

C. Structural Characteristics

11. World Politics as a Primitive Political System*

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I. Reasons for Comparing Primitive and International Politics

Many primitive peoples have political systems which are very much like the international political system. If the characterization of world politics as mere "anarchy" is an exaggeration, surely anarchy moderated or inhibited by a balance of power is a fairly accurate description of the rivalry between sovereign nation-states. The Nuer, a primitive African people, have been described as living in an "ordered anarchy" which depends on a "balanced opposition of political segments."¹ It is commonplace to describe the international system as lacking a government, so that "might makes right." "In Nuerland legislative, judicial and executive functions are not invested in any persons or councils";

* The author's research has been undertaken with the assistance of a grant from the Stimson Fund, Yale University.

¹ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford 1940), 181, *idem*, "The Nuer of the Southern Sudan," in M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, eds., *African Political Systems* (London 1940), 293.

hence, throughout the society, "the club and the spear are the sanctions of rights."²

To be sure, politics among the Nuer—or any other primitive people—is not identical to world politics, but however important the differences may be, a number of writers have suggested the possibility of comparing the two kinds of political systems.³ Curiously enough, however, there has been virtually

² Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 162, 169. Cf. R. F. Barton, "Ifugao Law," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, XV (February 1915), 15.

³ E.g., Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (1st edn., New York 1953), 221; George Modelski, "Agraria and Industria: Two Models of the International System," in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba, eds., *The International System* (Princeton 1961), 125-26; and David Easton, "Political Anthropology," in Bernard J. Siegel, ed., *Biennial Review of Anthropology 1959* (Stanford 1959), 235-36. At least one anthropologist was aware of the analogy: see R. F. Barton, *The Half-Way Sun* (New York 1930), 109-10; *idem*, *The Kalingas* (Chicago 1949), 101; and *idem*, "Ifugao Law," 100, 103. In his introduction to *The Kalingas*, E. A. Hoebel wrote: "International law is primitive law on a world scale" (p. 5). Cf. Hoebel's *The Law of Primitive Man* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), 125-26, 318, 321, 330-33.

no effort to elaborate these similarities comprehensively from a theoretical point of view.⁴

It should be noted in passing that there are three more general reasons for comparing primitive and international political systems. An attempt to bridge the gap between political science and anthropology has merits because such cross-disciplinary endeavors may free one from unnecessarily narrow assumptions which often dominate research in a given field. This is particularly true with respect to political anthropology, since the political aspects of primitive society have often been only imperfectly analyzed.⁵

Secondly, it may not be amiss to point out that long before anthropology was established as a discipline, political philosophers analyzed the social and political antecedents of existing states and governments.⁶ The idea of a "state of nature," in which men lived before the establishment of governments, plays an important role in the history of political philosophy. Although recent students of primitive society have argued that "the theories of political philosophers" are "of little scientific value,"⁷ the existence of a tradition which considered the "state of nature" as relevant to any political theory may indicate that political scientists should consider primitive politics more fully than they now do.

This general point is of specific importance for the theory of international politics because it can be said that the modern theory of international relations

⁴ Since this study was undertaken, an article has been published that marks a first step in this direction. See Chadwick F. Alger, "Comparison of Intranational and International Politics," *American Political Science Review*, LVII (June 1963), 414-19.

⁵ In 1940, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown said: "The comparative study of political institutions, with special reference to the simpler societies, is an important branch of social anthropology which has not yet received the attention it deserves" (Preface, in Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, eds., *African Political Systems*, XI). More recently, David Easton has written: "Such a subfield [as political anthropology] does not yet exist" ("Political Anthropology," 210).

⁶ E.g., Montaigne, *Essays*, I, XXIII ("Of Custom, and that We Should Not Easily Change a Law Received"), and I, xxxi ("Of Cannibals"); Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, esp. First Part and notes c-q; and Locke, *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, esp. Chaps. 2 and 3.

⁷ Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, 4. See also Henry Sumner Maine's sharp criticism of Rousseau's conception of the "state of nature" in *Ancient Law* (New York 1874), 84-8, 299.

took the notion of a "state of nature" as its model.⁸ Since anthropologists have asserted that such a "state of nature" never existed, consideration of the empirical and theoretical relevance of the concept may well be in order; not the least of the advantages of a comparison between primitive and international politics would be a fuller understanding of the relevance of modern political philosophy to a theory of world politics.⁹

Finally, as Ragnar Numelin has shown, "international relations" (or its analog) exists among uncivilized peoples; the "discovery" of diplomacy cannot be attributed, as it customarily is, to the "historical" cultures of the Mediterranean or Orient.¹⁰ Thus any exhaustive theory of world politics would have to comprehend the rivalry, warfare, and diplomacy of primitive peoples as genuine examples of "international politics."

II. Similarities Between Primitive and International Politics

At the outset, four elements common to politics within a number of primitive societies and international relations deserve mention: first, the absence of a formal government with power to judge and punish violations of law; second, the use of violence and "self-help" by the members of the system to achieve their objectives and enforce obligations; third, the derivation of law and moral obligations either from custom or from explicit, particular bargaining relationships (i.e., the absence of a formal legislative body operating on the basis of—and making—general rules); and fourth, a predominant organizational principle which establishes political units serving many functions in the overall social system.

The first three of these similarities between

⁸ On the relations between the concept of a "state of nature" and the prevailing theory of politics among sovereign states, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York 1959), esp. Chaps. 6-8; and Richard H. Cox, *Locke on War and Peace* (Oxford 1960), esp. Chap. 4.

⁹ Cf. Kenneth N. Waltz, "Political Philosophy and the Study of International Relations," in William T. R. Fox, ed., *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1959), 51-68; and Arnold Wolfers, "Political Theory and International Relations," in Arnold Wolfers and Laurence W. Martin, eds., *The Anglo-American Tradition in Foreign Affairs* (New Haven 1956), esp. xi-xiii.

¹⁰ Ragnar Numelin, *The Beginnings of Diplomacy* (New York 1950), 125 *et passim*.

primitive and international politics are relatively self-evident when one considers those primitive societies which lack fully developed governments. The fourth, however, may not be as clear. In certain primitive societies, territorial political units are largely defined, especially in the eyes of their members, in terms of kinship groups which are reckoned either "unilaterally" (i.e., groups such as the "lineage," in which descent is in either the male or female line from a common ancestor), or "bilaterally" (i.e., the family group includes relatives of both mother and father, as in modern, "Western" society).¹¹ Different combinations or divisions of these groups, on a territorial basis, often provide the basic structure of the entire political system.

Although it is not normally noted, the international system of sovereign states is also organized largely on the basis of a single principle. In this case, the principle is that of "territorial sovereignty"—i.e., the conception that sovereignty "is always associated with the proprietorship of a limited portion of the earth's surface, and that 'sovereigns' *inter se* are to be deemed not *paramount*, but *absolute* owners of the state's territory."¹² This ultimate authority can, of course, be divided, as it is in federal states; but so, too, with the lineage principle in some primitive systems which are divided into different levels of units.¹³

¹¹ See Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, 11; and Barton, "Ifugao Law," 92-4, 110. Carl Landé, in a stimulating unpublished paper entitled "Kinship and Politics in Pre-Modern and Non-Western Societies," has emphasized the different effects of these two types of kinship groups.

¹² Maine, *Ancient Law*, 99 (original italics).

¹³ The foregoing comparison may appear to come strikingly close to the formulations of Maine (*ibid.*, 124-25) and Lewis H. Morgan (*Ancient Society* [New York 1877], 6-7)—formulations which have been criticized in recent years by anthropologists. See I. Schapera, *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies* (London 1956), 2-5. Despite the inadequacies of the conceptions of Maine and Morgan, especially with reference to their presumption of progress in human development, some distinction between primitive or traditional society, in which kinship and personal "status" play a predominant role, and modern territorial states, based on citizenship and contract, is today accepted by many social scientists. Indeed, it is paradoxical that while anthropologists have been attacking the Maine-Morgan dichotomy (by showing that all societies have a territorial element), sociologists and political scientists have been adopting the distinction from the works of Tönnies, Weber, Parsons, or Levy. E.g., see Fred W. Riggs, "Agraria and Industria—Toward a Typology of Comparative Administration," in William J. Siffin, ed.,

In primitive societies like the Nuer, lineage kinship groups perform a wide variety of functions so that it is not possible to point to a specific act and define it as "political,"¹⁴ rather, there is a political element in many actions which simultaneously serve other purposes. This characteristic has been described in recent sociological literature as "functional diffuseness" of traditional social structures.¹⁵ The conception of "diffuseness" is thus opposed to "functional specificity" (i.e., the organization of a special group or institution to perform a given activity or function), which is supposed to prevail in all modern societies.

An extreme example of this usage is found in Riggs's polar conceptions of a "fused" system, which "a single structure performs all the necessary functions," and a "refracted society," in which "for every function, a corresponding structure exists."¹⁶ Riggs argues that traditional, agrarian societies are "fused," whereas modern, industrial societies are "refracted." While such a distinction may indicate an important tendency, it is a rather exaggerated exaggeration to imply that in modern political systems, "for every function, a corresponding structure exists." The political unit of the modern state system has a "fused" character which parallels the "diffuse" role of kinship groups in primitive societies like the Nuer.¹⁷ Moreover, just as industrial civilization does not presuppose a perfect

Toward the Comparative Study of Public Administration (Bloomington 1959), 28-30, 111.

¹⁴ E.g., according to Evans-Pritchard, "We do not therefore say that a man is acting politically or otherwise but that between local groups there are relations of structural order that can be called political" (*The Nuer* 264-65).

¹⁵ See Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe Ill., 1951), 65-7.

¹⁶ Fred W. Riggs, "International Relations as a Prismatic System," in Knorr and Verba, eds., *The International System*, 149. Cf. Modelski, "Agraria and Industria," in *ibid.*, for a stimulating adaptation of Riggs's concepts.

¹⁷ To be sure, it is easier to specify what actions are "political" in the twentieth-century world than it was for Evans-Pritchard among the Nuer. Nonetheless, as Karl Deutsch has remarked, the nation-state is itself "functionally diffuse," performing an extraordinary range of economic, social, and political functions. See "Toward Western European Integration: An Interim Assessment" *Journal of International Affairs*, XVI (1962), 95-6. Cf. Gabriel A. Almond, "Introduction," in Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton 1960), 11, 63.

age or actions, action re is a ultane- stic has e as the l struc- is thus ganiza- rform a osed to

"refracted" society, traditional societies are rarely totally "fused."¹⁸

Up to this point we have tried to show two things: first, that there is a striking similarity between some primitive political systems and the modern international system; and second, that one element of this similarity is the "functional diffuseness" of political units in both types of system. If this is so, one cannot employ the polar opposites of "primitive" and "modern" or "functionally diffuse" and "functionally specific" as the basis of a comparative analysis of primitive political systems. Because primitive political systems vary enormously, one must explicitly distinguish the particular *kind* of primitive society which is supposed to present the greatest similarity to world politics.

In order to compare primitive and international politics, therefore, one needs a classification which distinguishes primitive societies in terms of their political structure. Although the typologies of primitive political systems hitherto developed by anthropologists have been imperfect, it will be useful to accept provisionally the distinction between primitive peoples which have developed some form of governmental institutions and those which have generally been called "stateless societies."¹⁹

The following comparison will focus on primitive societies that lack formal governments. Such systems may be described as having "diffuse leadership," since individuals or groups have influence without formally institutionalized coercive authority. There may be a "titular chief" in these societies, but such an individual, even together with other influential men, does not act as a ruler. Since the modern world, as a political system, shares this structural characteristic of "statelessness," a résumé

¹⁸ It is simply incorrect to assert that nonliterate peoples, however traditionally minded, were incapable of developing "functionally specific roles," "achievement norms of recruitment," or the "state" as a formal organization; each of these attributes, so readily described as "modern," can be found in societies which must be described as "primitive." For an example, see S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium: The Kingdom of the Nupe in Nigeria* (London 1942). Cf. Riggs, "Agraria and Industria," 28....

¹⁹ See Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, 5-23; John Middleton and David Tait, eds., *Tribes Without Rulers* (London 1958), 1-3; Lucy Mair, *Primitive Government* (Baltimore 1962), Part I, Schapera, *Government and Politics*, 63-4, 208-14; and Robert Lowie, *Social Organization* (New York 1948), Chap. 14. For a Critique of the categories used by anthropologists, see Easton, "Political Anthropology," 210-26.

of political life in primitive stateless societies will show the utility of comparing them to the international political system.

III. "Self-Help" and Violence in Primitive Stateless Societies

In stateless systems, disputes cannot be referred to an impartial government backed by a police force. The characteristic pattern of responding to criminal or civil wrongs is "self-help": the individual or group which feels injured considers himself or itself legitimately responsible for punishing a crime or penalizing a tort. Self-help in these circumstances involves two stages which appear to be directly comparable to the functions of adjudication and enforcement in modern legal systems. In either system, first it is necessary to determine that a wrong has occurred and that a particular individual or group will be punished in a particular way; second, the punishment or penalty for that wrong must be enforced or implemented.

In the simplest primitive societies, both stages are accomplished by the individual or family that has been wronged. For example, when a kinship group discovers that one of its members has been murdered, the guilty individual and his kinship group will be identified and a retaliatory killing (or other punishment) will be inflicted by the wronged group. As Barton indicated in his study of Philippine headhunters, such self-enforcement of legal penalties²⁰ raises a crucial problem among stateless primitive peoples. The kinship group which enforces the *lex talionis* by killing a murderer or one of his kin sees this act as not only necessary, but also legitimate. Although unrelated bystanders may accept this interpretation, since retaliatory killing is customary, the kinship group which is penalized may not consider the retaliation to be a legitimate punishment.²¹ When this occurs, there is often a

²⁰ It must be emphasized that the retaliation is *legal*, being sanctioned by customary law (or, in Weber's terms, "traditional legitimacy"). Cf. Mair, *Primitive Government*, 16-19; and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (Glencoe, Ill., 1952), Chap. 12.

²¹ See Barton, *The Kalingas*, 231. Note the parallel tendency in world politics: "One state's aggression is always another state's legitimate use of force to defend vital national interests" (Inis L. Claude, Jr., "United Nations Use of Military Force," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, VII [June 1963], 119).

tendency for crime and punishment to "escalate" into a more or less permanent relation of "feud" between the kinship groups involved.²²

In feuds, violence usually takes the form of sporadic surprise attacks by individuals or small groups. Hence a condition of feud should not be equated too completely with what we call "war,"²³ rather, it is a condition of rivalry in which intermittent violence and aggression (e.g., seizure of property or person as well as retaliatory killing) appear legitimate to those who attack, and illegitimate to the victims. The similarity of this "state of feud" and a Hobbesian "state of nature" is obvious, with the important difference that kinship groups are often involved, instead of isolated individuals.

Although the notion of modern warfare cannot be accurately applied to all primitive intergroup fighting, primitive violence sometimes approximates a civilized war. The gradations of conflict arising out of self-help have been clarified by Tait and Middleton, who suggest that primitive feuds and wars be distinguished because only in the latter is there no obligation to attempt to settle the dispute.²⁴ They argue that within a restricted range (which varies from one primitive society to another) the

²² Cf. Barton, *The Half-Way Sun*, Chaps. 5 and 6. In some situations, however, a group may refrain from counterretaliation, either because the kinsman who was punished was offensive to his own kin or because the group lacks the power to react. . . .

²³ Numelin argues that organized, continuous warfare of the type known to civilized man is practically unknown among primitive peoples (*The Beginnings of Diplomacy*, Chap. 2). Cf. Schapera, *Government and Politics*, 215, 219; and Melville J. Herskovits, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York 1955), 207-8.

²⁴ "Introduction," *Tribes Without Rulers*, 20-2. Cf. Radcliffe-Brown, *African Political Systems*, XX. A similar though not identical distinction is made by Barton, "Ifugao Law," 77-8. Kinds of violence in primitive society could also be distinguished in terms of the extent to which groups act as corporate units and the degree to which violence is continuous. In this sense, a true "war" would consist of more or less continuous hostilities between corporate groups, whereas "feuds," in the purest case, would be intermittent conflicts between individuals (albeit with the support of kinship groups). Although such an approach would take into consideration the fundamental issue raised by Rousseau's criticism of Hobbes's concept of a "state of war" (see *L'État de guerre*, in C. E. Vaughan, ed., *The Political Writings of Rousseau* [2 vols., Cambridge, Eng., 1915], 1, 293-307), it raises theoretical questions which require a more exhaustive analysis than is here possible. For the present, therefore, it is useful to accept provisionally the distinction between feud and war as elaborated by anthropologists.

more or less permanent condition of feud rivalry is rendered unlikely, if not impossible, by the existence of close kinship ties and relationships "administrative organization."

At this level there may be a duel or the requirement that ritual acts of atonement be performed, but prolonged group rivalry is unlikely since the individuals concerned are all members of a single "nucleus group" (which is, normally, a local community, kinship group, or both). Within such a local family unit, disputes culminating in violence are not self-perpetuating; as in modern states, a punishment or penalty "atones" for a crime and there completes the legal case.²⁵

Outside of this range, punishment does not terminate the rivalry arising out of a dispute, although retaliatory violence tends to be self-perpetuating. Tait and Middleton suggest that there is a zone in which violence can be described as a feud because the opposed groups recognize an obligation to settle their dispute. In this range of social interaction there are normally procedures for arriving at a settlement. Hence, among the Nuer, the "leopard-skin chief" holds an office which serves the function of settling feuds on the basis of compensation.²⁶ The "go-between" among the Ifugao serves a similar function.²⁷

This does not mean that such means of settling the feud are always successful, nor that the settlement is in fact permanent. On the contrary, Evans-Pritchard concludes: "Though the chief admonishes the relatives of the dead man at the ceremonies of settlement that the feud is ended and must not be renewed, Nuer know that 'a feud never ends' . . . There is no frequent fighting or continuous unabated hostility, but the sore rankles and the feud, though formally concluded, may at any time break out again."²⁸ Hence the settlement of a feud amounts to a truce—one might say a treaty, given the impermanence of similar settlements in international politics—between rival groups. Such a settlement

²⁵ Tait and Middleton, *Tribes Without Rulers*, 19-21. See Barton, "Ifugao Law," 14-15, and the example described on 70 ff.

²⁶ Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 152-54.

²⁷ Barton, *The Half-Way Sun*, 109-10, and the example described on 70 ff.

²⁸ *The Nuer*, 155. Cf. Barton, "Ifugao Law," 77. "Once started, a blood feud was well-nigh eternal (unless ended by a fusion of the families by means of marriage).

may occur because feuding segments need to cooperate on other matters, but it cannot unite them into a harmonious unit without further steps, such as a marriage between the feuding families.²⁹

Tait and Middleton use the term "jural community" to describe the unit within which disputes take the form of feuds to be settled by an established procedure.³⁰ Violence on this level tends to be limited in a way which presents very revealing similarities to procedures in international affairs: as with "limited war," there is a restriction on the means of violence used and the ends sought, and like some interstate treaties, each rival group is willing to end violence (if only temporarily) because of the need to cooperate with its rivals. Hence the settlement of a feud does not ordinarily preclude the recurrence of violence; as in international treaties, the parties are their own judges of the maintenance of the conditions of the peaceful settlement.³¹

The feuding condition is thus a relationship between rival groups in which violence is a latent but ever-present threat should disputes arise. War, as defined by Tait and Middleton, is a more extreme form of competition, since there is no obligation to settle conflict, however temporarily. Among many peoples with leaders instead of rulers and governments, a distinction is made between those groups with whom violence is limited to feuding and those with whom there is a continuous condition of war. A given group is not bound by common procedures of dispute settlement with foreigners or with individuals from different parts (or "jural communities") of the same nation. For example, whereas conflicting groups from the same Nuer tribe could only be in a state of feud, individuals or groups from different Nuer tribes are always in a potential state of war with each other. When spatially or culturally distant groups are involved, violence is likely to emerge at any time, even in the absence of a formal dispute.³²

²⁹ See the example in Barton, *The Half-Way Sun*, 115.

³⁰ "The jural community . . . is the widest grouping within which there are a moral obligation and a means ultimately to settle disputes peaceably" (*Tribes Without Rulers*, 9).

³¹ Cf. the rarity of the emergence of what has been called a "security community" in international politics. Karl Deutsch, et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton 1957), Chap. I.

³² Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 121-22. Cf. Lewis H. Morgan, *League of the Iroquois* (Rochester 1851), 73.

Among stateless primitive peoples, therefore, social distance (which is highly correlated with geographical distance) decreases the likelihood that violence, should it occur, will be limited.³³ This spatial distinction between those who are "far" and those who are "near" tends to produce a series of concentric zones around each group in many primitive worlds.³⁴ Where such zones have been found, the specific boundaries of each region are often unclear. Thus there is considerable evidence that, for a member of many primitive societies without a government, the group or "political community" to which allegiance is owed varies, depending on the dispute in question.³⁵

This characteristic is related to one of the fundamental differences between many primitive political systems and world politics—namely, the fusion of various levels of social intercourse which we are accustomed to distinguish. In modern life, one can speak of a distinction between the level of a society (normally organized as a nation-state), that of a local community, and that of a family. For the primitive, the family or kinship group may include all residents of a locality; even if it does not, the kinship group or locality will tend to have many of the functions of a modern society without having either the political structure or the unique claim to allegiance of the modern state. As a consequence, parallels drawn between primitive political systems and international politics, however useful they may be in other respects, must take into consideration differences in the scope and powers of units in the two kinds of systems.³⁶

³³ The conquest of physical space by modern technology has altered the character of "social distance" without destroying it. Today differences in the kind of political regime tend to have effects similar to those of geographical distance between primitive tribes; because of their political principles, Communist regimes are those farthest from the United States even when they are close to us in miles. Cf. the concepts of "structural distance" (Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 113 ff.) and "social distance" (Emory S. Bogardus, *Sociology* [4th edn., New York 1954], 535-36).

³⁴ See the similar diagrams in Barton, *The Half-Way Sun*, 114, and Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 114. Note that Barton distinguishes a "neutral zone" between the "home region" and the zone of feuding.

³⁵ See Mair, *Primitive Government*, 46-8, 104-6.

³⁶ The problem of units and levels of analysis has had surprisingly little attention in recent theorizing on international politics. For exceptions, see Karl Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level* (Garden City, N.Y., 1954); Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*; and

Despite these differences, however, there are some striking similarities between primitive stateless societies and international political systems with respect to the role of violence in intergroup conflict. In both, there is a range of social relationships which is relatively exempt from self-perpetuating violence; within the "nuclear groups" composing both systems, the procedures for settling disputes or atoning for crimes are terminal, at least in principle. In both types of systems, intermittent, violent conflict between nuclear groups can be temporarily settled without removing the potentiality of further attacks. Violence is justified in the eyes of the aggressive group because the legal system permits self-help as a means of enforcing one's rights. Since the punished group denies this justification, there is a tendency for a conflict to erupt into an exchange of hostilities, a tendency which is restrained between those groups which consider themselves to be similar or "near" each other. These similarities indicate that the analogy between primitive political systems without governments and international politics is not merely fanciful; both appear to belong to a general class of political systems in which self-help or violence is an accepted and legitimate mode of procedure.

IV. Order in Primitive Stateless Societies

In discussing the characteristics of violence in primitive societies which lack rulers, there has been an emphasis on the competitive relationship of opposed groups. When seen in this light, primitive society may seem to be a barely controlled anarchy in which security of life and limb is scarcely to be expected. Since this impression is inaccurate, it is of the greatest importance to emphasize the variety of political functions performed in primitive stateless societies.

Even if one disputes Barton's estimate that the life of the Philippine headhunter was more secure than that of a citizen in modern societies, it is undoubtedly true that, as he says, "a people having no vestige of constituted authority and therefore

J. David Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," in Knorr and Verba, eds., *The International System*, 77-92. Of particular importance is the relationship between a cultural community or "people" and organized "political communities." Cf. Gabriel A. Almond, "Comparative Political Systems," *Journal of Politics*, XVIII (August 1956), 393-408.

living in literal anarchy, [can] dwell in comparative peace and security of life and property."³⁷ Whatever the logical merits of Hobbes's conception of a "state of nature," it does not seem to follow, at least among primitive peoples, that the anarchy of social life without a government produces a violent war of against all. Quite the contrary, it would appear that violence in such primitive societies often serves the function of maintaining law and order according to customary procedures.

The pacific functions of self-help can be clearly seen if one considers the circumstances in which violence does *not* arise out of conflict in a stateless primitive system. In the simplest of such societies the necessities of cooperation tend to preclude violence within the family and locality, while the limitations of technology tend to restrict social intercourse to these relatively narrow groups. Hence, among the technologically least developed primitives, feuding relations are rare and war is virtually unknown. In this kind of system, self-help and retaliation function effectively as the only forcible means for punishing crimes because social opprobrium is, in itself, a strong punishment.³⁸

Among primitive peoples with a more complex stateless system, such as the Ifugao studied by Barton there are many occasions for feuding or warfare but actual violence does not arise out of every dispute. The limitation of violence between potential feuding groups is related to the institutions which serve the function of settling feuds. The Ifugao "go-between" not only acts as a mediator in feuds which have caused deaths on either side, but also acts prior to the eruption of violence in an effort to prevent such killings. In negotiating disputes which have not yet led to killing, he emphasizes at every stage the dangers implicit in open feuding; by describing these dangers in detail, the "go-between" (with the backing of his own family and the local community at large) attempts to deter an attack by either of the opposed families.

Institutionalized pressures to prevent the outbreak of violence also occur within the rival groups

³⁷ Barton, "Ifugao Law," 6. Barton calculated the annual death rate from head-hunting at 2 per 1000 during a period of "abnormally high" activity (*The Half-Way Sun*, 200). In the United States, accidental deaths from all causes during 1963 were at the rate of 5.3 per 1000.

³⁸ E.g., A. R. [Radcliffe-] Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (Cambridge, Eng., 1922), 48-52, 84-7.

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themselves. Thus, while the closest relatives of an offended individual may insist on the need for killing as a punishment for such wrongs as adultery, sorcery, or refusal to pay debts, more wealthy relations (who, according to Ifugao custom, may be more vulnerable to counterretaliation than the killer should a feud occur) frequently counsel moderation.³⁹ Since retaliation is an action decided upon by the family as a unit, and since feuds are difficult to settle, "the accuser is usually not overanxious to kill the accused."⁴⁰

Whether originating with a "go-between" or a member of a wronged group, advice that open feuding be avoided, or at least limited, is characteristic of a phenomenon which has recently received extensive attention in foreign affairs—namely, deterrence. Although it has sometimes been assumed that deterrence requires a rational calculation of the consequences of an attack, deterrence and self-help among primitive peoples do not presuppose a conscious strategic calculation of the type formalized by game theorists.⁴¹ Thus the possibility of violent counterretaliation may, in itself and without further calculation, stabilize rivalries and limit conflicts when there is no governmental arbiter to enforce law and order.

In order to avoid an overemphasis on either the stability produced by deterrence or the violence resulting from self-help, it will be useful to view both as necessarily related consequences of a political system which lacks authoritative governmental institutions. In political regimes of this kind, self-help and deterrence have the function of regulating bargaining between opposed groups, but they also serve as a means of organizing social intercourse in a predictable fashion. This latter function is especially important, though it tends to be overlooked in analyses of deterrence from the standpoint of a theory of strategy.

³⁹ On the characteristics of self-help and retaliation among the Ifugao, see Barton, *The Half-Way Sun*, Chaps. 3, 5, and 6; and "Ifugao Law," 75-87, 92-5, 99-109.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 95. Compare the Cuban crisis of October 1962.

⁴¹ Sophisticated students of strategy have never assumed, of course, that rivals can deter each other only if their calculations are formulated in terms of game theory. Cf. Thomas Schelling's analogy of deterring a child, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 11. Nonetheless, popular analyses often assert that deterrence implies—and requires—rational calculation on both sides. E.g., Seymour Melman, *The Peace Race* (New York 1961), 22.

Retaliation by an offended group, both as a means of deterring wrongs and as a method of punishment, can therefore be studied in terms of its social consequences. As Barton points out with reference to headhunting, these consequences are multiple, and are sometimes not consciously perceived by those concerned.⁴² Consciously, retaliation is a means of maintaining the well-being of an offended group and of responding to a specific wrong. Unintentionally or unconsciously, self-help serves to preserve and unite a group which has been threatened by another, to fix responsibility for wrongs, and thus to maintain a legal order. For a specific individual who executes retaliation, the dangerous exploits required for self-help may consciously be a means of gaining glory and influence as well as a means of preserving his legal rights.⁴³ Since all of these functions have analogies in the self-help conducted by sovereign nation-states, it would be unwise to see in retaliation and deterrence merely a means of maximizing the advantage gained by one of two or more rivals.

The essential character of both self-help and deterrence in primitive society is thus political in the broadest sense: when there is no government, retaliation and the threat of violence serve to unite social groups and maintain legal or moral criteria of right and wrong. This use of might to make right seems repugnant to civilized men, for it has been largely (though not completely) superseded within modern society; nonetheless, such a procedure is consonant with a particular kind of social order and cannot be dismissed as having been surpassed with the formation of the first political society. Primitive legal procedures may largely be confined to the international political system today, but on this level the uncivilized notions of self-help and retaliation continue to play a decisive role.⁴⁴

Indeed, the example of primitive societies which have successfully developed governmental institutions shows how difficult it is to substitute hierarchical legal procedures for self-help. Even

⁴² For the distinction between latent and manifest functions which is here implied, see Marion J. Levy, Jr., *The Structure of Society* (Princeton 1952), 83-5. Cf. Barton, *The Half-Way Sun*, 196-7.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Barton also notes that headhunting served the latent function of providing "relief from the monotony of daily life."

⁴⁴ Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, V.1130^b30-1134^a15.

among peoples like the Alur, who are ruled by chiefs, a significant category of wrongs are punished, at least in the first instance, by retaliation on the part of the offended group.⁴⁵ Only if the consequences of retaliation and counterretaliation threaten the security of innocent bystanders do the chiefs intervene, making the conflict a matter of "public law" punishable by an authority acting in the name of the tribe as a whole. In this eventuality, punishment may be meted out impartially to both parties to a feud; the creation of specifically governmental institutions represents a departure from the principle of self-help, and requires a minimal awareness that there is an organized community at a higher level than that of the contending groups.⁴⁶

V. International Politics as a Primitive, Stateless System

The foregoing analysis has attempted to show how self-help, retaliation, and deterrence can be viewed as a characteristically primitive approach to law and order. Through this focus on stateless primitive peoples, the reliance upon self-help and deterrence in international relations appears to be evidence that the world forms a political system that is in many respects similar to primitive systems. Although it is often argued that international law and politics are *sui generis*,⁴⁷ the utility of a comparison between international affairs and stateless primitive societies is shown by two characteristic similarities: first, the relation of law to violence as a means of organizing a coherent social system; and second, the relationship of custom to rivalry and bargaining as means of making and applying known rules.⁴⁸

Although it is fashionable to describe inter-

national relations as a lawless anarchy,⁴⁹ and to admit that international law exists only on condition that it be called "weak" law,⁵⁰ these habitual opinions must be questioned. It is true that the international system permits and even sanctions a considerable amount of violence and bloodshed; but, as has been seen, there is a class of stateless political systems which have this characteristic because they depend upon self-help for the enforcement of law. In such systems law and violence are related in a way that is quite different from the internal political order under which civilized man is accustomed to live; if we speak of international "anarchy," it would be well to bear in mind that it is an "ordered anarchy."

To prove that international law is not necessarily "weak," one need only consider the functions of law in a political system. Hoffmann has suggested that any legal order has three functions: it should produce "security," "satisfaction," and "flexibility."⁵¹ According to these criteria, a legal system dependent upon the self-enforcement of rights by autonomous groups (be they families or nation-states) is "strong" in all three respects.

Most obviously, "flexibility" is assured in a system which recognizes any change in power; to the extent that might makes right, changes in might produce changes in right. It may be somewhat less evident that international law produces a "satisfactory" solution for disputes, yet this is on the whole true because of the admitted impossibility of reversing the verdict of brute force.⁵² And, finally, the stateless international system even produces a modicum of security, most especially through deterrence based upon a mutual recognition that rival nations will both be harmed (if not destroyed) by the use of their legitimate right to self-help. In

⁴⁵ Aidan W. Southall, *Alur Society*, (Cambridge Eng., n.d.), 144. See also 122-36, 160-65.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 144-46, 23-4, 237-39.

⁴⁷ E.g., Stanley Hoffmann, "International Systems and International Law," in Knorr and Verba, eds., *The International System*, 205.

⁴⁸ The second of these characteristics is concerned, speaking crudely, with the relationship between what Almond has called the "political functions" of rule-making, rule application, and interest articulation, while the first corresponds roughly to his functions of interest aggregation and rule adjudication. The last of these functions, in a stateless system, should really be spoken of as rule enforcement, for obvious reasons. Cf. "Introduction," in Almond and Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, 17; and see note 82 below.

⁴⁹ Cf. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, Chaps. 6 and 7. While the present essay is in complete agreement with Waltz's major theme (i.e., that war is a necessary consequence of the state system, since "in anarchy there is no automatic harmony"), his emphasis on the problem of war tends to understate the elements of legality and order in world politics.

⁵⁰ E.g., Hoffmann, "International Systems and International Law," 206-7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁵² Although the "satisfaction" with defeat in war may be of short duration, this is not a necessary consequence of military defeat (as the pro-Western attitude of West Germany and Japan after World War II indicates). The limited durability of "satisfactory" settlements will be discussed below.

this respect it is worth emphasizing that the nuclear age, with its awesome potentialities for destruction, has also seen a corresponding increase in the unwillingness of powerful nation-states to resort to overt war.⁵³

To reveal more clearly the orderly (if violent) aspects of a stateless international system, several elements of the relationship between force and law need to be spelled out in greater detail. As in primitive stateless societies, not only does violence erupt intermittently from a continuing condition of potential feud or war between autonomous groups; cooperation also occurs sporadically. While such cooperation is sometimes limited to actions which prepare for or prosecute warfare (as in most alliances), the members of the interstate system have also been capable of making mutually binding cooperative decisions in *ad hoc* multilateral conferences.⁵⁴ The Concert of Europe provides a more institutionalized example of such intermittent structures, which act as a kind of temporary "government" while preserving the sovereignty of the major states in the international system.⁵⁵

This type of cooperative decision-making, subject to veto by a participating state, must be seen as a feasible—if obviously limited—method of procedure; it is present not only in *ad hoc* bilateral or multilateral meetings, but also in the continuously functioning international organizations (the League of Nations and the UN) which have been developed in this century.⁵⁶ It should also be noted that the

⁵³ Since World War II there have been numerous international incidents which, under prenuclear conditions, would probably have resulted in open warfare. Cf. Herman Kahn, "The Arms Race and Some of Its Hazards," in Donald G. Brennan, ed., *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security* (New York 1961), 93 ff. On the security offered by the "impermeable" nation-state before the development of nuclear weapons, see John H. Herz, *International Politics in the Atomic Age* (New York 1959), Part 1.

⁵⁴ Most notably, of course, in peace conferences terminating major wars.

⁵⁵ On the Concert of Europe, see Richard N. Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics* (Boston 1963), Chap. 4, and the references there cited. Compare the specialized, intermittent political agencies in many stateless primitive societies: Robert H. Lowie, "Some Aspects of Political Organization Among American Aborigines," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, LXXVII (1948), 17-18; and Radcliffe-Brown, *African Political Systems*, xix.

⁵⁶ Note the similarity between the Iroquois Confederacy, which could act as a unit only if a decision was

emergence of so-called "functional" organizations represents a trend toward continuously functioning institutions capable of limited but very real cooperation in the international political system.⁵⁷

The limitations as well as the importance of both violence and cooperation in world politics must therefore be equally emphasized in any total assessment of the international system. In so doing, the comparison with stateless primitive peoples serves the useful purpose of identifying the characteristic properties of a political system in which law is sanctioned by self-help. As among the primitives, retaliation is an acceptable means of righting a wrong, though it is true that civilized nations regard strict retaliation—"an eye for an eye"—as a more extreme recourse than do savage peoples.⁵⁸ As among stateless primitives, neutrality is possible, and non-involved groups often attempt to mediate conflict and induce rivals to cease fighting. As among stateless primitives, finally, the very possibility that conflict may escalate serves to deter violence on some occasions.⁵⁹ Hence the relation of law to force in the multistate system, like the "ordered anarchy" of primitive societies without governments, is derived from the lack of authoritative political institutions.

When we turn more directly to the decision-making process—the second characteristic mentioned above—it may be recalled that in many primitive political systems, especially those lacking governmental institutions, custom and bargaining are related in a crucial way, since they are the only

unanimous, and the UN Security Council. See Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, 111-14; and Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares* (2nd edn., New York 1959), Chap. 8.

⁵⁷ Cf. the limited but continuous role of the *pangats* and "pact-holders" among the Kalinga, which Barton contrasts with the intermittent action of the Ifugao "go-betweens" and "trading partners" (*The Kalingas*, 144-46). On the question of the "continuity" or "contingency" of political structures, see Easton, "Political Anthropology," 235-38, 245-46.

⁵⁸ Henry S. Maine, *International Law* (New York 1888), 174-75. Primitive peoples do not always exact strict retaliation, however; the institution of a "weregild" or payment in lieu of retaliation is paralleled in international politics by reparations and other penalties exacted in the negotiation of peace treaties. Also, compare Morton A. Kaplan, "The Strategy of Limited Retaliation," Policy Memorandum No. 19 (Princeton, Center of International Studies, 1959), and, more generally, recent strategic discussions of "graduated deterrence"—e.g., Henry A. Kissinger, *The Necessity for Choice* (New York 1961), 65-70.

⁵⁹ Cf. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Chap. 8.

methods for establishing enforceable rules. The same can be said of the international political system, for it too lacks an authoritative legislature or an all-powerful executive. International law can be said to be created in two major ways: a practice or rule either becomes a custom, having been followed for a considerable time, or it is adopted by mutual consent, as binding specific groups under particular circumstances. While the second of these legislative methods is relatively unambiguous to the extent that it produces formal treaties and agreements, the first produces customary law slowly and imperceptibly, so that in periods of rapid change one may wonder if any such law really exists. Over time, nonetheless, specific legal rules have been adopted and accepted as valid by the nation-states composing the modern international system.⁶⁰

At any moment of time, international law seems to be chaotic and uncertain; "double standards" often appear to bind weak or law-abiding states, while permitting the ruthless or strong to satisfy their demands with impunity.⁶¹ But when a longer-range view is taken and the world is considered as a stateless political system in which self-help is a legitimate means of legal procedure, disputes over the content of international law (like disputes over the legitimacy of each killing in a primitive feud) become a predictable consequence of the system's structure. As the world is now organized, international law almost requires conflict concerning the substantive provisions relating to a given dispute, and warfare is a legal means of bargaining prior to the conclusion of more or less temporary settlements.⁶²

⁶⁰ On the character of international law and its sources, see James L. Brierly, *The Law of Nations* (4th edn., London 1949), 1-91, 229-36; Percy E. Corbett, *Law and Society in the Relations of States* (New York 1951), 3-52; and Morton A. Kaplan and Nicholas de B. Katzenbach, *The Political Foundations of International Law* (New York 1961), Chap. 9. Some observers of international relations, following John Austin's legal theory, have doubted that a system without a single sovereign authority could have "true" law. For a criticism of this application of Austin's view, see Maine, *International Law*, 47-51.

⁶¹ William Foltz has pointed out to me that there is also a parallel "reverse double standard" in both primitive and international systems; weak and unimportant groups are often permitted actions which major groups would not commit (or which would be strongly criticized if committed). . . .

⁶² From the point of view of a systematic analysis, law

One peculiar characteristic of laws in a stateless political system is thus the legitimization of dispute concerning the application of legal rights to particular circumstances. While it is usual in this context to emphasize the relationship of force to law (by pointing out that "might makes right" in anarchy), the frequency and necessity of disputes over the substance of rights have another consequence: the primacy of political rivalry. Within a society with a government, men whose interests conflict must channel their demands through a specific institutional structure, ultimately recognizing (in principle) the legitimacy of political attitudes which have been sanctioned by governmental decision.⁶³

In international politics, this relatively terminal character of intra-state political decisions is often lacking; the policies of one's rivals need not be legitimized even by victory in warfare. In a sense, therefore, might does *not* make right in international politics (as, indeed, the French insisted after 1871 and the Germans after 1918). Like primitive feuds, international disputes are only temporarily settled: a settlement which precludes the possibility of further conflict is rare.⁶⁴ This means that political differences, and the interests upon which these differences are based, are often more visible in world politics than in intra-state politics. Conflicting

need not be a "good." Indeed, law need not produce peaceful "order," though as civilized men we infer from our political experience that this *should* be so. Hence authorities on international law often feel compelled to go beyond mere restatements of accepted legal principles; the international law texts, long an important method of codifying customary international law, are frequently animated by a desire for reform. Cf. Maine, *International Law*, Lectures I, XII, *et passim*. Unlike the sphere of domestic politics, in which relativism sometimes seems tenable to scholars, international law and politics are difficult to treat in a wholly positivist fashion without thereby accepting as justifiable a condition of legal self-help and war which civilized men tend to reject as barbarous, if not unjust. Hence world politics is perhaps the area in which it is most evident that satisfactory political theory cannot divorce objectivity (and especially freedom from partisanship) from the quest for standards of justice.

⁶³ But note that, even in domestic politics, the legitimacy of governmental decisions may be challenged by those who are willing to be "bellicose." Cf. Bertrand de Jouvenel, *The Pure Theory of Politics* (New Haven 1963), 180 ff.

⁶⁴ For the prerequisites for these rare cases, see the study cited in note 31. Note the function of "marriage" (between representatives of rival kinship groups in primitive societies and between ruling families in the earlier period of modern state system) as a means of formalizing such a settlement.

demands for the satisfaction of the desires of one's own group—politics and rivalry—are therefore the prime factors in international relations.⁶⁵

This primacy of political conflict in world affairs is especially important because of a further similarity between primitive and international politics. Just as some stateless primitive societies are differentiated into spatial "zones" of increasing opposition, so the world can be divided into areas which are politically "far" from each other.⁶⁶ Here again, a characteristic of world politics which often appears to be *sui generis* can be understood more broadly in the context of a comparison between primitive and international politics.

VI. Some Differences Between Primitive and International Political Systems

In arguing that stateless primitive political systems resemble the international political system in many ways, the search for analogies should not obscure the massive differences which must have been only too easily noticed by the reader. By specifying some of these differences, however, it will be possible to distinguish those aspects in which world politics is unique from those that are due to the absence of a formally constituted world government. In particular, there are two general differences between primitive and international politics which will make it easier to see the limits of the structural similarity between the two. It will be necessary to consider, first, the role of political culture, and second, the impact of change.

Although it is usually assumed that the beliefs, manners, and customs of nonliterate peoples are homogeneous, many primitive societies are composed of heterogeneous ethnic stocks; indeed, such heterogeneity is particularly important, for it appears to be related to the emergence of governmental institutions, at least among many African peoples.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, there is a marked tendency toward cultural homogeneity in primitive stateless societies,

⁶⁵ Cf. the "principle of political primacy" emphasized by Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War* (Chicago 1957), 13-15.

⁶⁶ "Blocs" and regional systems are, of course, ready examples. On the relationship between the global system and regional systems in international politics, see George Liska, *Nations in Alliance* (Baltimore 1962), 19-20, 22-4, 259-62.

⁶⁷ See Schapera, *Government and Politics*, 124-25; and Mair, *Primitive Government*, Chap. 5.

since most individuals accept without question the established way of life.⁶⁸ Although the application of traditional rules to specific cases may be and frequently is disputed, the relative stability of culture limits the kinds of change occurring in most primitive systems.⁶⁹

In contrast, the international political system currently includes radically different political cultures. As Almond has shown, national political systems which face the task of integrating different political cultures are subject to strains that are absent in more homogeneous societies; *a fortiori*, this problem is even greater in a system which permits many antagonistic political cultures to organize themselves into autonomous nation-states.⁷⁰ In general, therefore, it could be argued that self-help and structural decentralization tend to produce a greater degree of instability in world politics than in most primitive stateless societies.⁷¹

An additional feature compounds this problem. The historical development of Western civilization, as it has increased man's control over nature and spread the effects of modern science throughout the world, has produced particularly sharp differences between political cultures, at the same time that it has brought these cultures into closer contact than was possible before the advent of modern technology. And, simultaneously with this intensification of the contact between different cultures, it has become apparent that technologically advanced societies are capable of what seems to be virtually infinite material progress, so that the most powerful nations can continuously increase their technological superiority over "backward" or "underdeveloped" states.

The main consequence of the interaction of modern, scientific technology upon cultural differences has been extraordinarily rapid change in world politics, of which the great increase in the number of

⁶⁸ Cf. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, 9-10.

⁶⁹ Hence there may be disputes concerning the power and influence of opposed groups, but these conflicts are rarely ideological in character.

⁷⁰ See Almond, "Comparative Political Systems," 400-2. Cf. the importance of the nationality problem in the U.S.S.R.

⁷¹ Note, however, that many primitive societies are not as stable and unchanging as is often believed. E.g., see Southall, *Alur Society*, 224-27, 236, *et passim*; and J. A. Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society* (London 1954), Chap. 2.

STRUCTURE = HOW
FUNCTION = WHAT

nation-states is out the most superficial index.⁷² The stateless structure of a primitive political system may be tolerably stable, despite the reliance upon self-help enforcement; a similar structure, in the changing context of international politics, may well lead to chaos. Even in a primitive world, the contact of a more "advanced" people with a society without governmental institutions has often produced a rapid domination of the latter by the former.⁷³ It is all the more to be expected, therefore, that the present structure of the international system is essentially transitional, and that quite considerable changes must be expected in the next century.

VII. Conclusion: Directions for Research

The reader may well wonder, at this point, whether the foregoing analysis has any theoretical significance: can the contrast between primitive stateless societies and the interstate system provide any substantive insights otherwise missed by students of world politics? The relative novelty of the comparison here proposed is not, in itself, sufficient justification of the endeavor. Almost eighty years ago, Henry Sumner Maine saw this parallel when he remarked: "Ancient jurisprudence, if perhaps a deceptive comparison may be employed, may be likened to international Law, filling nothing, as it were, except the interstices between the great groups which are the atoms of society."⁷⁴ While the parallels noted above may be nothing but a "deceptive comparison," Maine's formulation itself suggests the important element of similarity which promises to clarify our understanding of world politics.

Although both primitive and international politics can take place in "the interstices between the great groups which are the atoms of society," the "groups" which are "atoms" are not always the same. While this has obviously been true in international affairs at different times and places, it is no less so in primitive societies. As a result, there are an immense variety of types of primitive political systems, just as there have been widely different international political systems.

The question, then, is whether there are

⁷² On the distinction between "stable" and "revolutionary" international systems, see Hoffmann, "International Systems and International Law," 208-11. . . .

⁷³ Southall, *Alur Society*, 229-34.

⁷⁴ *Ancient Law*, 161.

different patterns of groups—or different political structures—which can be identified as typical alternatives among primitive peoples; if this is the case, then perhaps the types of primitive political systems have similarities to the possible types of international political systems.

To date, there have been two major approaches to the construction of typologies of international systems: on the one hand, models of the international system have been defined in terms of behavioral rules,⁷⁵ and on the other, types of international systems have been distinguished on the basis of historical evidence.⁷⁶ Without entering into methodological discussion, it can be wondered whether both of these approaches have shortcomings: the former tends to be *ad hoc*, and the latter to be restricted to the periods one studies.⁷⁷ Given the orientation of recent theoretical efforts in political science, the construction of a structural typology of political systems would seem to be a useful supplement to other approaches.⁷⁸

Because such a typology appears to derive from "structural-functional" theory, developed especially by some British anthropologists,⁷⁹ it would be well to specify more precisely what is meant by "structure," and why it is emphasized rather than "function." As Marion J. Levy, Jr., has suggested, the term "structure," in its most general sense, "means a pattern, i.e., an observable uniformity, of action or operation."⁸⁰ Levy adds: "Functions refer to what is done, and structure refers to how (including in the meaning of 'how' the concept 'by what')

⁷⁵ The most well-known example of this approach is, of course, Morton A. Kaplan's *System and Process in International Politics* (New York 1957), Chap. 2.

⁷⁶ See Hoffmann, "International Systems and International Law," 215-33; and Rosecrance, *Action and Reaction in World Politics*, esp. Part II.

⁷⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, Chap. I, and Stanley Hoffman, ed., *Contemporary Theory in International Relations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1960), 40-50, 174-84.

⁷⁸ It seems, for example, that the distinction between stateless systems and fully developed states is insufficient because it ignores an intermediary type which Southall called "pyramidal" or "segmentary states." In such systems, of which feudalism is but one example, there are a multiplicity of levels of authority, the most comprehensive of which is "paramount" without being "sovereign." See Southall, *Alur Society*, 241-60; and Barnes, *Politics in a Changing Society*, 47-53.

⁷⁹ E.g., see Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, esp. Introduction and Chap. 10.

⁸⁰ Levy, *The Structure of Society*, 57.

what is done is done. One refers to the results of actions (or empirical phenomena in general), and the other to the forms or patterns of action (or empirical phenomena in general). . . . The same empirical phenomenon may be an example of either a function or a structure, depending upon the point from which it is viewed. . . . An interest in the results of operation of a unit focuses attention on the concept of function. An interest in the patterns of operation focuses attention on structure. An interest in the results of operation of a unit and the implications of those results focuses attention on both function and structure since the implications that can be studied scientifically lie in their effects on observable uniformities."⁸¹ As is evident, from the point of view of sociological theory it is impossible to develop a general theory which emphasizes solely either "structure" or "function." Nonetheless there are good reasons for suggesting that a structural typology precede refined "functional" analysis.

This advantage can best be shown by referring to Alger's analysis of the similarities between intranational and international politics. Although Alger suggests that Almond's list of political functions is useful for such a comparison,⁸² when he turns to the parallel between primitive and international politics, he emphasizes three factors, derived from Easton's work, which are ultimately structural in character: namely, the differentiation of political roles and the contingency or continuity of their operation, the specialization of roles which control physical force, and the character of overlapping memberships.

The reason why Almond's political functions are not immediately useful in comparing primitive and international politics is not hard to see. As Alger remarked, "A headman of a primitive society may perform intermittently as interest articulator, aggregator, and rule-maker."⁸³ If Almond's functions

are not performed by specialized individuals in many primitive societies, concentration on these functions may only emphasize the "diffuseness" of roles, without indicating the different patterns which emerge in different systems. It is necessary to see in what kinds of situations different individuals act in different ways; functional categories derived from "modern" complex political systems may be simply inappropriate for the study of primitive societies.⁸⁴

As Almond himself was at pains to point out, "The functional categories which one employs have to be adapted to the particular aspect of the political system with which one is concerned."⁸⁵ Since a comparison of primitive and international political systems must identify the "particular aspects" of each type of system which are analogous, the use of functional categories would seem to be unpromising at the outset. In contrast, the use of a structural typology of political systems, if it proves possible to define kinds of political structures which exist in both primitive and international politics, has a double advantage: this approach should permit one to see not only the similarities between systems, but also the sources of the differences between modern international politics and primitive political systems.⁸⁶

Finally, it should be pointed out that research in this direction, while it appears to utilize recent

⁸⁴ An additional critique which might be made is that the Almond functions imply a political teleology: since traditional, "diffuse" systems tend to be replaced by modern, "functionally specific" ones, analysis may be oriented toward finding those activities which favor the trend toward "modernity." Cf. Almond and Coleman, eds., 16-7. . . .

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁶ In addition, an emphasis on structure should permit one to handle more explicitly the troublesome problem of defining the "actors" in the international system. Cf. Arnold Wolfers, "The Actors in International Politics," *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore 1962), 3-24. Alger seems to adopt the so-called "individuals-as-actors" approach, which raises some severe methodological problems; for example, he suggests (in applying Easton's work) that "international systems would tend to be distributed toward the contingent end of the continuum" which ranges from "contingent" to "continuous." This is a questionable conclusion if one considers that not only international organizations, but specific roles within national governments (e.g., "foreign minister"), function continuously in the modern state system. Cf. Alger, "Comparison of Intranational and International Politics," esp. 416, with the discussion above, p. 610. . . .

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 60-62.

⁸² Alger emphasizes the similarities between international politics and the internal politics of both developing nations and primitive societies ("Comparison of Intranational and International Politics," 410-19). He suggests that the "input functions" ("political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication") are more relevant than the "output functions" ("rule-making, rule application, and rule adjudication"). Cf. Almond and Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, 16-17; and note 48 above.

⁸³ Alger, "Comparison of Intranational and International Politics," 412. Cf. Almond and Coleman, eds., 19.

theoretical approaches derived from anthropology, sociology, and behavioral political science, is not divorced from the problems posed by traditional political philosophy. By emphasizing the existence of a class of social systems in which no formally instituted governments are established, the relevance of the notion of a "state of nature" to international politics can be shown to be more than a mere by-product of "normative" theories developed by political philosophers.

At the same time, however, since the apparent "anarchy" of a "state of nature" is found in primitive societies, analysis of the various kinds of primitive political structures suggests that some of the implications of the "state of nature" doctrine in political philosophy are questionable. In particular, the phenomenon of stateless societies implies that even if one can speak of a "state of nature," such a

condition cannot be used to prove that man is by nature an asocial being; as a result, the "state of nature" (whether in primitive or international politics) need not be considered the *natural human condition*, as opposed to the purely *conventional* political community or state. Hence the comparison of international and intranational politics—and, more specifically, the analysis of similarities between primitive and world politics—among other things leads us to a reassessment of the sufficiency of the theory of politics established by Hobbes and elaborated by Locke, Rousseau, and Kant.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ For a sophisticated attempt to show the continuing relevance of the philosophy of Rousseau as the basis of a theory of international politics, see Stanley Hoffmann, "Rousseau on War and Peace," *American Political Science Review*, LVII (June 1963), 317-33. Cf. Kenneth N. Waltz, "Kant, Liberalism, and War," *ibid.*, LVI (June 1962), 331-40.