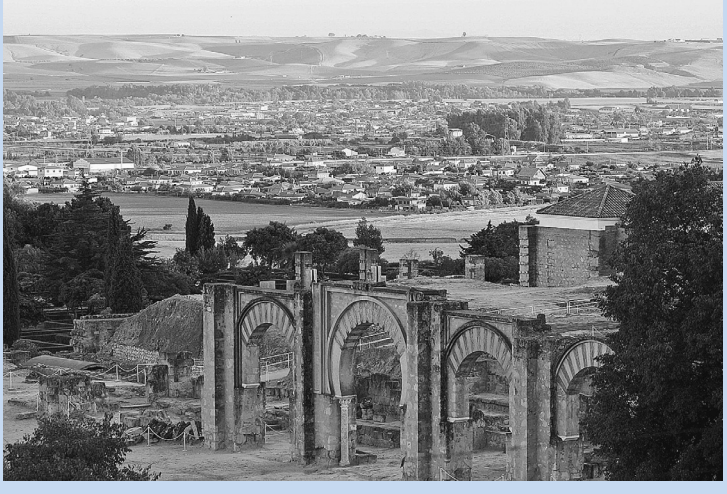
CHAPTER

2

Perspectives on World History

Change and Continuity



Our identity comes in part from history, sometimes buried right beneath our feet, as in the case depicted here of the ancient Muslim city of Medina Azahara in southern Spain. Ninety percent of this Islamic metropolis remains unexcavated.

Three miles west of the modern city of Córdoba, Spain, lies the buried city of Medina Azahara. Constructed in the tenth century, Medina Azahara was the political and cultural hub of the Islamic kingdom of al-Andalus, the Arabic name for the Iberian Peninsula (current-day Spain and Portugal). There was nothing in Europe to compare to it. It was, in the words of a current scholar of that period, "like New York versus, well, a rural village in Mexico."[1] The Islamic world, not Christian Europe, was the center of the universe. Today, even though excavations began in 1910, only about 10 percent of the buried city has been uncovered and restored. Now, the site is threatened by urban sprawl and the vagaries of government funding to preserve the ruins. Too few people know about it and care to preserve it. Yet this history, however ancient, constitutes the basis of our global political heritage. It is worth studying to gain insights about our contemporary world. How we view this history, of course, depends on our perspective.

The realist perspective looks at world history through the lens of power distribution. It sees a dynamic of two major configurations of power over the past 5,000 years: empire and equilibrium. These two configurations cycled back and forth, as empires consolidated dominant power and smaller powers resisted to reestablish equilibrium. From the beginning

of recorded history (around 3000 BCE until about 1500 CE), empires dotted the historical landscape and, in some cases, lasted for hundreds of years. But after 1500 CE, Europe, and then the world as a whole, moved toward equilibrium and the decentralized system we have today of separate and more or less equal nation-states.

The liberal perspective views this same history focusing on expanding societies and governing institutions. In the first period, from 3000 BCE to 1500 CE, human society grew from agricultural villages and sea-based trading towns to large, contiguous territorial states. After 1500 CE, the territorial states in Europe spawned an industrial revolution that subsequently drew the world closer together through exploration, commerce, and, most recently, the information revolution. Today we speak about the *global* village.

The identity perspective sees this history in terms of the evolution of ideas, how people over the years imagined themselves and others. Ethnicity, mythology, and religion defined the self-images of people in the earliest societies. Then, starting around the fifteenth century, the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment in Europe invented the modern age of national, ideological, and secular identities. Today, secular states coexist warily with religious, ethnic, and traditional cultures from other parts of the world.

Let's look briefly at this history up through the third quarter of the nineteenth century. We pick up the threads leading to World War I in the next chapter. The Parallel Timeline on page 73 offers a chronology of this history and helps you see which events the different perspectives might emphasize. Try to grasp the big picture and not simply memorize every detail.

Some of this ancient history, I realize, may seem distant and hard to absorb. But remember your family is part of this history. And history illuminates many activities we engage in today. For example, when you visit the Great Wall in China, do you know when and why it was built? History also provides context. Do you know, for example, that the Buddha and Confucius lived about the same time some six centuries before Jesus Christ or that Mayan and Islamic civilizations flourished in the same era?

My daughter once asked a pretty significant question. She was ten years old and traveling in Europe for the first time. "Dad," she said, "where did Europe come from?" An innocent yet profound question! We can't study international affairs and not know the answer to that question. We need to know where Islam, the Great Wall, Hinduism, and Mayan temples came from. And don't think the answers to those questions are not relevant today. In January 2005, an American Iraqi was asked why he voted (by absentee ballot) in the elections held in Iraq that month. "I'm an Assyrian," he said. "That's now a small province in northwest Iraq." Think of it—he's from one of the oldest recorded civilizations in the world. And his part of the world, known then as Mesopotamia, is still in the center of the news. Everything changes and nothing changes, right?

empire
a configuration of government where one dominant power or hegemon consolidates power primarily through conquest.

equilibrium
a distribution of political or economic power in which the different parts of the world interact on a more or less decentralized basis.

The Realist View of World History

From a realist perspective, two logics drive the course of world history: a logic of **empire** or domination, emphasized by the power transition school, and a logic of **equilibrium** or counterbalancing, emphasized by the power balancing school. Ancient history from 3000 BCE to 1500 CE is mostly about empires in different parts of the world that sometimes competed within a specific region, such as the Middle East, but did not interact much with one another across different regions of the world. Modern history from 1500 CE to the present is mostly about equilibrium or the growing interaction of separate and more or less equal states, first within Europe, and then throughout the rest of the world.

Parallel Timeline

Events of World History from Different Perspectives

Realist		Liberal		Identity	
Egypt and Mesopotamia	3000 BCE	Agricultural settlements	3000 BCE		
Hindu (India) and Shang (China) dynasties	1500 BCE			Hindu traditions	1500 BCE
Kingdom of Kush (Africa)	1000 BCE	Mediterranean trade	1000 BCE	Olmec culture (Latin America)	1000 BCE
				Buddha (Buddhism)	600 BCE
				Confucius (Confucianism)	600 BCE
Period of Warring States (China)	400 BCE			Classical Greek culture	400s–300s BCE
Peloponnesian Wars (Greece)	400 BCE				
Alexander the Great	350 BCE				
Ch'in dynasty (China)	200 BCE			Hellenistic Greek culture	200s BCE
Roman Empire	200 BCE–500 CE				
				Jesus Christ (Christianity)	25 CE
Gupta dynasty (India)	400 CE				
Golden Age of Islam	600–1200 CE			Muhammad (Islam)	600 CE
Sui, T'ang, and Sung dynasties (China)	600–1200 CE				
		Spread of monastic orders	900–1200 CE		
Mayan Empire (Americas)	1000 CE	Japanese emperor system or institution	700s CE		
Various African empires	1000 CE			Christian Crusades	1000s–1100s CE
		Consolidation of territorial states in Europe	1100–1500 CE	Holy Roman Empire (Europe)	900–1700 CE
Ottoman Empire	1200–1900 CE			Magna Carta	1215 CE
Yuan (Kahn) dynasty (China)	1300 CE	Hanseatic League	1300s–1600s CE		
		Asian-European trade—Silk Road	1300s CE		
Aztec and Inca empires (Americas)	1300s–1500s CE	Black Plague	1400s CE	Renaissance	1400s CE
		Long distance sea travel	1400s–1600s		
Spanish and Portuguese expansion	1500s–1600s				
				Reformation	1517 CE
Manchu dynasty (China)	1600s CE	Agricultural revolution	1600s–1700s CE	Cromwell and Glorious Revolution (Liberalism)	1600s CE
Japanese isolation—Tokugawa era	1600s–1800s CE				
Thirty Years War	1618–1648 CE				
		Treaty of Westphalia	1648 CE		
Louis XIV bid for empire	1670–1715 CE				
Colonial empires: British, French, and Dutch	1700–1900 CE			Enlightenment	1700s CE
		Treaty of Utrecht	1713 CE	American Revolution	1770s CE
		Industrial revolution	1780s CE		
				French Revolution	1789 CE
Napoleonic Wars and empire	1792–1815 CE			Nationalism	1800s CE
		Congress of Vienna and Concert of Europe	1815 CE and rest of 1800s		
		Laissez-faire trade	1846 CE		
				Marxism	1870s CE
German unification	1871 CE				

Spotlight on
security dilemma

In the sections that follow, we observe the repetitive impact of the security dilemma in international affairs that realist perspectives emphasize. One city-state arms either to protect itself or to attack another city-state. Other city-states cannot be sure which motivation is paramount, and they arm too to balance power and avoid losing their independence. At times, when the other party is overwhelmingly powerful, groups bandwagon. Empires highlight the advantages of economies of scale (sharing the spoils of conquest) and consolidation or integration (exercising influence from inside rather than outside an empire) rather than balancing. Empires in Asia developed stronger centralizing features than those in Europe. Many centuries before European states did so, for example, an earlier Ch'in dynasty in the fourth century BCE conscripted soldiers, taxed rather than borrowed money to finance state affairs, monopolized property, developed extensive secret police and informant systems, and allocated administrative offices more on merit than due to bribes.[2] But notice that both of these logics of consolidation and balancing focus on material forces. Liberal and identity perspectives, which we take up subsequently, emphasize more interactive or institutional and ideological forces.

causal arrow

Age of Empires

History begins not with the first societies to exist but with the first societies to record their existence So we start with ancient empires in Mesopotamia, which were the first to record their existence, but we move on quickly to Asia, the Americas, and Africa, where other empires also existed but records started only later.

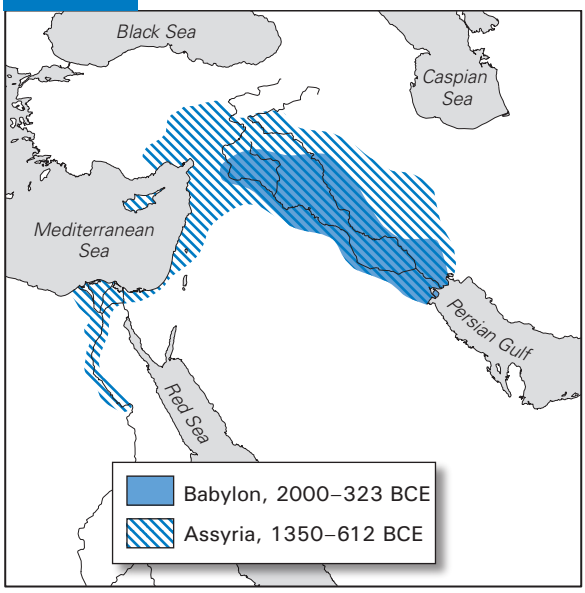
Mesopotamia. Around 3000 BCE, a dozen or so separate cities in Mesopotamia began to record their exploits. At times, over the next 1,500 years, the most powerful ones dominated their neighbors. Around 2450 BCE, Sargon established the first known empire of Akkad. The Akkadian empire linked Babylonian cities located near modern-day Baghdad and in southern Iraq with Assyrian cities located in northern Iraq and parts of contemporary Turkey and Syria. Also about the third millennium BCE, another empire, Egypt, sprouted in the Nile Valley. Pharaohs built the pyramids in an attempt to grasp eternity. Later, the Ur and Babylonian empires flourished. Hammurabi of Babylon produced his famous code of laws that laid out practical guidelines such as an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But after Hammurabi, a period of equilibrium or balancing followed. In this period, known as the Amarna period, the Egyptian empire came into contact and competed with empires in both Mesopotamia and Anatolia (the Hittites, in present-day Turkey). Subsequently, the Assyrian (800–700 BCE) and Persian (600–400 BCE) empires reestablished hegemony (see Map 2-1), until Rome conquered the Mediterranean region, a conquest marked in our memory by the marriage of Mark Anthony, the Roman general, and Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, in the present-day Gaza Strip.

Ancient India and China. By the second millennium BCE, Indian and Chinese civilizations also began to record their existence. The Aryans, an Indo-European people, invaded and settled India around 1500 BCE, bringing with them Brahmanic or Hindu religious traditions and a social structure that influenced the Indian caste system. In the sixth century BCE, Siddhartha Gautama, who came from a non-Aryan tribal clan and became known as the Buddha, founded the religion that bears his name. Buddhism challenged the Hindu caste system and flourished in the third century BCE under the Mauryan king Asoka (see Map 2-2). In 2005, Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize–winning economist, pointed out that Buddhist councils under Asoka predated the Roman Senate in offering some of

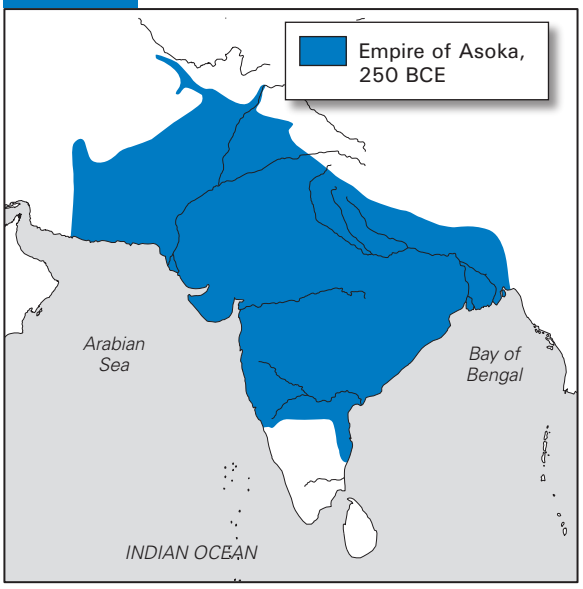
the earliest forums for democracy, in which adherents argued different viewpoints in public.[3] But then Buddhism declined in India. Today, Hindu traditions prevail, although India also hosts the second largest Muslim population in the world (after Indonesia).

The Shang dynasty in China, governing a much smaller area than present-day China, emerged around 1500 BCE. It was later overthrown by the Chou dynasty, which ruled with declining effectiveness first from the western capital of Hao and then the eastern capital of Lo-yi. Confucius, who came from the lower nobility in China, propagated his teachings in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, about the same time as the Buddha in India. Confucianism, which emphasized hierarchical relations within family and society, did much to strengthen Chinese unity but not before the Chou dynasty dissolved, and in the fourth and third centuries BCE, China went through a period of anarchy and equilibrium known as the Period of Warring States. Sun Tzu described this period in his classic study, *The Art of War,* and left rules for war and peace comparable to those of the Greek historian Thucydides, who wrote around the same time about the Peloponnesian wars in Greece.[4] Notice in the box on page 76 how this Chinese history is still relevant to contemporary policy debates. In 221 BCE, the Ch'in dynasty reunited China and built the Great Wall—which you can visit today outside Beijing—to defend it, as well as creating a vast army of terra-cotta soldiers to honor the emperor, which was unearthed in 1974 in the old capital of Xian. The Han dynasty followed and ruled with one interruption until 220 CE. China was divided again in the third century CE, and although it is identified with empire and the concept of the Middle Kingdom (with China as the center of civilization) throughout the rest of its history, it continued to experience periodic divisions and anarchy, most recently under western colonialism in the nineteenth century.

Map 2-1 **Middle Eastern Empires, 2000–323 BCE**



Map 2-2 **The Indian Empire Under Asoka, 250 BCE**



Greek Civilization. Around 1000 BCE, activity in the Mediterranean shifted westward. Seafaring people, such as the Phoenicians based in Carthage on the North African coast and the Philistines (from which Palestine gets its name), descended on the Levant (today's Syria, Lebanon, and Israel). Overland invasions brought Greeks from the northwest and Aramaic-speaking people from the southeast, including the Israelites, into the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East. Israelite kings, David and Solomon, worshipping the deity they knew as Yahweh, briefly established a kingdom centered in Jerusalem. By the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, some city-states in Greece, as earlier in Mesopotamia, began to dominate their neighbors. Sparta established an empire, then Athens. The two city-states

Using the Perspectives to Read Between the Lines

Contemporary China Expert Draws from Ancient Chinese History

On September 8, 2005, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page story about a Pentagon China expert, Michael Pillsbury. To see how relevant history remains for contemporary policy debates, listen to what Mr. Pillsbury has to say about China's foreign policy. See also if you can identify the perspective behind his use of history, in this case from the Period of Warring States in China around the fourth century BCE.

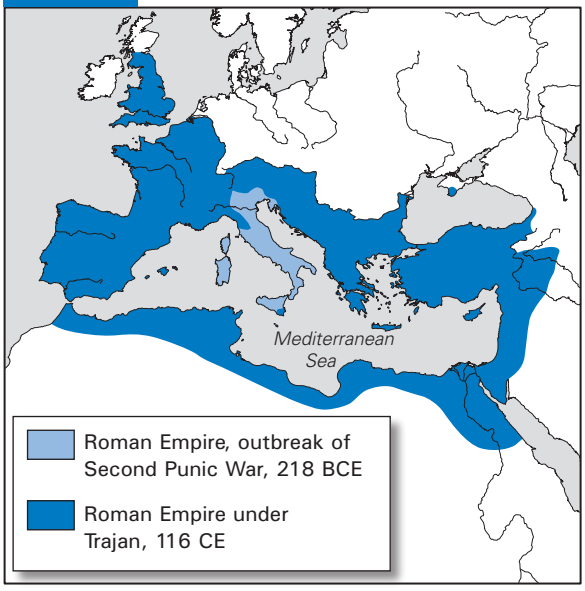
> After decades spent nurturing contacts within China's military, Mr. Pillsbury has amassed mounds of Chinese-language military texts and interviewed their authors to get a grip on China's long-term military aims. His conclusion has rattled many in Washington. . . .
>
> "Beijing sees the U.S. as an inevitable foe, and is planning accordingly," warns the 60-year-old China expert. . . .
>
> Chinese writings, Mr. Pillsbury says, show a military establishment obsessed with the inevitable decline of the U.S. and China's commensurate rise. On the economic front, he cautions that Americans shouldn't be taken in by the profusion of fast-food restaurants in China or other signs that make China look like the West. Beneath the growing trade ties with the U.S., he says, runs a nationalistic fervor that could take American investors by surprise. . . .
>
> [Mr. Pillsbury] is increasingly convinced that China's military thinkers and strategists derive much of their guidance and inspiration from China's Warring States period, an era of pre-unification strife about 2,300 years ago. This is the thesis of his latest book, *The Future of China's Ancient Strategy,* which [argues] . . . that China's history and culture posit the existence of a "hegemon"—these days, the United States—that must be defeated over time.

First, notice Pillsbury's conviction that history influences present-day military thinking in China—if you do not know that history, you cannot understand China today. Second, China's military thinking, according to Pillsbury, is fixated on the conflict between declining and rising states, the realist cycle of empire and equilibrium that China experienced during the Warring States period before the Ch'in dynasty reunited China and built the Great Wall to defend it. Third, notice how Pillsbury discounts the liberal expectation that China will be converted by wealth to become more like the West. Nationalistic fervor will prove stronger than trade ties, he warns. Finally, Pillsbury never suggests that the United States might actually be a hegemon itself and hence a threat to China, or that American military planning may also be based on the balance of power. According to Pillsbury, China's conviction that America is a foe derives from its historical memory or mentality, not the contemporary structure of power in Asia. Can you see why, in the end, Pillsbury analyzes China from an identity perspective and domestic level of analysis?

united briefly to confront Persia, a new empire in the eastern Mediterranean that united the old Assyrian and Egyptian kingdoms. Classical Greek civilization flourished, but Sparta and Athens soon fell into hegemonic wars against one another. Sparta defeated Athens, and Thucydides left a realist account of these Peloponnesian Wars (431–421 BCE and 414–404 BCE) that influences our understanding of international relations to the present day.[5]

In the mid-fourth century BCE, a new Greek empire took over under the reign of Philip II of Macedon and his son, Alexander the Great. Alexander briefly united the Greek and Persian kingdoms into an empire greater than any seen before, stretching from Greece and Egypt in the west (and founding today's city of Alexandria) across present-day Iran and Afghanistan into the Indus River valley of India. Hellenistic Greek culture, named after the straits of Hellespont, the ancient dividing line between east and west now known as the Dardanelles, added elements of cosmopolitan life and art to the small city-state traditions of classical Greek culture.

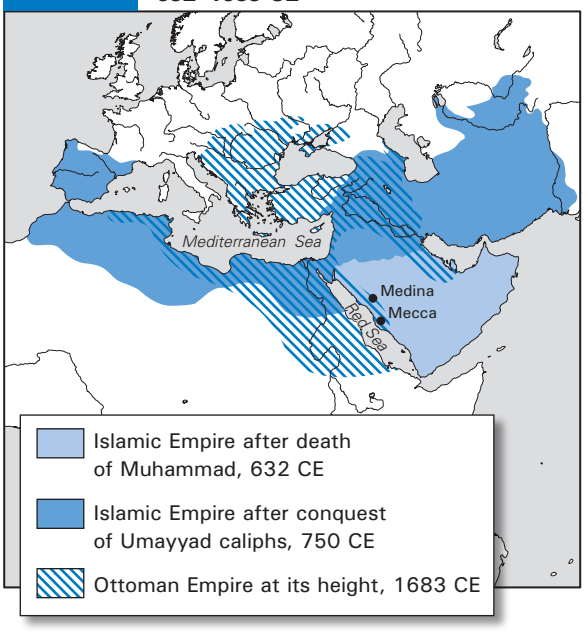
Map 2-3 **The Roman Empire, 218 BCE–116 CE**



Roman Empire. On the Italian peninsula, still another empire was being born. Rome had existed as a city since the seventh century BCE. But in the third century BCE, it expanded, first conquering southern Italy and then spreading beyond the Italian peninsula. It fought two major wars, known as the Punic Wars (264–241 BCE and 218–202 BCE), against Carthage, the Phoenician city-state. The Punic Wars live on in our imagination because Hannibal, the Carthaginian general, crossed the Alps with elephants to fight the Romans. In the early second century, Rome defeated the last remnants of Alexander's empire, and the Roman Empire consolidated control and lasted for the next 800 years. As Map 2-3 shows, it extended its rule to the Rhine-Danube Rivers in Europe and across the English Channel to England, Wales, and southern Scotland. Hadrian's Wall, the northernmost outpost of Roman civilization, still stretches across the landscape of northern England. Roman rule evoked early ethnic resentments in both the Middle East (the roots of Judean nationalism) and Europe (the roots of German nationalism). And Roman colonial administrators in Judea executed the Jewish prophet Jesus of Nazareth, known to his followers as Christ, the anointed one and the son of God. Christ's life and crucifixion inspired the religion of Christianity. After persecuting Christians for several centuries, the Roman Empire in the fourth century CE under Constantine adopted Christianity as the state religion. Christianity supplanted Roman authority when the empire collapsed in the fifth century CE, and the Christian church played a major role in European politics for the next millennium through the pope in Rome, the seat of the Roman Catholic Church, and the patriarchs in Constantinople (today's Istanbul), Kiev, and then Moscow, the various centers of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Golden Age of Islam. Rome and Greece, Christianity and Judaism, became the crucibles of western civilization. But other civilizations flourished nearby, as well as far away. Arab civilization existed long before the seventh century CE but left no recorded history. The Queen of Sheba, known from biblical stories, came from the kingdom of the Sabaens in what is now Yemen. Romans and Persians attacked the kingdoms of southern Arabia but never subdued them. The Arabian peninsula escaped conquest, as did Saudi Arabia many centuries later, the only Middle Eastern country not colonized by European powers. Nomadic Arabs ruled in northern Arabia. From one such nomadic tribe, the Quraysh, came Muhammad, the founder of Islam. A pious youth turned off by materialism, he received the call in Mecca in 610 to become God's prophet. Persecuted by worldly merchants, he fled to Medina in 622 and organized

Map 2-4 **The Islamic and Ottoman Empires, 632–1683 CE**



Map 2-5 **Chinese Dynasties, 618–1367 CE**

there a godly society that ignited the expansion of the Islamic Empire—an empire that in conquest and culture rivaled that of Rome (see Map 2-4).

By mid-century, Islamic conquests extended across North Africa to Europe and across Mesopotamia to the Indus River valley of India. Islamic forces were finally stopped at Tours, France, in 732 and occupied Spain, or al-Andalus, for the next four hundred years. Arabs besieged Constantinople several times during this period but never conquered it. The Umayyad dynasties in Syria and later the Abbasid dynasties in Baghdad maintained Arab rule until the twelfth century, fighting back both Christian crusades from the west and Mongol assaults from central Asia. In the eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks converted to Islam, and a succession of Turkish dynasties established the Ottoman Empire. Centered in Constantinople, Ottoman rulers conquered territories as far north as the outskirts of Vienna and as far east as India. This Golden Age of Islam made numerous contributions to culture and science, including algebra, advanced irrigation techniques, and the art of papermaking (possibly obtained from China) that facilitated the translation and preservation of Greek and Roman classics. Without the efforts of Islamic scholars, many of the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and others would have been lost to the world forever.

Asian Dynasties. About the same time as the rise of Islam, China experienced a renaissance. Yang Chien, a leading statesman in the northern kingdom, seized the throne and reunited the country under the Sui dynasty. Known as Emperor Wen, he invaded Korea and battled Turkish invaders from central Asia. In 615, a noble family in northwest China, known as Li, temporarily allied with the Turks and overthrew the Sui dynasty. Li-Yuan became emperor and founded the T'ang dynasty (see Map 2-5). China now expanded its rule to include inner and outer Mongolia, parts of central Asia, and, briefly, Korea. The T'ang dynasty crumbled in the tenth century and was followed by the northern (960–1126) and southern (1126–1279) Sung dynasties. During the southern Sung period, China shrank under the onslaught of another empire, that of the Mongolian chief, Genghis Khan. Khan conquered territories from the Pacific to the Adriatic (Italy's eastern coast) and organized the Great Khanate to rule China under the Yuan dynasty (1280–1367). The Venetian explorer Marco Polo visited China during this period and reported on the beauty and achievements of Chinese civilization, stimulating Europe's appetite for trade with the east.

Further east, still other civilizations flourished. Japan's early recorded history describes an emperor system in the eighth century CE, centered near present-day Kyoto, heavily

influenced by Chinese culture and Buddhism. When the emperor, and to a lesser extent Buddhism, declined in influence thereafter, great aristocratic families such as the Fujiwara and warriors such as Minamoto ruled the country. A *shogun* system maintained nominal unity through the puppet emperor, while *daimyos,* the lords, and *samurai* warriors divided authority and exercised real power.

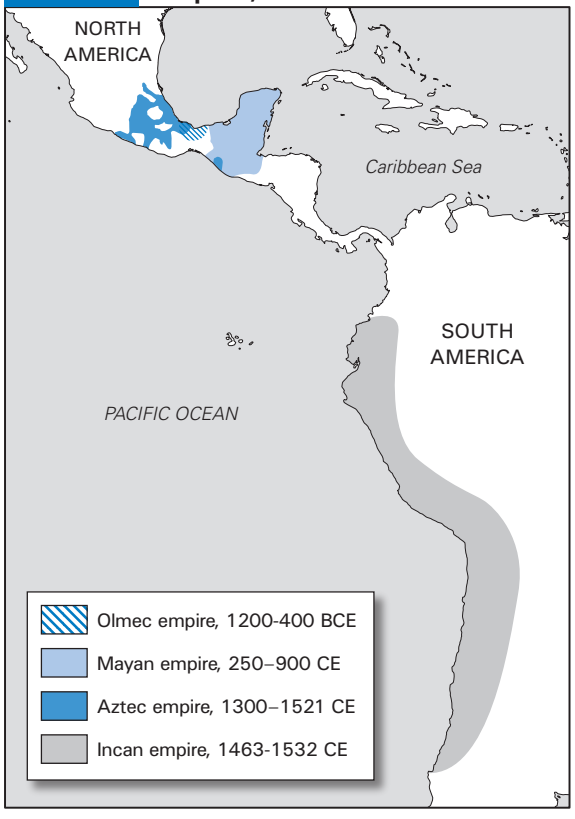
In the fourth century CE, India consolidated Hindu orthodoxy under the Gupta dynasty but then divided after the sixth century into some seventy kingdoms, which competed with one another until the Turks invaded and established Muslim rule from the twelfth to seventeenth centuries.

Empires in the Americas. Mayan civilization in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and northern Honduras reached its zenith in the first millennium CE (see Map 2-6). The Maya raised stone temples, pyramids, and tombs comparable to those of ancient Egypt and developed calendars based on astronomical observations that involved sophisticated mathematics. As the Mayan civilization went into decline, the Aztecs built another empire in central Mexico, known for its magnificent capital, Tenochtitlán, and its horrific rituals of human sacrifice. Farther south, the Incas established an Andean empire that stretched from Ecuador to central Chile. They organized complex governmental structures and built roads and cities, such as Machu Picchu, in the most remote and highest mountain regions. Extensive mining for silver and copper resulted in the exquisite adornment of cities like Cuzco, which fascinated the Spaniards when they arrived.

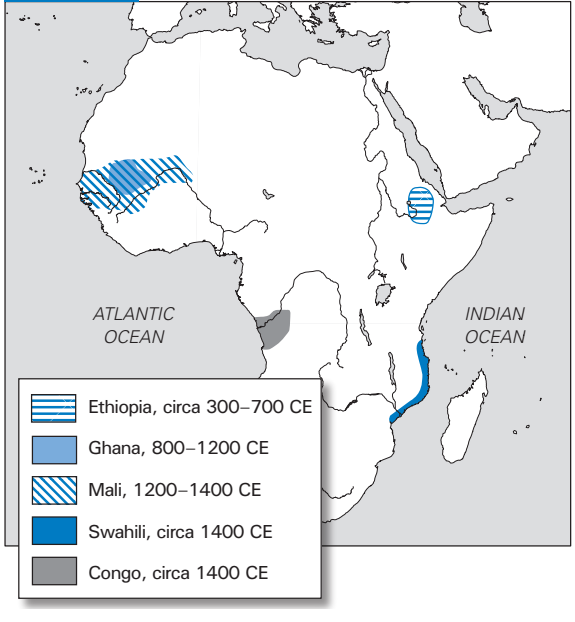
Recent discoveries have illuminated even older civilizations in what is now Latin America. The Olmec culture, which flourished along the Gulf of Mexico in Veracruz and Tabasco, dates back to around 1000 BCE. A stone slab found recently in southern Veracruz bears what experts believe to be a true writing system.[6] If this discovery holds up and leads to further evidence, empires in the Western Hemisphere as old as those in the Middle East may be confirmed.

African Civilizations. African civilizations existed in Ghana, Mali, Congo, Ethiopia, and southeastern Africa. In the eighth century CE, the empire of Ghana spanned an area from the Sahara Desert to present-day Niger and Senegal. Arabs spoke of it as the "land of gold," and Ghana traded gold with the Arabs, as well as salt and slaves. The empire of Mali succeeded Ghana in the thirteenth century and was twice as large (see Map 2-7). Its ruler is said to have had ten thousand horses in his stable.

Map 2-6 **The Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, and Incan Empires, 1200 BCE–1532 CE**



Map 2-7 **African Empires, 300–1400 CE**



Bantu-speaking people in Nigeria spread south into the Congo and eventually across most of southern Africa. The kingdom of Congo flourished on the lower Congo river. Swahili-speaking tribes settled on the east coast of Africa and traded with seafaring peoples as far away as Indonesia. Interior kingdoms in central Africa flourished. Traces of magnificent stone buildings from the fifteenth century can be found today throughout Zimbabwe (which means "stone houses"). Ethiopia is perhaps the oldest African civilization, dating back to the kingdom of Kush, which had connections with ancient Egypt.

Europe in the Early Middle, or Dark, Ages. While the Arab, Chinese, African, and American civilizations flourished after 600 CE, Rome collapsed and Europe descended into what early historians called the Dark Ages. A period of comparative decline and stagnation ensued in which much of the learning and technological achievements of the ancient Greeks and Romans were lost for the time being. Germanic and other tribes, the most warlike of which were the Huns led by Attila, raided the Italian peninsula and the rest of Europe. In the sixth century, the Christian church in Rome declared its independence from Constantinople and turned to the Germanic tribes to help defend the western empire. In 800, the pope crowned the Frankish king Charlemagne, from a German tribe in today's northern France, as holy Roman emperor. Charlemagne's empire encompassed much of modern-day France and Germany and seemed for a while to be a worthy successor to Rome. But continuing raids across Europe, this time by the Vikings in the ninth and tenth centuries, and the fact that Charlemagne's empire had to be continuously divided among his heirs fragmented Europe once again. The papacy lost influence and became corrupt. Local princes and dukes seized control, claimed divinity, and invested or appointed local bishops. In 1054, the Christian world formally split into two. Orthodox Byzantium, with the patriarch in Constantinople, became the inspiration for the later Slavic and Russian civilizations; the papacy in Rome competed with emerging territorial-based kings to reconstitute a weak version of the Roman Empire in Europe, which now, because of the church's influence, became known as the Holy Roman Empire.

Around the turn of the millennium, the Roman church made a comeback. In 962, the papacy anointed another German king—Otto of Saxony, today a region in eastern Germany—as holy Roman emperor. Major reforms of the church followed, including the founding of monastic orders, the most influential of which was the Benedictine order in Cluny outside Paris. These orders fanned out across Europe, renewing faith, inspiring the Crusades, and providing essential services in feudal society (such as loans to purchase land). In the late eleventh century, during the so-called Investiture Conflict, Pope Gregory VII took back the right of the church to select or invest local bishops and authorities. The conflict sparked a series of wars between Rome and Otto's successors, the Hohenstaufen kings—Frederick I, or Frederick Barbarossa, and his son Frederick II. The two Fredericks tried to expand the empire to incorporate the rich trading cities and provinces of Italy. The pope fought back, encouraging Italian provinces to align against the emperor under alliances such as the Lombard League of northern Italian cities. This balancing of power weakened the holy Roman emperor and devolved power to the individual German and Italian provinces and cities, which remained divided until the late nineteenth century. The Hapsburg kings, initially from Switzerland, seized the emperor's crown in the thirteenth century. They relocated to Vienna and led the Austrian dynasty that campaigned against the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Spotlight on

the balance of power

city leagues
collections of city-states united for protection or trade.

city-states
cities that are controlled by sovereign governments.

Medieval Europe. During the Middle Ages, small, fragmented **city leagues**, such as the Hanseatic League of German cities on the Baltic Sea, and **city-states**, such as Venice, Florence, Genoa, and Milan on the Mediterranean Sea, dominated the areas of present-day Germany

and Italy. Then, a new form of authority, the **territorial state**, emerged in France, England, the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal.[7] Starting in 987, the Capetian kings expanded Frankish, or French, authority outward from Paris. They weakened the pope, even moving the papacy in 1309 from Rome to Avignon. The Valois kings from Burgundy succeeded the Capetians and waged a long conflict, known as the Hundred Years War (1337–1453), to expel England from the continent, where English monarchs had expanded through intermarriage and conquest. Eventually victorious, France developed a highly centralized state administration that consolidated feudal authorities and asserted independence from the holy Roman emperor. England, in defeat, consolidated its domain across the English Channel. Unlike France, however, it developed a more decentralized state system. In the thirteenth century, the nobility and local leaders extracted from King John the first bill of rights, the Magna Carta, and established the practice of more frequent assemblies of nobles and notables known as *parlers*—the precursors of the present-day Parliament—to decide affairs of state. Meanwhile, Spain and Portugal, after expelling the Muslims, opened up long-distance sea trade and began an age of exploration that led to the discovery and colonization of the New World, as well as Africa and Asia. The Dutch entered the sea trade and became the ship-building and financial center of early modern Europe. We mention more about Europe's economic expansion in Chapter 8.

territorial states
highly centralized administrations emerging in the late tenth century CE that consolidated feudal authorities and asserted independence from the holy Roman emperor.

The period from 1300 to 1600 witnessed both a decline and renaissance in Europe. The Black Plague in the fourteenth century wiped out a third of Europe's population. But then a period of cultural innovation known as the Renaissance began in Italy and spread through Europe, ushering in the modern age of science, art, and political thought. Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and Machiavelli wrote *The Prince,* giving his name thereafter to a type of politics, Machiavellian, that epitomized realist maneuvering to benefit the interests of the sovereign.

Europe Ascends and Other Empires Recede. By 1500, Europe had begun to reemerge from its thousand-year decline following the fall of Rome. Curiously, just as it did so, several other great civilizations fell into decline. The Islamic world slipped back, although the Ottoman Empire besieged Vienna in 1529 and 1683 and played a role in Europe until the early twentieth century. China, which had built impressive fleets in the fifteenth century, abandoned long-distance sea trade and succumbed in the seventeenth century for the second time to foreign rule under the Manchu Qing dynasty. Japan forbade all contact with foreign intruders (except a few Jesuit traders around Nagasaki) and isolated itself from western influence for three centuries. The Mayan, Aztec, and Inca civilizations in the Americas offered little resistance when the Spanish conquistadors arrived in the early 1500s. The African empires also disintegrated under the assault of western explorers and slave traders.

Age of Equilibrium

Thus, we turn to Europe to investigate the age of equilibrium and the rise of the contemporary system of independent states. Europe became the center of technological innovation and change after 1500, and its modern history epitomized the cycling back and forth between empire and equilibrium that the realist perspective sees as the principal dynamic of world politics. But we should not forget other great civilizations that continued to evolve: Islam, China, Japan, and those in Africa and Latin America. Today they play equally important roles in world affairs and bring experiences that differ from those of modern Europe.

Reformation. Beginning in the mid-fifteenth century, the Hapsburg kings Frederick III and Maximilian expanded the Holy Roman Empire to include much of Europe, other than France. In the 1500s, their successors, Charles V and later his son, Philip II, incorporated

Spain and the Spanish Netherlands into the empire. Now, France was surrounded on all sides by Hapsburg rulers. Empire once again threatened to unite all of Europe.

At this very moment, however, the Catholic Church, which gave the holy Roman emperor its imprimatur, imploded. In 1517, Martin Luther, a devout monk, nailed his ninety-five theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, which criticized corrupt church practices. His protest launched the religious upheaval known as the Reformation or "Protest-antism." A religious dispute to reform the church soon became a political dispute to redistribute power in Europe. Numerous princes throughout the empire as well as the French kings exploited the Lutheran or Protestant split with Rome to fight back against the Hapsburgs. Francis I of France attacked Hapsburg territories in Italy, and Protestant kings in the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and northern Germany challenged Hapsburg rule across northern Europe. By the end of the sixteenth century, England under Henry VIII had withdrawn from the Catholic Church and established the Protestant Anglican Church, with the monarch as its supreme head. When the papacy rallied forces to punish England, now ruled by Henry's daughter Elizabeth I, the English fleet defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588. Where Catholic rulers had once dominated, Protestant states now consolidated their authority.

Spotlight on
the balance of power

Counter-Reformation and the Thirty Years War. The holy Roman emperor did not give up easily. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Hapsburg emperor, Ferdinand II, led a counter-reformation campaign against France and the Protestant states. Religious wars, known as the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), ensued and decimated the villages and peoples of Europe. To this day, Europeans remember which towns are Catholic and which are Protestant.[8] Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden led the Protestant states, and France, although Catholic, exploited the conflict against the Hapsburgs to expand its territory and power under the French king, Louis XIII.

Spotlight on
identity

Cardinal de Richelieu, first minister under Louis XIII, was a leading figure in the Thirty Years War and became one of the fathers of the modern state system. Ferdinand and Protestant rulers fought about religion and the true faith, but Richelieu, although a Catholic prelate, fought only to expand the power of his sovereign and the aristocratic class to which he belonged. He appealed to what he called ***raison d'état*** (reason of state) or what later became known as the national interest. Sovereignty became the new watchword of the territorial state; the sovereign yielded to no other authority in matters of religion or power. The state pursued independent interests and rejected universal values, such as Catholicism or Protestantism, as a basis for managing interstate relations. Reason was beginning to supplant religion as the rationale for state power, although, as identity perspectives stress (see later discussion), Europe remained Christian, a fact that stirs debate today as the European Union considers membership for the Muslim state of Turkey.

raison d'état
the principle of national interest or what the state requires.

Spotlight on
the state

Treaty of Westphalia. The religious wars ended in 1648. The **Treaty of Westphalia** established a new order of sovereign monarchs. From this point on, individual states—not the Holy Roman Empire—ruled Europe. (See Map 2-8.) Negotiated over four years, the treaty came out of the first multilateral, interstate diplomatic conference of its kind, involving 145 delegates representing 55 jurisdictions. So bitter were the divisions that the Catholic delegates gathered in Münster and Protestant delegates in Osnabrück. Couriers carried proposals back and forth over the 50 kilometers separating the two towns in northwest Germany.

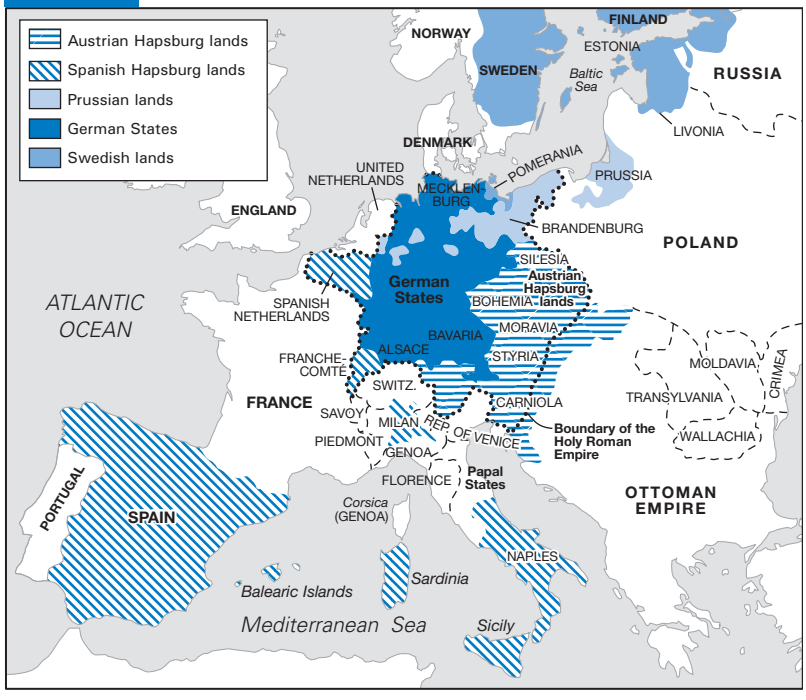
Treaty of Westphalia
a multiparty European treaty signed in 1648 establishing the modern international system of state sovereignty.

Two critical issues had to be resolved: religion and power. On religion, the delegates agreed to a formula already established at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. Individual sovereigns had the right to decide the religion of their own people. Monarchs were independent in all matters of domestic jurisdiction and, in turn, recognized the equality or mutual sovereignty of other monarchs. The Protestant Netherlands, or Holland, became independent of Catholic

Spotlight on
sovereignty

Hapsburg rule and established the principle of statehood through recognition by other states. On power, Westphalia extracted a renunciation of imperial ambitions from the holy Roman emperor and gave individual sovereigns the right to participate in and consent to all dealings of the empire. Thereafter, some three hundred separate political entities made up the Holy Roman Empire and decided policies through electors meeting in the Imperial Diet. France and Sweden were granted the right to intervene to enforce these provisions. Both inside and outside the empire, Westphalia established the expectation that equilibrium, not empire, would govern European affairs.

Map 2-8 **Europe in 1648**



Louis XIV. Like many peace settlements, Westphalia focused on the last war, not the next one. Everyone worried that the holy Roman emperor in Vienna might seek empire again. No one anticipated that France, a guarantor of Westphalia, would make the next bid. Building on Richelieu's legacy, Louis XIV, the Sun King, envisioned himself as a universal monarch and built a glorious palace at Versailles to symbolize the new center of Europe. In the late seventeenth century, he attacked the Low Countries, which included Hapsburg lands located in present-day Belgium but which were then part of Holland. This threat eventually forced an alliance between Holland and Great Britain, which had been naval rivals in the 1650s. (Remember, in one of these naval wars, New Amsterdam, located on present-day lower Manhattan, passed from Dutch to English hands and was renamed New York.) In 1688, under the threat from Louis XIV, England invited William of Orange, the Dutch Protestant ruler, to become, along with his wife Mary (daughter of James II, the Catholic King being deposed—think of doing that to good old Dad!), king and queen of England. From the realist perspective, power dictated this alliance, although, as we note later, identity perspectives stress the convergence of English and Dutch religious identities. Britain and Holland joined Austria to save the new state system from French imperial ambitions. In 1700, the last Spanish Hapsburg king died without a direct heir. Louis XIV named his grandson Philip V to take over the Spanish throne. Philip V was also in line to become the next king of France. Uniting the dynasties, Louis saw the opportunity to dominate the entire Atlantic coastline, thus jeopardizing British and Dutch commercial interests. The War of the Spanish Succession followed and extended the conflict for another decade. It ended eventually in 1713 in another multistate European treaty, the **Treaty of Utrecht**. France was stopped, and Spain began its retreat from the stage of great powers. England, which had been absent at Westphalia because of a domestic revolution in the 1640s and 1650s under Oliver Cromwell, stepped forward to guarantee the settlement. Great Britain, formed in 1707 with the merger of England, Wales, and Scotland, went on to play a prominent role in Europe until the present day.

Spotlight on
hegemony

causal arrow

Treaty of Utrecht
a multistate European treaty established in 1713 that helped end the War of Spanish Succession and eventually signaled the rise of Great Britain.

Classic Balance of Power. The eighteenth century was one of relative equilibrium. Great Britain and France fought one another, off and on, throughout the century. Many of these wars had ramifications outside Europe. The Seven Years War (1756–1763) cost France its North American empire; known as the French and Indian War in North America, the Seven Years War also led Britain to tax the American colonies and triggered the battle cry of the American Revolution—"no taxation without representation." France later became a crucial American ally to help win American independence, among other things controlling the Chesapeake Bay as George Washington defeated Charles Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781. Austria remained a significant power in Europe, but two other powers—Prussia and Russia—also ascended. Prussia under Frederick the Great seized Silesia, a resource-rich province in present-day Poland, and ignited a long struggle with the Hapsburg rulers in Austria for dominance of the German provinces. Russia expanded even more dramatically. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Peter the Great injected western technology and customs into Russia society, and the German princess Catherine the Great, who became tsarina by marriage to Peter's grandson, later expanded the Russian empire. Russia surged toward central Asia, seizing the Crimea on the Black Sea, and moved toward the Balkans where it rolled back a declining Ottoman Empire and threatened Austrian provinces. At the end of the century, as a portent of things to come, the three eastern powers Russia, Prussia, and Austria absorbed and divided the independent kingdom of Poland, which disappeared from the map of Europe until the end of World War I.

The balance of power in the eighteenth century worked in classic fashion, with flexible alliances, periodic but limited wars, and territorial compensation. As realists see it, there was no conscious direction of the system; the system was laissez-faire, like an economic marketplace, with the outcomes unintended but determined by an "invisible hand." A balance or equilibrium resulted even though no one state deliberately sought it. Britain, it is true, acted as a kind of off-shore balancer of power. It did not seek to dominate on the continent but to prevent any other power from dominating. When Prussia and France threatened Austria in the 1740s, Britain aligned with Austria. But when Austria and France threatened the status quo in the 1750s, Britain sided with Prussia. Alliances formed and dissolved on the basis of shifts in power, not ideological affinities or permanent alliances. Equilibrium in Europe was accompanied by colonial competition abroad. French, British, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese fleets colonized much of North and South America and the coastal areas of Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and China (see maps in Chapter 13). The industrial revolution began in England and spread to Europe. The development of military technology accelerated and began to shift material power decisively.

Spotlight on
balance of power and alliances

causal arrow

French Revolution and Napoleon. Domestic political revolutions soon refashioned the European landscape. The American Revolution of 1776 had a long-term impact, but the French Revolution in 1789 changed Europe immediately. The identity perspective sees these revolutions originating from new ideas of liberty and constitutionalism at the domestic and foreign policy levels of analysis. The liberal perspective highlights the advent of specialization, institutions, and markets at the systemic process level. But the realist perspective sees these events as part of the ongoing struggle for power at both the domestic and international levels of analysis. A new kind of military dictatorship, uniting the state with the people, emerged to replace the monarchy. By 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, a commoner and army officer, had seized absolute power in France. He crowned himself the successor to Charlemagne as holy Roman emperor, showing that temporal authority no longer needed the pope (and how history matters in what leaders do), and waged a series of wars to subjugate the rest of Europe. Empire was back. But as the realist perspective predicts, the other

causal arrow

nations resisted. The Napoleonic Wars from 1792 to 1815 checked French expansion, and the Congress of Vienna in 1814–1815, which ended the Napoleonic Wars, restored equilibrium.

Concert of Europe. The grandest of all international conferences up to that point, the **Congress of Vienna** shaped Europe for the next century. While Westphalia and Utrecht made only modest provisions to monitor the peace, the Vienna settlement set up the **Concert of Europe**, an elaborate system of conferences and consultations among the great powers to manage the balance of power. The four victorious powers—Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria—restored the French monarchy and established the **Quadruple Alliance** to prevent another revolution in France. In 1818, France joined the other four in the **Quintuple Alliance**, which assumed special rights and responsibilities to settle international disputes and, if necessary, enforce them.

According to the liberal perspective (see later discussion), the Concert of Europe was a giant step forward from the classical or laissez-faire balance of power instituted by Westphalia and Utrecht, and it played an important role in preserving the general peace in Europe over the next century. But as the realist perspective sees it, the Concert did not last very long as a working system. Active conferences dropped off after 1830, and the system failed almost from the beginning to deal with the new forces of nationalism stirring in Europe.

Nationalism. In the early nineteenth century, nationalism ignited independence movements both inside and outside Europe. National revolutions occurred in Spain (1821), Greece (1829), Belgium (1830), France again (1830), and other European countries. Colonial rebellions in South America (1820s) freed the Spanish colonies. **Nationalism**, while manipulated by elites, appealed to ordinary people to become part of the life of the state and to identify with a common language, culture, and history. From the nineteenth century on, we speak of the **nation-state**, a fusion of the masses and state, not just the territorial or aristocratic state.

The realist perspective sees nationalism as an instrumental not independent force. Aristocratic elites operating from a foreign policy level of analysis used advancing technology to draft the masses into state service and created myths of nationhood to yoke them firmly to the foreign policy objectives of the state. Napoleon pioneered conscription and replaced the mercenary army with a citizen army. Military service, as historian John Keegan writes, became a *rite de passage* from boyhood to manhood and "an important cultural form in European life."[9] But notice that the state created the military culture, not the other way around. The nineteenth century, while relatively peaceful after 1815, witnessed an increasingly virulent tension between a new order of nation-states, which harnessed the power of the people to the state, and the old order of territorial or aristocratic states, which pursued the interests of aristocratic elites.

German Unification. The most decisive nationalist movements came in the second half of the nineteenth century with the unification of Germany and Italy (and, we might argue, the reunification of a divided United States through the Civil War)—all occurring in the 1860s. As realists see it, Germany and Italy, divided into autonomous provinces, city leagues, and city-states since the early days of the Holy Roman Empire, served as buffers to cushion the contest for power on the European continent. They separated the relatively new powers of eastern Europe—Russia, Prussia, and Austria—from the earlier powers of the west—Britain and France. Once this buffer was gone, there were fewer margins for error in managing the balance of power. Disputes became more intense, and competition that normally played out among the divided German and Italian provinces now spread to the Balkans where the empires of Austria and the Ottomans were crumbling. The Crimean War

Congress of Vienna
a major international conference (1814–1815) that shaped Europe by setting up the Concert of Europe.

Concert of Europe
a system of conferences and consultations in the early nineteenth century among the great powers to manage the balance of power.

causal arrow

Quadruple Alliance
an alliance established in 1814 by Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria to prevent another revolution in France.

Quintuple Alliance
an alliance established in 1818 when France joined the four nations of the Quadruple Alliance in which members assumed special rights and responsibilities to settle international disputes peacefully and, if necessary, enforce them.

Spotlight on
foreign policy level of analysis

causal arrow

nationalism
a sentiment, emerging in the 1800s, that sees nations as the core unit of identity.

nation-states
states defined by a fusion of the masses and the state, which occurred in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

Spotlight on
the balance of power

(1854–1856) gave an early indication of trouble ahead. Britain, France, and Austria allied to stop Russia's advance to the Black Sea. But Germany's unification seriously weakened Austria and created a big new power in central Europe that could now threaten France, Russia, and ultimately Britain.

Prussia unified Germany in the 1860s through three unilateral wars against European sovereigns. The effect was to overturn the cooperative system of the Concert of Europe. First, in 1864, Prussian forces seized Schleswig-Holstein, a province in today's northwest Germany, from Denmark. Second, in 1866, Prussia defeated Austria, its longtime rival for mastery of the German provinces, and united the German provinces without Austria, which became in 1867 the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary. Third, the united German provinces attacked and defeated France in 1870–1871. Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine, a chunk of French territory in the southwest, which France had taken two centuries before, and proclaimed the new German Empire from the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles. The Prussian king William I retrieved the old title of caesar—kaiser in German—used by earlier holy Roman emperors (again showing the relevance of history) and became Kaiser Wilhelm I. France was humiliated, and the stage was set for the great European conflagrations of the twentieth century—the First and Second World Wars.

Otto von Bismarck, chancellor of Prussia, and then of the united Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm I, was the architect of German unification. In realist annals, he ranks as the master statesman and preeminent practitioner of the balance of power. He not only unified Germany through separate wars that avoided counterbalancing from the countries surrounding Germany, but he managed to reassure neighboring states for the next twenty years, until he left the chancellorship in 1890, that the new, increasingly powerful, united Germany was not a threat to their safety or interests. Had he continued in office, some believe, arguing now from an individual level of analysis because the cause comes from Bismarck, that Germany would have evolved very differently and Europe might have avoided the devastating world wars of the twentieth century.

Spotlight on
individual level of analysis

Emphasizing Power over Institutions and Ideas

Realist perspectives do not ignore institutions and ideas. They simply emphasize power relative to these other factors. Power is more important both because, as Thomas Hobbes, the seventeenth-century English philosopher, believed, people need power for innate or psychological reasons and, as Hans Morgenthau, whom we met in the last chapter, argued, people need power to pursue all other objectives. They do not always agree on these other objectives, such as religion, culture, and political ideology, but they agree on the need for power to achieve them. This common need for power, Morgenthau believed, makes it possible to study international relations systematically. For logically consistent reasons, therefore, realist perspectives do not make too much of the varying values, motivations, and aims of historical actors.

Listen to Paul Kennedy, a realist who wrote a best-selling book in 1987, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers.* Surveying the age of equilibrium in Europe after 1500, he tells us explicitly that he is not going to focus on the motives, goals, or values of countries; he's going to focus on their ships and firepower:

> There are elements in this story of "the expansion of Europe" which have been ignored. . . . The personal aspect has not been examined and yet—as in all great endeavors—it was there in abundance. . . . For a complex mixture of motives—personal gain, national glory, religious zeal, perhaps a sense of adventure—men were willing to risk everything, as indeed they did in many cases. Nor has there been [in this account] much dwelling upon the awful cruelties inflicted by

> these European conquerors upon their many victims in Africa, Asia, and America. If these features are hardly mentioned here, it is because many societies in their time have thrown up individuals and groups willing to dare all and do anything in order to make the world their oyster. What distinguished the captains, crews, and explorers of Europe was that they possessed the ships and the firepower with which to achieve their ambitions, and that they came from a political environment in which competition, risk, and entrepreneurship were prevalent.[10]

causal arrow

Kennedy's book is over 650 pages long, but as we learned in Chapter 1, he cannot cover everything. He has to select, emphasize, and make judgments. Notice how the heavy lifting of history is done by material factors ("the ships and the firepower"), not by ideas ("national glory, religious zeal") and values ("awful cruelties"), which are so varied ("complex mixture of motives") and dispersed ("many societies in their time") that they matter less than the anarchic conditions ("political environment [of] competition, risk, and entrepreneurship") that all individuals and groups have to cope with.

Nor do realist perspectives ignore diplomacy and institutions. As we note in Chapter 1, Kissinger, the realist scholar, wrote a long book entitled *Diplomacy.* But the problems to be negotiated by diplomacy are very tough. They often involve conflicting goals and relative gains or zero sum situations. What one country gains, the other loses. Recall the wars in the sixteenth century between Francis I of France and Charles V of Austria. When asked once what differences existed between him and Charles to cause such wars, Francis responded, "None whatsoever. We agree perfectly. We both want control of Italy!"[11] Kissinger quotes Bismarck's 1853 lament about the long-standing rivalry between Prussia and Austria over control of the German provinces: "We deprive each other of the air we need to breathe."[12] Realist problems don't yield easily to compromise.

Spotlight on **diplomacy and use of force**

Because stakes are so antithetical, realist perspectives believe that negotiations and institutions succeed only if they are backed by force. The balance (or correlation, as communist leaders phrased it) of forces on the ground circumscribes the possibilities of diplomacy; and, according to the realist refrain, countries have to seek "peace through strength." Realist accounts often fault liberal assessments because the latter put too much emphasis on arms control and pursue negotiations as a substitute for rather than a complement of military power. For liberal accounts, force is seen as a last resort after diplomacy fails or in some cases as a "past" resort outmoded by modern times. By contrast, realists see force as a pervasive companion of diplomacy. Frederick the Great, the eighteenth-century Prussian king who seized Silesia from Austria, said it best: "negotiations without arms are like music without instruments."[13] You can't get the objectives of diplomacy—the music—without the use of arms—the instruments.

Liberal Accounts of World History

Spotlight on **interdependence**

Liberal perspectives interpret the history of empire and equilibrium very differently. They are less impressed by the cycling between empire and equilibrium than by the gradual but inexorable expansion of international interdependence among the people and societies of the world. Because liberal perspectives focus on relationships rather than power, they see more clearly the increasing volume, scope, and complexity of global interactions. These interactions have grown geometrically over time and crystallized in regularities and patterns that constitute widening domestic societies and international institutions. This broader social context constrains the balancing and use of military power. International politics may be an anarchical system, but it is also an anarchical society, that involves specialized and cooperative, as well as conflictual, interactions.[14]

From Villages to States

Cooperative interactions include economic exchanges, which have been going on at least since the beginning of recorded history. Sargon's Akkadian empire consolidated trade in wood from present-day Lebanon and precious metals from the mountain ranges between present-day Syria and Turkey. In the second millennium BCE, during the Amarna period, trade became an alternative to imperial expansion to broker relations among relatively equal powers.[15] Phoenicia and Rome spread shipping throughout the Mediterranean. Marco Polo later spurred trade between east and west. Social interactions also increased. The Aryans brought the caste system with them to India; the Confucian social order stabilized China after the Period of Warring States; and monastic or religious orders spread across Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Social and economic interactions ignited pandemics. Ships brought the Black Plague to Europe in the fourteenth century, and western explorers brought smallpox to the New World.

Spotlight on
NGOs and IGOs

Most important, liberal perspectives emphasize political interactions and the role of expanding domestic (NGOs) and international (IGOs) institutions. From earliest times, societies slowly widened, albeit often through struggle. Rome coalesced in a war against Hellenistic Greece, and modern France formed out of the struggle against the papacy and Holy Roman Empire. By 1500, contiguous territorial states populated much of Europe. Consider this: at the end of the first millennium over 3,000 political entities existed just within the confines of the Holy Roman Empire (today roughly Germany and parts of Italy). By the time of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (see Map 2-8 on p. 83), that number was down to about 300. In 1815, it dropped to fewer than 40; and today, of course, Germany and Italy are not only united but gradually becoming part of a still larger European Union. In 2008, there were fewer than 200 political units or states in the entire world. By path dependence and unintended consequences, political society and legitimacy are clearly coagulating. If the cycling between empire and equilibrium is a broad pattern, so too from a liberal perspective is the steady broadening of political governance.

From Anarchy to Legitimacy

Liberal perspectives point out that relationships come in greater variety than empire and equilibrium. Political units may be independent and exist in a situation of anarchy. Yet their actions need not threaten one another. The distribution of power is not the decisive factor; the distribution of legitimacy is. Legitimacy is the right or authority to use force, not just the capability to use force. Legitimacy can be centralized, while capabilities remain decentralized. Some political scientists call this arrangement "negarchy," a hierarchy of legitimacy but an anarchy of capabilities.[16] This was the seminal insight of the Buddhist courts under Asoka and the Roman Senate under Julius Caesar. Oligarchic families and elites possessed competing capabilities, but they all accepted the central authority of republican councils in India and Rome. Merchants discovered this principle in trade. They acquired and sold separate goods, but they all respected the law of a central authority or treaty that provided security and did not allow them to do their trading at gunpoint.

Spotlight on
legitimacy

Similarly, liberal perspectives argue, political units may be interdependent or even subordinate to one another, that is, exist in a situation of hierarchy or empire, but the outcome may be not be security but insecurity. As political scientist Michael Doyle explains, the outcome under imperial rule depends on four factors: the dispositions or identities of the imperial and peripheral powers make up two factors (the identity perspective), the differences in international power between them make up a third factor (the realist perspective), and the interactions or connections among them make up a fourth (the liberal perspective). After

considering all four factors, Doyle concludes that connections or interdependence, not identities or power, may play the decisive role: "transnational agents—metropolitan merchants, for example, or missionaries—often take on a role significant in shaping the particular content of each imperial rule."[17]

causal arrow

Thus, empire depends on the nature of authority between social units, not just the hierarchy of power. This fact accounts for why some empires in history have been aggressive and others have not. Empires should be stable, right? No one is able to challenge the central power. Yet empires never seem to be stable; hegemons do not know when to stop expanding. Louis XIV could not stop before he was defeated. Nor could Napoleon or Hitler. This momentum for expansion must have had something to do with the internal institutions of empires, not just their external monopoly of capabilities. Also, some empires survive; others do not. Why? Because, while all are challenged from outside by anarchy, some succumb to internal decay. Their institutions fail and, as a result, their power fails. That was the case, for example, with the Indian and Roman empires of the fifth and sixth centuries CE, both of which fell eventually to the Huns. Notice, in these cases, how institutional factors drive power factors and how a domestic or individual level of analysis dominates over the systemic level of analysis.

causal arrow

Modernization Not Westernization

Spotlight on

technology and modernization

The liberal perspective emphasizes the steady march of modernization, technology, and material progress. Technical progress is largely the result of process, participation, and compromise, not the ascendance of a specific political ideology. The liberal perspective upholds the political neutrality of science, technology, commerce, expertise, and learning. Modern institutions help countries overcome obstacles to cooperation by increasing information, lowering transaction costs, spurring efficiency, facilitating specialization and expertise, testing alternative policy choices, solving common problems, and enforcing agreements.[18] They encourage reciprocity and enable cooperation over time even among antagonists.[19]

Thus, the liberal perspective emphasizes modernization, not westernization or democratization, and advocates procedures and rules that can be embraced by all political ideologies. The neoliberal institutional perspective, in particular, elevates pragmatism over principle and institutions over ideology. The political scientist John Ikenberry writes, for example, "The possibility of an institutional settlement stems from the ability to achieve agreement on institutional arrangements even if the underlying substantive interests remain widely divergent and antagonistic."[20] Institutional agreements do not require converging or similar ideologies, as identity perspectives might expect. They accommodate diverging ideologies. From the liberal perspective, legitimacy to use power derives from procedural rules such as inclusiveness and tolerance, not from substantive ideologies such as democracy.

causal arrow

Common Rules and Procedures. The historian Paul Schroeder writes a liberal account of European history in the age of equilibrium—the period after 1500—that is very different from Henry Kissinger's realist account in *Diplomacy.* Schroeder treats the same facts as Kissinger, but chooses to emphasize different ones. Kissinger writes, "nations have pursued self-interest more frequently than high-minded principle, and have competed more than they have cooperated."[21] Notice how for Kissinger self-interest and competition (the realist emphasis) trump high-minded principle (the identity emphasis) and cooperation (the liberal emphasis). By contrast, Schroeder writes, "the history of international politics is not one of an essentially unchanging, cyclical struggle for power or one of the shifting play of the balance of power, but a history of systematic institutional change—change essentially linear,

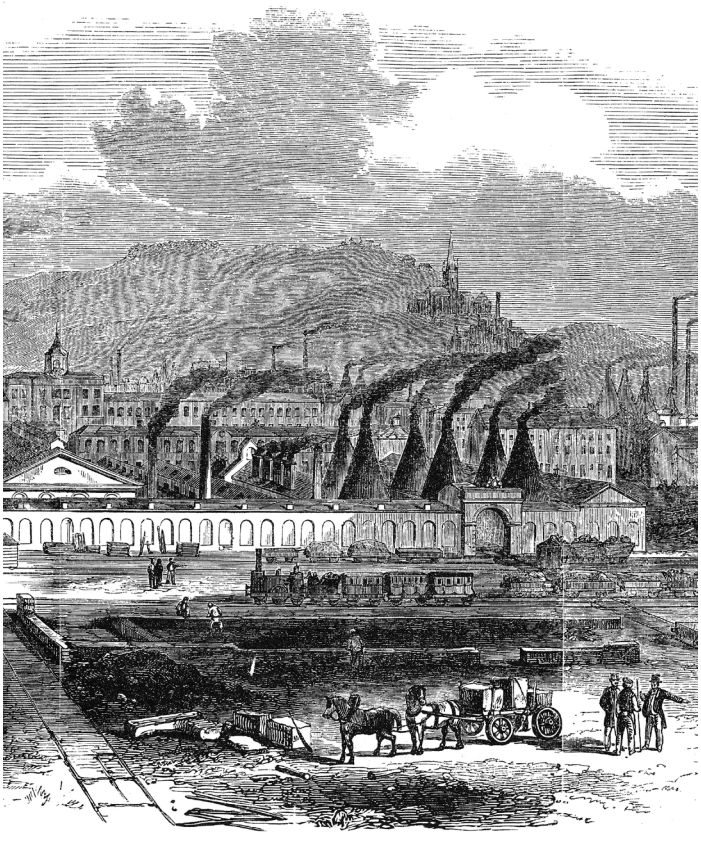
causal arrow

moving overall in the direction of complexity, subtlety, and capacity for order and problem-solving."[22] Note the emphasis on systematic institutional change and linear progress toward order and problem solving (the liberal emphasis), not the cyclical struggle for power (the realist emphasis) or convergence around similar aims or ideas such as democracy (the identity emphasis).

Schroeder goes on to examine European politics in terms "of the constituent rules of a practice or a civic association: the understandings, assumptions, learned skills and responses, rules, norms, procedures, etc. which agents [actors] acquire and use in pursuing their individual divergent aims within the framework of a shared practice."[23] OK, sounds like a bit of mumbo jumbo. But mark the number of words Schroeder uses that emphasize relationships or interactions. Practice, responses, rules, and procedures suggest repetition and reciprocity. Civic association emphasizes the NGOs that figure prominently in liberal accounts. Learning denotes the feedback and path dependence of the liberal perspective. He considers other factors such as understandings, assumptions, and norms, but these cognitive factors or ideas relate primarily to procedures, not principles or ideologies. Indeed, despite "individual divergent aims" or principles, he expects countries to work together "within the framework of a shared practice." Common practice, in short, dominates divergent ideologies. And he does not mention power at all; there is no emphasis on ships and firepower, as in the case of Paul Kennedy.

Spotlight on
interactions and reciprocity

causal arrow



The industrial revolution, depicted here in this nineteenth-century engraving of steel works in Sheffield, England, changed many things but not the struggle for power as realist perspectives see it.

The Concert of Europe. How does Schroeder's institutional approach affect his interpretation of specific events? Considerably. A good example is how he treats the Vienna settlement in 1815. Realist perspectives interpret that settlement as restoring the balance-of-power system following the upheavals of the French Revolution. Schroeder is more impressed by the institutional innovations adopted at Vienna, which altered the nature and outcomes of the balance of power. The eighteenth-century balance-of-power system involved long and frequent wars; the nineteenth-century system was, relatively, more peaceful; that was because, as Schroeder explains, "The 1815 settlement did not restore an 18th-century-type balance of power or revive 18th-century political practices; the European equilibrium established in 1815 and lasting well into the 19th century differed sharply from so-called balances of power in the 18th."[24]

For Schroeder, three "major institutionalized arrangements and practices" significantly moderated the balance of power. First, the Vienna or Concert of Europe system created more credible security guarantees than did the Utrecht Treaty. Critical to these guarantees was the practice of periodic multilateral conferences. Regular conferences occurred

between 1815 and 1830; and, although less frequent thereafter, twenty-five more took place between 1830 and 1884. Second, the congresses of Paris in 1856 and Berlin in 1878 involved heads of state, not just foreign ministers, a very rare occurrence at that time.[25] Third, the system fenced off colonial issues from European politics. In the eighteenth century, British and French rivalries outside Europe reinforced rivalries inside Europe. Recall how the Seven Years War (1756–1763) in Europe between France and Britain (among others) was replicated in the United States by the French and Indian War and subsequently led France, which lost the Seven Years War, to avenge its defeat by supporting the American colonists against Great Britain in the colonists' war of independence. This sort of interaction between colonial and continental wars occurred less frequently in the nineteenth century. Finally, the Vienna system gave smaller or secondary powers a larger role in buffering great power conflicts. The Netherlands, Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, and the German Confederation, which reduced the number of German provinces, all served this purpose. Poland, of course, remained partitioned. "The system of intermediary bodies emerging from the Vienna settlement," Schroeder writes, "was less a product of deliberate planning than it was the ultimate outcome of arrangements reached mainly for other, more immediate purposes."[26] Notice here the influence of path dependence and its emphasis on unintended consequences. Decisions made for one purpose have a different result. Altogether, the evidence suggests, according to Schroeder, that institutional changes helped countries overcome the worst aspects of the security dilemma and expand the number of participants to include middle and small powers. This is a classic liberal interpretation of the nineteenth-century European international system.

Spotlight on **institutions**

Spotlight on **path dependence**

causal *arrow*

Flaws in the Balance of Power. Liberal critiques spotlight the ambiguities and flaws of diplomacy associated with the balance of power. These flaws result from aspects of reality (prisoner's dilemma) emphasized by liberal perspectives: the role of communications, types of goals, and alternative behaviors to balancing.

Spotlight on **the liberal view of prisoner's dilemma**

First, countries miscalculate or misperceive the balance of power.[27] They have insufficient or erroneous information. France in 1865 thought Austria was the dominant power in the German Confederation, not Prussia. That's why France didn't align with Austria when Prussia attacked Austria in 1866. Then, after Prussia beat Austria, France saw itself as the strongest power and pressed Prussia in 1870 to apologize for the Spanish succession affair, in which Bismarck backed a German prince to take over the Spanish throne. Even though that prince subsequently withdrew, France, feeling its superiority, demanded an apology from Bismarck. The kaiser, relaxing at a spa in Bad Ems, responded in a conciliatory way, but Bismarck (operating at the foreign policy level of analysis, linking and manipulating domestic and systemic process factors) doctored the telegram to make it shorter and less conciliatory. France was offended and declared war against Prussia—a war that France ultimately lost. The balance of power failed because of bad information. More open diplomacy and effective institutions might have prevented war.[28]

Spotlight on **foreign policy level of analysis**

Second, countries react to threats, not capabilities. Threats are a function of geographical proximity, technological balances between types of weapons, and intentions.[29] While realists also emphasize geography, liberal accounts pay more attention to the strategies and intentions that influence how capabilities are deployed, not just how big they are. They argue that states align against the greater threat, not the greater power. England, for example, fought Holland in the early 1660s, even though France had attacked Holland and was clearly becoming the greater power in Europe. But Holland and Britain were both sea powers and threatened one another's trade. France was a land power, and its armies seemed less threatening. Alignment thus involves an assessment of the other country's type of power

Spotlight on **intentions not capabilities**

and intentions, which liberal perspectives emphasize, not just its total capabilities, which realist perspectives stress.

Spotlight on
bandwagoning and buckpassing

Third, countries have options other than balancing. They can bandwagon with the greater power, that is, appease or cut a deal with the stronger party. Spain's 1796 alliance with France, even though France was winning on the battlefield, is an example of bandwagoning. Or they can hide, as Prussia did in 1795 when it withdrew from the coalition against France. Or they can wait and watch, engage in what is called buckpassing, and let other countries do the fighting. Britain followed this strategy partially throughout the Napoleonic Wars until it weighed in decisively at the final battle at Waterloo.

Some of the disagreement here between realist and liberal perspectives has to do with whether we are trying to predict behavior or outcomes. Realist perspectives point out that countries may not always behave by balancing but that balances eventually form anyway, as they did in the end against Napoleon. Liberal perspectives point out, however, that behaving differently affects the types of balances that result. As Schroeder argued, the new balance of power that formed in 1815 after Napoleon was defeated was different from the previous one, and the differences contributed to the relative peace of Europe in the nineteenth century.

causal arrow

Spotlight on
collective goods such as trade

Nonstate Actors and Collective Goods. The liberal perspective not only emphasizes the role of international institutions and communications but also that of nonstate institutions and collective goods, such as peace and wealth, which enable actors to achieve benefits for all.

The liberal focus on wealth as a collective good spotlights trade. Trade is not a pure collective good like clean air. One party may gain more than the other and, in relative terms, lose. But trade makes it possible to increase wealth overall and therefore, at least theoretically, increase it for each party. In ancient and medieval society, little trade occurred. Landowners were stationary, and religious leaders ventured abroad mostly as emissaries of governments, such as the Crusaders and monastic orders of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. From the time of the Amarna great powers and Phoenician seafarers, however, traders moved across political boundaries independently of governments. They created what political scientists call transnational relations, or relations among nongovernmental, as opposed to governmental, authorities. Traders founded the early city-states and leagues in Europe, and river commerce helped consolidate feudal estates to form modern European states. Western exploration and colonialism extended this process to the global level. British and Dutch trading companies globalized commerce and became the first transnational corporations in world markets.

Spotlight on
transnational relations

But the big breakthrough came with the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century. Governments established functional IGOs to manage the growing interdependence in commerce, shipping, and communications. The earliest of these included various interstate river commissions in Europe, which regulated the collection of tolls, and the International Telegraph (1865) and Universal Postal (1874) unions, which regulated early forms of global communications. Purely NGOs also proliferated, reflecting not only commercialization, but political and human rights movements in the nineteenth century. Transnational banks such as the Rothschild Bank of France conducted business abroad, and organizations to abolish the slave trade and help in natural disasters, such as the International Red Cross, operated across national borders.

Spotlight on
IGOs and NGOs

Even more important, industrial and political change created more and more domestic actors involved in foreign policy decision making and activities. Domestic groups, such as bankers and corporations, became prominent in foreign affairs. The role of these domestic actors varied, however, depending on the ideology of the countries in question. The variety

of ideas and ideologies that inspired individuals and societies over the millennia is emphasized by the next perspective on world history—the identity perspective.

Identity Views of World History

Identity perspectives root the explanation of historical events in the ideas and dialogues by which international actors acquire or construct their identities. Realist and liberal perspectives tend to take for granted who the actors are and focus primarily on their interests and interactions. Recall how, from realist perspectives, it is not possible to study systematically the enormous variety of values and motives by which states identify themselves and for which they pursue power. And recall how liberal perspectives prefer to focus on rules and procedural norms, not substantive principles and ideologies. For both realist and liberal perspectives, the identities of actors are exogenous variables, falling outside their specific theoretical focus. By contrast, identity perspectives focus directly on who the actors are, making them endogenous factors, and see the use of power and institutions as a consequence of the actors' identities, not as something that is given or unchanging.

Spotlight on
the construction of identities

Spotlight on
exogenous and endogenous variables

Identity views emphasize the influence of ethnicity, religion, culture, domestic ideologies, international norms, and social discourse on historical events. Let's look at these factors in selected historical outcomes.

Religion and Pope Innocent III

Family, ethnic, clan, and tribal identities dominated early societies. Mythology reinforced and, in some cases, superseded blood ties. Ancient peoples defined themselves and others through their gods. As Professor Stuart Kaufman notes, in Sumer, one of the early Mesopotamian dynasties, "the theology held that each city existed primarily to serve a particular god, with each city-state's ruler considered the delegate of his city's god."[30] Although Greek philosophy introduced a more rational basis for identity, which influenced, among other things, public debate in the Roman Senate, religious sources of identity remained strong. Christianity dominated the late Roman Empire and medieval life in both western and eastern Europe, while religious commitments drove the rise of the Islamic Empire. Institutional rationality may have played a more important role in China, as Confucianism, a set of practical rather than spiritual rules, eventually became more important than Buddhism.

Spotlight on
religious state identity

As identity perspectives see it, religious power often made the difference in European medieval conflicts between the pope and temporal or worldly authorities. Pope Innocent III, who ruled the church in the early thirteenth century, was particularly effective at using religious or ideational power. His legions could not always match the armies of the Hohenstaufen and other kings that sought to dominate the Holy Roman Empire. But he understood how to use the enormous spiritual power that the church exercised over ordinary citizens, especially through excommunication. As Rodney Hall tells us, when two princes, Philip and Otto, battled for preeminence, Innocent sided with Otto and forced the bishops attached to Philip to abandon him by threatening to depose them from their sees and excommunicate them. Then, when Philip was assassinated in 1208 and Otto ungratefully used the occasion to defy papal power, Innocent excommunicated Otto and released Otto's subjects from their oaths of allegiance to their king. Otto lost his legions not by force but by fiat. In the end, Otto could not find a single priest to marry him, let alone support him, and, as Professor Hall writes, "Otto was utterly and unequivocally deposed by 1214." His successor, Frederick II, learned a lesson and made more concessions to the pope than Philip or Otto ever did.[31]

French Culture and Richelieu

When temporal authority challenged the pope again, it did so with ideas not armies. Recall from the history recounted earlier how Cardinal de Richelieu counseled King Louis XIII to ignore his religious ties to the pope and use force to expand French territory at the expense of the holy Roman emperor in Vienna. His critics saw this counsel as blasphemy. Kissinger recounts how one critic at the time asked Richelieu incredulously, "Do you believe that a secular, perishable state should outweigh religion and the Church?" Richelieu's answer was a resounding yes. "In matters of state," he observed, "he who has the power often has the right, and he who is weak can only with difficulty keep from being wrong in the opinion of the majority of the world."[32] Richelieu was saying that ideas and identities in Europe were changing. The state identified in terms of religion was giving way to the state defined in terms of power. This is the identity of states, which realist perspectives take for granted. But identity perspectives are concerned with how identities emerge in the first place and how they might change again in the future.

Spotlight on
secular state identity

England and Domestic Ideologies

From an identity perspective, not all states are alike. Their identities change, and domestic factors affect foreign policy. The example of England in the seventeenth century is instructive. Just at the moment that Richelieu exalted the power of his king, English noblemen and commoners cut off the head of their king. Under Oliver Cromwell, English rebels beheaded Charles I, but the Stuart kings, Charles II and James II, restored royal rule in the 1660s. Nevertheless, English Protestants and the Anglican Church of England, which had broken with the pope already under Henry VIII in the sixteenth century, continued to oppose the Catholic Stuart kings. In 1688, they finally prevailed in Parliament and brought the Protestant leader from Holland, William of Orange, to the English throne as William III.

causal arrow

Now, according to the logic of the identity perspective, this change of English domestic identity from Catholic to Protestant had the decisive impact on English foreign policy behavior during this period. Remember that at the same time Louis XIV, the French Catholic king, was making a bid for European empire. According to realist logic, England and other states should have balanced against France. Instead, England fought Holland in the early stages of French aggression (1660s and 1670s) because, as liberal accounts say, they were both sea powers and saw one another as the greater threat even though France was the greater land power. But identity perspectives point to still other factors that eventually caused England to balance against France—the change in domestic religious identity that occurred in 1688 when the Protestant king William of Orange took the English throne. As Paul Schroeder points out,

> had not William III become king of England . . . England would have never balanced against France. The legitimate Stuart King James II whom William overthrew depended on Louis to support and subsidize him in his religious-political struggle with Parliament and the Church of England.[33]

Spotlight on
relative identities

causal arrow

So a change in England's ruling coalition from Catholic to Protestant was necessary before England could oppose France, a Catholic country, and make the balance of power work. Relative power was not the decisive factor; relative religious identity was. If we emphasize the parliamentary or institutional struggle going on inside England, as Schroeder does, the explanation is a liberal one from the domestic level of analysis. If we emphasize the ideological struggle between Protestants and Catholics, the explanation is an identity one, also from the domestic level of analysis. The difference depends on whether we judge institutional processes or ideological convictions to be more important.

Identity and Westphalia

When the state system emerged in Europe at Westphalia in 1648, monarchs divided from one another as Protestant or Catholic states, but they still identified with one another as Christians. They defended one another against both higher authorities—Rome—and lower authorities—the feudal aristocracy—through the doctrine of mutual sovereignty. Neorealist perspectives, as we noted earlier, say that the monarchs pursued independent interests and the balance of power resulted from their separate actions. But classical realists and identity perspectives emphasize that the monarchs also shared a convergent or shared identity. They operated under a set of common Christian beliefs, which they took for granted.

Spotlight on **shared identities**

Morgenthau, a classical realist, describes this shared identity. From 1648 to the French Revolution of 1789, he observes, "the princes and their advisors . . . referred as a matter of course to the 'republic of Europe,' 'the community of Christian princes,' or 'the political system of Europe.' "[34] This sense of community did not prevent war. Smaller, localized wars were more frequent in the eighteenth than the nineteenth century. But the perception of community constrained widespread war and avoided another bloody era like the Thirty Years War. As social constructivists argue, there are different types of anarchy, some more violent than others. "Anarchy is what states make of it."

At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Tsar Alexander of Russia sought to reconstruct the Christian community of Westphalia. He proposed the Holy Alliance to go along with the realist Quadruple and Quintuple Alliances (see earlier discussion). The **Holy Alliance** proclaimed the adherence of all rulers to the principles of Christianity, with God as the actual sovereign of the world. The tsar wanted Christian ideals to inform all institutional activity and use of power by the Concert of Europe. In the end, only the most conservative monarchs of Prussia, Russia, and Austria signed on to the Holy Alliance. For England and France, shared Christian identities were less important than separate state interests.

Holy Alliance
an alliance established in 1815 that proclaimed the adherence of all rulers to the principles of Christianity, with God as the actual sovereign of the world.

causal arrow

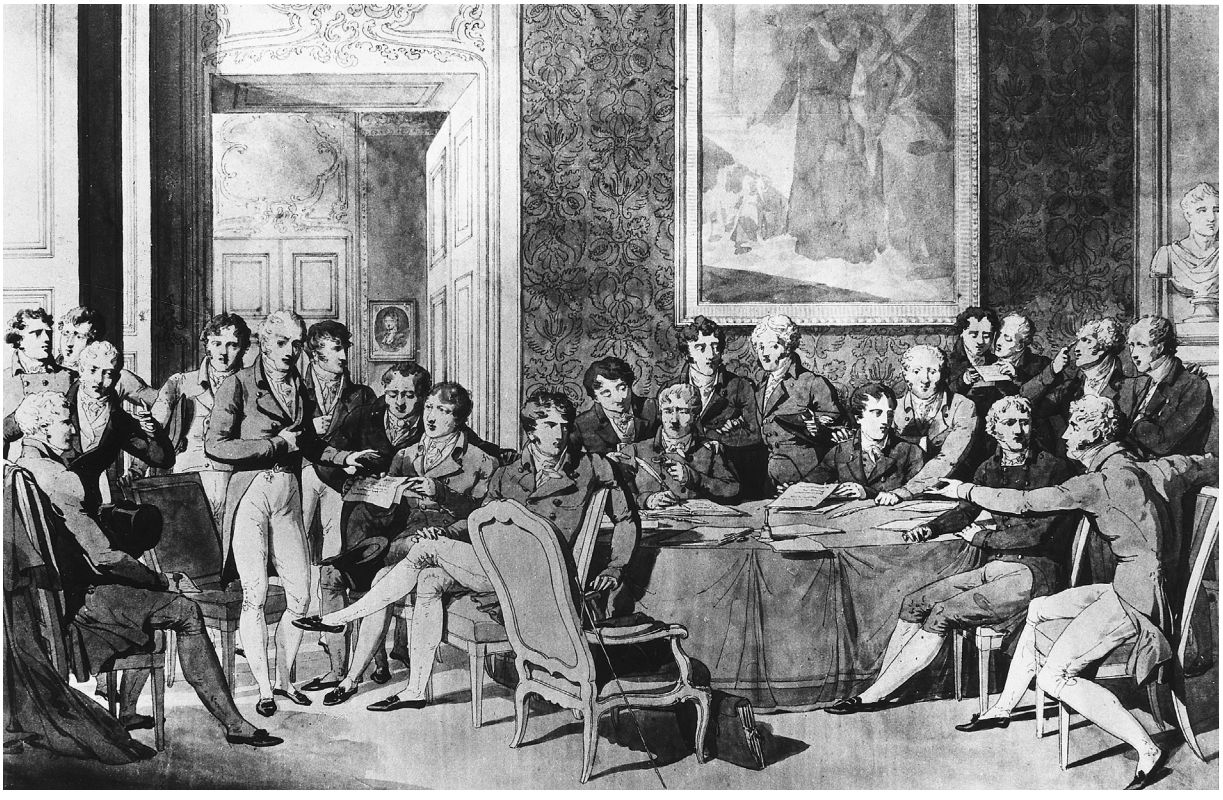
Norms and the Concert of Europe

The French Revolution injected a large transfusion of ideas into European politics. It forced European statesmen to make their compact more explicit. They did so through the conference system established at the Congress of Vienna, and that system helped avoid general war for the rest of the century. Liberal scholars such as Schroeder emphasize the institutionalization of the Congress system and give it high marks for preserving peace, at least compared to the eighteenth century. But identity perspectives see ideas as being more important. Some emphasize the social construction of shared identities and norms that moderated diplomacy and the use of force after Vienna. Others emphasize the role of relative or diverging national ideologies unleashed by the French Revolution. Underneath the structure of common norms and institutions, according to more agent-oriented constructivists, competitive nationalisms over the course of the nineteenth century eventually weakened the sense of European community and in the twentieth century blew it wide open.

causal arrow

Spotlight on **common norms**

According to political scientist Martha Finnemore, the Concert system involved five relative changes in the norms affecting the balance-of-power system. First, it established the normative expectation that states would resolve problems through consultation and negotiation, not the use of force. Second, it placed new emphasis on expectations of association and international society that created a balance of duties and rights to go along with the balance of power. Third, it institutionalized face-to-face personal meetings, which enabled for the first time in international diplomacy an ongoing social discourse. Fourth, it "normatively devalued war as a tool of foreign policy." And fifth, it identified domestic revolution as the principal threat to international solidarity. The Concert aimed to prevent at all costs



The statesmen of Europe meeting in Vienna in 1815 established an international conference system, the kind of repeated meetings that liberal perspectives hope may someday replace the balance of power.

another revolution like that in France that elevated ideological disputes over common purposes.[35] Most of the new norms were procedural, although the last one involved an ideological preference for conservative regimes. According to Finnemore, these norms account for outcomes better than institutional roles or the balance of power.

Spotlight on **diverging identities**

By contrast, political scientists John Owen and Mark Haas emphasize the autonomous ideological identities of states in Europe in the nineteenth century rather than the façade of common norms.[36] Absolute and constitutional monarchies contended against one another inside countries at the domestic and foreign policy levels (for example, the liberal Whigs and conservative Tories in England) as well as between countries at the systemic process and structural levels (for example, between constitutional Britain and France and the autocratic Holy Alliance powers). Absolute monarchies exercised unrestrained power, while constitutional monarchies accepted an increasing measure of restraint by domestic law and custom. Britain, which was the most advanced constitutional monarchy at the time, found itself increasingly opposed to Concert interventions. When liberal revolutions broke out after 1820 in Spain, Portugal, Naples (Italy), Piedmont (Italy), and Greece, Britain could not cooperate with absolute monarchies to suppress these revolutions. It ceased to participate in the Concert system and became an observer only. In 1826, Britain actually acted to oppose the norms of the Concert. It intervened unilaterally in Portugal not to suppress but to defend a constitutional monarchy. And by 1830 France joined Britain in supporting Belgium's liberal revolution from the Dutch crown. Outcomes are explained more in terms

causal *arrow*

of converging and diverging identities at the domestic and foreign policy levels of analysis than in terms of norms held in common by all at the systemic level.

International Law and Liberal Constitutionalism

As the nineteenth century wore on, Christian beliefs faded but international law and liberal constitutional ideas flourished. States increasingly accepted more legal obligations toward one another. A rudimentary body of international law took shape, codified earlier by, among others, Hugo Grotius, the Dutch seventeenth-century jurist, in his classic work *On the Law of War and Peace* and Emériс Vattel, the Swiss eighteenth-century legal scholar, in *The Law of Nations*. Between 1581 and 1864, as Morgenthau reports, states concluded some 291 international agreements to protect the wounded and innocent in war. The Geneva Convention of 1864 became the basis of Hague Conventions in 1906 and an expanded Geneva Convention of 1949, which regulate conduct in war to the present day and are points of issue in the contemporary debate on the handling of prisoners in the conflict with terrorism.

Did liberal constitutional ideas in democratizing states drive this development of international law, or did international law gradually shape a consensus on basic human rights and democracy? You say both, and certainly you are right. But which was more important overall or in any given situation in time? Identity perspectives see ideas or shared beliefs (such as Christianity in the classic balance of power) creating the basis of procedures and law, whereas liberal perspectives see procedures and law (such as the conventions to protect the wounded) gradually bringing together ideas and identities. Again, it is not a question of one perspective ignoring the other but of which key variable emphasized by each perspective causes the other.

causal arrow

These differences in perspective shape current debates. Professor Jed Rubenstein points to a different understanding of law that exists today between Europe and the United States.

> Europeans have embraced international constitutionalism, according to which the whole point of constitutional law is to check democracy. For Americans, constitutional law cannot merely check democracy. It must answer to democracy—have its source and basis in a democratic constitutional politics and always, somehow, be part of politics, even though it [politics] can invalidate the outcomes of the democratic process at any given moment.[37]

Can you see that the difference between these two understandings of international law is a function of the direction of the causal arrow running between law (liberal) and democracy (identity)? For the European view, law must be inclusive of all cultures and check democratic as well as nondemocratic states. The causal arrow runs from law to democracy. Thus, when the United States acts outside the law of the United Nations, which is the most inclusive and therefore legitimate institution in contemporary world affairs, it breaks the law, as many Europeans believe the United States did in invading Iraq in 2003 without UN approval. For the American view, democratic politics legitimates law. Nondemocratic states cannot make legitimate law. UN law therefore is subordinate to democratic law, as the U.S. administration argued in 2003. The causal arrow runs from democratic ideas to law. Both arguments have flaws. The danger in the European view is that nondemocratic groups may dominate and then break the law, as the Nazis did domestically in Germany in the 1930s or Russia did internationally by invading Georgia in 2008. The danger in the American view is that one country, even if democratic such as the United States, may decide that it alone, not a majority of other democratic peoples or countries, makes the law and decides whether the invasion of another country is legitimate or not. Many disagreements in international affairs lie behind these subtle distinctions in the causal relationship of variables, which is why we work so hard to understand and use alternative perspectives in this book.

causal arrow

Bismarck and German Identity

By the last half of the nineteenth century, domestic ideologies or identities were increasingly at war with the Concert's procedural norms. Europe fragmented into more liberal states—Britain and France—and more conservative states—Austria, Prussia, and Russia. Each type of state feared a revolution that might put the other ideology in power, weakening the position of their ideology in the world and strengthening the ideology of the other states. The opposing ideology might come to be seen as "the wave of the future." Thus, a kind of ideological war increasingly accompanied European balance-of-power politics. Would common procedural norms of the Concert of Europe or competing national liberal and conservative political ideologies win out?

causal arrow

The test came, some believe, with the unification of Germany. Did Bismarck act within the institutional constraints of the Concert system, or did he shatter that system for good? From the first point of view, Bismarck united Germany without a wider continental war, something that probably would not have been possible in the eighteenth century. So the Concert's institutions must have constrained Bismarck's behavior. This is a liberal argument. From the second point of view, Bismarck attacked and defeated fellow monarchies: Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, and France in 1870–1871. He went on to establish the principle not of sovereign solidarity but of "my sovereign over all others." For the sake of nationalism, he destroyed the Concert system. This is an identity conclusion.

Let's end this discussion of identity perspectives with a conversation Bismarck had in the 1850s with one of his Prussian mentors, Leopold von Gerlach. This conversation reflects the much broader social discourse going on in Europe at the time between national and European identities and offers a classic example of how identities change in the process of social discourse.[38]

Spotlight on social discourse

Recall that Bismarck was ready to use any means to unite the German Confederation under Prussian rule. Austria was a fellow German and conservative monarchy, but Austria was also Prussia's principal rival in the German Confederation. Bismarck wrote to his mentor Leopold von Gerlach that "present-day Austria cannot be our friend" and suggested an alliance with France in order to gain leverage over Austria. France was led by Napoleon III, a nephew of the great Bonaparte. Napoleon III had assisted revolution in Italy and was considered by many contemporaries to be a romantic and hardly a dependable ally to preserve a conservative Europe. So Bismarck's desire to align with France did not please von Gerlach. He wrote back to Bismarck, "How can a man of your intelligence sacrifice his principles to such an individual as Napoleon?" Bismarck replied with the mantra of the new nationalism:

> France interests me only insofar as it affects the situation of my country. . . . as things stand, France, irrespective of the accident who leads it, is for me an unavoidable pawn on the chessboard of diplomacy, where I have no other duty than to serve *my* king and *my* country [Bismarck's emphasis]. I cannot reconcile personal sympathies and antipathies toward foreign powers with my sense of duty in foreign affairs; indeed I see in them the embryo of disloyalty toward the Sovereign and the country I serve.

Von Gerlach wanted to preserve the Christian, anti-revolutionary Europe of the Concert system. Bismarck wanted to unify Germany, and as he put it, "*my* king and *my* country" come before Europe. He would serve that king and country, even if it meant attacking another conservative state and colluding with an otherwise archrival revolutionary one. Bismarck was putting sovereignty above German culture, just as earlier de Richelieu had put culture above religion. Bismarck ends the conversation by telling his old mentor that he is prepared to discuss practical issues but not ones of right or wrong.

> I know that you will reply that fact and right cannot be separated, that a properly conceived Prussian policy requires chastity in foreign affairs [no alignment with revolutionary France] even from the point of view of utility [calculation of my sovereign's interest]. I am prepared to discuss the point of utility; but if you pose antimonies between right and revolution; Christianity and infidelity; God and the Devil; I can argue no longer and can merely say, "I am not of your opinion and you judge in me what is not yours to judge."

Bismarck had had enough of European sentimentalities. He would focus on what was useful, not what was right. The day of "my country right or wrong" had arrived.

Spotlight on **relative morality**

Today we would disapprove of both Bismarck's nationalism and von Gerlach's conservatism. But that is not the point. The story illustrates how identities change through social discourse and then, in turn, affect behavior. From this perspective, identities account for the subsequent fragmentation of Europe. Germany, and other countries, went on to embrace an extreme nationalism that plunged Europe into wars in the twentieth century that were far worse than the Thirty Years War.

Critical Theory Views of World History

Critical theory perspectives view world history from a contrarian point of view. For them, all history is an exercise of power, whether material (power), institutional (dependence), or rhetorical (ideas). The perspectives that scholars and policymakers throw up obscure rather than illuminate this power; they hide the marginalization of women in history, the oppression of the working class, and the structural imperialism that divides the world into core (rich) and peripheral (poor) parts. Let's take a look at some reflections on this history from feminist, Marxist, and world system perspectives.

Feminist Views of State Construction

Professor Ann Tickner is a leading feminist scholar who has worked to open up the international affairs discourse to critical perspectives. Listen to her critique of the evolution of the European state system:

> Since the beginning of the state system, the national security functions of states have been deeded to us through gendered images that privilege masculinity.
>
> The Western state system began in seventeenth-century Europe. As described by Charles Tilly [see endnote 7 for this chapter], the modern state was born through war; leaders of nation states consolidated their power through the coercive extraction of resources and the conquest of ever-larger territories. Success in war continued to be the imperative for state survival and the building of state apparatus. Throughout the period of state building in the west, nationalist movements have used gendered imagery that exhorts masculine heroes to fight for the establishment and defense of the mother country. The collective identity of citizens in most states depends heavily on telling stories about, and celebration of, wars of independence or national liberation and other great victories in battle. National anthems are frequently war songs, just as holidays are celebrated with military parades and uniforms that recall great feats in past conflicts. These collective historical memories are very important for the way in which individuals define themselves as citizens as well as for the way in which states command support for their policies, particularly foreign policies. Rarely, however, do they include experiences of women or female heroes.[39]

Spotlight on **deep-seated images, institutions, and power**

Tickner is taking aim not just at power struggles but at the deep-seated imagery and institutions, especially cultural institutions, that structure and dominate our understanding of power and the role of the masculine figure in international affairs. The privileged

masculine view subjugates not only women but also nonwestern cultures. Tickner, not being a deconstructionist, offers numerous suggestions to overcome this situation. She believes women bring very different qualities to the foreign policy enterprise and that once "women occupy half, or nearly half, the positions at all levels of foreign and military policy-making," their contributions as "mediators and care givers" will become as valued as the citizen-warrior images espoused by men.[40]

Marxist Critique of Industrialization

capitalism
a system that concentrates economic and social power in the hands of bankers and corporations (bourgeoisie), exploiting the labor of workers and farmers (proletariat).

Spotlight on
exploitation and inequality

Karl Marx focuses his radical critique of international relations on the plight of the industrial masses uprooted by the industrial revolution. Industrialization or **capitalism**, he argues, distributed wealth unevenly, concentrating economic and social power in the hands of bankers and corporations (bourgeoisie) and exploiting the labor of workers and farmers (proletariat). Marx believes the forces driving this exploitation are buried deep in the structure of history. No single point of emancipation is possible. The salvation of workers, however, lies in the fact that history is on their side. The same powerful material forces driving capitalism will one day drive the emancipation of workers. Exploitation will gradually raise the consciousness of workers and cause them to unite to match big corporations and the state apparatus that corporations control. The struggle will begin in industrialized countries and spread across the international system. The capitalist need for markets will bring industrial countries into conflict with one another and, through colonialism and imperialism, carry their struggle to the developing world. In response, working classes will unite across the international system, and eventually external resistance along with internal contradictions will do capitalism in. The world capitalist system will implode, leaving in its wake the united masses of working people who will do away with the superstructure of state and interstate institutions constructed by capitalism and refashion the world on communist principles of global justice and equality.

The struggle in actuality proved to be long and extremely difficult. Marxists reasoned that either history was acting too slowly or that some other powerful forces were abetting capitalism. Lenin came up with the idea of the vanguard of the proletariat to lead the communist revolution and expedite history. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist imprisoned by the fascists in the 1920s, developed the idea of the hegemonic social order to show that the bourgeois grip on the working classes was not only material but ideological. According to Gramsci, the state included not only the bureaucracy but "the church, the educational system, the press, all the institutions which helped create in people certain modes of behavior and expectations consistent with the hegemonic social order" of capitalism.[41] This hegemonic social order reinforced the capitalist industrial order and made revolution very difficult without seismic upheavals. Lenin's and Gramsci's ideas fed into the titanic struggle that ensued in the twentieth century among liberalism (bourgeoisie-ism), communism, and fascism.

World Systems Theories

world systems
theories (updating Marxism) that explain how colonialism reinforced capitalism and enabled capitalism to survive by exploiting the peripheral countries of the world.

No one could see at the end of the nineteenth century that Marx would prove to be wrong. But the critique of exploitation he advanced acquired an enduring appeal, especially among the poorest peoples of the developing world. Colonization in the nineteenth century and then the long road to independence in the twentieth century left an agonizing trail of tears and trauma, which is still ongoing. **World systems** theories, an updating of Marxism, stepped in to explain how colonialism reinforced capitalism and enabled capitalism to survive by exploiting the peripheral countries of the world.

Professor Immanuel Wallerstein tells the story of how exploitation evolved from feudal times to modern times:

> [I]n the late Middle Ages, [m]ost of Europe was feudal, that is, consisted of relatively small, relatively self-sufficient economic nodules based on a form of exploitation which involved the relatively direct appropriation of the small agricultural surplus produced within a manorial economy by a small class of nobility. . . . what Europe was to develop and sustain now was a new form of surplus appropriation, a capitalist world economy. It was to be based not on direct appropriation of agricultural surplus in the form either of tribute (as had been the case of world-empires) or of feudal rents (as had been the case of European feudalism). Instead what would develop now is the appropriation of a surplus which was based on more efficient and expanded productivity (first in agriculture and later in industry) by means of a world market mechanism with the "artificial" (that is, nonmarket) assist of state machineries, none of which controlled the world market in its entirety. . . . The territorial expansion of Europe hence was theoretically a key prerequisite to a solution for the "crisis of feudalism."[42]

For Wallerstein, growth generates surpluses that one class or group of countries then appropriates unequally from the other. Feudal lords extracted pre-industrial surpluses from peasants. Capitalist or core states now extract this surplus from poor or peripheral countries. State institutions and particularly the decentralized state system or anarchy serve this process of exploitation. They provide the deep structural forces keeping the system at work because no one state controls the process and world socialist government is impossible. In short, international politics, as the three principal perspectives outlined in this book see it, is not at all an objective world that we can know by hypothesizing and testing but a subjective instrument of deep-seated social forces that exploit one another. According to Wallerstein, "exploitation and the refusal to accept exploitation as either inevitable or just constitute the continuing antimony of the modern era, joined together in a dialectic which has far from reached its climax. . . ."[43]

Spotlight on

deep-seated divisions between core and peripheral countries

Summary

History, we could say, contains too many facts. We can't know all or even most of them. We have to select, and that selection depends on our perspectives. Realist perspectives track the ebb and flow of power that cycles between empires and warring states. From ancient Mesopotamian empires to the Greek, Roman, Islamic, and now western empires, other states fight back and eventually restore equilibrium. Liberal perspectives see a progressive, not a cyclical, trend in history. This trend moves in the direction of expanding societies and governance. From subsistence villages in ancient empires to the Concert of Europe to the European Union and now a globalized world, technology promotes growing interdependence and the capacity to solve problems that benefit the needs of all. Identity perspectives survey the march of ideas through history and see either a growing consensus on international law, human rights, and progressive governance or a continuing competition of alternative ideological solutions for the needs of human society. From mythology to religion to nationalism and political ideologies, the world constructs and contests alternative social images and political futures. Critical theories deny that we can abstract any of these forces from history. History is a gigantic fly trap in which we are all stuck. The three principal perspectives are inextricably a part of their specific times and places. If anything, they disguise the larger social system in which they are embedded. Anarchy, interdependence, and intersubjective discourse are all products of much deeper forces.

Key Concepts

capitalism 100
city leagues 80
city-states 80
Concert of Europe 85
Congress of Vienna 85
empire 72
equilibrium 72
Holy Alliance 95
nationalism 85
nation-states 85
Quadruple Alliance 85
Quintuple Alliance 85
raison d'état 82
territorial states 81
Treaty of Utrecht 83
Treaty of Westphalia 82
world systems 100

Study Questions

1. Did history begin in Mesopotamia or just recorded history?
2. What are the parallels and differences between the Peloponnesian Wars in Greece and the Period of Warring States in China?
3. What are the parallels and differences among the Greek, Roman, and Islamic empires?
4. Would the liberal or realist perspective emphasize the crucial role of the Reformation in European development?
5. What aspects of the Concert of Europe would the realist, liberal, and identity perspectives emphasize?