

The Entanglement of Norm: A Structural Study During the Congress of Vienna and the Revolutions of 1848

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the formation and crisis of international norms between the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the Revolutions of 1848. It argues that the diplomatic order established at Vienna, while achieving temporary stability through a balance of power among sovereign states conceived as legal entities (“state-as-entity”), contained inherent contradictions. These stemmed from its failure to address transformative forces within state organisms (“state-as-organism”) – particularly rising nationalism, bourgeois liberalism, and the pressures of industrialization. Employing a structuralist framework inspired by Althusser’s “symptomatic reading,” the analysis utilizes the core binary of state-as-entity/state-as-organism to dissect historical events and political theory, and shows how the visible legal order of diplomacy was constantly undermined by invisible social contradictions. Key concepts from Carl Schmitt (sovereignty, state of exception, friend-enemy distinction) and E.H. Carr (realism-utopianism dialectic) are integrated. The study concludes that the Vienna system’s conservative norms, reliant on a fragile “legality” among state entities, proved unsustainable, and produced what is described as “the entanglement of norm.” Napoleon’s regime exemplified the “state of exception” and the tension between revolutionary origins and governance. Metternich’s diplomacy, prioritizing equilibrium and legality, ultimately failed by suppressing necessary internal reforms within state organisms, leading to the 1848 explosions. These revolutions underscored the “entanglement of norm”: international norms are inherently unstable due to the dialectic between the visible realm of state entities/diplomacy and the invisible, often conflicting, realities of state organisms (material conditions, ideology). This entanglement manifests in the persistent potential for the “state of exception” and highlights a crisis of political representation linking domestic legitimacy and international order.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Questions

The study addresses three interrelated research questions:

1. How did the Vienna system’s normative framework generate structural contradictions that ultimately led to its collapse in 1848?
2. What is the analytical value of the state-as-entity/state-as-organism binary for understanding the relationship between diplomatic order and domestic social forces?
3. How do Carl Schmitt’s concepts of sovereignty and the state of exception illuminate the crisis of international norms during this period?

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1.2 Contribution

This paper makes two primary contributions to the literature. First, it develops a novel conceptual framework that bridges International Relations theory and political philosophy, offering a structuralist alternative to conventional “levels of analysis” approaches. Second, it demonstrates how the Vienna system's diplomatic stability masked underlying social contradictions that would explode in 1848, providing a historical case study of what this paper terms “normative entanglement” – the condition in which international norms become entangled with and undermined by domestic political dynamics.

1.3 Analytical Framework: State-as-Entity vs. State-as-Organism

The core analytical binary of this study requires explicit operationalization:

Table 1: Operationalization of the State-as-Entity/State-as-Organism Framework

Dimension	State-as-Entity	State-as-Organism
Ontological Status	Juridical person in international law	Socio-political formation
Primary Domain	Diplomacy, treaties, recognition	Domestic society, economy, ideology
Visibility	Visible in formal institutions	Often invisible in diplomatic discourse
Key Forces	Sovereignty, balance of power, legality	Nationalism, class conflict, industrialization
Temporal Character	Relatively stable, continuous	Dynamic, transformative

The state entity refers to the state as a juridical actor in international law and diplomacy – visible in treaties, recognition, and negotiations, whereas the state organism denotes the socio-political formation shaped by domestic forces such as nationalism, class conflict, and industrialization. Unlike the conventional “levels of analysis” distinction in International Relations, this framework emphasizes the dialectic of “visibility” and “invisibility”: diplomatic actions appear stable on the surface, but are destabilized by hidden internal contradictions. An interdisciplinary analysis is necessary because International Relations can only deal with the “visibility” within the special political areas of diplomacy and strategy; historical studies offer a larger picture of the actual examples, which is essential for the purpose of the study. Above them, philosophical theories on politics, ideology and the state are the keys to bond both the materials and the intentions of the research.

ANALYSIS

2.1 Twilight of Idols

The professional analysis in International Relations offers a structural inquiry that is grounded in, yet distinct from historical research, which is often constrained by “immediate reading”: directly comparing textual narratives to an unquestioned external object.¹ Any text contains the inherent binary relations of “visible” and “invisible,” which could be superficially regarded as evaluating whether a playwright has meticulously arranged every element on stage. Nevertheless, more attention must be paid to the fundamental structure of the stage itself, whose existence already determines the nature and the juxtaposed forms of constituent elements, and to reveal the causes of the oversight in view, any analysis must conceive knowledge as a process of production. On this basis Althusser carries the productive methodology of the “symptomatic reading”: “This production, in the double sense which gives the production operation the necessary form of a circle, is the production of a knowledge.”² As a representative case in International Relations studies, the history of the Wars of Coalitions and the Congress of Vienna is particularly suitable for certain structuralist Marxist theory.

In the year 1805, a web of dust churned by thousands of steeds parcelled the heartlands of Central and Eastern Europe. As the Third Coalition planned to build up an army that’s twice the size of Napoleon’s army, generals perpetually clad in military regalia moved like chess pieces across their maps, while their armies’ advancement was marked by delicate crimson threads. In swelling confidence, they believed themselves poised to quell France’s revolutionary tides. Yet their designs crumbled before Napoleon’s lightning campaigns, leaving Austria particularly humiliated, as its geopolitical position at the crossroads of Central Europe exposed it to encircling predators. Military collapse forced its reluctant alliance with France, while the Treaty of Schönbrunn four years later sheared away vast territories. The empire’s coffers stood so drained that “Napoleon did not even limit its army, well aware that Austria did not possess sufficient resources to maintain a substantial force.”³ During this crisis, Metternich ascended as foreign secretary, later becoming an architect of the century-long peace.

Metternich’s journey began with a threatening maneuver against Napoleon aimed at retaining and protecting Austria in this humiliating peace, whose very existence itself warrants examination considering that Napoleon exercised arbitrary power over Austria just as he commanded the mythology of invincibility. Napoleon, “a conqueror who sought to translate the moral claims of the French Revolution into reality,”⁴ yet “for all its conquests the fate of the French Empire depended on the life of one man”⁵: Revolutionaries are opposition parties without power in hand, and often remain opposition parties inside the government after ascending the throne through arduous struggles. What opposes them whether in the way of “visible” resistance or “invisible” orneriness is the entire Ancien Régime. In this specific case of the Vienna upspring in section 1.2, we can see that this is because of the fragility of presence of legitimacy in every revolution. Even when attempting to drive a transformation “from the state as a

¹ See Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster and David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2016), 3.

² *Ibid.*, 18.

³ Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812–22* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2013), II, sec. 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, sec. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, sec. 4.

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‘special force’ for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the general force of the majority of the people,”⁶ the old ideologies that once held hegemony continue to revolt in domains unwashed by revolution through various approaches. Modern revolutionaries do ‘not rely solely on armed struggle but simultaneously against the existing authority on the dimension of cultural hegemony, where Napoleon found himself at a disadvantage because it was he who “went on the 18th Brumaire into the legislative body, and, though in a tremulous voice, read to it its sentence of death,”⁷ and replaced the state of revolution with the state of exception under authoritarianism, which is yet unquestioningly accepted by Kissinger and Mearsheimer in the context of International Relations as “revolutionary power” or “revisionist power.” The technical terminology in International Relations is conditioned to simplify the complex dialectical relations of influence and determination into one of “possible constituents of states of affairs” (which only exist within the diplomatic horizon on the condition of states-as-entities) and perceive it as a concept that “is all that is the case” as if the undecidability of this proposition defines its own boundaries through a sacred illumination. To delve deeper in this universe of discourse, a pair of concepts that exist in the form of sets that are waiting to be filled with certain terminologies when analyzing different theories is introduced here, which is constructed in order to separate the concept of state as both the basis and object in political geography/political economy and geopolitics/International Relations – state organism/entity. The state entity refers to the state as a juridical actor in international law and diplomacy – visible in treaties, recognition, and negotiations, whereas the state organism denotes the socio-political formation shaped by domestic forces such as nationalism, class conflict, and industrialization. Unlike the conventional “levels of analysis” distinction in International Relations, this framework emphasizes the dialectic of “visibility” and “invisibility”: diplomatic actions appear stable on the surface, but are destabilized by hidden internal contradictions. An interdisciplinary analysis is necessary because International Relations can only deal with the “visibility” within the special political areas of diplomacy and strategy; historical studies offer a larger picture of the actual examples, which is essential for the purpose of the study. Above them, philosophical theories on politics, ideology and the state are the keys to bond both the materials and the intentions of the research.

As mentioned above, the foundation of the material form of state remains “invisible” in diplomatic vision, that is to be received as a case and a secondary analytical object, without the potentiality of becoming “visible” and furthermore of being conceptually dismembered, which would consequentially be the indispensable procedure in a disciplinary overturn. E.H. Carr clearly recognized that: “It was the personification of the state which made possible the creation of international law on the basis of natural law.”⁸ The generalized established personification of state is not only the basis for international morality and law, but for International Relations itself since every state fundamentally constitutes an organized population in an enclosed territory. Given that axiom, the definition of the intuitive natural state can be deduced as an aggregation of material foundations through the term state organism, thus the concept of state entity is constructed from its solid base to supplement, so move forward to fully encapsulate the existence of personified states: the essential presence of state organism facilitates its absence in

⁶ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, trans. unknown (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1939), III, sec. 2.

⁷ Marx, Carl, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, trans. VI.

⁸ E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1946), 148.

appearance. This does not mean state organisms never reveal its nature, nor that international order is not a savage struggle of survival which necessitates both fangs and claws, but rather that these moments exist only as “immediately present.” Nonetheless, when regarding concepts such as “spectacle” and “international order” being present as the appearances of certain hypothetical ideal realities in forms of structural bodies that are compounded by polarities like “present”- “not present” or “visible”- “invisible,” the insoluble situation which is positioned on the oversimplified binary opposition of “truth and lie” must be remained vigilant against.

To explain the relationship between Napoleon and the revolutionary ideology – although most International Relations scholars accept it as a succession of French Revolution other than nuance the distinction – another set of binary concepts shall be established, which only shares certain conceptual similarity with the categorization of state organism/entity: the realism-utopianism framework articulated in *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*. Unlike the dialectic relations and mirroring in the latest set, Carr’s set is analogous to Platonic forms, lacking such intricate cyclical determinations. The French Revolution emerged from the Enlightenment and cemented by the adhesive of an individualism of Prometheus, anyhow, its ideals simultaneously nurtured counter-revolutionary Metternich – “the Enlightenment retained deep into the nineteenth century its last champion, who judged actions by their ‘truth’, not by their success, an advocate of reason in an age of philosophical materialism, who never surrendered his belief that morality could be known and that virtue was teachable.”⁹ The discrepancy stems from the revolution being both a natural product of Enlightenment and furthermore in certain catalytic conditions, ultimately transforming into a combination of universal utopianism and realism of private interest, whereas the essence of this transformation manifests particularly in the evolution from individualism to mutual aid amongst the society and even collectivism, then to a longevous universal ideal of emancipation, which presents as the transition from intellectual exercises to united revolt of all citizens located in the special revolutionary context. What drove revolution’s outbreak during what Tocqueville termed “The Most Prosperous Period of the Old Monarchy”¹⁰ was a realistic private interest.¹¹ On the other hand, Napoleon’s military might – while superior to any proletarian militia who groped its way hiding behind the dusty barricades built of cobble stones from the Paris streets and the labyrinth of narrow streets or underground revolutionary clubs, as a mortally wounded animal withdraws to its lair, but lacked of moral legitimacy in the long run. Within France as a state organism, Napoleon wore a costume of “order” and “people’s will”, although it wouldn’t be that hard to discover the gap between political identification and the need to establish a sovereign. Without France as a state entity, Napoleon meanwhile unscrupulously challenged existing orders through great power aggression akin to domestic revolution. For International Relations scholars the key connecting revolution and Napoleon lies in the aggressive realist strategy of overturning the existing order/balance of power with armed struggle, but more exactly the key which both of them share, what Giorgio Agamben termed “status necessitatis”: “an ambiguous and uncertain zone in which de facto proceedings, which are in themselves extra – or antijudicial, pass over into law, and juridical norms blur with pure fact – that is, a threshold where fact and law seem to become undecidable.”¹² People often fail to perceive the importance of utopian moral demands in similar

⁹ Kissinger, *World Restored*, XI, sec. 1.

¹⁰ Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime and the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1856), Bk. 3, chap. 4.

¹¹ See *Ibid.*, Bk. 2, chap. 9.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 29.

circumstances in reality because of this reason, while the limitations of realistic strategies stand vis-à-vis, which tightly anchored in material conditions just because they avoid entanglement with the concept of legitimacy and legality within actions and remain evident.

Had Napoleon's expansion been unbounded, Metternich could not have maintained temporary peace while enduring the intrinsic difficulties, in strategic equilibrium, of slow and inefficient, and still managed to sustain relationships with alliances and to boost postwar political equilibrium. After yet another collapse of the coalition, what actually restored Metternich's confidence was neither a rearmament nor a true victory, but the disintegration of the pre-existing European order – after Napoleon and Alexander's meeting after the Russian defeat at Friedland, "the intermediary powers had been eliminated, the time of unlimited victories gained by limited wars was over. Victory henceforth would depend on domestic strength."¹³ Here reveals a gradual attenuation of the impacts of the French Revolution which had already transformed into external aggression, while the crucial concept of "government" was introduced. If the legal context that is supportive to "government" even so seemed enigmatic, then it would be rather surprising to hear Napoleon acknowledging that his true glory is his Civil Code rather than military victories after his mythology of invincibility faded out in the Spanish war of 1808 and his hindsight subsequent to the catastrophic Russian war of 1812: "...the game could no longer be won by pulverizing either the antagonist or the pieces...it had to be played according to its own rules."¹⁴ The Napoleon government inside the state organism can be assorted to Schmitt's sovereign dictatorship, which exemplifies the state of exception as paradigm of government – a concept that Agamben has borrowed from Schmitt, which imposes a new constitution that can anchor the state of exception to the juridical order¹⁵. From this proposition and examine Europe's regional order of state entities, as a precursor to supra-state institutions like the League of Nations, its legality at this juncture where not only the state organism of French empire, but also the common environment of state entities is in a specific situation existed merely as a threshold of this particular community, which metaphorically and literally bound by blood and milk exchanges. Viewing the continent as a singular entity composed of atomic state entities reveals politics' primordial form of friend-enemy groupings, and therefore, grasps individual entity in the utmost degree of intensity, which is "upon all those moral, aesthetic, economic, or other distinctions"¹⁶; in other words, the demarcation forges community, where sovereignty functions as a magical prism, more than sustaining state operations but also determining their existential boundaries. "An arrangement that makes the invisible visibility necessary must be rooted in what is not visible, and is shown in visible things. The mediator comes to the world for it can only be top-down, not bottom-up."¹⁷ This represents the most significant difference between Hans Kelsen's legal positivism, but also the greatest point of consensus between Agamben and Schmitt. For Kelsen and his disciples, the norm hinges upon an entire field originating from the "basic norm,"¹⁸ However, for Schmitt, the norm is never realized solely via the legal text, as Agamben personally emphasized. Instead, it is achieved by the connection of the life of sovereign and auctoritas.

¹³ Kissinger, *World Restored*, II, sec. 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, sec. 5.

¹⁵ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 34.

¹⁶ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 26-27.

¹⁷ Carl Schmitt, "Die Sichtbarkeit der Kirche: Eine scholastische Erwägung," *Summa* 1, no. 1 (1917).

¹⁸ see Kelsen, Hans, *Pure Theory Of Law*.

Analyzing Metternich's balancing act which is outlined as "the principal strategies that great powers use to prevent aggressors from upsetting the balance of power"¹⁹ in Mearsheimer's theory requires preceding regard to his ideological borrowings from revolutionary thought: Metternich's portray "as a politician of the Enlightenment who belonged to a generation of cosmopolitans" and "how the views he had acquired... stood the test of time as guidelines that he had followed in his political practice."²⁰ Crucially, his cosmopolitanism differed from eighteenth-century nation-state paradigms. It was more oriented to political field and remained rather descriptive at a transcendental viewpoint where moral and politics spectrally mingled²¹, nevertheless impossible to contradict his conservative conviction²². Despite later associations of the current regional community of political equilibrium and supra-state institutions, the reader must recall that international law and state sovereignty then lacked the modern concept of legality. Though Metternich persistently emphasized legality idea to Napoleon almost like an Enlightenment thinker, he ignored Kant's warning²³, and chose to be a "moral politician" instead of "political moralist," and furthermore, "using Napoleon's concept of legitimacy—the only one he recognized—against him,"²⁴ which was to marry an Austrian princess to Napoleon for survival. For this reason, the current European community utterly opposed Rancière's critique of contemporary supra-state institutions – "depoliticize political matters, reserve them for places that are nonplaces, places that do not leave any space for the democratic invention of polemic"²⁵ – because for post-revolutionary Austria whether internally as state organism or externally as state entity, nothing existed beyond sovereign decision²⁶, therefore, this community represents the opposite of neutralization and depoliticization. Returning to our ambassador to Paris's diplomatic duel with Napoleon, following the long-term Anglo-Austrian contact that could be aptly described by the Chinese idiom of "having two faces and three knives waiting to stab at the back as well," Metternich and Emperor Franz secured Austria's lifeline through Schwarzenberg's secret negotiations with Russian commanders, which preserved the Austrian auxiliary corps, by which "the first goal of Austrian policy – political mobility – had been achieved."²⁷ Kissinger's comment on the difference between Metternich and Napoleon depicts Metternich's mobility in cabinet diplomacy²⁸. What should also be recognized on cabinet diplomacy except for the precondition that every legally contracted state must be involved in the community of nations via the form of state entity is that any diplomatic operation cannot valid or activate itself, therefore necessitates the sovereign as an "auctoritatis interpositio,"²⁹ which not only effects by the abovementioned "sustaining state operations" but furthermore by triggering the sovereign inside the state organism, encompassing the

¹⁹ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 139.

²⁰ Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich: Strategist and Visionary*, trans. Daniel E. Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 65.

²¹ See *Ibid.*, 60.

²² Kissinger, *World Restored*, XI, sec. 1.

²³ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, trans. M. Campbell Smith (London: Macmillan, 1903), sec. 1.

²⁴ Kissinger, *World Restored*, II, sec. 4.

²⁵ Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Corcoran (London: Verso, 2006), chap. IV.

²⁶ For the terminology of "sovereign decision", see (Agamben, 2005, chap. I, IV & VI), and for the terminology of "decision", see (Schmitt, 1922/2005). The two terminologies share large area of intersection.

²⁷ Kissinger, *World Restored*, IV, sec. 1.

²⁸ See *Ibid.*, V, sec. 1.

²⁹ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 31.

concept of “auctoritas” and “potestas” that Agamben distinguished in detail³⁰. Back in 1813, if emperor Franz had not ordered for “the arrangement of a temporary truce of the shortest possible period and without written agreement” as what Agamben called “nomos empsukhos” (“the sovereign as a living law”), Schwarzenberg couldn’t obtain to any deal with the legality which entirely was stemmed from the sovereign of state organism. As a matter of fact, the post-Vienna order’s foundations were invisibly laid as early as 1813, by means of Metternich’s continental networking and equilibrium blueprints though there were not any clear inklings on the determination of the Napoleon revolution.

For Kant, what Metternich’s regional community represented was not a moral center as any contemporary international alliance institution would be willing to claim, but purely a non-compulsory contract, and “at the most, the agreement of a permanent free association such as the federation of the different states, to which we have alluded above.”³¹ Naturally this free association appears “invisibly” through veiled military threats, while shows itself as a set of unconstrained variables, which in the special case of the balance-of-power community served as Metternich’s cosmopolitan ideology (its supplementary ideology). The era of mass politics would soon eclipse the trace of any derivative of this masterful planning, which became impossible to reappear as the republicanism that Kant dreamed merged and its disclosure of the authentic image of Enlightenment that is linked with a retreat from rationalism into ideological mythology, with tides of revolution, which was annexed by the first mentioned of two. For the secret diplomacy, the dialectic between “visibility” and “invisibility” emerged presentative disjunctions and in nature driven by the tension of legality, could never come out in its original form; even so, the mass politics from the early twentieth century was incapable of essentially erase these disjunctions, merely but thoroughly redistributed the possibilities of their (“invisibility” and “visibility”) allocation. Both of them are rendered by the crux concept of state: invisibility through the state entity’s permanence, because, according to Hobbs, any kind of sovereign is naturally a popular sovereign, and visibility through transformations in state organism’s sovereignty, and social ideology as well.

Recycling from the two terminologies in Saussurean linguistics, the *signifier* of national interest invariably fixed while its *signified* shifts, creating invisible disjunctions between state and popular interests in diplomatic vision, thereof only states-as-entities are conjunct and popular interests neither consist in signifier nor signified, subsequently from the view of state entity become excess, which is only a matter of its nature. The *signifier* in diplomacy shows stability but is hardly suitable as judgmental criteria, whereas the signified that is varied, is easy to turn into the wind vane of external evaluation. All of which lead to the existential form inside the sovereign furthermore especially the insolubility of republic and democracy. As the nourishment of conservatism sorrowfully took its fate of exit, nationalist revolutionary fervor entered the arena: “In the solitude of the plains, in the stony labyrinths of a city, scintillation of stars, outburst of gas lamps, you are the fireworks of the goddess Liberty!”³²

2.2 A Short History of Decay

The research material employed in this study thus far spans several disciplines, and beyond navigating numerous pre-existing literatures, the most frequently utilized methodology is the technical approach

³⁰ See Agamben, *State of Exception*, 74-75, 82-83.

³¹ Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, Appendix II, sec. 2.

³² Charles Baudelaire, *Poems in Prose*, trans. Arthur Symons (1955), “Evening Twilight”.

common in International Relations and jurisprudence, which in philosophy amounts to creating a field of operation within a particular conceptual universe and the possibilities of insoluble concepts. The binary model of state entity/organism aims precisely to shatter this insolubility as the first step. Agamben draws on this lesser-known text to identify Benjamin's exposition of pure violence as a form of existence underlying jurisprudential operations, which emerges within the normative boundary of *State of Exception*, where he inserts the concept of the state of exception and illuminate the core divergence between Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt: "While Schmitt attempts every time to reinscribe violence within a juridical context, Benjamin responds to this gesture by seeking every time to assure it – as pure violence – an existence outside of the law"³³. Agamben has reached the same conclusion as Benjamin, and declared the flaw in Schmitt's theory: Schmitt's attempt to engrave the state of exception within a juridical context is doomed to fall apart, for the "state of necessity" is intrinsically outer the law.³⁴ Nonetheless, Agamben conceded the "juridical void" (though relevant) seems incomprehensible.³⁵ This implies that within the technical, practice-oriented dimension of Schmitt's technicized political theory³⁶ and in his own universe of discourse, the state of exception is undoubtedly inscribed indirectly within the juridical context, but as a matter of fact, Agamben and Benjamin never truly descended into Schmitt's view, and as for the first mentioned of two, his genealogical investigations in chapter four and five never deviate from the main stem of Schmitt's approach. While this study does not clarify the position of normativity in general modern Marxist theories, it recognizes that unquestioningly accepting the opposition between Schmitt and Benjamin defined by Agamben for the core of its argument is insufficient, and it seeks to implant Schmitt and Benjamin within the same field of view. The duality of state entity/organism alone is inadequate unless introducing Althusser's structuralism, whose method, though highly technical in concept like Schmitt's, but is not insoluble in the same way, for beyond its multi-layered hierarchical structural organization, it equally emphasizes dialectical relations and the transformation of qualitative and quantitative change, and this transformation itself is not a continuation of old idealist philosophy, for these remainders – belonging to "il significante eccedente (the surplus signifier)"³⁷ still emerged as a ubiquitous presence within the organization. The ideal image of conservatism should possess the law-rational authority, and "this law had to be rooted in a tradition, because otherwise it would be arbitrary. The 'strength' in the formula ('strength in law') stands for everything that secures the state order,"³⁸ yet in a fleeting moment when Metternich chose conservatism over dynamism, choosing stagnation over reform, under the precondition of preventing the Habsburg dynasty's established interests, even skilfully defusing multinational conflicts with hat tricks while controlling the influential bourgeoisie, but there was a non-human revolution going on underground that would baffle all his efforts – the industrial revolution. Metternich's political acumen functioned as a "katechon", a restraining force that ultimately proved powerless against the decline of Christian faith. The success of a revolution already prefigures its own legality by means of violence, even if this legality is

³³ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 59.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁶ Referring to the technicality of jurisprudence and a persistence in concepts compared. This technicality comes from the difference in Agamben and Schmitt.

³⁷ Agamben, *State of Exception*, 37.

³⁸ Siemann, *Metternich*, 747.

only immediately present in the temporary alliance of all social classes, and the conservative order he clung to was itself eroding.³⁹ Ironically, the pretext used to crush the Vienna uprising was also legality, albeit inhabiting on a different dimension from here. In October 1848, following Hungarian Revolutionary Army's victories against Austrian forces, an insurrection erupted in Vienna, the fragmented capital of the Austrian Empire battered by democratic revolutions. When Windischgrätz finally attacked the revolutionary government, Mór Perczel's Hungarian army which stationed just miles outside the capital refused to lend a hand to the last barrier that could stop the Austrian army into Hungary out of a matter of legality.⁴⁰ The legitimacy of revolution in politics displays a crucial part in Schmitt's theory, which points directly to an origin in Schmitt's academic life, his early ecclesiological essay "Die Sichtbarkeit der Kirche," where legitimacy is the root of Catholic Church's "invisibility," as it plays a mediatory role between the god that is necessarily separate from humanity, and men that necessarily exist as associations but not independent individuals. Schmitt's political theory directly points to this mediatory philosophy. If ignoring Schmitt's technicality as a jurist manifests as ineffective critiques operating on different fields, then ignoring this widely present but specifically marked and theorized mediatory philosophy in Schmitt reaches its zenith in *Hatred of Democracy's* extension of anarchist paradigms: when Rancière claimed that politics is the disruption to the consensus, this couldn't refer to the complete abandonment of consensus, for on the one hand the pure fragmentation of grand consensus already suffices to create chaos, and on the other hand here comes to the problem that to what degree must fragmentation proceed to generate an observable state of politics? Numerous dissenting individuals are certainly insufficient for this state, because the true democratic politics must first be a platform of possibility, which is impossible in non-consensus and would only re-expose the brutal and violent foundation of political practice, upon which can support two extreme outcomes: violent struggle dominated by those wielding the tools of pure violence, where a violent perspectivism takes the lead, or the demise of the demos as a political subject. Thus, Schmitt's critique on liberalist privatization resurfaces, "Public life is expected to govern itself. It should be governed by public opinion, the opinion of private individuals. Public opinion, in turn, should be governed by a privately owned free press. Nothing in this system is representative, everything is a private matter"⁴¹; meanwhile one can also reapproach this point through the representative system, which is identical to the concept of "republic" in *Hatred of Democracy*, where Rancière incisively points out that the republic system is naturally wrought by the wish to suture the pure democracy and the regulating principles⁴², thus, as a result, "a law-giver may no more be, in one and the same person, the administrator of his own will."⁴³ In sum, the political representation as an exemplar of mediatory concepts is inseparable from and cannot exist independently of all actual or potential political subjects. This is not a legalist reactionary or counterrevolutionary assertion, but a political axiom that any revolutionary radical political theory aiming at the real world cannot negate, which, nonetheless, still cannot clarify the significant meaning of Schmitt in this study. Compared with critiques by Catholic theologians, Karl Löwith's essay written shortly after the Nazi rise to power offers greater insight, which after noting the simultaneous debt of Schmitt to 19th-century

³⁹ See Friedrich Engels, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (1971), chap. IV.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. XII.

⁴¹ Carl Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 28.

⁴² See Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, chap. III.

⁴³ Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, sec. 2.

theology/Christian philosophy (Kierkegaard) and sociology (Marx), emphasizes the occasionalist nature his anti-romantic political theological “decisionism”: it neither accepts the metaphysics of historical determination in Marxism, nor does it actually possess the eternally valid measure of Christian authority in Kierkegaard’s philosophy, instead, for Löwith this represents the very ideology of the Nazi regime, a hollow Machiavellian demon and false prophet cloaked in sanctity, which seeks to grasp the human being as a whole with the intensity of war and sacrifice.

When one chooses Schmitt’s political theory that “condensed in ‘concrete representation’, shuttles between... the invisibility of spirit and the visibility of matter” and “endures as the excluded middle between the visible and the invisible,”⁴⁴ rather than the International Relations theories amidst the prolonged interwar crises of the 20th century through immense state-level terror, he must realize the fundamental difference: the former meticulously demarcates the thresholds and boundaries of its universe of discourse (whether revolutionary or legalistic) using philosophical means, therefore avoiding complete descent into instrumental rationalism. Here, Kelsen’s unreliable law-state identity theory can also be seen as a pointer to the fact beyond its own universe of discourse that any norm would be meaningless without boundaries; for Schmitt’s texts, boundaries were firstly forged in the style of polemic against the mainstreams in Weimar Germany. For some scholars, this stance meant to defend democracy with mightiness, but in the others’ views it is entirely a fiery sermon for its arbitrariness and intense scathing criticism. This study later proves the the importance or even necessity of Schmitt’s “decisionism”⁴⁵ for the political philosophy in our epoch. In biopolitical studies, Foucault first proposed his biopolitical theory centered on the norm, affirming its universe of discourse, while Agamben proposed an independent biopolitical theory in opposition to Foucault, formulated through negation in a manner similar to Schmitt. Theories like offensive realism scarcely bother with these issues beyond their positivist purviews, but within theories this study tend to study, it is not hard to notice a widely accepted indeterminacy – “it is sound only by virtue of what it rejects; it is weak as far as what it affirms is concerned.” On the other hand, Löwith’s second criticism outlines Schmitt’s theory, which is rooted in the tradition of Platonic/Aristotelian political philosophy. It points out the void core of the friend-enemy distinction as well as the intensity of association, and the eradication of the totality of the individual.

Indeed, long before Schmitt came to his laughable peak of power in the Third Reich, he has excluded the isolation of individuals in the earlier cited essay: “As soon as a person speaks, he is no longer alone in the world.”⁴⁶ The vast scope of his theory makes it difficult to address normative issues, compounded by the polemical nature of his works. Nevertheless, none of these signifies that Schmitt’s theory served no normative possibility. Löwith’s critical path is overly circuitous and his arguments too indirect; this critique pertains more to political stance than theoretical substance, even regardless of the doubtful necessity for any political theory to directly address normativity and the relationship between public order and the individual. In fact, the similarities between Schmitt and Löwith in their academic motifs – particularly their shared concern with the driving forces of historical progress born in response to 19th-century nihilism – far outweigh their political differences. Placing the scholars discussed thus far

⁴⁴ Michael Marder, *Groundless Existence: The Political Ontology of Carl Schmitt* (London: Continuum, 2010), 30.

⁴⁵ This study does not intend to abuse this terminology the way as it is abused throughout Schmitt’s stigmatized history in both the West and the East. Here, “decisionism” refers to the whole root in political philosophical history for Schmitt to create his own theory – a special political voluntarism based on the image of “authority” within Schmitt’s texts.

⁴⁶ Schmitt, “Sichtbarkeit der Kirche”.

into a lineage yields the following chain: [Kelsen] - [Schmitt] - [Benjamin/Löwith] - [Agamben] - [Rancière]. Focusing on Kelsen, Schmitt, and Agamben, it is recognizable that Kelsen's legal positivist critique of Schmitt for diluting law into an appendage of the Hobbesian Leviathan within the norm of his sovereignty theory and Agamben's counter-critique that Schmitt failed to fully implement this sovereign figure sustained by the state of exception, are essentially mere clashes of political inclination⁴⁷ – which also applies to Löwith. Such critique within political theory amounts to nothing more than the irresponsible calculation of differences between theories of utterly different origins. We can discern the essence of this critique through Schmitt's criticism of Kelsen: "Kelsen operates with a concept of cause derived entirely from the natural sciences...without seeing that the concept of substance in scholastic thought is something entirely different from that in mathematical and natural-scientific thought. The distinction between the substance and the practice of law, which has a fundamental significance in the dogmatic history of the concept of sovereignty."⁴⁸

Returning to the issue of normativity, Löwith's skepticism towards Schmitt's normativity allows us to distinguish him from Kelsen's normative field established via positivist law (the latter is a spatial domain awaiting filling by positive content, while the former, borrowing the geometrical expression from *Groundless Existence*, is in an ambiguous intermediate state⁴⁹, because the establishment of the borders of lines is just a beginning), but if Althusser is brought – not included in the aforementioned lineage – into the discussion, the similarity between Schmitt's and Kelsen's normative theories would immediately appear: both rely on legitimacy as the first cause, which largely dependent on the Platonic/ Aristotelian tradition. Let us clarify this with Žižek's comment on Althusser's state theory. For Žižek, Althusser's intrinsic theoretical failure is never succeeding in interpreting how does the Ideological State Apparatus "internalize" itself.⁵⁰ Further drawing on the position of Pascal, Freud, and Marx in Žižek's text, a novel lineage distinct from the history of political philosophy can be derived, which is a paradigm that thoroughly abandon or at least cancel the priority the "visible" horizon in political activity are far removed from this study that advocates a remain inside the paradigm of Althusser's symptomatic reading, probing the boundary lines of a discipline without truly stepping beyond it. Combining the normative form of Althusser's state theory with the tendencies displayed in his earlier philosophical research, his state theory reveals its identity as a descriptive theory and the fact that it inhabits a world without a subject due to its pursuit of scientificity in Marxist theory and the neutral, non-value-laden stance, where it continues exploring means without ends, which is a world where even the distinction of E.H. Carr's realism and utopianism is absent, and accurately for this reason the study regards Althusser's analytical method as key to placing Schmitt and Benjamin within the same purview, though exploring each still requires the intervention of the historical lineage of political philosophy. "On the Concept of History" is the key text for grasping Benjamin's political philosophy overall. As a Marxist text, it differs starkly from Althusser by explicitly expressing non-neutral value judgments, even unapologetically employing theological vocabulary. It connects the Christian theological concept of redemption to the materials for the philosophy of history of historical materialist philosophy, being contrary to Marx's own emphasis

⁴⁷ As spoken in note 1, this study is against neutralization in political theories, but for the approaches of philosophical deduction to reach a certain set of values, it has an opposite request.

⁴⁸ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 41-42.

⁴⁹ Marder, *Groundless Existence*, 22.

⁵⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2008), 43.

scientificity, the Christian concept Benjamin utilizes embodies the very root of Western individualism, and if we accept Löwith's point in *Meaning in History* of "the old Jewish messianism and prophetism"⁵¹ in Marx's "history of fulfilment and salvation in terms of social economy,"⁵² then Benjamin seemed to recognize this "invisible" tendency and elevated it to "visible," which applies to Schmitt the same: his "decisionism" is unequivocally an opposition to the neutralization inherent in bourgeois liberal ideology under parliamentary democracy, and this opposition equally relies on Christian theology. Schmitt and Benjamin are identical in their opposition to the status quo as well as the form of the opposition, while their political theories heavily rely on the existence of a pure mediator, which for Benjamin is solely the "pure violence," which "as a means is either lawmaking or law-preserving,"⁵³ but for Schmitt the figure of the mediator is immensely diverse; it is the key that binds the norm that is by no means positivist jurisprudence but a norm of modal. Firstly, as an "existential political theory"⁵⁴ to grasp politics as the art of the possible; Secondly it does not constrain the complex modalities of political reality with abstruse and abstract philosophical concepts but suspends specific situations through the slow-acting mediatory philosophy.

DISCUSSION

One of the crucial materials Schmitt used to formulate these mediatory figures interconnected with authority and sovereignty was the existential form of Catholicism as a political entity, and the ancient tradition of European jurisprudence rooted in Roman law and theological history. For this, he accorded it a unique status in *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, based on "the principle of representation" as the "antithesis to the economical thinking dominant today."⁵⁵ The overall figure of this mediator using the foundation of the axiology Schmitt opposed can be constrained, which resides not in the special sovereign entity, but rather coalesces into the order itself that constitutes the specific sovereign entity: "Once contact with God has been established — even if through many layers of mediation—the revolutionary force of faith can no longer be extinguished. Moreover, within the Church there is also a motto: obedience to God must far outweigh obedience to man."⁵⁶ Comparing this with Schmitt's commentary on axiology clarifies the meaning of "decisionism", which has a non-positivistic character, yet this does not imply it lacks constraining force. Considering the necessity of constraining theorems for positivism, the difference value between positivism and purely descriptive theory is here termed "determination", one of its key characteristics being the coordinate system targeting the properties of the object. Weber's *Verstehen* is comparable to Schmitt's "overdetermined" structures. Unlike pure "determination," these structures preserve specific modalities in particular situations, where the most fundamental complexity of the modalities represents the indeterminacy of its universe of discourse: there is no detailed division

⁵¹ Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History*, trans. H. Kesting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 44.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵³ Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. 1, 1913–1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 243.

⁵⁴ See Marder, *Groundless Existence*, 38.

⁵⁵ Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 8.

⁵⁶ Schmitt, "Sichtbarkeit der Kirche."

concerning the origins and scope of state action in international politics but only a collection named the friend-enemy grouping, where positivist coordinate systems are helpless before this complexity – either incapable of finding a way to model it, or after constructing a model whose complexity far exceeds a two-dimensional coordinate system, having already lost the original purpose of reducing analytical difficulty through modeling. One could say that “determination” is merely a simplified, special form of “overdetermination,” and positivism is likewise only a special form of descriptive theory (maintaining a state analogous to the stable theory in mathematics under strict constraining conditions), because both of them rely on the means of definition and proof required by descriptive theory. These factors explain why Schmitt’s theory subtly permeates various political theories even of his opponents, but before that, it is important to consider Althusser’s late philosophical turn into view; his assessment of Machiavelli is highly valuable for exploring the subtle presence of Schmitt’s theory, in which he proposed a novel conception of the “materialism of the encounter”, where the familiar political void in Schmitt reveals its philosophical root in a “philosophical void,”⁵⁷ a kind of philosophy that starts with atoms that accidentally encounter with each other, by which they historically produce an anchor of situation in the drift time, where the potency of motility can react with and actually possesses the ability to intervene with. Althusser also provides a discourse on the history of materialist philosophy for this modality initially proposed only at the mutable political level due to its obvious “visibility,” but the opposition of Epicurean philosophy to Platonic philosophy involved therein is not entirely applicable to Schmitt, because the latter cannot be simply seen as a “political void” like Machiavelli, who founded his political purpose on an eternal friend-enemy grouping, which undoubtedly constructs a purpose within its critique and polemics like Marxism – a purpose embodying Platonic philosophy. Consequently, it also inherits the defects of Platonic philosophy for our era, that the value of goodness does not derive from the “world of appearances,” and still there would be a civil war of the highest intensity where no one can escape from making a decision. Combining Schmitt’s explicit critique of the origins of axiology and positivism, this “defeat” and the acceptance of modality are assured to be deliberate results. His decisionism provides a paradigm for the necessity opposing a society of null set.

During the middle of the 19th century, the surge of Social Darwinist thought throughout British society following Darwin’s great biological discoveries, forged the philosophical and ethical fallacy underlying the society of null set, the naturalistic fallacy. As Moore stated, the force nature does not necessarily point to a righteousness in ethical view.⁵⁸ This irreparable universal void created the prototype for all neutralized ideological standards, which ironically had tried to fill this void with the applause for violence. Its failure dramatically manifested in the inaction of the League of Nations.⁵⁹ In the present moment, this crisis is equally reflected in the pluralism dominated by singular-value philosophy and in the extreme opposition to it. We are perilously close to the political crisis of Schmitt’s era, and we are in dire need of re-examining the potential value of Schmitt’s theory.

CONCLUSION

⁵⁷ Louis Althusser, "The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter," in *Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings, 1978–87* (London: Verso, 2006), 173.

⁵⁸ See G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 56.

⁵⁹ See Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 31.

This study has argued that the Vienna system's collapse in 1848 is a consequence of a fundamental "entanglement of norm," a condition in which international norms become entangled with and undermined by domestic political dynamics. The state-as-entity/state-as-organism framework reveals how diplomatic order can achieve apparent stability while accumulating organism-level contradictions that eventually prove overwhelming.

The Vienna system's conservative norms, reliant on a fragile "legality" among state entities, proved unsustainable because they failed to address the transformative forces within state organisms, including nationalism, liberalism, and industrialization. Metternich's diplomatic maneuver could not substitute for the domestic reforms that the Austrian state organism actually required. The concept of the "state of exception," drawn from both Schmitt and Agamben, illuminates the paradoxical relationship between legality and revolutionary politics. The revolutions of 1848 demonstrated that both revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries appealed to legal principles, yet these appeals could not resolve the fundamental political conflicts between them – revealing the essence of normative entanglement.

Limitations: This study acknowledges several boundaries: the theoretical scope focuses primarily on Schmitt, Agamben, Althusser, and Carr; the geographical focus is limited to Europe; the methodological approach is conceptual rather than empirical; and the periodization concentrates on 1815-1848, leaving for future research the question of how normative entanglement operated in subsequent decades.

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