Power & International Relations Theory; Why the 'Debate About Empire' Matters?

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores how different understandings of power in International Relations (IR) theory lead to different understandings of world order. In particular, I examine how notions of power have informed the recent "debate about empire" in IR theory and what the term empire might usefully mean in the context of contemporary world politics. I start by investigating how power is understood in relation to the role of shared understandings. Mainstream or 'Rationalist' scholars of IR have argued that shared norms and principles are epiphenomenal, existing only to the extent that sovereign states find utility in them. 'Reflectivist' scholars, on the other hand, have suggested that we attribute a much greater degree of autonomy to what they call 'constitutive knowledge'. That is, the intersubjective and historically contingent truths about world politics that inform the values and norms of state behavior. What is noteworthy about the recent debates about 'empire' is that, for better or for worse, Rationalist scholars have tended to explain America's recent unilateralism in terms of a return to the logic of political realism which gives primacy to state power. However, following the Reflectivist argument, I argue that it is a mistake to limit the analytic scope of unilateralism to the egoistic agency of any one state. Instead, it may be more precise to situate American unilateralism in the context of an emerging regime or formation of shared understandings which is more global in scope. To explore this possibility, I turn to Foucault's theory of power which explores how liberal governments both direct their populations and rationalize the use of certain forms of violence. I turn also to Hardt and Negri who, taking their lead from Foucault, offer a novel definition of the term empire as a quality or condition of the practice of global governance particular to late modernity. Hardt and Negri define empire as a new form of global sovereignty that has emerged along with the global market and global circuits of production. My research explores how this definition can be used to refine such key concepts and categories of IR theory research as sovereignty and war. Reinterpreting these key categories through the lens of empire, I show how theories based on constitutive knowledge are capable of recognizing that there is in fact a great deal more going on in contemporary global power relations than American unilateralism.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

American unilateralism in the wake of the attacks of 9.11.01 has provoked a great deal of discussion within the discipline of International Relations (IR) theory on the topic of empire. Indeed, for some, this discussion has become so widespread that it is now no exaggeration to claim that there is a "debate about Empire" or a "debate on empire" under way (Cox, 2004b; Ikenberry, 2004a). Yet there is a great deal of confusion about the meaning of the term, and its use is highly contested. For some critics, recent US unilateralism merely confirms what they have long argued to be true: that we live in an age of American imperialism. This argument, posed mostly by critics from the left, suggests that the globe-spanning regime of neoliberal governance we recognize as today's post-Cold War order was orchestrated quite intentionally by the US for the sole purpose of global domination (for exemplars of this position, see Chomsky, 2004; Johnson, 2004). Thus, notwithstanding its support for liberal rules and institutions, America may be said to be an imperial power because of its regular efforts to exploit its position as the world's only superpower in order both to mold world order to its advantage and to prevent the emergence of competitors.

Skeptics have responded to this argument with the claim America is not, and cannot be, an empire. Neoliberal scholars of IR in particular have suggested that empire be defined more strictly as a form of world or regional order wherein a group of countries are subject to formal political control directly from a foreign power, e.g. 'the British Empire'. America is not an empire because, while aspects of America's foreign policy may today seem imperialistic, its continued reliance on rules and institutions and its lack of formal territorial colonies suggest that its power ought to be discussed in much less overtly hierarchical terms. Moreover, American power is also limited by the diffusion of state power into complex flows of goods, people, and media typically associated with the development of globalization. Under these conditions, direct formal rule of the sort implied by the term Empire becomes extraordinarily difficult to manage, even for a militarily powerful country like the US. For neoliberals then, the key issue is hegemony, not empire (Ikenberry, 2004b; Keohane, 1991). World order today is hegemonic because it rests on a balance between hierarchy and consensus. While this order is supported by American power to extent that this one state plays a central role in providing the public goods necessary for its survival, it is not exclusively of American power.

Following the definition of the skeptics, it is indeed hard to define America as an empire. However, as Cox argues, empires can assume many complex forms. They combine different forms of rule and are generally focused less on total control and more on getting the "right results" (2004a: 600). Even the British Empire was sustained in part by informal forms of domination. For this reason, it has been suggested that IR theory should engage with the concept in a more creative fashion (Cox, 2004a). Were IR to embrace a definition of empire broadened to include informal types of rule, it would allow much greater latitude for the implication of imperial power in the history of world politics than is usually allowed within the mainstream of the discipline. This is because IR tends to assume that world politics today is based on an anarchic system wherein all nation states are formally similar units, each motivated by self-help, endowed with a certain amount of power, and capable of bargaining with others. However, if the existence of this system is reinterpreted and cast as a development within historical processes of global social change then the very assumption of the immanence of statism to world politics becomes problematic. More specifically, it becomes clear that our world order is not a given process of relations between nation states but, rather, the product of fundamentally Imperial politics. Imperialism is the foundation upon which modern international politics is based. Evidence of the lack of direct rule is not sufficient to disprove the existence of empire. Historically, as Barkawi and Laffey (1999) demonstrate, empires have sustained themselves more through the manipulation of the power of colonized and client populations than through the exclusive use of force. Indeed, empires are powerful essentially because they can reach into the domestic realm of the subjected nation and reconstitute it.

There is thus a fundamental incompatibility between empire and international relations theory. The tension between these two positions appears irreconcilable for the simple fact that, by most accounts, empire takes the discipline beyond the world of self-contained states and their mutual relations that has provided its essential focus since its inception. On the one hand, if empires is said to exist then the foundational assumption of anarchy is immediately rendered problematic, making work within IR theory itself redundant. On the other hand, if theorizing international relations in an immutable structure of anarchy is the core intellectual task of the IR theorist, then this immediately casts doubt upon the possibility of empire. To borrow a phrase, if today's world politics are anarchic then this anarchy is what empire has made of it. If the nation

states of the world were originally constituted by imperial powers then the place of the logic of anarchy in IR theory needs to be reevaluated.

In this work I claim that much of what theorists of empire have to say about world politics addresses concerns that are of great relevance to the student of international relations. However, much of it does so in an incidental manner, rather than as its explicit intention. It looks for evidence of empire, and then tries to explain its causes and impacts. It never examines the issue of empire with a view to what the concept might reveal about our assumptions about international relations, or vice versa. There is, as yet, no single study within the discipline that deals with the *theoretical* significance of empire, setting out in detail its potential impact on the discipline's agenda. It is the objective of this study to provide a meaningful gesture towards filling this gap in the literature and to do so by developing a theoretical framework itself drawn from an understanding of the international relations of empire. Here I am concerned not with looking for evidence of empire, or proving how it provides a better account of world politics than IR. Rather, at the most general level, I am interested in how theories of imperial constitution of IR can help us understand contemporary developments in world politics. This is not to take the question of the actual practices of empire for granted. It is simply to say that I don't want to examine empire for its own sake. If empire is important in this work, it is to the extent that it offers valuable insights for IR theorists.

I. The International Relations of Empire

There is very little agreement in the literature as to just what may be said to constitute an empire. For this reason, the impact of empire on international relations is understood in a variety of ways. For example, employing a fairly standard method of classifying the contending approaches in the discipline, the impact of empire on IR theory can be considered in terms of its implications for realist, pluralist, and structuralist perspectives on the subject. According to each of these perspectives, empire is meaningful only to the extent that it has significant implications for either the fundamental nature of the process of IR, the actors in that process, or upon the structure in which the actors find themselves, respectively. However, as I will argue, this sort of approach is likely the wrong place to start.

According to the first perspective, American unilateralism would be seen as somehow demonstrating the importance of the individual nation-state actors in international relations, thus

augmenting the argument for a continued analytic focus on state power. In a monopolar world, it would be understood as perfectly natural for America to seek to extend its security forces in order to prevent the emergence of a challenging power. To a certain extent then, American foreign policy today would be seen as reaffirming a Realist view of IR theory by demonstrating the autonomy of the sphere of interstate relations (Boot, 2002; Kagan, 1998; Kristol & Kagan, 1996; Waltz, 2002).

From the point of view of the second perspective, empire might be seen as diminishing the claims of the pluralist critique insofar as it draws attention to weakness of interdependency. The objective of the pluralist critique is to challenge the primacy of the state as the main actor of IR. To this ends, pluralists focus on the power of transnational corporations, capital markets, and international organizations in creating a global marketplace. In stark contrast to the Realists then, pluralist IR theorists suggest that 'true' empire is a logical impossibility in a world made complex by interdependency, an array of diverse actors, and 'soft power'. Unilateralism is not empire, according to these critics. However, were the US truly to engage in imperial behavior, it would serve only to obstruct the long-professed ideal of constructing a self-regulating globalization and, thus, ultimately serve to undermine US interests (Barber, 2003; Brzezinski, 2004; Ikenberry, 2004b; Johnson, 2004; Keohane, 1991; Nye, 2004).

Thirdly, empire can be examined from a structuralist perspective. Here, as per world systems theory for example, state formation is determined by the location of that state within a capitalist world system. For structuralists, the 'empire or globalization' dichotomy, constituted by the realist and pluralist approaches respectively, belies a general lack of historical thinking about empire. Contrary to both these approaches, the structuralist argument is that empire signifies the emergence of a new transnational power structure which is nothing but a manifestation of an already long existing historical series of structures designed to disenfranchise the world's poor (Anderson, 2002; Balakrishnan, 2003; Barkawi & Laffey, 2002; Gowan, 2003; Wallerstein, 2002; Wood, 2003). American unilateralism then might be said to suggest a new structural phase in the evolution of this system.

What is common to each of the three approaches just discussed is, essentially, that they each try to assess the extent to which empire impacts the aspect of IR theory with which they are most concerned. Accordingly, empire either concerns the actors, the process, or the structure of IR. As an IR theorist then, one is tempted therefore want to engage in a study of empire's impact

on IR through each of these lenses. However, such a study would arguably restrain the concept of empire by defining it differently according to how it impacts upon these preexisting categories of the various sub-fields of IR. Instead of resorting to these existing categories, I would like to pose a deeper form of question. That is, does empire not call into question the very conceptual foundations upon which these categories are based in the first place? This might be construed as a controversial question. Nevertheless, it is an important one. My hunch is that it would be perfectly easy for the sub-fields of IR to simply accommodate whichever understanding of empire that most effects them, respond to it, and then simply continue to pretend it is 'business as usual' without considering how IR is effected in the broader sense. Indeed, as has been documented in historiographical analysis of the discipline, this has been the destiny of many of IR's previous so called 'Great Debates'. The discipline's various 'paradigms' have typically used the term "debate" as a convenient way for them to avoid having to deal with questions that unsettle their dominant epistemological and ontological assumptions (Schmidt, 1998; S. Smith, 1995). Some have suggested that this has been the destiny of the 'globalization' debate in IR, too (Clarke, 1999). Moreover, the dominant accounts of IR's 'debates' have been proven to be highly selective, generally excluding from serious consideration any research falling outside the mainstream paradigm of IR, Realism (S. Smith, 2004). There is a genuine danger then, despite Cox's claim, that IR may announce to itself a "debate about empire" that will stop before it starts.

My view is that IR simply cannot capture the full significance of empire by simply trying to incorporate it into its already existing paradigms. Instead, we need to develop a new way of looking at empire's impact on IR that does not depend upon jaded categories. This is clear in the manner in which the concept of empire subverts the existing debates within IR anyway, even if this has not been recognized. Take, for example, what is commonly understood to be *the* major debate of contemporary IR theory today. That is, the debate between the neo-realists and the neo-liberals. Three contentious issues are usually raised: the power of the international structure over its actors; what sort of actors ought to be included within that structure; and the extent to which institutions can alter interests (Keohane, 1986). However, the issue of empire raises questions for each of these three issues. For example, what impact does the idea of a transnational arrangement of power have on state interests and the concept of cooperation? And to what extent does anarchy imply the absence of a regime? Since anarchy is taken to be the principle structural

constraint upon state behavior, any reconfiguration of anarchy would portend the need for a new theory of IR. This is not to suggest that there is an opposition between IR and empire. It is merely to draw attention to the dichotomy between structure and agency posited in such claims, and the potential of empire to derail this.

Of course, the emerging literature about empire is quite diverse, and in Chapter 3 I take time to survey to review its nature and scope. However, as a broad introductory generalization, it can be said that it is very much engaged in a debate about the structure of power in world politics. In some accounts, the significance of empire is thought to lie in the overwhelming ability of one state to actually reframe the structure of international politics through sheer blunt force (Boot, 2001; Fergusson, 2004; Ignatieff, 2003b; Mallaby, 2002). In others, empire is thought to be a more structural process related to the global reach of capitalism wherein the autonomy of the state is increasingly subordinated to the demands of capital (Abu-Maneh, 2003; Gowan, 2003; Wallerstein, 2002; Wood, 2003). Viewed in these polarized terms, the state is either the agent or the object of empire. However, the argument to be developed in this thesis seeks to avoid this stark choice by suggesting there is a mutually constitutive relationship between empire and the state, within which it becomes difficult to talk about change in the state without also talking about change of structure, and vice versa. In making this claim, my argument follows the suggestions elaborated in recent thought about world politics that empire is actually closely related to modern western thought and philosophy of government. Defined as a phenomenon of such thought, the antinomy between empire and the state breaks down. Empire has no real centre per se but, rather, constitutes an internalized logic of governance, or biopolitics (Arrighi, 2003; Dalby, 2004; Dirlik, 2003; Hardt & Negri, 2000; Lipschutz, 2004; Reid, 2004).

To illustrate the significance of the argument to be elaborated here, the following brief examination of the idea of structure in IR theory may be helpful. In IR theory, the distribution of capabilities among actors is generally understood to determine the structure of international politics. As such, the end of the Cold War is understood as significant to the extent that it left America as a global hegemon, albeit one limited by the emergence of an array of new actors and processes in world politics. However, critics suggest that this is fairly unhelpful sort of enquiry as it limits the scope of the question to the relations between states and their capability to manage this new complexity. Ignored in this is the possibility of transformation in the form of the domestic state, or how this change might be inextricably interwoven with change at the

international level. Thus, IR theory ignores the extent to which the end of the Cold War actually represents a major change in the structure of world politics and how this change was directed by domestic change (Cronin, 1996). The point that the IR theorist should take from this is that the 'domestic' is as much a part of the fabric of the international system as any abstracted 'structure' of the relations between states. From an alternative perspective then, it can be suggested that a study of the interconnection between international developments and a change in the actual constitution of the units involved provides a more holistic account. However, the question remains as to how we should try go about theorizing the relationship between domestic transformation and empire. For this, it may be helpful to turn to Panitch's analysis of globalization as a novel form of imperialism.

Following on the writings of Nico Poulantzas in the 1970s, Panitch notes that globalization is not at all synonymous with the decline of states or state power but, rather, the result of an "internalization" of the "relations of production" of American-style capitalism (2000: 8-9). This internalization had the effect of dissolving national bourgeoisies, thus rearticulating the interests of their state in favor of those of "international capital" (8). Globalization is not a development standing opposed to the power of the state but, rather, involves a reconstitution of the state itself. Pantich finds in Poulantzas's analysis the key to a novel understanding of contemporary imperialism. Poulantzas was describing the emergence of a qualitatively new form of imperialism, deployed in a non-territorial form, without the need for colonies. In Panitch's terms, it is "induced reproduction of the form of the dominant imperialist power within each national formation and its state" (9).

What is significant about Panitch's analysis is that it poses imperialism in terms of a change in the global relations of power in a way that presents the domestic and the international in a mutually presupposed relation to each other. Panitch's move is quite distinct from the typical, more formal implication of the domestic in accounts of international politics. Typically we think of the state as deriving its legitimacy from the domestic realm through its ability to represent the domestic by upholding the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention in an international system. However, Panitch's approach implicates the domestic in a more substantive way by looking at alternative source of legitimacy: the ideal of the "capitalist state".

Panitch and Ginden (2003) argue that the production of legitimacy through internalization of the ideal of the capitalist state was central to the construction of the

architecture of world order after World War Two. While Panitch and Ginden accept that there was a massive disparity in the distribution of capacities in the post-War conjecture, in favor of America, they argue that it is equally important to look at how the ideal of capitalism aligned the "administrative capacities" of the state at this time. It was during this time that the Atlantic states essentially began a process whereupon they fell into a kind of redundancy with each other, recreating themselves in their own changing images, as characterized by higher levels of government intervention and management of the economy. This shift was reflected in domestic policy but also in the practices of the international system as well, albeit not quite to the same extent.

The internalization of the ideal of the capitalist state is not to be confused with ideological domination by an outside power or 'hegemon'. Rather, it reflects a process of internalization of new ideals of government regulation. Contrary to mainstream IR theory then, from the empire perspective, globalization and complex interdependency appear to be less in antagonism with the state. Rather, the reconstitution of the state resulted in its becoming a conduit or relay for the rules of the world political economy we know today. Of course, the question may be asked about the unique role of American power within this framework. However, while America is important in world order, it does not play the role of a hegemon. Rather, it is an empire:

> "it may be more accurate in some ways to see the American state today as
> burdened by the function, which it alone can play, of maintaining world order in
> today's global capitalism" (Panitch, 2003: 235).

Panitch's presentation of the development of imperial dimension of mentalities of globalization is instructive therefore because it draws our attention to the possibility of a mutually reinforcing congruence between the of ideals of governance at the domestic level and 'unilateral' expressions of power by individual states. This suggests the framework to be developed throughout this thesis.

II. Empire and the Discourse of IR Theory

As per my argument above, empire is defined in this study as a transnational arrangement of power. As such, empire is not in and of itself a substantive activity, either material or mental. It is not something done by an agent or subject. Rather, it is a quality, condition or form that such

practices might take. Accordingly, the focus of interest in this thesis will be sum of these activities (world politics) and the effect of empire upon their quality, condition, or form. In that way, I want to use my thesis as an opportunity to assess in what ways empire demands a change in IR theory. Again, I wish to stress that I am not interested in elaborating a new theory of empire. Although my work will doubtless have much to say about empire and, as such, may enhance our understanding of it, this is not my objective.

The methodology of this study will be to create what might be called a conceptual framework of empire which, when developed, will be superimposed on upon key areas of research of IR theory. Once this conceptual framework is stated, I will demonstrate how the opposing sides of many of today's debates in IR actually have a great deal in common with each other, to the extent that they reproduce assumptions about power in world politics that in fact serve to impoverish our understanding of the various ways power is implicated in the production of world order. The two key research areas I have in mind are all matters to do with state performance but, equally, suggest controversies which have taken on particular resonance in the light of recent American foreign policy: sovereignty and war. Importantly, the discourse of IR tells us that state performance in each of these areas is under challenge. However, this understanding also reveals IR's impoverished understanding of the possibility of empire. Generally, empire is construed as a form of state power that operates on the other units of international relations from the outside. However, if we entertain the possibility that empire is a form of power that can effect states from the inside then a very different picture emerges.

The literature briefly reviewed in the last section focuses on empire as a transformational force operating both externally and internally to the state. For presentational purposes, this study will follow suit and take the state and its predicaments as the fundamental site of analysis. It will look at the implications of thinking of the state as an outcome of empire, particularly in terms of practices of sovereignty and war. Obviously the state is not the only site of empire that could be examined. Moreover, the boundaries between the research areas I am interested in are fuzzy. Nevertheless, these are the terms under which mainstream IR registers the diminishing power of the state in today's conditions of globalization and complex interdependency. As such, they suggest heuristic sites for an examination of the new form that the state is taking in empire and, as a result, the value of empire as a concept for IR.

The reader will recall that I have already said that there is little agreement within the literature about the essential qualities of empire, let alone the extent to which it is active in contemporary world politics. Nevertheless, what cannot be challenged is that there is conversation going on about empire, whether it exists, what it might 'mean', about its causes, about its historical origins, its empirical depth and scope, its ideological agenda, and the possibility of challenging or reversing it. There is much uncertainty then. Yet, in spite of this, there is a pervasive idea at least of what may be said to count as the stakes in the 'debate'. As IR theorists, when we think of empire, whether we agree that it exists or not, we use a language that relates to a substantive aspect of the theory of international politics. As such, we think of empire in terms of its impact on the relations between sovereign states. But while we struggle to accept or deny empire in terms of its effects on the existing categories of IR, empire is reconfiguring those very categories of analysis that make such thought possible: sovereignty and war. What I want to explore as my contribution to this discussion is whether or not it is possible to construct a framework about empire that both emphasizes what all these topics have in common, as facets of what we might call the discourse of IR, yet throws each into relief as aspects of international relations that are fundamentally mutated as sites of empire.

Whichever way empire is perceived, its emergence as an issue has major implications for IR theory. At the very least, some of the empire literature makes the claim that empire is necessary for the survival of political order in world politics (Ignatieff, 2003b). Thus construed, empire is a normative goal or aspiration for a fundamentally recast international relations. Elsewhere, the emphasis is less on empire as a hoped for change in the environment of international politics and more upon an actually existing reconstitution of the state. Here empire signifies the shifting of the location of sovereignty from the state to the global level:

> "a global order, a new logic and structure of rule-in short, a new form of sovereignty. Empire is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world" (Hardt & Negri, 2000).

In either account, however, to speak of inter-state relations is to speak of the relations between fundamentally different kinds of states than those we find discussed typically in IR theory. As such, it should be clear that sovereignty and empire mutually implicate each other. They should not be thought of as each other's negations. And it is for this reason that empire must have great implications for the way we approach and define the subject of International Relations.

III. Research Questions: World Sovereignty and War

As stated above, many mainstream IR theorists have been quite skeptical of the idea empire, as a form of state power, under contemporary conditions of 'complex interdependency'. As such, it may seem counter-intuitive to present my argument as I have, with such a sharp focus on the role of the state. However, I am not arguing for a return to state-centric theory. The reason for my emphasis on the state is that it is in the functioning of the state that we are most likely to observe the impact of empire, as I have defined it. My focus on state behavior then is a means to an end rather than an argument about the primacy of the state, per se. The state is an important site of empire, and can be studied for evidence of empire in action.

Typically in IR, when we debate the position of the state in contemporary global conditions we do so in terms of whether the state has power. Here we are presented with an image either of the state being eroded (the state as an object of globalization) or, alternatively, of the state as somehow responsible for generating the conditions of interdependency (the state as the subject of globalization). However, there is an assumed duality here of the state and its environment. As Walker notes, this duality is fundamentally contradictory. It presents the state as the realm of a universal polis delimited or contained by a boundary beyond which its "universal values and processes … could not be guaranteed" (Walker, 1990). This notwithstanding, such dualistic thinking has been challenged in IR theory. For example, within the literature of IPE, the idea of an autonomous national economy has been challenged (Murphy, 1994; Strange, 1995; Underhill, 1994). Similarly, within Security Studies, the definition of security and the viability of the state as the sole arbiter of security have been challenged (Campbell, 1994; Der Derian, 2001; Lipschutz, 1995; Varadarajan, 2004). In each of these areas then, we can see that questions have been raised both about the utility of the assumptions of the traditional frameworks of IR.

As a general observation, it might be said that the catalyst for work in each of these areas has been globalization. However, as the above suggests, where globalization as a theoretical problem has demanded new approaches in IR theory, it has also demanded a broadening of the interpretation of the issues on the agenda. My feeling is that empire today makes a similar demand. The emerging discourse on empire creates problems both for the existing theoretical frameworks of IR theory and the issues it seeks to address through those frameworks. Acknowledging this, while the theoretical task of this study will be to place empire into

conversation with the assumptions of IR, the substantive research task of this work is to examine how empire can help us to think anew about many important issues on IR theory's agenda.

In the following chapter I will argue that IR theory has a poor understanding of the role of power in the constitution of world order. I review a selection of literature of both realist and liberal understandings of the concept of the regime. The purpose of this chapter is to set out a basic iteration of IR's limitations in relation to power. More specifically, it examines IR's failure to attend to the constitutive dimension of regimes. Unfortunately, by virtue of the fact that it is typically liberal IR theorists who get involved in debate about regimes, this chapter will focus mostly on their work. However, Realists are not absolved of responsibility here. As I note, Realists tend to ignore the social altogether. In the conclusion of this chapter I will set out the main claim of my whole thesis: that is, that notions about power circulating in the debate about empire usefully highlight the deficiencies of IR's ontology.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is essentially to take stock of the burgeoning literature on empire. I identify the key claims being made on behalf of empire and try to establish its points of impact on the ontological categories of IR discussed in Chapter 2. Here I agree with Cox that the "debate about empire" is hugely important for IR. However, I by no means wish to accept all the claims of the empire literature. Thus, I will also need to look at the disagreements about empire: what empire actually is; the evidence of its existence; its normative orientation; its impact on the state. It will be made clear that there is no one definition of empire or tidy core of issues that it effects. Nevertheless, several fault lines will be identified that have the potential to illuminate key categories of analysis in IR: whether empire is a product or producer of the state, whether empire is driven by 'ideational' or 'material' forces, the relationship between the economic and political spheres of empire; whether it is a world order or disorder, etc. Given the criticism of inside/outside binary of sovereignty elaborated in Chapter 2, similar criticism is leveled at the empire discourse, where necessary.

Chapter 4 examines the implications of the 'debate about empire' for theory of the state and sets out the conceptual framework for the analysis in the chapters to follow. I focus here in particular on recently popular 'world state' theory, as elaborated by Shaw and Wendt. Here I draw from several analyses of empire based Foucault's theory of Governmentality in order to challenge the assumption of an essentially definable sovereign state that governs. The point to be developed is that the state is not a container of some sort of static 'internal' thing. Rather, the

state is a historically dynamic thing. It is subject to change as predominant notions of what the state represents as a subject are themselves transformed. Here, then, the question of 'postmodern' empire becomes relevant, challenging the assumed duality between state and structure that informs Shaw and Wendts work. This chapter will examine the case for an understanding of empire based on biopolitics by examining the importance of liberal forms of government in determining state subjectivity and how systems in world politics are reproduced – or altered as the case may be.

With the theoretical framework of Chapter 4 in place, the remaining chapters apply this framework to a pair of issues central to IR theory: war and democracy. The point will be to explore how empire demands a revision of the basic assumptions of IR in each respect. Chapter 5 addresses the question of the transformation of war and how the imperial state manages security. It suggests that changing paradigms of security in the state needs to be viewed in light of transformations of the state itself. Evaluating Agamben's (2003) claim that the state of exception has become a normal mode of politics, it asks to what extent this observation demands changes in our dominant understandings of war, peace, politics and governance.

CHAPTER 2: ACTORS AND EGOS; THE PROBLEM WITH REGIMES IN 'RATIONALIST' IR THEORY

As claimed in the introductory chapter, this dissertation is not about empire. I am only interested in the question of empire to the extent that it raises serious questions for mainstream IR theory.[1] More specifically, I am interested in how the emerging debate about American unilateralism broaches understandings of power and order which are anathema to mainstream contemporary IR theory.[2] My core purpose in this chapter then is to establish the claim that a problematic language of power is currently pervasive within IR theory. Specifically, I wish to show how work in the mainstream is informed by an *instrumental* account of power and how this in turn limits our ability to understand world order. Admittedly, the reader already familiar with critical literature in IR theory will not find my comments here about mainstream IR theory's approach to power to be particularly novel or refreshing. To an extent, the criticisms I make in this chapter constitute a rehearsal of a critique that is already well known. Nevertheless, the arguments to be developed here are important to state. For beyond simply indicting mainstream IR for the poverty of its understanding of world order, they offer us some important conceptual tools that pave the way for alternative approaches.

My primary purpose in this chapter then is to examine how the account of power inherent in mainstream IR theory obliges it to read the implications of American unilateralism for world order in unhelpfully restricted terms. That is, as either an affirmation of the intransigence of the logic of zero-sum gains in international anarchy or as a temporary interruption of a continuously evolving logic of coordination under conditions of interdependency. The problem here is that both claims depend upon the common assumption that world order is constituted by the intentional actions of rational egoist states. My first task in this chapter then is to set out a brief *genealogy* of this assumption in a reading of what is commonly understood to be the most

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[1] I appreciate that the use of the term 'mainstream' here is need of some qualification. As I defined it in Chapter 1, I use the term in a sense similar to that set out by Wendt and Smith. In Wendt's view, IR theory has been largely dominated by a 'Rationalist' approach which treats the identities of interests of the agents in international politics as properties given exogenously or prior to international politics (1999: 27). He thus stipulates as "mainstream" in IR any body of work which holds that "states are collectivities of individuals that through their practices constitute each other as "persons" having interests, fears, and so on" (1992: 397, note 21). Similarly, as Smith suggests, the 'mainstream' can be thought of as that body of IR scholarship that focuses on "states as actors" where states interests "are determined by the state's position in the international political system" (2000: 382).

[2] Again, as stated in Chapter 1 (the Introduction), this is a debate which is not exclusive to IR theory. It spans a range of disciplines from political economy to cultural studies to postcolonial studies to literary criticism.

important debate in IR theory in the last thirty years, the debate between neorealism and neoliberalism. In choosing this example, I do not wish to say that the assumptions about power that I am concerned to challenge in this work may not be at work elsewhere within IR theory or in the wider world of social discourse. Indeed, I suspect they are. However, my feeling is that an examination of the assumptions about power circulating within *the* major debate of the discipline today would have the advantage of revealing in a fairly concrete way the likelihood of mainstream IR theorists being well disposed to the sort of ideas being discussed within the emerging conversation about empire.

The debate between neorealism and neoliberalism has achieved a prominent place within IR theory, at least as practiced in the United States.[3] Some have even gone so far as to claim it to be "the hottest topic in international relations theory today" (Kegley, 1995: 1). While the protagonists in this debate disagree about much, they all share several assumptions about the nature and scope of international relations. They are largely concerned with the extent to which states are capable of working together to produce institutions or 'regimes' based on common norms and principles that are capable of mitigating the effects of international anarchy and whether states, understood as the main actors in international politics, pursue relative or absolute gains (for discussion, see Baldwin, 1993). As such, they share the assumption that the international relations theorist ought to take as his or her primary research concern the study of the relations between discreet nation states, understood as rational and utility-maximizing agents of power with interests given exogenously to the system. This assumption of 'rationalism' is important insofar as it enables analysts to take an *instrumental* view of the role of institutions in world politics. That is, it allows institutions to be viewed as artifacts or tools, constructed by communities of nation states in order to solve their common problems. Thus institutions are understood to be produced voluntarily by states, at least to the extent that states determine them to be useful according to their own self-interested calculations.

The above notwithstanding, the rationalist approach has been subject to extensive criticism. As Keeley (1990) observes, because rationalism assumes that world politics is about

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[3] Of course, IR is a quintessentially American discipline. As Hoffman (1977) famously observed, the development of the discipline has always been fundamentally linked to the unique circumstances of its reception in the US. America's political circumstances after the Second World War led US policy makers to become interested in precisely the kind of expertise and opinions that the developing IR community was willing to offer, especially in the Realist approach. The focus of Realism upon the management of international events through power maximization

the relations between possessive individualist nations state actors, it is unable to appraise the social institutions of world politics except as phenomena of inter-state cooperation or contract established in order to provide some form of common 'good'. Consequently, it can tell us nothing about the content of the particular sorts of claims concerning the 'good' that regimes come to stand for. Because it takes the 'good' of regimes for granted, rationalism cannot it tell us anything about what life in different sorts of regimes may actually be like. Nor does it have much to say on the plight of "rule-takers", those actors who do not share the regime's evaluation of the good in question (see Lamy, 2001: 183). Nor, indeed, do we get much of a sense of the historical specificity of regimes. We have no means to enquire how it is that the institutional practices of one regime can be supplanted or co-opted in the context of another (Ruggie, 1982). For all these reasons, instrumental approaches to world order are thought to contain a prescriptive view of world politics based naïve account of the power of regimes.

The weakness of the rationalist reading of world order suggests the need for a reevaluation of its account of the role of institutions and regimes in world politics. Yet to argue for this reevaluation is not necessarily to argue that regimes do not matter at all. Nor is it to argue for a reinterpretation of regimes as simply an ideological strategy designed to occlude class hegemony, as one might from a classical Marxist perspective. Rather, it is to suggest that a reading of institutions predicated on a notion that they are essentially providers of collective goods might itself serve to hide something of the role played by regimes in world order. With this in mind, in the second section of this chapter I survey more historicist understandings of regimes described by critics of IR that take us beyond the instrumental perspective adopted by rationalism. Here I start by offering an overview of what is commonly known as the Reflectivist critique, examining specifically the critiques of those theorists concerned with the constitutive nature of regimes. Focusing specifically on the methodological principles of the brand of Reflectivism, I argue that mainstream assumptions about such 'given' phenomena as sovereignty and practices of foreign policy in fact occlude a great deal of the power of international regimes.

However, while the Reflectivist critique of mainstream IR is convincing, it is not without its own critics. It is often accused of reading world order in a way that is too divorced from material interests and power-political struggles (see Varadarajan, 2004). For example, it is

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has fit extraordinarily well with the needs of the US as a hegemonic power. Thus it follows, as Smith (1987) notes, that IR is not just a US-dominated social science but a social science dominated by realism.

unclear how such theories might speak to the question of the recent US invasion of Iraq. Given the increasingly obvious fact that the Bush Administration's initial publicly stated motivation for invasion, safeguarding the world from Saddam Hussein's Weapons of Mass Destruction, was really a pretext for securing America's hegemony in the region, critics are now openly speaking about an American imperial project (for an explicit statement of this line of argument, see Gowan's comments in Gowan, Panitch, & Shaw, 2001). Indeed, given the overtly power-political terms of the invasion, recent US unilateralism seems to lend credence to the idea of an inevitable return to zero-sum pursuits in a unipolar world, an idea more traditionally associated with IR's structural realism. In recognition of this, and by way of providing a preview for the chapter to follow, at the end of this chapter I briefly examine the dilemma that 'empire' presents for a Reflectivist understanding of world order. Far from dismissing the Reflectivist critique, however, I suggest that this 'dilemma' can only be read as such if unilateralist behavior is understood *by definition* to be somehow anathema to regimes and the provision of collective goods. Yet, as I will argue, unilateralism might also plausibly be interpreted as perfectly consonant with the norms and principles of a regime. That is to say, internationally accepted norms might also generate imperial relations of power. This possibility suggests the need for a language capable of articulating a vision of world order that does not rely solely on state egoism for its explanation. As I will argue in the chapter to follow, just such a language is available if we look to the fringes of IR theory, and the wider debates within the social sciences about empire.

I. Rational Egoist States and World Order

In IR theory today it is widely understood that a 'great debate' is taking place.[4] Referred to varyingly as the debate between neorealism and neoliberalism (Baldwin, 1993) , the 'rationalist' debate (Keohane, 1988), or the 'debate over absolute and relative gains' (Waever, 1996), its key controversy concerns the question of whether states are more likely to focus on issues of survival or issues of mutual interest in a post-hegemonic international context. Participants in the debate

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[4]The term 'great debate' is used here with a measure of caution. Accounts of the emergence and development of IR theory are often couched in a language of healthily eclectic debates, waged between protagonists of equally entitled status. As told by scholars like Vasquez (1999) or Banks (1985), for example, the discipline has experienced a series of "great debates" through which it has moved towards an ever-truer conception of the world. Yet it is problematic to speak of a generalized history of IR theory. As Smith argues, such accounts tend to forget that IR's debates have generally bracketed questions of epistemology and, consequently, have silenced or relegated to the margins any critical voices challenging the dominant view that the discipline ought to be primarily concerned with the relations between nation states (S. Smith, 1987, 2004).

share the assumption that world order is constituted primarily by the relations between discreet nation states, each one understood to be a *rational* egoist. States are understood to be rational actors in the sense that they always act in ways "that can be adjudged objectively to be optimally adapted to the situation" (Keohane, 1988: 381). They are *egoists* insofar as they act "in ways that are calculated to increase the expected value of outcomes to them" (Keohane, 1983: 151). To the extent then that such states may be said to engage in practices of cooperation, it is to the degree that they consent on the basis of their separately calculated interests to create between them common notions of acceptable conduct in their foreign affairs. Similarly, if cooperation between states is understood to be absent or in retreat, this will be by virtue of the fact that these common understandings are not being respected.

The perceived need for the rationalist debate stems largely from a concern among its protagonists to understand cooperation in the absence of hegemony (see Keohane, 1988). Indeed, the significance of the concept of hegemony to international relations theorists in the efforts to explain order in world politics cannot be overstated. As Grunberg notes, IR theorists generally attribute cooperation between nation states to the existence of "a certain kind of political structure, a structure characterized by the dominance of a single actor" (1990: 431). As an account of world order, the theory of hegemonic stability is premised on the idea of a great power providing public goods to a whole community of states on the basis of its own self-interests. The public good in question generally takes the form of an institutional arrangement that allows for greater risk-taking and interdependence in the relations between states where those relations would otherwise be defined by lack of trust and closure.[5] Thus an asymmetric distribution of power in favor of Great Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States after World War II is said to have played a central role in underwriting the relative openness and tranquility of the world in their respective eras.

Yet, hegemonic stability theory also suggests that hegemonic powers are able to provide public goods only at great cost to themselves. As Gilpin argues, "the governance of international systems involves a fundamental economic problem" insofar as it constitutes an "economic drain". To avert a decline then, Gilpin claims that a hegemonic power needs "a continuing economic surplus" (1981: 156-7). Ironically, however, the openness and stability that a hegemon

strives to provide on the basis of its own selfish motivations ultimately generates the conditions necessary for the emergence of rival powers. These powers, or 'free-riders', may freely reinvest their own respective surpluses in advanced forms of economic production without having to worry about carrying the costs of providing for the public good. On this basis then, the theory of hegemonic stability predicts the emergence of rival powers as a function of the exercise of hegemonic power. Moreover, as this emergence is considered to be positively correlated to the costs of hegemony, it is expected that any given hegemony inevitably begets the circumstances of its own decline.

Given the prediction that all hegemons are subject to eventual decline, it is not surprising that the question of cooperation in the absence of hegemony should be significant to IR theorists. Historically, this question gained a particular prominence among IR theorists during the 1970s. Noting the ostensible decline of US power with the end of the Bretton Woods system, well-known theorists like Ruggie and Haas (1975), Keohane and Nye (1977), Gilpin (1981), and Krasner (1983) became concerned to investigate whether or not the institutions and sets of shared values elaborated under the auspices of American hegemony would necessarily share the same fate as their author. And this question has largely shaped the debate between mainstream theorists ever since. On one side of the debate, neoliberal scholars like Keohane (1983) and Krasner (1983) have argued that despite the decline of American power, it is not unreasonable to expect that states would try to mitigate a return to anarchy through the use of cooperation. On the other side, neorealist scholars like Grieco (1993) have argued that while states are interested in 'absolute gains' under limited circumstances, this has little or no impact on the tendency of state to seek 'relative gains' in matters of national security. For neo-realists then, while limited cooperation cannot be ruled out, the concern for the distribution of gains in critical issue areas effectively constituted an insurmountable barrier to interstate cooperation.

While the differences between neoliberals and neorealists on the possibility of cooperation in a post-hegemonic environment are significant, they should not be overstated. The two sides in the debate share the same view of what may be said to count as the essential 'stuff' of international politics. As Baldwin notes, both sides argue from the basis of an assumption that states behave like "egoistic power calculators" (1993: 9). Neither side accepts the notion of an

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[5] More specifically, as outlined by Kindleberger, the hegemon stabilizes monetary and trade relations by providing liquidity in time of crisis, redistributes income through foreign aid, and constructs sanction mechanisms to regulate

altruistic state, a concept traditionally associated with Idealist critiques. Moreover, both sides treat states as the "essential actors" (1993: 9). While there is some disagreement on the relative importance of the state, both sides accept that the state is the primary actor. Lastly, and most importantly, both sides accept the idea that cooperation between states is possible, at least to the extent that they will prefer to serve their interests by working together; conflict *and* cooperation are both important aspects of international relations (1993: 9). Read this way, neoliberals and neorealists share the same understanding of what constitutes the basic objects, forces and events of international politics.

While definitions of institutions vary, few rationalists would disagree with general notion that they are forms of coordinated social activity constructed by human agents. As Keohane puts it, an institution is "a general pattern or categorization of activity or to a particular human-constructed arrangement formally or informally organized" (1988: 383). Defined this way, the term obviously refers to a good deal more than formal organizational bodies, with buildings, formalized charters and the like. For Keohane, institutions can refer to either sets of practices or expectations. In terms of practices, an institution can be defined as a general form of behavior that "can be corrected by an appeal to its own rules" (1983: 383). These sorts of institutions are considered permanent and unchanging in the sense that they are quite deeply embedded in social life and "taken for granted by participants as social facts that are not to be challenged although their implications for behavior can be explicated" (1983: 384). Practices then may be thought of as akin to the behavior of players in a game such as chess, wherein possible moves are defined by the rules of the game. As applied to international politics, the practice of sovereignty is demanded from all would be players. Sovereignty is one of the basic 'rules of the game' to which each 'player' must conform.

While mainstream IR theorists are interested in practices, these do not form the primary object of their study. Instead, they focus more on what they call 'specific' institutions, or sets of expectations which converge around specific forms of activity occurring within a game. These sort of institutions are also "rules" of behavior but in a more limited sense, insofar as they present "history encoded into rules" or "summaries of past decisions" (1988: 384). Specific institutions are of interest to neoliberals because they generate information about previous patterns of activity and the likelihood of their persistence, thus allowing actors to predict future

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abuses (1981: 247)

patterns of interaction within the game. As Keohane notes, "human beings, and governments, behave differently in information-rich environments than in information poor ones" (1984: 245). Specific institutions may therefore mitigate anarchy by providing conditions wherein states may come to expect reciprocity in the honoring of contracts and thereby reducing the "costs of specifying and enforcing the contracts that underlie exchange" (North, as cited in Keohane, 1988: 386).

As applied to international relations, specific institutions are said to develop in the form of regimes, or "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (Krasner, 1983: 2). As specific institutions, the function of regimes is "to establish stable mutual expectations about others' patterns of behavior and to develop working relationships that will allow the parties to adapt their practices to new situations" (Keohane, 1983: 147). Regimes are understood as offering greater returns in terms of efficiency compared to zero-sum forms of coordination. Krasner explains the efficiency of regimes through the metaphor of the Prisoner's dilemma in classical game theory, or the dilemma of "common interests" (1983: 11). In this game, although common interests are assumed among all actors, actors do not practice the collaboration necessary for their realization. Keohane equates the failure to perform in this instance to *market failure*, a condition "in which the outcomes of market-mediated interaction are suboptimal (given the utility functions of actors and the resources at their disposal)" (1983: 151). The lesson to be drawn from this is that cooperation is not a given. The structure of the system may prohibit collaboration even though the players may all wish for it. The IR theorist concerned with regimes should thus address their existence in terms of constraints, not simply of incentives.

While the demand for regimes is not a given, states can be lead by the desire for optimal efficiency to seek their elaboration. While states may enter into bilateral agreements on *ad hoc* basis as it suits them, these agreements are costly to maintain and enforce under conditions of anarchy. Regimes can thus offer returns in terms of efficiency if, as Keohane suggests, "the costs of making ad hoc agreements on particular substantive matters are higher than the sum of the costs of making such agreements within a regime and the costs of establishing that framework" (1983: 155). Moreover, the costs of ad hoc agreements are positively correlated with the number and importance of issues arising within a given policy space. Otherwise expressed, the more

interdependent the relations between states become, the greater the likelihood that states will want to lock in more permanent institutional procedures to facilitate cooperation.

As stated by Keohane, rationalists are primarily concerned with "how the legal concept of state sovereignty and the practical fact of substantial state autonomy coexist with the realities of strategic and economic interdependence" (1988: 380). In the wake of the decline of US hegemony, world political economy is said to have become extensively interdependent, characterized by a complex arrangement of "contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments" (Nye & Keohane, 1971: 331). These 'transnational relations' signify the emergence of a variety of non-state actors which in turn constrain the policy options of states. Non-state actors such as multinational firms, for example, are constituted transnationally, with corresponding patterns of interests. As such, their presence requires states to acknowledge the new and complex issues being asserted by these actors. The essential puzzle that confronts rationalists then concerns how states will respond to the perception of a 'control gap' in interdependency.

Of course, neorealists and neoliberals diverge on the significance of interdependency for the practice of sovereignty. For neorealists (i.e., Grieco), security issues remain paramount. For neoliberals, the perception of a control gap suggests that states will make increased "demands for overall frameworks of rules, norms, principles, and procedures to cover certain clusters of issues – that is for international regimes" (1983: 156). For example, the norm of generalized commitment, or reciprocity, is a tool that states desire in order to cope with the general uncertainty of life in complex interdependency. Reciprocity is a norm that, as Keohane puts it, "forbids specific interest calculations" (1983: 158). It requires that one accept "the veil of ignorance" that attends this life "but act *as if* one will benefit from others' behavior in the future if one behaves now in a regime supporting way" (1983: 159). In this way, regimes facilitate agreements in such a regularized way that in they provide long run benefits for all concerned. Thus, as a general principle, neoliberals claim that there will be extensive regimes wherever states see increasing returns to scale in their development. As the complexity of world politics grows, issue areas expand, thus increasing the demand for coordination.

To conclude this section then, rationalists perceive institutions as regular practices consistent with specific standards of acceptable behavior. These standards are said to exist by virtue of the fact that states need to be able to expect congruent standards of acceptable behavior

from each other in specific issue areas. Thus construed, regimes are instruments or tools developed by communities of state-agents whenever states desire to coordinate their behavior. In contrast to ad hoc agreements, regimes signify a persistent demand among states for mechanisms capable of sustaining common understandings of how states should behave in specific issue areas. The incentive for states to create regimes is derived from their usefulness as instruments to decrease the overall uncertainty attendant to inter-state relations by providing information and thereby change the expectations of their constituent actors. Thus, wherever non-coordinated behavior is costly, such as under conditions of interdependency, actors may desire to construct institutions that can facilitate cooperation. Crucially then, we see how for the mainstream of IR theory institutionalized standards of state behavior exist only to the extent that they are authored by communities of rational egoist states. Based on this fundamental assumption, it becomes clear that standards exist by virtue of a sort of contract where norms, etc., may be considered a form of communal or public good. However, as we shall see in the next section, there are many possible problems with such a formulation. It is highly selective both in terms of the actors it perceives and its understanding of the power of these actors over the norms and principles they create.

II. Regimes of Constitutive Knowledge

Are the only ideas that matter in international relations those that are co-created by nation states on the basis of their given preferences? Can a methodology developed with the explicit intention of deriving the 'cause' of shared ideas from rational agency really tell us that much about the significance of these ideas? What sort of importance should be assigned to the ideas that inform enduring historical 'practices' like sovereignty? The understandings of the relationship of state power to shared values and norms upon which mainstream theories of IR are based have been subject to extensive criticism. Theorists of a variety of critical perspectives have struggled to show that shared understandings may be in fact far more *powerful* than the mainstream suggests. Thus, as Cynthia Enloe notes, we are confronted by the irony of the fact that while "conventional international-political commentators have put power at the center of their analysis … they have underestimated the amount and the varieties of power at work" (Enloe, 1990: 197). With this irony in mind then, in this section I survey the basic nature of what has come to be known within the discipline as the Reflectivist critique of mainstream notions of the relation of state power to shared knowledge.

Reflectivist work in IR is difficult to define because it contains a wide variety of schools of thought. Unified only by their opposition to rationalist categories of analysis, it is impossible to summarize in any meaningful way the breadth of ontological and epistemological arguments that reflectivism brings to IR. In this section I simply want to set out a brief survey of the general nature of the critique of mainstream understandings of power made by Reflectivist scholars. I start by examining the basic epistemological move that Reflectivists make when they privilege ideas as 'constitutive'. Contrasting the epistemology of Reflectivists with that espoused by Rationalists, I note some of the methodological implications of a Reflectivist stance for research in IR theory. The concept of 'regimes', for example, gains much greater significance insofar as it suggests the need to contemplate world 'order' even in contexts where there is an ostensible lack of cooperation between nations states. As Mann observes, it is plausible that "disorder might not result from the absence of an international regime but the presence of one" (1993: 50). However, here I also show that the implications of this observation are interpreted differently within the Reflectivist community, leading to at least two different types of research program, namely the constructivist and the post-structuralist. Detailing these briefly, I suggest that in its concern for the role of power in the production of formations of constitutive knowledge, post-structuralist methodology allows for a more sophisticated analysis of regimes by showing how intersubjective 'order' is not simply a neutral phenomenon. Thus, as I will suggest in the closing section of this chapter, post-structuralism offers the possibility of a radically alternative interpretation of American unilateralism.

When Reflectivist scholars of social science claim that knowledge is constitutive, they do so in contradistinction to those who argue that well-founded knowledge about society can only be drawn on the basis of pure observation. Scholars in the latter category are often known as positivists. Originating in the thinking of such enlightenment philosophers as Bacon, Hume, and Locke, the positivist approach to the study of social life has figured prominently since the Enlightenment. According to Smith (2000), positivism subscribes to at least four core methodological tenets. First, positivists maintain a belief in the *naturalism* of the social world. That is, they believe "that the social world is amenable to the same kinds of analysis as those applicable to the natural world" (2000: 383). Second, positivists distinguish between facts and values, where 'facts' are deemed to exist independent of theory and normative commitments should not intrude into research. Third, positivists are committed to uncovering patterns and

regularities in the social world, which are deemed to exist regardless of the methods used to investigate them. Fourth, positivists are committed to empiricism as the arbiter of what may be said to count as knowledge. That is, they follow the empiricist principle that legitimate scientific knowledge can only be derived from direct human experience.

The third tenet of positivism, concerning patterns and regularities, carries much of the burden of its explanatory potential. As Hollis and Smith argue, the very signature of positivism is that it believes that there are "objective and timeless laws at work" in human society (1991: 46). Accordingly, if it is to be deemed 'scientific', social science research must refer to general 'covering law' statements in order to explain a specific case, and thereby be able to predict future cases in the same conditions. In other words, if there is no verifiable regularity, there is no explanation. However, as Ruggie (1998a) notes, this is where positivism gets into trouble. For while it argues that social life can only be evaluated through direct observation or experience, certain assumptions must first be established if the significance of these observations is to be divined. Thus, for example, a common premise in positivist social science research is the assumption that human beings are passive recipients of external stimuli, capable of modifying their behavior in response to these stimuli through reference to given utility functions. Yet the question can be raised here, can such assumptions ever be made in a truly objective manner?

For Ruggie, the positivist approach faces two essential epistemological problems. First, and most importantly, there is no external 'Archimedean' point from which social facts can be appraised as they really are. This is because social facts are conceptual creations, not materially concrete objects. As such, social facts always reflect the "commonsense understandings, actor preferences, and the particular purposes for which analyses are undertaken" (1998: 87). Thus, while positivism might be useful in an investigation of the natural world, the world of physical 'brute facts', it is a wholly different matter to apply it to social life. Questioning the very possibility of objective analysis then, Ruggie argues that the general rules that positivists create in order to guide their research are unavoidably biased. These rules are always founded on what Connolly (1983) has called "contestable concepts", those concepts which can never be fully defined because they are fundamentally normative (i.e., the state, power, revolution, etc.). Second, social life generally presents a far too limited number of cases to allow any deduction of rules from the results of observation alone. Because events in social life are often "aggregative",

the results of combined and highly complex processes, there is often little hope for contrasting them across cases in any meaningful way (1998: 93).

For Reflectivists like Ruggie then, the application of positivist methodology to the social world is extremely problematic. Because norms and values are *intersubjective* phenomena, no general or covering law can be invoked to explain social causality. The significance of norms and values lies in the fact that they are interpreted by their respective normative communities. Thus, in international relations the question of how state behavior is interpreted by other states becomes centrally relevant. To a Reflectivist, the publicly stated rationales and justifications – texts - of state behavior matter because they speak to how the fundamental biases of the actors have themselves already been constituted. Norms such as reciprocity then are not the instruments through which regimes are constructed but, rather, *are* the regime (1998: 99).

Clearly then, the epistemological move made by Reflectivists problematizes the very possibility of a Rationalist project. For if the core categories of Rationalist IR theory have an indefinite or surplus meaning that is somehow foreclosed through the use of the positivist warrant, then it would seem that Reflectivists are right to suspect that Rationalist categories belie a tacit normative agenda – even if Rationalists themselves are unaware of this. However, in recognizing the importance of intersubjective knowledge, Reflectivists confront an epistemological dilemma of their own. That dilemma is rooted in what we might call the question of signification, or the question of final meaning. For if the familiar analytic categories of the rationalists are so contestable, what sort of assumptions *can* we make when studying the social world? For some Reflectivists, or Constructivists, like Ruggie and Wendt, this question needs to be sidestepped if one is to avoid lapsing into relativism. Concerning the explanatory potential of norms in international relations for example, Ruggie notes that it is sufficient simply to chart the importance of, and historical variations in, the meanings that actors give to violations and respond to them (1998a: 97). The "foundational question" for Ruggie is "how the constituent actors – that is, territorial states – came to acquire their current identity and the interests that are assumed to go along with it" (1998b: 14). Similarly, for Wendt, a legitimate question for an IR Constructivist to ask is why "US military power has a different significance for Canada than for Cuba, despite their similar 'structural' positions, just as British missiles have a different significance for the United States than do Soviet missiles" (Wendt, 1992: 397). In both of these examples, the state is retained as the analytic focus of IR theory and ideas *cause* it to behave in

different ways or change its form. For Constructivists then, the state is still a sovereign identity –
an actor or a centre of decision-making. For other Reflectivists, however, the retention of the
state as its primary object of study implies a certain 'return to power politics' and a highly
premature closure of the question of signification. While opening up the relation between the
interests and the identity of the state to greater scrutiny, the historicity of the state per se is still
foreclosed. Constructivism is thus still situated in the status quo politics of the mainstream IR
Rationalists.

Another approach to the question of final signification is offered by post-structuralism.
For post-structuralists, "all meaning systems are open-ended systems of signs referring to signs
referring to signs" (Waever, 1996: 171). Contra Ruggie and Wendt, post-structuralists deny the
possibility of a final meaning or, indeed, a progressive accumulation of knowledge about IR.
There is always a historical – indeed, political - context to the categories of social enquiry. As
such, for post-structuralists, IR theory must invite reflection upon the particularity of the
categories it represents as given. In opening up these categories, or so it is hoped, alternative
perspectives and marginalized voices may be discovered and allowed expression. Post-
structuralist IR seeks to analyze the powerful role of social norms and values in informing such
categories as sovereignty, the strategies of symbolic representation through which the sovereign
authority of the coherence of the state is maintained. Thus, where Constructivism focuses on the
intersubjective nature of inter*national* politics, post-structuralists feel that this claim in fact
depoliticizes a distinction between the domestic and the international that is in fact historically
contingent.

Is there really such a thing as international politics? This would seem an odd question,
given that the seriousness of the enquiries discussed in the last section. More strange still given
that the role of the sovereign state has been understood as self-evident and, indeed, *right* at least
since the writings of Machiavelli and Hobbes. However, for a post-structuralist, such texts are
not just descriptions of the 'real' world. They are purposeful acts, steeped in what Campbell
(1996) has called "transversal politics". That is, they are part of a social discursive process that
poses the borders of the state as somehow beyond question. As Ashley (1989) notes, this process
is achieved through two maneuvers. First, a 'human' rational quality is ascribed to the state in
opposition to the natural or irrational "man". Second, this is placed in opposition to the equally
irrational realm of the 'outside', beyond the sovereign borders of the state. Yet, as Weber

comments, "there is no "natural" sovereign state" (1995: 27). The very 'content' of the term is dynamic, shifting in keeping with historical changes in modes of social organization. The state has thus existed in a wide variety of forms and served a variety of purposes. And although some of these purposes have been notoriously ugly, this is overlooked in the unquestioning attitude of IR theorists towards the 'reason' of state. By privileging an ahistorical definition of the state as a 'rational center', these theorists tacitly adopt the purpose-laden politics of the state. For this reason, post-structuralists look upon Rationalism's trans-historical universalization of its 'scientific' categories of analysis with great suspicion, if not outright hostility. As Walker argues, to the extent that the very function of the nation state seems to involve a need to silence the voices of those who would challenge its ends, it seems that the very 'reason' of the state constitutes a "legitimation of domination" (1993: 29). That IR should be complicit in this project suggests that its discourse amounts to little more than an "ahistorical apology for the violence of the present" (1993: 31).

Clearly then, a post-structural take on the norm of sovereignty has some serious implications for the mainstream of IR. Yet post-structural analysis of IR theory does not limit its analysis to a critique of the discourse of sovereignty alone. Discourses of interdependency are similarly targeted. Ashley, for example, takes the concern of scholars of interdependency for the emergence of new actors in globalization as simply an intellectual displacement of the question of social coproduction of the conditions and subjects of political interaction. For Ashley, the essential problem of such discourses is that they are still determined negatively, by the anarchy problematique. They are epistemologically warranted by what he calls the "heroic practice", a problem common to all IR theorists who are committed to "the hierarchical sovereignty/anarchy opposition". For even if the amount and variety of actors allowed in the analysis is increased, scholars are still trapped in the fundamental notion of order as a derivative of "the absence of central rule" (1988: 239).

Post-structuralism's concern with the role of knowledge in international relations does not simply stop at the level of texts that reify the sovereignty/anarchy problematique, however. Others focus their investigations on the wide range of more *material* sites where the power of shared understandings can be observed at play, often quite tacitly, in world politics. In the same spirit as the French critical theorist Foucault, post-structural IR theorists also examine the effects of discourse in non-discursive domains, such as "institutions, political events, economic practices

and processes" (1982: 162). The purpose of such research is not simply to uncover the elided significance of texts but to examine how all manner of bodies (both social and human) are disciplined and controlled through the discourses of world politics. In his examination of the genealogy of modern diplomacy, for example, Der Derian (1992), shows how "pre-texts" or normative interpretations about how diplomacy should be practiced have shaped the institution of modern diplomacy. Similarly, Shapiro (1989) the security priorities of the nation state are situated in discursive "structures of authority and control". For Shapiro, the role of these structures in the "domains of practice" of national security is to produce as self-evident the "subjects", "objects" and "relationships" with which such practices are concerned. Another example is Keeley's (1990) analysis of actually existing international regimes, which uses insights from Foucault's theory of power/knowledge to undermine the standard neoliberal institutionalist understanding of international regimes, arguing that their instrumental take on inter-subjective consensuses elides much of the essential contestability of 'public goods'.

If nothing else, post-structuralism's concern with the role played by texts in actual practice reveals its antagonism with more state-centric forms of thought. Because all political systems are constituted through knowledge, they are historically contingent. Yet recognition of their historical nature also demands recognition that they are fragile; there are always fractures in the assemblages of power and, so, no one regime of knowledge is ever determinative in the final instance. The relative dominance of one discursive complex or assemblage in one moment or space does not preclude the future possibility of other discourses and marginal movements maneuvering to clash, co-opt or even coexist with it. Thus, in its focus on how complex sets of ideas about social life such as sovereignty become successful by implanting themselves in social contexts and transforming power relations, and by refusing to treat the features of the social word as if they apply throughout the world and apply for all time, post-structuralism is well positioned both to explore the contingent nature of international politics and to enquire about the possibility of alternative forms of world politics.

III. Conclusion

Reflectivist studies of the role of intersubjective knowledge in world politics suggest that norms and values in world politics are in fact a great deal more powerful than Rationalists let on. Because of its insistence on an instrumental understanding of the power of regimes, the

Rationalist approach seems incapable of seeing the extent to which norms and values, like sovereignty and anarchy, are constitutive of international politics. Moreover, the Reflectivist critique also suggests that mainstream Rationalist scholarship is complicit in the reproduction of a worldview that accepts the ethical status of sovereignty of the nation state as a given. Nevertheless, with the advent of America's unilateralist turn in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, it seems that many of the lessons of Reflectivism are being ignored. If anything, American foreign policy today is seen as reaffirming a Realist view of IR theory by demonstrating the autonomy of the sphere of interstate relations. Asked 'why' America has become so militarily assertive, more cynical Rationalists have not hesitated to make arguments premised essentially on the enduring truth of zero-sum accounts of world politics (see especially Cox, 2004b; and Kagan, 2002). From this perspective, recent events serve only to confirm the naiveté of the neoliberal institutionalist account. For realists, the end of the Cold War has bequeathed to the USA a predominance of power internationally which, according to the logic of zero-sum gains, it is destined to deploy in a unilateral and, ultimately, imperialist fashion. Far from being a hegemon in decline then, the US is now the prince of a unipolar world order, wherein it is perfectly natural for it to seek to use its power as it sees fit. Indeed, as many American analysts have suggested, given the compounded vicissitudes of life in an increasingly globalized world, American imperialism may have come not a day too soon (see, for example, Boot, 2002; Kagan, 1998; Kristol & Kagan, 1996).

For those Rationalists who still maintain faith in the logic of cooperation, the Bush administrations policies may well be ill advised but they are hardly imperial. From this perspective, it is granted that American unilateralism diminishes the claims of the pluralist critique insofar as it suggests a near-sighted and selfish agenda. Yet there is no reason to suspect that the 'sunk costs' of the post-War regime do not still provide grounds for continued cooperation. In stark contrast to the Realists then, pluralist IR theorists suggest that 'true' empire is a logical impossibility in a world made complex by interdependency, an array of diverse actors, and 'soft power'. Unilateralism is *not* empire, according to these critics. Moreover, were the US to engage in *truly* imperial behavior it would only serve to obstruct the long-professed ideal of constructing a self-regulating globalization and, thus, ultimately serve to undermine its own interests (see, for example, Brzezinski, 2004; Ikenberry, 2004b; Johnson, 2004; Keohane, 1991; Nye, 2004; Risse, 2004).

If the above sample is in any way representative of the nature of the mainstream response to American unilateralism, then Cox and Ikenberry are surely right in their claims that a 'debate about empire' has broken out in IR theory (see Cox, 2002; Ikenberry, 2004a). Yet, be this as it may, the fact that this debate is thought of as somehow proper to inter*national* relations suggests that once again conversation about an important conjecture in *world* politics is being circumscribed by IR's guiding principle of sovereign identity. Indeed, if the brief survey above is anything to go by, the response of IR theory to American unilateralism still seems to be very much dependent upon the Rationalist ontological horizon. That is to say, the conversation about empire is presumed to be a conversation about the limits and possibilities of politics between nation states. Yet this presumption is itself powerful: it restricts the field of possible interpretations of the current moment to an either/or dichotomy into which the facts must then be forced. It prevents us from seeing, as the critique of Rationalist assumptions in this chapter has suggested, that unilateralism does not necessarily imply the absence of a regime; American unilateralism need not necessarily be interpreted as indicative of a decaying regime of cooperation. In fact, as I will argue in the coming chapters, a plausible argument can be made to the effect that American unilateralism is perfectly consonant with - indeed, presupposes - a global regime of values and norms. To specify the nature of this regime, I will argue that we should look to the fringes of IR theory, or even to other disciplines within the social sciences. My hunch is that there that we will find available far richer conceptions of the role of imperial power in world politics, at least in compared to the limited sense espoused by Rationalists.

Cox's claim notwithstanding then, in the next chapter I will argue that the "debate about empire" never really went away. Since at least the writings of Lenin there has been a long-running debate about the nature of world order centered on the concept of imperialism, albeit defined in a manner quite different to that used in IR theory. In stark contrast to mainstream IR, intersubjective understandings here are understood as strategies intended to produce a form of imperialism based on consent, not coercion. Unfortunately, however, despite the historical endurance of this debate, little effort has been made within IR theory to engage with it in any sustained sense. In the course of the following survey then, I will chart out some of the key moments in this debate, paying particular attention both to those theorists who have used arguments based on intersubjective truth and, more importantly, their understandings of how imperial regimes are determined. In the course of this discussion I will also specifically examine

how Reflectivist critics of empire differentiate between the long-term development of an American imperial order and the relatively recent phenomena of US unilateralism. Along these two axes then, I will suggest we find a set of alternative conceptual tools for analyzing the meaning of empire today. These tools will in turn provide a basic framework within which other central issues of IR theory will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3: DEBATING EMPIRE

As suggested in the previous chapter, 'Rationalist' IR has been heavily criticized for its instrumentalist account of the role of shared norms and understandings. Given this critique, it may seem rather paradoxical to now devote attention to a concept that focuses ostensibly on the overwhelming significance of just one country in determining the form and function of world order. To the extent that empirical evidence exists to support the claim that US foreign policy has today become imperial, it would seem to confirm an essentially realist perspective on world affairs. For beyond simply implying the renewal of US hegemony, where that term is classically understood to refer to a practice oriented towards influencing the external affairs of other states so as to better oversee the fair distribution of public goods, the idea that America is today acting somehow as an imperial power suggests the capacity to exert a form of control exercised territorially, thus extending into the *internal* affairs of other states.

For a realist, the emergence of an empire today would be a tremendously significant development, demonstrating in no uncertain terms the enduring nature of the logic of zero-sum gains and foreclosing immediately the possibility that rationally agreed upon regimes of shared norms and rules might have a significant or lasting bearing on world order. Indeed, expressed this way, it would seem that the 'question' of empire in IR theory is precisely the inverse of the question of regimes. Where mainstream theorists view the concept of regimes as a theoretical device to explain congruent behavior among states in the absence of hegemony, the concept of empire is understood to explain an order founded upon the political will of just one state. It is perhaps understandable then, as I will discuss, that theorists of 'interdependency' have balked on the question of American empire. Nevertheless, as the following discussion will suggest, to the extent that it makes assumptions about the instrumental nature of norms and values, this 'realist' discourse of imperialism is itself quite limited. Relying as it does upon an understanding of world order founded upon self-interest calculating egoistic states, it ignores the constitutive power of shared understandings and thereby seems to be incapable of understanding either the range of means of imperial power, the variety of actors which it involves, or the complexity of the conditions under which it emerges.

In this chapter I examine three groups of theories that try to explain world order today through the concept of imperialism. I do this in order to better establish whether or how this term

might help us overcome the narrow purview of mainstream IR on the matter of constitutive power. The first group to be interrogated here are those who define empire exclusively in territorial terms. As I will argue in Section I, the term empire is traditionally understood to imply a territorial form of control exerted by one state over another, with specific practices and conditions of possibility relative to more multilateral forms of order. As such, mainstream IR theorists concerned with the formation of regimes under conditions of interdependency find reason to rule it out. To the extent that they use the term empire at all it is typically in equivocated terms, intended to denote the positive hegemonic influence of America as a 'liberal' empire. Indeed, it is this definition of empire that is used by those who support US foreign policy today and its project of spreading democracy in the Middle East.

The idea of restricting the definition of empire exclusively to territorial dominion is highly contested, however. Other theorists argue that imperial rule should be defined functionally. As an example of such literature, Section II examines the work of Stephen Gill, a theorist working from a perspective informed by the writings of Gramsci. Gill argues that the signature trait of contemporary imperial power is not so much its territorial dominion, though historically many empires have been based on territory, but rather its ability to produce a moral consensus that suits its own interests. To achieve this, an imperial power can manipulate the desire of those it wishes to dominate. Indeed, as these theorists argue, given the historical record of resistance to empire among dominated peoples, empires have been forced to adapt and develop such techniques in order to maintain their power. Contrary to more narrowly territorial definitions then, a consensual perspective suggests that while imperialism certainly describes a behavior or practice of great powers, empires today must be adaptable and capable of producing a degree of consent among its subjects where more direct coercion proves ineffective.

The third group to be examined here focuses on what might be called the 'necessary causality' of imperialism. In this sense, the contemporary argument about America's 'consensual imperialism' can be situated within an enduring modern debate about the essential causes of imperialism. Traditionally associated with the critical discourse of Marxism, these theories of imperialism can be read as describing a continuum between those who view the presence of imperial 'ideology' as simply a 'stage' in a long term historico-economic rivalry between national elites and those that frame today's imperialism as somehow based on the cooperative efforts of a transnational elite. At one end of the continuum, emerging out of the writings of

Lenin, imperialism is caused by the need for a 'spatial fix' to solve a domestic economic crisis. At the other end, following Kautsky, the crisis is construed more as one of global capitalism and a transnationally articulated capitalist class seeks the fix. Crises in the latter form of imperialism are not specific to any one country and so leading class factions in the powerful nation states find it convenient to produce regimes of cooperation among each other to manage them. However, while a variety of different positions are possible along this continuum, they share a common dilemma. That is, to a greater or lesser degree, they are discourses largely determined by the language of economic competition between nation states. As such, they would seem to fall short in terms of their understanding of the role of shared understandings and reproduce much of the same problematic discourse of instrumental power elaborated by Rationalist IR.

To explore these issues, I start Section III with an examination of Laclau and Mouffe's critique of the Gramscian approach to hegemony. While not explicitly concerned with imperialism, their analysis of hegemony suggests that it is also possible to view imperialism as the product of a set of historically contingent relations that are not amenable to traditional forms of causal explanation. Here then the focus is less on the agency of a particular class within capitalism or on a particular set of relations of production and more on such contingent phenomena as the shifting and often contradictory forms of liberal discourse that permit such cooperation in the first place. While a focus on such phenomena imports objects of analysis into the debate that would not necessarily be recognized as proper to the traditional language of the analysis of economic struggles, it has the advantage of expanding its historically limited terms. At the very least, it describes a world where multiple discursive regimes can inform the hopes and dreams of powerful groups and thus a world where social antagonism cannot be reduced exclusively to the terms of economic conflict.

In search of an account of US imperialism that would satisfy Laclau and Mouffe, I turn to the work of Hardt and Negri. Although often understood to argue that world order is constituted more or less exclusively by consensual power, I argue that this interpretation in fact overlooks their concern for more disciplinary forms of power. More specifically, it overlooks their concern for the inherent violence of liberal society and the problem this contradiction presents for democracy in the context of neoliberal globalization. For Hardt and Negri, there can be no theoretical account of American unilateralism outside of this broader context of imperial violence. In this sense, they provide a theoretical language which can both acknowledge the

specificity of America's imperial turn while understanding the extent to which contemporary expressions of US power are dependent on ostensibly multilateral conditions of possibility. This is helpful, as we shall see, for it is by no means clear that the US state, as a rational actor, or even a dominant US elite or class is the exclusive or even the leading 'author' of today's imperialism.

I. Discourses of Territorial Empire

In his recent book on the influence of military ideology on US foreign policy both before and after the events of September 11, 2001, Chalmers Johnson speculates on whether or not the term 'imperial' is adequate to describe the role of US power in the world today. As it is traditionally defined, he suggests, it is likely that the term is inadequate for this task. This is because the essence of the classical definition of imperialism is that it must involve formal colonization: "if dominion by a stronger state does not include the weaker state's 'colonization', then it is not imperialism" (2004: 29). Johnson takes his definition of colonization from Abernethy, who defines it as "the set of formal policies, informal practices, and ideologies employed by a metropole to retain control of a colony and to benefit from control. Colonization is the consolidation of empire, the effort to extend and deepen governance claims made in an earlier period of empire building" (cited in Johnson, 2004: 29). In Abernethy's classical formulation, imperialism requires the exercise of some degree of formalized governmental control by one state over another. Lieven, a contemporary theorist of empire, appears to agree with Abernethy. He defines empire as a specific type of polity or power that "rules over huge territories and a multitude of peoples and one which is not legitimized by the formal consent of the people it governs". Like Abernethy, he believes that "there has to be some sort of direct rule over the dominion for a power to be classified as an empire". If a polity does not meet these conditions then, it is not an empire: "rule without consent over many, culturally alien peoples is part of empire's definition" (2002).

According to the classical conception then, imperialism involves the domination of one polity over the geographical territory of another. For some, this concept is useful insofar as it introduces the possibility of hierarchy between polities in international relations. In this sense, it challenges traditional understandings of IR which oppose the 'anarchy' of the international realm to the 'hierarchy' of the domestic sphere and extrapolate from this that the logic of "state survival" is the primary structure of world politics (see for example Waltz, 1979). However, as

Cox suggests, where this view poses world politics as always and everywhere about state "agents" and "static structures", the admittance of a broader definition of imperialism into the debate allows the possibility that "the principle dynamic shaping the contours of the world system from the sixteenth century onwards" has in fact been the logic of "imperial conquest" (2004b: 585).

The concept of empire evokes the histories of the great territorial empires that have defined human politics for millennia. For Cox, "it is obviously the case that most empires in the past, from the Greek to the Spanish, the Ottoman to the Russian, have been defined as such because they brought vast swathes of land belonging to other people under their control." (Cox, 2004a: 21). For Wallerstein, such empires were truly "world empires", where a single government exercised formal control over diverse peoples, geographically dispersed in space (1974). Covering vast territories then, these sorts of empires were essentially self-contained political systems, organizing production exclusively within their own borders. However, as Shaw notes, it is important to distinguish between ancient empires and more modern ones. Ancient empires were based on "thin domination", where infrastructural power was relatively concentrated in a center yet relatively distant from most everyday social relations. It is only with the advent of more modern forms of empire that we see the "thicker domination" typically associated with 19th century imperialism. At the core of these empires were the administrative infrastructures of the modern nation-state which went a great deal further towards co-opting the everyday lives of subordinated peoples into its "systems of political action and belief" (2002: 328-29).

When people think of empire today, it is most likely the 19th century 'thick' mode of imperialism that comes to mind, the still recent and tragic experience of which is generally remembered in a dim light. At the turn of the twentieth century, the whole world was largely divided into the huge imperial spheres dominated mainly by European states. The 1885 'scramble for Africa' and the subordination of China had completed the project of European global dominance, marred only by the rise of Japan and the United States, though the latter was essentially a European power. In the preceding century, many European powers had established colonial holdings and introduced policies intended to flood them with great numbers of emigrants. Moreover, while Europeans poured into North and South America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa in their droves, large numbers of Africans were relocated to serve as

slaves in the Caribbean and American south. Many Chinese and Indian people were induced to move to the colonies. And all this, of course, underwritten by doctrines of racial superiority. Moreover, many countries literally exported the sources of potential domestic crises by sentencing criminals and dissidents to live the rest of their lives in the colonies. The British government regularly sent restive Irish and other dissidents to overseas colonies in America and, later, Australia.

The history of classical imperialism is thus more than simply the history of a form of political rule. It abounds with evidence of racism and cruel practices. Yet Johnson's question remains an important one. To what extent can a term that evokes such a history be considered to fairly describe America's position in the world today? As we will see, many reject the term out of hand. The US is not an empire because colonization has not been a regular practice of US foreign policy, the recent occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan notwithstanding. Moreover, the continuing presence of constraints on US power under today's conditions of complex interdependency mean that, even if the US wanted to be an empire, it would be an impossible proposition in practice.

Not Empire, but Empire 'Lite'

Theorists who adhere strictly to the classical conception of empire find it hard to see evidence of their continued existence today. While the Bush administration's recent behavior may well be reminiscent of the behavior of the great imperial powers of the 19th century, this by no means seals the argument that America is an empire. An example of this argument comes from Nye, who suggests that while America is an important power in world politics, it is a mistake to think that America has sufficient power to be considered an empire. The idea that America could be an empire today must be dismissed because it implies, incorrectly, that today's world order is based on a 'hub-and-spoke' model. While the US retains a very central role in the world, the advent of globalisation has limited its capacities for imperial action in four ways.

First, alternative nodes of power now exist. While in military terms, it may be somewhat accurate to consider the US as dominant (the US has sufficient power, for example, act "to redress local imbalances" in Asia) the analogy doesn't hold when economic or environmental globalisation is considered (as there are other nodes in these networks and US influence is not always welcome in them). Second, reciprocity or two-way vulnerability: The US is

fundamentally exposed to events 'out there' in the world – which directly implies that any function it has as a 'core' is immediately unstable: Sept 11; Asia financial crisis; environmental catastrophe; etc. Third, today there exist regional hubs, which tend to have much greater significance for some states than the US. The emergence of China as an industrial power, for example, means that it will soon emit high levels of greenhouse gas, thus impinging much more on the welfare of low-lying distant islands like the Maldives to a much greater degree than the US does. Fourth, hub and spoke models require an intermediary position for the hub: almost a truism, if the 'spokes' today find it much easier to communicate directly with each other, then ipso facto the hub must lose the power it held as intermediary. Thus, although today, for example, America has far more Internet users than the rest of the world, this is steadily declining. As this trend continues, the consequences will be significant. China, for example, will be able to "shape a Chinese political culture that stretches well beyond its physical boundaries" (2002).

For these reasons, Nye concludes that the US is not as important world power as theorists of US Empire suggest. While Nye readily admits such phrases such as "American primacy," "American leadership," and "American superpower", he argues that the idea of an American empire incorrectly "implies a control from Washington that is unrealistic and reinforces the prevailing strong temptations toward unilateralism that are present in Congress and parts of the Administration" (136). However, curiously, while Nye doesn't like the term imperialism, he has no problem with America's unparalleled global dominance *per se*: "the American military has a global reach with bases around the world," "the American economy is the largest in the world" (135), "nearly half of the top 500 global companies are American" (32), and "The United States may be more powerful than any other polity since the Roman Empire" (ix). Yet, despite these claims for the greatness of US power, Nye insists that the US "is certainly not an empire in the way we think of European overseas empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries because the core feature of such imperialism was direct political control" (2004: 135).

Unlike Nye, Geir Lundestad does flirt with the idea of the US as an empire but insists that his usage of the term is "descriptive" and thus not intended to evoke the terms more normative connotations. As such, his understanding of the word bears a striking resemblance to Nye's notion of hegemonic leadership. As he argues, "in traditional empires most parts were ruled directly from the imperial capital, whereas the American 'empire' consisted mostly of independent countries. I could have used the word 'hegemony', the term most frequently used by

political scientists and political economists to describe the superior American role after 1945, but although the terms are different, in this case their meaning is largely the same" (2003: 1). Thus Lundestad emphasizes the willing complicity of America's 'imperial' subjects. Of course, he acknowledges that in some cases imperial rule has been imposed. This notwithstanding, however, the basic point remains that the US was invited by willing partners to remain in Western Europe after World War II, and in many other places too, in the understanding that this would aid in the elaboration of an order infused with liberal characteristics that would support an expanding system of democracy and capitalism.

Like Lundestad, John Ikenberry (2001) has described the US in terms of informal liberal empire. For Ikenberry, the idea of the US as simply a hegemonic power ignores its positive cultural influence on the world, a role common to many empires. Thus, while American is not an empire in the formal sense, it can be reasonably claimed to be something between the two: a 'democratic-capitalist empire'. As he suggests, "If empires are coercive systems of domination, the American-centered world order is not an empire. If empires are inclusive systems of order organized around a dominant state – and its laws, economy, military, and political institutions – then the United States has indeed constructed a world democratic-capitalist empire" (2001: 192). In this sense, US imperialism is substantively different to that of classical empires. The institutions elaborated around the world under US leadership are attractive to others because they are beneficial to them. This attractiveness explains why US power has not been checked by an aggregate of smaller powers, as might be assumed to be the natural course in theories of balance of power.

Importantly, then, as with Lundestad's argument, the normative implication is that for Ikenberry the US is not really an empire at all. The word is just a handy tool that refers to the global order constituted under US leadership. *Real* US imperialism then, were it to exist, would fly in the face of the positive-sum scenario presented by these theorists. Risse (2004) acknowledges as much, arguing that the problem with US foreign policy today is that it damages internationally agreed norms. He suggests that US unilateralism has undercut such internationally shared "constitutive norms" as "multilateralism and close consultation with … allies". To support this argument he observes the damage unilateralism has done to the 'Transatlantic Security Community' as a set of strong institutionalized norms. Yet it is important not to overstate this damage, suggests Risse, for the essential rational premise for cooperation

remains strong: transnational interdependence. This is confirmed by fact that the transatlantic market remains very highly integrated, with 45.2 percent of all US foreign investment going to Europe in 1999 and 60.5 percent of all European foreign investment going to the US (2004: 224). As such, while US foreign policy may be characterized by "imperial tendencies", it would seem highly unlikely that today's America could ever be a genuinely imperial power (2004: 215).

The Case For US 'Imperial' Leadership

Those who are critical of America's recent track record at exerting effective hegemony also take up the idea that empire can be defined as a forceful yet still 'positive-sum' form of leadership. In fact, without an American empire, they argue, the fate of the liberal world order is at risk. This talk has emanated largely from a run of key intellectuals in the North America and Britain, "Hobbesian theorists" in Micheal Mann's terms, who have read the events of 9.11 as somehow affirming the fundamentally anarchic nature of world order and the need for "a sovereign, a Leviathan" (2004: 632). To these theorists, events like 9/11 are directly linked to the failure of self-government in the Middle East. Yet such states persist only because of the reluctance of the world's largest power, the US, to assert itself as a global leader. Concerning the failure of self-government in the Middle East, for example, Michael Ignatieff (2003a) has suggested that in the wake of their successful struggles for independence from the West, Muslim countries have systematically failed to evolve into "competent, rule-abiding states". The resulting lack of basic rights, such as freedom of speech and the other accoutrements of true "self-determination", leaves many in these countries vulnerable to the seduction of ideologies like "radical Islam". Left to fester, this situation constitutes a mortal threat to US interests and the fortunes of democracy world wide, as the events of 9.11 attest.

The solution advocated by these Hobbbesian theorists is for a strong state – America – to assert its leadership, to become something like an empire, or an 'Empire Lite' (Ignatieff, 2003a). That is, not an empire per se but a 'liberal empire'; a power that takes upon itself the 'civilizing mission' of the classical empires (Ferguson, 2003). This empire brings the sort of leadership that is necessary to ensure stability in an increasingly complex world. Indeed, in the particular case of the 9.11 attacks, meek global leadership of successive White House administrations is often understood to lie at the root of the problem (see Eland, 2002). In an increasingly complex world, such abdication from the responsibility of power to lead is incredibly dangerous. For the rise of

Islamic terror suggests a genuine and urgent need today for the leadership that only a benevolent and enlightened power like an empire can provide.

The mission is clear then, as Boot observes, "troubled lands today cry out for the sort of enlightened foreign administration once provided by self-confident Englishmen in jodhpurs and pith helmets" (cited in Eakin, 2002). And given the fact that it is the only power great enough to take up this task today, the responsibility for carrying out this mission, a "savage war for peace", must inevitably fall to the US (Boot, 2002). After all, even though there the historical record suggests that reforms have often been driven by domestic agents, throughout its history the US has proven itself time and time again to be the world's foremost catalyst of democratic change (Kristol & Kagan, 1996). Moreover, in absolute terms, the US has the power to do this. As Krauthammer notes, "the fact is no country has been as dominant culturally, economically, technologically and militarily in the history of the world since the Roman Empire" (Eakin, 2002). To the extent that America needs to be a leader then, the logic of empire is "too compelling to resist" (Mallaby, 2002: 6). It is time for America to recognize itself as the world power it is and realize that democracy around the world is suffering for its lack of leadership.

The bluster here about empire notwithstanding, we must be clear what this discourse is *not* saying. None of these scholars go so far as to suggest that US undertake anything like the territorial dominion associated with the classical empires. One need only mark the prolific use of qualifiers in Ignatieff's 'empire *lite'*, Ferguson's '*liberal* empire', Boot's '*attractive* empire', etc., to understand the equivocation: American power is viewed as a means to an end that does not necessarily translate to 'true', territorial empire, as per the definition offered by Lieven. In this sense, the classical conception of empire operates negatively in this discourse. Thus, while the American occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan evince formal imperial proclivities, nowhere in this discourse is formal empire stated to be the objective.

As with any term that has such baggage attached to it, it is perhaps understandable that it be used with some qualification. Indeed, American policy makers seem to go out of their way to explicitly reject it as an objective. Bush himself has claimed that America has no wish to no become an empire (Bush, 2002). Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, has suggested 'We do not do empire' (cited in Mann, 2004: 632). And even theorists have recently got in on this act. To avoid the moral difficulties associated with the term, Ikenberry has recently recanted his suggestion that America is an empire, arguing now that the term be abandoned altogether. He suggests that

we typically only understand two options for describing America's power today. On the one hand, if the question of empire is defined only in terms of a hierarchy of political relationships, with one state clearly dominating the others, then America is an empire. However, on the other, if that dominant power displays a proclivity for bargaining, if the power willingly subjects itself to global rules and institutions, and if that power operates on the basis of diffuse reciprocity, then it may be better simply to use the term hegemony. As American foreign policy today combines elements of both these tendencies, it can be defined neither as neither a hegemon nor an empire. While he concedes that the America's new overseas occupations suggest an "imperial ambition" of sorts, in reality these occupations are temporary and amount to little more than evidence of "imperial tendencies", not to be confused with true, classical empire. Thus America is the leader in a "democratic political order that has no name or historical antecedent" (2004a: 154).

But do these denials count for anything? The practice of formal imperial dominion has traditionally be considered morally dubious in the popular American imaginary. Indeed, as William Appleman Williams once famously observed, "one of the central themes of American historiography is that there is no American Empire" (1955: 379). Some argue that this remains true today. Smith, for example, criticizes US citizens for stubbornly refusing to recognize the fact that US foreign policy is increasingly starting to walk and talk like an empire (N. Smith, 2003). And similar criticisms are made by those enthusiastic for US empire: Ferguson laments the fact that America is an empire in "denial" (Ferguson, 2003). However, there would seem to be something to the point that America is not an empire, at least in the classical sense. Its lack of formal colonies notwithstanding, its continued reliance on multilateral and bilateral relations with other countries speaks to the idea that, if America is indeed an empire, it has achieved this position in a relatively idiosyncratic manner. If this is true, then what exactly can it mean to speak of America as an imperial power?

II. Discourses of Consensual Empire

In distinction to those theorists who use the 'classical' definition of empire, others advocate more functional definitions that do not rely exclusively on territorial dominion. Critics grant that the territorial approach is useful to the extent that it challenges the more traditional 'anarchy'-based accounts of international relations by showing how hierarchies of imperial power have played a significant role in the constitution of world order. Yet, as Johnson notes, this is also to some

extent an "historically circumscribed view", eliding as it does the resourcefulness and inherent adaptability of imperial power in the face of historical change (2004). Indeed, as Cox point out, empires are qualitatively different creatures to the utility-calculating automatons found in structural realism. Instead, they are "living entities" capable of reflexive thought, planning, and learning "the appropriate lessons from the study of what had happened to others in the past" (2004b: 585).

By definition, a system populated by such 'learning' entities cannot be static. Rather, it is bound to change as the units themselves learn from previous experience and modulate their practices accordingly. Thus argued, it is conceivable that a country could develop means of achieving empire that are not predicated on direct territorial control if the costs of territorial occupation were too high. As Gallagher and Robinson suggest, it is therefore necessary to conceptualize two types of imperialism, the formal and informal, each suggesting a different set of means to achieving imperial ends. Where imperialism meets resistance, informal techniques of imperialism tend to be more efficient, reducing costs by producing coordinated behavior with ostensibly independent governments. For Gallagher and Robinson, the variation between the two was a function of the overall process of integrating territory into an open world economy. The study of imperialism is necessarily thus the study of "the various and changing relationships between the political and economic elements of expansion in any particular region and time" (cited in Panitch & Gindin, 2004: 8). However, as Doyle's formulation suggests, the end result is always the same: Empire "is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society" (1986: 45).

The concept of informal imperialism is significant for IR theory today insofar as it allows for a variety of possible forms of power that are not readily admitted in the discipline. Where theorists of classical empire tends to think of empires as powers endowed with such a preponderance of raw material capacity that they can maintain an overseas dominion through brute force alone, informal imperialism suggests that an economically powerful state may be able to produce an imperial outcome without necessarily having to directly sustain a dominion. Thus construed, the contrast with classically conceived empire is stark.

The concept of informal imperialism has gained in popularity since the terrorist attacks of 9.11.01. Many commentators have been prompted by their observations of recent US foreign policy to suggest that the Bush administration's recent military adventures are merely the latest

(even if arguably the most counterproductive) episode in a long history of American imperialism. According to this argument, since at least World War II, if not beforehand, American foreign policy planners have been actively pursuing, through a combination of military, economic and ideological means, the creation and extension of an informal dominion of US power on the planet (see, for example, Bacevich, 2002; Chomsky, 2004; Stokes, 2005). The task of situating the Bush Administration's recent unilateralism and bellicose rhetoric in this long history of US informal imperialism is important, continues this argument, as it draws attention to the continuities of America's role in shaping world order today. More specifically, by calling our attention to this history, the Bush Administration has in fact done a valuable service for the student of world order, revealing in no uncertain terms what IR theory's apologists for US power would sooner cover up with the gloss of benevolent hegemony. Cox's argument is exemplary here: despite mainstream IR's continued talk of a system of states operating a structure of anarchy, events since 9/11 remind us "that one very special state with an enormous amount of power continues to play a central role in international relations" (2003: 4).

The Power of Consensual Empire

What sorts of conceptions about power are required in order to make the argument that America is and has long been an empire? One archetypal model of informal imperial power can be found in Stephen's Gill's theory of transnational historical materialism. Grounded in the writings of Antonio Gramsci, Gill elaborates a notion of hegemony far more compatible with the understanding of informal imperialism being discussed here than that associated with the instrumental regimes of IR theory. Gramsci, an Italian Marxist writing in the early Twentieth century, had been critical of the economistic and deterministic thinking of much Marxist scholarship. Thus, where more instrumental Marixist theories posited the state as an implement almost entirely at the disposal of a unified social class, Gramsci tended to see the state as a historically mutable phenomenon, subject to clashes of domestic class disputes. This is perhaps understandable given that, in his own time, Italy was certainly not yet a fully developed "bourgeois state". Gramsci's approach to theorizing the state had to able to accommodate the fact that the politics of his own state were defined by an antagonism between old bourgeois class factions, whose interests were bound up with the institutional remnants of Napoleon's despotic Italy, and newer bourgeois factions who were seeking to displace them (Gramsci, 2000: 40-44).

Theories based on a Gramscian view of the state stand in marked contrast to those contained in the writings of such exemplars of instrumental Marxist scholarship as Lenin or Kautsky. Writing on the eve of the First World War, Lenin sought to give an account of why the great imperial powers of Europe were heading towards war. The crux of Lenin's argument concerned, first, the fact that production within these capitalist countries was organized on a primarily national basis and, second, the fact that the search for profit obliged national firms to search overseas new sites for investment of their surplus capital. For Lenin, as markets at home tended ultimately towards exhaustion, firms tended to resort to the use of finance capital in order to cannibalize each other. He noted how this process of monopolization created a crisis within the nation state, ultimately forcing domestic capital overseas in the search for new investment opportunities. The resulting 'fix' was territorial expansion into less-developed parts of the world.

Lenin's observation of the central role played by finance capital in this process prompted him to make his well-known claim that "if it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism" (Lenin, 1916). With the world increasingly carved up between them then, the search for new markets inevitably brought the advanced European powers into relations of rivalry with each other. Moreover, because of the 'law of uneven development', the returns from their imperial possessions were highly differentiated. The implication of this for the chances of permanent peace between these rivals was significant. Competition, or 'inter-imperial rivalry', was thus identified not so much as a policy pursued by any particular government, but as a 'stage' in the historical development of capitalism which was leading inevitably towards a total war between the capitalist powers.

Against the essentially catastrophic and zero-sum account of inter-imperial rivalry offered by Lenin, the German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky argued that Lenin had under-privileged the potential of capitalist classes to come to a mutually beneficial arrangement. Thus, inter-imperial rivalry "represents only one among various modes of expansion of capitalism" (Kautsky, 1914). Uneven development notwithstanding then, from a purely economic point of view, argued Kautsky, there was nothing preventing the world's capitalists from interrupting their continuing cycle of war and forming a mutually beneficial alliance, thus constituting a new form of "ultra-imperialism" which could resolve the violent contradictions between western

states. This could take the form of either a sort of international cartel or trust, or it could take the form of a transnationally elaborated 'oligarchy'.

The historical record suggests Kautsky was ultimately right in his assumption that capitalism was not going out of business any time soon. As Arendt later observed, with hindsight it seems that European imperialism was in fact "the first stage in the political rule of the bourgeoisie rather than the last stage of capitalism" (cited in D. Harvey, 2003: 127). This notwithstanding, however, it is important to note that Kautsky was not fully able to describe just how this development would take place. Gill explores the problems in Lenin's and Kautsky's theories as they are manifest in the intellectual debates that took up their relative perspectives after World War II. As he notes, at stake in these debates is the issue is "the durability of the postwar order among the major capitalist states, in the specific conditions presented by the territorial expansion of communism" (1990: 35). He notes that 'Neo-Leninist' theorists like Magdoff and Mandel anticipated an eventual decline in American power as potential competitors would come to realize the possibility of rearticulating the world financial system around their own interests. Here, as in much IR theory, American power is understood to have played a central role in creation of the postwar order. On the one hand, America's up-scale productivity and developed financial sector, combined with an absolute advantage in military capacity, gave the United States such preponderance of material power as necessary to dominate potential challengers. On the other, demand for cooperation was increased by the pressing need shared by Western states to contain Soviet and communist Chinese expansion, which was then institutionalized through shared rationalizations of this need for cooperation in military alliances, such as NATO. However, while the result was an enduring and relatively ordered regime of capitalist accumulation skewed in America's favor, it was vulnerable to a potential European and Japanese resurgence. The narrowing of the 'productivity gap' between America and these other countries, it was thought, would lead inevitably to a return to inter-imperial rivalry.

The first of Gill's two criticisms of these post-War theories essentially amounts to an argument that neither fully captures the complexity of the process of interest formation in an interdependent world. That is, neither approach seems to take into account the "webs of international material interests" that have been constituted in the internationalization of production since the end of the war (1990: 37). More specifically, he notes, the emergence of a 'transnational' formation of capital has made it harder for individual capitalist states to go

against the grain: "the opportunity costs of non-cooperative economic strategies may appear prohibitively high" (1990: 37). The social corollary of this transnational capital, he notes, is a capitalist class fraction whose interests are nonspecific in terms of national identity. Operating in transnational communicative networks, this class is significant insofar as it defends the principles of economic liberalism and activates against governments who reject these principles. More specifically, the identification of this class as a major actor serves to refute the simplistic idea that world order is defined primarily by the relations between nation states, oscillating eternally between hegemonic cooperation and disorder.

The second of Gill's criticisms is that both approaches reproduce the instrumentalism of classical Marxist theories of the state. That is, each perspective assumes the capitalist state is "mainly the implement of the dominant class fraction of finance capitalists" or represents an "ideal collective capitalist" (1990: 37). The problem here is that it reduces the determination of the form of the state to an economic process without countenancing the possibility of a role for human consciousness or action thereof. For a more complete understanding of the formation of state policy, one would need to allow to some extent for outcomes which cannot be traced unambiguously to the interests of a specific class fraction.

For Gill, this ambiguity is provided for in Gramsci's notion of the 'historical bloc'. Gramsci developed a radical theory of hegemony that was premised not on the idea of material 'power over', as it is in the two Marxist perspectives just described (and, indeed, most of IR theory). Instead, borrowing from the Italian idealist philosopher Benedetto Croce, Gramsci developed a theory of social life that brought in an 'ethico-political' dimension. That is, a recognition of the critical role of 'moral and cultural leadership' and 'facts of culture' in social life. Thus, in contrast with Marx, who is commonly understood to have argued that social relations were determined exclusively in the realm of political economy, Gramsci allowed for forces that operated in the 'political' realm. Gramsci thus attributes to social actors a certain cultural power which thereby allows him to account for phenomena which are not admissible in more 'mechanical', interest-based accounts (such as obvious miscalculations by class actors, decisions based on religious convictions, etc.).

The historical bloc refers to situations when there is a 'unity' in the complexly interdependent relations that exist between the material and ideational spheres of social life (Gramsci, 2000: 193). Such unities were interesting to Gramsci, especially in the context of

Western liberal democratic states where what he called 'civil society' played a prominent role in framing the horizon of political life. Gramsci defined civil society as that "the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private'", which he held in distinction to those organisms formally associated with the formal government, or 'political society' (2000: 306). While he accepted that the boundaries between these two levels of social action were often unclear, he argued that they could be defined in purely functional terms. The former is the realm of the "functions of hegemony", wherein the a dominant group exercises power by virtue of its "prestige", which it acquires because of its position in the world of production. The latter is the realm of "direct domination", where the physical power of the state is deployed at the behest of the dominant group. As civil society was considerably more developed in the West, Gramsci expected that dominant groups there would be able to rule more or less by consent. More specifically, the dominant social class could, by virtue of its prestige, synthesize the interests of other classes with its own and thereby treat those interests as universal. For this reason, even if states there entered into a period of economic crisis, 'ethico-political' hegemony per se would not necessarily be challenged (2000: 208).

An Informal American Empire?

Gill takes Gramsci's idea of the historic bloc and applies it at the international level. Following on the writings of Robert Cox, who applied Gramscian concepts to the study of issues in international labor, Gill elaborates a theory of the emergence of an international historical bloc in the postwar context. For Gill, international hegemony can be said to exist when there is 'congruence' between the three key social forces (ideas, institutions, material interests) across three interrelated levels: world orders, state-civil society complexes, and production (1990: 46). In distinction to mainstream IR theories then, which posit the limits of congruence as given in the interests of rational-actor nation states, Gill poses congruence in terms of dominant domestic classes that have established hegemony at home and then sought to make this hegemony "internationally expansive" (1990: 47). Such expansion would presuppose the existence of global civil societal realm, itself premised on a global mode of production, wherein links could be established across various social classes. The elaboration of this realm would require, in the words of Cox, that the capacities of states were put to work with a view to constructing "a world order which was universal in conception, that is not an order in which one state directly exploits

others but an order which most other states … would find compatible with their interests" (cited in Gill, 1990: 47).

In contradistinction to the pure interests-based transnational 'class alliance' posed by Kautsky then, the historical bloc has relatively universal moral appeal. As such, it also has a potentially *trans-class* dimension, implying that fractions of different classes apart from the dominant groups in each country can be brought along in the project. Important here is the concept of articulation. Well-situated thinkers and strategists play a specific role in the elaboration of the historic bloc. These thinkers, whom Gramsci dubbed 'organic intellectuals', are the "concrete articulators" of hegemonic ideology that work to maintain the moral coherency of the historic bloc. However, for Gill, these intellectuals "are not simply producers of ideology". They are also the "organizers of hegemony" whose task it is to contemplate strategies for sustaining and developing hegemony (1990: 51). In the context of cooperative regimes, such intellectuals play a highly strategic role then. Found at work within formal institutions such as think tanks and international financial institutions, these intellectuals both produce and disseminate the worldview of the dominant class they represent.

By way of an example of such an intellectual, Gill suggests the case of Zbigniew Brzezinkski, one of the founders of the Trilateral Commission. Constituted of over 300 elite citizens from Europe, Japan, and North America, the Commission was formally a private organization founded in 1973 in the wake of the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in the early 70s. Its objective was to promote closer cooperation between these three regions. In the words of its founders, the organization would function by promoting a "universal vision" of international cooperation "not based on coercion and arm-twisting, but on the mutuality of interest and indeed on the longer-term interest of mankind" (cited in Gill, 1990: 53). Brzezinski saw the Commission as a useful bulwark against forces that were perceived to be threatening the 'universal interests' of transnational capital on world affairs. Among these threats, suggests Gill, were included the strong labor movements and restive Third World nationalist movements of the 1970s. Seen in terms of a tactical response of transnational interests to these threats, the Commission is an exemplar of an ideological apparatus in a longer-term strategy or 'war of position' of these interests to maintain their hegemonic control.

Through the example of Brzezinski and the Trilateral Commission then, we see that Gill's theory allows for the possibility of an informal arrangement of world order – and one not

cast exclusively in terms of inter-state rivalry. However, while the object of Gill's explanation is 'cooperation', it should be understood that this form of cooperation does not take place in a power vacuum. It is part of an overall transnational project of imperialism in which America plays a decisive role. As he argues, while the end of the Bretton Woods system may have signaled the relative decline of American power, measured in absolute terms the sheer scale of the country's military and economic power remained notable even through the 80s, "the American neo-imperial system have remained intact" (1990: 86). While America's material power declined in relative terms, its advantage in absolute terms remained pronounced, especially given its worldwide system of military alliances. Moreover, America's properly hegemonic power remained strong. Thus, as Gill suggests, "imperial 'gain' for the United States" could still be won through "political and cultural influence which effectively 'Americanizes' the civil societies of a range of other states, making them more congruent with that of the United States" (1990: 86).

To restate, the point is essentially this: through use of an ostensibly ideological form of power, America was able to work on and substantially transform the identity and interests of its potential rivals. This is not to evoke the idea that it was a case of cultural 'mind-meld', or 'Coca-colonization' of these countries. Rather, it was a case of the active internalization, through an array of institutionalized practices, of the norms and objectives of the US. As this internalization took hold, the viewpoints of the key policymakers in these states fell into redundancy with each other, creating what Gill refers to as 'congruence', or the 'fit' of "interpenetrating political, economic, and military structures" (2003: 83).

In terms of global economic structures, the concept of congruence makes plausible the contention that the decline of US power was overstated. America's ideological penetration of the European powers and Japan was such that even as US power declined in relative terms, it still had strategic options. It could, for example, use its residual ideological power to maintain a form of control over the world's financial architecture. As Panitch and Ginden observe, "by the time of the crisis of the early seventies American ideological and material penetration of, and integration with, Europe and Japan was sufficiently strong to rule out any retreat from the international economy or any fundamental challenge to the leadership of the American state" (2004: 19).

The technical capacities required to achieve the intellectual consensus necessary for the survival of global capitalism would be provided by international organizations like the IMF and World Bank. In the wake of the relative decline of US power, sites like these played a crucial role in the elaboration of a new ethics of self-governance, the economic orthodoxy of neo-liberalism. Here, organic scholars questioned the premises of the embedded liberalism of the post-War years. Where Bretton Woods had maintained relatively strong capital controls, neo-liberals now rejected the idea that speculative financial flows would disrupt stable exchange rate systems. They also praised the way international financial markets would move to discipline states and force them to adopt better fiscal and monetary programs. Critically, as Helleiner notes, this disciplinary movement found "strong support among an increasingly powerful bloc of social forces that favored financial freedom". Helleiner identifies in this bloc a new transnational capitalist class: an assortment of "private financial interests and conservative financial officials, as well as multinational industrial interests whose frustration with capital controls grew as their operations became increasingly global in the 1960s and 1970s" (1994: 167). While centered in the US, the extent of its ideological power in other countries signified the realignment of the interests of bourgeois sectors in many states from commodity production to finance capital.

The neo-liberal policies introduced globally at the behest of the emerging transnational class ensured that new centers of cheap and exploitable surplus labor would be available in the developing world, while industrialists could deploy new, geographically-mobile production techniques allowed to relocate their industrial base with ease. Guided by the imperative of accommodating investors, even to the extent of risking flights of short-term or 'hot' capital', states increasingly deregulated their currency mobility laws. In the US, this process undercut domestic productivity, forcing radical adjustment of production techniques in non-protected sectors, and driving firms in wealthy countries to relocate productive capacity in less developed regions, heralding the massive deindustrialization of the American economy in particular. Through this process, the US started to become more of a "rentier economy" in relation to the rest of the world, living more off the returns from overseas investments than domestic productivity (for discussion, see Harvey: 2003: 63-66).

Elsewhere, a significant impact of the shift to neo-liberalism was the increasingly precarious position of developing economies. Critical scholars offer the circumstances surrounding, and the international community's subsequent response to, the 1997 Asian financial

crisis as evidence of this. The spectacular emergence of the Southeast Asian 'tiger' economies in the 90s met with a sudden disaster in 1997. While establishment media and analysts suggested at the time that the crisis had been caused by Asian 'crony-capitalism', more Gramsican accounts suggest that the problem was much more to do with "excessive financial deregulation, including, above all, allowing banks and firms to borrow abroad without any government controls or co-ordination" (Wade & Veneroso, 1998). As Evans argues, such policies were rarely homegrown. Rather, they were the result of "Anglo-American ideological prescriptions … transcribed into formal rules of the game" to which individual states had to commit "or risk becoming economic pariahs" (1997: 71). Moreover, the conditionalities attached to the bailouts and roll-overs settled with international financial institutions enabled even greater degrees of liberalization, thus allowing foreign companies to buy up enormous amounts of Southeast Asian land and plant at 'fire-sale' prices (Bhagwati, 1998).

From a Gramscian perspective then, American imperialism has reconstituted itself as a more or less consensual program and has, through this articulation, been able to sustain a world order that fundamentally suits its own interests. Not that coercive power has no role to play in this order or that things always go America's way. Particular situations may require the exercise of violence, which was after all for Gramsci "the ultimate currency of power" (Anderson, 2002: 22). However, the concern is to situate the particular within the general. As Poulantzas wrote in the 70s, American power today is generally of a non-territorial nature, operating through "induced reproduction of the form of the dominant imperialist power within each national formation and its state" (cited in Panitch & Gindin, 2004: 9). The alignment of the "administrative capacities" of states around the world posits these states as de facto conduits or relays of the rules of the world political economy, thus constituting a global "capitalist state". As such, the composite picture that emerges is that, contra Lenin and Kautsky, American imperialism can be posed neither in terms of a zero-sum game between national capitals nor an 'ultra-imperialism'. Rather, "it may be more accurate in some ways to see the American state today as burdened by the function, which it alone can play, of maintaining world order in today's global capitalism" (Panitch, 2003: 235).

III. Discourses of Biopolitical Empire

The above critique of informal imperialism is useful to the extent to which it allows for novel forms of power in contemporary world politics. More specifically, it offers a plausible account of world order which suggests that the function of imperialism plays a continuing role in global life through consensual power. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that the actors and structures posited within this critique are given only within the context of a class struggle over material resources. Otherwise expressed, it is a critique that is situated in a language which privileges the idea that social life is exclusively determined by economic struggle. Within this conception, a special role has been reserved for American power as somehow determinative. This sort of reductionism has been subject to severe criticism in recent years, and notably since the late 1960s when theorists started to attack the scientism of structuralist linguistics. Structuralism embraced a rigid conception of the relationship between language and meaning and desired to liberate from this relationship a transcendent truth, a universal law of content and expression. However, in its efforts to discover this truth, it was thought that Structuralism also immobilized its critical potential. In posing one universal truth about language, it ignored both its own status as a powerful form of knowledge and the claims of alternative, weaker truths – the truths of the mad, the imprisoned, etc. 'Post-structuralist' critics refused the idea of a phenomenological subject – a more or less ontologically 'there' subject hidden under various layers of historical subjectivity. Instead, they asserted an essentially meaningless subject – a subject that was produced through and through in the warp and woof of an array of historical events.

Thinking about hegemony in way that does not presuppose a certain type of subject 'given' in social relations, Laclau and Mouffe note that Gramsci offers the kernel of a powerful critique of economically reductionist theories. Such theories posit human subjects and the social structures they inhabit as somehow necessarily given in an historical process of material antagonism. Gramsci's great contribution was to include the category of "moral and intellectual leadership" is his analysis of social antagonism. This allowed him to develop an understanding of classes in their concrete situations and not as somehow 'given' prior to social interaction. For Gramsci, hegemony composes subject-positions into which concrete groups are inserted. It does this through the constitution of a kind of 'collective will' or subject which can "traverse a number of class sectors" (2001: 65-71). Importantly, for Gramsci this does not lead to the production of a 'false consciousness' because the subject itself is a constituted will, and has no

true class position of which it *ought* to be conscious. Moreover, as discussed above, ideology itself is formed through the practice of articulation, the cultural elements of which are not necessarily of a class. This is important as it suggests that the 'interests' of groups are malleable. For example, Gramsci is critical of the idea that any dominant group can just 'take control of the state' in a time of revolution. Under conditions of hegemony there is a risk that the revolting group will *become* the state (2001: 69).

These interesting possibilities notwithstanding, however, Laclau and Mouffe argue that Gramsci's theory of hegemony is ultimately problematic because it relies on the idea that the articulation of hegemony is something done with strategic intent *by a class*. While Gramsci conceded that classes are endogenous to social interaction, they remain the primary actors nevertheless. For Laclau and Mouffe this suggests that Gramsci's world is ultimately an economic one. They suggest that Gramsci's structuralism in this sense becomes particularly obvious when one considers his concept of the 'war of position'. Gramsci used this concept to suggest that revolution can actually change the nature of a civilization, generating entirely new classes and antagonisms. The problem revealed here is that, for Gramsci, the revolution necessarily presupposes a class antagonism. Classes are therefore structurally given and, as such, the question of the development of the social is always somehow a question about class relations. He does not seem to reflect on the extent to which the discourse of economics that the notion of class presupposes, the actual "logic of economic space", is itself constitutive (2001: 69).

Biopolitical Empire

Abandoning Marixist assumptions about subjectivity then, Laclau and Mouffe note that social antagonism has no necessary rational schema that allows its trajectory to be mapped prior to the constitution of its subjects. Instead, they are concerned with logics of 'discourse'. That is, articulated systems of meanings where the elements, or "signifiers", of those systems are given internally. In the production of these systems, however, the relations between elements are never fully constituted as systemic 'moments'. This is because no system can ever fully exhaust the "surplus of meaning" – the ever proliferating interpretations of one object in relation to all others - that make objects possible in the first place. By definition then, discourse can only be partially or temporarily fixed. As they note, "any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre" (2001: 112). These

temporary centers are referred to as 'nodal points'. They are master signifiers that provide the epistemological warrant for entire signifying chains. Saussure's concept of value, for example, grounded his structural model of linguistics, allowing all signs to be rendered commensurate according to a law of variation. However, because of "the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity", nodal points can only ever "partially fix meaning" (2001: 113). As such, Saussure's structuralism is critiqued because it tries to internalize what is essentially ambiguous.

Laclau and Mouffe's critique proceeds on this basis to elucidate several reoccurring themes in Marxism and the social sciences more generally. They note the uncertainty of the category of subjectivity, refusing on the one hand any conception of an essentialized subject but noting, on the other, that the 'object' of any given subject position is itself polysemic. They also note the impossibility of the term 'society' as a stable referent and the implications of this for the concept of antagonism. Where Marxism has traditionally posited social antagonism as driven by self-conscious classes, for Laclau and Mouffe antagonism is rather something related to the experience of the discursive limits of the social itself (2001: 126). To whit, if society is never a fully coherent object, then neither is antagonism. However, where Laclau and Mouffe usefully describe how these various logics and problems of discourse function, it is by no means clear from their work how they would actually theorize the specificity of global social life and its limits in the conjecture described by the imperial discourses examined so far in this chapter. More specifically, it is unclear how they would approach the question of revolutionary subjectivity in response to political events. To remedy this, I turn now to the theory of 'biopolitcal' empire described by Hardt and Negri. While the authors often refer to this global power as 'capital', to them this is not a reference to any rational schema of the social which is somehow a priori to political practice. Rather, borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari, this is global capitalism understood as a "machine" (2000: 39). As such, its constituent actors are not essentially economic subjects but, rather, represent a constituting and constituted subjective material of the social.

A brief word about Deleuze and Guattari's approach to causality is due here. Like Laclau and Mouffe, Deleuze and Guattari seek to draw our attention to the fundamental instability of the categories of social life. Yet, in distinction to Laclau and Mouffe, they do not aver from talking about capitalism. In their works, they outline what they call a "history of contingencies" (1977:

140). That is, a "universal history" of the various modes of production and the events that have transformed them (1987: 459). To describe these historical developments they do not use a master logic but, instead, invoke a wide array of abstract terms and concepts, all of which are intended to underscore the primary descriptive claim upon which their ontology rests. That is, that society is defined by machinic processes: "We define social formations by machinic processes and not by modes of production (these on the contrary depend on the processes)" (1987: 435). This is no metaphor. For Deleuze and Guattari a society is indeed a machine. "The social machine is literally a machine, irrespective of any metaphor, inasmuch as it exhibits an immobile motor and undertakes a variety of interventions: flows are set apart, elements are detached from a chain, and portions of tasks to be performed are distributed" (1987: 141). It follows from this that for Deleuze and Guattari all modes of human subjectivity can be distinguished from each other on the basis of their arrangements of material processes, whether these materials be discursive or physical.

Explaining how social machines to come into existence requires a fairly radical conceptual move away from the more typical schemes of causality elaborated in Western philosophy. Yet it is here that we find Deleuze and Guattari's radically contingent understanding of capitalism. Capitalism does not have a structural logic or master scheme. Rather, as they note: "great accidents were necessary, and amazing encounters that could have happened elsewhere, or before, or might never have happened, in order for the flows to escape coding and, escaping, to nonetheless fashion a new machine bearing the determinations of the capitalist socius" (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1977: 140). This quote is important insofar as it speaks to Deleuze and Guattari's understanding not only of the contingency of capitalism but also of how meaning works in capitalism. For Deleuze and Guattari, all social regimes are founded on a logic of production which codes its various flows. In this manner the equivalence between the different elements of a signifying system is established. However, whereas in ancient imperial systems the master signifier (which allowed the production system to take place) was the 'despot', under capitalism it is much harder to specify any sort of transcendent power.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that capitalism is an 'axiomatic' system. It is "an axiomatic of abstract quantities in the form of money" (1977: 139). That is to say, it is an abstract machine wherein value is based on a purely quantitative measure that is completely indifferent to the qualitative 'codes' of more traditional 'despotic' societies. As Patton notes, an axiomatic system

"is defined by purely syntactical rules for the generation of strings of non-signifying or uninterrupted symbols" (2000: 94). Thus axiomatic systems are those in which all goods are qualitatively equal in the marketplace: bananas, microwave ovens, and 'virtual child pornography'. In distinction to primitive societies, where flows are determined by codes such as prestige, the sacred, the taboo, etc., capitalism has no need to produce such codes in order to achieve social consistency. Instead, the system of axiomatic relations between things and cash becomes the prime mover in the whole society. Under capitalism, the only good is the ever-greater accumulation of 'stuff': "abstract wealth and its realization in forms other than consumption" (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1977: 254). We see then how capitalism relies on the internalization of a sense of good that is entirely removed from older notions. Capitalism is production simply for the sake of production. To this extent, it is a system of production that has only the most arbitrary sense of itself; it is an essentially schizophrenic form of behavior.

Hardt and Negri's borrow Deleuze and Guattari's machinic theory of capitalism and use it to describe the politics of life under conditions of globalization. However, where some read globalization as an expression of state-based imperial power, Hardt and Negri argue that the concept of Empire be used instead. Territorial imperialism, they note, was "a machine of global striation, channeling, coding, and territorializing the flows of capital, blocking certain flows and facilitating others". In contrast, the global market of schizophrenic capitalism functions to produce "a smooth space of uncoded and deterritorialized flows" (2000: 333). Now, while it may appear here that they are using overly complicated language where they might otherwise simply use the term 'globalization', this is to miss the essential thrust of their argument. They are primarily interested in the ethical discourse that must accompany such a development. New ethical systems generate new juridical categories and transform older ones. In this sense, Empire is "a new design of the production of norms and legal instruments of coercion that guarantee contracts and resolve conflicts" (2000: 9). It refers to a novel situation then, wherein the legal systems of all sovereign states fall into redundancy with each other under the logic of the world market. Of course, this is not to say all actors are the equivalent or that the capacities of those actors are evenly distributed but it does mean that world order has become an essentially collaborative endeavor.

Beyond simply evoking the global reign of schizophrenic capitalism then, Empire also refers to the juridical framework that accompanies it. It consists both of the United Nations and a

whole series of "national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule" (2000: xii). By operating at all these levels, Empire exercises a prerogative over the development of law and, as such, functions as a form of sovereignty (2000: 38). As they note, "Along with the global market and global circuits of production has emerged a global order, a new logic and structure of rule--in short, a new form of sovereignty. Empire is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world." (2000: xi).

Hardt and Negri struggle to describe this new form of sovereignty. Given its lack of territorial boundaries, it is quite unlike the traditional conception of state-based sovereignty. They suggest that the form of order it most closely resembles is that of the Roman Empire. However, even the Roman Empire had its territorial limits. And so the question is begged: what sort of theoretical premises can we use to describe this emergent order? Hardt and Negri express a particular interest in concepts that link shared norms and values to legal practices. One major concept they rely on is Foucault's notion of the 'biopolitical'. In his work on the history of human sexuality, Foucault developed the concept of biopower. This concept was intended to differentiate between the sort of rule more commonly associated with monarchical regimes, which governed through a power to take life, and the sort of rule more generally associated with modern republican ideals, which rule through the protection of life and the regulation of the body. As a form of power, it is unique insofar as it presupposes the investment of all social life. Older, more disciplinarian societies did not possess such techniques of power to allow them to rule without relative amounts of closure. Biopolitical societies, however, can be both orderly and open because they are worked on at the level of affect, the visceral or emotional source of a society's ethical commitments. For this reason, a biopolitical society is a society which is "subsumed within a power that reaches down to the ganglia of the social structure and its processes of development" – a society which thereby "reacts like a single body" (2000: 24).

I return to the concept of biopolitics in the next chapter. However, it is sufficient for my purposes right now to briefly set out the terms under which Hardt and Negri use the concept to describe the contemporary world order. The most important thing about the concept of biopolitical empire is that it is reproduced through biopolitics. This is significant because biopolitical power does not presuppose an essential subject. Approaching global capitalism through the lens of the biopolitical, Empire appears as new global sovereign because of its ability

to define the ends of human life and create law - not because human life is essentially proper to any one category of social activity.

The concept of an emerging regime of global biopolitics has somewhat counter-intuitive implications for our discussion of US imperialism today insofar as it calls into question the thesis that the US is the sole author or agent of global domination:

> "With the processes of globalization, the sovereignty of nation states, while still effective, has progressively declined ... The United States does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperialist project. Imperialism is over. No nation will be the world leader in the way the modern European nations were" (2000: xi-xiv).

Although it may be argued that the legitimacy of organizations like the UN is premised upon the agreement and participation of sovereign states, in the last instance putting the operations of the UN firmly within the rubric of the 'Westphalian system', the very creation of that sovereign legitimacy necessarily presupposes a form of global biopolitics. This is not to say that the state is now irrelevant or even that borders no longer exist or have ceased to have a meaningful function. Rather, the point is that the interests of nation states are now all at least partially coextensive with the interests of this new logic of global rule.

Disciplinary Empire?

The argument in the last paragraph may have seemed plausible amidst the euphoric talk of globalization so characteristic of the years following the end of the Cold War. More specifically, it may have made sense in wake of the international community's 'moral intervention' in the first Gulf War, the event which the authors claim provoked them to write in the first place. However, today, in the wake of the more unilateral invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the advent of the Bush doctrine, many wonder how Hardt and Negri could have so glibly dismissed the continued relevance of American sovereignty. Bellamy Foster, for example, argues that "the concept of imperialism had been all but effaced, even within the left, by the concept of globalization," and, in part, blamed Hardt and Negri for this "growing fashion ... one equally attractive to ruling circles judging by the attention given it by the mass media." The "new global Jeffersonianism", as Bellamy Foster labels this growing fashion, is a red herring. Instead, what we are witnessing is a vindication of an earlier Marxist theory, based on the structural advantage of advanced 'core'

economies over those more peripheral ones, except in a more dangerous form. Citing from a *Monthly Review* article by István Mészáros, Bellamy Foster argues that "the potentially deadliest phase of imperialism" has begun, and it is accompanied by the "expanding circle of barbarism and destruction that such conditions are bound to produce." To objections that the War on Terror is not directed against a nation-state, and might be viewed through the lens of "Empire" as a deterritorialized sanction conducted "in the name of global right," Bellamy Foster countered that "the United States [has] responded not through a process of global constitutionalism, nor in the form of a mere police action, but imperialistically by unilaterally declaring war on international terrorism and setting loose its war machine" (Bellamy Foster, 2001)

Bellamy Foster's critique of Hardt and Negri's treatment of US power is overstated, however, and in fact suggests a strong misreading of their argument. As they argue, "the decline in sovereignty of nation-states … does not mean that sovereignty as such has declined" (2000: xi). Within the new juridical framework of Empire, the functions of the capitalist nation-state (military and otherwise) have not ceased to be performed. While certain transformations associated with globalization have altered the logic of state rule, "political controls, state functions, and regulatory mechanisms have continued to rule the realm of economic and social production and exchange" (2000: xii). What is significant then is the incorporation of all these functions under a single sovereign logic of biopower that is new, replacing the formerly competing imperialist powers with "the idea of a single power that overdetermines them all, structures them in a unitary way, and treats them under one common definition of right that is decidedly postcolonial and postimperialist" (2000: 9).

The idea of a 'common definition of right' here is the basic premise of Hardt and Negri's argument. It is perhaps no surprise then that Bellamy Foster has such a hard time recognizing this as 'empire'. However, as Fillion notes, it is somewhat pointless to criticize Hardt and Negri for their poor theory of empire when "they are not concerned with producing something called a theory of Empire" (2005: 48). Nowhere in their theory of global right is it claimed that there are the state is dead or that states do not matter. As Hardt has noted in an interview, the point of the concept of Empire is to make it "less clear what should be situated inside and what should be situated outside the nation-state" (2004: 172).

States *do* matter then. However, the fact that they are in redundancy with each other and other agencies of global governance matters too. For Hardt and Negri, the sovereign borders of

the nation state have been recombined around a new function. Today they operate not so much on the principle of sovereign exclusion, as they generally did under in classical imperialism, but rather have become compatible with the requirements of global capital (2000: 331). As such, state borders now have fallen into redundancy with each other, constituting something that might best be described as a grid. The problem, of course, is the implication of this 'grid' scenario for thinking about the role of the US military today.

Hardt and Negri had originally borrowed their concept of Empire from the ancient Roman form of rule, which was understood to supersede the continual alternation between the three possible classical forms of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The Roman Empire effectively combined all three in a single sovereign form and, they suggested, today's 'Empire' does precisely the same. The function of the 'monarchy' in today's empire is apparent in times of war, they argued, when America's awesome advantage over other countries in terms of the capacity to deploy force is revealed. Similarly, supranational economic institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and WTO were understood to play a monarchical role in times of economic crisis. The function of the aristocracy was observable in the practices of its dominant ruling elite at meetings of the G8 and UN Security Council. Such occasions, they suggested, demonstrated the way in which global economic and cultural flows were governed by a handful of dominant nation-states. Finally, the function of democracy was apparent in the sense in which it claimed that it represented a global 'people'. While historically such claims have been issued by advanced and subordinate nation-states alike, if a nation-state were to 'fail' to achieve this adequately in today's Empire then civil society organizations (media, NGOs, humanitarian, religious, etc.) are on call to represent the people there instead.

When taken together, suggest Hardt and Negri, these three positions can be mapped roughly onto the image of a three level 'pyramid'. This image of this pyramid is intended as a tool to help us think about the constitution of today's Imperial power, where each level operated by different means: "the bomb, money, and ether" (2000: 345-347). As long as the status quo between these positions persists, Empire remains healthy. Thus, while the US plays the role of a monarch by virtue of its military capacities, it tends to seek the approval of the global market and popular interests before using this power. Here, although the US could conceivably still "act alone", it would prefer to act "in collaboration with others under the umbrella of the United Nations".

What makes *Empire* really stand out as a theory of global power compared to, say, theories focused on the constraints of interdependency on state power is its ability to constitute the moral will to keep this pyramid together. This is not to say the whole world is now rendered uniform or homogeneous. Empire is defined by a multitude of divisions and hierarchies that operate on a diverse range of scales: regional, national, and local. Empire's 'trick' is its ability to manage difference on all these levels. Consider, for example, the fate of the categories First World and Third World: "today they clearly infuse one another, distributing inequalities and barriers along multiple and fractured lines" (2000: 335). Thus, while Empire is hierarchical, it is so only in the context of a breakdown of the categories traditionally understood to constitute international life. This is what Hardt and Negri are referring to when they describe Empire's general task to be the management of "a smooth space of uncoded and deterritorialized flows" (2000: 333). Any effort to theorize world order today has to situate American unilateralism in relation to this task.

One of the main ambiguities emerging in this general breakdown of categories in global life today is the problem of defining the enemy. Hardt and Negri write that, "today it is increasingly difficult for the ideologues of the United States to name a single, unified enemy; rather, there seem to be minor and elusive enemies everywhere" (2000: 189). These words clearly ring true in a society where the primary enemy is defined as "terrorist", in one instance hiding out in Afghanistan, then Iraq, then Lebanon. As the Bush administration strategy obviously depends on the subsumption of various populations under the title of "terrorist".

As such, while it is true then that Hardt and Negri never presented their Empire as 'the potentially deadliest phase of imperialism'. Yet this is hardly to suggest that they thought of it as a benign force. While they are not trying to theorize empire, it is not for nothing that they use the term to name the global form of rule they are trying to describe. One of Hardt and Negri's primary concerns is the aporia of modern liberal ideologies of rule as they function under conditions of global capitalism. For them, liberal forms of rule are always contradictory in the sense that while they perennially speak of peace, they always function through violence. Empire is no exception here. As the authors note, if "the concept of Empire is always dedicated to peace - a perpetual and universal peace outside of history" then "the practice of Empire is continually bathed in blood." As such, Empire never hesitates to use "the necessary force to conduct, when

necessary, 'just wars' at the borders against the barbarians and internally against the rebellious" (2000: xv).

The intrinsic violence of Empire notwithstanding, with hindsight it does seem that *Empire* underestimated America's ability to break with 'money and the ether'. As Negri himself has since conceded in an interview, the book's description of the biopolitical constraints on American power was too optimistic. The War on Terror, he now suggests, "is an imperialist backlash within and against Empire that is linked to old structures of power, old methods of command, and a monocratic and substantialist conception of sovereignty that represents a counter tendency with respect to the molecular and relational characters of the imperial bio-power that we had analyzed" (Negri, 2003). However, while this concedes much in terms of suggesting the fleeting nature of the instantiation of Empire that the author's were originally writing about, it is not to say that *Empire* was a naïve work or that American unilateralism is somehow occurring outside of the context it described. Since then, Hardt and Negri have reiterated the need for a new theory of sovereignty, stating that a world order based exclusively on multilateralism or unilateralism is today inconceivable (2004: xiii). And in a more recent interview still, Negri has insisted that the American monarchy remains in a position where it can be "pushed and ultimately compelled to accept a continuous negotiation with the rest of the primary representatives of the world aristocracy, that is with a number of nation states and great continental powers" (2006).

The point here is not to equivocate but to highlight the enduring nature of the current regime of global capitalism and the extent to which it continues to rely on internalized norms and values for its stability. A few theorists are taking this idea seriously. Aronowitz and Gautney, for example, suggest that Hardt and Negri are quite right to argue that theories of "globalization from above" simply cannot account for the complex manner in which networks of diverse global actors are implicated in the scenes of empire. In a time when world order is moving "towards a more destructive phase, marked by increased militarization, worldwide recession, and increased economic inequality," they suggest, the question of global assemblages of legitimate power is increasingly important (2003: xxv). Reid (2005b), too, argues that the American military and the "agencies, practices and discourses" of Empire are mutually dependent today. To demonstrate this contradictory complementarity, he recounts tellingly how a range of non-governmental and humanitarian actors were positioned in advance of the war and consulted with American

planners in the preparation and implementation of post-war relief and reconstruction. While not necessarily *of* US power, these caring organizations were nevertheless able to work with US sovereign power because of a shared understanding of the stakes of human life. Both the Bush Administration and the NGOs made claims on behalf of a universal human subject. For Reid, this speaks to the idea that by "defining humanity in accordance with internationalised laws, reducing it to another imperial injunction, biopolitical modernity plays into the hands of modern Sovereignty" (2005b: 249).

The picture that emerges from Reid's account looks very different to Bellamy Foster's. Instead of a unilaterally declared War on Terror, we focus on the *sovereignty* constituted by shared accounts of what human life is and what it is for. There is general *moral* consensus between caring organizations and the Bush Administration that human life can be universally defined. Reid suggests that this consensus has a certain power insofar as it exercises a "form of sovereignty over the constitution of life". The activities of caring (biopolitical) organizations open up new possibilities for the imposition of sovereign power because they pursue and reproduce a totalized ideal of a universal and legally enfranchised humanity. Such a consensus thus relies on a complex interaction between inside and outside. While the different parties involved may disagree on the specific means for achieving those ends, their core agreements about humanity remain alibis for competing yet mutually reinforcing "sovereign impositions, each of which do a different form of injustice to the life of human beings" (2005b: 250).

Escaping this dilemma is a key concern for theorists of complex Empire, The recent wars, as Caldwell observes, whether in Kosovo, Afghanistan, or Iraq, are all unique because, unlike the modern wars, they do not appeal to international law for their justification. Rather, they rely on "liberal paradigms" that "exceed modern state categories" and which justify the declaration of an "exception" to the law (2006: 492). While I return to this point about legal exception in Chapter 5, for now let it suffice to note that these liberal paradigms can motivate globally cooperative networks and agencies that are not necessarily of US power. Reid's key point is therefore a salient one: "we cannot account for the global way in which the sovereign power of the USA is asserted today other than in the context of a global biopolitics" (2005b: 249). As such, it is by no means clear that American foreign policy today is as 'unilateral' as it is often made out to be. a point to which I return in my final chapter. For now, however, let it suffice simply to note that Empire relies both on the US military and global biopower.

IV. Conclusion

The debate about American 'empire' has by no means been limited to the disciplinary confines of the formal study of IR theory. Contributions abound in government circles, popular political literature and other disciplines in the social sciences. In this chapter I have focused on two key axes of this wide-ranging debate. The first concerns the extent to which empires are necessarily *territorial* phenomena. Here I reviewed literature both from IR theory and popular political critiques of American foreign policy. I noted that formal IR theory has tended to reject the idea that America has become an empire on the grounds that it has no dominion. Similarly, I noted that even those calling for an American empire are using the term as a metaphor for a more disciplinary form of hegemonic leadership. In this sense, when they call for 'empire', they are by no means advocating an enduring form of territorial dominion. In neither case then are we left with a sense that *true* empires can be anything other than forms of rule associated with territorially bounded dominion.

However, the idea that empires are always and everywhere territorial is by no means uncontested. Looking to more functional definitions of empire, I reviewed the Gramscian critique of US power, focusing in particular on the work of Stephen Gill. Contrary to the more instrumental accounts of the state offered in traditional Marxist accounts of imperialism, Gill uses the Gramscian category of civil society to theorize the moral leadership exerted by various class sectors in international politics. Gill argues that the rise of neoliberal ideology combined with the emergence of transnational class interests has secured America's geopolitical advantage, even in the absence of an overwhelming relative advantage in terms of coercive power, by maintaining global congruence with the American form of governance.

The second axis of the empire about debate addressed in this chapter concerns how imperial power is determined. While not necessarily critical of the Gramscian argument that imperialism can be defined functionally, or the idea that it may have a continued relevance today even under conditions of globalization, a post-structuralist approach to the question of subjectivity suggests that an essentially class-driven ontology is ultimately itself somewhat imperialistic. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, the task of theorizing relations of power in a manner that both captures the significance of global capitalism yet does not presuppose the economic nature of subjectivity or reduce antagonism to a field of economic activity demands attention to

the contingent manner in which regimes of social meaning are constructed. In this chapter I have argued that the approach adopted by Hardt and Negri does just this. While their theory has been fairly criticized for being unable to account for the specific role of US power in the constitution of world order today, it is important to recognize that Hardt and Negri's argument remains valuable precisely because of its ability to situate American unilateralism in an emergent and dynamic global regime concerned with human life, or biopolitics. By the authors' own admission, the fundamental stability of their initial assessment of this regime was overstated. Yet it is by no means clear from this that their ontological premises need to be abandoned.

Despite their empirical failing then, it would seem that at the theoretical level Hardt and Negri's *Empire* remains helpful, providing as it does a language that both allows for an informal form of imperialism while still satisfying Laclau and Mouffe's critique of the Gramscian reductionism. With this said, it would seem that challenge their work presents to IR theory today is to somehow specify, historically, the admixture of the logic of the new global 'biopolitical' Empire and the logic of the politics of traditional sovereignty that characterizes our time, and to identify the forces which shift the relative balance of power between the two. Such an exercise would necessarily challenge many of the fundamental precepts of mainstream IR. In the following chapters I examine a selection of these: the state, war and democracy. While not an exhaustive list, these three dominant concepts in IR carry much of the burden of mainstream IR's explanatory potential. In each of these chapters I will be keen not to simply restate or survey Hardt and Negri's arguments on each of these aspects but, rather, to examine how they might be articulated within IR theory and how the 'debate about empire' reviewed in this chapter is inviting new reflections on each.

CHAPTER 4: EMPIRE AND THE STATE

IR theory has for a long time assumed the nation state to be the primary actor in world politics. Whether framed in terms of the 'hard' argument about the zero-sum games and inevitable nature of great power politics or the 'soft' argument about the possibility of cooperation and mutual gain, the stakes in the primary debates of IR theory have been essentially focused on the possibility of divining the best possible arrangement of the relations between states relative to their interests. As such, IR theory has unproblematically assumed the perspective of the state in its pronouncements upon world politics. Theorists from a wide variety of critical standpoints, both on the margins of IR and in other social science disciplines, have expressed reservations about the potential of such narrowly statist accounts to speak to the complexities of governance in a world increasingly defined by complex global interdependency.

Contrary to mainstream IR theorists, who have tended to view globalization as somehow constraining the autonomy of the state in international relations, theorists of a more sociological persuasion have suggested that interdependency needs to be understood in terms of changes wrought *within* the state, and not just in terms of a set of forces opposed to it. Shaw, for example, argues that it is "wholly erroneous to counterpoise globalization to the state" (1997: 498). Instead, he suggests, we should examine the extent to which globalization can be construed as a globe-spanning transformation in the actual *form* of the state. For Shaw, globalization is in fact synonymous with the emergence of a form of 'global state'. Like Mann (1997), Shaw believes that the historical development of the state was never isolated from transnational social forces. More specifically, the relationships between capitalism, transnational cultural forms, and the nation state have always been complexly interdependent. Today's globalization is, therefore, not especially new or significant in this regards. Rather, it designates a shift in the ratio of autonomy to an interdependency that has always been there.

Another theorist concerned with this transformation in the form of the state is Alexander Wendt. However, inspired by the writings of German jurist Carl Schmitt, Wendt rejects Shaw's minimalist metrics of sovereignty in favor of more strict criteria. Where Shaw is content to pose the world state as a positive-sum 'institutional mess', Wendt suggests that it is fact the world state's ability to deploy force that is paramount. For Wendt it is thus important to ask whether there are not substantively compelling reasons to believe that a world power with monopoly over

force is in the offing. To answer this question, Wendt turns to Hegel's theory of history. Like Francis Fukuyama (1992), Wendt ascribes to mankind a fundamental desire to be recognized. Where mainstream IR scholars tend to suggest that the social struggle is primarily about the need for security, Wendt suggests that it is rather more about the need to "count", as common to states as it is men. For, at the very least, if an actor does not count, it "may be killed or violated as one sees fit" (2003: 511). Thus all projects of individual identity require recognition if they are to be completed. However, because the competitive interstate system is a 'structure of unequal recognition', universal mutual recognition remains impossible so long as sovereign borders continue to divide communities.

Critiques such as Shaw's and Wendt's are useful to the extent that try to remedy IR's lack of historical nuance and reject the idea of unchanging state interests. However, they are still susceptible to the charge of statism. As I argue below, while they allow for a state that is subject to forces which are at least superficially exogenous to the system of interstate politics, they nevertheless still assume its capacity for legitimate sovereign decision-making. Otherwise expressed, they rely for their understanding of the state on a conception of government which, as Hindess puts it, assumes "a sovereign power that is founded on, and operates through, the consent of its subjects" (1996: 131). As such, they have little or no theory concerning the constitution of those same subjects – how they have been trained or prepared by the institutions of the state in the values and shared understandings that it requires of them. In a sense then, such theories suffer a foundational burden. For in grounding their account of the agency of the state in a framework premised on consent, they miss the constitutive role that discourse plays in creating the terms of that consent in the first place.

By invoking the question of subjectivity here, the assumption of an essential sovereign agency – global state, traditional state, or otherwise - as somehow separate from its attendant society is undermined. It is undermined precisely because the question of subjectivity reintroduces the history of the state's essential subject. Once this subject's history is reintroduced, it becomes impossible to describe the state as anything but immanent to the social. The inability of 'world state' theorists to see this suggests that they pay a high price for their use of the statist perspective. For in posing the world state as the outcome of a set of more or less voluntary decisions made by states in favor of increasing efficiency in the face of an increasingly complex world, this discourse limits the possibility of textured analytical purchase on the nature

of sovereignty today. This is especially prevalent in its assumption that the zone constituted by the world state is fundamentally peaceful and is only ever violent to extent that external factors compel it to deploy violence. As such it ignores the extent to which the state form is itself premised upon domination in general, and imperial domination in particular.

By way of responding to these sorts of questions, this chapter elaborates a critique of global state theory by challenging its most fundamental assumption, the notion of the state as a legitimate centre of power given outside of social relations. This chapter suggests that the state is instead a historically dynamic thing subject to change as predominant notions of what the state represents as a subject are themselves transformed. To make this argument, this chapter borrows from two different critiques of the world state. It refers first to an emerging Marxist critique within IR theory that focuses on the repressive role of imperial violence in the formation of the world state. However, while noting that this approach is useful to the extent that it reveals the elision of many forms of violence in world state theory, it also suggests a pressing need also to examine the role of *productive* forms of power in this development. To elaborate on this I turn to Foucault's critique of government and some recent applications of this theory to both traditional imperialism and the newer imperialism of neo-liberal governmentality. These works challenge not only the innocence of the politics that has produced the world state but also the assumption of the possibility of an essentially definable *governing* world sovereign. In this way, these works speak not only to the importance of rationalizations of imperial government in determining forms of sovereignty but they also allow us today to situate the global state in continuity with the imperial regimes that preceded it.

I. Martin Shaw's World State

The effort to move beyond simple atomistic approaches to IR has generated much interest in the question of the constitution of the state and its historical transformation. One thoughtful commentator on these matters has been Martin Shaw. By emphasizing the importance of concepts like imperialism and the 'global state' he has progressively elaborated on his thesis that we live now in a 'post-imperial' world. In doing so, Shaw has an effectively challenged the assumption that world politics can be reduced to a simple question of nation states operating in a system. For such a system to exist, he notes, the constituent states would have to possess a great degree of power in order to maintain their autonomy from each other. Historically, however, the

only states to have ever possessed anything near this amount of power were the great 'thick' empires of the nineteenth century. As he observes, today "very many states are small, weak, with problematic national coherence, and above all minimal capacities to mobilize violence and only limited autonomy in any sense" (1997: 499). And even the states with supposedly strong militaries today seem to have given up their ability to project their power outside of a multilateral context. Thus for Shaw a key paradox of the historical development of our world order is that while strong 'imperial' states played a central in the spreading of the contemporary state form all over the world, most of today's 'nation-states' are hardly powerful enough to deserve the term (1997: 500).

Where many scholars of IR attribute the emergence of today's weakened state form to globalization, Shaw suggests that this form was already in existence at the end of World War II. The massive destruction of that war left many of the classically strong Western states in ruin, driving many to pool their sovereignty in new institutions. This pooling, which began in the Western developed states but which later spread to enshroud the globe, has resulted in the emergence of what Shaw calls a "single state conglomerate" (1997: 501). Within the borders of this conglomerate, inter-state violence has largely been abolished and, as such, we can now safely say "the era of big wars between core states in the world system seems to be over" (1994: 60). Emerging within these borders, suggests Shaw, is a novel sort of "world state" state characterized by "a more or less coherent raft of state institutions which possess, to some degree, global reach and legitimacy, and which function as a state in regulating economy, society, and politics on a global scale" (1997: 504).

Shaw does not argue that this globally spreading 'western state' is a form of world government, or even 'western' government. Such views, he suggests, tend to rely on limited understandings of the state, rooted in analyses of the relatively powerful and coherent 'classic' centralized states of the nineteenth century. Borrowing from Mann, Shaw suggests that the state is always to some extent subject to "polymorphous crystallization". In other words, states are mutli-modal or functional powers. They are always and everywhere the expression of some sort of social power. Thus, while Marxists may be correct when they critique the first Gulf War as an expression of a form of global imperial power, scholars of IR are equally correct to understand the post-War effort to protect Kurdish refugees as an instance of a new regime of humanitarian intervention. Each of these accounts is rooted in an analysis of social power that is valid on its

own terms but incomplete in terms of theorizing the state. Different crystallizations bring into relief the variable fortunes of different institutions. As such, states are revealed as somewhat schizophrenic actors. The American state, for example, can crystallize: "as conservative-patriarchal one week when restricting abortion rights, as capitalist the next when regulating the savings and loans banking scandal, as a superpower the next when sending troops abroad for other than national economic interests. These varied crystallizations are rarely in harmony or in dialectical opposition to one another; usually they just differ. They mobilize differing, if overlapping and intersecting, power networks" (Mann, cited in Shaw, 1997: 504-05)

Much of Shaw's thesis here is contingent upon his definition of the state. Shaw refers us to Weber's classic definition of the state as: "A compulsory political organization with continuous operations that will be called a "state" insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order" (cited in Shaw, 1997: 499). For Shaw, this definition accurately captures the sort of state that populated world order prior to 1945. States in this order were demarcated from each other by the potential for violence between them. Yet these states stand today as rather more fragmented entities than they did then. Their constituent institutions often compete with each other for power over the overall direction of the state. And while this is not to say that the monopoly over military power so essential to Weber's state is no longer relevant today, it does suggest that vertical (inter-state) divisions of power are increasingly less likely to trump horizontally articulated divisions. Thus today we can conceive of internationalized forms of legitimate force – with new borders of violence now drawn between the relatively settled western state and other, less stable blocs. And, in the same breath, we note that this power is also being privatized: "individuals, social groups and non-state actors are more widely using force and claiming legitimacy for their usage" (1997: 505).

In recognition of these new horizontal divisions, Shaw calls for the revision of Weber's classic definition. In its place he suggests the criteria proposed by Michael Mann, who argues that the state should be defined less in functional terms and more in terms of its institutions. To get a clearer idea of Shaw's reasons for relying on him, it is worth here pausing to elaborate a little on why institutions are so important in Mann's understanding of the power of the contemporary. For Mann, theorists generally always look at the state from one of two essentially opposed viewpoints (1988: 1-2). In the first, the state is nothing more than an arena or a

container for antagonism between various forms of power. Theorists operating from this vantage point will tend to derive the state as a *function* of the kind of social power that predominates in the sphere of social life they are most concerned with. Marxist theorists, for example, will tend to focus on how economic power determines state actions whereas IR theory Realists, concerned primarily with military power, will tend to see the state as the inevitable embodiment of physical force in society. For Mann, however, neither of these accounts can ever provide the full story. Focusing more on the state as a set of institutions, Mann avers that the state is a rather more messy concept than Weber lets on (1988: 4).

Borrowing only partially from Weber, Mann argues that a social body must satisfy four criteria if it is to be called a state. It must have:

1). a differentiated set of institutions and personnel

2) embodying a centrality in the sense that political relations radiate outwards from a centre to cover a

3) territorially demarcated area, over which it exercises

4) some degree of authoritative binding rule-making, backed up by some organized physical force.

While the last element certainly concedes much to Weber, Mann insists that "states can be recognized by the central location of their differentiated institutions" (1988: 4). In this way, he distances himself from both Marxist and IR Realism, both of which posit the function of the state as a function of the particular types of social power that concern them respectively. Mann's more multi-modal state is never purely functional. Rather, different interest groups assert themselves over time, manipulating different institutions in order to assert their specific interests. This is a state, therefore, which "Balkanizes" under the microscope – a state which is so messy that it has "*no final unity or even consistency*" (1988: 53, 56).

For Shaw, Mann's basic criteria for analyzing the state can also be applied to the sum of global institutions which have to some extent regulated world politics since World War II. Shaw argues that these institutions can be said to constitute a 'global state' to extent that they together meet all four of the criteria set out by Mann, and also a fifth. In terms of the first, the global state involves a differentiated set of institutions and personnel: "the western-centered global state is … an aggregation of institutions of an unprecedented scale" (1997: 506). It is a 'mess' which

includes a plethora of global, western and national state institutions and covers a wide area of political, military and welfare functions.

In terms of the second, the global state also serves as a logistics-coordinating centre. While there is no world constitutional order per se in the mess, there are "elements of a constitution" that together serve as a "single set of institutions" (1997: 507). The central role played by Washington, DC, in this constitution is attested to by the heavy involvement of the US government in the resolution of so many post-Cold War crises "from the Middle East and Yugoslavia to South Africa and even Northern Ireland" (1997: 507). However, there is a tension in the relationship between the centre and the diverse set of institutions that mediate its power. Whether it's the UN, NATO, or international economic organizations like the G-7, the OECD, or the WTO, the role played by the US is not determined by its selfish interests but, rather, by "the exigencies of global leadership" (1997: 507). Moreover, other powerful nation-states like Germany and Japan, and regional organizations like the EU, also play important roles in the global state. In this way, while the global state has a center, it is contented and unstable with an internal structure that is prone to change.

The global state also meets Mann's third criteria insofar as its worldwide reach constitutes a "territorially demarcated area" over which it exercises rule-binding authority. Shaw concedes that this claim is somewhat problematic given that there are also a series of lesser territorial jurisdictions claimed by an array of overlapping regional, nation-state, and subnational actors. Yet among these actors there is a "systematic sharing of sovereignty which is relativizing the previously unique sovereignty of the nation-state" (1997: 508). In this sense, the global state has a defined territory over which it exercises an organized political force.

The disparate and patchy nature of this political force notwithstanding, it has enough power to satisfy Mann's fourth criteria of a degree of authoritative, binding rule making". This is resolved on three different levels of governance. The first is the level of binding inter-state institutions, which serve to regulate the interactions between those states. The second is the level international law, which extends the grip of the global state from the purely inter-state realm into that of civil society. The third is the level of international conventions and agreements, which regulates how exchange is carried out in the global economy. Each of these levels is backed up by 'organized political force' provided by the armed forces of the most powerful nation-states

and "a machinery of courts, tribunals and police" which, while dependent upon the will of the nation-states, suggests a genuine enforcement capacity (1997: 508).

Shaw argues that his global state meets Mann's criteria in these four ways. However, Shaw also adds a fifth criterion to point to the relative coherence of the global state constituted by the world's disparate states as they articulate their power in an overlapping fashion. Specifically, he suggests that these individual states must be "to a significant degree *inclusive* and *constitutive* of other forms or levels of state power" (1997: 508). Shaw concedes that according to this criteria it is obvious that the 'western' component of the global state is far more coherent. While the global institutions of the UN, for example, are broadly inclusive, they are only weakly constitutive. By contrast, the institutions of the western state elaborated after World War II exercise a much greater degree of power over their nation states. Despite this, however, Shaw asserts that "global imperative and the need for global legitimation" have driven the western state to operate within more global parameters (1997: 509).

Summarizing Shaw's approach then, a world state is emerging that is both functional in the first instance yet endures because of its institutional utility in the face of global crises. These crises create global demands which reconstitute the western state, forcing it to act as it otherwise might not in order to secure its appearance as a legitimate power. Shaw is clearly aware that powerful western states continue to act on the basis of parochial interests and that, in this sense, the global state is somewhat contingent. Nevertheless, while narrow imperial ambitions persist, they are constrained. The global state has to satisfy "the imperatives of globally legitimate principles," adjudicating over the claims of insurgent and victimized groups such as the Kurds and Bosnians, and also navigate "the demands of an emergent global civil society" (1997: 509). While western governments do not always choose to exert leadership in times of global crisis, the fact that they have done so at all – even reluctantly – suggests that the presence of a significant structural constraint on their autonomy. Indeed, given that the ostensible purpose originally served by the western state has now passed, namely collective defense during the Cold War, it would seem hard to otherwise account for the increasingly global posture its constituent states tend now to adopt. Responses to global crises today thus serve to evince both the process of global state formation and its weaknesses.

II. Wendt's World State

Another theorist currently exploring the possibilities of a world state is Alexander Wendt.

However, where Shaw roots a currently existing world state in an uncertain dialectic between

persistent national interests and the exigencies of global life, Wendt's world state an inevitable

result the tension between man's inherent need for recognition and the logic of anarchy. Wendt's

theoretical purpose in making this argument is to rehabilitate teleological approaches to IR.

Without denying agency or contingency at what he calls the 'micro-level' he wants to draw

attention to an ultimate inevitability at the macro-level of the international system. At this macro-

level, he avers, there are "pathways which channel the international system's development"

(2003: 492). Wendt's enthusiasm for teleological thinking is unusual for, as he admits himself,

"resistance to progressivist, much less teleological, thinking runs deep within contemporary IR

scholarship" (2003: 492). While IR liberals do hold some hope for progress through

institutionalized regimes of shared norms and understandings, this is not a teleological argument.

Instead, it is an argument that merely suggests tendencies of unit behavior within the system

given past performance in similar circumstances. Wendt wants to push this a step further by

arguing that human agency is increasingly constrained over time by man's fundamental desire

for recognition.

Unlike Shaw, Wendt's general approach to international relations avoids rationalistic

analysis in favor of constructivism. Wendt believes that the nature of structure of international

relations is dependent upon interpretations. The social institutions which guide international

society were originally created by human consciousness. Thus the practices of international law,

diplomacy, war, are all based on mutually held notions of the material world. Based on this,

Wendt argues that the social structures which organise state actions are collective meanings.

Importantly, however, this doesn't make social structures any less 'real'. For all intents and

purposes, he says, they exist: "once constituted, any social system confronts each of its members

as an objective social fact that reinforces certain behaviours and discourages others" (1992: 445).

Importantly, when Wendt suggests that he is taking something as an 'fact', what he

means is that he is prepared to deal with it as a fait accompli in his analysis. Wendt offers

humans and states as examples of such 'real' objects. While their relations between each other

may be guided by intersubjective understandings, they are both "pre-social" entities when taken

on their own terms (1999: 198). Wendt's purpose is claiming that the state is 'real' in this sense

thus becomes clear. He wants to be able to assume that states are coherent entities in their own rights without the need for any further investigation into their constitution. If "states *really are* actors" then they can be studied as more or less stable phenomena with "more or less human qualities: intentionality, rationality, interests etc" (1999: 10). Thus, while he is concerned as a contructivist with the production of the state's subjectivity, he nevertheless assumes that the state is an actor with a sense of its 'self' that, despite its nature as a product of human social interaction, nevertheless behaves and fucntions *as if* its existence were somehow prior to that interaction.

Elements of Wendt's World State

Examining Wendt's theory of state in a little more depth, we get some important insights into his eventual understanding of the world state. Like Mann and Shaw, Wendt holds that the state is a corporate actor whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts. For Wendt, the state is "an organizational actor, embedded in an institutional-legal order that constitutes it with sovereignty and a monopoly on the legitimate use of organized violence over a society in a territory" (1999: 213). Many of the elements of this definition parallel those in Mann's approach. First, there is a concern with a coherent set of institutions and the structural power over norms that the political authority of the state presupposes. Just as Mann's institutions give the state its despotic and logistical powers, Wendt's give the state a power over "the means of production, the means of destruction, and the means of (biological) reproduction" (1999: 202).

A second element in Wendt's definition is that of the state's monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. This gives the state its power to carry out its institutional functions. Again, it is present in Mann's definition, albeit in a rather softened form. Mann notes that the state must be capable of "authoritative binding rule-making, backed up by some organized physical force" (1988: 4). However, it is important to emphasize here that Wendt's approach takes a more hardline stance than either Mann or Shaw. Where the latter can conceive of a state that draws its autonomy as an agent primarily through the utility of its institutions, Wendt's conditions are more stringent. Wendt understands the distinctive power of the state to be its ability to maintain an unchallenged control over its own armed forces – and at least be able to *claim* that this is somehow legitimate. While there may be objections to this claim, "for IR purposes" these objections are irrelevant unless they are backed up by enough power to actually

contest it in practice. As he notes, "what matters is the efficacy of the state's monopoly, not its legitimacy" (1999: 206).

To underline his relatively hardline stance on the monopoly of force, Wendt refers approvingly to Carl Schmitt's view that the state is essentially that which has "the ability to decide unilaterally that certain individuals or groups are not part of the community and so may if necessary be killed" (2003: 505). Now, this might appear to be a somewhat cynical view, especially when contrasted with Mann's somewhat more upbeat appraisal of the institutional utility of even the most despotic state. However, Wendt's purpose here is not to say that legitimacy does not matter at all but, rather, to suggest that it suffices for his own analytic purposes that the state's rule be minimally tolerated by its population. After all, many ostensibly illegitmate regimes are tolerated by their populations. The point here, therefore, is that one way or another the state has the means of directing its population's potential for violence. In otherwords, that the state can weild the populations potential as a "common power". That is, that those controlling the exercise of organized violence "cannot make decsions independently of each other, but always operate as a 'team'" (2003: 504).

This reference to the common power of the state leads us to the third element in Wendt's scheme: sovereignty. There are two types of sovereignty, internal and external. Internal sovereignty refers to "the exclusive right to enforce the law of the land" (2003: 504). Sovereignty can be externally legitimated, by other states for example, but the only legitimacy that really counts in terms of the state's day-to-day effectiveness as an actor is that of the domestic population. This makes sense because the sovereign is that entity which has ability to define the 'political'. In otherwords, "the right to make final, binding, political decisions" (1999: 206). Were one state's sovereign authority to become contingent on the approval of another then the right to decide on the political within that state would effectively have been transferred.

For Wendt then, it is sovereignty that makes the state a true law unto itself. While its sovereignty is grounded in legitimacy, this can be achieved through coercion in a militarily strong state. Interestingly then, where even Mann's most despotic state is ultimately an institution that endures on the strength of the utility it provides to other social actors, Wendt's state does not seem to require this. This implies that even where sovereignty can appear to be limited, as in the case of a very democratic state, it nevertheless remains their absolute limit. Here, even though powers are only superficially 'delegated' to the democratic state by the

people, "short of a collapse of state legitimacy the state will be the sovereign in all but name" (1999: 207). And the same stands true for states constrained by globalization. While Wendt grants that interdependency can place limits on the autonomy of the state, it does not change the fact of its sovereignty. Rather, it merely creates a gap between the practical right of the state to define the political and its ability to act. The status of the state as the ultimate locus of authority remains constant.

Given the importance that Wendt attaches to the state's power over the political, it is understandable that he would find Shaw's definition of the world state somewhat lacking. In Wendt's terms, Shaw "relaxes the monopoly of force requirement" in favor of a messy agglomeration of institutions of global governance (2003: 506). Importantly then, Wendt's fourth criterion of the state concerns its nature as a corporate actor. While the state is a structure made up of many individuals, it can also act as a single agent. Wendt believes this "collective intentionality" is possible by virtue of the fact that the members of the state's structure share a belief "that they constitute a collective identity or 'We', to which they are willing to subordinate their private judgment" (2003: 505). Unlike Shaw's 'messy' institution-based global state then, a world state in Wendt's view would require something much more focused: a world society of states with both a minimal level of desire to resolve disputes peacefully and a willingness to defend each other from threat.

Achieving Wendt's World State

The differences between Wendt and Shaw may seem quite stark at this point. However, as I will now argue, they have much in common in terms of how they understand the power of the state. This becomes especially clear when we investigate the three fundamental changes to the system of international politics that Wendt believes would be necessary for the inauguration of a true Weberian world state today. For it is here that the question of legitimacy returns with a vengeance.

The first two conditions contrive to produce a global monopoly over the use of violence. The first requirement is the emergence of universal security community. For Wendt, states in today's international system suffer from a generalized security dilemma. This is not to say that states today exist in a condition of pure anarchy, where there is no shared culture between them at all and knowledge is purely 'private' (1999: 266-267). Rather, it is to say that states both know

about each other and how to communicate with each other but suffer from a lack of information about each other's intentions and so, for the sake of security, necessarily assume the worst. The existence of a world state necessarily presupposes that this has been overcome through some or other process of institutionalization. Under such conditions, states in the system of international politics would "no longer routinely perceive each other as physical threats" but instead "expect to settle their disputes peacefully" (2003: 505).

Beyond the expectation of peaceful resolution of disputes, the second precondition of the global monopoly of force is that there be universal collective security. That is, there must be a pervasive sense among members of the system that "a threat to one is a threat to all" (505). Once this is in place, combined with the expectation of peaceful resolution of disputes, the states in the system will no longer be able to make decisions regarding the use of force independently from each other. They become, in effect, a common power.

The third precondition is that there be a political sovereign, or a "universal supranational authority" which can make "binding and legitimate decisions about the exercise of this common power" (2003: 505). Here the members of the system surrender their own sovereignty to a global power, thus transcending a merely institutionalized pacific federation. Where in the latter case states would retain their sovereignty, in the world state it is mandatory that states cooperate with the will of the sovereign.

For Wendt, a world state along the lines just described is not only desirable – it is inevitable. The details of the process through which this happens are outside the scope of this chapter. Suffice to say, Wendt understands the state itself to exist as a temporary solution to a more fundamental human problem, namely the struggle for human recognition under conditions of anarchy. Like Francis Fukuyama (1992), Wendt ascribes to mankind a fundamental desire to be recognized. Where mainstream IR scholars tend to suggest that struggle in human life is primarily about the need for security, Wendt suggests that it is rather more about the need to "count", as common to states as it is men. For, at the very least, if an actor does not count, it "may be killed or violated as one sees fit" (2003: 511). Moreover, all projects of individual identity require recognition if they are to be completed. Given that recognition depends on others, argues Wendt, it is natural that people come together in social systems like states. Following Hegel, he suggests, states "make their subjectivity possible" (2003: 513).

While Hegel was content to think that the state was the sine qua non of the achievement of human recognition, it is possible that he had not reckoned on the development of the sort of military technologies available to states today. For Wendt, the inter-state system is a problem in one sense because it is competitive and, as such, it is a "structure of unequal recognition". Complete mutual recognition remains impossible so long as it continues to divide communities. In another sense, however, the inter-state system is becoming an even greater problem because of the accelerating pace of technological change. As Wendt notes, IR theorists of a more Hobbesian persuasion have traditionally understood states to be somehow immune to the human compulsion to form a common power between them. As collective units, states are not as vulnerable as their human counterparts to being 'killed' under the conditions of general anarchy (2003: 508). Yet this need not always be so. Borrowing from Deudney (1995), Wendt notes that as technological development raises the relative cost of interstate conflict, this premise will doubtless be subject to change. The proliferation of nuclear weapons in the last century has essentially increased the risk to states of remaining in the state of nature, "making such violence increasingly intolerable" (2003: 517).

Wendt notes that a variety of different solutions present themselves to this dilemma, ranging from a "society of states" characterized by the norm of recognition of legal sovereignty, a "world society" characterized by the norm of non-violent dispute resolution, to "collective security" where a "Kantian culture" of mutual protection guarantees punishment against transgressors of international norms (2003: 517-24). Yet all of these are reversible. For this reason, suggests Wendt, the only way to achieve a stable state of affairs where the recognition of all human beings is not threatened by a return to destructive war is the creation of a world state-like power that can guarantee this. As noted earlier, Hegel understood that the state created conditions wherein everyone recognizes everyone. In an international context, the only way this could be achieved in a sense that would be irreversible would be through the instantiation of a true Weberian state. As Wendt puts it, "we will get a Weberian world state by creating a Hegelian one" (2003: 504).

III. Empire and Sovereignty

Wendt and Shaw have obviously different understandings of what it would take to inaugurate a world state. Where Shaw suggests that an emergent global institutional 'mess' suffices to mark

the birth of a world state, Wendt demands a complete cession of sovereignty to a form of global 'common power' in order to ensure that a true 'irreversible' world state is produced. These differences make for interesting study on their own terms. Yet, for the purposes of this chapter, what is interesting is that both accounts rely on an understanding of the global state as essentially a combined form of governmental power. That is, a regulative power which exists by virtue of the combined investment in its elaboration by nation-states who have agreed to accept its regulations as binding. In these last sections I turn to two separate critiques of this conception of the world state. I refer to the first here as the critique of the world state as imperialism. This approach is primarily concerned with the repressive role played by imperial power in the constitution of the world state. I refer to the second as the critique of the world state as Empire. This approach is also concerned about the role of violence in the constitution of the world state but tends to analyze it in a way that brings attention to bear on the specific techniques and mentalities that direct the global state more broadly. Here, importantly, the focus is less on the instrumental role of violence in cohering the world state but, rather, on the productive manner in which dynamic ideologies of global governance and war create policy redundancies among states.

The primary complaint of critics of the world state as imperialism is that its advocates tend to ignore both the fact that many of the states in the international system were founded by imperial violence and the reality that imperial violence continues to play a role in the constitution of world order today (see, for example, comments by Gowan and Panitch in Gowan et al., 2001). Both Wendt and Shaw suggest that a world state is currently in some stage of emergence and, in fact, already exists in nascent form among a core of western liberal democracies. In this sense, their arguments are essentially extensions of an enduring debate in IR theory concerning the thesis that liberal democratic states do not go to war with each other (see, for example, Doyle, 1993; Fukuyama, 1992; Levy, 1988). While neither Wendt and Shaw are satisfied that this thesis sufficiently captures the significance of the emergence of the liberal democratic core, their own arguments nevertheless remain firmly within its ontological horizon insofar as their purpose is to explore the implications of this emergence beyond that of simply constituting a pacific union or federation of states.

Critics of democratic peace theory suggest that its advocates make problematic assumptions about the relationship of liberal democracy to war. As Barkawi and Laffey note,

discussion within the democratic peace debates about war and peace has generally been constrained to a simple matter of "variation in the frequency and spatial distribution of war between states" which it correlates with the democratic character of the states involved (1999: 404). However, in its commitment to the sovereign state as its basic unit of analysis, democratic peace theory elides the extent to which the concepts of democracy and war have been subject to historical variation. On the one hand, by taking contemporary liberal conceptions of democracy as the sine qua non of true democratic life, it ignores the fact that these conceptions are themselves reflections of historically fluctuating tides of class power and shifting class alliances. On the other, by limiting the definition of war to a form of violence that exists only between nation states, it ignores the fact that liberal states were often imperial powers who waged campaigns of organized violence upon groups of stateless peoples. Indeed, liberal powers have often used force "to discipline, or even exterminate, unruly subjects, such as trade unions, indigenous movements, communist parties or other popular challenges that were pursuing competing political projects" (1999: 422). By the same token, democratic peace theory also ignores the struggles of local communities and peoples defending or seeking forms of rule often more democratic than those the imperial centers imposed on them.

For these reasons, Barkawi and Laffey suggest that theorists approach the idea that today's emerging global liberal order is essentially a zone of peace with a measure of skepticism. Instead of limiting the context of the democratic peace to the sphere of interstate relations, they argue, the categories that enable democratic peace analysis should be relocated in processes of globalization or global social change. Specifically, they need to be rethought within the context of imperial practices that spread "European forms and institutions – cultural, political, economic and social – to a progressively greater part of the earth's surface" (1999: 406). These were processes of global significance that transformed both the social units they encountered and the relations between them. This approach reveals the inadequacy of more state-centric accounts especially in the context of how they tend to analyze the state's use of force. Mainstream international relations theory posits the idea that states recruit force at home and then project that force into the international system. Yet force has often been organized internationally, overflowing the territorial boundaries of the state. The recruitment of local soldiers and police forces within colonized territories was a central aspect of the West's imperial domination in the non-European world throughout the period supposedly characterized by the predominance of the

Westphalian state. The modern 'liberal' empire of the U.S. is especially notable in this context, having relied heavily on a transnationally elaborated coercive apparatuses to maintain its grip on order in South Vietnam, Afghanistan, Guatemala and Cuba, to name just a few. Taken from this perspective, the democratic peace is ultimately an imperial peace, imposed by the West in order to secure a regime of values that supports its material interests in no uncertain terms.

Barkawi and Laffey's critique is interesting not simply because they draw attention to the hypocrisy of liberal claims about the relationship between war and democracy but also because they challenge the idea that the 'common power' of western rule is constituted in a vacuum. As Reid has observed, Barkawi and Laffey's work is an important contribution to IR because it represents the first time that the democratic peace has been challenged from an explicitly Marxist perspective (2005b: 69). While critiques of the liberal peace had been previously articulated outside of the formal academic boundaries of the discipline (see Kolko 1988; McCormick 1995; Robinson 1996), there was not much evidence of these ideas being taken seriously within it. However, as Hutchings (2006) argues, Barkawi and Laffey's approach to world order is primarily intended as a counterpoint to Neorealism. Where the neorealist approach posits functionally undifferentiated units operating in a system, Barkawi and Laffey posit a context of structured hierarchy. Of course, international hierarchy can be defined variously as a relationship between a wide variety of social objects: nations, polities, political units, and states. Yet, as Hutchings observes, each of these definitions "hinges on the assumption of a plurality of political communities each possessing its own sovereignty" (2006: 434). As such, the term 'imperialism' covers any practice wherein one of these communities violates sovereignty of another. Therefore, sovereignties can be either imperial, in which case they are possessed of full sovereignty, or they can be potential, in the case of subordinated communities.

Barkawi and Laffey's work is clearly a product of twentieth century anti-imperial norms that originated in the relations between European powers and their colonial holdings. As Hutchings notes, their work is characterized by a "normative state-centrism", which rivals the more Weberian 'fact-based' state-centrism of IR Realism (2006: 434). This criticism presents a problem for Barkawi and Laffey, especially given the fact that they have explicitly claimed that their work is intended to provide an escape route out of IR's 'territorial trap', "the notion that borders are relatively impermeable containers of social relations" (2002: 111). Yet the possibility of their escaping this trap themselves is undermined because, as Hutchings suggests, "to identify

the subordination of states, nations or political communities as the necessary condition of imperial rule is to reify the norms that ascribe them sovereignty" (2006: 435). The problem here, argues Hutchings, is that while their approach allows them to theorize "the formal European empires of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries" and more recent, informal expressions of imperial power during the Cold War, it does not serve well in imperial contexts where the normative expectation of sovereignty is not present. In this sense, Barkawi and Laffey's approach presupposes the subject on behalf of which it speaks because it does not allow for the possibility an imperial hierarchy that is understood as legitimate. Under rule of a legitimate empire, no such claim to sovereignty would exist. Indeed, its constituent subordinated groups may not even believe that they have a claim to their own sovereignty.

Hutchings' point here is instructive. While an empire may involve discrimination against other races, nations, or territories, it might not be exclusively defined by it. This point foreshadows a deeper theoretical problem for Barkawi and Laffey. Despite their efforts to replace IR's investigative context of states in anarchy with a rival account based on the constitutive powers of dominant imperial states, it is unclear that they have a fully theorized understanding of the various possible modes of imperial power. This is not to say that the limited instances which Barkawi and Laffey critique were not characterized by a self-conscious desire for sovereign emancipation but to suggest that there may be other modes of imperial rule that are not predicated on the repression of subaltern claims to sovereignty. Hutchings suggests that constructivist approaches may be of some use here. By reframing empire as a phenomena of "historically and spatially specific norms", constructivism can allow for the possibility of "multitudinal forms of legitimate 'imperial sovereignty', in both historical and contemporary politics" (2006: 435). By examining continuities in normative structures and juridical forms, constructivism can demonstrate the continued relevance of the concept of imperialism in the contemporary practice of government.

IV. Governmentality and Empire

The essential advantage of Hutchings' approach in distinction to that of Barkawi and Laffey is that it provides a language to describe hierarchy, as he suggests, "without the appearance of overstatement or accusation" (2006: 438). However, by the same token, it would seem problematic to focus exclusively on the construction of hierarchy through norms without

addressing the practices which those norms subsequently inform. Where the problem with Barkawi and Laffey is that they ultimately presuppose the sovereignty of the imperial subject, Hutchings leaves us with an account of empire that has no critique of the *power* of imperial norms. In this last section I argue that a Foucauldian perspective may be helpful here insofar as it points to the possibility not only of normatively sanctioned hierarchy but, also, a non-repressive model of imperial power.

Foucault found discussion of power in the social sciences to be generally dissatisfactory. As he famously noted, in political theory we still need to "cut off the King's head" (1980b: 121). By this he meant to suggest that most social analysis presumed on some level that power referred to the basic capacity of a sovereign actor to achieve its interests. This view was problematic, Foucault argued, because it is not always clear "that those who exercise power … have a vested interest in its execution; nor is it always possible for those with vested interests to exercise power" (Foucault & Deleuze, 2003). In this sense, relations of power are never confrontations between autonomous or moral agents endogenously given within society. To remedy this view, Foucault suggested that we take a step back from the idea of the sovereign actor. He proposed instead that we think of power as a sort of "structure of actions" that shapes and directs the actions of those who are essentially free (1983: 220). Power in these structures is not a function of consent, or even the absence of consent. Rather, power is foundational and cannot be mitigated per se.

By rejecting the idea of the sovereign actor, Foucault simultaneously rejected the idea that the stakes of normative political debate concerned the question of the proper political constitution of society. That is, the question of the proper relations between the ruler and the ruled, each of which considered as sovereign powers in their own right. Instead, Foucault suggested that by analyzing the practices of specific social institutions, one could also start to distinguish between different types of structures of actions, with some that were relatively unchanging and others that allowed for great mobility. Among the different sorts of rationalities of rule enumerated by Foucault is that of modern state government, or "governmentality", a mode of subjectification in which the subject is constituted, or "lead", to regulate his or her own "modes of action", both as they might affect his or herself and his or her self's possible range of actions of others (1983: 138). Subjects in governmentality are not confronted by state power, legitimate or otherwise. As Foucault put it, the state is nothing more than "a mythicized

abstraction" (1991: 103). Rather, the subjects of the state are engaged by a specific rationality of *state order* which works on the "conduct of conducts" of a relatively free population. By conduct of conducts, Foucault means not only that government attends to "the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, and so on" but also that "the means that the government uses to attain those ends are themselves all in some sense *immanent* to the population" (1991: 100, my italics).

Foucault's efforts to wrestle with the constitution of the governmental subject in this manner bespeak a radically different understanding of the state. As Gordon observes, Foucault's purpose was to show how "the nature of the institution of the state is ... a function of changes in practices of government, rather than the converse" (1991: 4). Several scholars influenced by Foucault's ideas about power and the state in this regards have used his theories to investigate how governmental power can be articulated transnationally. From the analysis of classical imperialism to present day globalization, these scholars have eschewed strictly repressive models of power. Hindess, for example, criticizes standard academic accounts of liberalism for being overly concerned with the relations between the state and its subject and suggests that we also need to look at the "cosmopolitan, supra-state aspects of the liberal tradition" (2004: 23). However, he suggests a measure of caution in embracing Foucault's argument that liberal rule is carried out essentially through freedom. Liberalism is certainly distinguished as a form of rule by its commitment to the cultivation of habits of self-governance. Yet while "government through freedom" may be considered appropriate for 'civilized' peoples, the government of inferior peoples may be a different question entirely. A central issue for liberal government, therefore, is the need to determine "what can be governed through the promotion of liberty and what must be governed in other ways" (2004: 28).

To make these important distinctions, liberal governments have resorted to many different sorts of metrics. However, suggests Hindess, these have been more commonly articulated in historicist, developmental and gendered terms. This is especially true, he argues, in the case of classical imperialism, which often used an autocratic approach to managing its subject populations. While often racist, these accounts were not merely ideological conveniences. Nor were they viewed by their proponents as inconsistent with the principle of liberal rule through freedom. They stemmed rather from the fundamental preoccupation of the imperial powers with the question of who might be governed best in which way. Granted,

important liberals like Adam Smith and J.A. Hobson opposed imperialism despite the fact that they shared its developmental views about its subject populations. However, at issue here is not how imperialism was justified but rather how these distinguishing discourses effected the mundane, day-to-day decisions of those involved in imperial governance.

Hindess's account of liberal complicity in the practice of imperial rule would seem to allow for more nuance than that offered by Barkawi and Laffey. Hindess would no doubt readily agree with Barkawi and Laffey that liberal narratives like those presented by Shaw and Wendt all too easily assume that world state's pacific nature and ignore its continuities with classical imperialism. Recall that Shaw suggests that true imperialism is a thing of the past, replaced today by a relatively liberal regime led by small and relatively powerless administrative states struggling to sustain their waning power through cooperative efforts. Similarly, imperialism is also absent from Wendt's account, which is guided by a sense in which qualitatively equal states jostle with each other for mutual recognition. However, unlike Barkawi and Laffey, Hindess's critique does not rest on reducing the democratic peace theory upon which this scholarship rests to an expression of mere imperial ideology. Rather, for Hindess, the problem with Wendt and Shaw is that by ignoring the question of classical imperial rule, and its diverging rationales of subject constitution and administration, they also miss the continuities between imperialism and *liberalism* as projects concerned with the fundamental task of governing populations.

As noted, Hindess suggests historicist and developmental views of the capacities of ruled populations played a central role in determining the perceived possibilities of just what may be said to count as sensible imperial government. However, in the wake of decolonization, the developmental discourses of imperialism have largely been displaced by the developmental discourses of neo-liberalism. As a discourse of *global* governmentality, neo-liberalism tends to assume as given that all of mankind has equal potential for development and that the only structural factors can restriction that potential: lack of civil society, cultural values, corruption, etc. In distinction to classical imperialism then, neo-liberalism tends to refocus the discourse of development back on the question of self-rule. This is an issue taken up by Hardt and Negri who pose the question of global governmentality in terms of the emergence of a novel form of empire. Importantly, they use this term to refer not to the sort of imperialism that concerns Barkawi and Laffey but to a novel form of global sovereignty, the closest historical parallel of which is that of the Roman Empire. As they note, "ethics is part of the materiality of every

juridical foundation". Founded on the premise of "imperial right", however, Rome pushed to an extreme the coincidence of its legal personality with the ethical, establishing itself as the guarantor of justice for all its citizens. And it is precisely in this sense that Hardt and Negri present their *Empire* of global governmentality as an ethico-juridical assemblage: "a global concert under the direction of a single conductor, a unitary power that maintains the social peace and produces its ethical truths" (2000: 10).

While Hardt and Negri do not examine Empire as a 'world state' in the sense discussed by Shaw and Wendt, it is clear that they would argue that the two should not be conflated. Their Empire is far more than a 'common power'. Rather, as a form of power over what may be said to be right, Empire is a constitutive apparatus with its own attendant developmental understandings. In contradistinction to the era of imperial rivalry:

> "Today right involves instead an internal and constitutive institutional process.
> The networks of agreements and associations, the channels of mediation and
> conflict resolution, and the coordination of the various dynamics of states are all
> institutionalized within Empire" (2000: 182)

In this sense, while the civilizing pretensions of liberal imperialism may have been somewhat displaced in the wake of decolonization, the production of compliant subjects continues.

Empire still reserves "weapons of lethal force" for use against the deviant, yet its true power is to be found in its moral instruments. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), for example, are powerful both "because they are not run directly by governments" and because they "are assumed to act on the basis of ethical or moral imperatives" (2000: 36). While Hardt and Negri concede that there it is impossible to lump such a heterogeneous set of organizations together, they do reserve special comment for what they call "humanitarian" NGOs. That is, that subset of NGOs "that strive to represent the least among us, those who cannot represent themselves" (2000: 313). While this may seem a laudable practice, Hardt and Negri caution that the mandate of these groups is rarely articulated in terms of the particular interests of any limited group but rather as a function of the need "to represent directly global and universal human interests" (2000: 313). Given the wide territorial expanse of these organizations, and their deep penetration into social life around the world, their work has a remarkable potential to transform human life and satisfy Empire's requirements of life in general.

Of course, neoliberal governmentality is not without its problematic populations and self-rule is not to be taken for granted. Like Hardt and Negri, Dillon (2004) believes that neo-liberalism tends to obfuscate the essential differences between the multitudinous people's of the earth by aggregating them as a fluid and dynamic referent object. What is interesting, however, is that the increasing global power of such understandings has not been accompanied by an overall relaxation of security concerns. Indeed, the opposite is true. Under neo-liberalism, the human species tends to be described as an assemblage of properties and "bodies-in-formation". It becomes impossible for neo-liberal rule to have identify its enemies in terms of race or developmental differences. The location of the 'danger' is no longer outside the socius but, rather, in the very material from which it is constituted: the population itself. As such, Empire must be a very anxious apparatus of rule, ever vigilant against its own corruption from within. In this sense, the question of government in Empire is very much a question of security.

V. Conclusion

What is interesting about both Shaw and Wendt's description of the world state, regardless of whether they think it already exists or not, is that they both rely heavily on the liberal conceit of state sovereignty as a form of collective agency. This is clearly visible in Shaw insofar as his theory of the world state relies overtly on Mann's understanding of the state as a 'collective power'. As noted above, Mann defines power 'the ability to pursue and attain goals'. Wendt, too, refers to the 'common power' that must be cohered in order to give the state its monopoly over the use of force. We suppose then that, for both of these scholars, the normative question of the state is one of the appropriate political constitution of society. That is, a question of the proper relations between the ruler and the ruled. Given this, it is remarkable that neither pause to reflect on the techniques through which that constitution is achieved. More specifically, it is interesting that neither broach the topic of the role of government in producing these arrangements.

Importantly, Wendt and Mann do allow for the possibility of state intervention in the ideological dispositions of their subjects. Mann, for example, speaks of the state's ideological power. And Wendt notes that the 'we' of a state society can be worked upon 'top-down' by a government (1999: 210). However, neither author takes up this opportunity to elaborate on this role of government in much detail. Instead, in Wendt's case anyway, the constitutive function is understood simply as an expression of "the power at states' disposal" (1999: 210). Importantly,

we get no sense that he wishes to be understood as suggesting that the state is immanent to the social or that its practices are constituted through discourse. Wendt's state in this sense is still very much an 'actor' then, and not necessarily a machinery of government.

Shaw and Wendt's failings are addressed in no uncertain terms by Barkawi and Laffey. Their critique is premised on the idea that the state has constitutive powers and that we ought to be concerned with the "thick relations" of social and cultural flows that accompany the political and economic relations of empire. These thick relations are organized transnationally, thus constituting power formations that are not limited by sovereign state boundaries. However, in their struggle to argue that 'old-fashioned' classical imperialism still has an analytic purchase of world politics, Barkawi and Laffey reveal the limitations of their own discourse in the anti-colonial struggles of the last century. Nowhere in their work do they broach the possibility of a productive or legitimate form of imperialism.

In the last section of this chapter I argued that a Foucauldian approach to imperialism avoids assuming the normative sovereignty of the imperial subject but, at the same time, provides a valuable critique of the rationalities of rule which motivated imperial governance. Following Hindess's argument that classical imperialism was shaped more by a perceived need for coercive rule than "government through freedom", it was suggested that subjects of empire can be differentiated in terms of their ability to perform under conditions of freedom. Hindess's point is instructive. It suggests that the subjects of imperial rule can also be subjects of a judgemental liberalism and, as such, can be marginalized where necessary. Hardt and Negri's Empire updates this analysis in the conjecture of what has been called the 'world state'. However, posed as a form of governmentality, the world state is more than a simple common power. Rather, it is a form of rule that must struggle both to produce, and defend itself from, the population over which it rules.

CHAPTER 5: EMPIRE'S PACIFISM AND THE 'NEW WAR'
THESIS

In the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, and the ensuing military operations launched by the United States government in Afghanistan and Iraq, theorists writing from wide variety of social science perspectives and disciplines, both in American and elsewhere, have struggled to situate the attacks and the response of the US government in relation to the historical development of war. The attacks, it was said, confirmed the thesis that a new, historically unprecedented form of war is emerging. The US was prosecuting a new, high-tech precision campaign against a networked, stateless enemy (see, for example, M. R. Gordon, 2001; Keen, 2001). This thesis was already circulating at least ten yeas before the attacks. Scholars like van Creveld (1991) and Kaldor (1991) argued then that the hegemony of the nation state over violence was coming to an end. Globalization and interdependency, they argued, brought with them a rapidly proliferating diversity of actors that were both willing and able to engage in war. However, they opined, contemporary strategic thought had yet to catch on to this development. According to van Creveld, state defense planners were trapped in a "Clausewitzian Universe". Like the famous Prussian general, Carl von Clausewitz, these planners maintained an attitude towards the preparation and waging of war that was premised upon the notion that "that organized violence should only be called "war" if it were waged by the state, for the state, and against the state" (1991: 36). If they were to avoid their own obsolescence then, these Clausewitzian thinkers would have to awaken to these new realities.

Van Creveld's take on Clausewitz is not uncontroversial, however. A series of critical thinkers have sought to use his theory of the relation of the state to war in a radically different manner. These 'counter-strategic' thinkers, as they have been labeled by Reid (2005a), interpret Clausewitz rather differently. In terms of his concept of the 'force of pure war', Clausewitz is understood not simply as having set limits on the analytic scope of war but rather as someone who understood that war could be thought in non-instrumental terms. At least in the abstract then, Clausewitz gives war a certain autonomy from the state, thereby providing a vocabulary which could be appropriated and deployed against the state towards an emancipatory form of politics. Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari , and Hardt and Negri, among others, each read

Clausewitz along these lines. While each approaches the problem from a singular perspective, all are motivated by a common concern for the price exacted from the populations of modern liberal government in exchange for peace. Foucault especially understood the work of the institutions of the modern governmental state to be haunted by the specter of war. As he argued:

> "Ultimately what presides over all these mechanisms is not the unitary functioning of an apparatus or an institution, but the necessity of combat and the rules of strategy … In this central and centralized humanity … we must hear the distant roar of battle" (Foucault, 1995: 308)

This quote is not an allusion to a hidden war within society. Rather, it evokes a society wherein outright war was been largely rendered subordinate to politics but the principles of military logistics have assumed a significant role in determining social relations. Foucault is known for having argued that the modern state was premised on the production of a certain type of population, a process he referred to as 'governmentality' (1991). However, as Reid (2003) argues, what is less commonly understood is the extent to which Foucault believed the rationality of modern government to be informed by the science of military strategy.

As Reid suggests, Clausewitz's writings were important to Foucault insofar as they marked the entry into the human sciences of formal military strategy. Foucault was clearly impressed by the fact that Clausewitz was writing on war during a time of tremendous social change. More significantly, Clausewitz's principles for the manipulation of force on the battlefield bore marked resemblance to the sorts of principles for the arrangement of population that liberal governments were promoting around the same time. According to Reid's Foucault then, the advent of the science of strategy also marks the entry of that science into modern power/knowledge relations as a "model discourse", or "strategic principle from which all other areas of discourse take their cue" (2003: 4). This is not to say strategy was a master discourse per se but rather that, for Foucault, the progressive transformations of Western military strategic culture represented something of a microcosm of the broader social transformations wrought by liberal rule. More specifically, it represented the intensification of a tendency within modern state societies to strategize or constrain social relations at a level immanent to those relations. In this sense, the concept of war relations within the modern state is not intended to evoke military war but, rather, the production of a certain form of life. Thus Foucault's distinction between the power relations of more archaic societies, where daily life is "pervaded by warlike relations",

and those of more modern societies, where not only are the powers of war co-opted by the centralized military apparatus of the state but, also, daily life within the state comes to be increasingly defined by the dictates of strategy (2003: 267).

This chapter concludes my dissertation by exploring the violence of empire's 'modern' politics as in order to critique the thesis that a global 'new war' is underway. Using the writings of Hardt and Negri (2000) and Agamben (2002; 2003), both inspired by Foucault, this chapter examines the thesis that the 'war on terror' is somehow part of a general tendency towards a 'new' type of war. While not denying the many novel facets of the war on terror, the argument presented here is that the 'new wars' need to be situated in relation to the hegemony of military strategy over life in liberal societies that so concerned Foucault. To this end, the first part of this chapter briefly introduces the new war thesis, and examines in particular how the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been understood in relation to this thesis. I note specifically here the tendency of scholars who adopt this position to discriminate between 'postmodern states' and 'failed states', the former construed as the source of a 'coming anarchy'. Moreover, I situate this dichotomy in relation to a broadly construed Kantian ethic that enables the discourse of new war as a project of peace.

The second part of this chapter addresses two central concerns which serve to undermine the pacific claims made by new war scholarship. The first concerns Foucault's reading of Clausewitz's model of war as a general model of how power works in social relations. The second claim concerns Foucault's less studied argument that the discourse of strategy plays a central role in the government of modern liberal societies. Here I examine Foucault's view of the modern State as an apparatus that uses the principles of the modern science of military strategy to mobilize populations.

Part three of the chapter then extends this Foucauldian perspective to the global domain. Foucault's understanding of the strategic imperative of biopolitical rule plays a central role in Agamben's argument that 'normal politics' has today become increasingly defined by tendency towards a permanent state of exception. It also plays a role in Hardt and Negri's arguments in *Multitude* (2004), which poses this permanent state of exception as an episode in what they call modernity's 'civil war', or Empire. Taking these claims seriously, I argue, we will see that descriptions of the war on terror that remain couched in the discourse of 'new war' necessarily fall short. While this is not to deny certain novelties about the war on terror, it is to suggest that

the normative agenda of new war theory prevents a full assessment of modern liberal government in the historical development of the war on terror. For, as the horizon of security problems increasingly shifts to that of the global Empire, Foucault's 'politics as war' ceases to be confined within the boundaries of the State. With this in mind, the chapter concludes with a reflection upon Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the 'war machine' and its utility as a compliment to Foucault's reading of Clausewitz. With this concept, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the irreducibility of human life to sovereign power and, in doing so, leave us with the theoretical means to imagine a way of releasing the grip of the former over the latter.

I. 'New War'

The nineteenth century military theorist and historian Carl von Clausewitz is perhaps best known for his maxim that real war is always constrained by politics. War is a "wonderful trinity", he argued, composed of three major elements. It is partly a phenomenon involving the people, who are driven by blind instinct and emotion, partly of the army, who are the masters of chance, and partly an instrument of the government, which is the source of the state's political reason. War plays out in the relationship between these three elements. However, the trump element is the political one for, as he argues, "war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means" (1991: 119). For this reason, Clausewitz is understood as the exemplar exponent of the notion that modern war is primarily waged by and between states (see, for example, van Creveld, 1991).

Since the end of the Cold War, however, it has become popular to challenge Clausewitz on this account. Advocates of the 'new war' thesis today argue that the period of the classical nation state is ending, taking classical inter-state conflict along with it (for examples of this discourse, see Freedman, 1998; Ignatieff, 2000; Kaldor, 1991; Luttwak, 1995). This does not mean that what Kaldor has termed "Old Wars" will cease to occur, but rather that additional forms of armed conflict are emerging. What has become clear to analysts like Kaldor is that inter-state warfare only represents *one* form of violence in the contemporary world. Today violent conflict is articulated increasingly domestic or transnational forms – and generally located in regions of weak post-colonial states. Thus there have only been a handful of armed conflicts between states during the period from 1989 to 1998, while there were 32 violent intrastate conflicts in 1998 alone, and 30 just the year before (Sorensen, 2001: 116-117).

Martin van Creveld, another popular proponent of the new war thesis, argues that with the emergence of additional forms of violence besides inter-state war, the clear threefold division into government, army and people, which the hegemony of the modern state had enforced, is now ending. In this situation it is no longer appropriate for states to fear what Clausewitz had called 'total war' (see also Kayser, 1990). At the apex of the Soviet Union, such a catastrophic clash between superpowers might have appeared to be in the offing. Today, however, new non-state agents of war are gaining power to engage in low-intensity strategies asymmetric to the configuration of Western forces. Given this reality, van Creveld proposes that we change our model our analysis. The Clausewitzian model must be replaced by a model premised on the time immediately prior to the birth of the modern state system in 1648: the wars of medieval Europe which began during the Reformation and reached their apex in the 30 Years War. Thus the West may still have to engage in military operations on a regular basis, but these are of a substantively different nature, more directed towards policing non-state combatants.

This "future as the past" argument is reminiscent of the reflective narratives of the travel writer Robert Kaplan, who sees the world after 1989 as a reversal, a return to the past, or a resurgence of the repressed, especially in ethnic and religious terms. In his popular book "The Coming Anarchy" he describes the contemporary ("postmodern") period as "an epoch of themeless juxtapositions, in which the classificatory grid of nation-states is going to be replaced by a jagged-glass pattern of city-states, shanty-states, nebulous and anarchic regionalisms" (2001: 43-44). These "juxtapositions", he argues together with other theorists, can be defined as the neo-medieval age, in which "a premodern formlessness governs the battlefield, evoking wars in medieval Europe before the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia which ushered in the era of organised nation states" (2001: 48-49).

We can also observe this neo-medievalist account in a variety of other sources (see, for example, Coker, 1998; R. Harvey, 1995; Minc, 1993). Each tends to view the state as increasingly unable to monopolize violence or to control challenges to its authority within its own domain. Adding to this transformation the proliferation of technologies of mass destruction, Halliday suggests grim prospects for world peace indeed:

"This is combined with the spread of nuclear and conventional weapons, the explosion of the world's narcotic trade, the outbreak of warlordism and reckless

violence and a globalised clamour of identity, community, whinging and

vindictiveness of all stripes" (Halliday, 2001).

For some, this is a global trend, synonymous with a more general undermining of the state and of the state-based form of world order; whereas for others it is a phenomenon clearly confined to certain areas and regions such as the Balkans, OECD inner cities, Africa - all the places where state authority no longer operates.

The above notwithstanding, Halliday is dismissive of theories positing a generalized return to the New Middle Ages. As he suggests, such notions are generally of limited relevance for policymakers because the conflicts to which they refer are not really 'new' at all, especially regarding their claims in relation to nationalism and warlordism (2001: 44). However, while there is a wisdom to Halliday's warning of the dangers of 'Presentism', there nevertheless appears to be something to the thesis that the nation-state has had to refocus its strategic orientation. If nothing else, the years since the events September 11, 2001 seem to confirm the emergence of zones where the state has abdicated, permitting the evolution of an entirely different and variegated form of order: the simultaneous existence of different forms of statehood.

Many 'new war' theorists cluster these different sovereignties together according to region, or zone. Cooper, for example, identifies three 'zones' (2002):

- The Premodern Zone: States in this zone do not meet Weber's definition of statehood. In particular, they fail to maintain their monopoly over the use of physical violence. As such, this is a zone, "where the state has failed and a Hobbesian war of all against all is underway"

- The Postmodern Zone: States in the postmodern zone defend their interests through mutual vulnerability, openness and interdependence. As such, "no longer think of security primarily in terms of conquest". In Shaw's terms, these states are "postmodern" insofar as they "are very fully articulated with trans-national Western and global power networks" (1997: 511).

- The Modern Zone: Here, according to Cooper, Clausewitz's dictum remains true. States here maintain their grip on violence and are use war as an extension of policy. Following Weber's classical definition then, these are properly sovereign states.

Cooper summarizes his argument by noting that "whereas in the modern world, following Clausewitz' dictum, war is an instrument of policy in the postmodern world it is a sign of policy failure". In this sense, while members of the liberal democratic, post-national 'postmodern' zone do not threaten each other, they are still under threat from the classically modern powers, and the new 'primitive' forms of power.

Western militaries have been called on to play new roles in the face of the premodern threat. It is suggested that postmodern militaries have largely become police forces or, at least, *risk* policing forces. As Coker argues, postmodern armies are "no longer used to advance goods (constructing a new world order, putting new regional security systems in place) but managing bads (nuclear proliferation, terrorist threat, fighting ethnic cleansing, etc)" (2001: 56). Adopting Beck's writings on risk society to the way postmodern societies conceive security, Coker offers the contemporary risk management ethos as the exemplar response to the greater insecurity that seems to stem from globalisation. This management of risks, he suggests, seems to operate on two levels: "One is surveillance, such as 'global neighbourhood watch' programmes. The second is the new 'panics' like the war against terrorism" (2002).

Since the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the 'new war' thesis has been widely invoked (see, for example, M. R. Gordon, 2001; Keen, 2001). Indeed, as Connetta observes, the architects of Operation Enduring Freedom were happy to describe the plans for war in such terms, leveraging the discourse to give them considerable freedom in their battlefield tactics (2002). However, some have suggested that the thesis requires additional nuance in response to these campaigns. McInnes (2003), for example, compares the Afghanistan campaign to Western military operations during the 1990s. He suggests that these operations could be described as examples of new war in four respects. First, they were wars that could not spread geographically but remained locally contained. Thus, for example, NATO could intervene in Kosovo without risk of the conflict spreading to West itself (2003: 166). Second, under 'new war' the nature of the enemy is rearticulated. While in Clausewitz's age of 'total war' enmity could be ascribed both to the armies and people of the opposing state, under new war the enemy is usually a regime. That is, the government or leadership associated with a set of values or practices (2003: 167). The third aspect concerns a policy of minimizing civilian casualties. Whereas in the Second World War 'enemy' civilians could be targeted indiscriminately, today civilian deaths are lamented as the otherwise innocent victims of 'collateral damage' (2003: 168). Finally,

McInnes observes that Western societies have largely become disengaged from actual conflict. In an era of all-volunteer militaries, Western societies play the role of spectators in new war, thus eliminating a key pillar of Clausewitz's Trinitarian perspective.

These similarities with the new wars of the 1990s notwithstanding, McInnes suggests that the strikes on the World Trade Center and the US invasion of Afghanistan modify the criteria for new war somewhat. The 'war on terror' is not exactly like those conflicts of the 1990s mainly because of the risks it *may* carry for a spreading conflagration. As US forces carry their hunt for Al Qaeda to other states, risking the alienation of populations there and perhaps bolstering the terrorists' ranks, this conflagration becomes more likely. Moreover, as US operations risk provoking renewed efforts by Al-Qaeda to retaliate, Western populations may no longer stand as far removed from the conflicts. Yet with these exceptions stipulated, the war on terror is not a war against a sovereign state. As such, the new war thesis largely holds.

In terms of our understanding of contemporary global conflict then, the new war discourse sets up a certain dialogue with Clausewitz which challenges not so much his argument that war is an instrument of the political but, rather, that war is the exclusive instrument of the state. For new war theorists then, Clausewitz personifies a redundant discourse, because the nation state is no longer the sole agent of war. In this sense, they tend to differentiate between the condition of peace, as secured by the State, which is construed as the normal condition of civil life, and the exceptional condition of war, which can only be sanctioned by the state. For Clausewitz of course, war was simply "the continuation of politics by other means". However, it is important to recognize another aspect of this discourse. That is, its understanding of the crucial importance of violence as a tool, both in relation to the need to maintain the integrity of the postmodern zone and to the need to extend this zone beyond its own boundaries in order to 'roll back' the rising tide of anarchy.

As the new war discourse goes, along with today's proliferating range of political powers, different modes of warmaking are emerging, a notion captured neatly by what the Tofflers call "a collision of war forms" (Toffler & Toffler, 1998: 81). In other words, the coexistence of different forms of statehood brings about a bifurcated world: one in which questions of war and peace are viewed diametrically opposed. A liberal democratic 'postmodern zone of peace' has emerged among European societies. Within that zone, the century old notion that 'war is interrupted by peace' (hence a world in which war is the norm) became transformed

into 'peace is interrupted by war' (a world in which peace is the norm). For, in terms of interstate war, the borders between these states are, as Shaw puts it, "no longer borders of violence" (1997: 500). Outside the democratic zone, on the other hand, anarchy is an ever-present reality.

What emerges powerfully from these dichotomies then is a sense in which the new war discourse is motivated by a desire to reform. At the very least, it implicitly understands violence as a means of stabilizing the relationship between the zone of 'postmodern' peace and its premodern other. In more energetic form, it understands violence as a means to extend that peace into the primitive sphere (a point more or less explicitly stated in Cooper, 2002; & Ferguson, 2003). The very idea of such a world-spanning postmodern peace of course recalls Kant's famous *Perpetual Peace.* In this work, Kant traces out his hope for a peace between nations based on a framework of shared norms and understandings. More specifically, through the development of republican institutions and ideals within states, as well as the development of federal relations between republican states internationally. In the absence of such a liberal framework, he warned, the "state of nature", a "state of war", would dominate international relations (1991: 98). Like Kant then, theorists of new war seem to pathologize those forms of social life that do not live up to these republican ideals. In this sense, they run the regrettable risk of failing to see a link between their own forceful efforts to promote 'universal' ideologies and institutions in the name of a liberal peace and the reproduction of the very conflict that they seek to constrain.

In summary then, theorists of new war describe a world in which a fragile democratic order is increasingly threatened by a rising tide of anarchism (Kaplan, 2001). They argue that a new form of war must be embraced by western powers if this threat is to be warded off. Disturbingly, some even go so far as to advocate a perpetual war, or "long war", as the most appropriate means of achieving a perpetual peace today (Carafano, 2005). And the term "long war" has also crept into official White House discourse (Bush, 2006). Paradoxically then, the leadership of the world's foremost liberal democracy has quite self-consciously announced that it is engaged in a conflict of indeterminable length. With this said, it would seem worthwhile to engage further with the question of the instrumentality of violence in the postmodern, liberal sphere. More specifically, how are we to understand this basic paradox of the liberal democratic order's pursuit of peace through this violence? To answer this question, it may be important to return once again to Clausewitz. Or, at least, to alternative readings of Clausewitz which seek to

reappraise his understanding of the relation of the state to war. After all, if Clausewitz felt it worthwhile to labor on the idea of war as an extension of politics, there must have been some who thought precisely the opposite: that politics is the continuation of war. How then did Clausewitz really understand the relationship between these two concepts? And what, if anything, can further analysis of these concepts tell us about the relation of liberal societies to this declaration of a permanent war for peace?

II. Biopolitics and War

In this section I turn to Foucault's critique of liberalism's understanding of its own relationship to war. Inspired by the writings of Clausewitz, Foucault sought to reappraise the role played by war within the modern liberal order. He did this not by adopting a cynical posture in relation to liberalism's hopes for cooperation, as would a Realist IR theorist, for example, but rather by drawing attention to the tenuous nature of liberalism's description of its own pacific ends. A scholar supremely cynical of the pacific claims of liberalism, Foucault resolved the paradox of liberalism's war on war by taking it as given that modern Western life was predicated upon the principles of war. Indeed, much of Foucault's work was motivated by a concern for the price exacted from the populations of modern liberal government in exchange for this 'peace'. Paying particular attention to the institutions of the modern governmental state, he argued:

> "Ultimately what presides over all these mechanisms is not the unitary
> functioning of an apparatus or an institution, but the necessity of combat and the
> rules of strategy … In this central and centralized humanity … we must hear the
> distant roar of battle" (Foucault, 1995: 308)

This quote evokes the idea of a society in which society has been largely rendered subordinate to war. Foucault is known for having argued that the modern state was premised on the production of a certain population, a process he referred to as 'governmentality' (1991). However, as Reid (2003) argues, what is less commonly understood is the extent to which Foucault believed the rationality of modern government to be informed by the science of military strategy. In this sense, Foucault can be understood as a 'counter-strategic' thinker. Following Reid then, below I set out two dimensions of Foucault's counter-strategic thought. The first relates to his model of social power, which takes Clausewitz's model of war as its basic explanatory framework. The second relates to the role of strategic thought in modern life and Foucault's concern for the broad

strategization of social relations in the context of biopolitical rule, a development in which Clausewitz played no small role.

Social Relations As War

Foucault wanted to emphasize the role played by individuals in the production of history. However, he did not want to offer a unitary, given or true subject that would somehow sit outside of history. Foucault's was not a phenomenological subject – a historical subjectivity somehow constituted over a purer or more real experiential subject. As Foucault declared, he wanted to focus his work on what he called genealogy, a method of historical study which could "account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc. without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history" (1980: 117). In the place of this self-contained subject then, Foucault asserted a subject that was not dependent on any preexisting social categories – a subject that was produced through and through.

Foucault's ontology thus addressed a contingent subject, immanent to the field of events. His attitude in this sense stood in marked contrast to that of Structuralism, which posed social relations in terms of a strict structure/agency binary. The method of Structuralism in this regards allowed for observation of regularities and patterns in social life, thus belying its hope for a pure knowledge. Genealogy, however, abandoned this hope in favor of an admission into thought of meaning as complex, unverifiable, ambiguous, shifting. This, of course, was something Structuralism could not do without sacrificing its own status as a science.

To develop his alternative model of power, Foucault turned to Nietzsche and Clausewitz. Foucault first encountered the work of Nietzsche in the 1950s and described this encounter as his intellectual "point of rupture" (1988a: 23). In 1971 he produced a close reading of Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals*. In this volume, Nietzsche launches an excoriating criticism of the work of his former friend, Paul Ree. A "genealogist", Ree understood morality as having a linear path of progression which could be somehow traced back to an original source. Nietzsche focused his criticism on Ree's lack of historical curiosity. Ree's argument rather casually assumes that man is a fundamentally moral creature. This assumption appears to Nietzsche as fundamentally conceited given what little we know of the historic facts of mans moral descent.

Foucault reads Nietzsche as making the argument that there is a complex relationship between the story we tell ourselves about ourselves and our moral ends. In this sense, as Mahon observes, Nietzsche provides Foucault with a model for a sort of critique: Nietzsche's "genealogy is critique as a history investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (1992: 81). However, it seems that while Foucault turned to Nietzsche's method for his model of critique, he felt he had to turn elsewhere for his model of social relations. As he notes, "Nietzsche's hypothesis" relies to a certain extent on an inverted version of Clausewitz's famous aphorism, that war is the continuation of politics by other means (2003: 15-16). This is not to say that society is a form of actual or overt warfare. Rather, it is to suggest that a certain blurring of the war/politics distinction can provide a useful alternative to more conventional approaches to power, which really only ever allow analysis in terms of which subject has power over the other.

A brief examination of Clausewitz's arguments about war serves to clarify Foucault's intentions in invoking his work. Again, borrowing from Nietzsche, Foucault argues that the genealogist should seek to explain power in terms of "the entry of forces". This echoes one of Clausewitz's major arguments, which was that a battle could never be resolved in a purely dialectical fashion. In a sense, for Clausewitz, there was no such thing as a total victory. This was because the clash of forces necessarily contends with certain limits – the strategic requirements of state survival, for example - which prevent a straightforward dialectic between the armies taking place. Certainly in the abstract one could *imagine* the idea of war as an "act of force" to which there is "no logical limit" (1991: 84). But in the warp and woof of real world events the ideal of such a 'pure' war inevitably fragments.

For Foucault then, war is a metaphor for social relationships in general. The term 'war' is intended here not to evoke the notion of actual war but rather the idea of an abstract analytic principle through which we might better understand the subordination of agents to the requirements of strategy (1984: 86). The strategic relationship brings agents together in a conjecture and determines the nature of their struggle. This implies that Foucault's subject is distinct not just from the subject assumed by structuralism but also the subject of traditional "juridical" models of political power. Where the latter assume that fully autonomous subjects found power relations through mutually advantageous institutions such as the social contract,

Foucault's subject is thoroughly constituted within the relationship. In this sense, Foucault claims that he wants to examine power:

> "not on the basis of the primitive term of the relation but starting from the relation itself, to the extent that it is the relationship itself that determines the elements on which it bears: rather than asking ideal subjects what part of themselves or their powers they have surrendered in order to let themselves become subjects, we have to look at how the relations of subjugation can manufacture subjects" (2003: 265).

Returning to Foucault's reading of Nietzsche then, we see that human interaction is never fully free but rather constrained by strategic requirements, like forces arranged against each other in orders of battle.

Foucault derives three analytic principles from his conclusion that war is the basic model of political life. First, that politics is never simply about the distribution of capacities per se but rather is tempored by the fact we are all "essentially anchored in a certain relationship of force that was established in and through war at a given historical moment that can be historically specified" (2003: 15). Second, that the role of "civil peace", or normal politics, is always to maintain the strategic relation between the forces at play. Thus all political struggles which appear to have the redistribution of 'power' as their objective are all somehow subordinate to the order established by the war. Third, that the only way in which this warlike politics may be overcome – the only way in which the strategic relation may be banished altogether – is through a "trial by strength in which weapons are the final judges". That is to say, if the scenario in which the exercise of "power as continuous warfare" is to be put behind us, then there will have to be something like a "last battle" (2003: 16).

This last comment may seem a little odd, bearing in mind the cautionary stipulations above concerning the phenomenological subject. Precisely who or what may we presume is to win this final battle? Given that for Foucault the subject is constituted within a relation of power that is always modeled on battle, how should we understand this allusion to the possibility of overthrowing "power as continuous warfare"? By way of a further exploration of this question, if not a proper answer, in the next section I turn to the second dimension of Foucault's anti-strategic thought, concerned more explicitly with the militarization or – more specifically – the strategization of social relations in modern liberal societies.

As just discussed, Foucault believed that war provided the basic theoretical model or abstract scheme though which struggle on the field of knowledge could be made intelligible to critique. For him, the vocabulary of war described the manner in which forms of knowledge gained strategic power over the forces immanent to a society. As opposed to more Structuralist models, knowledge was not merely an ideological deployment. Rather, strategic formations of knowledge bring available social forces into relation with each other, energizing them, and directing them to be productive in different ways. Crucially, however, these strategic obligations can vary in different socio-historical contexts. Foucault distinguishes, for example, between forms of rule which are more appropriately described by traditional models of sovereign power, where the strength and integrity of the territory is of paramount importance, and modern liberal forms of rule, where governance is idealized as a form of self-organizing behavior, produced at the level of the population itself. This distinction brings us to second sense in which Foucault believed the concept of war was of particular importance. That is, as a tool in the critique of modern liberal government which he believed to be distinguished by "the necessity of combat and the rules of strategy" (Foucault, 1995: 308).

Foucault's critique of liberal government is primarily intended as a rebuttal to classical political theory, which takes sovereignty to be the unproblematic and legitimate site of authority and legal violence. The essential problem of classical political theory is its assumption that the sovereign state is *the* representative signifier for the nation, 'the people'. This form of ontological creativity is clearly visible in Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, where he posits the political community as a set of simple 'bodies in motion', a simple mass of people moving on a journey from a mythical "state of nature" to the "body-politick", "a multitude united in One Person" (1994: 227). In this early version of liberal contract theory, Hobbes struggles from first principles to portray the State as a compact, an entity composed of "many wills" reduced to one. His work ultimately produces a theory which legitimizes a form of sovereign rule which, once instantiated, may not be challenged by the population lest the common good of peace be lost.

For Foucault, Hobbes portrayal of the state is something of a theoretical sleight of hand, a *fait accompli*, which unravels into something of "a mythicized abstraction" upon closer inspection (1991: 103). It is merely an idealization because it bears little connection to the cultural circumstances of the actual production of sovereignty, or its subjects. One of Foucault's

principle complaints against this abstraction is that it "in effect presupposes that the individual is a subject with natural rights or primitive powers" (2003: 265). This understanding of the political subject is historically particular, however, and inherently caught up with the Ancient Roman discourse of "patria potestas", which placed the father of the Roman household in a position where he had the right to literally "dispose" of his offspring and slaves. In societies where discourses of this nature held power, "the sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring" (1990: 136).

Sovereign society is thus defined by a discourse that permits a strong correlation between the will of the sovereign and the "the general mechanics of power" (1995: 34). One indicator of such power is evidenced in its relation to the body, and the body of the condemned in particular. Foucault notes how the procedure for criminal investigations in sovereign society was in no way accountable or transparent. Indeed, in functional terms at least, the means of investigation and the means of punishment coincided. In this sense, the investigation bespoke the principle that "the establishment of truth was the absolute right and the exclusive power of the sovereign" (1995: 35). The condemned body in this scenario presented simultaneously both "the point of application of the punishment and the locus of extortion of truth" (1995: 42). The absence of any effort to reflect on the actual guilt of the accused thus comes as no surprise – the body is not simply a target of punishment but a site whereupon the sovereign makes its presence known, and affirmed.

In the society of classical law then, "punishment is a ceremonial of sovereignty" and the body is literally a territory or site for the direct application of power (1995: 130). The notion of sovereignty thus appears to be an appropriate 'cipher' of power for societies where this held true, like feudal monarchies. However, argues Foucault this model can hardly be applied to modern liberal regimes. For, far from being predicated on the atomistic "common power" that so concerned Hobbes, liberal regimes actually rely on incredibly complex mechanisms of power for their own reproduction. A more appropriate term then, suggests Foucault, is 'biopower'. That is, a situation wherein the prerogative of power is reversed such that the old sovereign's "right of death" has become the right of the whole social body "to ensure, to maintain, or develop its life" (1990: 136). Thus, where sovereign society is founded on the performative theatrics of legal authority, the project of liberal modernity is predicated on the strategy of defense:

"Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purposes of wholesale slaughter in the name of necessity: massacres have become vital" (1990: 137)

Crucial here is Foucault's point that none of this is done in the name of the sovereign but, rather, in that of "the biological existence of the population" (1990: 137).

Docility, Biopolitics & Security

Many of Foucault's more well-known works deal with the various techniques through which modern regimes go about the business of war in the name of life. In the *History of Sexuality, Volume I,* he suggests that there are in fact two primary techniques of biopower, which work together each as part of an overarching mechanics of social organization in modernity. Emerging in the nineteenth century, the first element in this framework is "disciplinarity", a complex formation of disciplining institutions like prisons and mental hospitals wherein the physical body is taken up and subsumed as a variable in the totality of social relations that is to be optimized and directed in a certain way. What is important here is the desire for a certain docility of the body, which allows for its successful "integration into systems of efficient and economic controls" (1990: 139). The second is "biopolitics", or the regulation of the "species body" of mankind. That is, "the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the contradictions that can cause these to vary" (1990: 139).

Foucault studies docility, the first aspect of biopower, most famously in *Discipline and Punish*. In this volume he traces the rearticulation of the institution of punishment in the transition from sovereignty to modernity. Where once a simple mechanism for the expression of arbitrary sovereign will, the modern justice system redeploys such techniques of punishment as the prison as a mean to regulate and control criminals at the level of their very freedom as autonomous selves: "if one intervenes upon [the body] to imprison it, or make it work, it's in order to deprive the Individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property" (1995: 11). Thus punishment becomes a secondary aspect of the penal process in liberal regimes. While it "still reaches" the physical body, it does so in a rule-guided way that is embedded in a higher purpose. It is no longer about inflicting pain but rather a normalizing penalty.

Foucault suggests that his examination of the productive aspects of the modern prison can be extended to encompass how similar technologies were deployed across a variety of social institutions. The ability to set bodies to work in certain ways made the sort of techniques used in the modern prison attractive to these other institutions. By consequence of this observation, it is possible for Foucault to claim that modern life relies on the transmission of bodies through a series of these disciplinary institutions: "methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed on them a relation of docility-utility" (1995: 181). Disciplinarity is significant then insofar as represents the subjection of the body to all manner of disciplines in order to make it docile. It links the anatomical body to the regime of power, normalizing it and leaving it ready to be marshaled and deployed. In this way, discipline essentially disassociates power from the body, creating "a relation of strict subjection" (1995: 182).

The second aspect of biopower is biopolitics, or the politics of arranging the population of the state. Foucault defines the problem of biopolitics as an "endeavor, begun in the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems presented to governmental practice by the phenomena characteristic of a group of living beings constituted as a population" (1997b: 73). In his various works on the theme of population and its emergence, Foucault is concerned to elaborate a theory of how government of human societies is resolved once the logic of Roman law "finally disappears". In this context, he suggests, the "major problem" of liberalism is posed. That is, the problem "of a dynamic of forces and the rational techniques which enable one to intervene in those forces" (1997a: 69). For Foucault, this concern with population of a state as a 'dynamic of forces' is a quintessentially Clausewitzian moment. After all, suggests Foucault, it was Clausewitz who first raised "the problem of the relationship between politics and strategy, and the problem of relations of force and the calculation of these relations as principles of intelligibility and rationalization" (2000a: 203).

Clausewitz's was thus concerned to make strategy intelligible to politics and thereby to refine the state's ability to make war. This observation prompts Foucault to consider Clausewitz a member of a certain class of scholars who wrote on the notion of a proper 'reason of state' and the need to address the management of its constituent forces in a logistical or strategic fashion. Importantly, this 'reason of state' was development as an antagonistic response to princely reason, such as that elaborated by Machiavelli for example. Princely reason was based on "the

problematic of the prince and his relationship to the principality of which he is lord and master" (2000a: 204). Developing this point further, Foucault notes that scholars of the reason of state typically interpreted *The Prince* as making the argument that "the prince stood in a relation of singularity and externality, and thus transcendence, to his principality" (204). The scholars of state rejected this notion on principle however, preferring something that Foucault calls the "art of government".

While not necessarily opposed to the institutions of docility discussed above, the objective of the art of government concerned the proper role of a set of institutions that attend to the incitement in the population of attitudes and practices, which are themselves conducive to a certain arrangement of productive forces. Foucault cites from Machiavelli's sixteenth century critic, Guillaume de La Perrière, who captured this rationale when he described proper government as "the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end" (2000a: 208). What is remarkable here, in contradistinction to Machiavelli's expressed concern with the expression of sovereign powers over a given territory, is the idea that the government ought to concern itself with a diversity of *things*. Among these things to be arranged properly, we find wealth, means of subsistence, sexual health, etc. The point here being that this new discourse of government encompasses a "plurality of specific aims", and not just those of the principality (2000a: 211). Otherwise expressed, the goal of the art of government is not to assist the prince secure his grip over territory but rather, through better management of these diverse fields, "to reinforce the state itself" (2000b: 316)

The distinctiveness of this new emerging reason of state, and the obstacle it actually presented to the full elaboration of 'rule over things', is evident in Foucault's discussion of the importance of the role of the concepts of the household and population. On the one hand, for La Perrière, the figure of the household is one of a whole possible array of instruments of government. In contrast with the concern of the prince in Machiavelli with mere territory then, in La Perrière one should govern a host of institutions immanent to the state: households, souls, children, convents, families, etc (2000a: 205). These are perhaps unremarkable institutions relative to the power of the state, but what is remarkable is the idea that they too should be subject to the art of government. For La Perrière, these institutions describe a sort of continuum of government, which extends downwards from the sovereign and back up again from these institutions. In terms of managing continuity "upward" within the whole ensemble, it falls to the

prince to prepare himself not simply to manage the territory but to develop within himself such savoir-faire as might be necessary to guarantee that his interventions in these affairs might be productive. To assure reciprocally congruent behavior "downwards" from the sovereign, however, requires a cadre of 'police'.

The choice of the term 'police' here is perhaps an unfortunate one, bringing to mind the contemporary version, which is an instrument of the judicial system. However, as Foucault reminds us, the seventeenth and eighteenth century meaning of the term was rather different, referring to almost any manner of government apparatus which intervened in social relations. The *Polizeiwissenschaft* of the Prussian, Austrian, and Russian civil service, for example, attended to everything from the census to citizen morality and religion, as well as citizen safety, the regulation of convenience and pleasures, animal husbandry, forest maintenance, etc. In this manner, Foucault suggests, the police were the broadly mandated agents of the state, whose task it was both to observe the nature of what is governed, and to organize it appropriately. Their regulations, therefore, would define "the nature of the objects of the state's rational activity" (2000b: 314).

It should be clear then that the 'reason of state' under scrutiny here is not to be conflated with the more despotic frameworks of rule with which the term is more typically associated. Foucault is at pains to distance the art of government from seventeenth century Mercantilism, for example (2000a: 214). Indeed, he suggests, if anything, traditional notions of sovereignty actually served to constrain the full development of the art of government for a long time. Those theories of government based on contract, for example, such as those elaborated by Hobbes and Locke, still relied to a great extent on the general principle of law and subtraction. The art of government collides with these notions, however, proposing a power not so much over "legal subjects" but over "live individuals" (2000b: 307), a point which becomes clearer when Foucault explains the role played by the model of the family in blocking the full development of the art of government. He notes how a variety of sources, including Rousseau's entry in Diderot's *Encylopédie*, reveal that the family was commonly assumed to be the ideal model of economic productivity, a hierarchical organization directed by the discourse of "patria potestas", as discussed above, which placed the father of the household in a position of sovereignty. Crucially, however, at some point in the development of the art of government, the model of the family is abandoned. In its place, we find another idealized source of productivity: the population.

Foucault argues that the emergence of the concept of population was made possible through new techniques for gathering statistics and other forms of surveillance. Government needed to produce quantitative knowledge both about its population and its various distinct types of individuals. This technology allowed government to start to appreciate the unique "regularities" of population: "its own rate of deaths and diseases, its cycles of scarcity, and so on" (2000a: 216). Populations were in this sense possessed of dynamic forces, which could not be reduced to the family. Moreover, the optimization of these forces in the name of the state called for a range of "new tactics and techniques" (2000a: 217). The result of this development was a further refinement of the art of government, which marked a departure from the administrative and disciplinary regimes of seventeenth century, and the essential 'birth' of biopolitics.

Biopolitics thus explains the secret of the coherency of liberal regimes. It creates self-government through its power to "incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impending them, making them submit, or destroying them" (1990: 136). In other words, it is the power to maintain order without the need for legal subtraction. That is, "without needing a sting" (2000a: 211). However, this should not give the impression that biopolitics is not susceptible to moments of great violence. Indeed, Foucault emphasized the role of "apparatuses of security", and "diplomatico-military technics" in general (2000a: 221-222). Of course, it seems counterintuitive to pose these techniques of fostering life as in any way related to war. Yet Foucault insisted that biopolitical society takes its own defense very seriously, noting that war is the logical "counterpart of a power that exerts a positive influence on life" (1990: 137). Crucially, he suggests, we must be clear that this is not war in the sense typically understood by the term. Foucault is at pains to stress that the warlike nature of modern life is not to be attributed to a "return" of the ancient right to kill (1990: 137). Rather, the point is that where previously a sovereign might have had a firm grasp on the capacity to use force, today the very techniques of logistics and war-making have been redirected and become generalized across society. Thus, "the force relationships which for a long time had found expression in war, in every form of warfare, gradually became invested in the order of political power" (1990: 102).

For Foucault then, the biopolitical society is not a society that hides a war. Rather, it is a society wherein military strategic thought plays a "directing role" (cited in Reid, 2003: 4). This is

because modern liberal governments confront the problem of a society that is constituted by "a multiple and mobile field of force relations". The field in question is not a battlefield per se, but a rather a social one, articulated around the notion that the ends of individual life must be to some extent arranged strategically. This concern with strategy explains Foucault's interesting distinction between the power relations of more archaic societies, which he says were "completely permeated by warlike relations" (2003: 267), and those found in more modern contexts, where the powers of war were redirected towards the arrangement and defense of the population.

Foucault's inversion of Clausewitz's maxim, that war is the continuation of politics by other means, thus takes on a supplementary meaning to the Nietzschean connation suggested earlier. As noted above, Foucault includes Clausewitz, the foundational figure in modern strategic thought, among such critics of sovereign power as La Perrière. For beyond arguing for the constraint of war by politics, Clausewitz's *On War* argued that the notion of a 'force of pure war' should be the starting point for a science of marshalling forces on a battlefield. Foucault was clearly impressed by the fact that Clausewitz was creating a science of strategy during this time of the emergence of biopolitics. Clausewitz's principles for the manipulation of forces on the battlefield bore marked resemblance to the sorts of principles that liberal governments were promoting around the same time. Through new technologies of docility and biopolitics, modernity's strategy of power was expanding into a multitude of areas of human life, enabling it to manage and channel it in new ways. One of Foucault's better-known studies, for example, examines how under the banner of conquering "unreason" and "nature" insanity was sequestered into the epistemological construct of disease (Foucault, 1988b). Clausewitz's *On War* marks a parallel attempt to discipline the practice of war, labeled as it was by Kant and other Enlightenment scholars as antithetical to the possibility of a rational order of international politics. As Reid argues then, Clausewitz's writings served as something of a "model discourse", or "strategic principle from which all other areas of discourse take their cue" (Reid, 2003: 4). Governmentality thus makes politics a continuation of war by other means precisely because of the admission of formal military strategy into the science of administering human life.

III. Global Civil War

As Arnold Davidson has averred, many of Foucault's lectures in the 1970s were devoted to the quest for "a mode of thought that analyzes power relations in terms of the model of war, that looks for the intelligibility of politics in the general form of war" (xvii). This section of the chapter extends the Foucauldian perspective outlined above to the global domain. Many scholars today borrow from Foucault's understanding of the domination of the logic of security over modern social life. Agamben (2003), for example, suggests that 'normal politics' has today become increasingly defined by tendency towards a permanent state of exception. Others, like Hardt and Negri (2004) poses this permanent state of exception as an episode in what they call modernity's 'civil war'. In the following pages, I argue that these critiques are of seminal importance in our efforts to appraise the 'long war' on terror. Instead of relying on the discourse of new war, which in its concern to secure a liberal solution seems incapable of addressing the role of modern governmental discourse in legitimizing the war in the first place, here we examine how the horizon of biopolitical problems is increasingly shifting to the global. To examine this issue we need to go beyond Foucault's framework of discipline and biopolitics somewhat. While Foucault described the power of modern government to create and direct subjectivity, he did not seem to be particularly concerned with the possibility biopolitics might become overtly totalitarian, preferring it seems to con. So how does biopolitics become a global state of war? And can we imagine a way in which we might bring this permanent war to an end and finally breaking the grip of strategy over human life?

The Permanent State of Exception

Building on Foucault's concern to distance security and biopolitical rule from the law and sovereignty, Agamben further examines the remaining significance of law in world order today. Observing the generalized retreat of the traditional model of sovereignty in favor of globalization, Agamben accepts Foucault's proposition that it is not the law but rather biopolitical security that today "imposes itself as the basic principle of state activity" (2002). For Agamben, security is about openness, not closure: "security wants to guide disorder" (2002). The risk of a globalized regime of biopolitical security, however, is that in the name of defending itself it may in fact institute a regime of terror.

Agamben devotes much of his work to the theme of legal exceptionalism. That is, the need for a force that can maintain order where the power of the legal norm fails. Like Foucault, Agamben roots the 'right to kill' in the discourse of law and sovereignty. However, he suggests, modern government inhabits a paradoxical space between the models of sovereignty and biopolitics. This is because biopolitics tends to resort to the language of the law in times of crisis; in the state of emergency, for example, biopolitical government can claim to suspend the law. Indeed, it *must* be able to refer to the language of law because its very preservation may require it to be able to present itself as somehow *outside* the law.

Agamben cautions us to examine this tendency to make reference to the law critically, however. As he notes, the state of emergency represents "the suspension of the juridical order itself," the exception "defines law's threshold or limit concept" (4). Otherwise expressed, the exception indicates a break in the legal regime, thereby seemingly reinstalling power in the figure of the sovereign. However, against conservative legal scholars like Carl Schmitt, Agamben maintains that is it is impossible to describe such developments as in any way really *legal*. Schmitt fails, Agamben notes, when he tries to maintain that the sovereign is both outside the law, as well as *of* the law. He fails precisely because "the problem of defining [the state of exception] concerns precisely a threshold, or a zone of indifference, where inside and outside do not exclude each other but rather blur with each other" (2005: 25).

If the exception is a marginal legal concept then it is arguable that the framework of traditional law can only analyze it in a rather constrained fashion. For this reason, argues Agamben, it may be more appropriate to examine the state of exception from a discursive perspective. Indeed, he suggests, it may be through a deeper investigation of the politics of the law that sovereign power's original claim over life might be further clarified.

One channel for this investigation can be found in the notion of 'legal civil war', which results in the invocation of the state of exception, as occurred during the French Revolution, the American Civil War, and the Third Reich. Through the examination of these historical examples, it becomes apparent that the state of exception comes into existence during an insurrection, civil war, or anomie. During such a state of emergency, the law is suspended; thus a state of exception is born. However, the root of the matter can be traced back even further to Aristotle's distinction between *zōē* (bare life) and *bios* (the life within the political community, or *polis*)

(1998: 133). Here, at the most basic discursive level, we can already see an attempt to frame a vertical ordering of subjects in terms of their position relative to the political community.

Agamben argues that we can see the approximate outlines of a "global civil war" emerging today (2003: 10). The exemplary moment of the law's subversion to politics in the current conjecture is George W. Bush's statement of November 13, 2001, wherein he announced that non-US nationals could be held in "indefinite detention" on suspicion of being an opponent in the "war on terror". Captives held under this provision are in a highly ambiguous relation to the law as they were neither considered subject to the Prisoner of War provisions of the Geneva Conventions, nor afforded the right of habeas corpus. This is just one of an array of Schmittian moments in the recent discourse of the US government in its arguing that it must be allowed to act outside the law in order to save the law. As Bush himself has put it, his government's objective is to maintain the law, and "anything we do to that effort, to that end, in this effort, any activity we conduct, is within the law" (see Isikoff, 2004).

At its most abstract level, Agamben's contribution to the debate is an argument that efforts to author law from a position exterior to life are always ultimately impossible. It is therefore impossible to define the exception as legal. Anomie, as opposed to nomos, is the heart of matter. The law ultimately survives through suspending itself, operating exclusively on the basis of pure force. Agamben prefers the term anomie to dictatorship then, as it better describes the real nature of those situations where the Constitution is suspended. Interestingly, however, it is also the root of a certain concept of force or violence which can transcend the historical correlation between law and force. Referring to Schmitt's debate with Walter Benjamin in the 1930s, Agamben notes that Schmitt's work in regards to the exception can be read as an effort to rebut Benjamin's argument on behalf of a concept of "pure violence" (2003: 11). That is, a form of violence that was absolutely exterior to the law – a force which might possibly be understood as a weapon with which one might finally break the bloody dialectic between law and anomie.

If Agamben's work is useful it is because it helps us amplify what is arguably an understated dimension in Foucault's development of the thesis that modern life is war. Agamben suggests that his own mission to find the "zone of indistinction (or, at least, the point of intersection) at which technologies of individualization and totalizing procedures converge" (1998: 5-6). Foucault's understanding of biopolitics shows us just how clearly the principles of logistics and strategy have become imbricated in the state's pursuit of a healthy population.

Agamben argues our analysis of biopolitical individualization must also include a "juridico-institutional" component (1998: 6), as the biopolotical project is carried out in perpetual fear of anomie. This is not necessarily anything that Foucault would disagree with. After all, Foucault was at pains to emphasize that there was a disciplinary and totalitarian dimension to biopower. As he noted, biopolitics never succeeds in completely supplanting discipline, or even sovereignty (2000a: 219). Foucault was simply to show that "the state can only operate on the basis of already existing power relations" (1980a: 122). The risk in Agamben's writings is that we might lose sight of this valuable point. We might, for example, come to restrict out analyses of all these instances of exceptionality and torture to the authorship of the US *state*. This is something Foucault would raise serious concerns about. Agamben's focus on power's fear of anomie does bring aspects of biopower into relief that are not obvious in Foucault's genealogy of modern power. Yet we must keep the immanence of US state power in mind.

Empire's Civil War

If Agamben amplifies the anti-strategic dimensions of Foucault's work, one suspects that yet more could be said about anomie and power's historical struggle to transcend it. For this, we might well look to Hardt and Negri. In their work published just before 9.11.01, Hardt and Negri had already made the prescient observation that the globalization of interdependency, described so often in innocuous terms by liberal international relations theorists, represents not so much the harbinger of 'new war' but, rather, marks another episode in what they term the "civil war" of "modernity", a struggle which has today "erupted again in full force" (2000: 90). Against Agamben, however, Hardt and Negri insist throughout their arguments that efforts to inscribe verticality are ultimately vacuous.

From its beginnings, argue Hardt and Negri, modernity was defined by a great antagonism between a radical, revolutionary tendency that aimed to disinter the power of the divine, or transcendental, from the centre of social life, and an already constituted regime which tried to keep that tendency in abeyance. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, they suggest, the waning status of God in human life made space for a new ontology in which man could consider himself 'modern'. Henceforth, man's power over space and time could be considered immanent, or internal, to himself and not transcendent, in God. This reclaiming of power from heaven instigated many truly profound effects on the balance of rule in European society and Hardt and

Nergi offer a great many examples of these in *Empire*. Christians, for example, were empowered to reappropriate their religion from its command structure under the banner of William of Occam's "multitude of the faithful" (2000: 73). Similarly, reformers in the Dutch lowlands were empowered by the publication of Spinoza's *Ethics*, which the authors take to be a master statement in charting the endless possibilities for the construction and reconstruction of human subjectivity by its own hands or, rather, through its own desire.

According to Hardt and Negri, however, while the advent of humanism and modernity started out as a "radical revolutionary process" ultimately there came a counterrevolution (2000: 74). That is, modernity had a second mode, "constructed to wage war against the new forces and establish an overarching power to dominate them" (2000: 74). This second mode was the reaction of transcendent power acting in alienation, a power fearful that continued human freedom would result in a "subversive delirium" (2000: 79). A fear which was apparent, for example, in the counterreformationist movement of the Catholic Church, which struggled to reassert itself as a meditative device between desire and the world in order to guarantee its own survival (2000: 76).

Crucially, however, the war effort of transcendental power was not waged exclusively through actual war, although there was much of that. More importantly, however, the stakes of the war concerned "human nature" itself (2000: xv). By this, Hardt and Negri mean to suggest that the strategy of power deployed in this war were not necessarily destructive. Rather, they were in fact often productive, too. Here they draw explicitly on the writings of Foucault, and his concept of biopower. As discussed above, Foucault used this term to refer to power not merely over life but over the desire and moral orientation of life. Published in the wake of 9.11, Hardt and Negri's second major publication together, *Multitude*, concretizes their understanding of the biopolitical terms of modernity's civil war in relation to the thesis of 'new war' discussed at the start of this chapter. Interestingly, Hardt and Negri do not challenge the basic description put forth by the new war theorists yet they do challenge their interpretation of it. Referring to the current conflagration as "global state of war" they effectively repose the question of the new war as an episode in their own narrative of modernity's civil war (2004: 12). This latest episode is fundamentally novel, however, because whereas previous such episodes had been sited within the confines of the nation state, today's struggles, while heterogeneous, are waged in the expanses of a global "regime of biopower" (2004: 13).

As with Agamben, Hardt and Negri believe that war itself has become "a permanent social relation" and thereby the "primary organizing principle of society, and politics merely one of its means or guises" (2004: 12). This is an entirely biopolitical phenomenon, they add: "that is, a form of rule aimed not only at controlling the population but producing and reproducing all aspects of social life" (2004: 13). Like Agamben again, they read contemporary war "a general phenomenon, global and interminable" (2004: 3). However, Hardt and Negri are more explicit about war's nature as a strategy of modernity. For them, biopolitical war entails the production of particular economic and cultural subjectivities, "creating new hearts and minds through the construction of new circuits of communication, new forms of social collaboration, and new modes of interaction" (2004: 81). Wars fought on this basis, they suggest, are beholden to an "imperial humanitarian" ethic, one that frames a conflict as necessarily in "the interests of humanity as whole" (2004: 60). In this sense, the biopolitical definition of war "changes war's entire legal framework", for "whereas war previously was regulated through legal structures, war has become regulating by constructing and imposing its own legal framework" (2004: 22).

Pure Violence Against the State

A question that Foucault does not seem to analyze in his discussion of biopolitics is why techniques of logistical organization are required by the State at all. Reading Foucault, one gets only a limited sense of the historical significance of these principles. Similarly, it is not clear how Foucault would advise us to engage with them. In contrast, both Agamben and Hardt and Negri pose the strategization of life as a negative response to anomie, or a fear of immanent power. By way of a conclusion to this chapter, I want to briefly set out some comments about a theory of power that allows this notion of the vacuity of state power to be more completely developed. More specifically, I turn to Deleuze and Guattari, who emphasize the irreducibility of human life to sovereign power and, in doing so, leave us with a theoretical means through which we might imagine a way of releasing the grip of the former over the latter.

As elaborated in their double-volume work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari read Clausewitz in a manner quite similar to Foucault yet concentrate more on the 'pure force' dimension of his argument. Thus, where Foucault understands the strategy of the modern logistical state as an appropriation of the techniques of military science, Deleuze and Guattari argue that this development must itself be situated in relation to a primordial state tendency. That

is, the 'capture' of the flows of pure force, or 'nomadic' energies, that it finds within its borders. For them, war is not an instrument of the State but, rather, a practice proper an autonomous social body that the State must 'capture' in order to reproduce itself. While Foucault is the theorist who scrutinized the modern state's production of logistical life, it is Deleuze and Guattari who, also borrowing from Clausewitz, most clearly link identify the state's need to commandeer pure force. Moreover, in this way, Deleuze and Guattari also provide a set of concepts that might be used to challenge state power.

As Patton explains, there is a "zone of indiscernibility" between the terms, as used by Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari (2000: 74). Both parties are directly concerned with what we might call the conditions of possibility of social outcomes and speak of these conditions in terms of 'abstract machines' and 'diagrams of power'. Within this zone of indiscernibility however, it is clear that Deleuze and Guattari are somewhat closer to Agamben's understanding of the basis of state power. In distinction to Foucault's approach to the modern state, which seems to focus exclusively on biopower, Deleuze and Guattari are concerned that the state is always haunted by an original trace of sovereignty. Like Agamben, who understands "the originary structure" to incorporate both biopower and sovereignty (1998: 27), for Deleuze and Guattari the advent of the State designates the actualization of a pure juridical function over life. The sovereign or despot itself is not all that important and nor is its function per se, "which can be limited". What matters, rather, is "the 'megamachine' of the State, a functional pyramid that has the despot at its apex, an immobile motor, with the bureaucratic apparatus as its lateral surface and its transmission gear, and the villagers at its base, serving its working parts" (1977: 194).

For Deleuze and Guattari then, the state in its most abstract form is a machine that assembles human beings in a hierarchy and puts them to work in such a manner that this hierarchy can be reproduced. They avoid historical details here, suggesting that it is possible only to describe this state in conceptual form, as the Urstaat, or ultimate state form. This is a crucial point because no sooner than the Urstaat is created then it begins to lose its pure form. That is, it begins to lose its grip on the life that it is attempting to overcode. The whole process can be summarized as follows. The State is born when the institutions of a primitive social regime, what they call a "territorial machine", is seized by a despot, or some external power – as they note, the state "always comes from without" (1997: 195). However, to impose his rule, the despot must forcefully 'deterritorializes' the tribe, effacing the relations of signification that bound it to its

primitive norms, before 'reterritorializing' it in such a way that his own body achieves the position of supreme source of the law. This new regime of meaning is inaugurated by force of arms and an attendant forceful imposition of a code of meaning or a regime of signs. Thus, through a "terror without precedent", the despot overcodes the already existing codes of the primitive society (1997: 192). The primitive codes are either destroyed or co-opted and reduced to "secondary parts in the new machine" (1997: 192).

The key move made by the despot in bringing about the birth of the state form then is overcoding: "Overcoding is the operation that constitutes the essence of the State, and that measures both its continuity and its break with the previous formations" (1977: 199). This move is significant because it suggests a theory of the origin of the state that contrasts in a striking manner with the theories of the origin of the state espoused by such thinkers as Hobbes. For contract theorists like Hobbes, the state form exists because long ago rational men joined in a contract in order to escape the permanent war of man against man in the state of nature. They nominated a sovereign to lead them to peaceful life by investing in that sovereign the exclusive right to make war. However, for Deleuze and Guattari, "this new alliance is something altogether different from a treaty or a contract" (1997: 195). The primitive society is not abolished by a contract between rational actors. Rather, it persists as inherited from the previous machine but only in a "bricked over" form (1997: 196). This bricking over is established through the deployment of a "despotic signifier", decoding the primitive ("territorial") regime of norms and values, and replacing it with a more abstract regime, but one ultimately reterritorialized on the body of the despot (1977: 206).

Deleuze and Guattari's state exists in a permanent state of fear, however. And to understand why this is so, it is helpful to address two of their key concepts: nomadism and the war machine. Deleuze and Guattari borrow the concept of nomadism from the anthropological research of Pierre Clastres, who argued that the applications of war extend beyond simply creating and preserving state power. For nomadic peoples, in fact, war was in fact a mechanism directed against the state form itself (Clastres, 1977). Deleuze and Guattari interpret this to mean that nomads used the force of war not merely to fend off aggressive states but the very possibility of the Urstaat emerging among their own ranks. The war machine is an abstract concept then, intended to evoke human life conceived in a manner "irreducible to the state apparatus, to be outside its sovereignty and prior to its law: it comes from elsewhere" (1987: 352). Thus, where

the abstract function of the State is to retain some form of territoriality, or interiority, at all times, the war machine is "a pure form of exteriority, whereas the State apparatus constitutes the form of interiority we habitually take as a model, or according to which we are in the habit of thinking" (1987: 354).

The idea of the state as an interiorizing machine is a hugely significant point – and it can be understood when applied to the historical relation of war to the State. Ever since Clausewitz, we have known the nation state as that entity which may declare war legitimately. We tend to differentiate between the condition of peace, as secured by the State, which is construed as the normal condition of civil life, and the exceptional condition of war, which only the state may sanction. For Clausewitz then, "war is the continuation of politics by other means". However, as Foucault suggested, if Clausewitz felt the need to labor this point then there must have been some who thought otherwise: that politics is the continuation of war. Focusing on this critical possibility, Deleuze and Guattari note that in the Middle Ages, the of order states was seriously challenged by the movement of nomadic peoples. These hordes constituted a pure war machine – not because they only had war as their primary objective (1987: 420) but because the essence of the nomadic movement is:

"the constitutive element of smooth space, the occupation of this space, displacement within this space, and the corresponding composition of the people: this is its sole and veritable positive object (nomos)" (1987: 417)

By this definition, the state and the nomad war machine are antithetical and destined for collision: whereas the function of the state is to assert verticality and closure, the war machine asserts movement. To defeat the nomad war machine, the state is forced to develop its own apparatus of movement and logistical know-how. That is, in order to defeat the war machine, it must be able to emulate its technology and either create or capture a war machine of its own. Thus the ability to strategize movement is coopted by the state for military-political purposes – or, rather, the potential of the war machine is reduced to one sole objective: making war for the state.

The capture of the war machine is accompanied by a broad social transformation, which contributes simultaneously to a further break down in the logic of the Urstaat. For, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, taxation and public works are required in order to maintain the state's warriors (1987: 419). Indeed, as they explain, the State only really needs a fiscal surplus from the

moment it appropriates the war machine (1987: 450). Beyond this, however, this development also raises the specter of total-war, or the enmeshment of the whole social body in war-related activity and logistics. Given that the reason of state is to seek maximal conditions for the realization of surplus, and thereby maximal potential for making war, "the object itself" becomes unlimited. Thus, like Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari argue for a reversal of Clausewitz: modern politics is a form of war by other means (1987: 421).

That Deleuze and Guattari identify with Foucault's argument in favor of a reversal of Clausewitz's maxim suggests a common frame of reference in their appraisal of the role of strategy in governing state policy. However, by emphasizing the fact that the technics of war were originally 'appropriated' by the state, Deleuze and Guattari usefully remind us of Clausewitz's suggestion that 'real wars' are constrained by the political requirements of states. Clausewitz's concept of 'absolute' war, on the other hand, seems to concur with this notion of a pure nomadic war machine.

IV. Conclusion

This chapter concludes my exploration of the contemporary 'debate about empire' and its bearing on IR theory. The previous chapter developed the core analytic framework for my entire project by addressing the relevance of constitutive theories of empire for how we think about sovereignty. The present chapter applied this framework to the question of the modern state's relation to war. The topic of war is tremendously important, given the recent developments of our time. However, mainstream analyses of today's 'new war' tend to limit debate on this issue by suggesting that its only stake is whether or not Clausewitz's dictum, that war is the extension of state policy, remains true in the present context. In this way, they remain stuck in the idea that global terror must be analyzed in terms simply of a multiplication or pluralization of actors in global society. I have tried to challenge this idea here by pointing to the work of a variety of scholars who use unorthodox readings of Clausewitz to suggest his continued relevance in the study of modern relations of power. In the first part of the chapter I examined Foucault's *Nietzschean* reading of Clausewitz, which posits war as the basic model of all social relations. I also showed how Foucault's studies of modern government seem to suggest Clausewitz as a seminally important figure in the development of a science of strategy and, thus, as having played a crucial role in the birth of the reason of state.

Beyond Foucault, however, I have also suggested that mainstream critics of 'new war' also rely on an assumption of the state as simply a pure form of interiority, untrammeled by relations with exteriority. As I have argued, Agamben's extension of Foucault's arguments about the securitization of modern life and the permanent state of exception focus our attention on the anomic as a genuine source of state fear. Building on this theme, I detailed Hardt and Negri's genealogy of a long running historical 'war' between transcendent and immanent power, culminating in the new manifestation of the former as global regime of constitutive power, or empire, with the consequence that modernity's civil war has now become 'global'. Hardt and Negri, I suggest, are explicit about the nature of this war as a strategy of modernity. That is, as an effort to effect a capture of forces refusing to conform to its strategic designs.

Finally, I attempted to relate Hardt and Negri's arguments about the global civil war to concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari, who prefigured the work of Hardt and Negri in many respects. My objective here was to more clearly elaborate the theoretical basis for thinking about war on its own terms, outside of the power of the state's law. This point is of great significance for the debate about 'new war'. Indeed, as Deleuze and Guattari insinuate, this debate has been moot for a long time: "the State has always been in relation with an outside and is inconceivable independent of that relationship" (1987: 360). The efforts of new war discourse to pathologize forms of war that lie outside the state's power belie its normative agenda to legitimize continued state colonization of the concept. Despite its liberal pacific pretensions then, this discourse is complicit in the declaration of a permanent state of exception. The challenge for IR theorists now is to produce a theory of resistance that is capable of supplanting this discourse.

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