Systems Theory: From Modelski to Singer

This chapter deals with the theoretical efforts of the most influential among IR scholars who have applied the systems perspective, namely Modelski, Bull, Rosecrance, Holsti, Charles McClelland and Singer. There are others whose researches drew upon elements of the systems perspective, such as Rummel, Brecher and Wilkenfeld on conflict[1]; Deutsch and Waltz on communications and bipolarity; and Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel on regional sub-systems. But Waltz is already covered in Chapter 5; Cantori and Spiegel will be taken up in Chapter 13B on regionalism, where it more fittingly belongs, and Bull in Chapter 23 on the English

School. So, in this chapter, we will discuss Modelski, Rosecrance, McClelland, Holsti and Singer.

GEORGE MODELSKI'S AGRAIA/INDUSTRIA AND LONG CYCLES

For Modelski,[2] 'the universe of international systems, past, present, future and hypothetical' is the proper subject of theoretical study of IR. He shifted its analysis from the conventional European centre by including non-Western systems, howsoever different in their behavioural attributes. Lamenting that, till lately, IR has remained almost wholly preoccupied with the international system dating back to the end of the Middle Ages, except scanty textbook references to earlier, 'exotic' international systems such as the Near Eastern or the Chinese, he said 'because of this lack of comparative historical data, some crucial events of even the comparative international system have remained obscure'.[3]

To capture this 'wealth of experience' and to show how international systems can change and have changed over time, Modelski used two sets of concepts: 'Agraria and Industria' and the 'long cycles' of world leadership and global politics. Following Parsons' and Marion J. Levy, Jr's structural–functional conception of systems, he argued that, despite being analytical concepts, 'Agraria' and 'Industria' facilitate comparative study of all known international systems, essentially social systems, since 'the same functional requirements are satisfied' in all of them, and concrete systems are nearly always combinations of the two analytic types.[4] These two models help us divide history into certain periods, called the 'Agraria system' and the 'Industria system', both of which wound around the furtherance of international communication and the preservation of culture. In the Agraria, preservation of the culture of a minuscule international elite was concentrated in the cities and disseminated by the courts, which functioned as 'agencies of integration'. The goal of the international system was to ensure that prevailing conflicts and differences did not perturb or unsettle this dissemination. By contrast, cultural maintenance in the Industria involved not the perpetuation of a 'specific' culture or cultural leadership but the continuation and dissemination of certain conventions of behaviour by the nation states, accepted as important and legitimate by the more advanced nations. Modelski gives pre-eminence to leadership, manifested in its 'long cycles' in world politics, as one of the most important determinants of international systems. This is a 'parsimonious device for describing and analysing the principal structures and chief processes of world politics', which 'offer a new perspective' on it, 'permit the careful exploration of the ways in which world wars have recurred, and lead states such as Britain and the USA have succeeded each other in an orderly manner', draw attention to the fact that great wars and leading powers were also linked to waves of major innovations, such as 'the age of discoveries or the industrial revolution' and 'help cultivate a long-term outlook on international affairs'. Adherents of long cycles theory hold that major wars and leadership changes 'relate to each other in repeating patterns', which in turn 'link up to major trends of global development'. Modelski claims that these patterns 'provide a memory and an organizing myth for organizing knowledge about past world politics', apart from affording a more balanced perspective on the field that is widely regarded

as congenitally conflict-ridden.[5] Far from being the offshoot of some aberration or deviance, the long cycle is 'the normal course of structural change in global politics', 'a consequence of the ordinary working of a large scale, and a difficult-to-observe, system' and a global political system is a functionally specific set of relationships designed for 'organised pursuit of collective action at the global level…a management network centred on the relationship between a lead unit and the contenders for leadership'.[6]

As for leadership, in domestic politics, it is conceptualized as functions performed by determinate individuals, but in 'global politics leadership is primarily performed by complex organizations', like nation states, and by individuals acting in their name. Modelski prefers the word 'leadership' to 'hegemony', whether used in Greek, Aristotelian or Wallersteinian senses (not Gramscian, which he does not mention), and warns that even a 'legitimate' conception of leadership 'needs to be balanced by serious attention to the challenger'.[7] A challenger not only 'creates systemic perception' of the imperfections and misbalances of the status quo,[8] but the tussles between ascending challengers and declining hegemons keep the system evolving. Spain and France were central challengers during the first two global wars, Germany during the last two global wars. The Soviet Union was the central challenger during the fifth cycle (till as I would add) the emergence of China, before the Shanghai Communiqué.

Initially, Modelski's time scale for studies of leadership in global systems stretched from 1500 AD, for him the year of origin of the modern international system, since long cycles as 'universally valid laws' of political initiatives were supposedly identifiable under 'regularities characteristic of the modern world system'.[9] However, later he traced his searches back to much earlier historical periods,[10] from his belief that the international system undergoes some 'evolutionary learning'.[11] These leadership-centric global systems have passed through four completed cycles and a fifth is in progress.[12] Each cycle (of 120 years on average) has four phases (each of approximately 30 years), such as (a) global war (resulting in the emergence of the new great power and leader), (b) world power, (c) de-legitimization of world power and (d) de-concentration of power to other actors. These can be studied from two perspectives: systemic and learning. The vicissitudes of world power are determined by both and economic capabilities. From the systemic perspective, the generation-long phases start with world power (as, e.g., the USA between 1945 and 1975), move on to de-legitimation, are succeeded by de-concentration (2000—) and finally end in global war. By contrast, in the learning perspective, the analytical emphasis is on the process of learning and selection, right from agenda setting (1975–2000) up to coalition building (2000–2030) and macro-decision (relating to the selection of the new global leadership and reforms of the political structure on the basis of a new agenda) to be given effect in the phase that follows. In the learning sequence, an incisive point is made about the relationship between long cycles and global wars: 'the long cycle does not "need" a global war'; rather, 'the "macro-decision" phase' may be envisaged as assuming 'a non-violent form, more akin, for example, to an electoral process'.[13]

For Modelski, the critical factor which brought about the post-1500 shift in the inter-regional configuration of the global polity lay in the skirting of the trade route linking Europe with China through the Middle East in favour of a new trans-oceanic nexus based on new logistical potentialities. Relying more on inter-regional structural complexity than on Wallerstein's neo-Marxian thrust on integrated production

processes embodied in a particular form of division of labour, Modelski showed how the passing of command of the sea from Venice to Portugal after 1500 started the series of world leaders. The time frames of the long cycles and their world leaders were as follows: (a) 1494–1580 or alternatively 1517–1608 (world leader Portugal); (b) 1581–1688 or alternatively 1609–1713 (world leader United Province of the Netherlands); (c) 1689–1791 or alternatively 1714–1815 (world leader Great Britain); (d) 1792–1913 or alternatively 1816–1945 (world leader Great Britain) and (e) 1914— or alternatively 1946—(world leader the USA). Transitions between these long cycles have been brought about by major wars from which the principal victor has become the new world power or leader and has been able to reshape the international system to suit its own needs. Five such periods of global war are identified by Modelski, concluded by the two world wars.[14]

Association between Nation States and World Power

Modelski's systems thinking did neither valourize post-16th-century European cities like Braudel[15] or modern apologists of world cities,[16] nor did it ignore states like Waltzian theorists, and thought it 'confusing to regard the "states-system" as some sort of external and objective reality' outside states.[17] It was also indefensible that just 'because a system lacks a world state or empire, it therefore has no political organization of any kind or that such political linkages as can be found within it cannot therefore be regarded as "basic"'. Terming entities 'uniquely dominant in the global system' as world powers, Modelski showed how in the 19th century Britain sustained a structure of world order so comprehensively that at the close of that period it became known as 'Pax Britannica' and how, since 1500, Portugal, the Netherlands, Britain and the USA took turns in the management of global interdependence during the cycles, with varying rates of success and thereby earned the epithet of great powers. Of course, just because world powers created and sustained the global system, it does not negate the role of economics, commerce, banking and finance in the 'global interdependence' of the same time frame of the cycle.[18] But these long cycles would not have existed without their 'urge to make a world order; and the special properties and necessary weaknesses of the global systems', since in 'the most elementary sense long cycles occur because there is a global system susceptible to such fluctuations'. Table 9.1 adapted from Modelski shows how the emergence of world powers is the result of 'formative global conflict', 'legitimizing settlement', 'institutional innovations' and 'landmarks of descent'.

   In all the above-mentioned systems of world order, all world powers were simultaneously also nation states, playing dominant roles: Portugal, after achieving national boundaries by 1249, and territorializing its national identity through successful wars against the Moors and Castile (1383–1411); the Dutch state, after being cast into shape in Civil War with the Spanish monarchy and embarking on its global outreach after solidifying its national institutions; England waiting till the achievement of comprehensive command of the seas in the 18th century even after winning its identity in the Elizabethan engagement with Philip and the USA being 'among the world's oldest and most successful nation states'. This first shows that 'successful establishment of an effective national political system…has been the precondition for successful global action' as in the case of Portugal, the Netherlands and Britain; and papal

TABLE 9.1 Lineages of World Powers in the Politics of Long Cycles

World Powers	Generative Major War	Legitimizing Treaty/Truce/ Conference	Assistive Discovery/ Innovations	Grand Climacterics of Downslide
Portugal	Italian Wars (1494–1517)	Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)	State-sponsored exploration/discovery Global network of bases. Carreira da India. Antwerp entrepôt	Spanish annexation. Wars of Religion. Sovereignty (1576)
United Provinces of the Netherlands	Spanish Wars (1579–1609) (War of Dutch Independence)	12-year truce with Spain (1609)	'Mare liberum', free trade, Amsterdam Bank, bourse, grain exchange, United East India Company	Wars with England, War with France (1672–1678). The English Revolution
Great Britain (first stint)	French Wars (1688–1713) (Louis XIV)	Treaty of Utrecht (1713)	Rule of Seas (Navy). European BOP. Indirect control of world trade. Bank of England, national debt	Independence of the USA. Partitions of Poland. French Revolution
Great Britain (second stint)	French Wars (1792–1815)	Paris, Vienna Congress (1814–1815)	Naval supremacy, antislavery, free trade, gold standard, Industrial Revolution, Latin American independence, 'opening' of china and Japan	Anglo-German naval competition, Imperialism, Russian Revolution, Great Depression
USA	German wars (1914–1916, 1939–1945)	Versailles Treaty (1919). Yalta, San Francisco, Potsdam	United Nations, strategic nuclear deterrence, MNCs, decolonization, space explorations	Rise of Eastphalia*

Source: Adapted from Modelski, 'The Long Cycles of Global Politics and the Nation State', 225.
* Added by author as factor that is weakening leadership

power, lone city states such as Venice or mighty continental empires such as 'the Hapsburgs, the Ming dynasty or the Mughals' could not do what nation states could in mobilizing the resources and furnishing 'the coherence, motivation and strength of purpose' needed for 'such extraordinary ambitions and far flung enterprises'. Second, nation states responded to global power in a 'defensive reaction', as when Peter the Great emulated the Dutch to rebuild Russia; France took on Spain and then England; or, when learning from its evident success and effectiveness, Germany imitated Britain to construct its Wehrmacht.

Nation states which in their competition for global control were treated by the whole world as 'models…to imitate, irrespective of needs, special conditions or requirements' promoted the longevity of the global systems ('periodicity' for Modelski), proved themselves as the 'most effective units for fighting *global war*' and extracted '*monopoly* rents' from the world system for their members as global powers were hamstrung as pillars of a global system by two limitations: (a) their capacity to extend 'bonds of solidarity to non-nationals', together with 'the links of communication, education and culture' they can provide to infuse strength and flexibility in the global system, is severely hamstrung by their national identity, and the potentials of this 'specialization' in political and economic issues to make even reciprocally advantageous deals 'oppressive and exploitative'; and (b) proneness of nation states as global powers to confuse territorial control with national security and become colonialist, though they find it hard to assimilate colonial lands and become subject to their anti-colonialist strivings.

Modelski divides the century-long cycles into ascending and descending phases, with the former stemming from the disruptions and disintegrations from which a global war springs, and from the 'creative and constructive' aftermath of that war, manifested in the emergent 'solidarity', 'coalition building' and the redefinition of common goals', as seen in the Vienna Congress. But the consensus burns out due to unattended global problems brought to the fore by 'new leaders and competitors' to experience a descent and downturn of the curve. The roles of the nation state in these two phases also differ. During the ascending phase, the global power addresses global problems, forges 'new national–governmental or transnational institutions' and satisfies the most pressing needs of the other components of the global system. But this consensual position starts getting eroded by 'the seeds of…dissolution' ingrained in the process. First, global power sustained by a nation state among other nation states is essentially 'tenuous', because of its weak institutionalization. Second, as devices basically unsuited for coping with the complex problems of global polity, the nation state-sponsored global power will falter in the long run, having to rest on the shoulder of its own people to bear the leadership burden. When in times of general peace and increasingly complex relationships the capabilities of global powers will be unequal to global problems, the resultant demands on other nation states to rise to the new tasks will induce them to take new responsibilities. Third, with the monopoly of the erstwhile leader or global power declining, a fresh contest among major powers for the support of minor powers will induce them to aid their nation-building efforts through foreign economic assistance. This oligopolistic competition will result in strengthening of nation states and sharpening of varieties of nationalism and counter-nationalism.

So, for Modelski, the salience of nation states in the global system was an upshot of two processes, 'a secular historical trend' of a widespread proliferation of nation states and long cycles. Truly, after the spread of nation states reaches its inevitable

geographical and physical saturation, the process decelerates and the curve levels off, leaving scope only for 'qualitative and intensive growth'. And the formation of nation states and the operation of the global system being mutually contributory, the approaching completion of the first is bound to 'have repercussions on the global system'. But that theoretical foray into the future does nothing to negate the historical record of the long cycle as a factor that increased the salience of nation states.[19]

Modelski and his associates enlarged the scope of the research programme from the 1970s to the 1990s to take it, in a globalist take, beyond the 'conventional limit of 1500'[20] to extend it first to 'the entire millennium of the modern era (from 1000 onwards) and then the past five thousand years of world system development'. They even focused on new interconnections to venture that the 'relevant experience…began about one thousand years back and centred on Sung China…prompted far reaching Mongol experiments with world empire, and then moved to Renaissance Italy, and onward to Western Europe, until the onset of full globalization in the last century'.[21] Moving from the past to the future, they also posited on the basis of basic data about the five global wars between 1492 and 1945, that political long cycles have co-evolved 'with the rise and development of leading economic sectors', global wars being not an essential feature of global politics in general, 'but of a rather distinct segment of that experience from the late 15th century onwards'. From that perspective, the long cycle has propelled political evolution all through the past millennium and remains operative, but it has evolved through two periods: 'those of (1) preconditions (and failure of world empire), and (2) formation of a global nucleus, before entering the third one, that of (3) global organization, since about 1850'. The typical institution of period (2) was that of global leadership, which 'continues into the preparatory phases of period (3)'. The consecutive 'iterations of global leadership have produced increasing increments of global order' that have been mainly offshoots of global war settlements, yet they were all weak in institutionalization. The global political system has entered the second of the preparatory phases, but not as yet the third, decisive, phase of the 'formation of global organization'. On this broader canvas, global wars appear as a time-bound form, an aspect of a long tradition 'from leadership to organization'.[22]

RICHARD ROSECRANCE: NINE STABLE AND UNSTABLE HISTORICAL SYSTEMS

Famous for his researches on the emergence of 'the trading states' and its underpinning 'commercial liberalism',[23] as well as attention to the rise of the 'virtual state',[24] Rosecrance also provided significant insights into the systems perspective on IR, not confined to his identification of nine distinct international systems between 1740 and 1960, and classification of them into stable and unstable categories. He has offered one of the broadest definitions of international systems in his first book.[25] In his scheme of things, interactions, both international and environmental, and elite responses generated stable or unstable outcomes. Rosecrance's explanation of them is divided into three tiers, each of which springs from a different analytical base. The first tier is rooted in conventional historiography. The second rests on a systematic investigation of the categories required for differentiating international systems. The third focuses on the basic determinants of stability and instability.

In the first axis, Rosecrance identified nine historical systems arising from 'traditional divisions of historical scholarship', such as (a) 18th century, 1740–1789; (b) Revolutionary Imperium, 1789–1814; (c) Concert of Europe, 1814–1822; (d) Truncated Concert, 1822–1848; (e) Shattered Concert, 1841–1871; (f) Bismarckian Concert, 1871–1890; (g) Imperialist Nationalism, 1890–1918; (h) Totalitarian Militarism, 1918–1945 and (i) Post-war, 1945–1960. Kaplan sought to capture the entire time frame of their operations through the BOPS and the LBPS models, though the latter continued for nearly three decades more. These historical divisions supposedly suggested changes in crucial turns in the modes, techniques and objectives of diplomacy in IP, which invested each system with its distinctive style. While the '18th Century' and the 'Concert of Europe' periods were stable systems, the 'Revolutionary Imperium' and 'Imperialist Nationalism' periods experienced instability, meaning 'chaos, breakdown and war'. Theory sketch of each period contained influences coming from the intellectual and cultural milieu of the elites, their international exposure and receptivity to both the structure and processes of IR and the constitution of other actor systems in it, the availability and impact of instruments of violence, the ideological devotedness of the masses and the presence of international institutions such as the Concert or of instruments of regulation like shifting alignments.[26]

The second axis identifies those categories changes wherein brought about resultant transformations in his nine historical systems. This identification would not only facilitate branding system outcomes as stable or unstable but also help 'systematize the historical analysis into categories in terms of which the separate systems may be specified'. Demonstration of variations in these extracted categories would show 'how changes in the components make for changes in the international system'. The elements relevant for discovering the conditions of stability in these systems are (a) disturbance inputs, (b) regulatory mechanisms reacting to the disturbances, (c) environmental constraints influencing the range of possible outcomes and (d) the outcomes themselves. Among disturbance inputs are forces such as oppositional ideologies, domestic insecurity, disparities between nations in terms of resources and conflicting national interests. The regulator mechanisms included the Concert of Europe, the UN or an informal consensus that the major European nations had reached in the 18th century. Environmental restraints avowedly limited the range of possible outcomes, such as in the period of Revolutionary Imperium, when the variety of actor disturbances was disproportionately greater than the variety of regulatory options, leading outcomes of this system to largely cross recognized limits of stability. Environmental restraints on effective regulation permitted conflict, as a result of which the system could not be geared to a pattern of outcomes that kept within acceptable bounds. Systems are equilibrial or disequilibrial depending on which element is dominant, the regulator or the disturbance.

The third tier of Rosecrance's analysis constructs a 'still broader view' of international systems, in which he seeks to conceptualize and examine basic determinants of each of the nine systems: elite direction (attitudes), degree of elite control, resources available to controlling elites and ability of the system to cope with disturbances. In his list of domestic sources of international action, elites of national units are highlighted most. The questions which arise here are as follows: (a) did the elite feel secure in its position domestically, or did they feel threatened by developments in the international system? (b) The control or security of the elite within the system being so

important, did the elite scent any weakening in their position and control? (c) Was the availability of disposable resources to the elite and their ability to mobilize them adequate? And (d) Was the system's capacity to ease the disturbances or control them adequate?

Diagnoses of stable systems on the basis of this three-tiered exploration was to be done through a comparison of first, third, fourth, sixth and ninth systems, in all of which disturbances were at the lowest ebb and the regulator was at its strongest. The elites supported the status quo both internally and internationally, with political attitudes lacking a strong hue of ideology, except in the ninth, in which elites were not loth to explore means short of war. On the other hand, the traits of an unstable system are deducible by comparing the second, fifth, seventh and eighth systems, all of which actor evidenced high actor disturbances measured by the capacity of the regulator, and the assortment of means available to him. Unhappy with the status quo and troubled by feelings of insecurity, the elites wanted to advance their internal and external position with respect to the international system and the actors in it through expedient appeals to nationalism or other relevant ideologies. Environmental constraints were not strong enough to limit disturbances. All this proved the strong correlation between the domestic insecurity of elites and international instability.[27]

Later, Rosecrance switched from his earlier concern with historical systems to the concept of 'overlapping clubs'[28] to search for the possibilities of a new 'concert' in the *present* international system. He started with the central hypothesis that the extent to which 'an encompassing coalition (a concert of great powers) can be created and even formalized in the next few years is in part a function of current relationships among major states'. If these great powers are organized into competing alliances, the chances of the formation of a single great power coalition will be minimal. But if the alliances or clubs in which the great powers are marshalled are overlapping in nature, the chances of bringing them together will increase. To answer the question if 'greater overlapping club structures' can measure up to 'an encompassing coalition or concert', Rosecrance looks at the present international system, interspersed by overlapping clubs of various shapes, sizes, memberships and purposes, heterogeneous due to different degrees of institutionalization, separate histories and different 'initial founders' joined by subsequently expanding members' rolls. These institutions provided an alternative basis for global organization, steering a middle course between the extremes of universalism, regionalism and nationalism, and making the international order seem not a 'product of global legislation but rather of clubs', operating on a geographical or functional basis.

So, on the basis of an analysis of work done by overlapping clubs in the provision of public goods at the international level, in the areas of implementation of 'emissions trading' legislations, collectivization of such private things as trade, by insertion of most favoured nation clauses in trade treaties, institution of various non-proliferation regimes and so on, through various bodies, Rosecrance shows how the global order created by overlapping clubs has functioned 'along functional and geographic lines'. In place of a single 'multipurpose international institution', states have forged a host of institutional arrangements mostly of functional or geographical specificities, operating more through functional executive agencies than controlling legislatures. This ensures discrete treatment of international issues and vastly reduces the chances of

cross-issue linkages. For, the log-rolling characteristic of 'issue-dense institutional settings, such as those in a legislature' does not obtain in situations where divergent sets of nations interact with limited particularistic orientations. When new issues make themselves visible at the international plane, states either have recourse to established international outfits or create new ones, as for instance when President Clinton suggested the creation of a new international mechanism for dealing with issues related to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The recent proliferation of G-numbered contact groups are cases in point. Functional clubs also occupy different functional domains, ranging from economic to political and military to environmental.

Although geographical clubs complement the imperfectly inclusive functional facilities and groupings, even when cross-cut by functional cleavages, they do not fill the gap of functional overlap and never measure up to the historically unprecedented principal functionally overlapping clubs of present times. Traditional geographical clubs were spatially circumscribed. France and England were not members in the Three Emperor's League (1873), and France and Russia were not in the Dual Alliance (1879). Bismarck was open to wider interactions with other countries, except France, despite criticisms about 'the overlapping (and partly conflicting)' treaty obligations with Austria and Russia concluded the Reassurance Treaty with Russia (1887). But after its departure, geographical alliances became more closed and exclusivist, finally culminating in the confrontational Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, which precipitated the First World War. But, as stated by Rosecrance, presently Russia is a member of the NATO Council but not of its opposing military grouping like 'an opposed and geographically exclusive Warsaw Pact aligned against the NATO'.

Economic groupings are also showing more openness. In the 1960s and 1970s, when the Soviet and Western blocs were geographically dividing the Middle East, Africa and Asia, Latin America and Western Europe, Asian and African countries which pursued a non-committal path away from the geographical competition were being pressured to join any one of them. In the late 1970s and early 1980s too, the dominance of non-overlapping clubs in both functional and geographical domains gave the impression that 'the real estates of less developed nations were being divided up, economically and politically'. By contrast, the end of the Cold War did not give rise to any new pattern of geographic rivalry. Confrontations like 'Asia-versus-North America-versus Europe' are absent. The USA mediates in European affairs via NATO, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and G7. Contrasted with the closed Southeast Asian regionalism of ASEAN, China, Japan, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand participate in the open regionalism of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is being expanded to accommodate some South American and Central American countries. The EU is extending to Eastern Europe. The defence industry is also experiencing the birth of another overlapping club because of dispersal with European and Japanese firms seeking tie-ups with American firms. The only snag is the absence of Russia, China and India in these clubs. From these evidences, the conclusion of Rosecrance is that 'a system of overlapping clubs is capable of providing global order in a world of viable universal institutions without degenerating into regional arrangements.'[29]

CHARLES MCCLELLAND: ANALYSIS OF EVENTS/DATA AND ACUTE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS AND ITS ANTICIPATION

McClelland presents 'an acute international crisis' (AIC) as an international system defined as an 'expanding' or 'amplified' version of 'the notion of two-actors-in-interaction', which is difficult to differentiate from other types of political systems in having 'no environment, unless the "platform" of the physical world "upon" which it operates is so considered'. His interaction analysis focuses on the outputs of national systems, keeping the national systems themselves 'black-boxed'.[30] The force of the argument compelled Kaplan to concede that the boundaries of the international system could be taken as the characteristic behaviours of each of the constituent states in operation, and finally to admit that 'the international system may be characterized as a null political system'.[31] The international system is multidimensional in nature, covering the entire gamut of official or unofficial contacts of nations of the world with each other, mainly demand–response relationships where an action by a state induces a response from another, which in turn provokes another action from the state that started the game. Since all events and developments in the international system arise from sources within nations and from sub-systems of national actors such as public opinion, interest groups and political parties, an analysis of events/data interaction(s), hereafter EDI, would have to take into account not only interactions happening at the international plane but also interactions between the national systemic and national sub-systemic levels. While a nation's 'international behaviour is a two-way activity of taking from and giving to the international environment', the entire giving and taking, 'when considered together and for the national actors, is called the international system'.[32]

As a methodology, EDI assumes that international interactions can be grasped as the cumulative effects of huge numbers of data about dyadic actions or events of a stereotypical nature, coming in finite possible types and concerning a whole range of relationships among national units, manifested in trade patterns, volumes of foreign aid, diplomatic exchanges, communications flows and so on. EDI analysis also considers 'single-action events of nonroutine, extraordinary, or newsworthy character that in some clear sense are directed across national boundaries and have in most instances a specific foreign target'.[33] Visits of heads of states, diplomatic warnings, participation in international conferences, threats of military force and so on would fall in the category of events. Used alone or in conjunction with transactions data, they may throw significant insights into patterns of interaction among states in clearly specified circumstances.

For the recording of these data, McClelland launched a World Event/Interaction Survey (WEIS), which was 'a record of the flow of action and response between nation states and non-governmental actors reflected in public events reported daily in the *New York Times* from January 1966 through December 1978'. The focus of analysis was 'the event/interaction referring to words and deeds communicated between nations, such as threats of military force', where 'each interaction is a daily report of an international event'. Eventually the data set rose to 98,043 such entries, where each event was coded as per 'actor, target, date, action category, and arena' in separate files, and finally made available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.[34]

ACI as an International System

Even after recognizing the multidimensional nature of the international system, McClelland advised focusing on one level at a time rather than mixing levels. He himself chose the level of interactions among national units; having already black-boxed the national unit and its domestic sub-units. Together with employing, along with his colleague, events data systematically to bilateral and multilateral interactions along a continuum from full friendship to outright war,[35] and foregrounding AIC as a sub-system of an international system, he sought to understand why systematic approaches to these crises were relegated to a theoretically secondary role. Trashing common sense and ad hoc explanations of international crises as 'first-order realities', or 'givens of history', needing no special efforts to identify or define them, he endorsed Deutsch's plea for a 'concerted research attack, combining the methods of several of the social sciences', which will help pinpoint those conflict conditions that might lead to war and suggest techniques for controlling and containing them. The reason why he chose AIC as the centrepiece of his research is that it is 'almost ideal for the application of the interaction approach'. Apart from being 'complexes of events which can be dissected, up to a point, to yield numerous sequences of related acts', an AIC 'temporarily narrows the focus of international politics and accelerates events in the public view so that there is little difficulty in tracing sequences of action', and after tracing and studying a number of such sequences a scholar can detect 'similarities or identities of form in some of them'.

Despite being well-equipped in tracing related events, diplomatic historians fail to offer theoretical analyses of crises. They are not only temperamentally ill-suited for taking into reckoning 'recurring forms in the sequences of interaction', but they devote more time to dig out the motives of the actors and excogitations and decision-making occurring within the foreign offices of involved governments, and they cannot afford to relate more than a small part of the interaction sequences in recorded history, fearing that the narrative would bog down in digressions. Their cumbersome verbal recordings of a series of related occurrences in a crisis make recognition of recurrent forms and patterns increasingly more difficult after collection of a few scores of these.

So, for a more 'sophisticated technique of recording' of these sequences, McClelland chose block diagrams. With block diagrams of the Berlin Blockade Crisis of 1948 and the Korean War of 1950, he showed how diagrammatic coding, 'charting and immediate analysis' of the stages of a crisis in chains of interaction sequences helps the analyst to pinpoint patterns and compare types of crisis behaviour. It assists in the drawing of various inferences and labelling of different kinds of sequences towards 'a mapping of the complete crisis from its dramatic initial "input" event to its trailing off into the "normalcy" of routine international relations' in utilizing historical data in novel ways and in constructing limited explanations of a short range of crises.

The systemic character of interaction analysis is helped by the fact that diversities in international conduct stem from three sources of variables, acting singly or in different combinations at any historical juncture: (a) attributes or characteristics of participating actors; (b) results generated by their contacts and interactions; and (c) impacts of the environment external to the first two wellsprings of variables. The information containing the results of interaction and environmental mediation is presumed to be carried back to the participating actors, and they are supposed 'to receive

and process such "output" information and feed the processed results (as inputs) in the next phase of participation in the particular and relevant "system of action"'. The benefit of this systemic perspective is that, while studying interaction, the analyst can afford to bypass the intricate details of the input processing mechanism demanded by the decision-making approach. The performances of the participants themselves, that is, the interaction sequences themselves, being dependable indicators of the active attributes of the participating actors, the researchers are at liberty to develop 'hypothetical constructs' regarding the 'pertinent actor traits' and state tentative propositions about the patterns of interaction that these traits match with.

The structure of this framework, however, would not be complete without mentioning certain central propositions about the traits and characteristics of actors taking part in a crisis system, and certain prognoses about the 'course of the current series of actions between the poles of peace and war'. Since the social organization of a nation state primarily shapes its crisis behaviour, the shift in the centre of gravity in the evolution of the nation state from war to business or trade through numerous processes of organizational change and development and transitional stages is important. McClelland follows Joseph Schumpeter to explain this shift from *conquest* to *trade* amid modernization and shows how, contrary to conventional Marxist emphases on capitalism and industrialization as the propellers of social mobilization, international exchange was the key factor. For, irrespective of the type or location of the modernizing society, it inexorably tends to design ever more differentiated administrative networks both in the public and private sectors, as well as its own set of novel corporate and individual 'needs'. Since due to limitations of the decision-making system not all the needs can receive ready attention, a large number of 'problems' are shelved till they erupt into acute problems. These proliferate in an advanced modernizing society just because its sub-systems are complex and require proper timing for attempts at solution. The cultural focus of the modernizing society being apt maintenance of its increasingly complex and sophisticated structures against breakdown, this structural–functional urge towards pattern maintenance and consistency would ensure that, where not hindered by adverse factors, the modernizing society narcissistically focuses on its incomplete task of problem resolution and minimization of distractions in the environment. It views that international scenario as ideal where everything runs effortlessly with minimal effort, cost and attention for maximal benefit.

McClelland's deduction from the aforesaid is that that advanced modernizing societies, being strongly oriented towards conservatism in IR, tend to process all outputs from environmental successions of international interactions according to their 'perceived nature'. When identified as familiar anticipated events, they will be dealt with in a routine fashion. But when they are novel, unforeseen or menacing, they will spill over routine processing channels to permeate dormant or lukewarm parts of the organizational structure of society, to produce abnormal inputs which would in turn go back to the international environment. When such inputs are self-generative and create ever new inputs and exceed the permissible limits of volume and intensity, the entire situation would be termed an international crisis.

The corollaries of these propositions are first that, in an international system constituted of merely two modernizing societies, greater degrees of routinization and crises of decreasing virulence and frequency would be expected, unless the domestic social structures of the two principal actors are racked by internal subversions or

breakdowns. Bilateral international relations would be 'administrative'. Although collaboration and accommodation will not replace conflict altogether, the two-actor system would show why 'repeated exposures to acute crises' may lessen the chances of the outbreak of a general war. Even when this system is 'expanded' to incorporate a number of other participating actors in varying stages of modernization of social organization and social transitions, some tied with one or the other of the principal actors in opposing coalitions, and others staying free from the coalitions, and the system is also rife with conflicts, the same tendency may be present. For, (a) being in advanced stages of modernization, these principal actors would like the system to slide down to 'a minimum-action, maximum-regulation' situation and (b) despite protestations of reciprocal perennial conflict and opposition, their common problems and conservative orientation would induce them to prioritize their pre-eminence in the rival coalitions, preservation of solidarity in them, and regarding cleavages and quarrels within the camp, maintenance of merely 'lukewarm and perfunctory' commitment to common tasks. But they would not risk non-attention to problems among non-aligned or non-committed nations since it may give the rival an edge and advantage. Since, even in the absence of ideological turmoil and changes in military technology, the 'structural–functional ambiguities' and tensions of the bipolar arrangement, and the contrary pulls of vested interests of leadership and preservation of the system, will pressurize the social organization of the principal actors, their tendency to mobilize an AIC may not be as disgusting as it may on first hand appear.

So long as the principal actors can manipulate the workings of conflict to fuel a crisis and control its trajectory, the possibility of a general war might be prevented. Although all of this makes the trend towards the routinization of acute conflict operations likely, there are three qualifiers to this deduction: (a) the adroit moves of the principal actors to search out 'new theatres and new forms for the interplay of their main-line conflict' may generate unforeseen control problems; (b) subsidiary actors within or outside the blocs experiencing various phases of modernizations and transitions may bring about 'novel crisis situations in unfamiliar areas' and (c) the bipolar structure of the system may fall away, gradually compelling the principal actors to refashion their strategies. A further consideration that may influence great powers to shun routinization and exacerbation of crisis is a radical overhauling of the international system into new shapes that might better facilitate the preservation of general peace than piecemeal bureaucratic tinkering with the system.[36]

Anticipation of ACI and American Foreign Policy

McClelland's systemic perspective on international crises includes their 'anticipation'. Already in 1976,[37] he was optimistic that in the very near future, given the big advances in computer technology and relaxation of controls on the 'circulation' of 'huge amounts of foreign affairs information collected routinely by many US government agencies', developing 'a global warning system directed at the detection of every kind of seriously endangering situation' would become conceivable. But extant explanations of the famous international crises series, which appeared between 1870 and 1904, 1935 and 1939, and 1948 and 1964, may not be of much use in the anticipation and prediction of future crises in the advanced stage of the Cold War, where

'massive political and physical power structures are standing in opposition', without releasing their potential in major warfare; and, in a first instance, the closure of one historical era and the emergence of another witnesses no major war.

It is in this context that McClelland examines the broad outlines of the structures and practices of the US foreign and defence policy, and finds its hailed institutional-ization wanting in spite of many virtues and benefits. Looking at crises such as the Sino-Soviet rift and the Vietnam issue since the late 1950s, Chinese military initia-tives in Tibet, the Sino-Indian relations, Indo-Pak conflicts and France's problems in Algeria, he found that American policy lost 'leverage' wherever the Soviet Union could not be blamed for inciting any one of the contestants, and among 10 explosive, and 'high-tension' crises in the period 1966–1975, not more than three (all in the Middle East, namely the June War of 1967, the Canal War and the PLO–Jordan struggle of 1970 and the October War of 1973) fitted the 'Cold War grid' of 'peculiar conflict–collaboration properties of the main series'.

From these, McClelland deduced that (a) 'crises do not have the meanings and do not create the effects they had in the 1947–1964 era', (b) 'the international political system has undergone or is still undergoing a major transformation in its structure of action' and (c) 'the USA has been or is in the continuing process of being forced into changes in its ways of processing foreign affairs'. To illustrate the last point, he showed how, in these new times of new crises, the 'Nixon–Kissinger pursuit of diplo-matic initiatives' showed a steady circumvention of the bureaucratic procedures of the Department of State and the Department of Defence, perhaps conscious 'capabilities to engage usefully in support of the complex of diplomatic actions judged necessary for enterprises such as the opening with China or the building of detente with the Soviet Union'.

For McClelland, this calculated bypassing by the Nixon–Kissinger duo of their for-eign policy establishments to respond creatively to new complex situations reveals the need of a redefinition of crisis in contemporary times. In place of the earlier 'episodic' nature of crisis, these new types of crisis brought within its definition 'alarming trends of our present culture' that possess common roots, including global inflation, 'worldwide resource shortages, extensive famine and the inexorable quest for more deadly weapons'.[38] Now, a crisis is 'simply an emergency situation that is responded to according to a perception of danger and an urge to act against that danger' and 'threat recognition and response to threat' now offer better chances for theory con-struction than the crisis itself. For, apart from linking of crisis management to foreign policy, it facilitates a closer look at many kinds of threats emanating from different sources both at home and abroad.

While discussing what theoretical alternative would provide more informed guid-ance for the acquisition and analysis of data relative to diagnosing crises, McClelland looks into two clear trends in the theorizing about the future of IR, namely 'transna-tionalism' and realism (which he renames as the '"international political primacy" orientation'). There is also a third one of 'eclecticism', being a combination of both. From the transnationalist perspective, requirements of information and analysis of data can be met by 'worldwatch functions of international organizations', as done, for example, in the 'world population research movement'. Here, the onset of a crisis would be perceived 'as an emergency situation, such as the outbreak of famine that would require unusual relief measures', drawing upon collaborative efforts from 'governmental or post-national entities'.

But McClelland does not regard the transnationalist option as an independently viable approach since 'world community values and practices' have not spread and sufficiently 'penetrated' national boundaries, and the 'system of sovereign states' continues to be 'a kind of sink into which affairs gravitate'. Among the emerging trends that seem to put the international system in constant jeopardy are a host of intra-societal communal conflicts (as in Northern Ireland in the late 1970s), forcible subversions of regimes (as in Portugal), local or regional conflicts that involve a number of neighbouring states (as in Lebanon) and system overloads or collapses due to an inability to meet basic needs (as in famine-ridden Bangladeshi and Sahel), in all of which the political element is dominant, but the current significance of international political primacy is that 'the growth of interdependence and mutual vulnerability in the world will bring all these varieties of local disasters to global attention in a political action format and, thus, will generate demands for solutions from political units'. So the changed meaning of political realism would draw attention to such disparate occurrences as

> the reshuffling of the international status ordering, energy and resource shortages and displacements, the rise to power of global business enterprises, the concerted campaigns of Third World countries for recognition and greater shares of modernization benefits, the heavy arming of a score of 'lesser' powers, and the civil disobedience moods and agitations in the advanced societies.

Even if these do not demand any system change, they at least facilitate a restructuring of IR and a new agenda of it. Because some basic beliefs of realism would remain unaffected in the new conceptualization of political primacy, McClelland thinks that the future may witness 'at least as many dangerous situations and as much threat as the past' and that 'public dangers', 'disasters and threats of disaster' and 'emergency situations and acute crises' might be perpetuated. Here, the superpowers may have to be 'principal defenders of the principle of non-intervention', and crisis prevention may not turn out to be 'a promising policy choice even for a leading power'. Rather crisis avoidance may be the only option in a world in which 'all significant public problems, issues and troubles, whatever their first character, become converted into political concerns'.

Relating to the third theoretical alternative of 'eclecticism', McClelland hazards a prediction that in the next ensuing decades, America's [and by extension other great powers'] foreign and defence policies will promote transnationalist initiatives in some situations (as when the national mood is in the upswing and is welcoming change), and advance nationalistic, parochial objectives on other occasions (as when national sentiments are having pessimistic and defensive overtones in 'mixed patterns of adaptation').

However, propelled by advances in techniques, the influence of transnationalism, and greater sensitization for emerging future threats, worldwatching has not only become a principal research activity of private organizations, international bodies and national government, but has also been broadened in scope to embrace recurrent analyses and predictions for issues as diverse as worldwide trends of weather, food and agriculture, trade, investments, health and disease detection, environmental trends and pollution effects, energy production and consumption, mineral access, scientific exchange, crime and delinquency, travel and communication and others. Apart from international conferencing of such worldwatching endeavours, there are

'state-of-the-world' reporting, charting and statistical or indicator reporting attempted by various national, supranational and international bodies.

As regards forms of reporting of crises, McClelland dislikes 'modelling projects' for their 'engineer's orientation' and 'technical solutions' and prefers 'situations analysis' because it contains more data about interactive behaviour. But to make them enduring and meaningful, not only studies of 'the images of crisis and the perceptions of threat and danger held by other peoples and governments' but also gathering of country-wide current knowledge. Charting and modelling are also ways of research into how perceptions of security, well-being and even prospects of gains or losses by many countries alter with changes in the international environment, as seen in the decisional outcomes of the Law of the Sea conferences. McClelland accepts EDI as a method of crisis anticipation but says that now it 'needs to be retested and adapted to fit the new emergency situations concept of crisis'. In place of only partly understood neat boxes that used to 'locate things that are inherently complex', 'schematization of current prospects of crisis research' should be in 2×3 tables that accommodate charting and modelling as 'row names', and that place conditions, situations and events in 'column titles'. With these changes, event readings would become the most helpful type of charting of crises from day-by-day operations' perspective. Events-level modelling is less preferable to charting because it is very likely to confront 'technical and tactical problems such as how best to provide speed, verification or redundancy'.

Situations analysis can use both charting and modelling fruitfully, particularly when done by 'computer-envireoned research enterprises'. It has three advantages: (a) normative research, severely downgraded ever since the invasion of 'behavioural' international research, can stage a comeback through it; (b) computer modelling of the situation should not pose much problem in designing, especially when 'generalized to a type', since many 'input forms and quantities could be tried on such a model to locate promising initiatives and reactions' in terms of the objectives that are set and (c) situational charting is a more effective tool for keeping a tab on the historical materialization of a crisis. He advises new researchers 'that their subject has a larger compass and much more historical significance and impact' than is normally thought.[39]

K. J. HOLSTI AND HIS WESTERN AND NON-WESTERN HISTORICAL SYSTEMS

Unlike Rosecrance and McClelland, Holsti's application of systems thinking[40] goes not only far beyond the Westphalian era in Europe but also beyond Europe itself. For him, an international system is 'any collection of independent political entities—tribes, city states, nations or empires—that interact with considerable frequency and according to regularized processes'. In his orderly framework, each historical system is analysable from five aspects: (a) boundaries of the system, demarcating its interaction from the environment; (b) major characteristics of the component political units; (c) the 'definable structure of the system' and its typical 'configuration of power and influence'; (d) the most endemic forms of interaction among the constitutive units and (e) 'explicit or implicit rules or customs' that regulate or govern interactions and

processes in each system. He tests these aspects of systems first in three civilizations whose interstate relations have been illumined by considerable historical evidence: the Chou dynasty, the Greek city–state system and the Interstate System of Europe, 1648–1814, which I am summarizing below.

International Politics of the Chou Dynasty

This non-Western system comprises nine centuries of Chinese history and two to three fundamentally different structures, all jam-packed under the misleading epithet of 'Chou', including (a) the feudal order or the 'Western Chou' era, witnessing the establishment of the central Chou dynasty in 1122 BC and its subversion by rebellious feudal lords and 'barbarians' in 771 BC, (b) the 'Spring and Autumn period' (771–483 BC), distinguished by the rise of independent states and (c) the period of the Warring States (403–221 BC), witnessing widespread political conflict and competition among the larger states, the disappearance of stable alliances and polar power structures and the resultant extinction of the system itself.

The *boundaries* of the Western Chou system covered roughly the landmass between the Huang Ho and the Yangtze rivers in central China, with contacts extending to India after the overthrow of the feudal hierarchy by rising, large independent states. During the Warring States era, the larger political units Sinicized many tracts inhabited by the *wu* (barbarian residents), including portions of present-day Manchuria, the eastern tip of the Shantung peninsula and some areas lying to the south and east of Yangtze river.

Regarding the *characterises of the component units*, apart from the central Chou monarchy, conferrer and distributor of land, title and favours in the feudal era with nominal title over the entire known Chinese landmass, there was an elaborate bureaucracy performing varied state tasks, and a host of sponsored small feudal units of various sizes and privileges, held by barbarian residents, bureaucratic retirees and deserving nobles. The power and autonomy of feudal lords increased in the 'Spring and Autumn' era; vassals created regular governmental structures to keep pace with increased functions and princes raised peasant militias during the 'Warring States' period. Attached states (*fu-yung*), possessing small bits of territory left unconquered by the Chou monarch, incorporated by the large feudal rulers, and autonomous merely in some purely local affairs were the fourth type of actor.

Structurally, in the hierarchical Western Chou era, the nodal point of influence lay with the principal unit, the central monarchy, though difficulties in transportation and communications generated varying degrees of dependence and subordination in the Chou monarchy for smaller units lying on the periphery of the system. Otherwise, apart from the territories directly under Chou kings, the core consisted one circle of small states governed by his direct relatives; another, more distant from the capital, ruled by noblemen who were distant kin of the ruling house; and near the periphery, termed the 'region of tranquil tenure', another host of small states (*kuo*) ruled by former army officers or civilian administrators. At the farthest reach lay the 'wild domain', populated by barbarian tribes, Chou vassals of dubious allegiance and people maintaining contacts without getting Sinicized. Once the mythology-driven feudal structure finally failed to stem the eventual accretion of power to many of the vassals or feudal chiefs, by the 'Spring and Autumn' era, and even more at the onset

of the 8th century, which witnessed a move from inter-vassal fights to engaging even the monarchy and verdicts even on issues of succession to the Chou crown, the central monarchy merely retained its aura and ceremonial primacy.

Amid this reversal of relationships between the centre and the units, the number of states conducting independent interprovincial relations came down from 10–15 during the Spring and Autumn, and Warring States periods to 7 major states and 3 smaller units by 230 BC, leaving no place for neutrals. After the onset of the 3rd century, all vestiges of Chinese unity disappeared in bloody wars among all states, overriding 'alliance commitments or traditional friendships', till the semi-barbarian and partially secluded state of Ch'in on the westernmost fringe overpowered Han, Chao, Wei, Ch'u, Yen and at last Ch'I, giving the Chou empire its final jolt. The Ch'in Empire governed by the Han dynasty, which succeeded it, removed all the 'symbolic vestiges of feudalism' and the political autonomy of separate territorial units, built around personal relations of the liegemen with the central monarch, introducing independent criteria of power and prestige. But after this emaciation of the Chou monarchy, all hierarchical rankings lost their stability and permanence. By the start of the Spring and Autumn periods, no single state was pre-eminent, and leadership gravitated among the Ch'i, Chin and Ch'un in the north, and the Ch'u, Wu and Yueh in the south. The Warring States period saw the two alliance systems of the Ch'i and Ch'u locking horns for primacy, till the Chin overpowered all states.

Forms of interaction varied between periods. The Western Chou era's meagre volume of political and commercial interaction among constituent units, confined to formal and ceremonial transactions between the nobility of different statuses and the central monarchy, yielded in the Spring and Autumn periods to heightened external relations between states beyond formal and diplomatic ties to trade and commerce even unsanctioned by the official centre. Such interactions were conducted without (in both senses) permanent diplomatic establishments and took the form of mutual impressing games through displays of strength, *ch'ao* (official diplomatic visits), *hui* (bilateral or plurilateral meetings of career bureaucrats), *p'in* (friendly delegations about information or probing), *shih* (emissaries exchange) and *shou* (hunting expeditions of governmental representatives mixing diplomatic pursuits with fun), between both Sinicized and un-Sinicized states, as of Ch'u and Ch'in with others. Even commercial transactions went beyond merchants' domain to incite states' interest in them from needs of steady supply of food and provisions to armies.

Wars were the most endemic form of interstate interaction during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. In the feudal order, wars fought mostly against the *wu* and recalcitrant vassals and less as unlimited fights of destruction than as 'trials of strength, finesse and glory', followed fairly rigid rules. But in the system of independent states, all units employed 'organized violence as a method of achieving objectives'. During the Warring States periods, wars became contests of huge armies with enormous casualties and indiscriminate massacres of prisoners of war. Apart from wars, various forms of subversion and *coup d'états*, intervention and supporting factions in wars of succession in other states were recognized as means of achieving national objectives.

Regarding *explicit or implicit rules or customs*, the wide gap among 'official rules, traditions and myths', put in place by Confucian and other philosophical systems, and 'actual practice' increased in the next two periods, when the existence of 'powerful, ambitious and independent states' rendered these philosophical rules

anachronistic and redundant in the face of exigencies emanating from the political and military traits of the system. Even the 'official theories of hierarchy, imperial rule over all subjects' and the accompanying dominance–subservience relations, faded before the reality of more or less sovereign equality of the great powers, which was given legal recognition in the treaties concluded after 771 BC. But adoption of sovereign equality of the units, consent and customary rights as the basis of treaty obligations did not ensure the inviolability of independence as a valued norm, and even enforcement of treaties needed the taking and exchanging of hostages as a dominant mode. Customary rules covered such matters as sending of emissaries at regular intervals and appropriate conduct and behaviour during wars, even though in the last phases of the system they were infrequently honoured. After Chou dynasty's sway declined, 'conflicts had to be resolved by those directly involved'. By the Spring and Autumn periods, very few institutions that could offer 'mediatory or conciliatory' facilities were left.

Holsti interprets stability of these systems not as 'the absence of war and conflict', but rather as the maintenance of the five essential characteristics of the system, and asks the following questions:

1. What 'other developments...brought about fundamental changes in any or more of the system's characteristics' (transformation variables in Kaplan's parlance)?
2. How can one correlate these three widely varying types of Chou systems with the foreign policies of the 'typical states' constituting them?
3. To what extent can the 'structure of the system' be held to be an important 'variable explaining the foreign policy behaviour of the constituent states'?

Holsti first provides a diagram summarizing the sources of stability and change in these three widely divergent systems. See Table 9.2.

The answers to the first question can be found in the third column of the diagram. Regarding the second, contrasted with their weakness in the feudal era, states other than tiny states or protectorates had much less limitations during the Spring and Autumn, and Warring States periods on their actions and objectives, because 'military capabilities and diplomatic influence were widely diffused' among some states. The much lesser latitude of the smaller states in this and the Warring States period and constraints on them to 'conform to the interests of the bloc leaders' is another generalization that makes the Chou system comparable to other historical international systems that would appear later.[41]

International Politics of the Greek City–State System

With regular contacts with 'India, the shores of the Baltic, Spain, and the north coast of Africa', colonies all along the shores of the Mediterranean, and political–cultural spread to places currently called Nice, Marseilles and Naples, the famed city states of Greece were geographically far more open than the Chinese system. Despite locational dominance of the Greek peninsula and the islands of the Aegean Sea, Holsti finds the geographical *boundaries* of the system difficult to demarcate because of the Greeks' regular commercial and diplomatic relations with the Phoenicians, Persians, Arabs, Indians and groups of people in Europe and Southern Russia, and the threat posed

TABLE 9.2　Sources of Stability and Change in the International Systems of the Chou Period

Period	Sources of Stability	Sources of Change
Western Chou (1122–771 BC)	• Emperor's esteem as 'Son of Heaven' • Power over land • Conferment of titles • Units' provision of taxes and troops to Emperor	• Weak communication between 'outer' states and the monarchy • Improving administrative and military proficiency of the states • Incipient local nationalism • Territorial expansion and consolidation by some states
Spring and Autumn (771–483 BC)	• Lingering myth of empire's unity • Growth of bilateral and customary rules to regulate interstate interaction • Emergence and elaboration of conflict resolution mechanisms (largely control of small states by larger ones) • Smoother communications • Rough BOP between adversaries	• Propensities towards polar power • State's acquisition of ever larger armies • Weakening of customary rules of warfare • Growth of large states
Warring States (413–221 BC)	• Suboptimal operation of alliances	• Unavailability of sites for external expansion • Ascendancy and pre-eminence of Ch'in • Wars of extermination

Source: Adapted from K. J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India, [1972] 1995), p. 35.

by Persian expansion of the Aegean Sea to the peninsular city states. Holsti, however, limits his analysis mostly on the transactions, exchanges and relations between city states and colonies, relegating relations with 'barbarians' living on the periphery to the background.

Regarding *characteristics* of the constituent units, the centrepiece of Greek political organization from the early 8th century BC till the lengthening shadows of Macedon engulfed it in the late 4th century BC, was the city state (*poleis*), with populations ranging from 25,000 male citizens to merely a few thousands, measuring about 100 square miles on an average, and encircled by agricultural areas of various sizes. Their governmental systems ranged from sacerdotal rule of priest kings, plutocracies and military tyrannies to freely elected republics. Three other forms of political organization that played significant roles in the Greek system were 'the tributary state' (a *poleis* functioning under the control of another city state in external affairs, as the Delian League under Athens in the 5th century BC), the military colony (*cleruchy*) and finally 'non-military colonies' created by many city states all around the Aegean and Mediterranean seas for additional food supply of mollification of 'population congestion' in the *poleis* and deportation centres for 'politically unreliable citizens and unwanted aspirants for public office'.

The system initially exhibited 'a highly diffused *structure*' and 'an egalitarian distribution of power, status and prestige' because city states had evolved in 'relative isolation', amid conflicts, wars, conquests and cession of territories, but without 'permanent hierarchies of dominance dependence'. But in the 5th century BC, the structure of the system became 'more stratified and rigid', when the bigger and more populous Athens, Acragas, Corinth, Argus and Thebes started domineering over smaller units. The switch to a 'polar' structure was caused later by the 'Persian penetration into the Ionian Islands, Thrace and Macedon'. Despite the formation of the Hellenic League as a military alliance under the joint leadership of Sparta and Athens during the Persian Wars of 492–477, grave internal conflicts of interests among its leading members led, after the rout of Persia, to the formation of another counter-alliance, the Peloponnesian League, under Spartan leadership. However, Athens' imperial ambitions had meanwhile found expression in a deceptive 'new multilateral alliance' of independent and tributary states called the Delian League, whose momentum was fuelled not just by Athens' commercial supremacy or the imperialism of Cimon and Pericles but also by attraction for Athens' superior political and economic arrangements and institutions, and remembrance of its help in their fights against internal and external threats. Anyway, by 431 BC, the consolidation of the Delian League after the accession of Rhodes, Miletus, mighty Corcyra and other city states in the eastern Aegean and northern and western Greece, and that of the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League supported by Ellis, Arcadia and Corinth as major allies, led to a kind of loose bipolarity in Kaplan's terms. Athens' commercial proficiency, economic power and superiority of 'political institutions, laws, culture, and commercial practices' were matched by Sparta's military prestige as bases of stratification.

Interactions among city states changed from a meagre flow of trade among self-sufficient city states and minimal participation of states (except in the collection of revenues) in solving the problems of merchants through much faster inter-unit trade by the 5th century, caused by the growth of the population and of the mercantile classes, and needs of military supplies, to merchants' solicitation of governmental support and protection for access to sources or raw materials and markets by the time of the Peloponnesian Wars. Governments too used trade for building resources and merchants as tools to apply diplomatic and economic pressure on other city states, as in Athens' use of tradespeople. The dominant mode of interaction from the earliest times was 'meetings…at religious festivals and councils' at places such as Olympia and Delphi, and religious institutions like *amphictyonies* which sought to maintain the integrity of the Greek religion and Olympic Games. But separate deities and divisive religious symbols of various city states prevented transmutation of these fraternizations in 'social, religious, recreational, intellectual and aesthetic' areas into political and military relationships, let alone unity. Instances of cooperation on matters of common concern being far fewer than conflicts over interests, war was endemic, and most of the peace treaties were time- and issue-specific. The 'coupling of religious and political symbolism' explains not only the frequency of territorial wars or ideological crusades fought for the glory of cities and their tutelary deities, particularly in the early phase, but also their brutality in terms of decimation and enslavement of enemies. In diplomacy, still another form of interaction, 'honoured citizens' with proven rhetorical skill were exchanged even between the Hellenes and the 'barbarians' and invested with diplomatic immunity.

A large body of *rules*, sustained by treaties and customs, sought to regularize diplomatic relations and conduct of warfare. These acknowledged the independence and equality of the city states, clarified the 'limits of immunities' enjoyed by diplomats and religious shrines during war conditions and suggested 'standard procedures' for announcement of war, grant of asylum and extension of citizenship. Wars being both 'costly and indecisive', procedures for settling conflicts short of war were favoured. 'Arbitration and conciliation' were two innovations in diplomatic practices that roped in 'third parties' to enter bargaining situations involving 'boundary disputes', conflicts over public debts and bickering stemming from divergent readings of treaties.

Much like the Chinese system, its Greek counterpart too yielded place, after a draining competition between the two major blocs, to the onslaught of mightier systemic outsider Macedonia, comparable to the Ch'in. Actually, the rise of 'much larger territorial and administrative units' outside had already made the Greek city–state system obsolescent, just as the emergence of dynastic states in the 16th- and 17th-century Europe rendered the 'independent walled cities of medieval Europe' anachronistic. Confronted by much larger Persia, Macedonia and finally Rome, puny city states had either to 'unite into one large territorial empire' like other giants swaggering in the Mediterranean region or suffer the extinction they did.

The Interstate System of Europe, 1648–1814

This historical system that evolved between the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) that settled the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) and the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1814 was a distinct international system for Holsti because of the following reasons:

1. The nature of the units and their forms of interaction were different.
2. Quite a few of the essential rules that were developed and articulated in Westphalia were new and had survived.
3. The basically new characteristics wrought first by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars in internal politics, especially in the conduct of warfare and involvement of the citizenry in foreign policy initiatives also continue till date.

The system was not only homogeneous but also, all sectarian schisms between Protestants and Catholics having already been settled, was cosmopolitan. Although politically fragmented, Europe was culturally united, as the epithet 'Christendom' contrasted with 'heathens' of the Ottoman kingdom and 'barbarians' overseas shows. The French language and the French court set cultural–linguistic standards. With only a nascent concept of nationality and personal rather than nationalistic political loyalties, authors, painters, composers, intellectuals, even diplomats and generals explored all-European recognition.

The religiously dictated *boundaries* of the system demarcated the 'princes of the Christendom' from the barbarian world outside, though contacts with the Ottomans and colonial establishments in North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, India and the East Indies also prevailed. The rules of interaction did not extend to '"barbarians", heathens and other types of inferiors', including even Peter the Great, Europeanizer of Russia.

The *units* could only loosely be referred to as states since territorial–political centralization and control by superior authorities over 'free cities, church properties, private holdings and local warlords' were centuries-old, exemplified by suppression of a mid-17th century insurrection against Louis XIV's efforts to impose central rule in France in 1715, and the prolonged process of state building in Great Britain, emulated later by Prussia and Italy. The dynastic politics in the system could not drown out 'critical questions of state building' amid claims and counterclaims during succession crises, and dynasts' attempts to restrict the powers of influential nobles in taxing and maintaining armies. State building mainly involved bureaucratizing the mechanisms of government, evolving national taxation regimes, developing centralized state armies and limiting dynastic issues in foreign policies. But the common masses that made up nine-tenths of the population had no role in the system.

For a large part of the systemic period, power was distributed among eight major and numerous lesser states. No single dominant power emerged. The projected 'unification of the French and Spanish crowns' that could end this was stalled by other powers' intervention. The Treaty of Utrecht, following the bloody war of the Spanish Succession, restored the principle of inviolable independence of the dynastic realms and reiterated the importance of BOP as a means of preserving their independence. Alliances were short-lived and shifting, inevitably breeding insecurity for the dynasts continually locked in conspiracies, like the one that carved up Poland three times till her extinction in 1795. The trade-off between freedom of choice and the insecurity of sovereign dynasts was not resolved because, unlike the early Chou system, the Holy Roman Empire could not afford any security.

Among *interactions*, apart from tardy and 'unreliable communications' between Christendom princes, wars were the most frequent form of interstate contact. Foreign trade, often conducted in zero-sum terms of 'mercantilism', absolute advantage and governments' search for monopolies and foreign establishments (by Spain in West Indies, the Dutch in the Baltic and France and Britain warring in North America), was conflictual and often degenerated into economic warfare. Governmental control of trade sought not national economic prosperity but fundraising for military establishments. Commercial rivalry and the quest for monopolies in trade, shipping and slave trade accounted for more than one-third of the 58 wars fought between 1648 and 1814, three of them embroiling Great Britain and Holland in the 1650s and the 1660s. Wars were short and un-devastating due to 'relatively crude technology of the age', domination of the forces by the mercenaries, high costs of maintaining armies and navies, the dynasts' proclivity to outmanoeuvre their adversaries rather than annihilating them and finally the institutional invention of maintaining 'a professional diplomatic corps' on a permanent basis in foreign lands acting as plenipotentiaries engaged in intelligence gathering, negotiation and reporting.

The *rules* of the system were partly codified by the two constituent accords of the Treaty of Westphalia (signed at Osnabrück by Protestant and Münster by Catholic negotiators), enunciating the basic systemic principle of the sovereignty of states from supranational control, whether Papal, Holy Roman imperial or others, robbing sub-national units, whether 'duchies, free cities or baronies', of rights to conclude treaties, wage wars, secure benefits from laws of neutrality and so on. But the Westphalian impact on IP and statecraft went far beyond these sovereignty assumptions to demarcate forms of tolerable behaviour from intolerable ones in treaty or documentary

codifications and in 'unquestioned customs'. Other important offshoots were as fol-
lows: slowly emerging notions of territoriality during 1648–1814 at a time of 'non-
contiguous' 'holdings' of dynasts; the binding nature of treaty obligations till
conditions have changed so fundamentally as to render them 'irrelevant or blatantly
harmful' (under the concept of 'pacta sunt servanda'), diplomatic immunities for
exchanged diplomatic staff and discouragement of assassination of rulers to promote
state or family interests. These 'rules of the game' were bastions of a non-innovative
order in Europe in which dynasts conspired, marauded and fought wars, diplomats
mediated, war was never considered a menace or outlawed, curbing conflict-resolution
mechanisms and no international organizations evolved with anything like collective
security. But even with frequent wars, the formal and informal rules of the system
ensured a measure of stability by sustaining dynastic political orders confronting few
actors save Poland with extinction (much unlike the later phase of the Chinese
system), though their fortunes suffered sharp vicissitudes, like Prussia flourishing
into a major power and Sweden degenerating into a second-grade one. A combination
of divine ordination of rulers and BOP restrained everyone having hegemonic ambi-
tions, such as Charles V and his Hapsburg descendants in the 16th and 17th centu-
ries, and Louis XIV in his later years.

Among the *forces* of change in all these three historical systems, the administrative
ones lay in the development by the 'subordinate states' of their own administrative
systems. These loosened the hold of the Chou monarch and the Holy Roman Emperor.
In the third state system, after religious universalism was undercut by religious and
sectarian schisms leading to political fragmentation, the doctrine of sovereignty
became a change agent by legitimizing it. Among technological forces, the walls of
Greek cities of tiny populations proved ineffective against the 'torsion catapult and the
siege tower' used by Macedonians, Hellenistic kings and finally Roman invaders, as
well as the armies of tens of thousands raised by the Romans. The *diffuseness* in the
distribution of powers was another source of change as seen in the Spring and
Autumn period in China (600–431 BC), and the 1648–1814 period in Europe. The
political fragmentation in China and Greece that resulted from endemic-draining wars
and insecurity and facilitated the entry of external attackers who turned them into
new empires was, as I would argue in **Chapter 13B**, repeated in India. There, regional
wars fought by the Gurjara-Pratihāra, Pāla and the Rāṣṭrakuta kingdoms in the 9th
and 10th centuries for the control of middle India bled her sufficiently to make the
Turco-Afghan invasion in the 11th and 12th centuries a cakewalk.[42] The same fate
would have befallen France had Napoleon won Waterloo and turned Europe into a
continental empire.[43]

The Contemporary Global System

This system is dealt with schematically, being even now evolving, and its theory
sketches being sure to come up in many of the theoretical chapters of this book.[44]

Regarding *boundaries,* the system is global since all of its political and social units
are unprecedentedly interconnected, leaving no region isolated and implicating all
into mutual contacts as members of the UN, though varying in intensity. The system
originated from a 'European core' prevailing from the 15th to the 19th centuries
through a 'Westernization' which went beyond 'expansion of military power and

commercial activity' to embrace the export of 'ideas and ideology' to other parts of the world. The breakdown of multi-ethnic empires through nationalistic uprisings bred an enormous amount of state building. The number of members of the pre-First World War states system increased from 16 in Europe and China and Japan on the periphery before the onset of the First World War to 52 in 1945, and a steep 184 in 1995, 72 per cent of whom were 50 years old or below, and only about a dozen such as Great Britain, Spain, Holland and Sweden able to claim a history of 200 years. This made the Contemporary Global System young.

The birth process of many of these states in the 19th- and early 20th-century Europe, their evolution in the post-Second World War colonial order and carving out through different processes lent them certain ingrained weaknesses. The successor states to the dismantled multi-ethnic empires of the Ottomans, Austria-Hungary and tsarist Russia demographic distributions did not have 'neat territorial frontiers'. There 'significant minorities' queered state identities. For many, boundaries artificially drawn by colonial powers in the 19th century were challenged by 'national liberation movements', whose leaders and spokespersons, however, failed to transcend the geographically expressed colonial 'political referent' while seeking liberation in the name of the 'people' of these countries. In many of the new 'weak' states, not militarily, but 'in the sense that significant sectors of the population do not identify strongly with the ruling groups or the post-colonial state', communal conflicts between various sections of the population and secessionist movements of minorities sullied the nationalistic spirit, as a 1981 survey showed.

State units also show much more marked disparities of size, population, forms of government, governmental accountability, rule of law, 'level of technological development, public education and general well-being among populations', and much greater disparities among national societies than in the 18th century, leading not to 'gradations' but to 'qualitative distinctions' among states. Apart from creating 'international dependencies', these disparities have bred differentiation among the units in nationness and stateness, bringing forth 'nation states', 'stateless nations and multinational states' and 'finally, a few states without nations', such as the Vatican. Although the flourishing of statehood has been described as 'one of the hallmarks of the modern international system', all states did not or do not have the same capacity for survival, and some have been seen to 'fail', 'collapse' or survive only with international support systems, such as Lebanon, Jordan and Somalia.

A variety of NSAs is *systemically* important, whether (a) territorial such as national liberation movements, (b) non-territorial such as MNCs and (c) organizationally intergovernmental such as the NATO or the OECD. They wield much more influence in 'developing and promoting issues on the international agenda' than 'the dozens of micro-states and weak states' and leave a 'considerable impact on select global issues' while operating across national borders to attain specific objectives. They have been tolerated while (a) introducing an issue 'onto the international diplomatic agenda', (b) publicizing certain global and regional problems and sensitizing citizens towards them, (c) pressurizing national governments and international organizations to take decisions helping their causes and (d) seeking 'an outcome through direct action', very infrequently even 'involving the threat or use of force'. The Greenpeace movement exemplifies all these four types of activities. Some diagnose the declining importance of states vis-à-vis NSAs in these three developments: first, the inability of states to insulate themselves against transnational movements and ideas from abroad across

iron curtains (e.g., the 1987 Chernobyl disaster in Russia); second, the 'wave of revolutions' sweeping across the world and their 'demonstration effects' have penetrated the insularity of states (e.g., Corazon Aquino's 'yellow paper' revolution in the Philippines and the June Democratic Uprising in Korea, enthusing Burmese protesters to demand the end of military rule); third, the 'demonstration effect of democratic opposition to Communist rule in Eastern Europe' (e.g., the decade-long Solidarity movement in Poland and its success for similar movements in Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria; or, speaking economically, the rapid spread of the stock market crash of October 1987 across Auckland, Tokyo, Toronto, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, New York and elsewhere). Holsti, however, does not accept the decline-of-the-state thesis, first, because a marked if not major paradox of the Contemporary Global System is the increasing resilience of 'the forces of political fragmentation, separateness and local loyalties' confronting 'technologies that shrink distances and help create millions of contacts between individuals of different societies'. Apart from the doctrine of national self-determination and potency of the values of 'autonomy and independence', political fragmentation is also helped by the ideology of nationalism and the search for security and identity. Because of all this, the state cannot be said to be 'fading away'.

According to most analysts, the *structure of power and influence* in this system from the start of the Cold War and at 'some point in the 1970s' was polar (bipolar). Although this scholarly consensus was shaken after some visible trends since the 1970s, Holsti declines to read in them trends of a return to the former mid-19th century European multipolarity, since a 'convincing case' for 'alternative positions' can be made if one chooses a different 'evidence…to measure power' or puts 'more content' in the concept of structure. While, during this period, economic indicators, Nobel/global prizes, or physical competence measured as Olympic medals pointed to a relative American decline, the perception changes if one uses the notion of 'structural power', meaning 'the authority and capacity to set the rules of the game and to determine how the others will play the game'. Here, the USA retains 'the capacity to lead, coerce and persuade' for most security and commercial issues, giving world trade the American definition of a level playing field for the foreseeable future. Even if the structure looks 'more multipolar' from some angles, particularly after the 'collapse of the Communist systems in Eastern Europe', the unavoidable general conclusion is that the USA is even now predominant, just increasingly more compelled 'to coordinate its policies' with those of other industrial powers.

Amid the fiercely increasing pace of inter-societal *interactions*, instantiated in the cumulative volume of 'world trade, mail flows, tourism, travel, telephone calls, foreign investment, international conferences of scientists and other academics, or international sports competitions', evenly 'matched by contacts between governments', the 'patterns' of these interactions are assuming more importance 'than the aggregate growth rates of transactions between individuals, societies and governments'. Here, the 'highly skewed pattern of global transactions' that are happening *mostly* between industrial countries, with the 'north–south trade pattern being similarly "skewed in is make-up"', are notable. Discovery of a similar pattern in war is more difficult. Traditionally, great powers used to be the most regular users of large-scale force in previous international systems. But, after 1945, in most of the wars, the employers of force have been Third-World states, due to their roles in national liberation or unification movements, or domestic insurrections subsequently turned international. All

of this has 'not significantly altered the security and insecurity problems of many states'.

The *rules and norms* that govern the system are in their exterior Westphalian, though modified and refined, such as unqualified sovereignty and legal equality of states, restraints on intervention and diplomats' immunities—all undergirded by ideologies of national self-determination and nationalism, and secured by the rule of international conferred state legitimacy. But this exterior of continuity belies remarkable changes in debilitating breaches of the rule of non-interference, the maintenance of 'thousands of lobbyists' by foreign governments in Washington DC and the emerging consensus in the thinking of many states that blatant violations of human rights provide them with 'the right and even the duty to do something about injustices'. Principles and values regarding the use of force in foreign policy have also undergone a change after the experiences of the two world wars, making wars under the League Covenant and the UN Charter permissible only for individual and collective self-defence, and for enforcing coercive sanctions cleared either by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and other international organizations, none of these new presumptions, however, availing against wars arising from national liberation movements, given the absence of norms that disallow 'force when it is used against colonialism'.

The *sources of stability* of the system are many, but not predominantly geographical, since its geographic scope is circumscribed until the 'discovery of extraterrestrial life'. Armed by nationalism, states promise to continue strong, with attainment of statehood being the primary objective of many communities. The collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia brought a kitty of 19 new states to the UN. Successes of national liberation movements in the Third World promise to bring more. A stabilizing role is also played by the Westphalian principles of sovereignty, legal equality and non-interference, in spite of their 'costs' (in affording protection to weak states, as in the UN coalition's restoration or Kuwaiti integrity after Iraq's annexation in 1990); by the collapse of communism as an ideology and the resulting disappearance of world revolution as a strategy, except what is retained in the international agenda by Islamic fundamentalists and finally by the triumph of liberalism and its end of history thesis.

Nationalism, even while strengthening the idea of statehood, releases destabilizing forces for the system by increasing the 'pressures of political fragmentation' and helping the birth of new states, many of which are 'tiny' territorially (though not necessarily so demographically), ridden with minorities, and not always 'viable' while trying to be 'ethnically "pure"', or independent as economic entities. The only corrective to the corrosive and potentially violent quest for statehood for ever new pieces of land and masses is the 'alternative concept of citizen', which, if as inclusive and righted as its Western conception goes, may dissuade most 'minorities' from demanding separate statehood. Otherwise, a conception of the nation steeped in ethnicity might divisively push up the number of new states to a point of unmanageability.

Technology has also been a source of change. If 'torsion catapult and the siege tower' helped pull down the Greek poleis, and cannons enriched by 'Chinese chemistry' of gunpowder left medieval European walled cities exposed, the invention and refinement of weapons of mass destruction has immeasurably changed all 'calculations about the costs and advantages of war'.

Among other forces of change, economic globalization has compelled governments to collaborate even for policies in which they wanted to 'go it alone', like increasing or reducing interest rates, and the resultant complex economic interdependence has

reduced tensions and, finally, as 'norms governing human rights become internationalized', changes in traditional perceptions of sovereignty impede societies or governments seeking to 'hide behind' its legal shield and increasingly support 'international action to protect populations at risk'.

For Holsti, a mixed theoretical bag is needed to grasp the essence of the Contemporary Global System, such as a 'realist vision' (for the 'formal anarchy among sovereign states, the persistence of war and security dilemmas' in some parts of the world), a 'society of states view' (for the numerous '"rules of the game", club-like features' of the system 'including mechanisms for ostracizing those who do not follow the rules, and the many bonds that tie societies together'), 'pluralist–interdependence models' (for the importance of NSAs and 'economic mutual dependence'), 'dependency models' (for the increasing gap in the standard of living and 'asymmetrical economic ties' between the north and the south) and 'world society models' (for the increasing homogenization of lifestyles due to global communications and 'the erosion of the sovereignty principle'.[45]

JOEL SINGER'S SOPHISTICATED SYSTEMS THEORETIC FORMULATION

Singer's version of systems theory is averse to using 'actions, behaviour, roles, decision-making and so on' as the main focus of analysis in place of events and entities, since in the former, after describing and classifying the persons in interaction, their behaviour and so on, and shifting without the help of yardsticks between different types of them, the analyst is confused, especially when analysis involves categories that are rooted in several discriminable levels of analysis, but not discriminated. Faithful to his formulation of the 'level of analysis problem' and GST's caution about inordinate similarities between systems that render the very concept meaningless, Singer focuses on partial theories which focus on behavioural events or interaction sequences and accurate depiction as preparatory to explanation.

Defining a social system minimally, as any assemblage of individuals and groups which demonstrate a modicum of 'interdependence, similarity or common destiny', Singer identifies three tiers of it. The 'global system' comprises humankind and any or all of the worldwide groups formed by persons. The 'international system' encompasses all national political systems, their entire populations and any or all subnational or supranational interest groups. The 'Interstate System' embraces all national units fulfilling certain criteria of statehood, together with all individuals, subnational and supranational groups in it. It contains two sub-systems: the 'central system' and the 'major power system'. This depiction of different systems necessitates the specification of the precise criteria of membership, as well as wars characteristic of these. The upshot is 'a prime example of fundamental research which provides an accurate database on which theories of war can be advanced and, hopefully, subjected to empirical test'.[46]

This painstaking research shows in 'clear operational terms' if and how a political unit is, or is not, a constituent of the Interstate System, attempts to construct measures for the ranking and power capabilities of states and measures the degree of concentration of power in the international system during the 19th and 20th

centuries. It engages in an ambitious 'Correlates of War Project' (hereinafter COWP) to construct a comprehensive theory of war. Amid the protracted fight of traditional-ists and behaviouralists over the sources of the impact of the power structure of the international system, and the impact of the power capabilities of every state on behaviour in the system, there were no universally agreed indicators of perceptions of the ranks 'ascribed' to states by states, though behaviouralists emphasized the perceptual aspects of these capabilities more than the traditionalist. To fill this gap, Singer and Small attempted to 'both calculate the ranking of the states every 5 years' from the Napoleonic Wars to the onset of the Second World War and 'to make explicit the criteria by which system membership and status ranks were established'. They contended that 'the relative importance that the states in the system attributed to one another could be inferred from the number and rank of the diplomatic missions accredited and dispatched to each of their capitals'.[47] In a subsequent paper, they not only extended the time period to cover 154 years between 1816 and 1970 but also modified the indicator in a new coding procedure that factored in three problems of calculation: (a) 'the post-1945 inflationary trend towards greater use of ambassadors and the relative decline of the numbers of ministers and envoys'; (b) the extent to which 'diplomatic missions are exchanged in a purely reciprocal and symmetric fashion' (about 10% of the 'dyadic diplomatic bonds were asymmetrical') and (c) the degree to which 'the indicator should reflect the important of the states' from which the missions are accredited. For the reasons of space, we skip details of their scoring procedure and data sources to only specify the criteria Singer and Small employed for the identification of Interstate System members. From 1816 to 1920, only states which had at least 500,000 nationals and had bagged recognition from the two 'legitimizers' of England and France achieved member status. Since 1920, though population requirement remained at 500,000, recognition could be obtained from any two major powers or from membership of the League of the UN. There were, however, a few remarkable exceptions.[48]

From the resultant 'diplomatic importance scores' of the states every five years from 1950 to 1970, they posit that 'mostly the major powers always occupy the top slots; the "pariah" [meaning revolutionary] states and their client states "score somewhat lower than their better-established opposite numbers"'; the non-aligned states outstrip their NATO and Warsaw Pact equivalents; the 'smaller but centrally placed states show up higher' than expectations and the more peripheral actors regularly fill up the 'lower quintiles', improving their positions as they industrialize or aim at a more 'active role' in the system. One initially baffling but later easily explicable reading is that certain smaller states of Western Europe have occupied the top of the rankings or approximated it during the greater part of the Second World War, much above the USSR, China, India and Japan. This is partly traceable to the aversion of European government to let long-established ties go, and partly to Europe being the nodal point of the Interstate System. Besides, the status of Belgium, Holland and Europe as 'major trading states as well as hosts to a variety of international organizations' and 'Italy's privilege as the locus of the Vatican helps'.[49]

From this, Singer tests with Bremer and Stuckey 'two distinct and incompatible' views about the effects of the 'distribution and redistribution of capabilities' on the 'incidence of major power war'. The first reiterates a classical BOP theoretic position that 'approximate parity (or change towards it) among the nations' will lead to a lesser incidence of war, while the second, echoing 'the hegemonic view', asserts that 'there

will be less war when there is a preponderance (or change towards it) of power concentrated in the hands of a very few nations, and a relatively stable rank order among the major powers'. Both positions agree that 'parity and fluidity increase decisional uncertainty'. But the first relates it to peace, and the second to war. Singer and team consolidated these two opposing positions into a 'single basic model' that encompasses the three 'predictor variables'—'capability concentration, rate and direction of change in concentration, and the movement of capability shares among the powers'— as well as the 'outcome variable' of 'amount of interstate war involving major powers'. They constructed an index which measured year-wise degrees of concentration of power for 150 years, as mentioned above. Employing complex statistical techniques, they related them to the quantum of war that happened every year and asserted after 'examining the associations between capability concentration and major power interstate war' that the evidence for it at present is inconclusively divided. 'While high concentration and changes towards it do—as the preponderance and stability school suggests—tend to reduce the incidence of war in the current century, such is clearly not the case in the previous century.' In it, the 'patterns' more closely reflect 'what is predicted by the peace-through-parity-and-fluidity model'. They put several 'additive' and 'multiplicative' versions of the basic model in multivariate analyses to see if they 'do better' when two centuries are examined separately and saw that while 'their predictive power is impressively high for the 19th century', it was 'rather low for the 20th'. The reason behind this anomaly is probably that 'uncertainty', the 'unmeasured variable', played a different role in the two centuries. In the former, in which diplomacy was still the exclusive preserve of small elite coteries, uncertainty emanating from 'an equal distribution of power and fluidity in rank orderings' may have been less in magnitude and consequences. For, these career diplomatists, even when unsure about which country was precisely ranked where, were naturally confident about others' 'general behaviour patterns' because of their indoctrination in accepted rules of the game, their 'shared culture' and their plenipotentiary freedoms, which eased divining or guessing how others would behave in familiar situations or crises. This kind of mutual predictability may have been eroded by the turn of the century due to 'industrialization, urbanization and the democratization of diplomacy', and the resultant fuzziness of the concept of national interest at home, the greater costliness of certain foreign policy steps due to the activities of political oppositions and interest groups and the consequently heightened 'need to mobilize popular support for material resources'. These uncertainties worsened the normal incertitude of the BOPS and made calculations of probability of war possible only when 'power configurations were exceptionally clear and the pecking order was quite unambiguous'.[50]

In the COWP, Singer is preoccupied about the following: (a) under what conditions certain international conflicts tend to 'erupt into war' while many others 'end in nonviolent outcomes'; (b) why some wars are 'short and others long' and how they are ended; (c) which type of nations 'initiate' most of the wars; (d) who 'wins' the most, the 'initiators' or the target nations; (e) whether 'the frequency and magnitude of war' are a consequence of the state of the international system, 'the level of development of the relevant nations' or 'the kinds of relationships among the nations which comprise the system' (i.e., whether the causes are systemic or sub-systemic) and (f) if outbreaks of wars are rather traceable to 'the "aggressive" behaviour of "specific governments"'. An interim report about the methodological aspects of the COWP[51] is a marvel of caution in empirical research. His strategy here is 'to convert a large range of hypotheses

representing diverse theoretical predispositions at several levels of analysis—into a common language' within a 'general systems taxonomy'. The hypotheses, culled from diplomatic, economic, geographic, demographic, military and psychological orientations to actual types of war at different times and places, start from the premise that 'underlying regularities behind the onset of war' and 'increasingly close approximations to an integrated and coherent theory of the causes of international war' could be found out if analysts would only pinpoint their variables and design models and sub-models cleverly.

To move from the 'outcome variable', that is, the incidence of war, to ecological and behavioural variables for predictions, Singer sought to operationalize vague constructs apart from constructing indexes. The counting of international wars since 1815, and the comprehensive compilation and codification of dependent variable data, aimed at measuring predictor (independent and intervening) variables and testing three types of ecological sub-models: (a) 'the attributes of the international system and its more limited sub-systems: the interstate, the central and the major power sub-systems'; (b) pairwise (or larger) relationships among all the nations in these systemic settings' and (c) 'attributes of the national states themselves', their values, 'trends, fluctuations and rates of change'. The 'attribute series' predictably started first with the data set on 'diplomatic missions nations maintained in other nations' capitals every fifth year for the entire Interstate System since the Congress of Vienna', to give an idea of the shifting composition of the international system. The second data set, relating to alliances, covered all 'defence pacts, neutrality and non-aggression treaties, and ententes' negotiated by two or more state members of the system, helping the analyst estimate the extent of 'alliance aggregation and involvement in the system year by year' and provided data about '12 different indices of existing alliance levels, as well as their creation and dissolution'. The third data set captured the origination, maintenance and disintegration of institutionalized bonds in the Interstate System embodied in intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). The fourth and most elusive data set concerned international trade. Singer measured the 'entropy' of each ecological model by looking at how nations fashioned their negative by clustering into groups or arranging themselves in hierarchies, and how this was reflected in the general dimension of each of the data sets, comprising (a) 'diplomatic representations groupings and diplomatic "importance" rankings', (b) alliance bond groupings and alliance involvement rankings, (c) 'shared IGO membership groupings and IGO participation rankings' and (d) 'trade partnership groupings and trade activity ranking'. These four data sets and others to be acquired avowedly facilitated discovery of the extent of systemic entropy through gauging 'polarity, clarity of the individual clusters, overlap among them and other indicators of high-to-low order configurations'. Apart from these structural variables, cultural variables related to 'trends (and fluctuations) in elite and popular beliefs regarding what is just, appropriate or likely in world politics' were considered.

Moving from systemic-level ecological predictors to attributes of separate nations, the same physical, structural and cultural distinctions are more thoroughly researched, the IR scholar being advised that the most important subset for him concerns the 'power base, or military–industrial capabilities' of national units, measured through indicators such as 'total population, urban population, iron and steel production, energy consumption, size of armed forces and military expenditures'. Apart from these capability markers, Singer also collected data on almost 30 demographic,

industrial and financial indices for all Interstate System members, backed up by softer indices based on a coding of national political histories and so on, including types of government along the entire 'autocratic–democratic continuum', 'regime stability', 'military participation ratio', 'ethno-linguistic composition and homogeneity', 'elite cohort ages' (to assess the freshness of war experience among decision-makers) and ethnic-territorial congruence. Conjoined with these more traditional indices of national power, the systemic attributes of origins in diplomacy, alliance, IGO and trade bonds and so on help the analyst to depict nations not only on the basis of their internal attributes but also on the basis of their external relationships.

Singer goes beyond these sources and levels of ecological data to capture the far more elusive behavioural data, aiming to construct a coding scheme applicable across a great range of 'chronologies, historical monographs and archival materials'. These are expected to help produce useful statements of the conflict sequences that predated each of the 50 interstate wars during this period, and to contrast them with 'a "matched sample" of conflicts' which did not culminate into war. Aware that 'terminological difficulties' also are irritants in such an enterprise, Singer attempts a definitional exercise, for example, distinguishing 'competition' from 'contention', 'rivalry' and eventually 'conflict' to finally single out patterns which erupted into war and compare them with 50 other conflicts that had un-warlike outcomes. The conflict behaviour patterns would not just serve as predictors of war in a dynamic process model but would also be regarded as 'outcomes of the ecological configuration'. The typology he constructs to code conflict sequences consciously eschews the 'contemporary "systems analysis" orientation', rather providing 'an operational and relatively atheoretical description of events' that enfolds the whole gamut of 'diplomatic, military and economic acts' in the shape of a 'hierarchical "choice tree"'. In it, each act is a 'discrete operational category'. Each category too is subsumed with others belonging to the same level of specificity under a broader category, riding 'up the ladder of increasing generality'. Only when 'knowledge of the conflict sequence' possesses the richest detail, Singer thinks it is possible to discern 'a solid and recurrent pattern'.

On the basis of this elaborate theoretical framework, Singer found that since the Congress of Vienna, there has been no discernible increase in the frequency of interstate wars in the 150 years covered by the study, 'extra-systemic' wars registered an increase in the 19th century and a decrease in the 20th and, even after counting the two world wars, the 'severity and magnitude' of wars registered 'only a modest increase' over the entire time frame, which too is largely nullified when one controls for the 'number of people or states in the system'. Although no regularity was noticed in the 'intervals' of war from 'onset' or outbreak through 'termination' to the next 'onset', 'the amount of war under way' demonstrated a 'strong periodicity in the 20–40-year range'. Besides, the majority of interstate wars were waged in Europe by European nations, mostly by England, France, Turkey and Russia, and rather than being confined to 'traditional enmities' showed 'a general randomness in the choice of allies and enemies'. Victories belonged mostly to the 'initiators' (in 34 of 50), who were defeated only in 15 and stalemated in 1. The victors also suffered fewer fatalities than the defeated (in 36 wars) save in the Spanish-Chilean, Greco-Turkish, Second Balkan war and the Second World War. No 'clear battle death threshold' at which the vanquished felt compelled to surrender could be established. For, while in 23 of the 50 wars, the defeated nations 'capitulated' after losing a little more than 0.1 per cent of their people, in many cases they yielded even before this figure was reached. An

arresting fact in the 'timing of wars' in European sub-systems was that when the incidence of intra-European wars reached high levels, wars involving 'extra-continental adversaries' declined in numbers. The reverse also was true.

Looking at the 'system structure (and inter-nation bond) indices and their association with war', Singer found their 'separate effects' to be dissimilar or unlike. The density of IGOs in the system had no appreciable impact on the incidence of war, even though the decreases in their growth tended to precede wars and sharp rises in their numbers occurred after wars. IGO partners had fewer shared memberships when they were fated to fight each other within 5–10 years or were destined to become enemies. Alliance levels were marked by a 'discernible bivariate association', with negative correlations in the nineteenth century and positive correlations in the twentieth century. In both centuries, those nations that were more implicated in wars had more alliance bonds. Even though the 'network of alliance bonds' was frequently changed by the forging of new alliances, with inclusions and exclusions, 'alliances routines' as well as IGO and diplomatic clusters were resistant to major changes and showed considerable constancy. Moving on from some system properties to the nature of their distribution, Singer found 'a high concentration in the major powers' capabilities' to lead to 'more war in the nineteenth century, but…less in the twentieth'. After positing that changes towards capability concentration or away from it, and changes in the rate of redistribution of capability redistribution, have opposite impacts on the system, Singer ingeniously mixes these 'indices of capability distribution and redistribution' in one of his additive models that could explain 73 per cent and 35 per cent of the variance of the incidence of war caused by these factors in the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively. He shows that, though major powers are responsible for a large portion of war activity, 'analysis to date reveals no strong relationship between a given war-proneness and its power rank, share of resources or changes therein'. Again, the greater the mismatch between 'capability and diplomatic importance distributions', the more prone the system becomes to war. After factoring in 'rates of change in these rankings, the composite model accounted for 72 per cent of the variance in the amount of war begun in each half-decade'.

Regarding the marginal effects of population, as counted for states in the European system, Singer found the populous ones more active in Continental wars than less populous ones, but this association did not hold for extra-continental wars, and there was no significant correlation between growth rates in population and its density and a nation's proneness to war. Another important general finding was that interstate wars happened more between countries that were geographically contiguous and comparable in most other dimensions of attributes, thereby problematizing the 'the old "have/have not" interpretation', though in extra-systemic wars 'the distances and dissimilarities' between warring nations were 'considerable'.[52]

Singer's COWP has generated a huge trove of statistical evidence, with its data sets feeding into Singer and Small, *The Wages of War 1866–1965* (1972), and Singer and Small, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816–1980* (1993), and itself enabling the production of a series of probabilistic laws drawn from consistently perceived empirical regularities at multiple analytic levels. It has put an end to a long-drawn 'tendency to let often ill-defined traditional theories of conflict guide empirical inquiry' through 'data developments interacting with theory development'.[53]

CONCLUSION

While Chapter 8 dealt with Kaplan, this chapter treated the formulations of systems theory by the aforementioned five prominent systems theorists. These included Modelski's 'Agraria and Industria' and the 'long cycles' of world leadership and global politics; Rosecrance's nine stable and unstable historical systems and the dynamics of their transformation, as well as his concept of 'overlapping clubs' as a tool of grasping the possibilities of order or of a new 'concert' in the *present* international system; McClelland's focus on ACI as an international system, EDI as a method of recording international events and WEIP as a methodology of charting crises; Holsti's four historical systems and the sources of stability and change in all of them and finally Singer's classification of systems in terms of their criteria of membership and characteristic types of war, and COWP for studying them. In Chapter 10, I will critique and evaluate them.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. State how Modelski's concepts of 'Agraria' and 'Industria' facilitate a comparative study of all known international systems.
2. Comment on Modelski's 'long cycles' of world leadership and global politics as applications of the systems concept in IRT.
3. Explicate the association between nation states and world power described by Modelski as a manifestation of the politics of long cycles.
4. Briefly describe Rosecrance's nine historical systems and the sources of their stabilities and instabilities.
5. Show how, after Rosecrance, the global order created by overlapping clubs has functioned 'along functional and geographic lines'.
6. How does McClelland establish present 'AIC' as an international system?
7. Write a brief essay on McClelland's WEIS project.
8. Show how, after McClelland, American foreign policy has tackled the evolving nature of ACI.
9. Depict the IP of the Chou Dynasty as captured by Holsti's formulation of systems theory.
10. How does Holsti capture the IP of the Greek city–state system through his systems concepts?
11. Summarize, after Holsti, the characteristics of the the Interstate System of Europe, 1648–1814.
12. Specify the mixed theoretical bag considered necessary by Holsti to grasp the essence of the Contemporary Global System in the light of the fivefold characteristics of every system.
13. How does Singer's painstaking research engage in an ambitious COWP to construct a comprehensive theory of war?
14. What are the insights into European politics in the 19th and 20th centuries thrown up by Singer's COWP?

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