Buzan and Little Chapters 16&17
• Based on the readings, do you think we are headed into a postmodern system? Why, or why not? If so, what will it look like?
Postmodern system?

- End of Cold War = systemic changes
  - Risk of major war recedes, so does fear
- Brave new world, or old wine in new bottles?
Interaction capacity

- Physical technology has reached its limit (has it?)
  - Terrestrial transportation systems mature
  - Communication: Room to increase number of people connected, but no significant qualitative changes in technology
    - May challenge territorial basis of political organization

- Societal technology
  - Tough to predict
  - Does not always promote interaction
• Already very intense

• Very uneven
  • Centre-Periphery formation looks stable
  • Two worlds:
    • Zone of Peace
    • Zone of conflict

• Regionalism
• We should look for qualitative (in type) rather than quantitative (in number or volume) changes

• Changes in importance of sectors
  • Democratic peace and globalization
  • Environmental processes
Units

- Dominant units traditionally territorial and military-political
  - What happens to units if the military sector diminishes in importance?
- Evolution of the unit
  - Permeable boundaries
  - Layered sovereignty (subsidiarity)
In Postmodern system, what is political-military structure...?

Logic of like units might survive, but only in classes of units (states alike, INGOs alike, etc.)

We might view the system as an ecology, where survival of the fittest drives unit diversification to niches
Peer Instruction

- What lessons do you think world history holds for IR?
Lessons of World History for IR

- IR Theory has an impoverished view of international systems
- International systems vary along six dimensions (how many does neorealism assume?)
  - Intensity
  - Geometric arrangement
  - Scale
  - Type of interaction
  - Time-span
  - Nature of dominant unit
• Changes in unit, not structural variables, define biggest changes in international system
  • More than polarity!
• Major theme of the book: evolution of units as a process of social learning.
• Interaction capacity: distinction between IC and process is messy when it comes to social technology

• Process:
  • Deep embeddedness of social processes in international system
  • Durability of process formations
  • Process defines scale, intensity, and character of international system
Lessons of World History for IR

• Structure:
  • Interaction capacity constrains the possible processes
  • Strength/weakness of process determines whether systems are structured or not