

PS 0500: IR Basics

William Spaniel

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Agenda

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

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

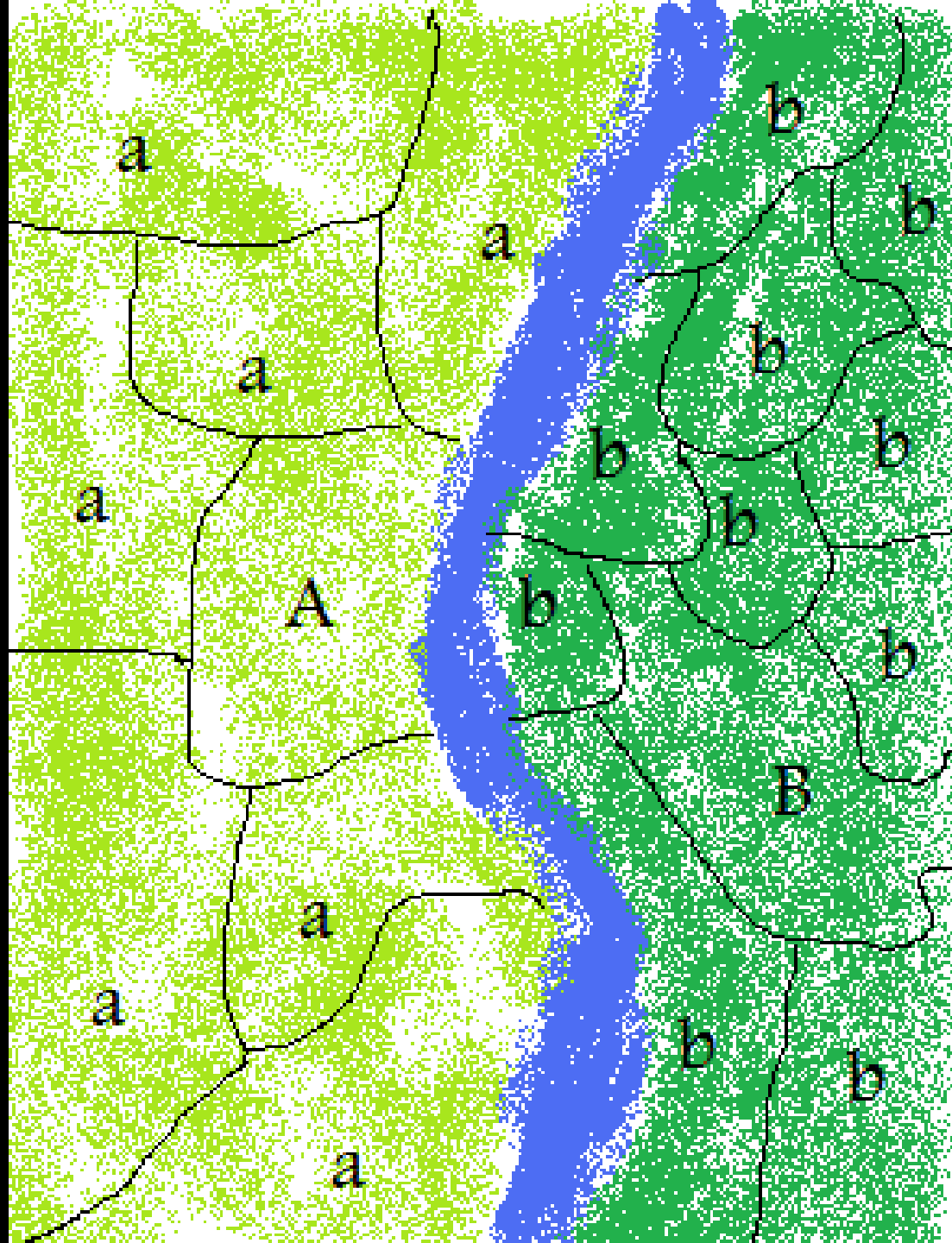
What is sovereignty?

- 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

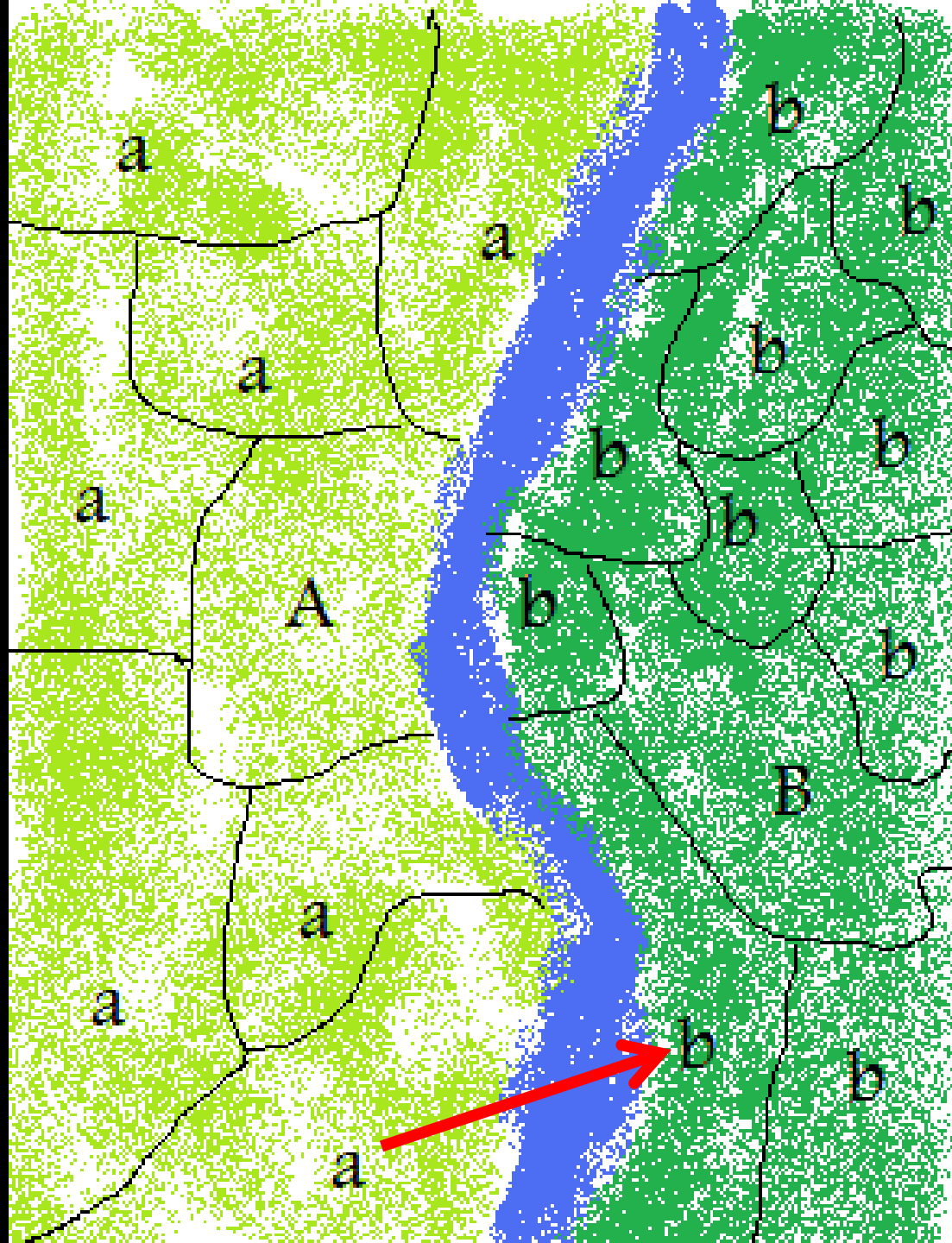
Analogy

- Parents have sovereignty over their children
- If you threw a baseball into your neighbor's window, your neighbor does not punish you
 - Your neighbor has to ask your parents for compensation

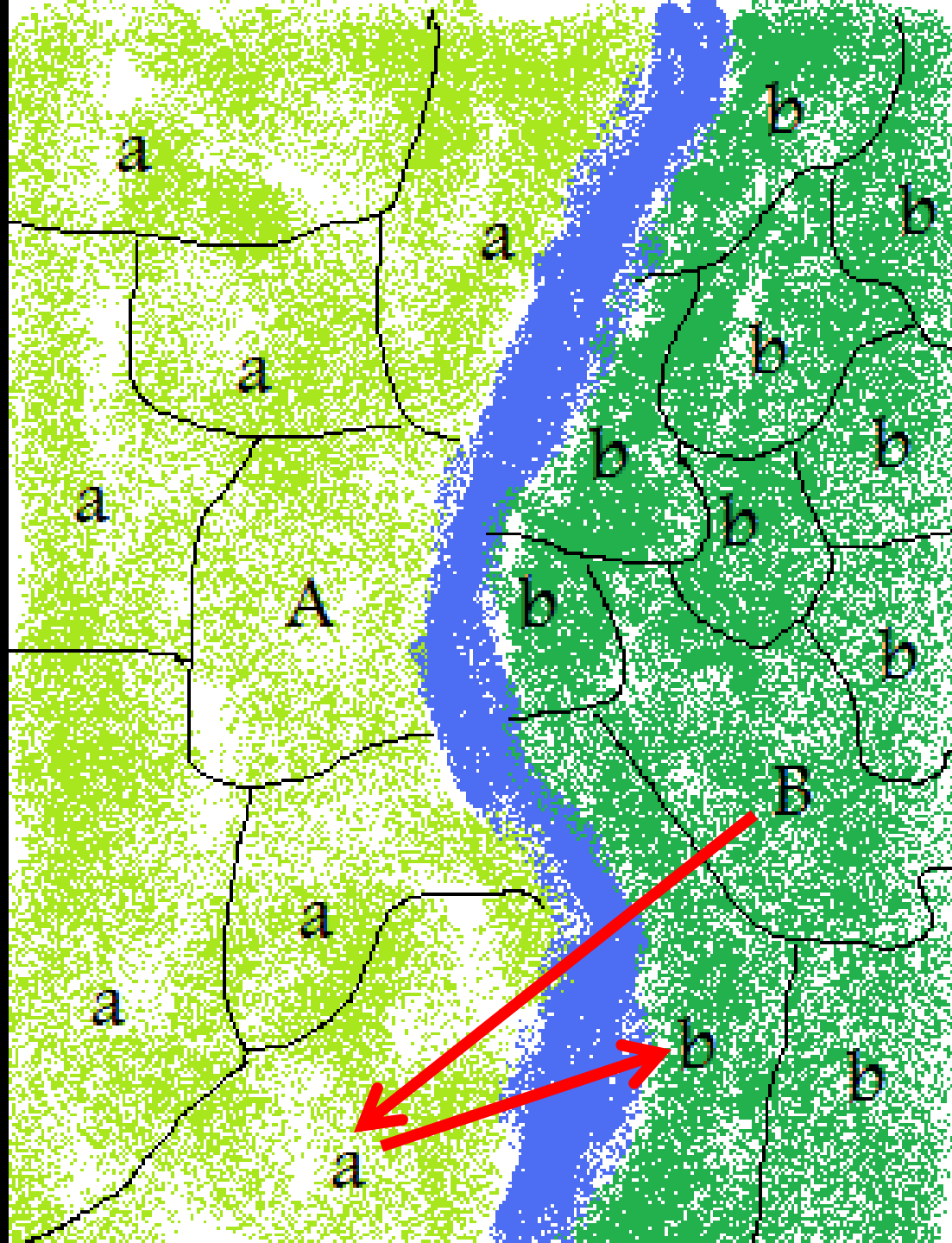
**Without
Sovereignty**



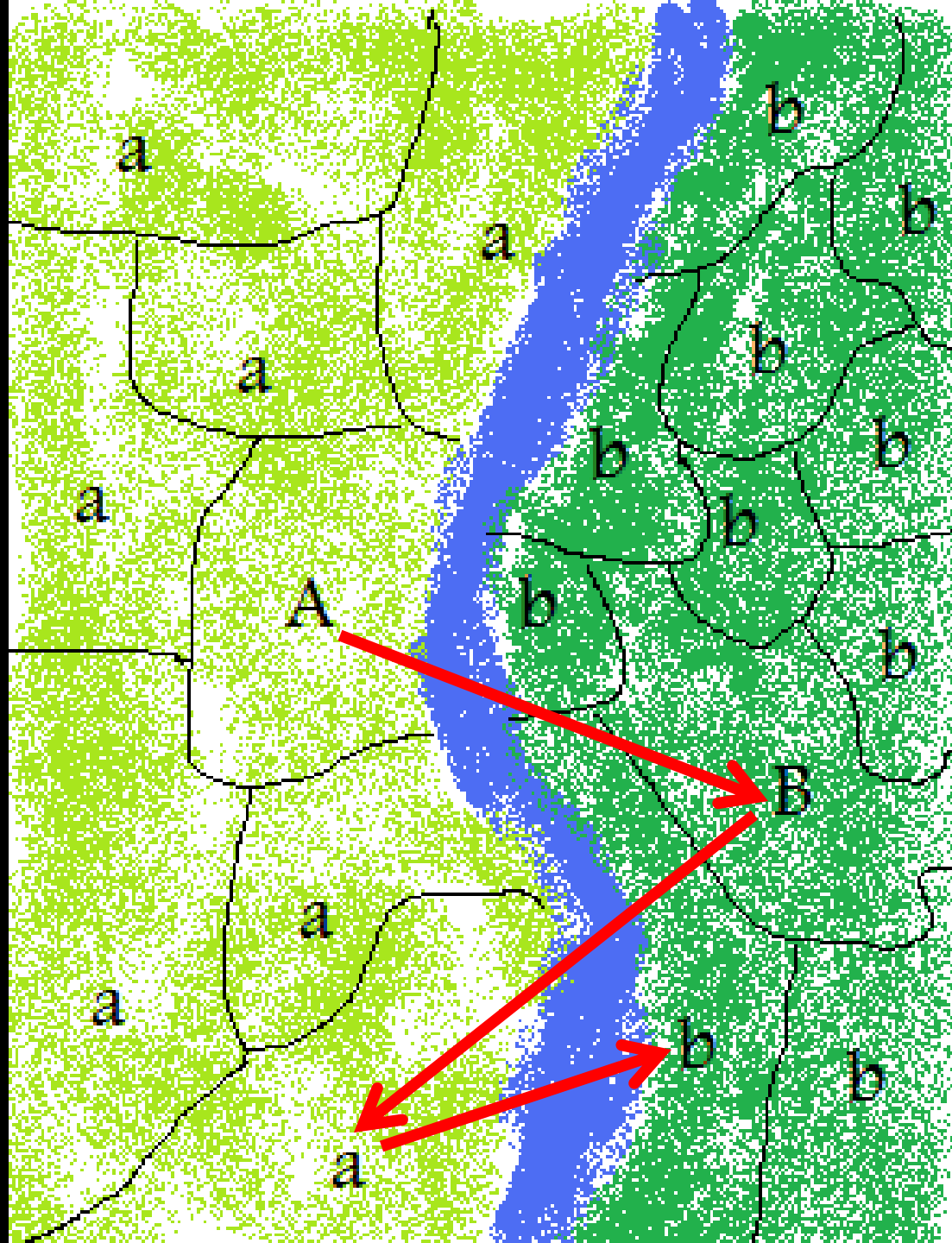
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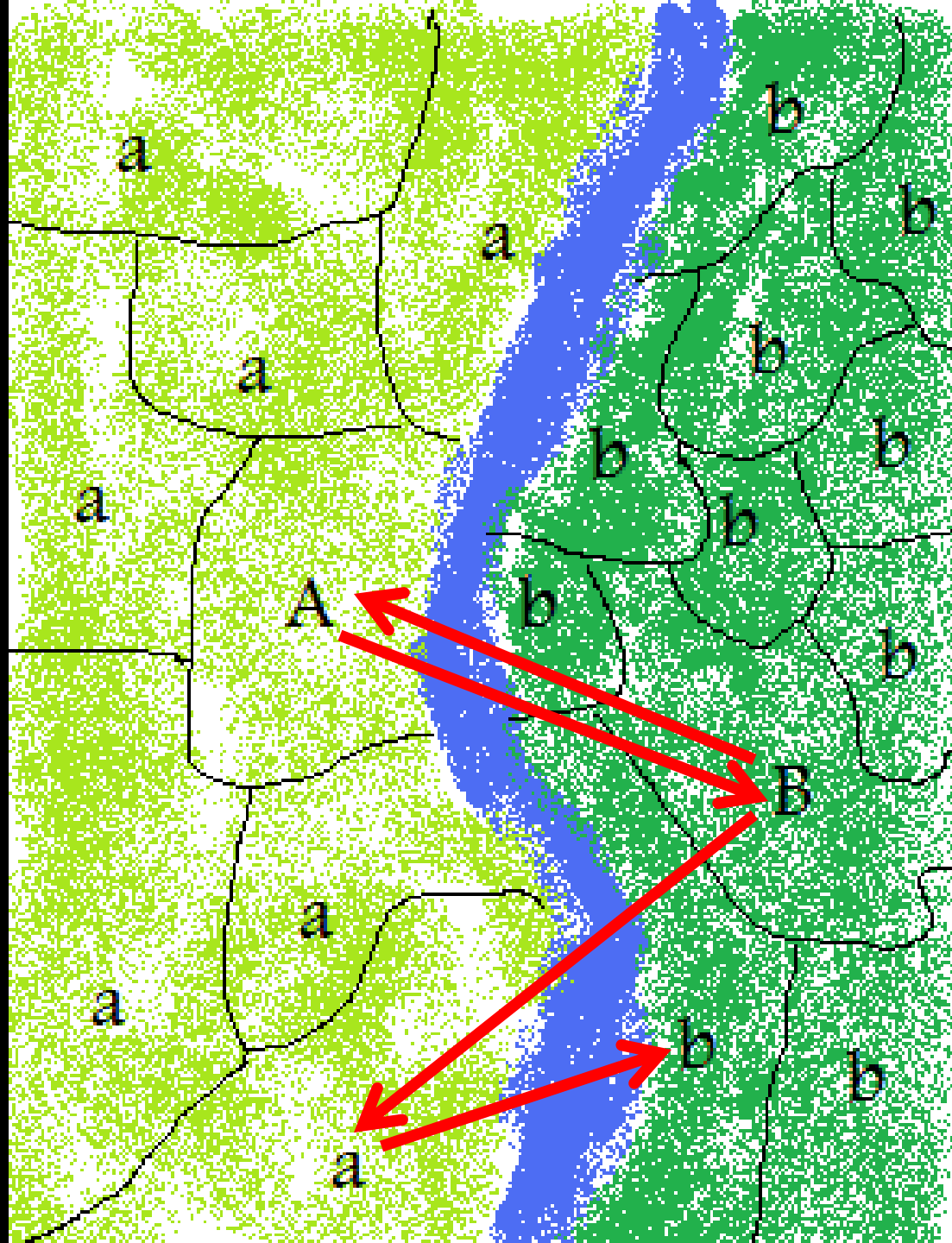
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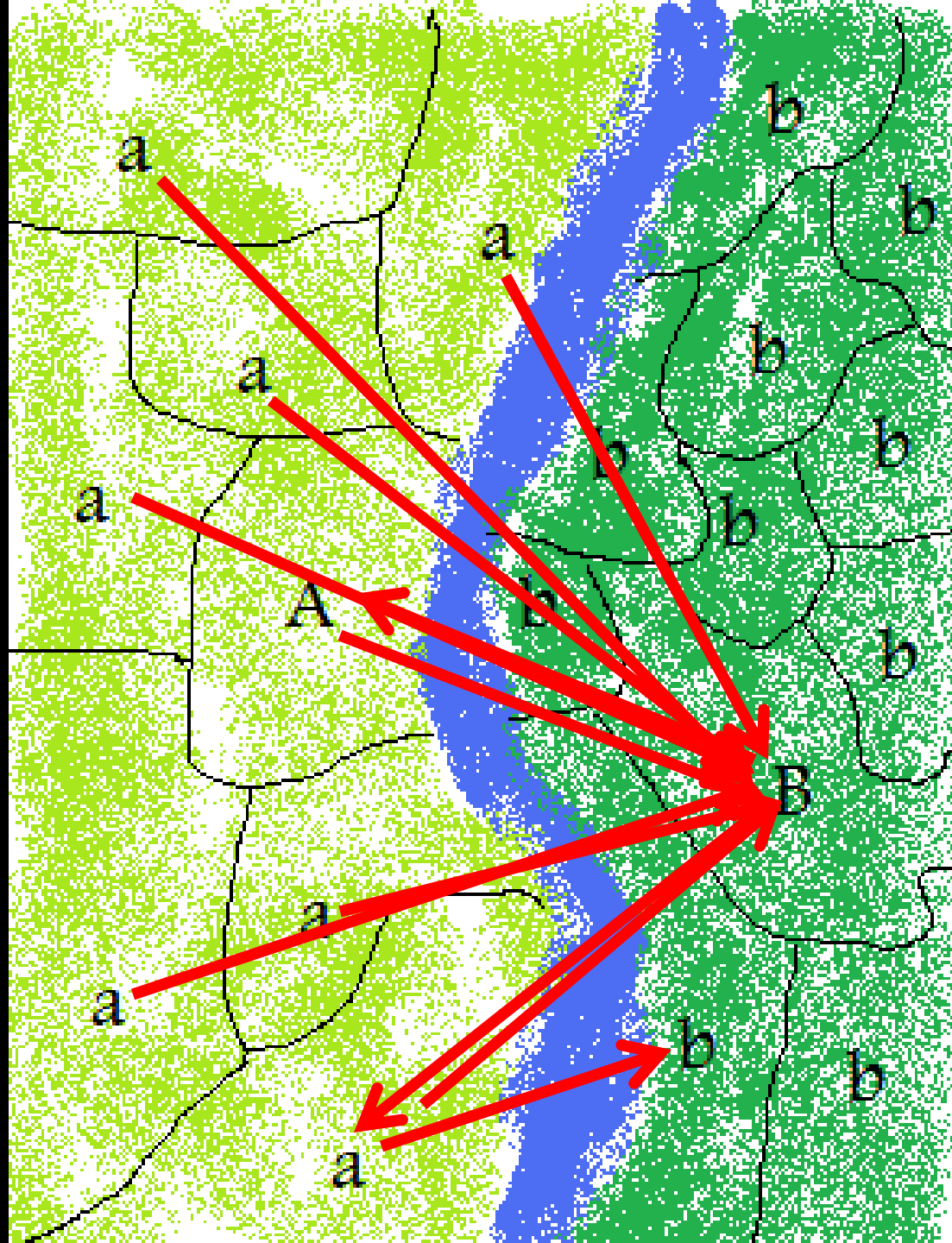
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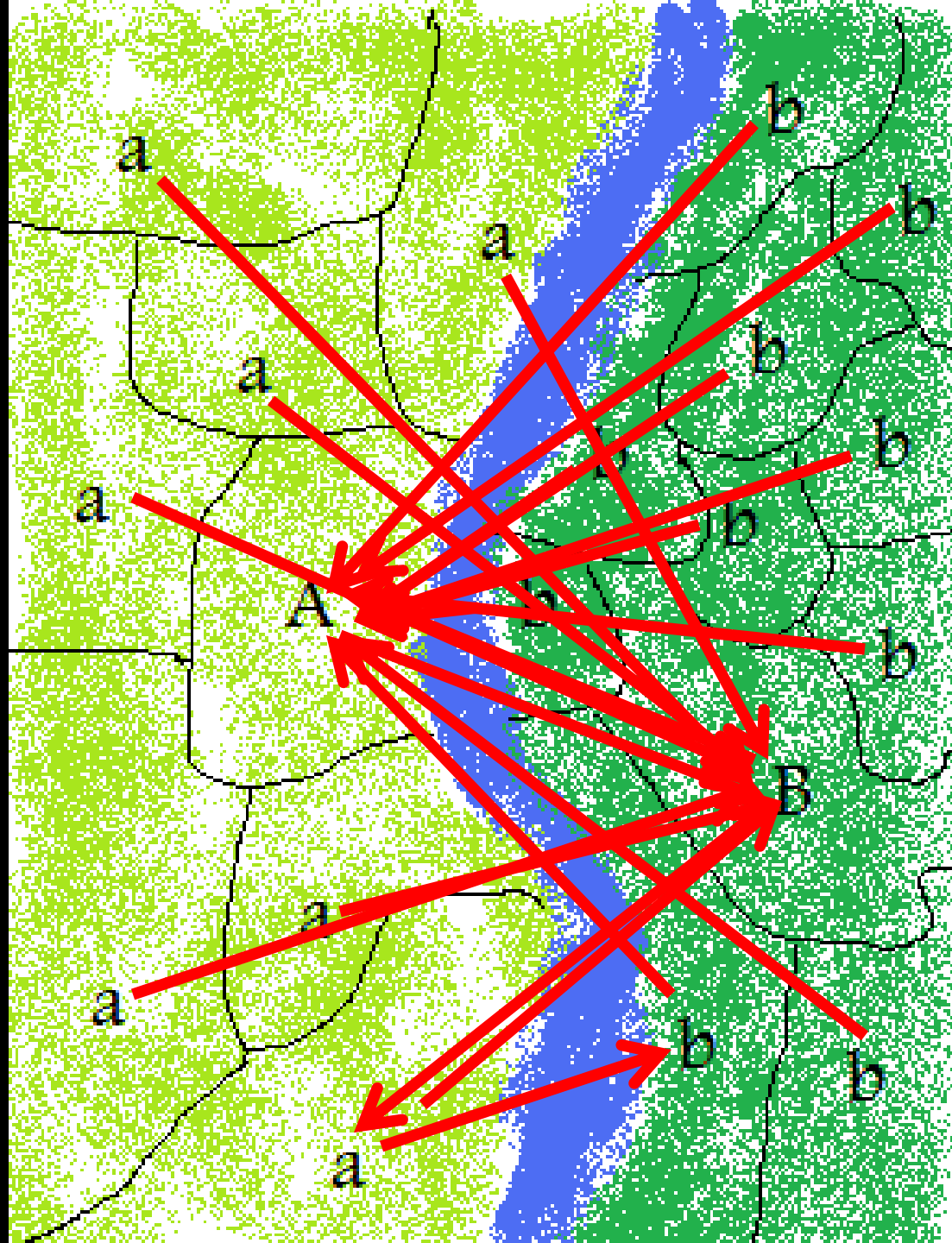
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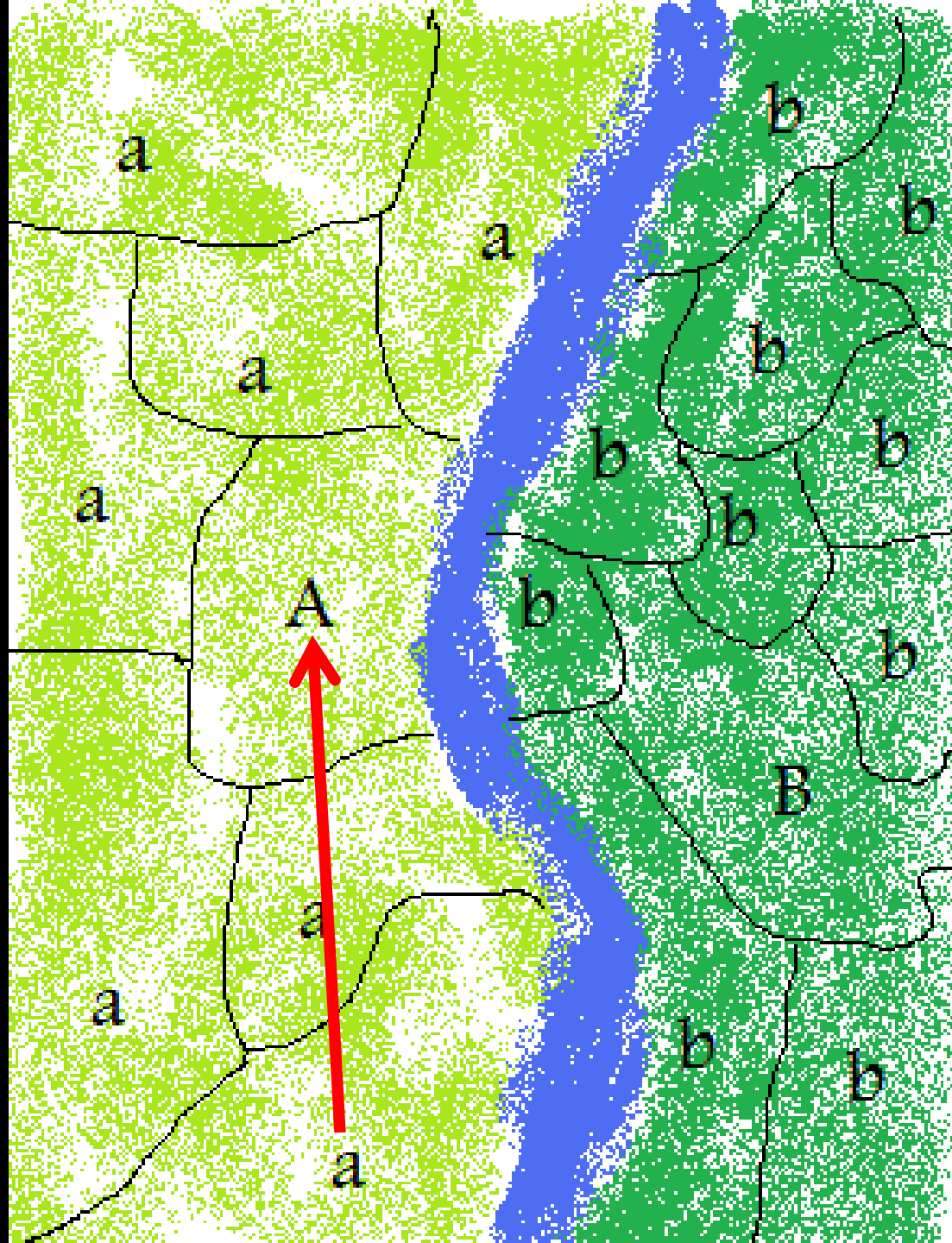
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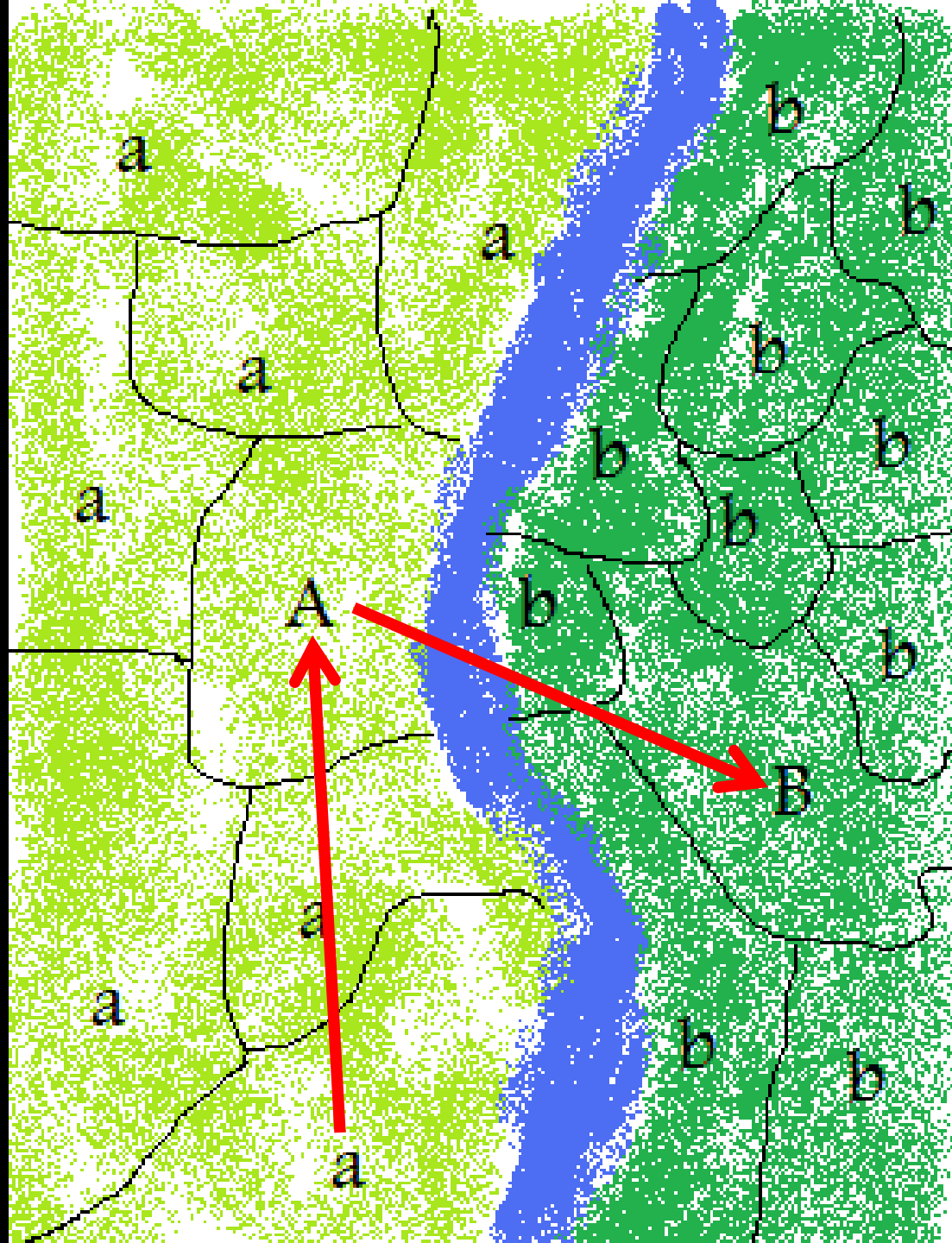
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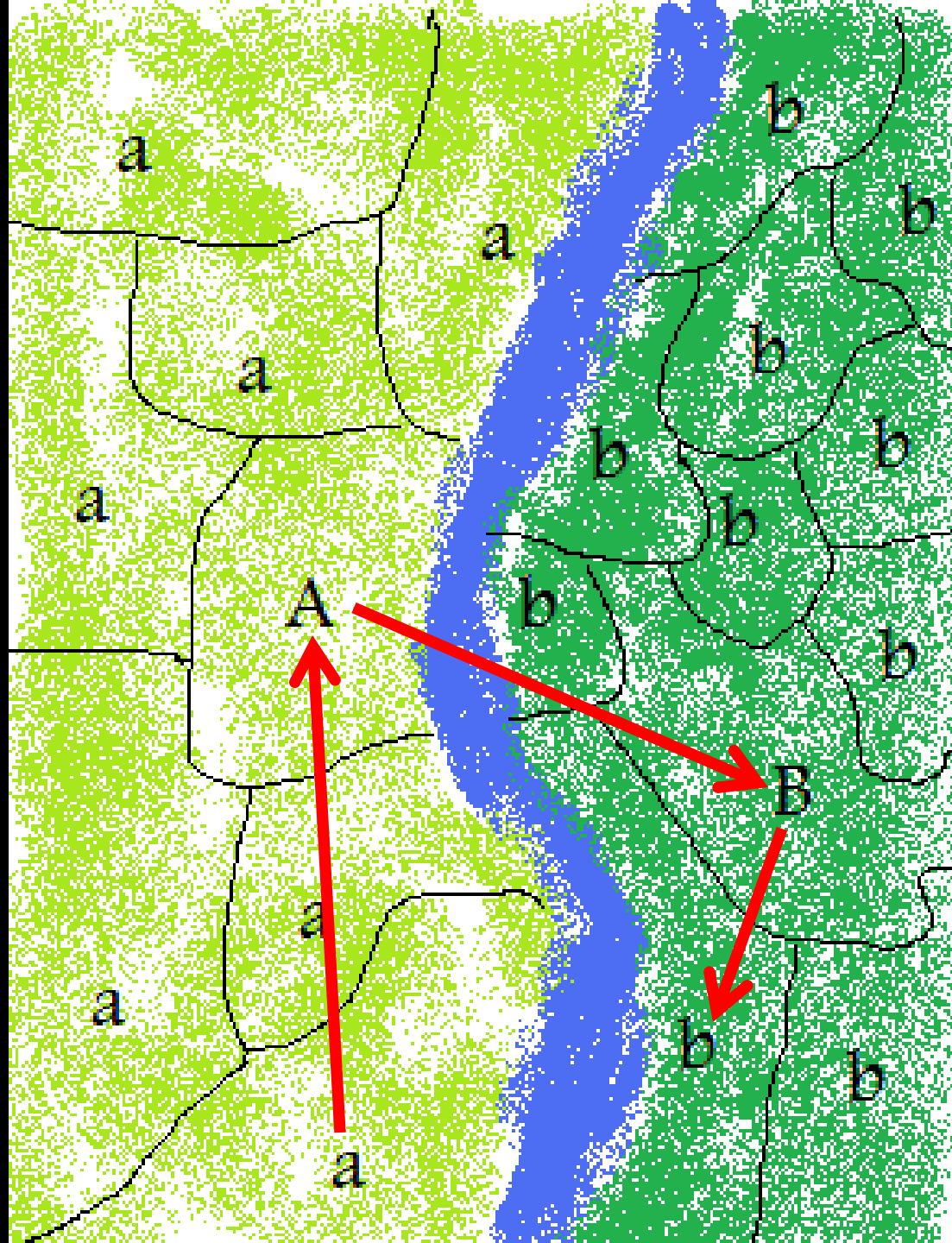
With
Sovereignty



With
Sovereignty



With
Sovereignty



Treaty of Westphalia

- Signed in 1648
- Ended the Thirty Years' War
- Established the principle of sovereignty





KATY PERRY  @katyperry · 13h

During all my 9 years as a pop artist, the one thing I know for sure is that The Treaty of Westphalia was complete

 94

 4.1K

 6.2K



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

What is sovereignty?

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- Sovereign states control their own domestic affairs
 - But states violate this occasionally

What is sovereignty?

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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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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
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- The party last night got a little too crazy
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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 sometimes encroach on other states' rights
 - 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

- 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

- 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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Two Types of Explanations

- Proximate cause: why did this happen the way it happened?
 - Focus of historical research
 - Concerned about the proper nouns of the situation

Two Types of Explanations

- Underlying cause: why was this asking to happen?
 - Focus of political science research
 - Concerned about the abstract details of the case

Two Types of Explanations

- We value underlying causes more
 - Proximate causes give us silly policy recommendations that may not generalize beyond the specific case
 - Underlying causes tell us how address what caused the specific case *and* other otherwise dissimilar cases

Examples: Dead Driver

Proximate Cause

- Jimmy died because he flew through the front windshield of his vehicle

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Underlying Cause

- Jimmy 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, and don't get into car accidents

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Underlying Cause

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What have we learned?

- Wear your seatbelt

Examples: Pandemic

Proximate Cause

- The student died due to COVID-19

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Underlying Cause

- The student never wore a mask, went parties, ignored social distancing and there were no hospital beds

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Examples: Pandemic

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- The student died due to COVID-19

What have we learned?

- Don't catch COVID-19

Underlying Cause

- The student never wore a mask, went parties, ignored social distancing and there were no hospital beds

What have we learned?

- Where masks, don't go to parties, socially distance, and expand hospital resources

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

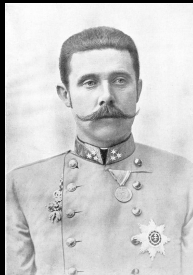
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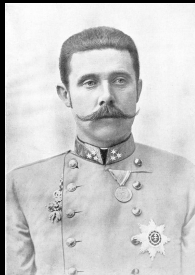
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What have we learned?

- First strike advantages cause war



Examples: World War II

Proximate Cause

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Examples: World War II

Proximate Cause

- Hitler was a bad person

Underlying Cause

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





Umlauffähig im ganzen Regierungsbezirk
Aachen. Gültig bis zum 1. April 1924.

Gutschein über Fünfzig Billionen M · a · r · k

Reihe A

DIESER GUTSCHEIN WIRD VON DEN STÄDTISCHEN KASSEN IN
ESCHWEILER u. STOLBERG SOWIE VON DEN BANKEN DES ESCHWEILER
STOLBERGER INDUSTRIEG. IN ZAHLUNG GENOMMEN. ER VERLIERT
SEINE GÜLTIGKEIT VIER WOCHEN NACH AUFRUF DURCH D. ÖFFENTL. BLÄTTER.

ESCHWEILER u. STOLBERG, DEN 17. NOV. 1923
DIE BÜRGERMEISTER:

50



Elser i.v. Döbbelmann



№ 715041

50 Trillion Marks

Examples: World War II

Proximate Cause

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Underlying Cause

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What have we learned?

- Let all aspiring Austrian artists into art school

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What have we learned?

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What have we learned?

- Be magnanimous in victory





The Lesson

- Proximate causes are funny
- Underlying causes connects connect dissimilar situations and make sensible recommendations about today's world

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- Proximate causes are funny
- Underlying causes connects 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?

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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...

Why We Formalize Arguments

- It's easy to get lost in the complex incentives that states face
- Building models of state behavior helps us keep things tractable
- Goal: Map assumptions to logically valid conclusions

Our Recipe

1. Create some assumptions
2. Do some (light) 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 work through the logic
 - Therefore, we won't be able to reach any conclusions at all

Thinking about Models

- Models are not reality—and intentionally so
- Don't say: "This model is bad because it doesn't exactly match the real world"
- Say: "I don't think this model captures important strategic dynamics that could fundamentally alter our conclusions"

