

# PSR/IR 106: IR Basics

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# Agenda

- Administrative Stuff
- Sovereignty
- Anarchy
- Proximate vs. Underlying Causes
- The Strategic World

# Recitation Information

## **Gleason Judd**

- Recitation: W 1-1:50  
LeChase 181
- OH: M 10-12 Harkness 109A

## **Brad Smith**

- Recitation: F 9-9:50 LeChase  
161
- OH: W 10-12 Harkness 315A

## **Doug Johnson**

- Recitation: F 9-9:50 B&L 315
- OH: T 10-12 Harkness 315A

## **Matt Sweeten**

- Recitation: F 9-9:50 Meliora  
218
- OH: Th 12-2 Harkness 302

# Agenda

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Big question: Who are the major actors in IR?

# Some Actors

- International organizations
- Domestic leaders
- Non-governmental organizations
- Multi-national corporations
- Military alliances

# Some Actors

- International organizations
- Domestic leaders
- Non-governmental organizations
- Multi-national corporations
- Military alliances
- States

# States vs. States

## States

- United States of America
- France
- Japan
- Georgia (Former SSR)

## States

- California
- New York
- Texas
- Georgia (Peaches)



# States vs. States

## **States = Countries**

- United States of America
- France
- Japan
- Georgia (Former SSR)

# States vs. States

## States

- United States of America
- France
- Japan
- Georgia (Former SSR)

**States are *sovereign* entities.**

# What is sovereignty?

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- A “state” is the sovereign entity of a territory.

# What is sovereignty?

- Definition: the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a territory.
  - Murders, gang violence, etc. are illegitimate.
  - National governments often delegate the power.
    - Example: local police
    - But the authority to use of force originates from the state's permission.

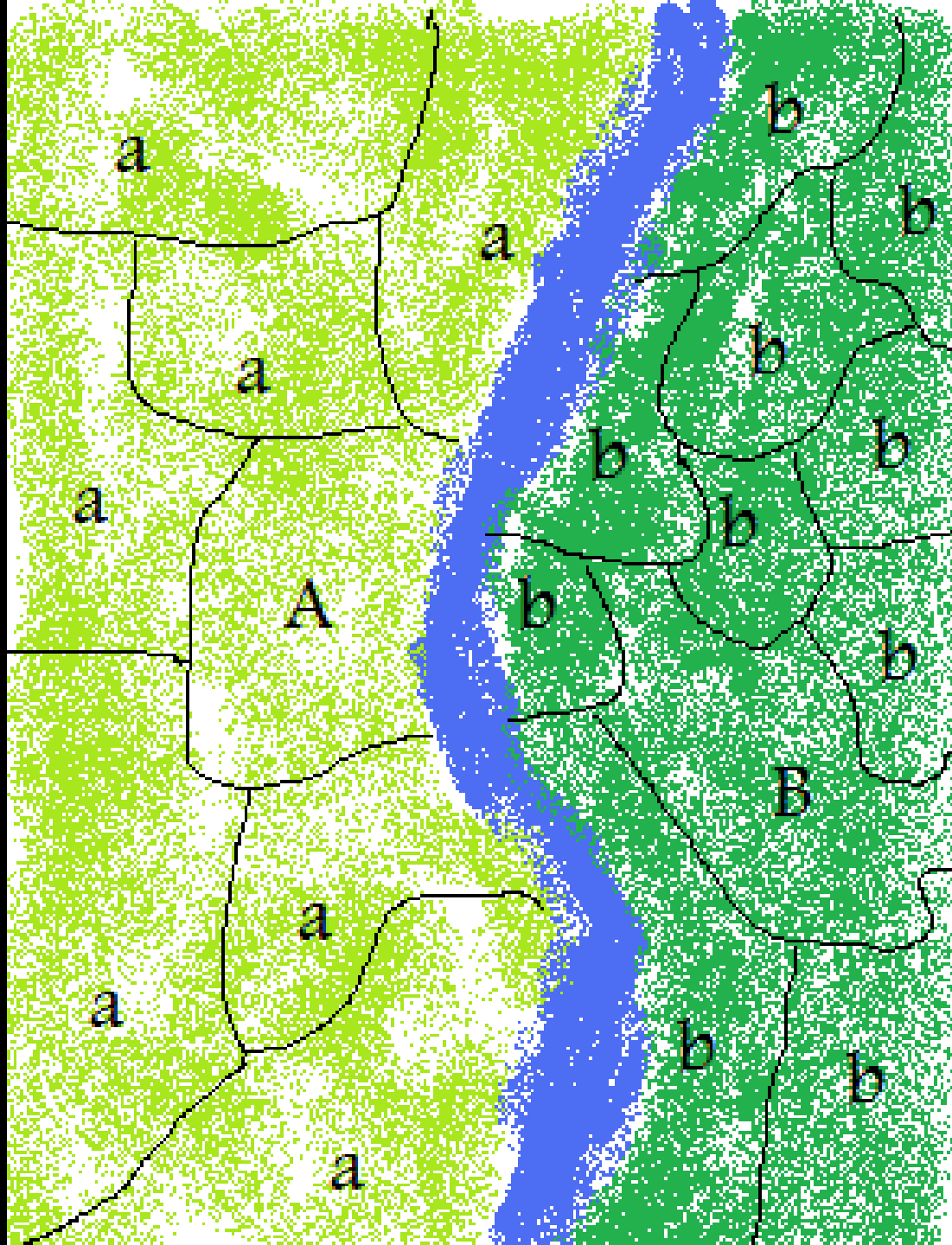
# What is sovereignty?

- Sovereign entities are not supposed to meddle in the internal affairs of other sovereign entities.
- This norm is well-established today but was not always the case.

# Trivial Analogy

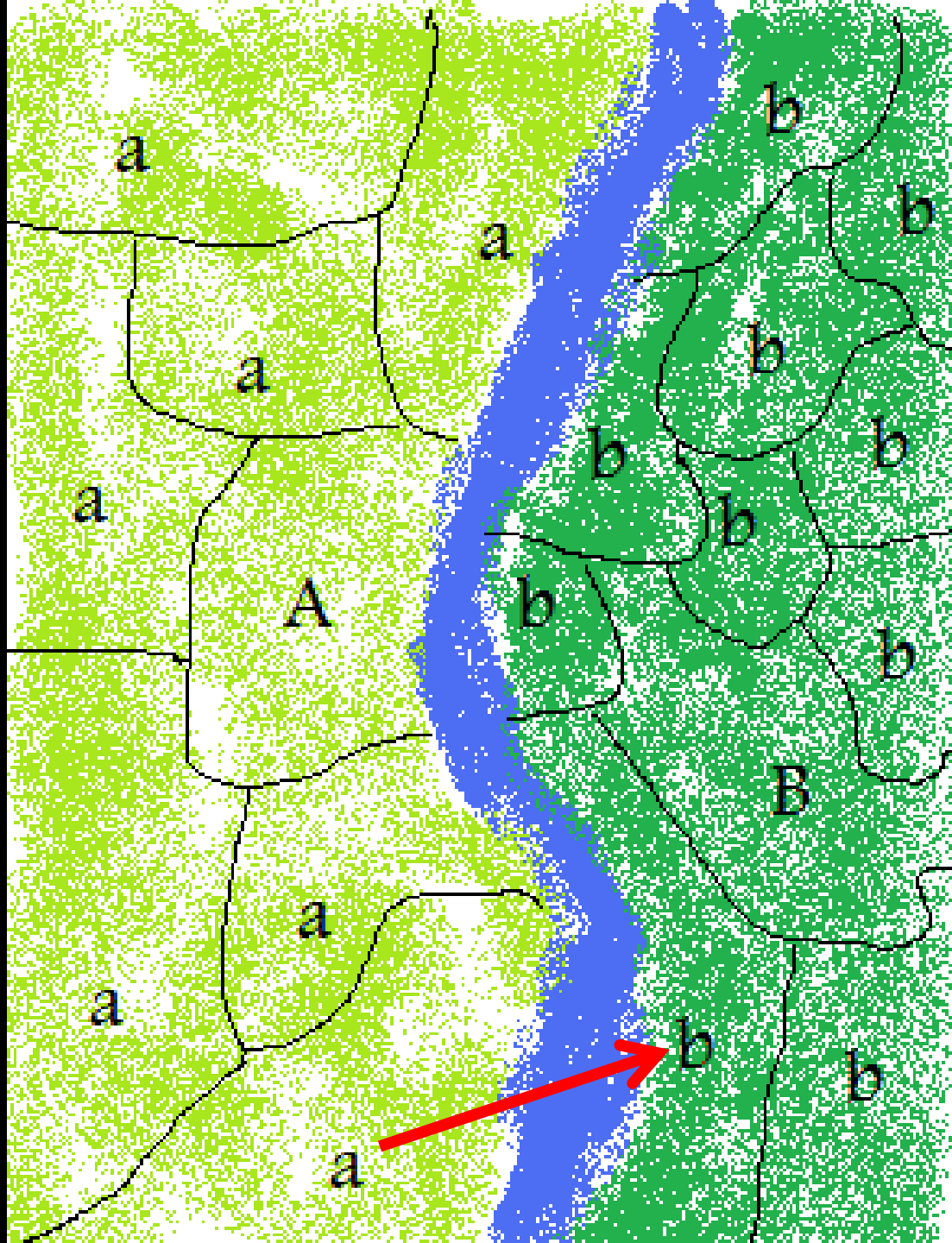
- Parents have sovereignty over their children.
- If you threw a baseball into your neighbor's window, your neighbor cannot punish you.
  - Your neighbor has to ask your mom and dad for compensation.

**Without  
Sovereignty**

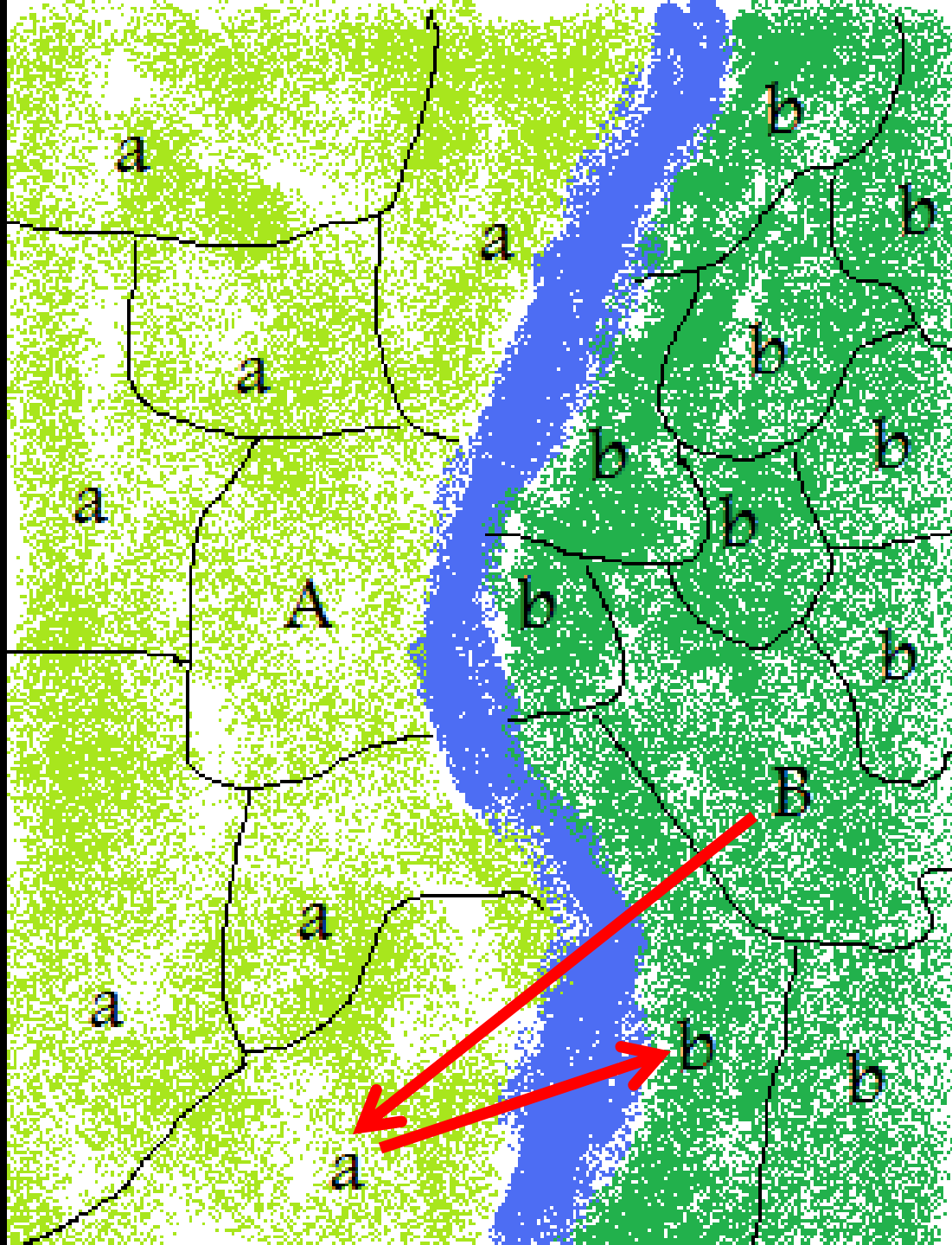




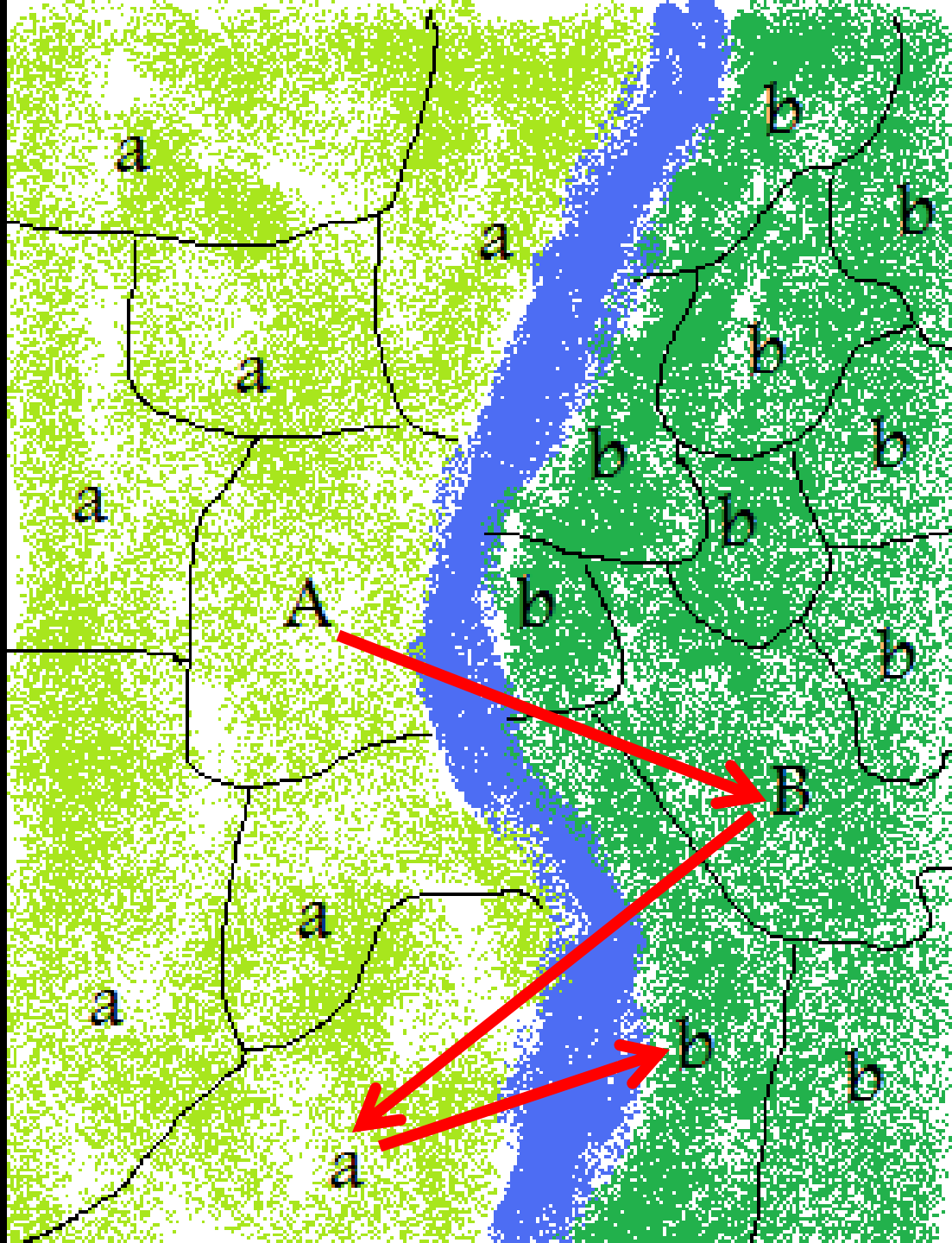
**Without  
Sovereignty**



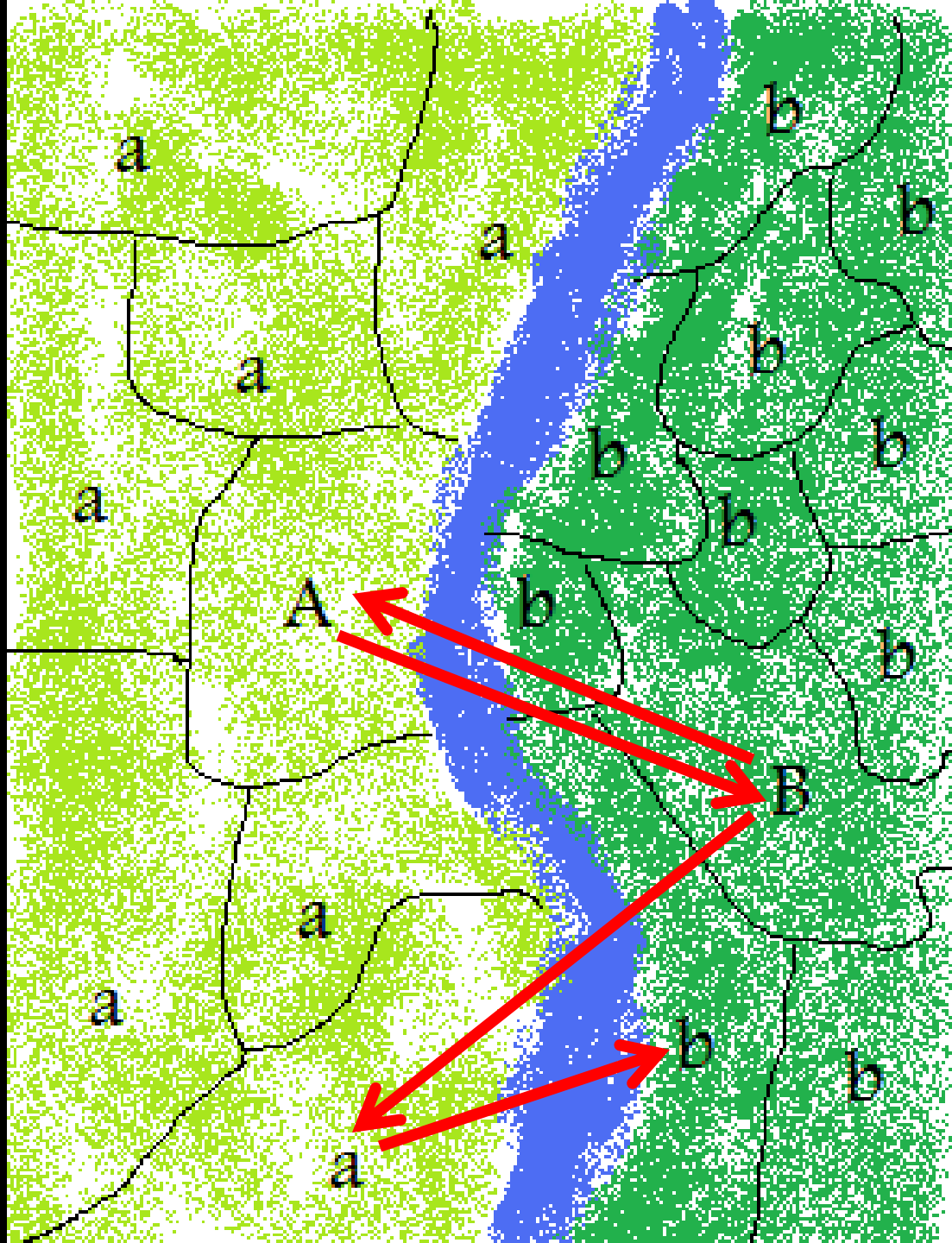
**Without  
Sovereignty**



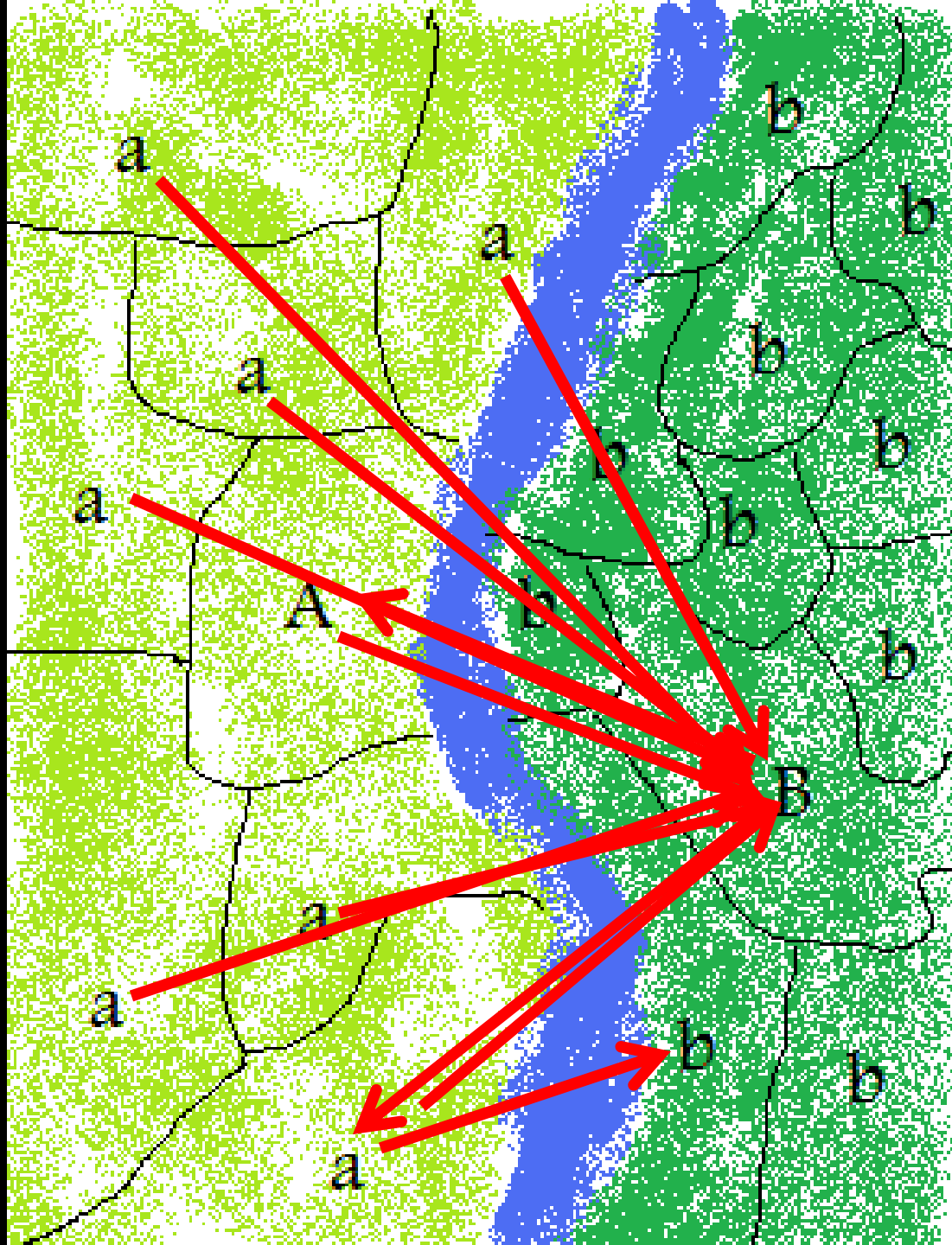
**Without  
Sovereignty**



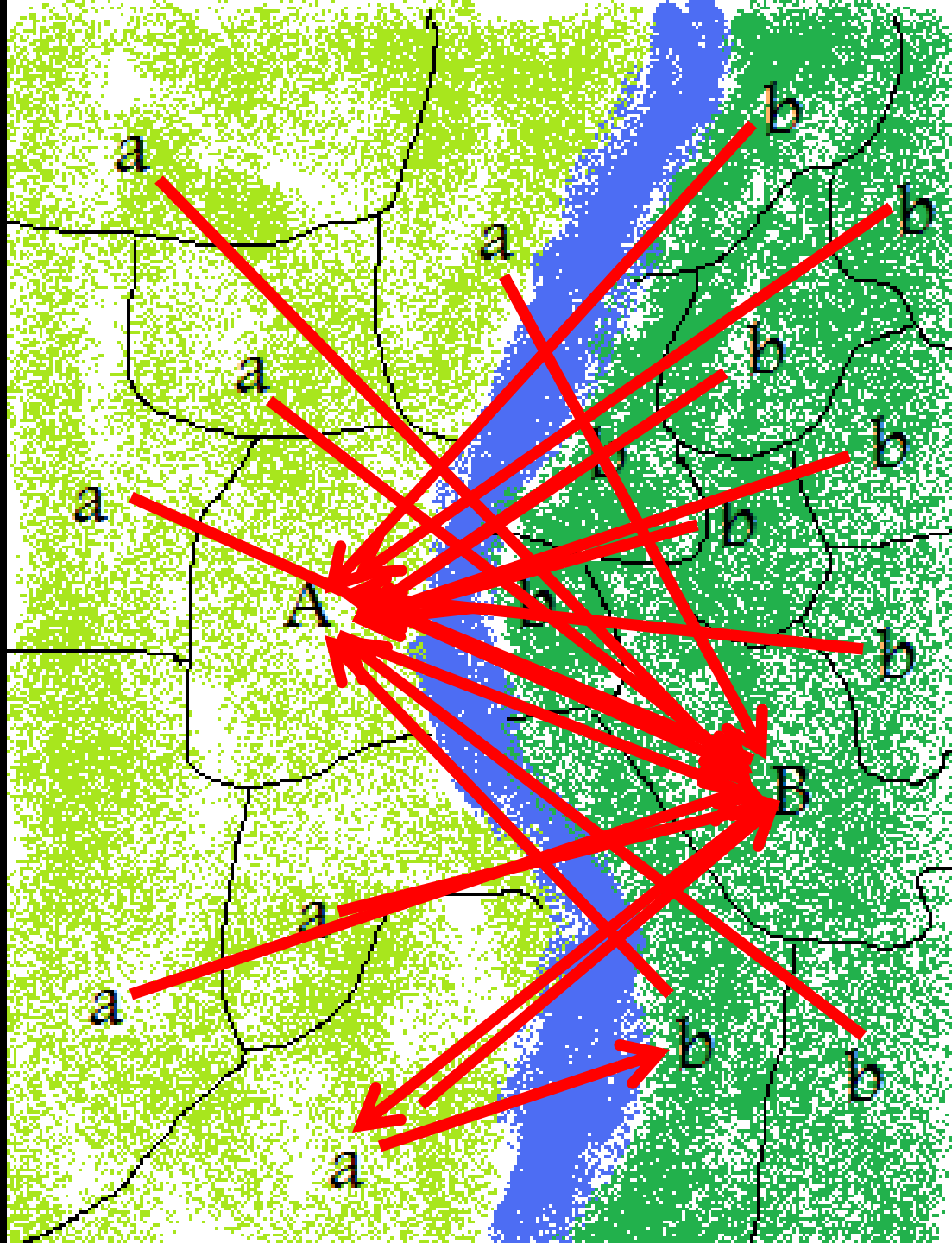
**Without  
Sovereignty**



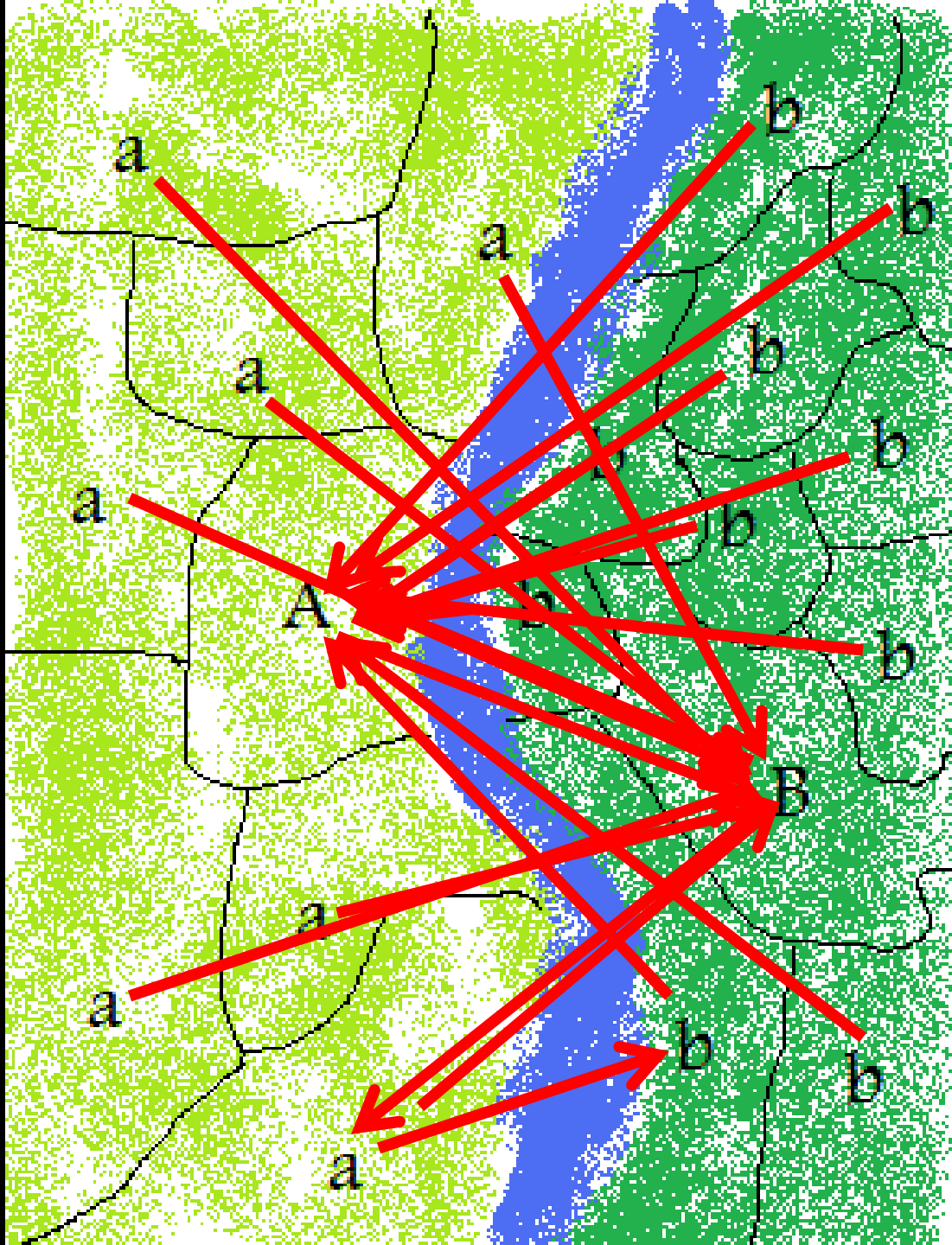
**Without  
Sovereignty**



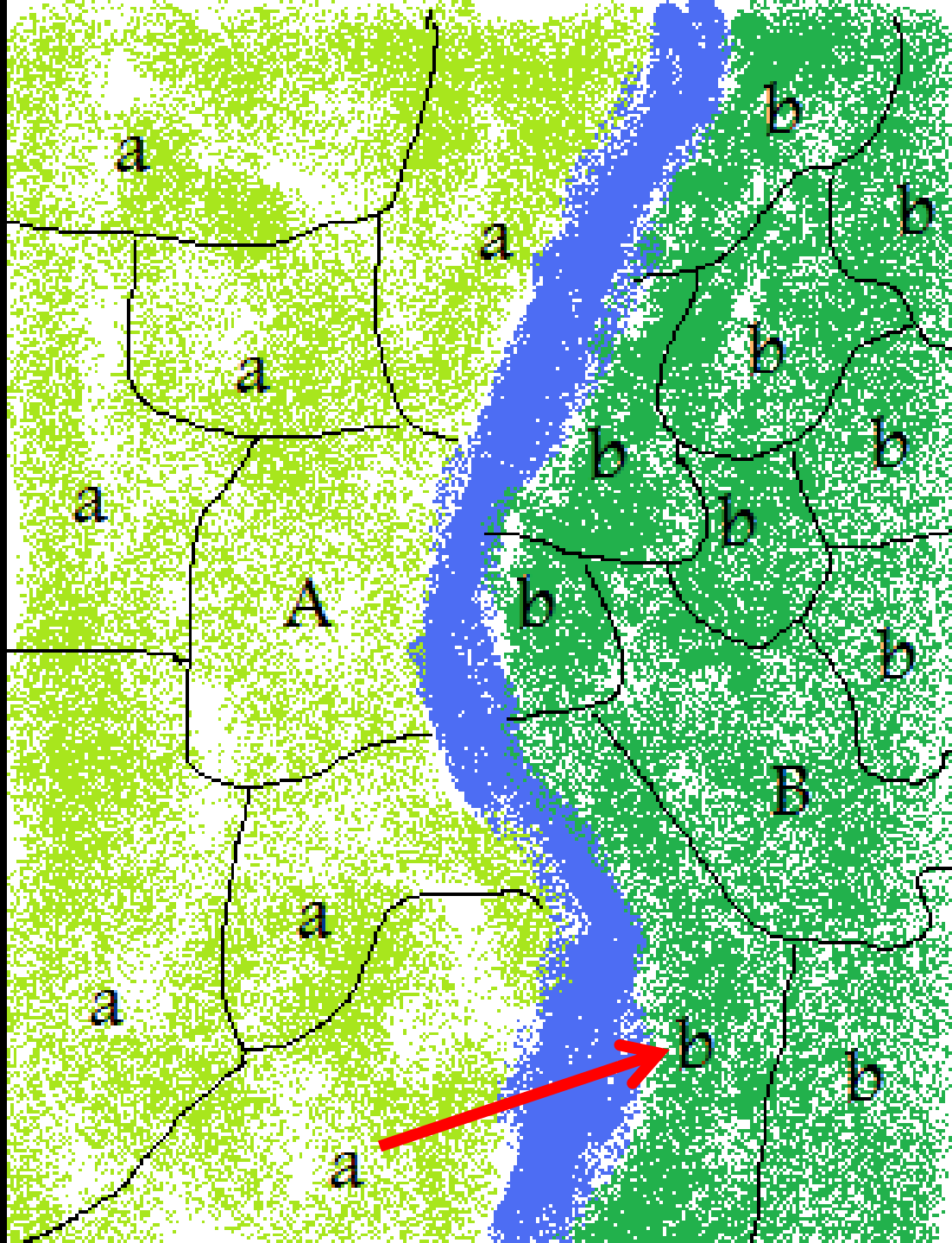
**Without  
Sovereignty**



**Without  
Sovereignty  
(Chaos)**

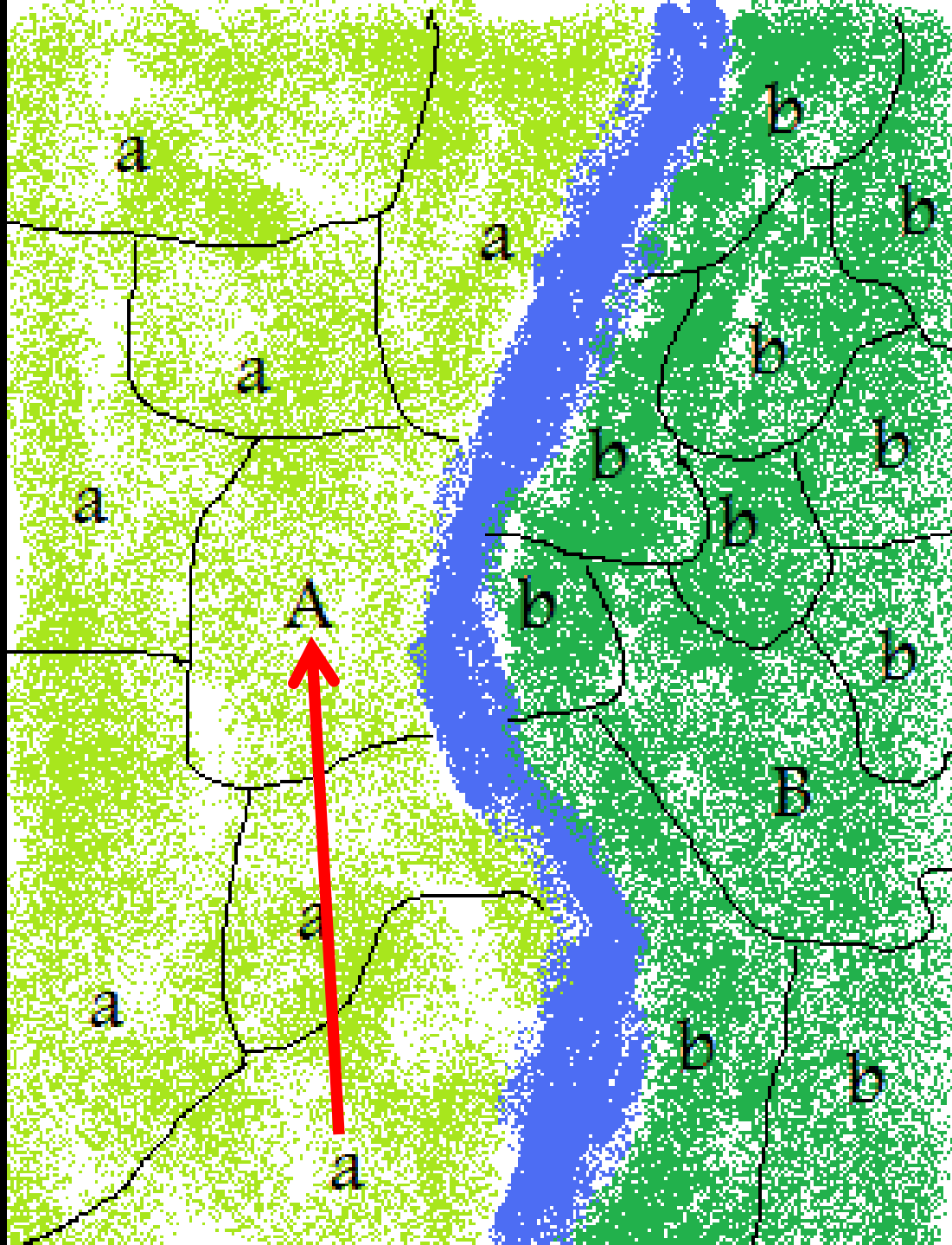


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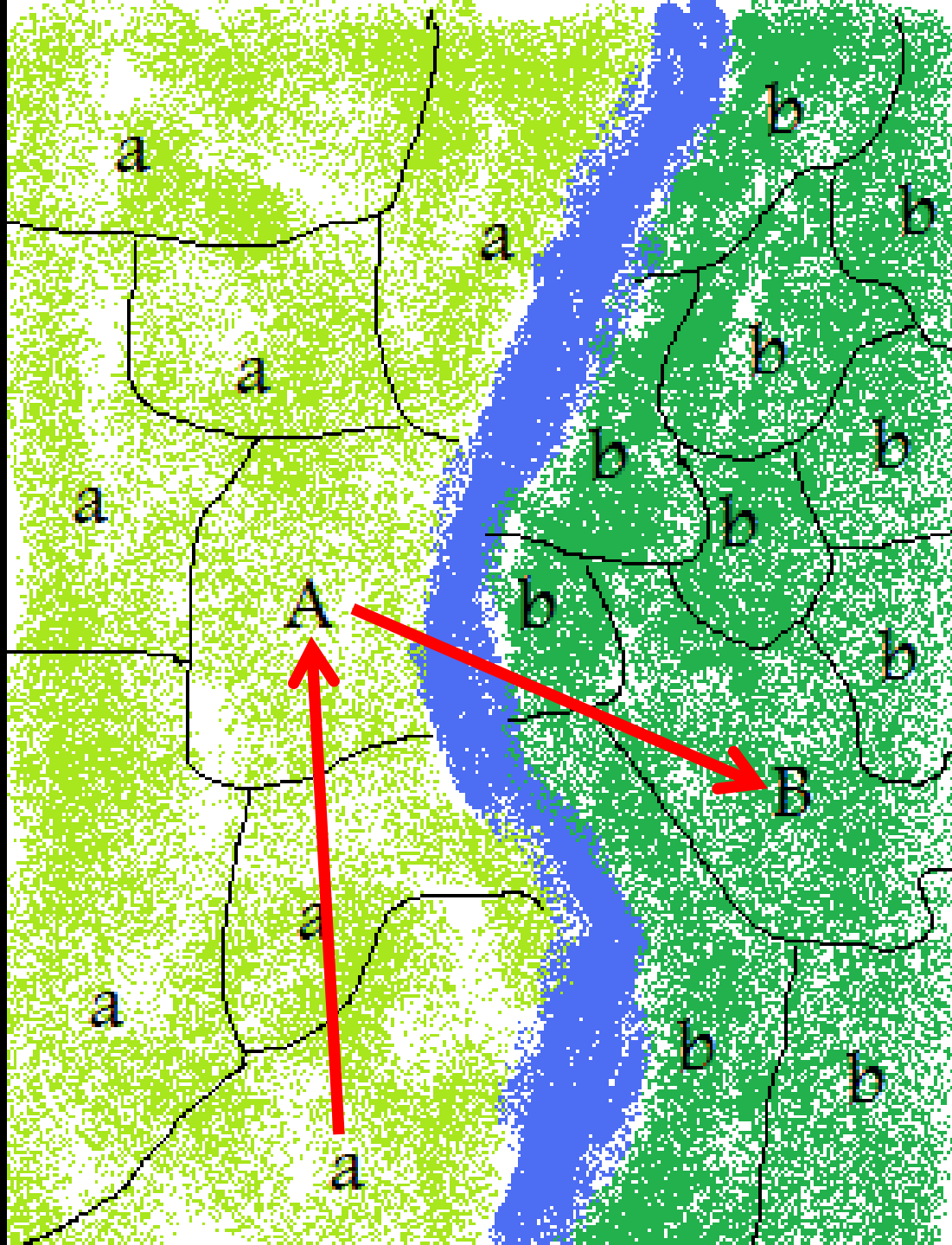




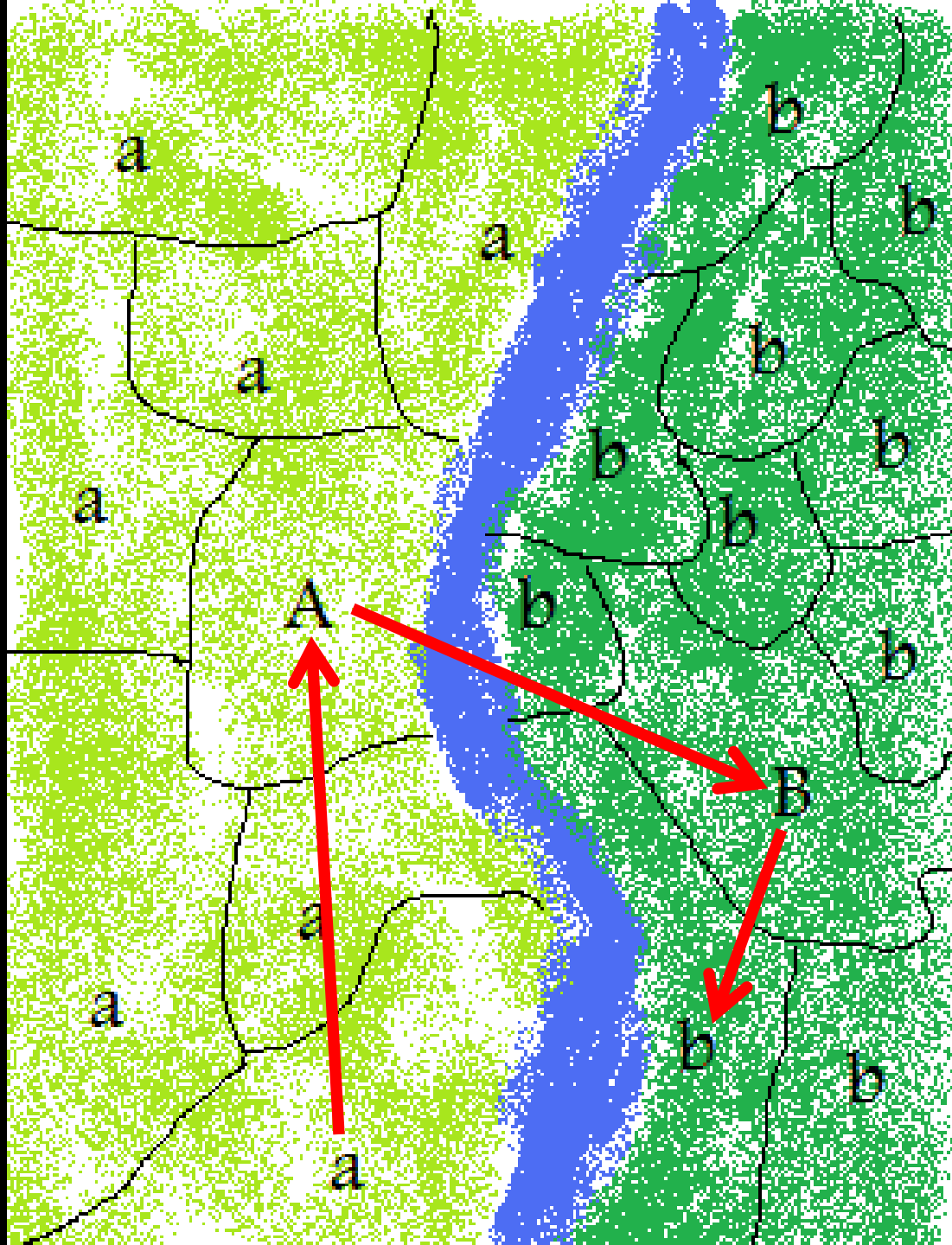
With  
Sovereignty



With  
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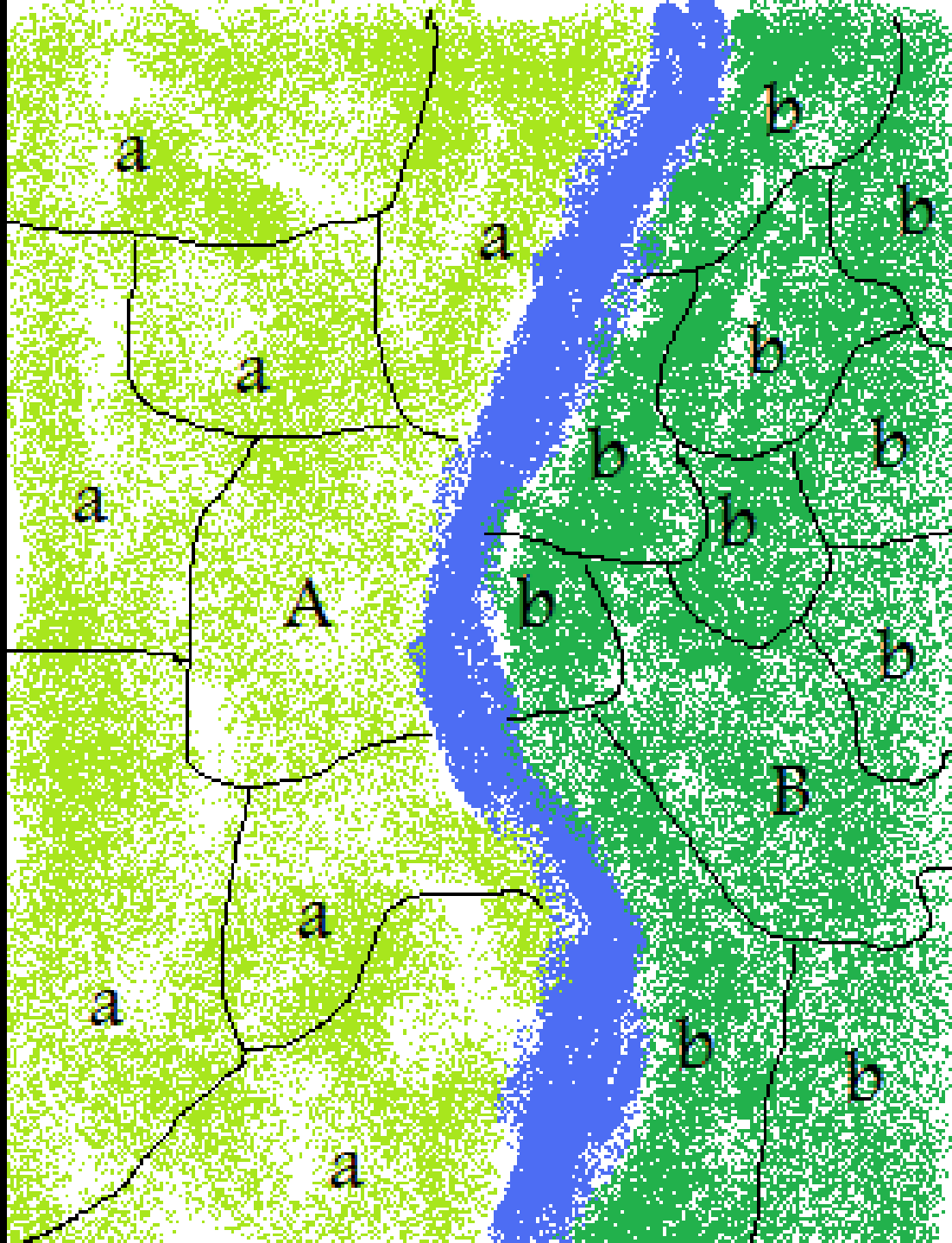


# Treaty of Westphalia

- Signed in 1648
- Ended the Thirty Years' War
- Established the principle of sovereignty.
  - Sometimes called *Westphalian* sovereignty.

# What is sovereignty?

- Definition: the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a territory.
- Dispute resolution between two sub-state actors occurs through the sovereign states.
- Sovereigns are expected to ensure their sub-state actors do not use force against foreign actors.



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- Sovereign states control their own domestic affairs.
  - But states violate this occasionally.
    - U.S. incursion into Pakistan to kill Bin Laden.
    - U.S. in Libya.
    - Russia protecting South Ossetia from Georgia.



# What is sovereignty?

- Definition: the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a territory.
- Sovereign states control their own domestic affairs.
  - But states violate this occasionally. Why?
    - Strong actors can get away with it.
    - Why is there no punishment?

# Agenda

- Administrative Stuff
- Sovereignty
- **Anarchy**
- Proximate vs. Underlying Causes
- The Strategic World

Big question: Who is sovereign  
over the sovereign?

# Violations of Domestic Political Order

- A man kills his neighbor.
- A bank robber steals thousands of dollars.
- The party last night got a little too crazy.

# Violations of Domestic Political Order

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  - The police come and take care of it.
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# When Things Aren't So Great

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- A mafia boss assassinates a rival mafia boss.

# When Things Aren't So Great

- A drug dealer kills a rival drug dealer.
  - Local police is too weak to do anything.
- A mafia boss assassinates a rival mafia boss.
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# Violations of Sovereignty

- In theory, sovereign states control their own domestic affairs.
- But states violate this occasionally.
  - Why doesn't the police come and arrest them?



# Violations of Sovereignty

- Life in international relations is closer to the mafia world.
- World police is either non-existent or weak (the United Nations).

# Anarchy

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- In international relations, no one is sovereign over the sovereign.

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- Anarchy is *not* chaos.
  - Fun fact: most states most of the time are not fighting each other.
  - Anarchy permits chaos...or order...or anything in between.



# IR's Challenge

- If anything can happen, how do we predict or explain outcomes?
  - Anarchy is a trivial explanation.
  - We need more precise predictions and explanations.

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Big question: How do we want to explain history and predict the future?

# Two Types of Explanations

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- Proximate cause: why did this happen the way it happened?
- Underlying cause: why was this asking to happen?
- We value underlying causes more.
  - Proximate causes give us silly policy recommendations.
  - Underlying causes tell us how to fix things.

# Examples: Dead Driver

## **Proximate Cause**

- The driver died because he flew through the front windshield of his vehicle.

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Don't get into car accidents.

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## What have we learned?

- Wear your seatbelt.

# Examples: The Bad Softball Team

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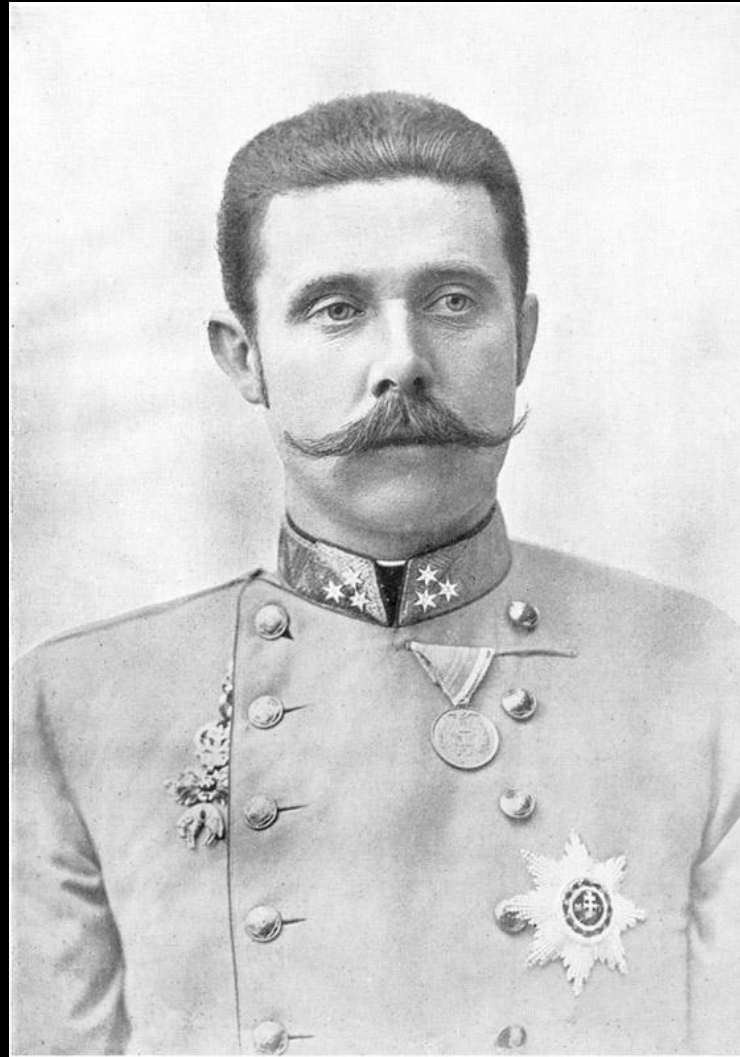
## What have we learned?

- If you want to win your local adult softball league, don't enroll in a PhD program.

# Examples: World War I

## **Proximate Cause**

- Franz Ferdinand was assassinated.



Archduke Franz Ferdinand



# Examples: World War I

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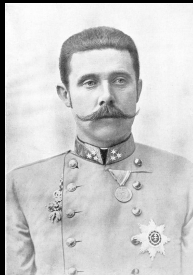
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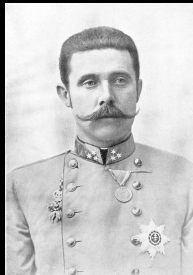
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- First strike advantages cause war.



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## What have we learned?

- Be magnanimous in victory.



# The Lesson

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- Proximate causes are funny.
- Discovering underlying causes allows us to connect dissimilar situations and make sensible recommendations about today's world.
  - The process of discovery is hard.

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# The Problem

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- The international realm is anarchic. *Anything* can happen. So how do we narrow our expectations?
- Solution: Analyze actors' abilities and desires to find plausible outcomes.

# The Strategic World

- There are about 200 states in the world.
- How State 1 acts affects State 2's outcomes.
- How State 2 acts affects State 1's outcomes.
- How State 1 acts affects State 3's outcomes.
- Etc.

# The Strategic World

- There are about 200 states in the world.
- How State 1 acts affects State 2's outcomes.
- How State 2 acts affects State 1's outcomes.
- How State 1 acts affects State 3's outcomes.
- Etc.
- Therefore, states are strategically interdependent.

# The Strategic World

- States know they are strategically interdependent.
  - Think about the intelligence budget of the United States alone. If the U.S. didn't care about strategic interdependence, why would they spend that much money?



# The Strategic World

- States know they are strategically interdependent.
  - Think about the intelligence budget of the United States alone. If the U.S. didn't care about strategic interdependence, why would they spend that much money?
- If only there were a scientific way to study strategic interdependence...

# Game Theory

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# Game Theory

- Game theory is the scientific study of strategic interdependence.
- Originally developed in the 1950s to study economic interactions.
- Applies just as well to state-level behavior.

# Game Theory

- ...is not black magic.
- ...does not capture all elements of reality.
- ...cannot tell us something a super-smart human being does not already know.

# Game Theory

- ...does map assumptions to logically valid conclusions.
  - Informal arguments (i.e. theories that use words exclusively) sometimes have logically invalid conclusions. The math demonstrates the error in reasoning.

# Our Recipe

1. Create some assumptions.
2. Do some math.
3. Reach logically valid conclusions.

# Some Pitfalls

- If our assumptions are silly, our conclusions might also be silly.
  - But they will be logically valid silliness!
  - Our results are only as good as our assumptions.
- If our assumptions are too open, we won't be able to do the math.
  - Therefore, we won't be able to reach any conclusions at all.