

PSR/IR 106: IR Basics

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Agenda

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

Recitation Information

- TA: Brad Smith
- bradleycarlsmith.com
- OH: Monday 10:00-12:00, Harkness 315A
- Your recitation time will be assigned on Friday

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

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?

- Definition: the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a territory

What is sovereignty?

- Definition: the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a territory
- 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

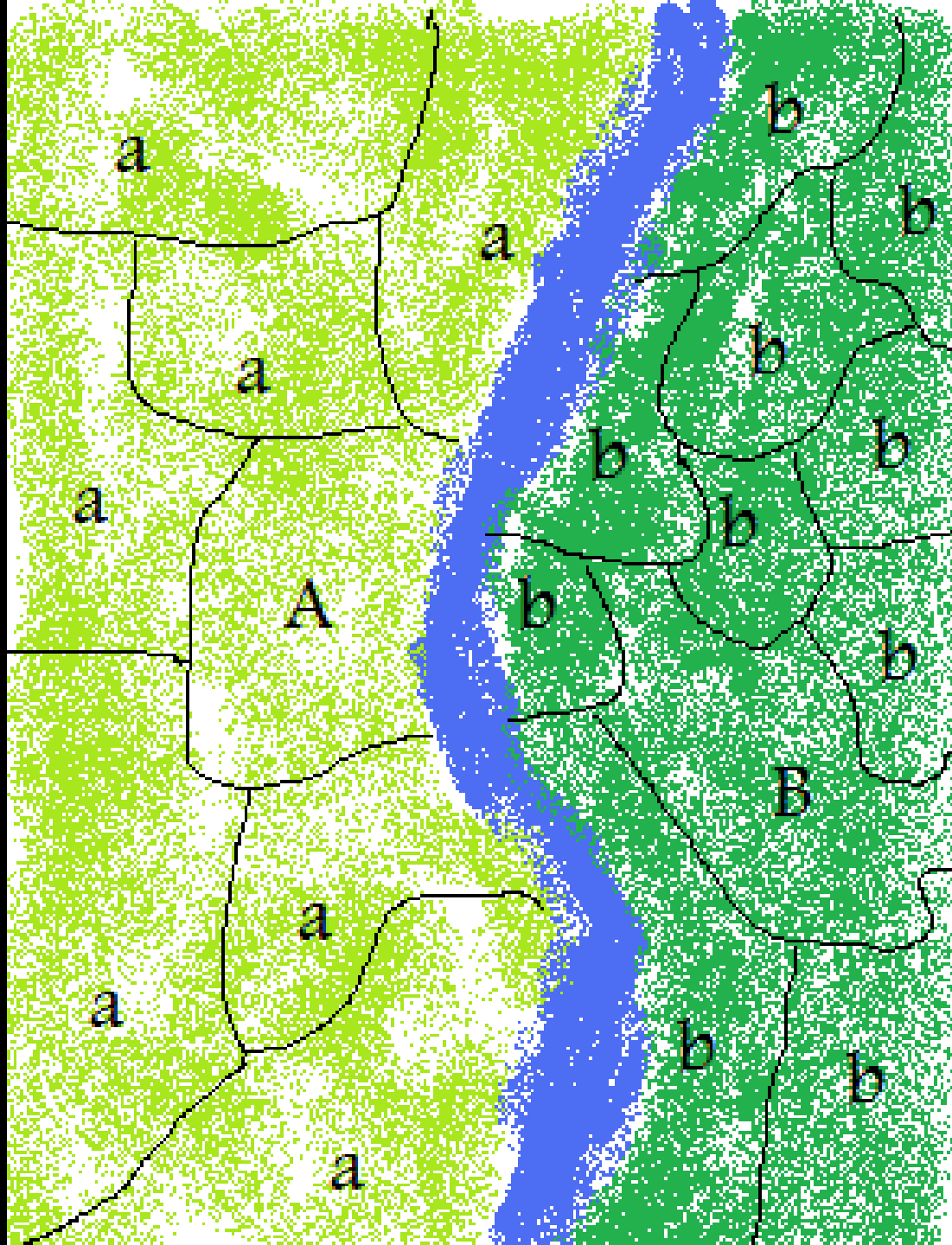
What is sovereignty?

- 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

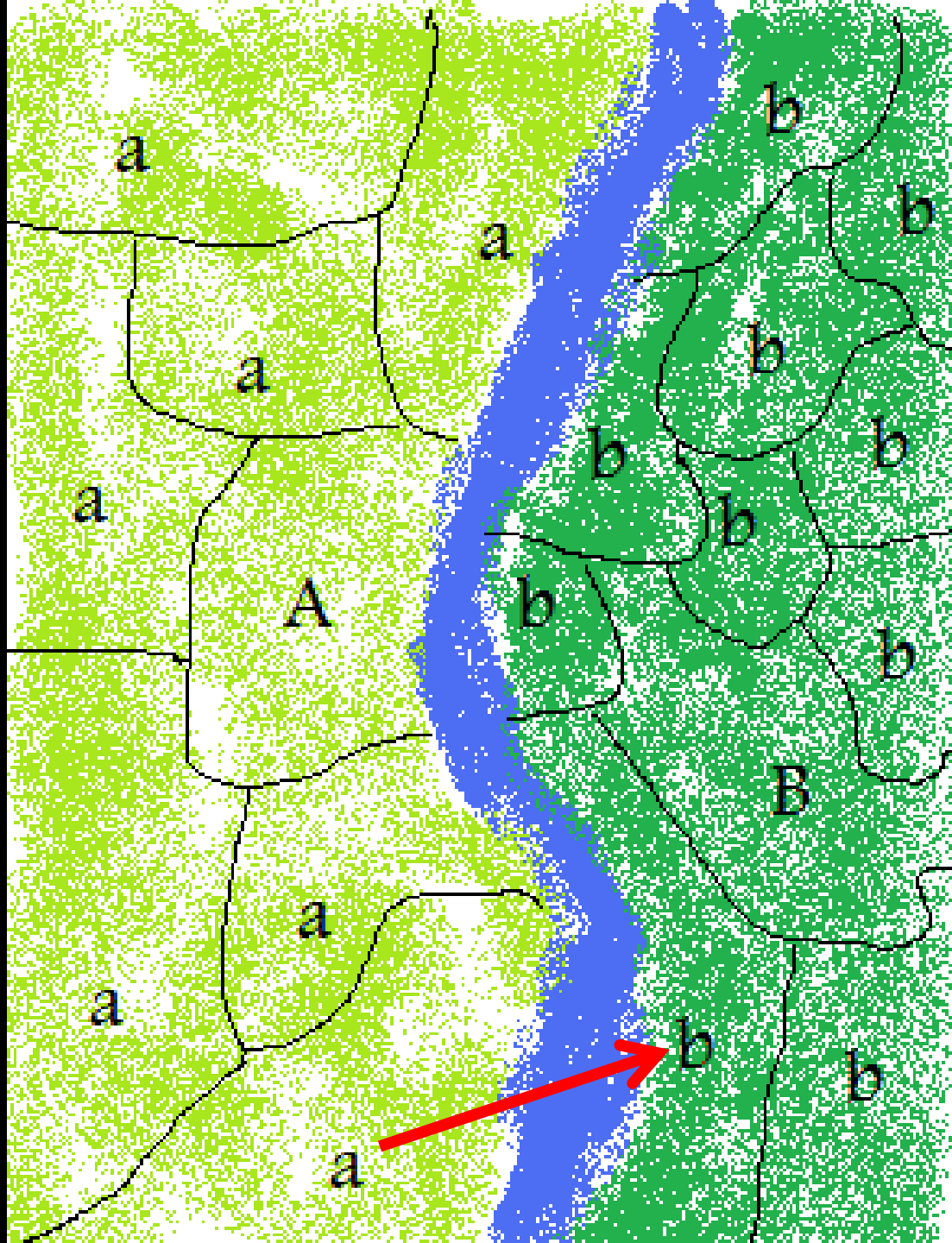
Trivial Analogy

- 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 an

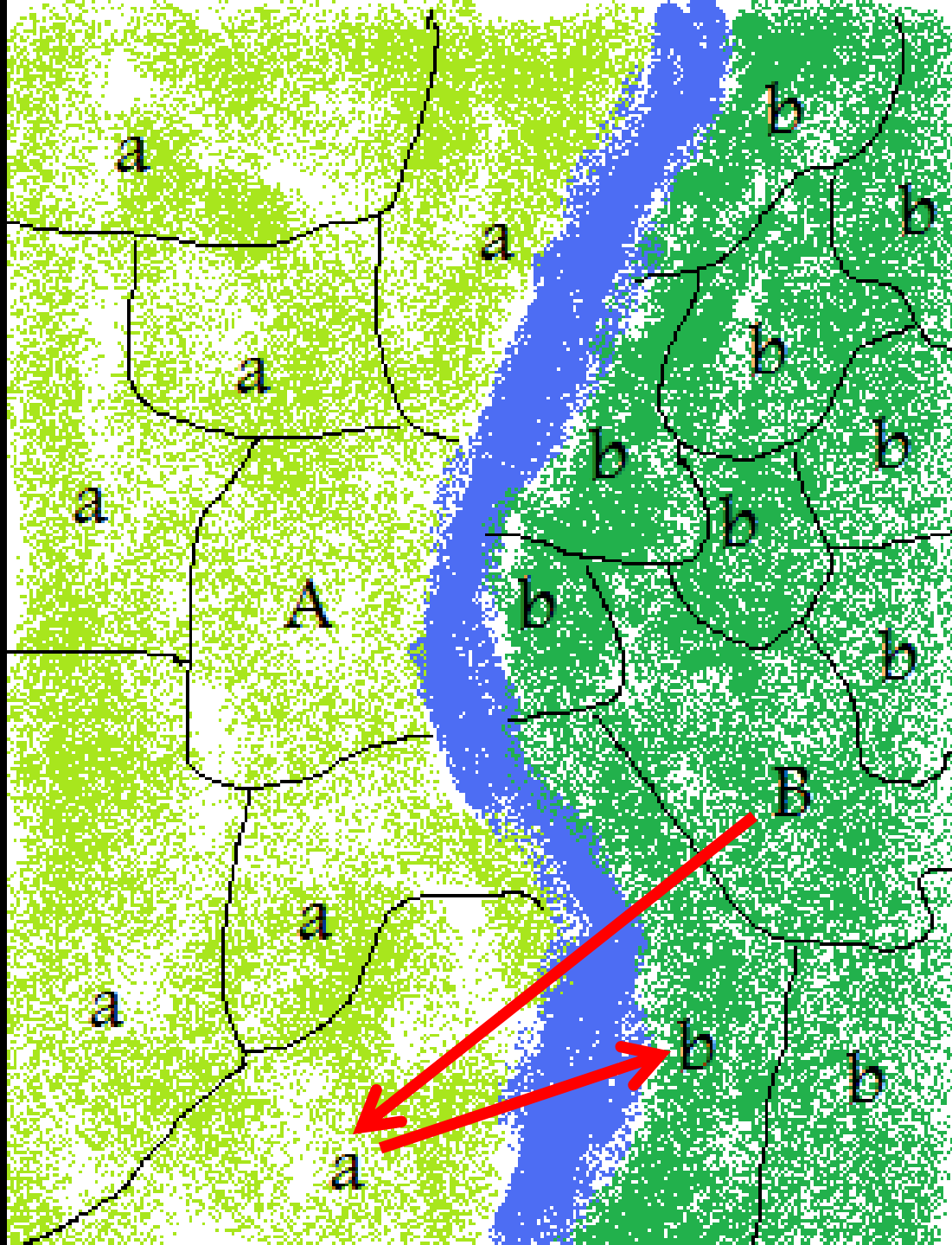
**Without
Sovereignty**



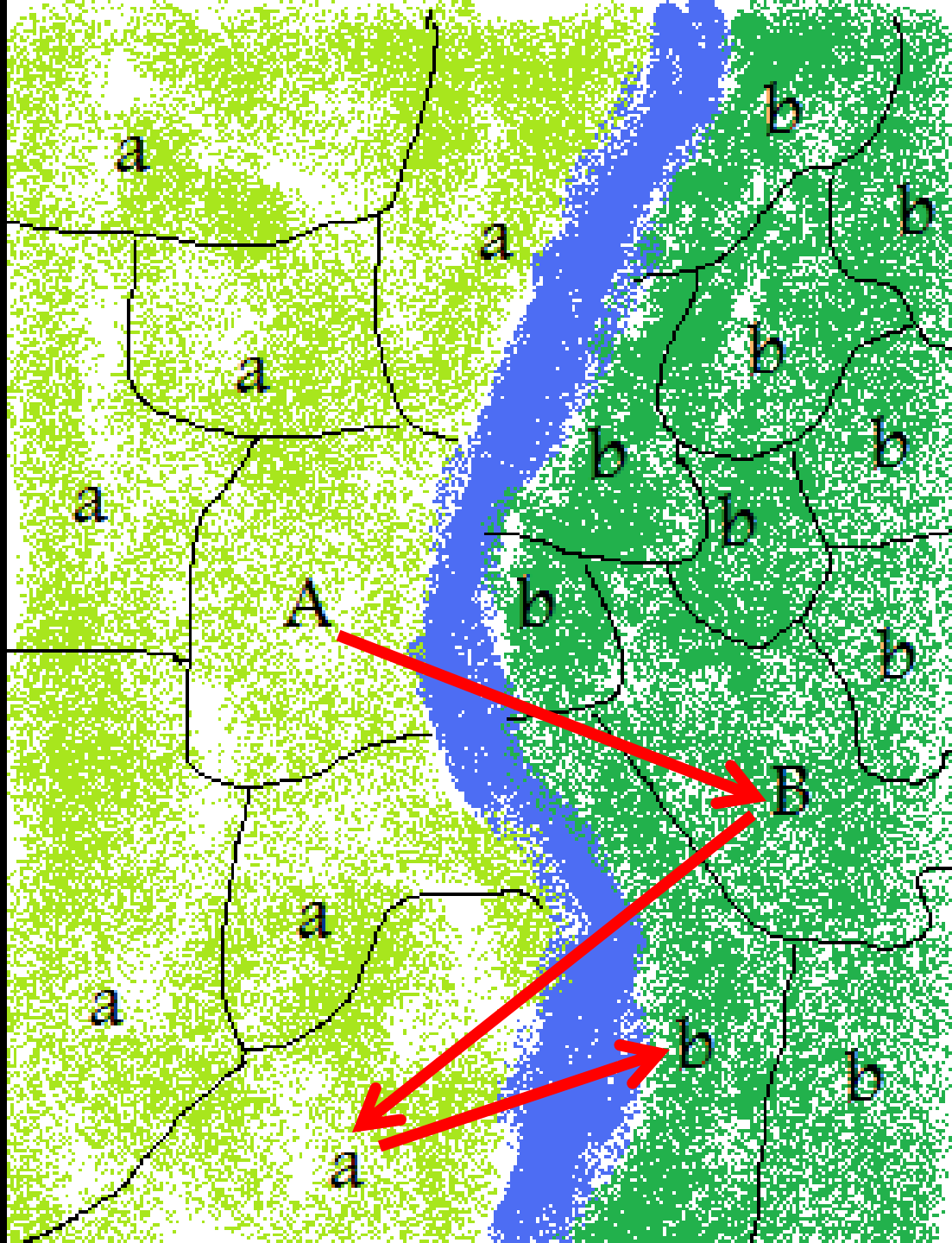
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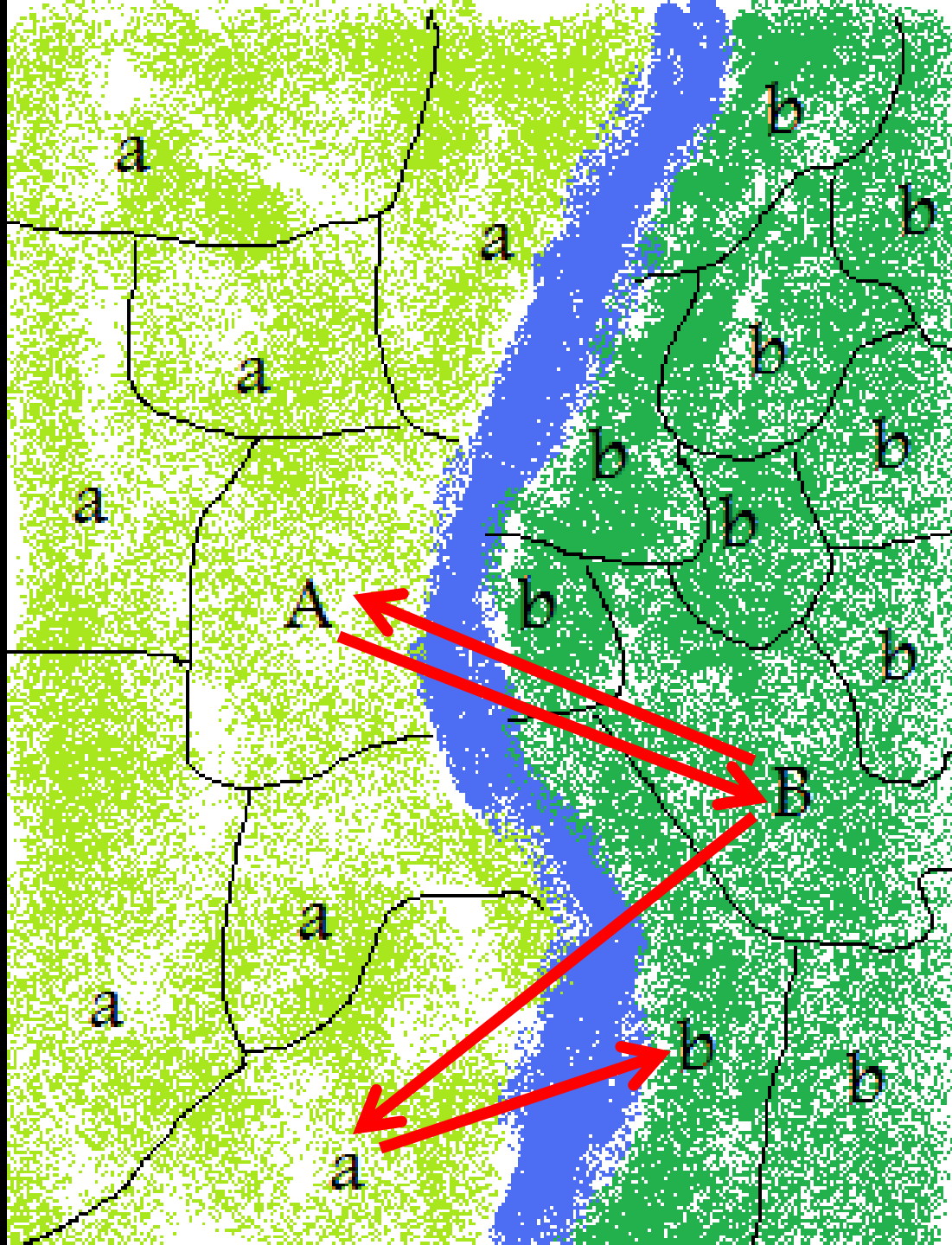
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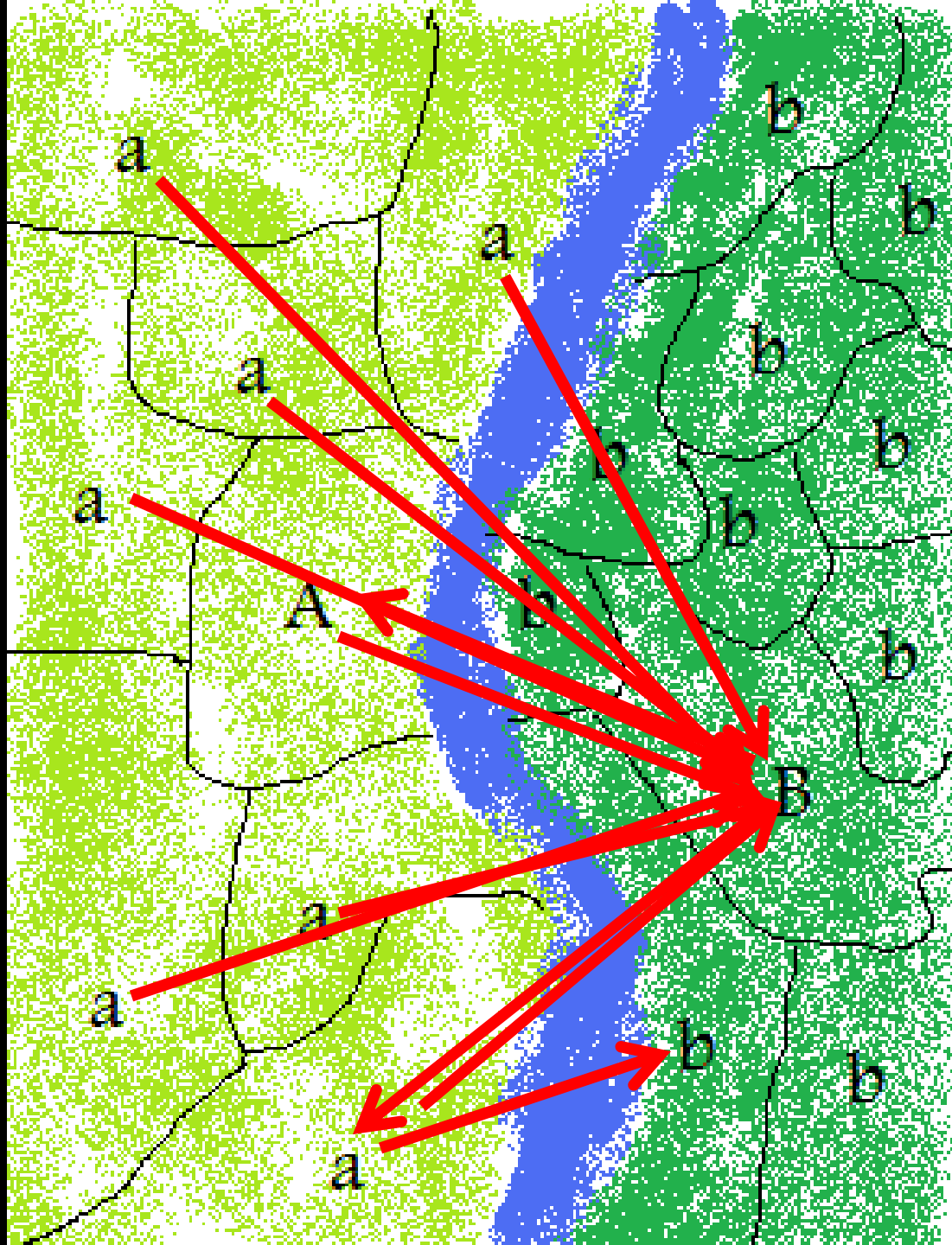
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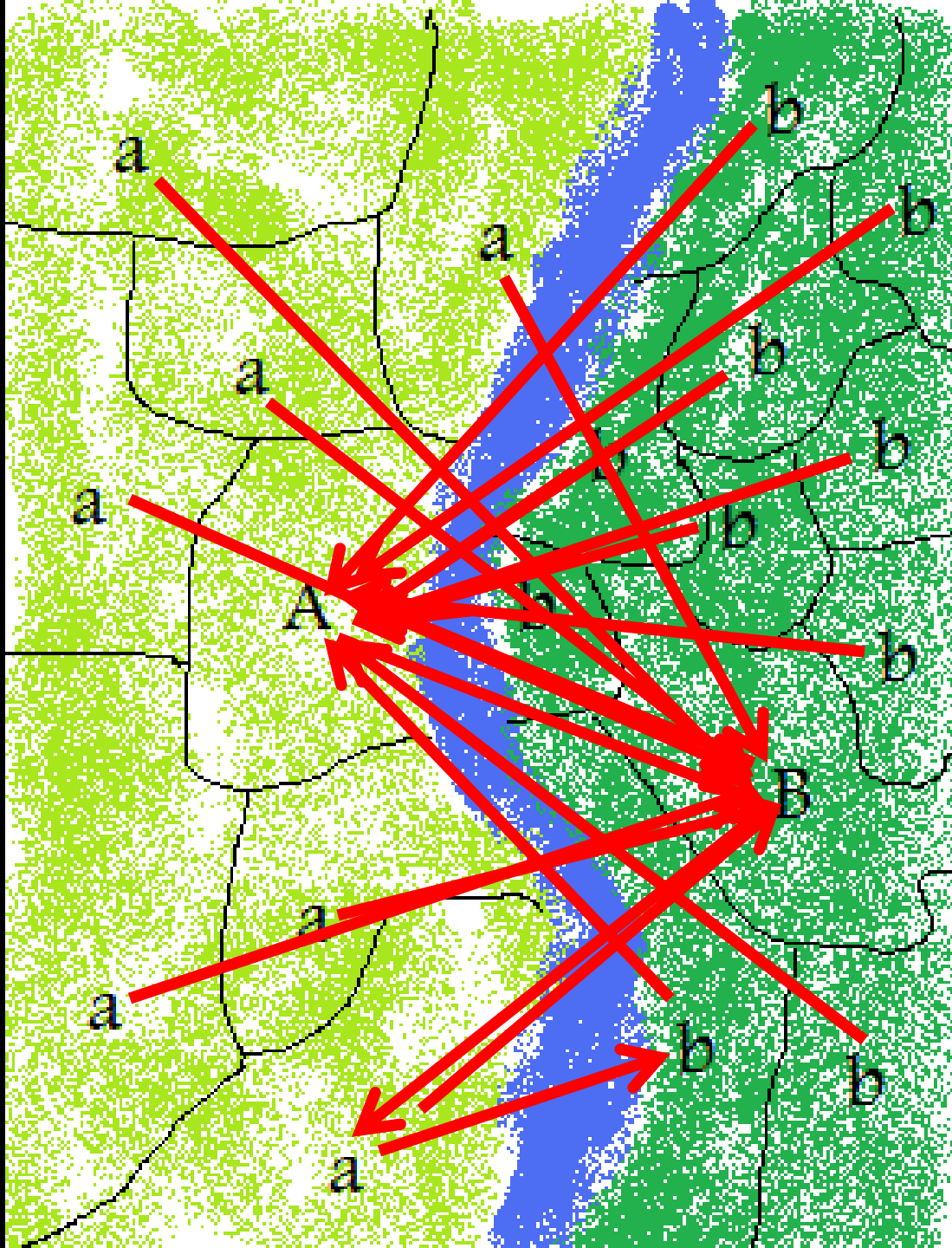
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Sovereignty**



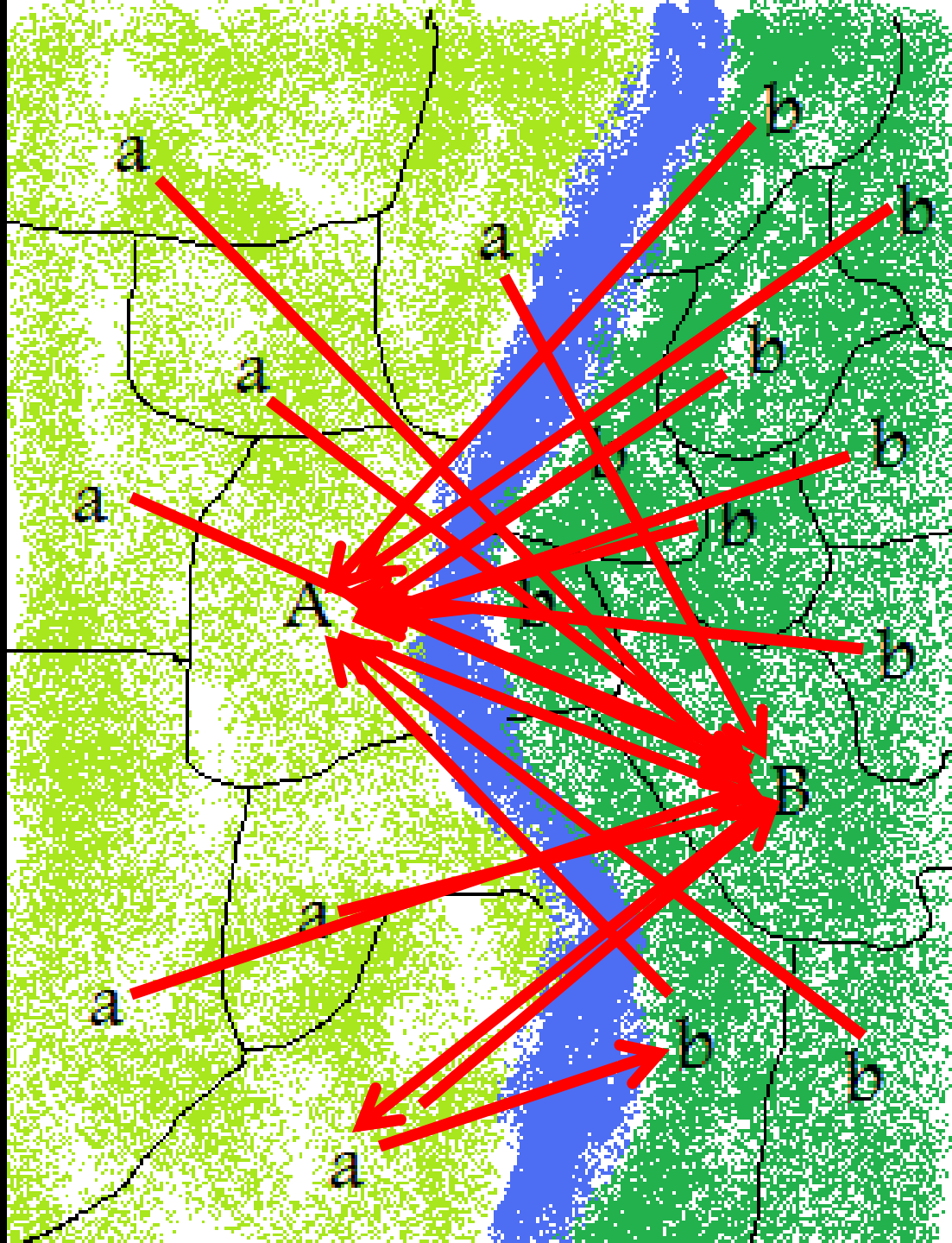
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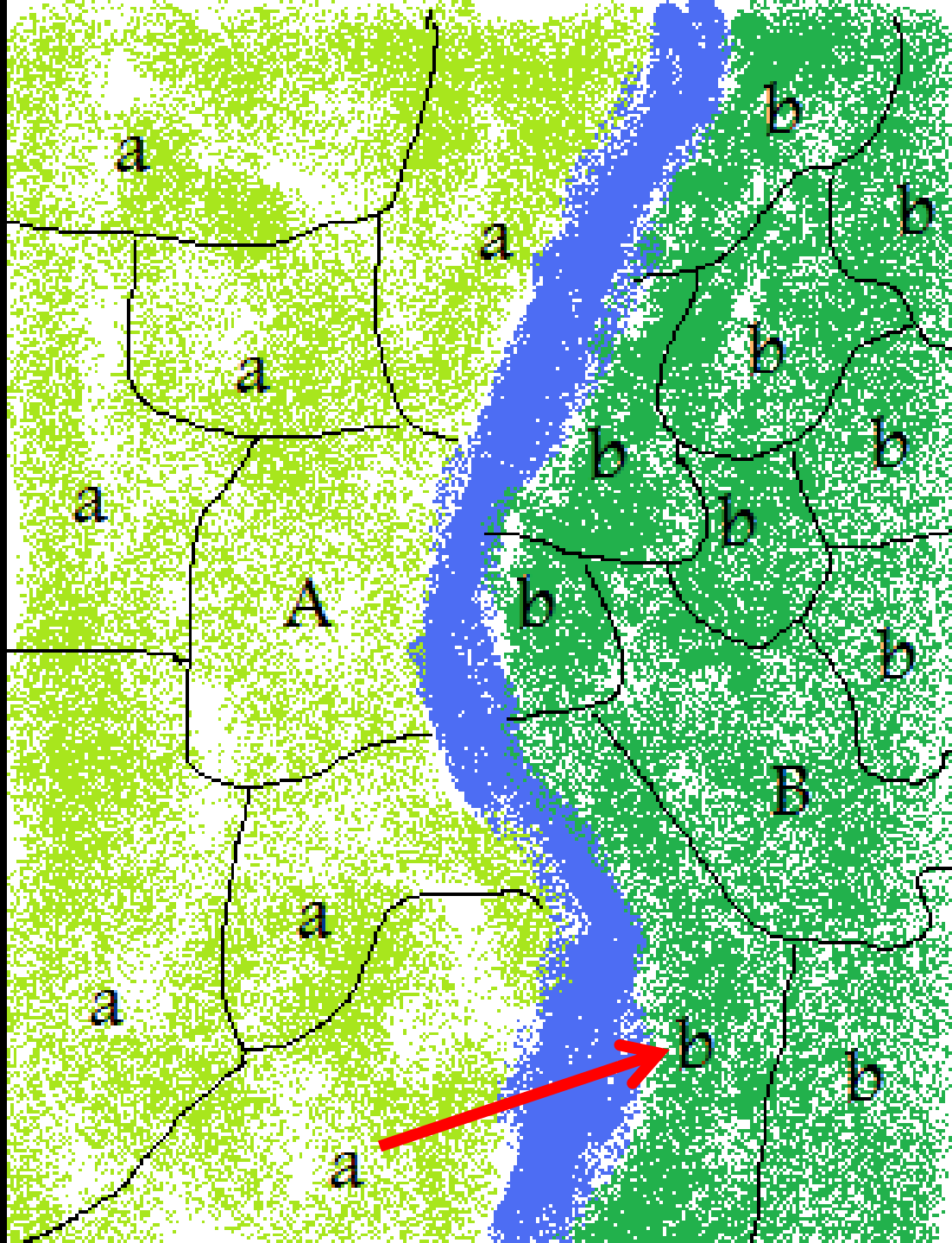
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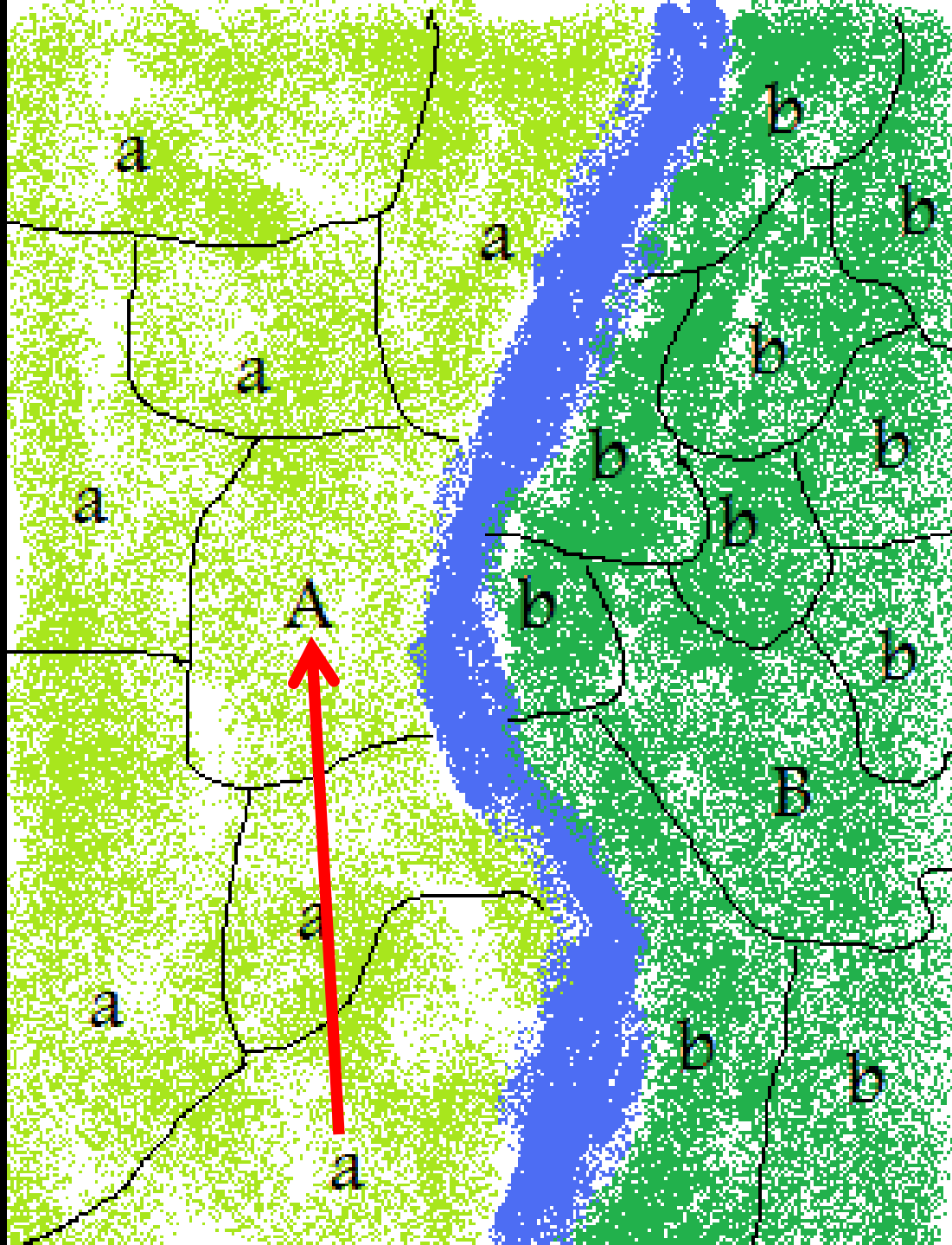
**Without
Sovereignty
(Chaos)**



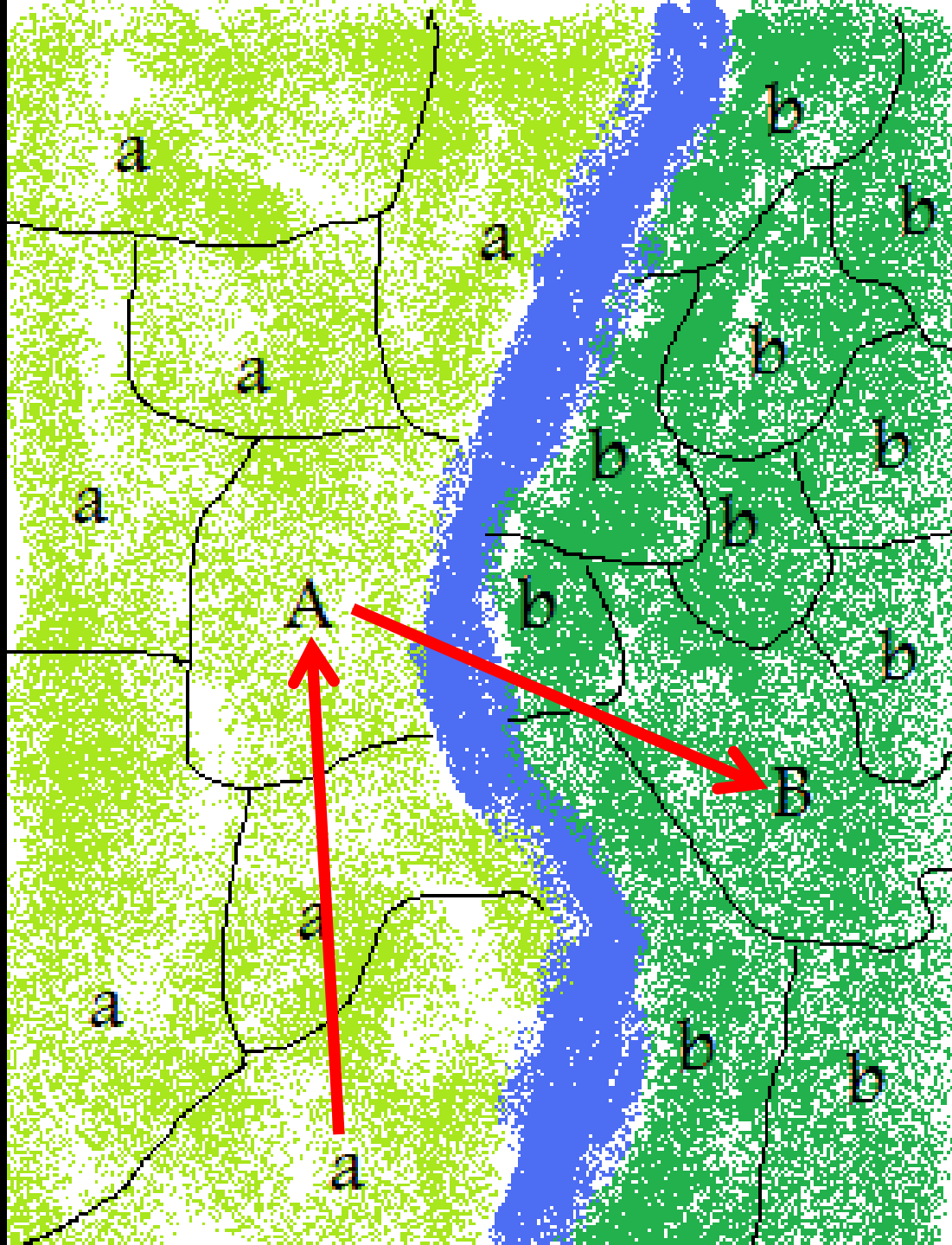
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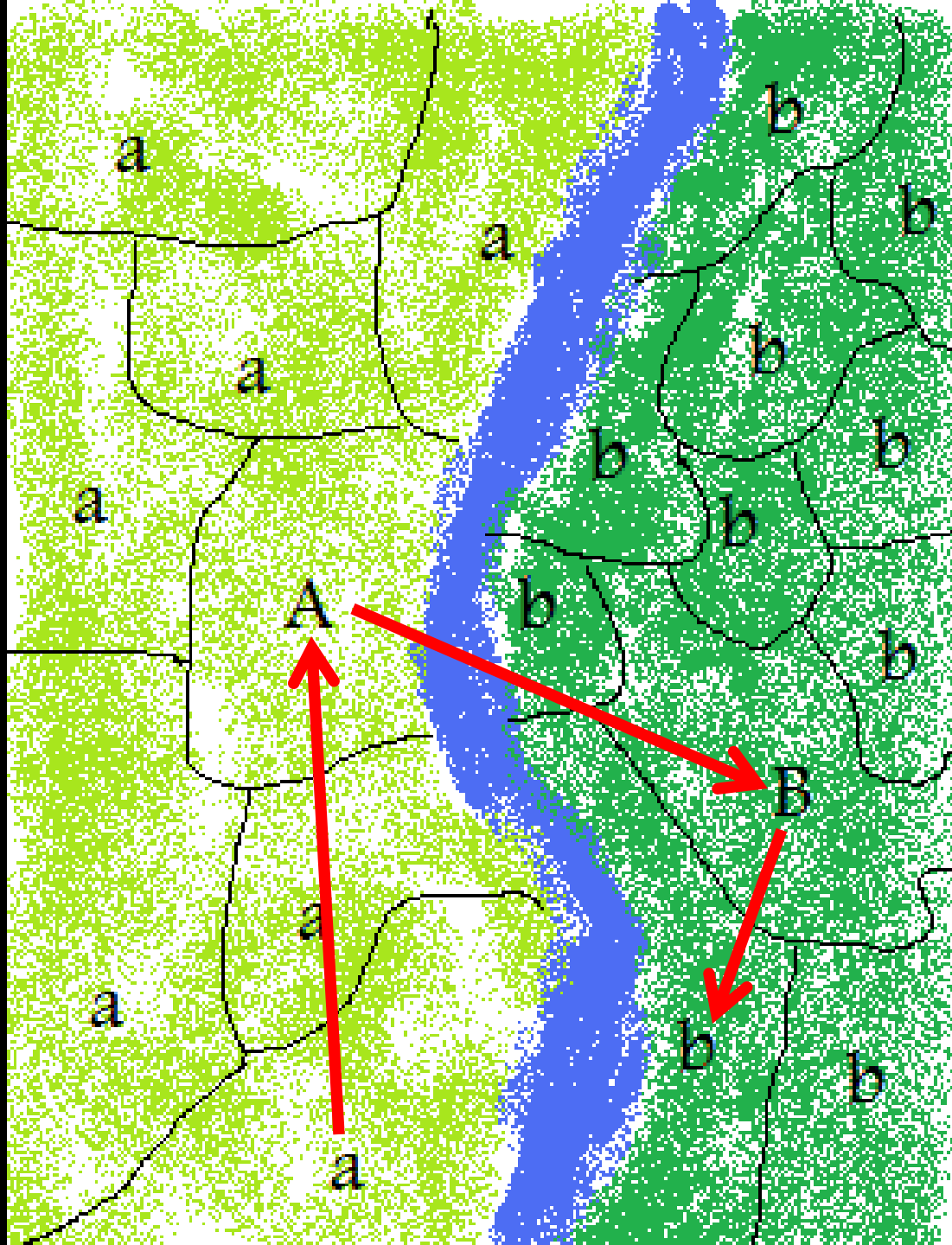
With
Sovereignty



With
Sovereignty



With
Sovereignty



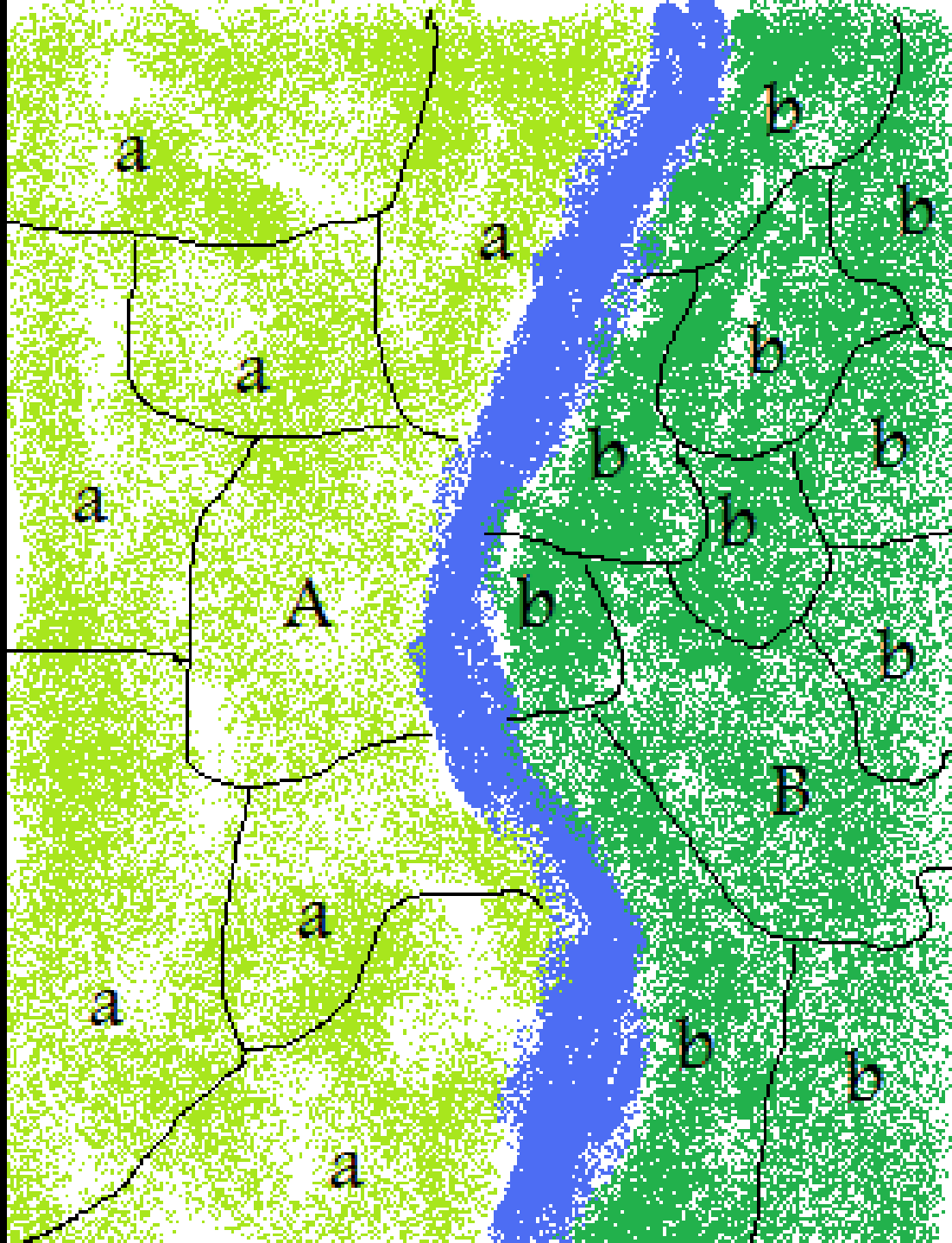
Treaty of Westphalia

- 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

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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

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- **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

- A man kills his neighbor
 - The police come and take care of it
- A bank robber steals thousands of dollars
 - The police come and take care of it
- The party last night got a little too crazy
 - The police come and take care of it

When Things Aren't So Great

- A drug dealer kills a rival drug dealer
- 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
 - Local police is too weak to do anything

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

- Definition: The lack of political authority

Anarchy

- Definition: The lack of political authority
- In international relations, no one is sovereign over the sovereign

Anarchy

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 - Have a problem? Either go solve it on your own or convince your friend to help you. The government isn't going to come and rescue you

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 - Have a problem? Either go solve it on your own or convince your friend to help you. The government isn’t going to come and rescue you
- Anarchy is *not* chaos
 - Fun fact: most states most of the time are not fighting each other

Anarchy

- Anarchy is a world of “self-help.”
 - Have a problem? Either go solve it on your own or convince your friend to help you
 - No government to come and rescue you
- Anarchy is *not* chaos.
 - Most states 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

- Proximate cause: why did this happen the way it happened?

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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.

Examples: Dead Driver

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Underlying Cause

- The driver died because he was not wearing his seatbelt.

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What have we learned?

- Don't fly through the windshield of your vehicle.
Don't get into car accidents.

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Underlying Cause

- The driver died because he was not wearing his seatbelt.

What have we learned?

- Wear your seatbelt.

Examples: The Bad Softball Team

Proximate Cause

- They lost because they had a hard time fielding the ball

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- Don't let a groundball get by you

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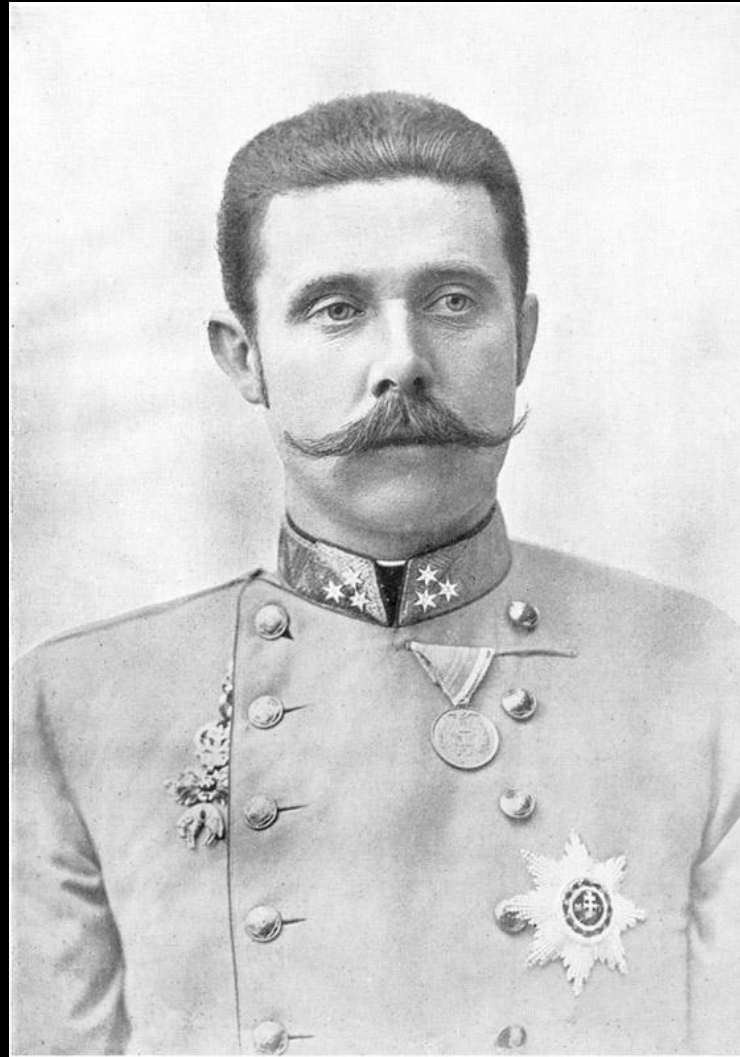
What have we learned?

- 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

Proximate Cause

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Underlying Cause

- Military technology gave states a huge first strike advantage.

Examples: World War I

Proximate Cause

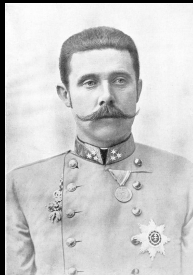
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Underlying Cause

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What have we learned?

- Don't let men with funny mustaches be assassinated.





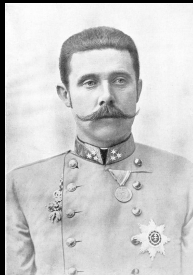
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Underlying Cause

- Military technology gave states a huge first strike advantage.

What have we learned?

- First strike advantages cause war.

Examples: World War II

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- Hitler was a bad person.

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Underlying Cause

- Reparations from WWI bankrupted Germany, allowing domestic institutions to fail.

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- Hitler was a bad person.

Underlying Cause

- Reparations from WWI bankrupted Germany, allowing domestic institutions to fail.

What have we learned?

- Let all aspiring Austrian artists into art school.

What have we learned?

- Be magnanimous in victory.

The Lesson

- Proximate causes are funny.
- Discovering underlying causes allows us to connect dissimilar situations and make sensible recommendations about today's world.

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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

- The international realm is anarchic. *Anything* can happen. So how do we narrow our expectations?

The Problem

- 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

Game Theory

- Game theory is the scientific study of strategic interdependence.

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.