1. How international relations were invented

All social institutions have been invented at a given moment of human history. This very simple and evident assessment is frequently obscured by actors and analysts. However, when we consider international relations, this invention appears as rather recent: no more than half a millennium, when the traditional political systems collapsed and the nation-states were created in Europe. The word, even before the concept, is here strongly meaningful: international relations deal with relations among nation-states and suppose the earlier invention of these new forms of political community. It suggests also that the invention took place in Europe and is strongly embedded in the culture and the history of the Old Continent. If we neglect this history, we risk having a distorted approach to the contemporary international facts.

This discrepancy is common today and is impacting both time and space. This European made international system is connected to a moment (the time of the Renaissance and the following centuries) and to a place (the post-medieval Europe). For these reasons, many aspects of this "classic" system do not work anymore in contemporary Europe, as they are facing a new context, new actors, and new issues. But they do not match at all the present situation of Asian or African countries which experienced other cultures, other economic or social structures and, more simply, other histories. These various discrepancies are impacting the core of our current international relations, explaining their crisis and their apparent disorder, the different kinds of misunderstanding and the inability of the traditional conflict-solving models to operate.

This first international system must be clearly identified: it is commonly coined the "Westphalian system," borrowing the name from the Westphalian Peace (1648) which put an end to the Thirty Years War (1618–1648). This war was one of the most dramatic conflicts which bloodied the Old Continent. However, what happened before it must be very carefully taken into account, unlike what IR contemporary researchers commonly do. Prior to the state-building process, IR did not exist properly, but many kinds of political system had to manage their relationship with other people and had to give a sense to what otherness

or alterity meant for them. These various traditions have never been totally abolished and still influence many contemporary actors, particularly in Asia and Africa, but sometimes in Europe as well, where tracks of pre-state traditions never completely disappeared. Two of these traditions must be brought out into the light: empires and fragmented political systems.

HOW DID EMPIRES CONCEIVE OTHERNESS?

All kinds of Empire tend generally to denigrate or at least to downgrade otherness. An Empire is commonly supposed to epitomize or even to incarnate a civilization (Eisenstadt, 1963): the other is considered as being based far away, in the margins and most generally in the shadows. For these reasons, otherness is not a central dimension of imperial politics, while the main issues are more domestic, dealing with, among others, the relationship between the imperial authority and cultural minorities who are embedded in its own territory. The former Empires did not have borders, but margins, nor permanent embassies but provisional legates. At this point, we must introduce an important distinction which is still now clearly impacting the foreign relations of empires, more precisely of their heirs. Some of them were clearly *messianic* and *extensive*, on religious (Muslim empires, Holy Roman Germanic Empire) or civilizational bases (Roman Empire); others were *self-centered*, non-messianic and focused on the protection and reproduction of their own culture (Chinese empires). The former type considers power as an instrument of extension, rather than an instrument of competition, as is the case in the Westphalian system; the latter is not primarily interested in what it happens abroad: it tends to depreciate foreign relations a little, promoting pragmatic initiatives without aiming to convert others to its own civilization. None of them, in any case, would imagine an international system including all the potential partners in the same acting arena.

If we consider the present world order, we observe that this tradition has not faded at all, but came to merge with the Westphalian system and principles. The integration of the old empires into the modern international order has been everywhere uncertain and limited, giving birth to hybrid systems which have been neglected by the mainstream theory: in the contemporary world, China and partly Russia are marked by their imperial past, while, in the Muslim world, the imperial legend is still active in the imaginaries. Moreover, the most orthodox Westphalian states

are still impacted by their colonial past which introduced a kind of imperial culture into their own vision of international politics.

The *extensive imperial culture* has always devoted itself to messianism and universalism which are the real horizons of its international action. The concept of sovereignty has never been totally admitted and is not considered as the cornerstone of the international order as is demonstrated by the European colonial empires as well as the Umayyad, Abbasid, or Ottoman empires. In the meantime, a strong faith in a controlled universalism is substituted to any other principles such as territoriality, sovereignty, and inter-state competition, while power appears as a key concept. This conception is lasting, deeply rooted in the cultures and operates still strongly even in the core of the Westphalian world, but in a hidden manner for preserving the relevance of the Westphalian model.

The *self-centered empires* match the Chinese history. China has never believed in any God and never expected to Sinicize the world. Its vision is then much more pragmatic: foreign relations are considered useful in so far as they bring something positive for the Empire. Its vision of the world has existed for a long time and has always been somewhat puzzling for Western observers. However, it has never been really taken into account by the Western and dominant political science and IR theory but is seen as a deviance, in a perfectly ethnocentric epistemology. Even if China had to convert itself, in the twentieth century, into an imitating nation-state model, through humiliation and coercion, it has always retained, beneath a Marxist evanescent veneer, the main orientations of its Confucian and Taoist culture. Some key concepts must be considered here and particularly that of *tianxia* which goes back to the Zhou dynasty (first millennium BC). It is a basic conception of the world order and describes it as the entire world as it stands under the heavens (Wang, 1995, 2008; Zhao, 2018). This simple definition is significantly at the opposite of the Westphalian conception of a competitive world order comprising permanent rivalry among states: it is clearly at odds with the main postulates of the realist theory which promotes the ideas of competing national interests, sovereignty and balance of power.

The concept of *tianxia* opened the way to different and even contradicting interpretations of the real basis of the Chinese foreign policy. Whatever it is, the majority of analysts consider that the classic paradigms do not fit the Chinese behavior in the political arena. It may suggest an imperial vision which gives to the Son of Heaven a pre-eminence for ruling the world, and particularly at the regional level, through the tribute system (Fairbank, 1968, and particularly Mark Mancall's contribution). Some scholars may consider that this unified

vision of the world introduces a totalitarian conception of globalization, while others point out that this "unification under the heaven" predisposes China to welcome the idea of a global world which disconcerts the Westphalian actors who were socialized to the idea of competition. It also sheds light on one of the theories elaborated by the Chinese strategist Sun Tzu who considered that the best conquest should be done without destroying (Sun Tzu, 1963): we find here not only the opposite to the Westphalian and the Clausewitzian vision, but also a good introduction to the present Beijing foreign policy which strives to extend its influence everywhere around the world without being involved in the main regional conflicts, particularly in Africa or in the Middle East.

This vision joins up with the concept of *Wu Wei* (attitude of non-action) which is common in the Taoist philosophy and posits that a genuine non-action strategy is generally more fruitful and successful than a strong involvement in different kinds of collective action. This postulate downgrades the Western vision of an active international arena in which all the actors need to actively fight for survival. Once more, we discover a special grammar of international politics which cannot be reduced to the Westphalian vision and which particularly promotes a way of playing with globalization which is totally different and based on a complete dissociation of politics from economics: a global policy aims at control of world resources without taking the risk of destructive wars or even a Sinicization of the foreign political systems.

That is why we should say that Empire is shaping an original kind of international action, which is still living today, which has even impacted the Westphalian European nation-states themselves and which is not reducible to the syntax common to the main IR theories, challenging or reconstructing its main concepts (territory, sovereignty, power competition, etc.) and puzzling the analysts of some foreign policies, like the Chinese one.

FRAGMENTED POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND OTHERNESS

If empires have their own ways of conceiving otherness that are clearly distinct from the Westphalian model, the same is true of all kinds of fragmented political systems. Among the pre-Westphalian political systems, two kinds of fragmented political orders played a major role, and are still partially active in our contemporary world: tribal systems and cities. Both of them shaped an original conception of otherness, which is different from the inter-state pattern, as well as from the imperial one.

Tribal systems have been studied by political anthropology which is unfortunately totally separated from the main streams of contemporary IR theory. Considering the Nuer segmented system in Sudan, Evans-Pritchard shows in a masterful way how the tribal system is based on a totally different vision of politics which persists nowadays in many places of the world, and may even be reactivated by state collapse, as appears in Africa or, to a lesser degree, in Asia (Evans-Pritchard, 1940).

Politics is here clearly disconnected from territory. The relationship is even exactly reversed: territory does not create politics, but is created by the social order, as tribes draw their own space and make it meaningful. If the tribes are nomadic, their spaces will even be moving, making the borderlines totally meaningless. Even if they are stable, their contours will change according to the part of the tribal system which is taken into account. For these reasons, the Westphalian state does not properly operate in many places of the contemporary world, while state competition is largely overcome by a complex system of inter-tribe rivalries. That is why also conflicts like the Sahelian or the Congolese ones are poorly understandable through the classic IR paradigms, and why Western states so often fail when they try to solve them.

For the same reason, the classic vision of the enemy is not really compatible with a political order in which the enemy is permanently changing according to the complex law of tribal kinship or alliances of conjuncture: stable alliances, polarization, international war or national enemy, as Carl Schmitt described them, do not properly work any longer (Schmitt, 2007 [1932]). This "fluid enmity" has become a major feature of our present (and future) conflicts which the classic theory totally disregards. More globally, these societies do not know or even accept what the monopoly of violence means or implies: the state is then poorly legitimate, while many non-state actors (warlords, "big boys," traditional actors) are commonly projected into the international, or regional arena: with all of them, it becomes difficult to negotiate according to the usual standards.

Cities are another kind of a fragmented political order: they strongly question the territorial dimension of politics. At their origin, cities are made of an association of families or siblings; they appeared very early in human history: in the Indus valley, around 3300 BC, with the pre-Harappan and the Harappan civilizations dominated by well-known cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. We find them a while later in Mesopotamia with the famous cities of Uruk, Ur, Lagash, and Umma. This adventure lasted throughout the following millennium and has never been totally interrupted: it crossed the ages through the Greek cities, the medieval Hanseatic League, the Italian Renaissance cities and, up to now,

with modern places like Singapore, Hong Kong or Dubai. In those systems, association is more decisive than community rule, and territory is substituted by social relations which are changing into complex and transnational networks during the modern era: that is why scholars speak of "virtual states" to coin their contemporary incarnations (Rosecrance, 1999). Like tribal systems, they do not match the main concepts of the current IR theory, but they also challenge the idea of nation even while they are actively promoting transnational relations in the world arena.

As far as we know, the Indus cities were first dominated and animated by trade activities: they were constituted by people who were mainly involved in trade and handicraft (Kenoyer, 1998); political structures and political authority were not central in their organization, while the army seemed to play a very marginal role in their development. As for their foreign relations, they were essentially constituted by economic and trade networks which extended beyond the Indus valley, as far as the Persian Gulf harbors. War does not seem to be present in this history, probably because of trade activities, as well as a good system of irrigation that made conflict useless and costly. By contrast, the Sumerian cities, at the same moment, faced a totally different situation: their political structures were much more elaborate, marked by major kings (*lugal*, "great man") and prime ministers (*sukkal-mah*), prefiguring the future Akkadian Empire. The army played a decisive role, while war was, this time around, at the very center of foreign activities as demonstrated by the famous wars between Lagash and Umma. As far as we know, these wars were the first to appear in human history. They are remarkable by their duration (two centuries and half, from 2600 BC until 2350 BC) and their nature, as the two cities did not share the same border. They are reputed to have been hard fought and particularly important, as they were motivated by the lack of water which was impacting the two cities and pushing them into a lasting rivalry.

This comparison is important, as it shows that there are no universal laws in political development, and thus in conceiving international relations: peaceful or warlike cities may appear according to circumstances; competition is as imaginable as cooperation or economic exchanges; the spatial dimension may be shaped through structured territories or not; national interest may be operating in certain cases or circumstances, while individual or aggregate interest may prevail in other contexts. The spatial dimension and its territorial organization may have been decisive in Sumer, while transnational relations and trade networks were much more structuring in the Indus valley. War was invented, much more than being intrinsic to human nature: it appeared at Lagash and Umma for expressly strengthening emergent political structures as well

as providing water when it was lacking. In short, none of the basic principles of the classic IR theory can claim to be universal and trans-historical: state competition, national interest conceived as a geopolitical compass, obsession of power, separation between domestic and international affairs, the territorial basis of state and politics, the structuring capacity of enmity … The Westphalian model is really embedded in a precise history.

THE WESTPHALIAN INVENTION

It should come as no surprise to anyone that the first international system *stricto sensu* was invented in the wake of the state-building process which took place at the end of the European Middle Ages. Empires, cities, and segmented systems conceived an art of foreign relations which is still partly working nowadays, but they did not conceive a system, as this art was more or less based on the outreach of one actor at a given moment. The creation of the nation-states brought about a major change: the juxtaposition of sovereign and equal political units implied a system of norms, practices, and complex relations which would be able to maintain and reproduce a lasting international order. This property could not be provided by one actor, as former empires did, but by a collective order which would be defined and accepted by all (or the main) competing actors. This great transformation happened just after the European Renaissance and was definitely, but naively, considered by the main IR theories as a never-ending system and an everlasting organization of international modernity. This messianic vision simply forgot that institutions appear in a given context while their persistence inevitably depends on the evolution of this context.

The puzzle is easy to solve: statehood emerged in Europe, mainly during the fourteenth century, as a functional and strategic solution to a triple political crisis: the inability of feudalism to manage the changing social order, the decline of the pope's capacity to rule the Christian world, and the slow decomposition of the Holy Roman Germanic Empire (Anderson, 1994 [1974]; Strayer, 1970; Tilly, 1974). These three failures were solved by dynastic actors who clearly separated the political functions from the social, economic, and religious ones for building up a specific and differentiated sphere of politics: this was based, for the first time in human history, on strictly delimited territories, provided with precise borderlines, over which each unit claimed to have full sovereignty. But, if these new territorial units were fully sovereign and then considered as equal in respect of their rights, which authority would then

be able to settle their disputes and maintain a minimal order on the Continent? The very idea of international law as playing a key role would not be clear, precisely because of the sovereignty principle, while all kinds of mediation, from the emperor or from the pope, were discredited. This ambiguity is at the basis of the first international system which was empirically invented during the following two centuries, progressively theorized by political philosophers such as Jean Bodin (Bodin, 2009 [1576]), Hugo Grotius (Grotius, 2015 [1625]), and Thomas Hobbes (Hobbes, 2014 [1651]), and overall formalized by the Westphalian Peace, in 1648. This conceptual foundation thoroughly fuelled the realist theory, without taking into account that such a paradigm was not necessarily adapted to the context of the following centuries, neither to the culture nor to the history of other societies.

A very important issue suddenly appeared, and became the lasting nodal point of this construction: if no authority was able to solve the potential disputes among new states, war might become the functional way of ruling the new international order. War was then considered not only as an instrument for helping every state to reach political aims, but also as a *property* of the new Westphalian system which could not properly work without it. This new conception should be regarded as one the main pillars of this new vision of international politics. It explains just as much the new configuration of the Westphalian war in its present status in the realist theory. War was henceforth defined as a power competition among sovereign states and as a way to update the balance of powers inside the international arena. It was, from this moment on, an instrument committed to serve a political end which was exclusively defined by the state. This strong interaction between state and war explains why Charles Tilly identified this terrible vicious circle by which war makes state and state makes war (Tilly, 1985). We easily understand why realism and neo-realism consider war as a property inherent in any international system, bound to human nature, to the organization of the state and to the essentially anarchical structure of the system itself (Waltz, 1959, ch. VI). We also understand why offensive neo-realism claims that war is the only means for containing the threat coming from rivals or enemies (Mearsheimer, 2001). However, it is clear that the situation has now totally changed (see Chapter 7): war has slipped from the state's control, it is in the hands of new actors, committed to new rationalities, and even sometimes free from any fixed rationalities.

THE WESTPHALIAN CONCEPTS

The Westphalian Peace did not invent a new system all at once, but it contributed to build up a new political order and to make it visible and concrete. Gradually, the main European narratives on international politics were traced from this pattern. That is why we can say that the Westphalian model strongly influenced the realist theory, to such an extent that it is no longer easy to grasp some major features of the post-Westphalian system. This influence was then transmitted to other theories, and particularly to liberal institutionalism, as we will see later.

The two treaties that were concluded as parts of the Westphalian Peace – Münster (January 1648, between Spain and United Provinces) and Osnabrück (October 1648, between France and the Holy Roman Empire) – brought these new concepts into being. The most important point is to be found in the latter treaty which put an end to the "imperial immediacy," by which each German imperial estate was freed from local lords and placed under the imperial authority. From this time on, the territory defined by itself the right authority and then the imperial power lost its upper hand. This territorialization of politics was consolidated by the rule *cuius regio, eius religio* which deprived the Emperor of his religious ascendency and opened the way to the achievement of the modern state. In the meantime, new sovereign states were constituted: Switzerland and Netherlands. Henceforth, the European map was clearly, for the first time, an inter-state map.

The constituted linkage in the history of international politics was then inescapable. European state-builders faced three obstacles that they had to overcome: the papal theocracy, the Holy Roman Empire, and the feudal system. *Territory* was in fact the only way to become emancipated from these three constraints whenever the state is considered as a political institution, that is to say an instrument for exercising its authority and controlling its population (Badie, 1995; Sack, 1986). As a concept, territory had then to move from geography to political science and international relations. It attained a central status in all international issues: inter-state diplomacy, international negotiations and peace treaties (in which territorial issues were most generally behind one or several major clauses), goals of wars (most frequently for gaining new territories), and modes of war (importance of the battlefield). All these characteristics are central in the realist IR theory, and are nowadays questioned by the new diplomacy (see Chapter 8) and the new international conflicts (see Chapter 7).

This political construction of territories could be really efficient and meaningful only if the territorial unit was *sovereign*. Sovereignty is thus the first derived concept: the territory will be an efficient instrument of government only if it has full sovereignty over it. As such, sovereignty had originally two meanings: first, the emancipation from foreign (that is to say extra-territorial) tutorship; second, the capacity to produce rules and policies without being constrained by other powers, "stronger, weaker or equal" to one's own (Bodin, 2009 [1576]). In these conditions, sovereignty became, from this moment on, the cornerstone of the international order which is then defined as a juxtaposition of sovereign states which, as such, pretend to the monopoly of the international arena: non-state actors do not have anything to do inside this arena and international relations become definitively a special and derogatory relationship as they are strictly reserved for the sovereign states, to the exclusion of all others. As we shall see, this major point of the realist theory is becoming less and less relevant in the present international context.

Preserving and optimizing sovereignty mean a strong capacity of *power*: for this reason, the Westphalian system has always been considered by theory as a system of power politics. Sovereignty must be recognized by all the other partners in order to exist: it depends, at every moment, on the decision made by the other states (Daase et al., 2015). If it does not appear as credible, it will be denied and threatened: its credibility is pledged by the amount of power that it is able to mobilize. It then opens the way to the three functions of international politics which were described by Morgenthau: keeping power, increasing power, and demonstrating power (Morgenthau, 1964 [1948]). The main issue which is presently at stake is to understand what happens when power becomes powerless in the international arena (see Chapter 5).

This dramatic vision of power is based on two important assessments: power creates a lasting competition among states and it can be contained only by an active effort to achieve and maintain a balance of power. Power competition is the natural result of the permanent combination of power and sovereignty: it animates the international arena, shapes foreign policies, and produces the main international events. However, it cannot but lead to a dangerous escalation and end in war: as a founding father of realism, John Hertz, put it when coining the concept of "security dilemma," a state is pushed to strengthen its own military capacity as soon as it observes that the partner raises the stake (Hertz, 1950). The only rational way for containing the risk of a permanent war would then be to promote a situation of balance of power, which would be necessarily precarious by default of a supra-national authority (Little, 2007).

This balance of power was the first conception of peace-keeping in modern history: but it is now called into question by the contemporary transformations of the nature of power (see Chapter 5). For the same reasons, alliances became progressively one of the main instruments of the Westphalian strategy: the longer they last, the more the allied states are secure. It implies, however, a minimal structuration and polarization of the world which were both seriously questioned after the fall of the Berlin Wall (see Chapter 2).

As the international system is made of sovereign units, *international law* would appear as a kind of aporia: no authority is supposed to constrain a state and, even more, to enforce a supra-national decision. That is why the status of international law has never been clear, while the main conventions between states have been concluded on an empirical basis and as a meeting of sovereign wills. War remains the normal method used by states for settling their disputes, even if their interest is progressively to tame and even contain it: for the same reasons, military interventions are still conceived as a normal instrument of foreign policy, a kind of mission for great powers, even if it does not efficiently work nowadays (see Chapter 7).

THE WESTPHALIAN HISTORY OF IR THEORIES

The founding fathers of contemporary IR theories are to be found mostly among the first theorists of the state: that is why they never treated systematically our topics in all their aspects. Machiavelli dealt with international issues in a marginal way, while Jean Bodin, obsessed as he was by religious wars and the Saint-Barthélémy massacres (1572), was essentially concerned by interventions coming from abroad and then by the sovereignty issue which he defined and conceptualized in *The Six Books of the Commonwealth* published four years later, in 1576. It was certainly the starting point of a long process which continued with Grotius and his *De Jure belli ac Pacis* (2015 [1625]) and reached its peak with Thomas Hobbes and his *Leviathan* which appeared in 1651, that is to say less than three years after the Westphalian Peace, and when one of the most violent wars in Europe ended. Let us also keep in mind the context of the English Civil War to which he was a witness.

The Westphalian Peace was a critical juncture for Hobbes and Grotius: the former wrote his major book in this context, while the latter actively participated in the negotiations. The new formal international order was in fact the starting point in the elaboration of IR conceptualizations, but also the basis of a lasting and crucial debate. Hobbes apprehended it as a

way of solving a major problem of social and political *security*, while Grotius, as a negotiator and diplomat, conceived it as a possible model of a new and stable political *order* in Europe and beyond. For this reason, Hobbes was first of all concerned with war and insecurity which he considered derived from human nature itself: both of them could be overcome at the domestic level only by a social pact, contracted by each individual with the sovereign who was the only possible provider of security. Such an abandonment of individual liberty into the hands of the sovereign was considered as granting a real security. But, by creating and reinforcing sovereignty, the social pact creates totally free *Leviathans* who are playing without any control in the international arena, precisely because they are sovereign: then they behave like "gladiators," Hobbes wrote, portraying their violence as the normal state of international politics.

For his part, Grotius did not accept war as an inevitability: as a lawyer who worked for the Dutch East India Company, and as a citizen of Delft, a place committed to world trade, he refused to consider states as gladiators and strongly challenged Richelieu who praised the law of the strongest: if sovereignty is an indisputable principle, it cannot lead to support all kinds of war. That is why Grotius considered that, through the Westphalian Peace, an "international society" would be possible; he strove also to distinguish those wars which were just from those which should be contained or even reduced, while Hobbes considered that all wars were normal expressions of an international state of nature. The Grotian vision implied an authority prior to the sovereignty principle: this function was assigned to natural law which would be imperative for anyone, including God!

The debate was then launched and, in a way, still continues today. It sheds light on the present "limited plurality" of paradigms in IR. On the one hand, Hobbes represents a hard interpretation of the Westphalian moment, considered as the expression of a continued competition of powers and a sort of permanent state of war. On the other hand, Grotius would personify the soft interpretation: while accepting the Hobbesian diagnostic and all the concepts around it, he strove to contain a dynamic which he morally condemned by drawing sovereignty free spaces (he strongly supported the ideas of free seas and free trade) and by promoting natural laws. In this challenge, Grotius was clearly defeated and the hard interpretation prevailed, at least up to the twentieth century and the end of the First World War. Hobbes's victory is easy to explain: at a time when the European kings started losing their absolutist rights in the domestic sphere, it became essential for them to keep their privileges in the international arena. By a kind of royal connivance, the game was

thus consolidated and even reactivated after the Vienna Congress and the formation of a European concert (1815). Maybe the world would have been different if Grotius had won the argument, but, in any case, the terms of a long-lasting debate were set, opposing a dominating realism to a more discreet institutional liberalism, both of them, however, positioned in the same conceptual frame, referring to the same founding moment and embedded into the same history.

The Hobbesian lineage was punctuated along the way by important theorists who played a major role in the constitution of the future discipline. As a Prussian officer who fought during the Napoleonic wars, Carl von Clausewitz was the initiator of the "strategic studies" which reinforced the status of war in international relations (Clausewitz, 1989 [1832]). War was then clearly connected to politics and defined as an essential instrument of state policy and state credibility; it was also bound to power as Clausewitz pointed out that the only aim of war was to overcome and fight off enemies: this last dogma still endures in the minds of Western rulers, leading them to disappointment and lack of understanding when they intervene in the new international conflicts (see Chapter 7). Carl Schmitt is another figure in this lineage: he constructed the concept of nation through enmity and potential war, stressing that war not only structures the international game, but also national communities which need enemies to maintain their existence. He extended the "war-making/state-making" principle coined by Tilly to the nations, and opened the way to the concept of international war and, in fact, to the two world wars (Schmitt, 2007 [1932]).

In the context of the First World War, the theoretical elaboration came to bifurcate and to follow two different directions. The first stage of globalization and the development of international trade pushed, even before 1914, some authors to return to Grotius, considering that war would be too risky and costly: Norman Angell made the point in his *Great Illusion*, but events proved that his forecast was untrue (Angell, 1910). At the end of the war, US President Woodrow Wilson built upon his former professional competence in constitutional law to promote an institutional vision of the new international arena: after the First World War tragedy, international institutions would be the only way to contain the risks of new major conflicts. This Grotian assessment paved the way to the League of Nations and to the liberal institutionalism which was, however, overshadowed by the failures of this first multilateralist invention and by the Second World War. It was not until the 1970s and the easing of the bipolar tension that Grotius made a comeback through the works of Joseph Nye, Robert Keohane, and John Ruggie (Keohane and Nye, 1977; Ruggie, 1998). The first two amended the realist theory by

pointing to the increasing interdependence of states which were no longer considered as pure competitors and gladiators: they were supposed also to cooperate to gain new benefits. The third theorist elaborated, in the same way, the concept of political regime which revived the Grotian hypothesis of an international society. But none of them really questioned the universal nature of the nation-state, either the founding concept of sovereignty, or the relevance of power politics.

Hobbes continues to dominate and still ranks first, among political actors, and inside the academic world, whether in American universities or elsewhere. In the area of the rulers, the old dream of a permanent tournament among equals is still alive. The Cold War and bipolarity were based on this postulate and came to freeze it. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the unipolar illusion extended this conviction, even while quite a new system began to emerge, giving a crucial role to rising powers and even to the Global South in which the major part of the international conflicts and international issues is nowadays concentrated, making the contemporary international system quite ungovernable by using the old rules and principles. As for the scientific literature, it is mainly dominated by the dilemma about the best way to manage the state of anarchy which is ascribed to the international arena: offensive neo-realism considers great powers as the main actors in the world, which are permanently threatened and then induced to maximize their share of power in order to survive (Mearsheimer, 2001), while defensive neo-realism relies on the old balance of power for limiting the risks of anarchy (Waltz, 1979). In other words, we can say that the grammar remains the same and is still strongly influenced by the Westphalian narratives.

This grammar is at the core of our analysis, as well as the ways for overcoming it in order to access the new world. In spite of many amendments, particularly on the increasing role of transnational relations (Rosenau, 1990), or strong criticisms from post-colonial (Bhabha, 1994), gender (Tickner, 1992), or constructivist studies (Katzenstein, 1996), the global transformation of this grammar has never been taken into account. We will try to suggest here some directions, by stressing, in a first step, the main ruptures which took place in the contemporary history of international relations.

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