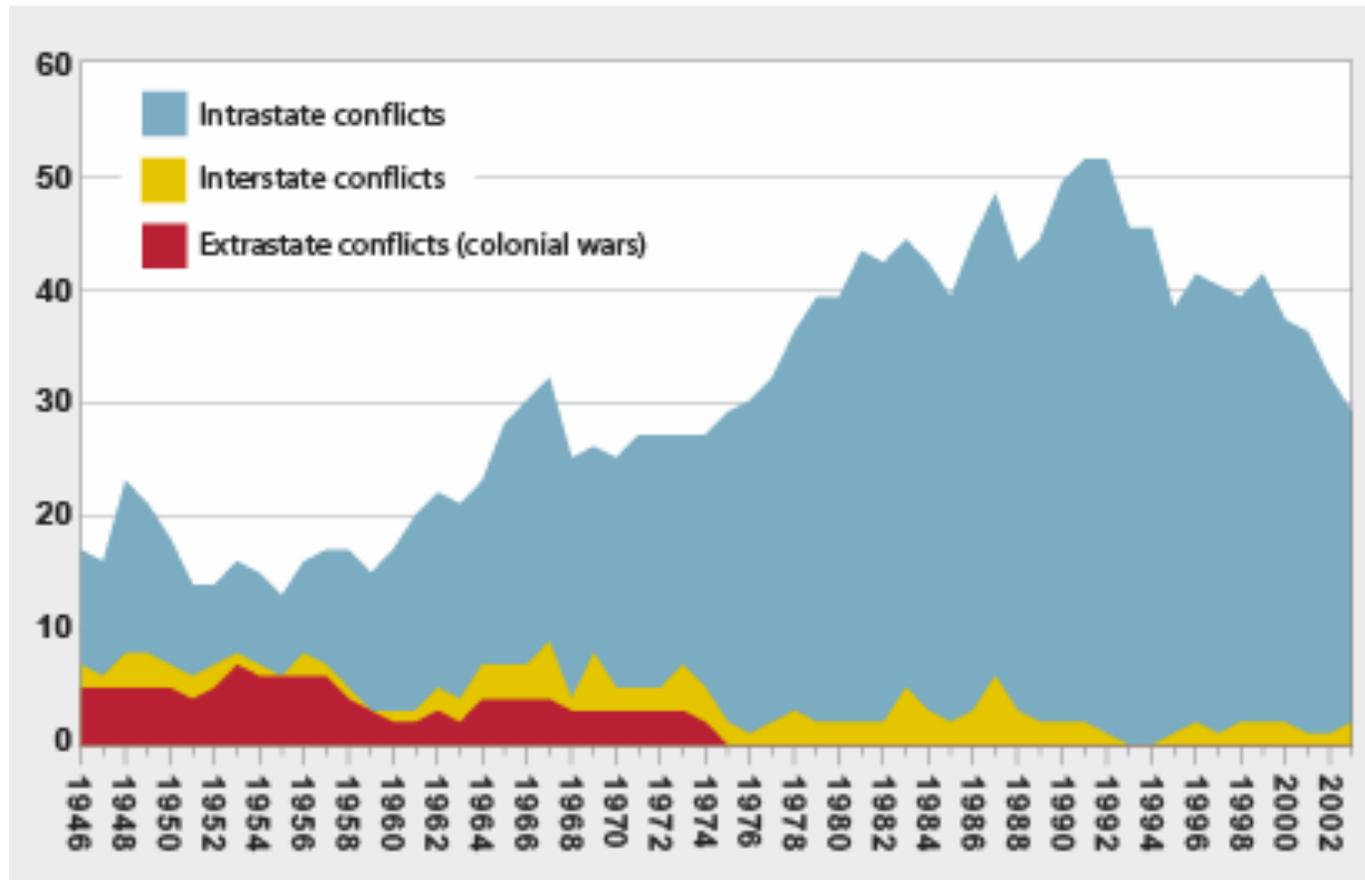
Source: *Human Security Report 2005*.
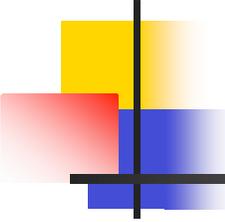
# Why the shift to non-state conflict?

- Global market for light weapons financed by global trade in resources such as timber, diamonds, and narcotics, as well as expatriate monetary transfers (Kaldor)
- Decline in major power war due to
  - Democratic peace (Rummel)
  - Liberal peace (Friedman)
  - "Hollandization" (VanCrevald, Luttwak)—substitution of trade and finance for military activities
- "Hourglass effect"—increase in power of international and local institutions at the expense of centralized government
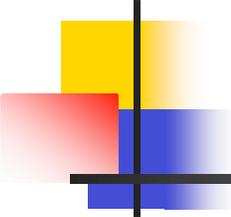
Another issue: three contemporary paradoxes confronting international relations realism

- Empirical failure of balance of power theory (Bennett and Stam 2004)

- Obsolescence of war hypothesis (Mueller, Kaysen, Luard, Luttwak)

- Prevalence of failed states: in realist theory, a failed state is an opportunity, not a problem

Nation-State Era = Elvis + 10
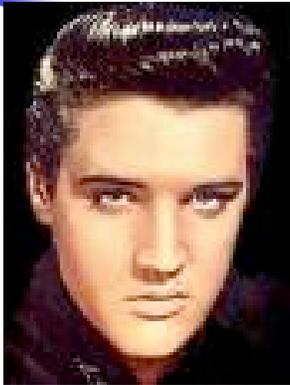
Elvis	**Nation-State**
1954 *That's All Right* with Sun Records	1954: Dienbienphu
1956 *Hound Dog* on Ed Sullivan show	1956: Suez Crisis
1970: Deputized as anti-drug agent	1970: Collapse of Biafran Rebellion
1977: Dies (event contested)	1977: Deng Xiaoping rehabilitated, beginning China's economic rise
	1987: End of major power war; MNSA's dominate conflict

Nation-State Era = Elvis + 10
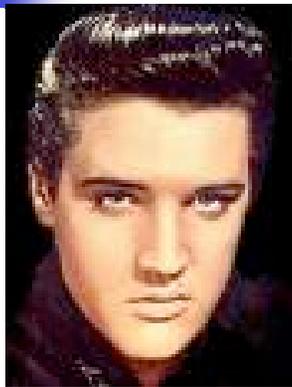
| Elvis	Nation-State
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1956 *Hound Dog* on Ed Sullivan show	1956: Suez Crisis
1970: Deputized as anti-drug agent	1970: Collapse of Biafran Rebellion
1977: Dies (event contested)	1977: Bill Gates wins lawsuit against Altair, beginning world domination
	1987: End of major power war; MNSA's dominate conflict
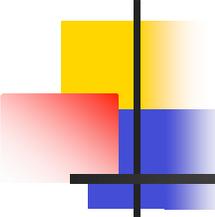
The international conflict system (in theory)
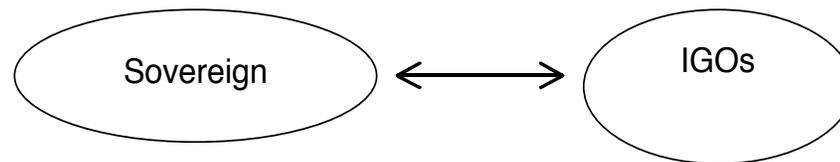
The international conflict system (in practice)
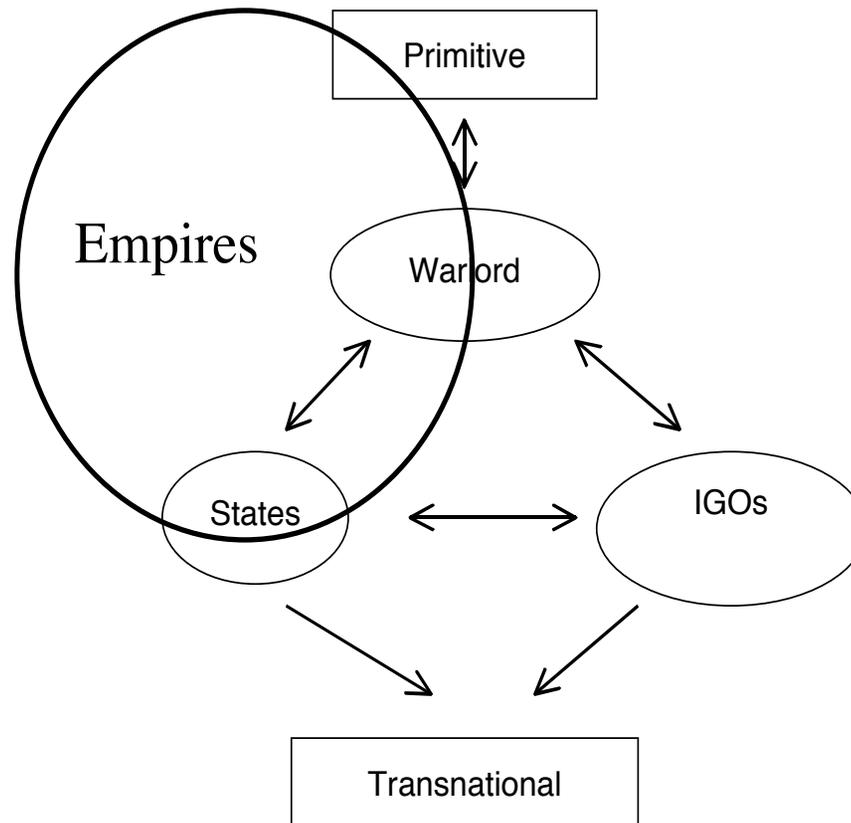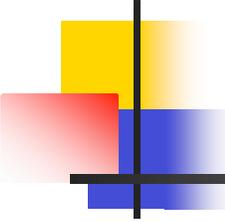
"Ideally, you should find example for your IR lecture in the morning paper"

- Collapse of NATO transition strategy in Afghanistan due to successful Taliban infiltration of police training operations

- Libya militia attacks on U.S. consulate, followed by counter-attacks by pro-U.S. crowds on Libyan militias

- *Sunday New York Times*: list of about a dozen states in the process of fragmenting
  - No comparable list of states *uniting*: Korea is about the only candidate

- Harvard public health study of the dangers of urban gangs
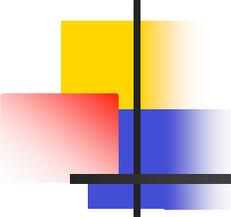
Example: 18 December 2007

BAGHDAD — Iraqi leaders criticized Turkey on Monday for bombing Kurdish militants in northern Iraq with airstrikes that they said had left at least one woman dead.

The Turkish attacks in Dohuk Province on Sunday — involving dozens of warplanes and artillery — were the largest known cross-border attack since 2003. They occurred with at least tacit approval from American officials. The Iraqi government, however, said it had not been consulted or informed about the attacks.

Massoud Barzani, leader of the autonomous Kurdish region in the north, condemned the assaults as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty that had undermined months of diplomacy. "These attacks hinder the political efforts exerted to find a peaceful solution based on mutual respect."

New York Times, 18 December 2007

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/18/world/middleeast/18iraq.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin
(Accessed 18 December 2007)

A "spectrum" of political violence

The electromagnetic spectrum

Less complexity   Greater complexity

Ethnic	Feudal	Classical	Industrial	Multilateral

COW
Westphalian-Clausewitzian-realist
Worldview

# Contemporary political violence

Somalia 1991-1995

Yugoslavia 1994-1999

Afghanistan 2001-present

Liberia 1991-2004

Less complexity   Greater complexity

| Ethnic | Warlord | Classical | Industrial | Multilateral |
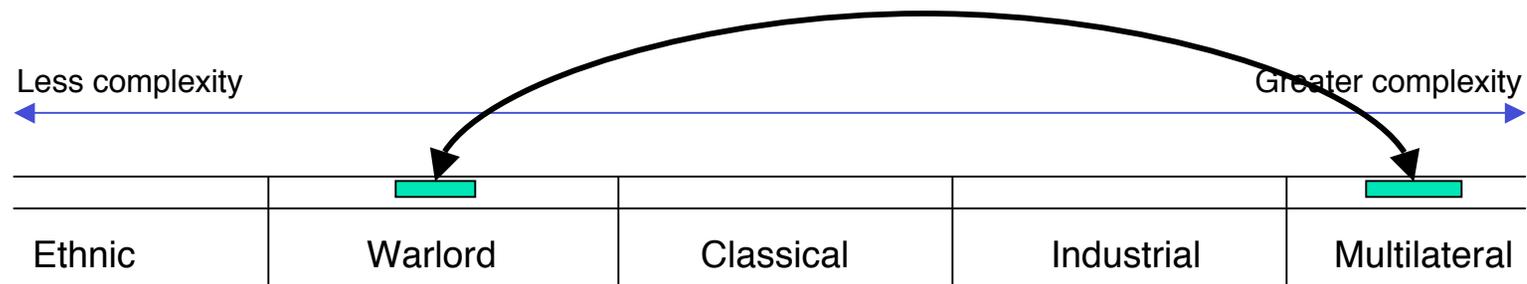
Contemporary political violence

Palestine 1936-present
Kashmir 1948-present
Southern Lebanon 1985-2001
Chechnya 1793-2004

Less complexity   Greater complexity

| Ethnic | Warlord | Classical | Industrial | Multilateral |
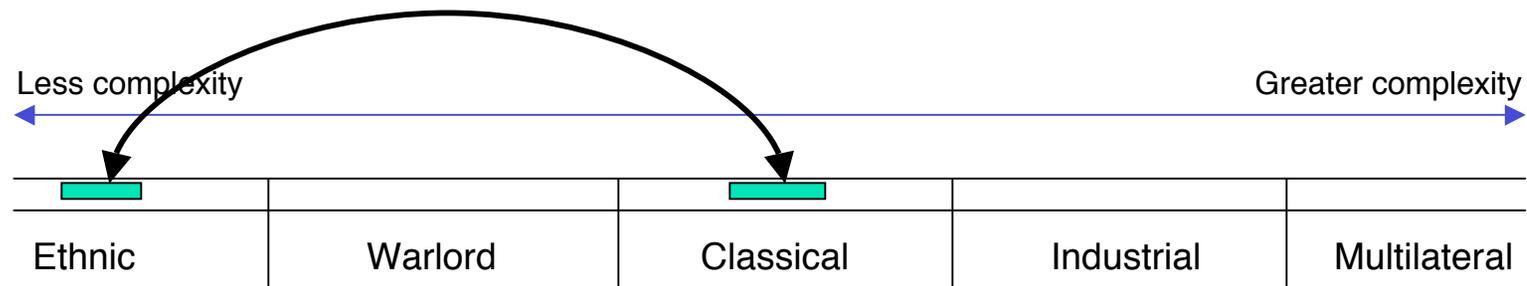
Contemporary political violence

India 1945-present

Lebanon 1976-1985

Rwanda 1994

Yugoslavia 1991-1995

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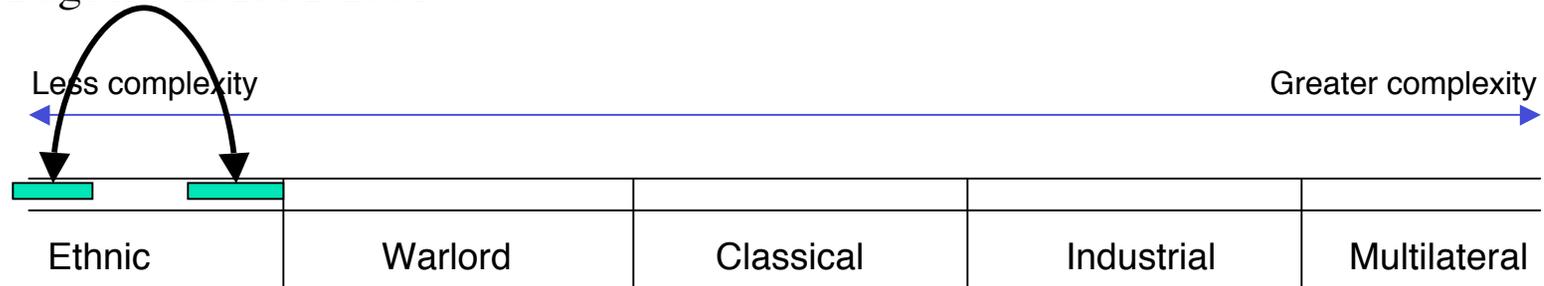
Contemporary political violence

Zaire/D.R. Congo 1997-2002

Less complexity   Greater complexity

| Ethnic | Warlord | Classical | Industrial | Multilateral |
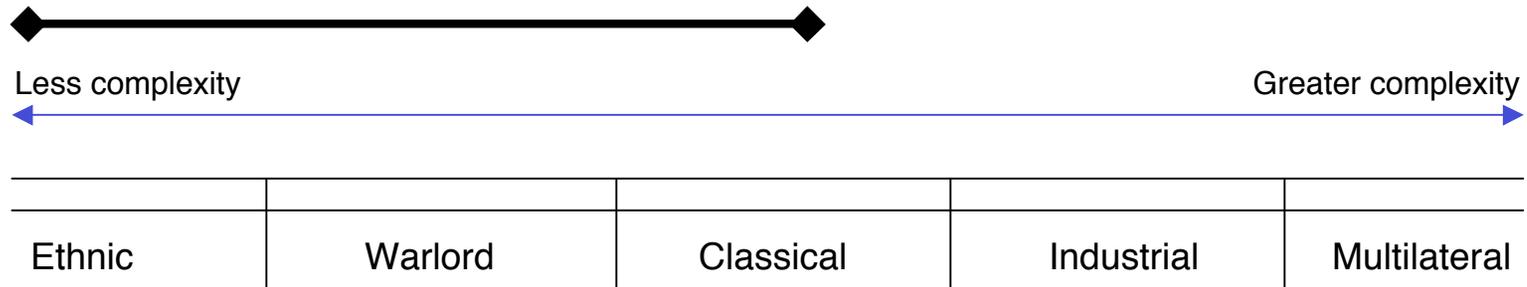
Contemporary Political violence

Libya ? Syria?

Yemen

Somalia

Afghanistan

Congo

Less complexity   Greater complexity

| Ethnic | Warlord | Classical | Industrial | Multilateral |
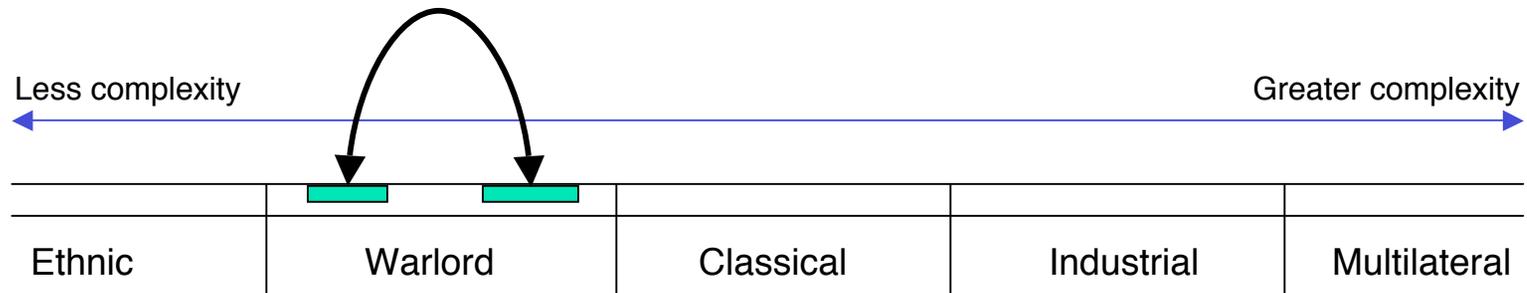
Political violence: *Pirates of the Caribbean*

Pirates
More pirates *Arrrgh*, matey…
British East India Company
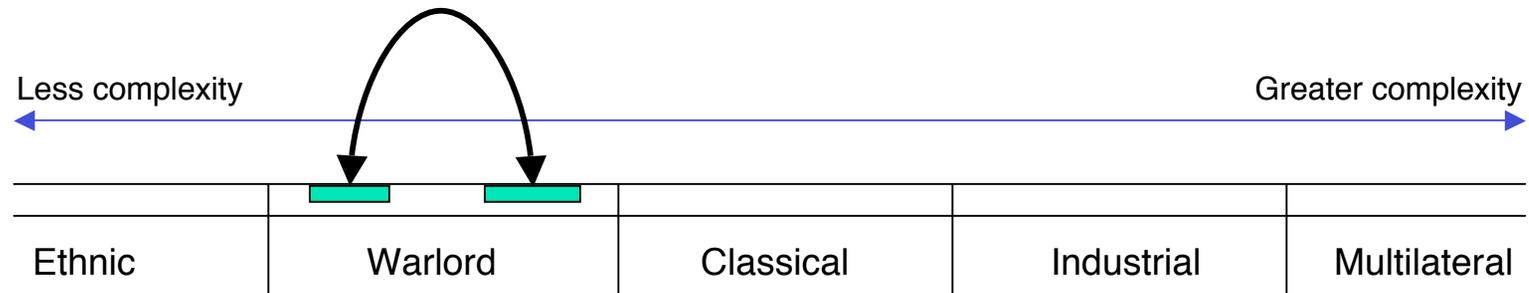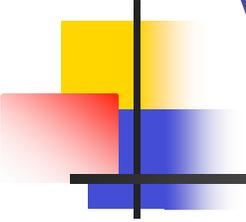
Less complexity ← → Greater complexity

| Ethnic | Warlord | Classical | Industrial | Multilateral |

Why create typologies?

- "Because we can…"
  - Apple Computer's standard excuse for any dramatic but useless graphical interface feature.
- Aristotle did it
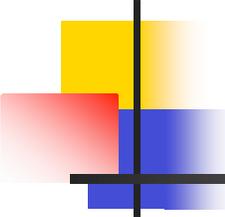
This is not a new approach…

"The distinction between correct and deviant constitutions is combined with the observation that the government may consist of one person, a few, or a multitude. Hence, there are six possible constitutional forms (Aristotle, *Politics* I.7):

	Correct	Deviant
One Ruler	Kingship	Tyranny
Few Rulers	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many Rulers	Polity	Democracy

"This six-fold classification (which is adapted from Plato's *Statesman*) sets the stage for Aristotle's inquiry into the best constitution, although it is modified in various ways throughout the *Politics*."

Source: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-politics/ (accessed 12 May 2005)
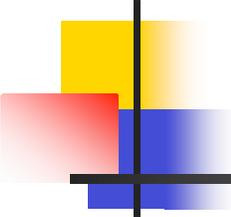
Why create typologies?

- "Because we can…"
  - Apple Computer's standard excuse for any dramatic but useless graphical interface feature.
- Aristotle did it
- Typologies serve as a means of simplifying a complex world
- "Like behaves as like"—ideally, cases classified similarly will behave similarly, giving some element of prediction
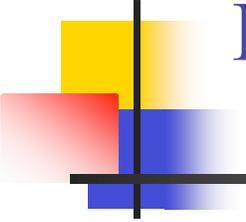
Traditional Typologies of Violence: Historical/Developmental

- **Heroic/primitive**

  - War as practiced in pre-urban societies. Classical mythology provides numerous archetypes, as do most modern comic books/"graphic novels", video games, and H/Bollywood films.

- **Classical**

  - This model is found from the beginning of urbanized, stratified societies until the transition to gunpowder-based militaries, a period of about 3,500 years. Some elements appear to have developed independently in multiple, disconnected cultures—e.g. China, Meso-America, and the Middle East—whereas other aspects have resulted from cultural diffusion This category usually involves imperial, feudal and nomadic variants.
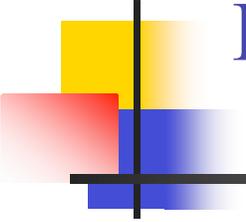
Traditional Typologies of Violence: Historical/Developmental cont.

- **Modern**

  - WCR model of state-sponsored, gunpowder-based militaries fighting for the interests of the state. It emerges in Europe with the simultaneous rise of the gunpowder-based military and the consolidation of military power into sovereign states, and is subsequently enhanced by the industrial revolution.

- **Contemporary/Post-Modern**

  - This model notes the impact of three contemporary changes. First, the globalized mass production of military technology has ended the military advantage enjoyed by industrialized states during the 1750-1950 period, and small armed groups can now successfully challenge weak or over-extended states. Nuclear weapons have meanwhile introduced a high level of caution into major-power conflict. Finally, economic production has reached a level where war no longer provides a credible route to wealth. These factors combine in the "obsolescence of war" thesis of Mueller (1989) and Kaysen (1990).
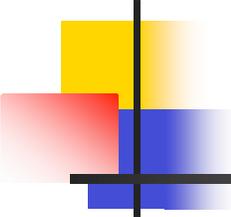
Traditional Typologies of Violence: Structural

- **Low-intensity conflict**

  - Conflict involving actors with a low level of political organization such as terrorists, warlords, and peasant revolts.

- **Civil War/Revolution**

  - Conflict contesting the control (or establishment) of a state from within.

- **Interstate War**

  - WCR conflict between two or more states.

- **Systemic war**

  - Wide-spread conflict involving most of the states within an international subsystem such as the Napoleonic Wars, World Wars I and II.

Alternative: Organizational-Behavioral Typology
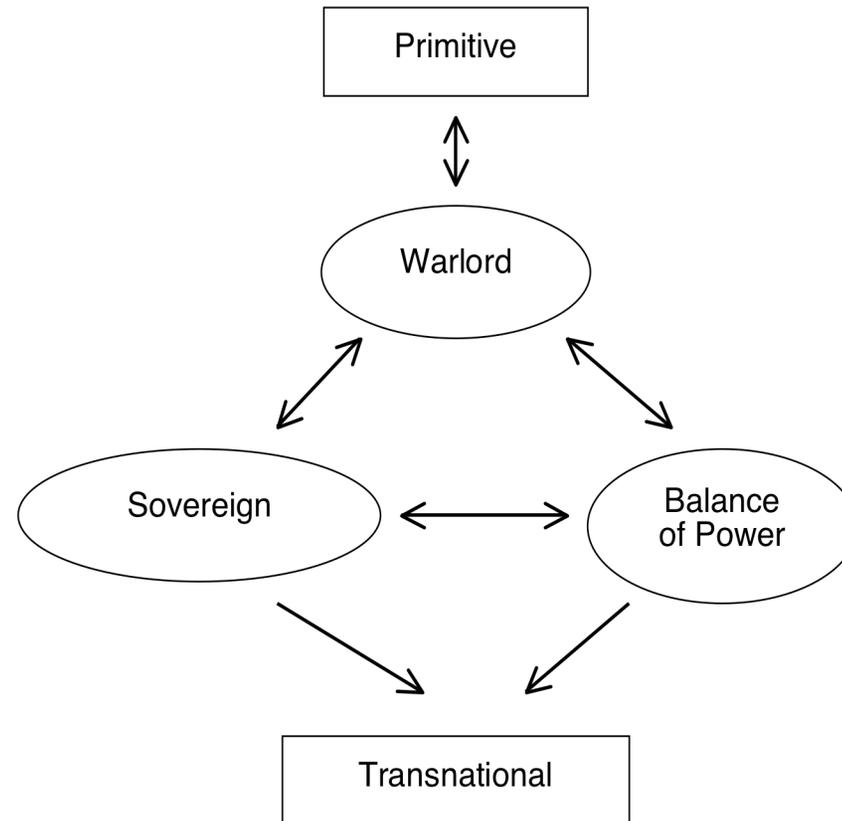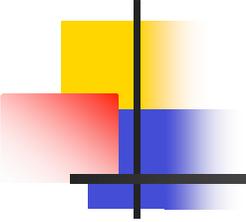
Material explanations

- "Follow the money"
  - Somali warlord: "We decided we couldn't afford to spend $100,000 on a six-hour firefight"
- Coercive efficiency: how many individuals can be supported by the efforts of one armed individual?
  - This must be substantially greater than 1 to support a professional military
- Too much fighting and not enough farming means everyone starves
  - Both DNA and linguistic evidence seem to support the hypothesis that until recently—perhaps the past 300 years—population expansion primarily followed agricultural innovation rather than conquest.
- <u>Weakness of the material approach</u>: Societies in similar material-economic circumstances can behave quite differently with respect to violence
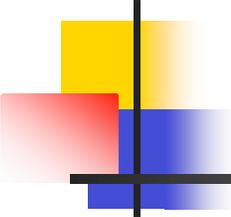
Constructivist considerations

- Ideas matter: individuals will engage in violence for non-material gains such as status, honor, religion, or revenge
  - To say nothing of gaining status by revenging the honor of religion…
- Due to the risks inherent in violence, non-material motivations may be at least as important as material for the individuals engaged in the activity
  - Never share a foxhole with a rational utility maximizer. Share a foxhole with a romantic hero.
- <u>Weakness of the constructivist approach</u>:
  "Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid."
  Han Solo, *Star Wars*, Episode IV.
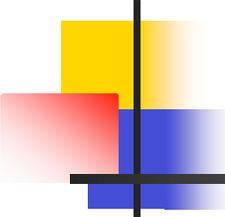
Primitive Mode: Characteristics

- Key work: Lawrence Keeley, *War Before Civilization*
- Violence is generally ritualized and seasonal
- Lethality is *usually* relatively low in individual incidents
  - However, in some instances it *may* be quite high. Furthermore, protracted violence in small population groups can, over time, lead to situations of complete extermination
- Rewards involve both status and economic resources; territory can be acquired
  - This contrasts with earlier approaches; territorial acquisition also occurs with chimpanzees
- Violence is done by amateurs, usually young males
  - (who are biologically expendable)
  - Cross-cultural mortality curves from homicide are almost identical in shape but differ in scale: Japanese kill each other at 1/10th the rate of Americans, but do so with the same age profile
- There is a high degree of variation between societies—organized violence seems to be cultural, and obviously also requires very specialized technology. As best we can tell, at least a few civilizations had low levels of military organization for extended periods of time.
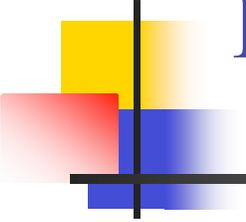
Primitive Mode: Examples

- Pre-urban tribal warfare
- Contemporary street gangs
  - (to the extent that they are transient rather than professional)
- Ethnic violence
  - Automatic weapons and other methods of efficient mass killing may have changed this in recent decades
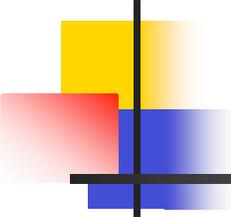
Warlord Mode: Characteristics

- De facto long-term control of a defined territory, plus the possibility of acquiring further territory
- Full-time professionals in the use of violence
- Hierarchical social structure, usually with a personalist leadership
- Questionable political legitimacy—systems usually co-exist (and can economically exploit) more organized systems
- Warlord systems are *stable*!—in fact they are probably the fundamental unit of political violence
  - Most warlords don't want to become governments, though they may be willing to be designated as one if you ask politely and this doesn't involve very much additional work…
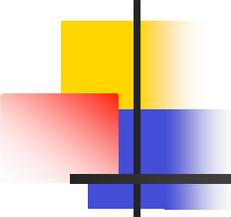
Warlord Mode: Examples

- Nomadic raiders
  - Economic base: the raided
- Western Europe, 400 - 1500 CE
  - Economic base: manorial agriculture
- Military warlords
  - Economic base: anybody in the vicinity weaker than they are
- Economic warlords
  - Economic base: narcotics, smuggling (this requires co-existence with a state structure to make these activities illegal and therefore lucrative, but may be serving a willing market)
- Organized crime
  - Economic base: Typically gambling, prostitution, kidnapping and protection rackets. Occurs within a sovereign state.
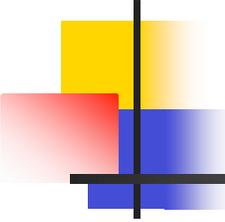
Sovereign mode: Characteristics

- Territorial with an established legal-bureaucratic state structure which has some legitimated means of extracting revenue
  - Legitimacy greatly increases coercive efficiency
- Professional military focusing on
  - Internal control—monopoly on the use of violence which promotes economic stability (Tilly, McNeill, Olson, Strayer)
  - External security
- Hollandization (Mueller): state does not engage in military expansion but instead concentrates on becoming fabulously wealthy
  - Military activity is limited by the Westphalian compromise with the economic elite: they support the military in the expectation that this will provide economic benefits
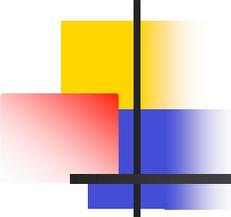
Sovereign mode: Examples

- Classical city-states

  - When they weren't realist.

- 18th century: Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland

- Post-WWII: "Old Europe", Japan

- 21st century: Russia

- 21st century: China??—let's hope…
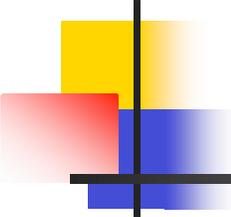
Balance of power: Characteristics

- Military control (or political legitimacy) is sufficiently strong to be able to extract significant economic resources
- Political elites behave according to realist/balance-of-power principles
- In many—historically *most*—cases, these states are actually hegemonic, though they typically view themselves as struggling to survive (cf. George Bush and the U.S. neoconservatives).
- Unlike what realist theory suggests, "balanced" systems appear to be very rare and rather transient
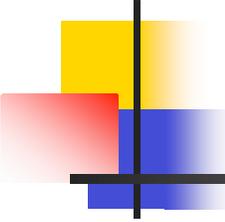
Balance of power: Examples

- Classical empires—Assyria, Egypt, China, Persia, Rome, Byzantium, Ottoman, etc.
  - Imperial conquest provided an autonomous resource base for the military
  - Isolation allowed some of these to operate in a Westphalian mode at times
- Napoleon/France and Bismarck/Prussia
- Late industrial states—Britain, France, Japan, USA, Germany
  - Proximate cause: mass production, population growth and the mechanization of agriculture dramatically reduced the real cost of military power
- 21st century USA?—position as sole superpower
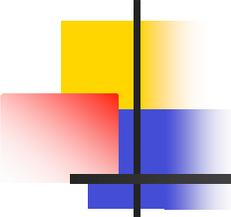
Transnational: Characteristics

- Military operations that are not primarily for the benefit of a territorial political entity
  - These would be distinct from conventional military alliances, which are simply realist policy tools

UN Peacekeeping Troop Levels 1948-2006

Surging

Global peacekeepers, '000

- UN-led
- UN-authorised
- UN-recognised
- Other operations

300
250
200
150
100
50
0

1948 60 70 80 90 2000 06

Source: Henry L. Stimson Centre
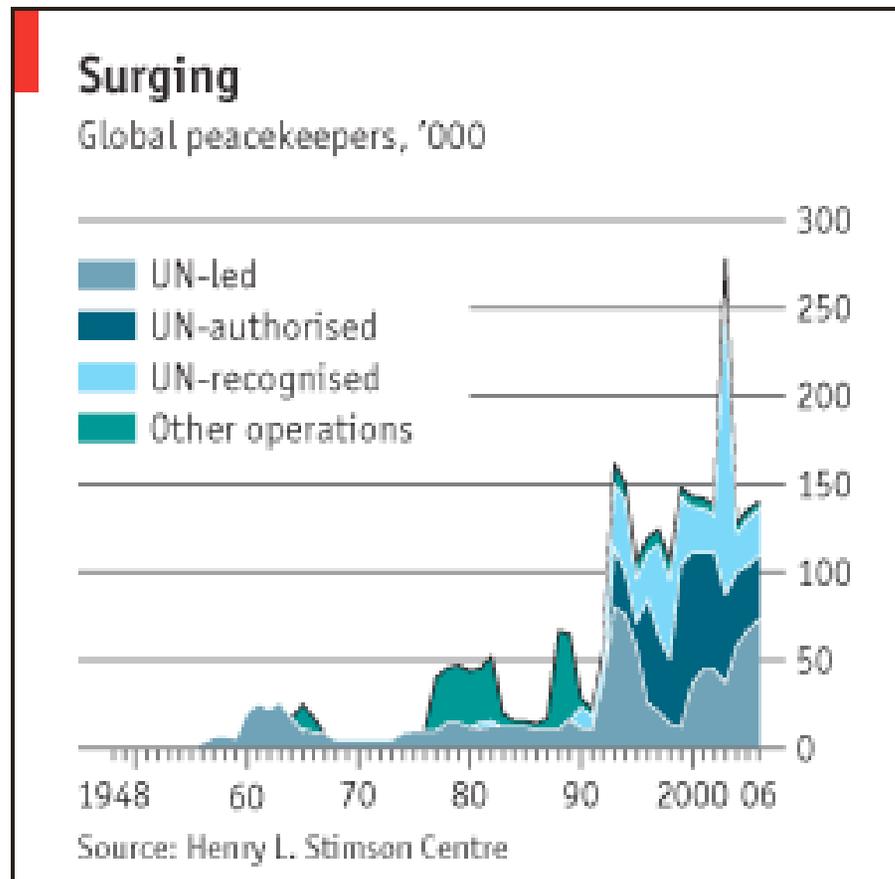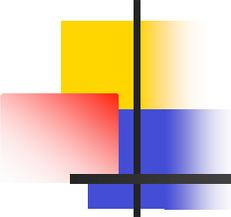
Transnational: Examples

- International peacekeeping operations
- Transnational terrorist and criminal groups
- Multinational corporations to the extent that these exercise autonomous military power
  - Most do not but, for example, the Dutch East Indies Company, the United Fruit Company, and most everything Cecil Rhodes was involved in did.
  - Contemporary oil and mining companies
  - Private military corporations? Or are these primary just cost-efficient means of providing sovereign states with military power as needed?
- Transnational religious military organizations
  - Crusades (well, at least that was the theory…), Knights Templars
  - Islamic Caliphate (again, in theory)
- *Clash of Civilizations*
  - if this actually exists, it fits here. But it probably doesn't exist.
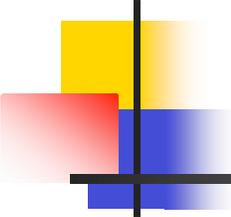
[my] Counter-arguments

- The nation-state model has actually transferred quite well in a number of non-European areas, along with the "Westphalian" economic/military compromise
  - Many of the states which are fragmenting are just breaking into smaller sovereign units, but these do not invalidate the "Westphalian" model.
  - The viability of small states may just be an effect of post-industrial technology
- Is the problem sovereignty, or realist theory with its emphasis on war?
  - Though if it is realism, IR theory is still in big trouble…
- Warlords and other militarized non-state actors seem to be primarily an issue in a few marginal areas and don't affect most of the world's population
  - Though they seem to drive a lot of U.S. policy

Questions?