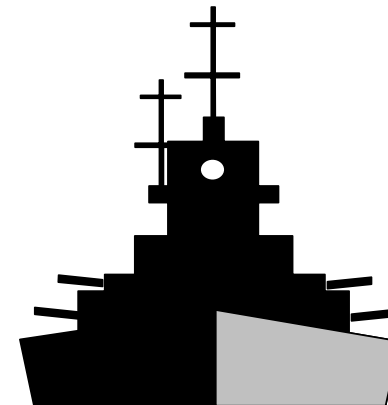
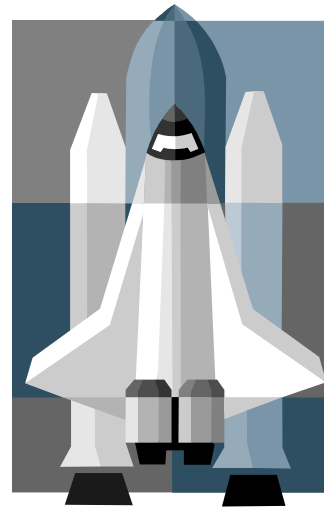
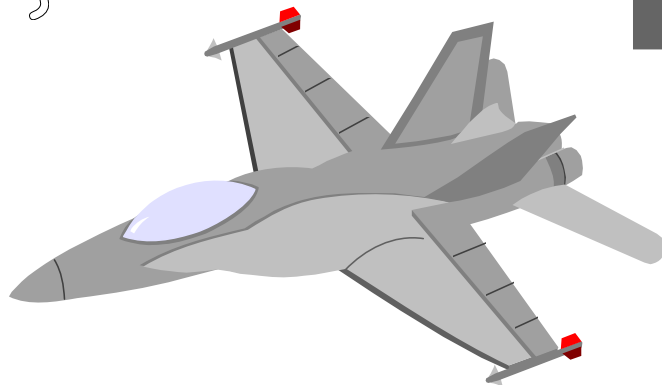
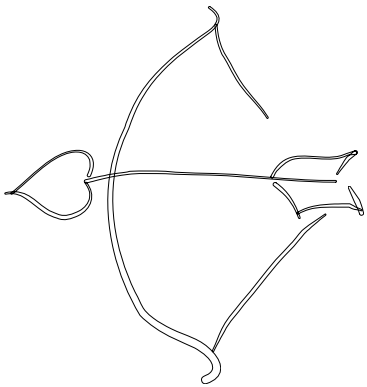


POL 3: International Relations

Power in International Relations



Power and Wealth

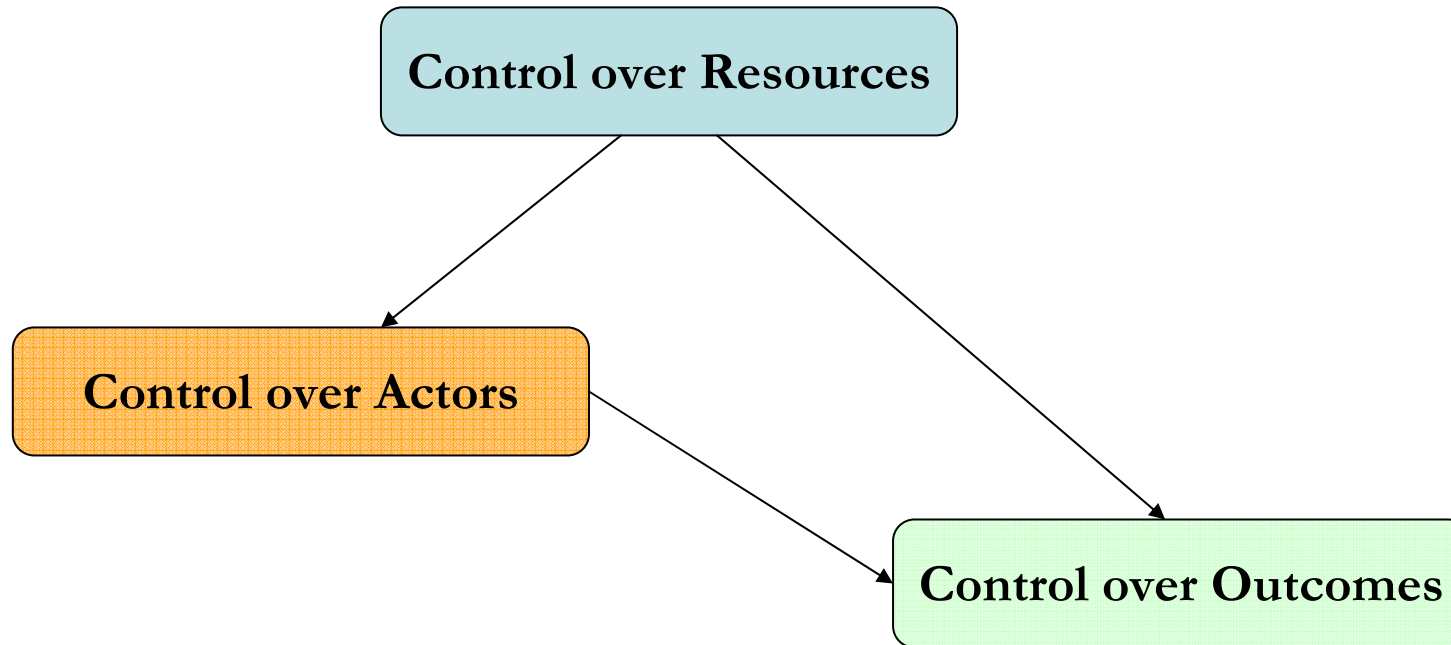
Power in international relations is similar to what wealth is to economics. This means

- 1. Power and wealth are relative concepts**
- 2. There is no absolute power just as there is no absolute wealth**
- 3. Power and wealth are social conventions, their measurement depends on social circumstances**
- 4. Power and wealth are dynamic; their content and attributes change over time**
- 5. Both power and wealth are means, not goals in and of themselves**

Approaches to the Measurement of Power

- 1. Power as control over resources. Power is a bundle of tangible and quantifiable resources; the more resources in the bundle (or a more balanced combination of resources), the more power a given unit has.**
- 2. Power as control over actors. Power refers to the ability of a given actor A to influence the behavior of other actors (B, C,...) according to A's will, even if the required behavior of other actors contradicts the will or interests of B, C, ... The more other actors behave in accordance with A's will, the more power A has.**
- 3. Power as control over outcomes. The ability of an actor to increase the likelihood of desired outcomes and to reduce the likelihood of undesired outcomes. This conception sees power as the capacity of a given actor to affect its environment.**

Due to the difficulty to measure and assess power in terms of control over actors or control over outcomes, it is commonly assumed by both scholars and practitioners that:



This assumption underlies policies of force design as well as influence attempts both via positive inducements and via sanctions. Yet it may be empirically tenuous

Dimensions of National Power

Physical Power

Political Power

Psychological Power

Physical Power

- **The sum total of the resources available at the disposal of the state's authority for the pursuit of national goals**
- **Physical power usually denotes a potential pool of resources for international interactions—this potential may not be actually realizable under all circumstances.**
- **Most components of this pool of resources are tangible and measurable quantities.**

Central Components of Physical Power

Demographic

Total population

Urban population

Age pyramid of population

Educational/technological quality indices of population

Economic

GDP, Per-capita GDP

Natural resources

Economic efficiency (components of GDP)

Economic indicators (growth rates, inflation, unemployment, balance of payments)

Military

Military expenditures

Military personnel

Military burden

Type, quantities, and quality of major weapon systems,

Quality measure of armed forces

Correlates of War (COW) Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC)

- Three dimensions: Demographic, Economic, and Military
- Demographics: Total and urban population
- Economics: Iron-steel production and energy consumption
- Military: Military expenditures and military personnel.
- Each state's capabilities on each variable is measured as the state's share of the system's capabilities. For example the relative population of state x is defined as

$$\frac{\text{State X's population}}{\text{World's population}}$$

Likewise the state's relative military expenditure is defined as:

$$\frac{\text{State X's military expenditures}}{\text{Total world's military expenditures}}$$

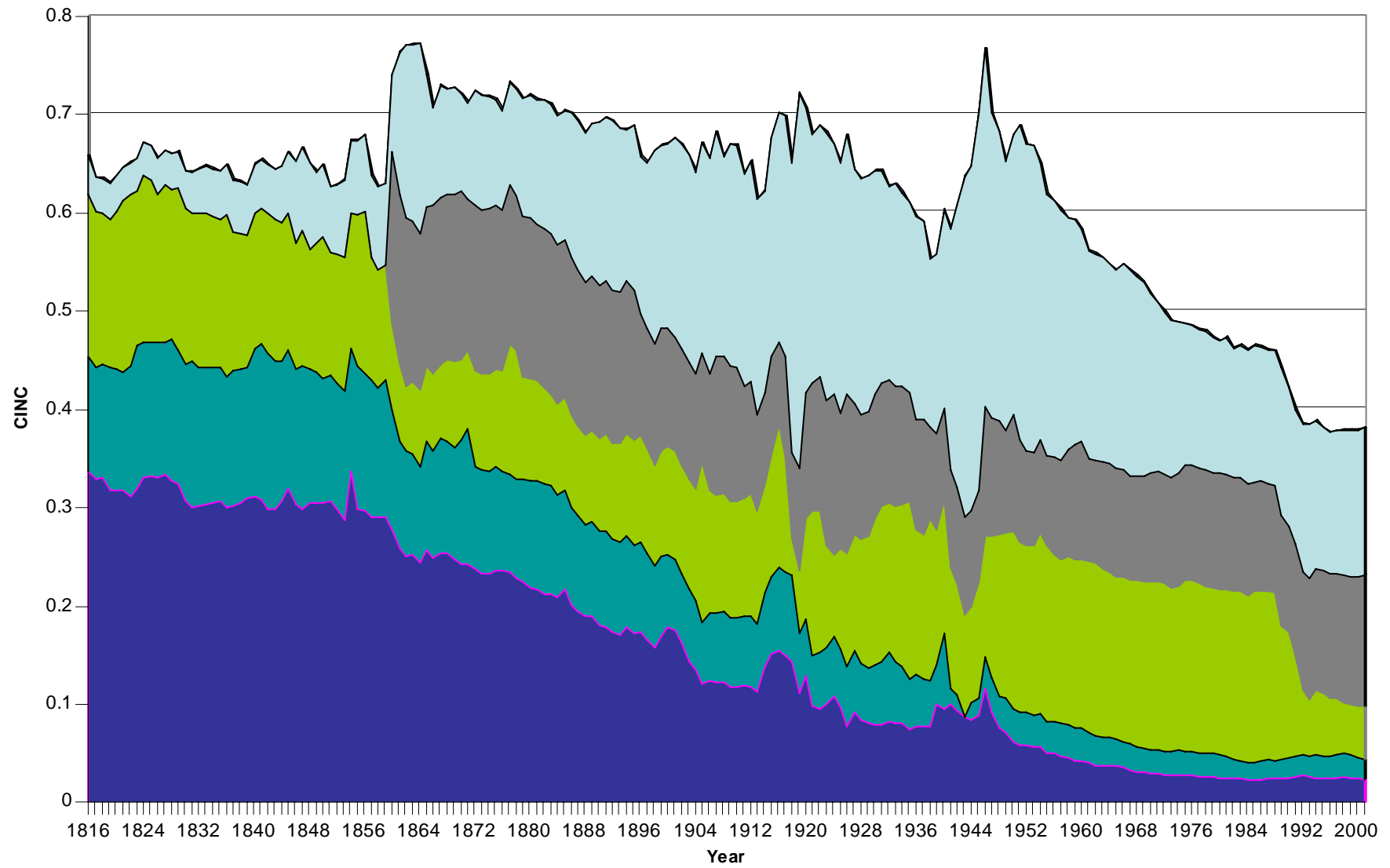
For example, China's population ratio in 1999 is:

$$CPR_{1999} = \frac{\textit{China's Population}_{1999}}{\textit{World Population}_{1999}} = \frac{1,200,000,000}{6,000,000,000} = \frac{1}{5}$$

Thus the composite index of national capabilities for a given state (x) is the average of its share of world's resources over these six variables: Total Population Ratio (TPR), Urban Population Ratio (UPR), Iron Steel Ratio (ISR), Energy Consumption Ratio (ECR), Military Expenditures Ratio (MER), and Military Personnel Ratio (MPR)

$$CINC_x = \frac{TPR_x + UPR_x + ISR_x + ECR_x + MPR_x + MER_x}{6}$$

Capabilities of Major Powers, 1816-2001



UK France Russia China US

Political Power

Political power refers to the ability of the government to extract human and material resources from the population for the purpose of accomplishing national goals. This is the capacity of the political system to convert its potential capabilities into actual capability.

A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler. *The War Ledger* (1980).

Offered a formula for measuring national power, as:

$$\text{National Capacity} = \text{GNP} \times \text{Political Capacity}$$

According to Organski and Kugler, GNP is the single best predictor of potential power (as control over resources).

Political capacity is a multiplier of physical power; it determines which percentage of the actual resources that a state produces are actually available to the government.

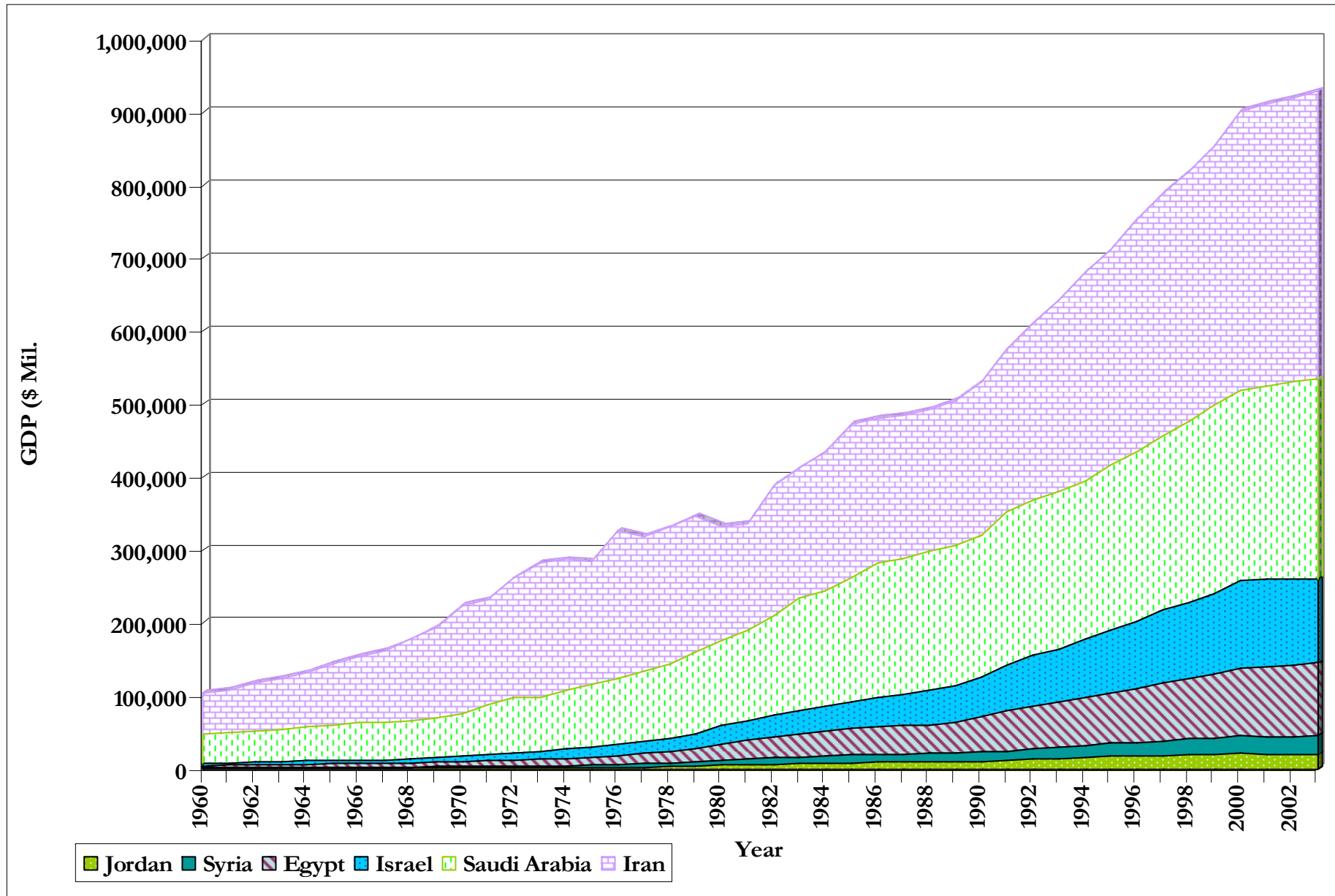
Organski and Kugler offer a definition of political capacity in terms of tax extraction ratio, that is:

$$\text{Political Capacity (PC)} = \frac{\text{Actual Tax Extraction}}{\text{Potential Tax Extraction}}$$

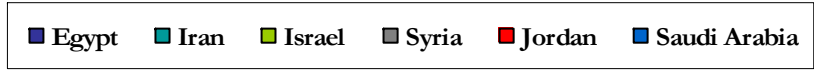
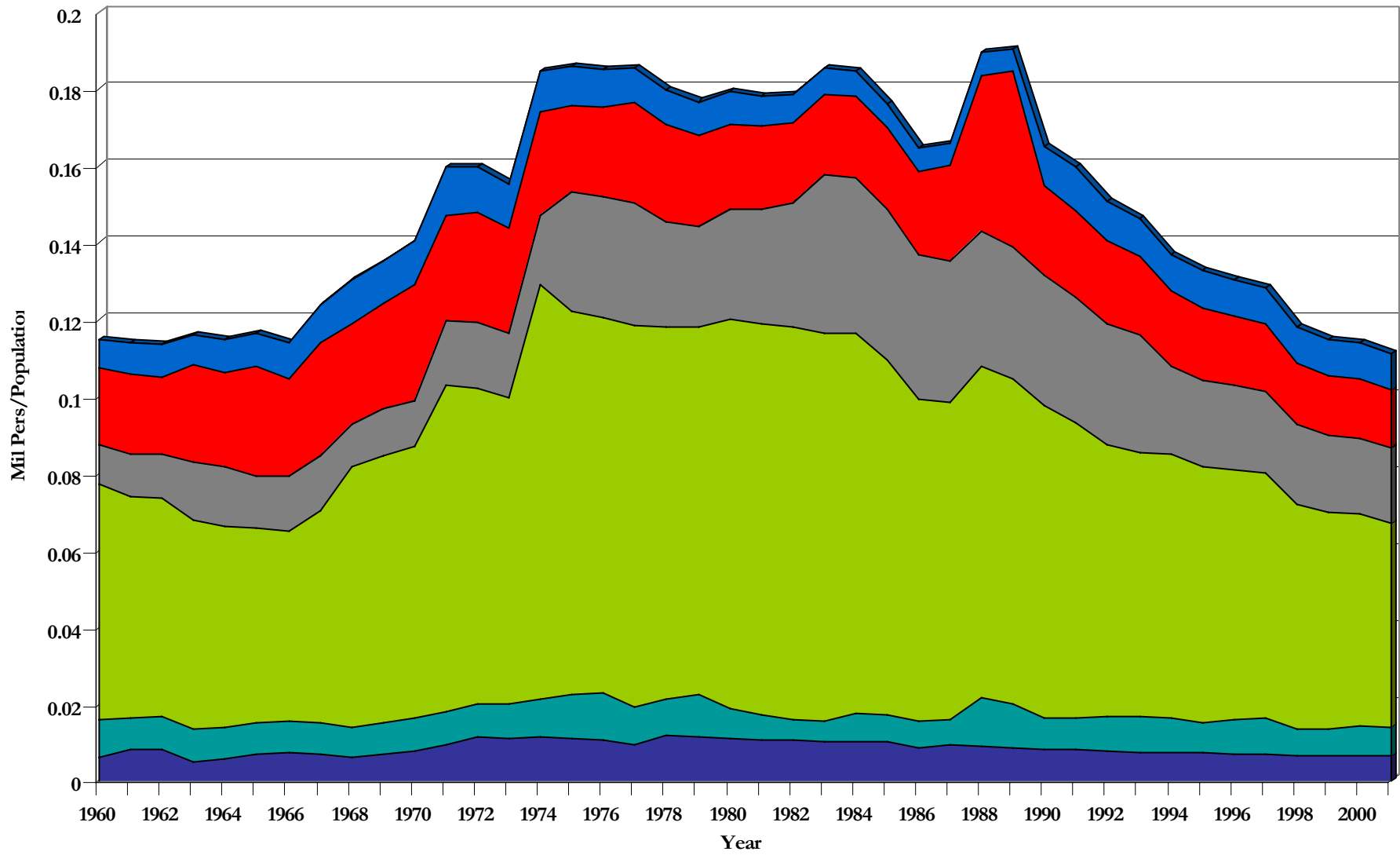
Another way of measuring political capacity is as:

$$PC = \frac{\text{Military Personnel}}{\text{Total Population}}$$

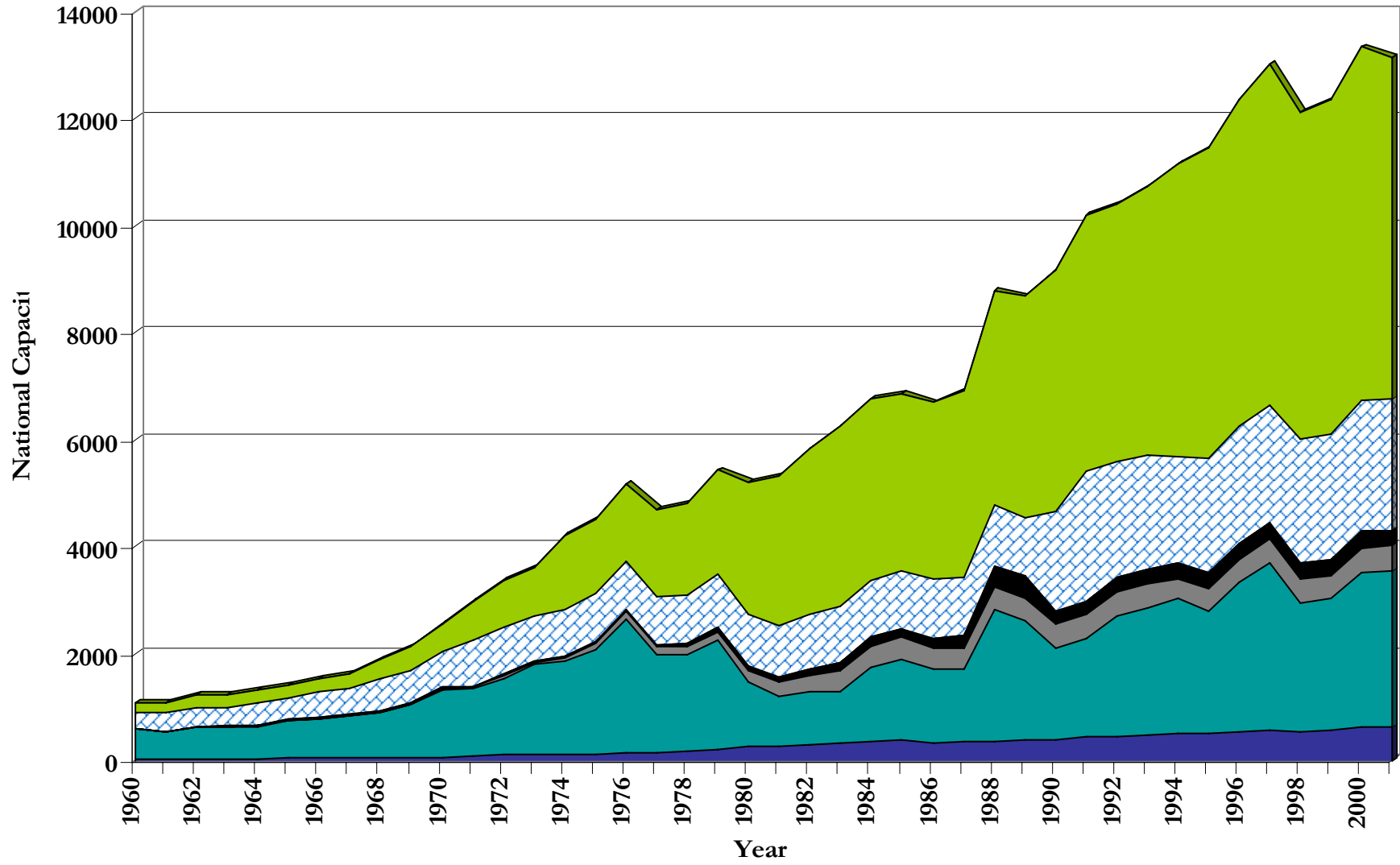
Economic Performance of States in the Middle East, 1960-2003



Political Capacity (Mil. Personnel/Population)



National Capacity of Middle East States



■ Egypt ■ Iran ■ Syria ■ Jordan ■ Saudi Arabia ■ Israel

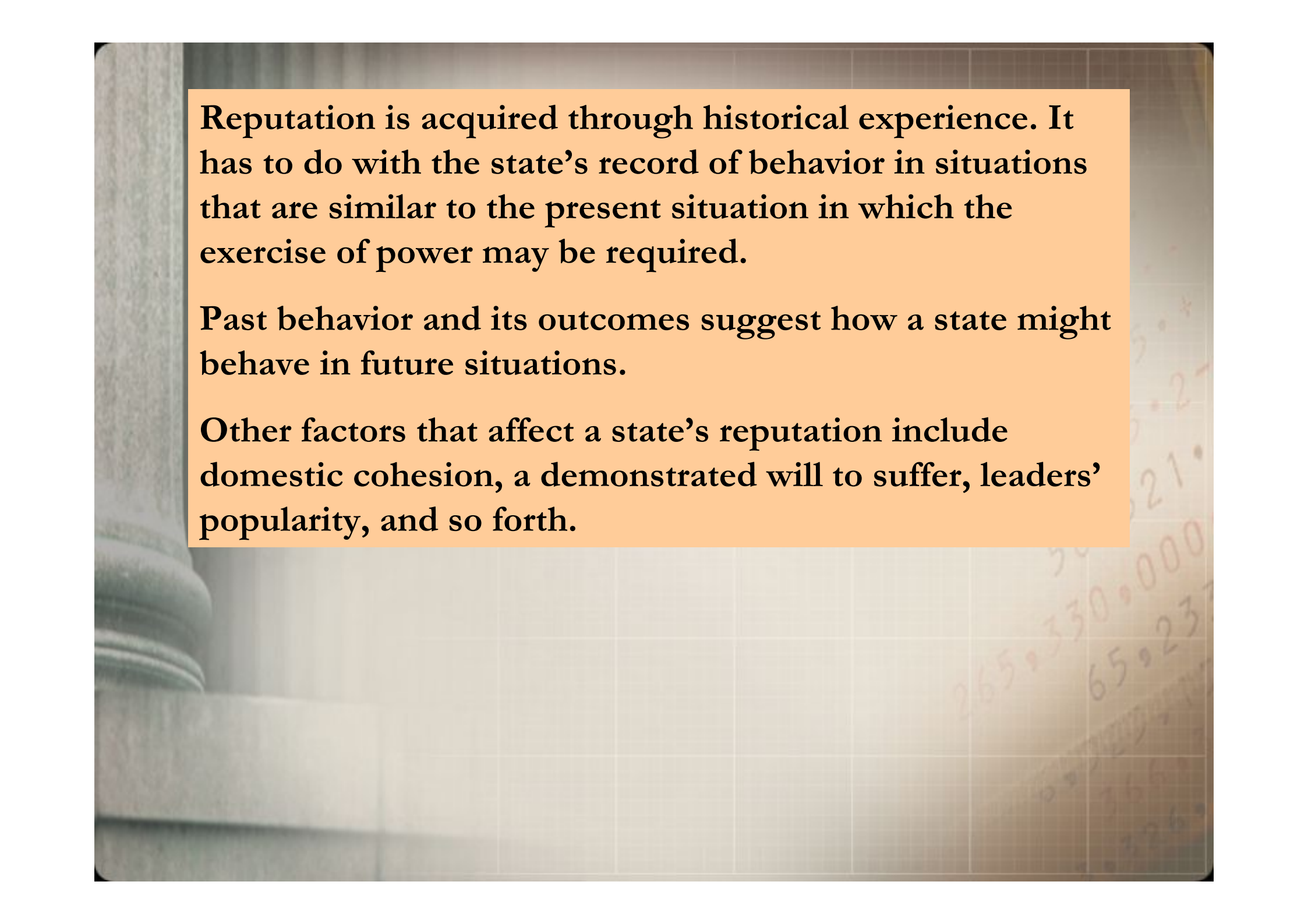


Psychological Power

The extent to which a state possesses psychological power is the size of the shadow that is cast by its political and physical power.

According to this conception, a state maximizes its power the less it is forced to apply physical power.

The major component of psychological power is a state's reputation, that is how other actors perceive the state's capabilities and its determination to use them (and to incur costs) in the pursuit of its national interests.



Reputation is acquired through historical experience. It has to do with the state's record of behavior in situations that are similar to the present situation in which the exercise of power may be required.

Past behavior and its outcomes suggest how a state might behave in future situations.

Other factors that affect a state's reputation include domestic cohesion, a demonstrated will to suffer, leaders' popularity, and so forth.

Paradoxes of Power

There are two basic versions of the paradox of power:

1. A strong state loses a conflict or war against a substantially weaker opponent, despite a significant disparity in military capabilities.

Control over resources does not correlate with control over outcomes.

2. A strong state loses a conflict or war against a substantially weaker opponent, because it has considerable higher level of military capability.

Control over resources causes loss of control over outcomes

Explanations of the Paradox of Power

- **Incorrect measurement of power: Reliance on measurement based on physical capabilities. Measures do not incorporate political and/or psychological aspects of power (e.g., Organski and Kugler).**
- **There is a gap between capabilities and resolve. A stronger state may not have the resolve and will to suffer for a marginal objective (Spiegel, Ray).**
- **Not all types of capabilities are fungible for all kinds of situations (Baldwin).**
- **Excessive capabilities causes inferior actors to collude against the superior adversary (Maoz).**