Debate:
The ‘second wave’ of Weberian historical sociology

The historical sociology of the state and the state of historical sociology in international relations

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ABSTRACT
With the current concern to critique neorealism, international relations (IR) theorists are looking to a variety of new perspectives as a way forward. Various authors have taken a specific interest in Weberian historical sociology (WHS), outlined in the works of Michael Mann and others. Nevertheless, there is currently only a rudimentary understanding of the approach within IR, and perhaps even less understanding of how it can be applied to IR. There is also a growing perception that the approach is inherently realist. This article seeks to redress this. It begins by laying out the basic WHS approach by identifying six general principles or traits. Special emphasis is given to recent developments in WHS’s theory of state autonomy, which takes the approach beyond neorealism. Having considered how this approach overlaps with the concerns of various IR theorists, notably Linklater, Halliday and others, it proceeds to examine how the approach can take IR beyond neorealism, by applying it to understanding: international economic change through a historical examination of tariff protectionism and free trade; the international politics of states, war and revolution; and international systems change (namely European industrialization). It concludes with a possible historical sociology research agenda for the study of IR.

KEYWORDS
Historical sociology; state capacity; international change; tariff protectionism; industrialization; war/revolution.

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INTRODUCTION

As Fred Halliday and others have argued, international relations (IR) as a discipline currently finds itself in an impasse (Halliday, 1994). Anxious to dethrone neorealism from its position of dominance within the discipline, IR theorists have begun to look to alternative approaches both from within and outside the discipline’s traditional boundaries. In the late 1980s and early 1990s various scholars began to turn their focus towards Weberian historical sociology (WHS) both as a means of redefining the discipline and as a potential approach that can go beyond neorealism (e.g. Halliday, 1987, 1994; Jarvis, 1989, 1993; Linklater, 1990; Shaw, 1994). However, while the works of historical sociologists are frequently alluded to within the IR literature, such citations tend for the most part to be fragmentary and unsustained. Moreover, many IR theorists have only a vague understanding of the approach, in part because it has never been spelled out in concise form, and in part because it has only rarely, if at all, been directly applied to the traditional study and analysis of IR.1

Perhaps more importantly, there are undoubted obstacles to the more widespread reception of the approach, most notably the common perception that WHS is merely a sociological form of neorealism. This perception derives (perhaps not unreasonably) from the approach’s emphasis on the importance of the system of states and above all on the insistence that states have autonomy. Indeed, at a time when IR is attempting to go beyond the state by bringing transnational and non-state forces back into IR, WHS with its emphasis on ‘state autonomy’ appears merely as a step back towards neorealist orthodoxy (e.g. Yalvaç, 1991: 94).

The basic argument of this article is that WHS is much more than a theory or approach based around the notion of state autonomy. Moreover, its theory of state autonomy, I argue, is one that allows considerable space for non-state forces, contrary to the realist approach. IR scholars, critical of WHS’s emphasis on state autonomy, have, however, failed to notice recent developments within the field. Most IR theorists have in mind the early formulations espoused by the likes of Theda Skocpol, which equate state autonomy as a power that transcends and, indeed, goes against the interests of the dominant class (e.g. Skocpol, 1979: 29–31, 1985: 9). But recent developments have moved considerably beyond this position. The basis of the new approach suggests that states by and large cooperate with dominant class interests, but that they often do so in order to enhance state power. This new ‘synergistic’ framework is discussed in detail at the end of the first section, and is employed within a series of case studies in Sections III, IV and V.

This article seeks to achieve several key objectives. First, it begins by setting out the core of the approach through six general traits or principles, in which the works of Mann, Runciman, Giddens and others are

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synthesized into a general formulation. Each principle will be differentiated from neorealism. Second, having laid out the approach, Section II goes on to examine the emerging consensus that makes WHS a potentially viable approach for the study of IR. Section III applies the approach laid out in Section I to the study of international political economy (IPE), specifically analysing the transition to tariff protectionism in late nineteenth-century Europe; Section IV extends the argument to the study of international politics (IP), specifically examining the First World War and its revolutionary aftermath; Section V considers WHS’s contribution to the analysis of ‘international systems change’, specifically examining the rise of industrialization after 1700, predominantly in Europe. The Conclusion outlines a potential historical sociological research agenda for IR.

I OUTLINES OF A WEBERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY APPROACH

While WHS is often thought to be based around the concept of state autonomy, it contains much more than this. One of the founding fathers of political realism, Hans Morgenthau, famously summarized his approach through six principles, outlined in the first chapter of his classic text, Politics Among Nations (1964). Here, I suggest that there are approximately six principles or traits of WHS, although these shall be consistently differentiated from realism and neorealism. They can be summarized as follows.

1 History and change

The first principle is that the study of history is crucial not simply for itself (as many historians often assume), but as a means of problematizing and critically exploring the origins of modern domestic and international institutions and practices. WHS is interested in understanding the process of change, both economic and political; that is, change between systems (systems change), or change within systems (intra-systemic change). The rise of capitalism/industrialization and the development of the modern system of states probably constitute the most common areas of systems change (discussed in Section V), although for intra-systemic change, there is a plethora of phenomena to be examined; for instance, the transition from free trade to protectionism in the late nineteenth century (discussed in Section III). In particular, WHS is interested in processes of global change, which, it argues, have occurred across a very long time span (that is, across several millennia).

Explaining change with a critical eye to problematizing modern institutions, structures and practices directly enters the terrain of Critical international relations theory. WHS examines the origins of various modern practices (e.g. free trade, protectionism) and institutions (e.g.
the state, the anarchic system of states, capitalism) to reveal that such phenomena are not ‘natural’ (cf. Cox, 1986), despite appearances to the contrary. Just as Karl Marx criticized the liberal assumption that capitalism is natural, so Weberian historical sociologists have demonstrated how the modern state is not a natural product of an alleged liberal social contract, but was forged to a certain extent in the heat of battle and warfare. Nor should the anarchic system of sovereign states be regarded as natural. Of the various forms that the international system has taken down through the millennia, the modern system of sovereignty is entirely unique; it is precisely its appearance as natural (reified in Waltzian neoliberalism) that needs to be problematized. This can be achieved through a historical sociological approach.

2 Multi-causality

WHS accords special emphasis to ‘multi-causality’ (i.e. a multi-factor approach). The approach insists that social and political change can only be understood through the interaction of multiple forces, none of which can be reduced to a single essence. As Gary Runciman (1989: 12) typically put it, speaking of the various sources of power:

although mutually interdependent, [they] are never fully reducible to one another . . . each of the three forms of power has its autonomous rules; but at the same time, each is reciprocally influenced by the other two in at least some aspects and to at least some degree.5

One area of disagreement, however, concerns the question of precisely how many sources of power exist. Mann argues convincingly for four, while Hall (1986) and Runciman (1989) argue for only three.6 The difference concerns the treatment of military power which Mann rightly separates from political (state) power, while Hall and Runciman conflate the two.7

Mann’s IEMP model of causality, which posits that ideological, economic, military and political power all have their own autonomy (albeit ‘partial’), is perhaps the clearest expression of the approach (Mann, 1986: ch. 1, 1993, ch. 1). But whether there are three, four or even five or six at this stage is not significant; rather, the significance lies in the fundamental claim that there is more than one source of power. This means that ‘base–superstructure’ models of causality, which reduce all phenomena to a single essence, are to be rejected. This of course has usually, and quite rightly, been invoked in order to critique Marxism.8 But equally it can be used to critique neorealism (especially in its Waltzian format) with its exclusive emphasis on the logic of the anarchic state system (to the detriment of non-systemic forces). Thus WHS argues that the state cannot be reduced to the logic of anarchy; states, as well as capitalists and other forms of non-state power, have
their own partial autonomy (to which I return in principles 4 and 6 and which is discussed in detail in Sections III–V).

As is well known, WHS began as a critique of liberalism and Marxism within Sociology. This led historical sociologists to bring both the state and the geopolitical state system back into the study of long-run change, which had previously been either omitted or given short shrift in the ‘economistic’ literature. This has been the principal means by which they have developed a non-reductionist/multi-causal approach. However, at times, the system of states has been singled out as the sole determining variable, leading to a geopolitical reductionism, which in turn justifiably lends credence to the critique of WHS as merely a sociological realism. One of the central tasks here will be to provide a non-realist explanation of international change (Sections III–V). Nevertheless, WHS argues that states, state systems, the international economy and social forces are all important variables in the understanding of change and development.

3 Multi-spatiality

The third aspect of the approach that follows on from the second is that societies, states and international systems (both political and economic) are inherently linked. WHS can produce what Cox (1986: 225) and Jarvis (1989) have called a ‘fit’ between the various spatial dimensions (cf. Halliday, 1987: 221). The approach has been best summarized by Mann in his pithy statement: societies (domestic and international) are ‘constituted of multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power’ (Mann, 1986: 1). It was this argument that in part enabled Theda Skocpol’s book *States and Social Revolutions* (1979) to cause such a stir. Here, perhaps her most fundamental argument was that the development of national societies cannot be understood through ‘societal-based’ theory, which focuses only on domestic-level variables, but must rather be analysed through the impact of ‘international systemic-level’ forces, most notably events occurring within the system of states. This built upon the insights of earlier writers, most notably: Hintze (1975), Weber (1978), Elias (1939/1994, 1978), McNeill (1963, 1982) and Bendix (1978). Mann and others (especially Giddens, 1981, 1985; Runciman, 1989; Hall, 1986; Collins, 1986) developed this much further, arguing that societies are not bounded entities which are self-constituting, and cannot therefore be analysed solely through domestic-level forces. Rather, societies and their institutions (economic, ideological, social, military and political) are in large part shaped by forces that lie outside their ‘borders’. To conceptualize this, Anthony Giddens coined the phrase ‘inter-societal relations’ (Giddens, 1981: 166–7; cf. Elias, 1978: 168–72; Runciman, 1989: 266–84). Particularly important is the claim that this interpenetration of space is nothing new, but has gone on throughout European history,
traceable back to at least AD 500. This is usually invoked as a means of criticizing orthodox Marxism and liberalism, or what Skocpol famously called ‘society-centred approaches’ (Skocpol, 1979: ch. 1). But equally, it provides a strong critique of neorealism which insists that the international system is separate from domestic society.

How can this approach apply to the terrain of IR inquiry? The multi-spatial principle can be best summarized in this respect through the concept of the ‘dual reflexivity’ of the international and domestic spheres. The dual reflexivity of the two spheres (international/domestic) rejects both orthodox Marxism’s claim that there is a one-way linkage of causality going from the national to the international, and world systems theory’s emphasis on the direction of causality going from the international to the national, as well as neorealism’s insistence on the separation of the two dimensions. WHS argues that causality runs both ways; thus international and transnational forces can shape societies as much as national societies can shape the international realm. There is a mutual or dual reflexivity of the two dimensions such that not only do they affect each other but, above all, they come fundamentally to structure each other, so that pace Marxism and neorealism, we cannot conceive the world economy or system of states on the one hand, and national societies on the other, as pure entities with their own self-reproducing logics. Rather they are reproduced through their mutual interactions. In Sections III and IV I show how a multi-spatial approach can reconfigure IR.

4 Partial autonomy

Because power forces and actors are multiple, and constantly interact and shape each other in complex ways, it becomes problematic to talk of power actors such as states or classes as wholly autonomous and self-constituting. Just as the various spatial dimensions are not self-constituting, neither are the specific power actors. Neither states nor classes, for example, can be regarded as independent ‘billiard balls’. They therefore cannot be treated as wholly rational, pure phenomena with single interests. They are rather determined by the interaction of multiple sources of power (cf. Elias, 1978: 140–2). Accordingly power actors and power sources do not constantly collide (as Marxism and neorealism assume), ‘like billiard balls, which follow their own trajectory, changing directions as they hit each other’ (Mann, 1993: 2). Rather, ‘they entwine, that is their interactions change one another’s inner shapes as well as their outward trajectories’ (Mann, 1993: 2, 725). Similarly, Norbert Elias talks of how power actors ‘inter-weave’ (Elias, 1978: ch. 1, 79–99, 154).

If power actors are not wholly independent, bounded and hermetically sealed, how can they be conceptualized? Mann argues that power actors are ‘promiscuous’ (Mann, 1986: 17–28, 503, 1993: ch. 1); Elias conceptualizes
them as ‘polymorphous figurations’ (Elias, 1978: 92); and Runciman discusses the notion of the ‘systact’ (Runciman, 1989: 20–7). Conceptualizing states, classes and other key actors as systacts suggests a shift in understanding their functions, identities and roles. A systact involves a complexity of functions and identities. Systactic membership may be either multiple or partial: ‘multiple because people perform a multiplicity of roles; and partial, because they may not wholly or consistently share all of the interests of all those clustered with them at a common location’ (Runciman, 1989: 21–2). This notion essentially develops Weber’s fundamental tripartite distinction of ‘class, status and party’ (see Weber, 1978).

Put more abstractly, classes (pace Marxism) cannot be understood as hermetically sealed entities, imbued with absolute autonomy that emanates from a specific economic origin; rather they are causally interdependent with the political, ideological and military sources of power. Similarly (pace neorealism), states cannot be conceived of as hermetically bounded entities or billiard balls imbued with an exclusive politico-strategic power maximization/survivalist rationality. In sum, just as economic and ideological sources of power emanating from the domestic and international realms cut across ‘sovereign’ state borders, so fiscal, geopolitical and ideological forces cut across pure class boundaries which, in the process, come constantly to reconstitute these entities such that they take on multiple identities. This fundamental aspect of the approach suggests a clear convergence with constructivism, a point I develop elsewhere (Hobson, 2000).

5 Complex change

Neorealism, in particular, stresses the importance of continuity in world politics. As Waltz famously put it, ‘the texture of international relations remains highly constant, patterns recur and events repeat themselves endlessly. The relations that prevail internationally seldom shift rapidly in type or in quality. They are marked by a dismaying persistence’ (Waltz, 1979: 66). This is a commonplace among realists (Howard, 1985: ch. 1; Gilpin, 1981: 7, 230; Fischer, 1992). And it is equally true of neorealist hegemonic stability theory which emphasizes the repetitive cycle of hegemony (Krasner, 1976; Gilpin, 1981, 1987) or the long cycle of global politics (Modelski, 1978); a logic that is reproduced in Marxist notions of hegemony (Wallerstein, 1984; Cox, 1986; Goldstein, 1988; Chase-Dunn, 1989).9

However, WHS argues that both societies and international politics are best understood as ‘immanent orders of change’ (Elias, 1978: 149). These arenas are subject to constant change, such that we need to focus on ‘discontinuity’ (Giddens, 1985: ch. 1), as much as ‘continuity’ in international and national development. It is at this point that Mann draws on Weber’s ‘switchman metaphor’.10 Thus, he argues,
The sources of social power are ‘tracklaying vehicles’ – for the tracks do not exist before the direction is chosen – laying different gauges of track across the social and historical (and international) terrain. The ‘moments’ of tracklaying, and of converting to a new gauge are the closest we can get to the issue of primacy.

(Mann, 1986: 28; original italics)

This means that the positivist search for iron laws of motion based on unitary power source models, found typically in Waltz (1979) and Marx (1867/1954), is a futile exercise. Development (national or international) is more tentative, subject to unintended influences and sudden changes through the interaction of multiple power forces, rather than single predictable and repetitive forms of motion. International development can best be conceptualized through the notion of ‘patterned mess’ (Mann, 1993: ch. 1), or ‘patterned chaos’, rather than that of smooth, predictable, unfolding evolutionary change.

6 ‘Non-realist’ concept of state autonomy

It is especially at this point that IR theorists, critical of WHS, claim that the approach is grounded in an implicit realist problematic. Thus, Faruk Yalvaç (1991: 94) wrote:

following a very interesting theoretical development, current sociological theories of the state are increasingly approaching a more traditional view of the state as actor model (ie., realist) precisely at a time when the theory of international relations is getting away from this idea and taking a more sociological form.

Or to put it in more sociological parlance, various writers have claimed that WHS is politically reductionist (Jessop, 1990: 283–8; Cammack, 1989; Scholte, 1993b: 96, 101–2, 112). This challenge requires a clear differentiation of the neo-Weberian approach from the realist. To demonstrate this, it is worth examining the realist and neorealist approaches to the state. Hans Morgenthau’s position, articulated in his sixth principle of political realism, asserts that, ‘the political realist maintains the autonomy of the political sphere just as the economist, the lawyer, the moralist maintain theirs’ (Morgenthau, 1964: 11). Morgenthau’s notion of political autonomy implies a fundamental analytical separation of the state from societal forces. Moreover, state autonomy for Morgenthau implies not only structural separation from society, but also that the only important function of the state derives from its relationship with others in the international system.

There are two further related positions articulated by neorealists. First, there is the paradoxical assertion made by Kenneth Waltz that while states
should be separated from societies, nevertheless they have no autonomy to affect international politics (Waltz, 1979). His second defining principle of the international system — minimal differentiation of the units (states) — intentionally and unequivocally rules out the possibility that states and the state–society relationship can affect international relations (Waltz, 1979: 88–99). States are understood in strategic-functionalist terms; they do what is required by the international anarchic ordering principle (namely, following survivalist policies of self-help). The second position is found in the more statist work of Stephen Krasner (1978: 55–90), who argues that state autonomy is high when the state is able to transcend society, where state–society relations are conceived as a zero-sum contest of power.14

At first sight Krasner’s formulation appears congruent with that of WHS. Thus Skocpol famously argued that states are ‘potentially’ autonomous from direct dominant class control (1979: 29–31). More specifically she argues that state autonomy refers to the ability of states to ‘formulate and pursue goals that are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society’ (1985: 9). The claim that autonomy exists only in those instances in which the state goes fundamentally against the interests of the dominant class is very much the received understanding of the WHS formulation. But this early formulation is being superseded by recent developments. An emerging new position suggests that state power can be maximized or enhanced when the state cooperates with, and embeds itself within, society. This lies at the base of Mann’s concept of the ‘organic’ state (Mann, 1986), and has been captured most recently through the concept of ‘embedded autonomy’ (Evans, 1995; Weiss and Hobson, 1995; Hobson, 1997).

‘Autonomy’ refers to the degree to which the state elite and bureaucracy determine and shape policies that are above the everyday private interests of its members (in clear contrast to ‘patrimonialism’). However, this autonomy does not refer to separation from society. As Evans puts it, ‘to the contrary, they [states] are embedded in a concrete set of social ties that binds the state to society and provides institutionalized channels for the continual negotiation and the renegotiation of goals and policies’ (Evans, 1995: 12). Thus, while autonomy is a necessary prerequisite for enhancing the state’s ability to advance its own goals (in his case, encouraging industrial development), a successful outcome can only be obtained through embeddedness. Conversely a lack of autonomy can lead back to patrimonialism and economic backwardness (e.g. Mobutu’s Zaire). Thus ‘some degree of autonomy from societal pressures is necessary in order to organize and rationalise society’. And yet, ‘states need to be constrained by their societies’ (Zhao and Hall 1994: 213). Ikenberry summarizes this through the notion of the ‘irony of state strength’ (Ikenberry, 1986: 106, 134–7, 1988b: 160–3, 175–7; Weiss and Hobson, 1995: 8, 46, 48, 57, 89, 129, 244–5; Hobson, 1997). Weberian historical sociologists have by
and large employed this analysis to understanding states and economic development. But the case study sections below apply this concept to understanding IPE and IR, by comparatively examining the various abilities of states to enhance their political and fiscal capacity in the domestic and international arenas, leading in turn to changes in international relations.

Michael Mann has recently argued that there are two statist positions: a ‘true elitist’ perspective and ‘institutional statist’ (Mann, 1993: ch. 3). The elitist perspective associates state autonomy with abrasion against society (as in the early WHS formulation), while the latter more recent formulation endows the state with autonomy to the extent that states affect societies (and international relations) even when they do this by cooperating with society. Moreover, it is argued that state power is maximized when states negotiate with society (i.e. embeddedness). In this formulation state–society relations are a crucial determinant of state power, which in turn has ramifications for understanding the processes of economic development and ultimately of international relations.

Even so, despite the development of this new formulation, it has largely gone unnoticed by IR theorists, who continue to equate statism and WHS with its early and crude ‘elitist’ aspect. Thus ironically Thomas Risse-Kappen typically argues in favour of a ‘domestic structure approach’, which ‘unlike’ statism, allows for a ‘differentiation between various degrees of state strength and autonomy vis-à-vis society and go[es] beyond the generalities of “statist” versus “pluralist” approaches to the state’ (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 19; cf. Ashley, 1986: 268–70). Indeed, it does go beyond the early ‘true elitist’ versions of state autonomy found particularly in WHS. But it tends to embrace exactly the objectives of the ‘institutional statist’ approach which has been largely developed within recent WHS research.

Thus the essence of the neo-Weberian approach is that state autonomy is not absolute and wholly separate from society (pace Morgenthau), nor is it measured in terms of the state’s ability to separate itself from society (contra Krasner). Rather, state autonomy is measured in terms of a state’s degree of embeddedness within society. Thus the more a state is embedded in society, the greater its capacity to maintain itself domestically and abroad. Conversely, the higher the isolation from society (i.e., in Mann’s terms, where ‘despotic’ power is high), the more a state’s capacity to maintain itself domestically and internationally is diminished. The basic principle here is that state power and capacity can be greatly enhanced by mobilizing society, and by maintaining a high degree of consent (cf. Buzan, 1983). This places emphasis on ‘collective’ power which enables the development of state and society, as opposed to the more ‘zero-sum’ conception of power found in realism and crude statism. While I shall return to this much more fully, the point to note here is that this notion

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of state autonomy does not involve kicking society back out, but rather implies 'bringing society back in'. Thus the structural separation of state and society found most acutely in neorealism is wholly rejected.

The approach has in common with Marxism the insistence that states must be linked to societies. But it differs in so far as it insists that states cannot be reduced to societal interests either in the first or last instances, or in the short or long run. More often than not, when states cooperate with society, they do so not as a sign of their weakness and dependence upon the dominant class, but as a means by which they enhance their power (i.e. fiscal-military or economic power). Nevertheless, even when the state is strongly embedded in the dominant class, this does not preclude moments when the state can go against this class’s interests (see Sections III and IV below for a discussion of Britain). Similarly, the German Reich's embeddedness in the agrarian Junker class did not prevent the state from occasionally going against its economic interests (Hobson, 1997: 31–9, 51–8).

Further clarification can be made by contrasting the definition of state strength in the international arena found in the Weberian and neorealist positions. For neorealists, state strength is defined as the ability of a state fundamentally to change the behaviour of others in the international system;¹⁵ a power that is held most prominently by hegemons (Krasner, 1977: 637; Gilpin 1981, 1987). In the neo-Weberian approach, the strong state is one that can adapt to domestic and international pressures that confront it. But it is the manner through which the state adapts that is crucial here: adaptation is maximized when the state embeds itself in society, and minimized when the state seeks to enhance its despotic power over, or isolation from, society.

Perhaps the crucial point to note here is how this position produces a critique of Waltzian neorealism. The approach rejects the passive definition of the state that Waltz adheres to, where states merely act in accordance with the logic of anarchy. The central problem found in neorealism is its insistence on conceptualizing states as sovereign 'like-units'. This reifies the state's institutional position in the domestic arena (by assuming a structural separation of state from society) and, on the other hand, underestimates the state's institutional ability to affect international relations, by reducing it to the exigencies and functional requirements of the logic of anarchy. Sovereignty is a passive concept, which tarnishes all states as 'like units', and simultaneously abolishes their domestic relations with society as conceptual variables in international politics. While states do by and large perform the same function, as he defines it, they are nevertheless clearly differentiated in terms of their relations with society which, in turn, plays a crucial role in the making of external foreign policy. As Ruggie points out, Waltz’s second defining principle of the international system (differentiation of the units) should not drop

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out but should be kept in (Ruggie, 1986: 142–6). Thus states need to be differentiated in terms of their embedded relations with society in order to understand foreign policy and international relations. Therefore the state–society relationship is crucial to understanding international relations, which in turn implies the use of ‘second image’ theory – something which Waltz, in his insistence on third image theory, expressly warns against (Waltz, 1979: 40–60).

Paradoxically, downgrading the notion of sovereignty, in favour of an embedded conception of state power/autonomy, enables us to bring the state and state–society relationship into the analysis of international relations. In turn, if we downgrade sovereignty in favour of state power/capacity and state–society relations, we necessarily downgrade (though not eradicate) the logic of anarchy in international relations. In the process we move towards a position that allows for the fundamental interpretation of all three spatial dimensions – the inter/transnational, national and subnational – in which states and non-state actors can have an autonomous input into IR,16 and are therefore not understood simply as a function of international anarchy (cf. Halliday, 1987: 226; Nettl, 1968: 562).

The ramifications of this are several-fold; first, as noted, it enables an analysis that provides for a complex interrelationship between states, societies and international systems, something that is unequivocally ruled out in Waltzian neorealism. Second, it makes possible an alternative organizing principle for the state, notably the conception of the ‘janus-faced’ state (cf. Halliday, 1994: 84–6; Hintze, 1975: 183; Skocpol, 1979: 32; Mann, 1988; Ikenberry, 1988a, 1991; Linklater, 1990; Jarvis, 1993), or the ‘adaptive state’, in which a state maintains its power domestically and internationally by playing off the internal against the external realms and vice versa (cf. Rosenau, 1981). This enables a much richer analysis than that found in Waltzian neorealism, not least because it opens up a broader canvas, enabling an understanding of how states, societies and international systems develop over time, as well as insight into how they interrelate.

Finally, one of the oft-cited theoretical objectives for many IR theorists and international political economists is to develop a theory that goes ‘beyond the state’ (e.g. Palan and Amin, 1996; Murphy and Tooze, 1991; Risse-Kappen, 1995). This is sometimes taken as a means to ‘kick the state back out’ (Ferguson and Mansbach, 1989). But the upshot of WHS is to suggest that there is not a zero-sum game between state and non-state power; rather, state power can be understood as something which goes hand in hand with social power. Moreover, the WHS approach to state autonomy not only asserts the relevance of non-state sources of power; it implies their very existence.17 Following this discussion of the six traits or principles of WHS, it is worth considering how they overlap with the concerns of IR theorists in general.
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II THE CASE FOR BRINGING NEO-WEBERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY INTO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

This section examines four broad sources which open up a space for WHS either explicitly or implicitly: the growing interest in ‘international systems change’; the desire to develop a Critical theory of international relations; recent theoretical developments within IPE and IR more generally; and finally, the explicit calling by some for a dialogue between IR and WHS.

One of the first developments within IR that enables an entry point for WHS is the growing interest in international systems change (the traditional preserve of WHS). This was first brought onto the IR agenda by John Ruggie (1986) and Robert Cox (1986), particularly as a way of critiquing Waltz. This has spawned a number of books and articles which produce (or comment on) various non-realist accounts of the rise and development of the modern system of states, ranging from the brilliant (broadly liberal) analysis of Hendrik Spruyt (1994) to the Marxist world systems approach of Arrighi (1994), Goldstein (1988), Chase-Dunn (1989), Wallerstein (1984), Palan and Gills (1993) and Frank and Gills (1996), as well as the structural Marxist account of Rosenberg (1994), and a host of non-Marxist writers (Rasler and Thompson, 1989; Jarvis, 1989, 1993; Hobden, 1998; Shaw, 1994; Scholte, 1993a, 1993b; Sen, 1984; Thomson, 1994). Moreover, Buzan, Jones and Little’s masterpiece, The Logic of Anarchy (1993), does much to bring the study of world history onto the IR research agenda. I would suggest that this striking book should replace Waltz’s Theory of International Politics as the realist text with which critics of realism should engage. Moreover, theorists of globalization are also interested in systems change, inquiring into whether the world is now moving into a post-sovereign environment (Shaw, 1997).

Second, the desire by some to produce a Critical theory of international relations (already noted with respect to Robert Cox) has led one of its chief proponents – Andrew Linklater – to call explicitly for the employment of WHS within IR (cf. Keyman, 1997). Thus he argues that,

a contemporary critical sociology (of international relations) ought to explain the interaction between the multiple logics which have shaped the development of the modern world. In this discussion, particular emphasis is placed upon the relations between the growth of state power, strategic interaction, capitalist development and industrialisation.

(Linklater, 1990: 6)

Linklater places special emphasis on the problem of boundaries, how these have been constituted, and how they have changed over time;
something which, in particular, enters the terrain of Mann’s work in *The Sources of Social Power* (1986, 1993).

To this can be added Cox’s calling for a Critical approach which focuses on three categories of forces – specifically, material capabilities, ideas and institutions (Cox, 1986: 218; cf. Keyman, 1997). This opens up the way specifically for a multi-causal model, a fundamental aspect of WHS. Added impetus is accorded at this point through Cox’s failure effectively to realize this objective of multi-causality, since in the first instance he defines the various realms – the domestic production sphere, forms of state and world orders – as essentially expressions of the condensation of class forces (1986: 220). Cox could be much better off were he to shed his Marxist skin and embrace a Weberian approach in order to realize fully his otherwise laudable objectives.

A third area of convergence between WHS and that of the emergent IR agenda has come about through recent developments within IPE. In their important book, *The New International Political Economy*, Craig Murphy and Roger Tooze argue for a ‘heterodox’ approach to IPE, which (among other objectives) seeks to transcend ahistorical notions of the separation between economics and politics (Murphy and Tooze, 1991; cf. Germain, 1997; Palan and Amin, 1996; Higgott, 1991a: 103, 1991b; Strange, 1988, 1991; S. Gill, 1991: 55; Murphy, 1994; Rupert, 1995; Boyer and Drache, 1996; Weiss and Hobson, 1995). In this vein, a growing number of authors are seeking to problematize the state (e.g. Keyman, 1997) and develop more complex notions of the state (e.g. Higgott, 1991b: 409–13; Halliday, 1994: ch. 4; Shaw, 1997). To this can be added the increasingly popular objective within IR theory of going beyond parsimony, and producing more complex notions of space, time, power, change, identity and causality – the very essence of WHS. This is represented in a host of approaches ranging from feminism (especially Tickner, 1988, 1992) through to post-structuralism (Walker, 1993). In particular, states and the system of states are being problematized within the emerging constructivist perspective, which provides powerful sociological and historical insight and analysis, and which, along with Critical theory, is perhaps the most significant theoretical innovation to enable a space for WHS. Constructivist writers of note here include Kratochwil (1989), Wendt (1997), Biersteker and Weber (1995), Inayatullah (1995, 1997), Strang (1991, 1995), Katzenstein (1996) and Reus-Smit (1997, 1998).

Fourth, various theorists have argued for the need to engage specifically in a dialogue between WHS and IR (Halliday, 1994; Shaw, 1994; Jarvis, 1989, 1993; Hobden, 1998). Halliday has gone furthest in this regard, suggesting how WHS – particularly through its theory of the state – can reorient the study of IR. Having discussed the core of his approach, I shall then apply it, in conjunction with the six principles outlined above, in order to understand various IR topics (trade regime changes, and war and revolution).
What is the specific WHS framework that Halliday employs to reconfigure the study of traditional IR? Though he does not use the term, Halliday invokes what might be called a ‘spatial trinity’ approach. He starts out by drawing on Theda Skocpol’s (1979) claim that societies are embedded within the external system of states. Thus he begins with her point that national revolutions are not determined simply by domestic-level forces (as has traditionally been thought), but through the impact of events generated within the external system of states – notably through defeat in war. Employing Skocpol’s neo-Weberian argument that revolutions tend to create stronger and more centralized states, he goes on to consider how this can in turn affect the international system. Drawing on Wight’s argument that revolutionary international politics has predominated over ‘unrevolutionary IR’ (Halliday, 1994: 132), he argues that revolutionary states then go on to affect the international system through engaging in war. He cites the examples of the wars of the 1760s which contributed to the 1789 French Revolution, which in turn led on to the Napoleonic wars; defeat in the First World War led on to the communist revolution in Russia and the emergence of the Bolshevik state, which in turn played an important part in the Second World War and of course, later on, in the Cold War (Halliday, 1994: ch. 6).

So what we have in Halliday’s work is the utilization of WHS to produce a non-realist theory of IR. Warfare is determined not simply by changes in the international distribution of power under conditions of anarchy, but by a series of linkages which cut across international society, specifically a spatial trinitarian conception of IR. Put differently, Halliday employs a feedback loop, invoking an international–national–international chain of causality. Thus developments in the state system (especially, though not exclusively, defeat in war) lead on to changes at the national level (i.e. revolution and the emergence of a revolutionary state), which then goes on to wage war in the interstate system according to specific internal revolutionary objectives. This trinitarian conception offers an organizing principle around which WHS can reconfigure IR. I employ this approach in the remainder of this article to understand: international economic change, examining the European transition from free trade to protectionism in the nineteenth century as a case study (Section III); the international politics of states, war and revolution (Section IV); and finally, international economic systems change, examining European industrialization as a case study (Section V).
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III A NEO-WEBERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL SPATIAL TRINITY: THE TRANSITION FROM FREE TRADE TO PROTECTIONISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (IPE)²²

After 1877, continental Europe shifted from free trade back to protectionism. Traditional IR as well as sociological theories argue that this occurred either because of economic causal requirements (as in Marxism and liberalism) or because of international geopolitical shifts in the distribution of power (as in neorealist hegemonic stability theory). Marxism and liberalism in particular have argued that the rise in agricultural protectionism was prompted by the flood of cheap grain imports into Europe (chiefly from the United States and Russia), prompting dominant agricultural societal groups to push their national states to protect their profit rates by raising tariffs. Similarly, industrial tariffs were raised as infant industrial groups required protection from cheap imports – especially those from Britain (e.g. Pollard, 1981: 257–60; Calleo, 1978: 67–9; Rogowski, 1989; Berghahn, 1987: 5; Gourevitch, 1986). On the other hand, neorealists, following the theory of hegemonic stability, argue that protectionism occurred because of changes in the international distribution of power, which had shifted away from British hegemony as a result of its emergent decline after 1873 (Gilpin, 1987; Krasner, 1976; Lake, 1988). British decline effectively opened up a space for rival states to resort to their traditional or ‘natural’ policies of ‘beggar-thy-neighbour’.

Invoking a Weberian historical sociology approach, an alternative explanation is possible. Rather than viewing the shift to protectionism as determined solely by shifts in the international distribution of power, or because of domestic class/factors of production requirements, the transition can be understood as occurring because of the interpenetration of a variety of sources of power existing in the subnational, national and international dimensions; notably, international geo-fiscal and economic pressures, state power and state–society relations.²³ Specifically, my claim begins by noting that changes in the international system, notably the need to increase military budgets as a response to the second military revolution, as well as international economic recession which led to a general reduction in government revenues, converged to effect fiscal crises throughout Europe after 1873. At this point it is crucial to note that tariffs are a form of taxation; specifically, a regressive form of indirect taxation. States became interested in raising tariffs so as to enhance government revenues to resolve emergent fiscal crisis (Hobson, 1997; cf. O’Brien and Pigman, 1992: 104; McKeown, 1983; Stein, 1984: 363; Kugler and Domke, 1986: 47–8). Nevertheless, these relatively uniform geopolitical pressures were responded to in different ways according to different mixes in state capacity and state–society relations.
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One critical variable here is the strength of the state concerned. In general, weak states came to rely on regressive indirect taxes to meet the higher expenditures and accordingly resorted to tariff protectionism, while the stronger British state sought to increase direct taxes as a means to resolve impending fiscal crisis (after 1900), and was thereby able to maintain free trade. What, therefore, are the ingredients of state capacity?

Three aspects or powers are important here: concentration (high or low), infrastructural reach (strong or weak) and state autonomy (embedded or isolated). Taking each in turn, trade and tax policy was significantly informed by a state’s degree of ‘concentration’. This refers to the difference between unitary and federal states, where federal states (having low concentration, i.e. weak fiscal centralization) came to rely on indirect taxes as their prime source of revenue as opposed to the unitary states (enjoying high concentration, i.e. strong fiscal centralization), which were able to choose between direct and indirect taxes. In particular, all federal governments (e.g. Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the United States, as well as Australia in the early twentieth century) relied almost exclusively on indirect taxation, while the provincial state governments had a virtual monopoly of direct taxation. This effectively closed off the option of direct taxation at the federal level, prompting these states to opt for tariffs as the principal means of raising revenues. This clearly contrasted with the British state which was unitary (i.e. enjoyed high concentration) and was able to rely institutionally on income taxation rather than tariffs and other forms of indirect taxes; this enabled it to maintain free trade. Of course, some unitary states relied on tariffs and indirect taxes for their revenues (e.g. Italy, France and Russia). However, their reasons for shifting to indirect taxes were linked to a series of other state power variables (notably low infrastructural power and/or high despotic or isolated autonomy).

The second state power variable that informed a state’s overall capacity is its degree of infrastructural reach. High infrastructural power was crucial for the income tax, which required significant bureaucratic and surveillance power for its collection. Britain’s strong infrastructural power contrasted strikingly with that of Germany and Russia, whose low reach made tariffs a more attractive fiscal proposition, since they could be easily collected at a set of ports, requiring minimal infrastructural reach.

The third variable is the degree of a state’s autonomy within society, which specifically relates to the degree to which the state is embedded within society. The more the state is embedded in society, the greater its ability to levy an income tax. The British state in particular was strong because it was broadly embedded in society, enjoying cooperative relations with both the dominant industrial classes as well as the working classes.
In the early twentieth century, the British Liberal Party, in government at the time, favoured the income tax mainly as a way of attracting working-class support to maintain its electoral hegemony (Sykes, 1978; Emy, 1972), though the higher income tax rates fiscally penalized – indeed they went against the long-run fiscal interests of – the dominant economic classes. Paradoxically, cooperating with the working and lower middle classes was crucial in strengthening state fiscal capacity. But the state was able to maintain cooperation with the industrial and financial classes because it maintained free trade (the pay-off for raising the income tax on the wealthy classes, since the alternative to income taxation was a return to regressive indirect taxes and tariffs – i.e. a return to tariff protection). The German and Russian governments, however, anxious to repress the lower classes, preferred regressive indirect taxes and tariffs. Moreover, as Marxists and liberals remind us, in Germany the state extended tariff protectionism in part to shore up the power of the dominant (Junker) class. The paradox here is that in enhancing their despotic power over society, both Russia and Germany weakened their military power (as discussed in the next section).

This notion of state capacity, then, is one that is very different from that found in neorealism. It places fundamental emphasis on a state’s embeddedness in society, strong states being more embedded than weak states. In turn, this had ramifications for trade policy in the nineteenth century, such that the stronger and more embedded the state, as in the British case, the greater was its ability to maintain free trade. Weaker states, whether this was based on high despotic power or low concentration or low infrastructural reach (or all three), resorted to indirect taxes and hence tariff protectionism.

This therefore completes the spatial trinity outlined above, as it applies to trade regime changes in the nineteenth century. International forces – the need for higher military expenditures in the face of declining revenues and international economic recession – impacted on states both inside and outside Europe. They were responded to differently, depending on the particular nature of state power and state-society relations in the various countries examined. This in turn led governments to raise taxes, which in the process led to a shift towards protectionism in continental Europe, in contrast to Britain.

But the ramifications of this analysis can be extended further to criticize the basic assumptions of neorealism, as well as neoliberalism and neo-Marxism. Each of these theories assumes that the international realm is one of ‘military necessity’ (neorealism) or of ‘economic necessity’ (neoliberalism, neo-Marxism), which orders states to conform to certain policies. However, the analysis above suggests an alternative scenario: that the international economy as well as the system of states is a resource pool on which states draw to enhance their position within
their domestic realms. Thus each of the major states dealt with above (Britain, Germany and Russia) resorted to taxing international trade in order to enhance its position within society, although the specific objectives differed in each case. Put differently, it was not simply the need to enhance revenues to fund higher military budgets that was crucial. States also had fundamental domestic objectives in their revenue-raising strategies which could in no way be reduced to international requirements, geopolitical, economic or otherwise.

Thus the German Reich government resorted to taxing international trade principally so as to enhance its fiscal power over the provincial state governments. Bismarck in particular increased tariffs in order to enhance central government revenues, which in the process would make the federal government less dependent upon the fiscal contributions that the provincial state governments made (these payments were known as Matrikularbeiträuge, or matricular contributions). Bismarck particularly resented the Reich’s dependency upon these payments since it gave the state governments a political hold over the Reich. Thus in order to enhance executive power, Bismarck raised tariffs (cf. Lambi, 1963; Pflanze, 1990a, 1990b). This was so successful that the Reich was even able to make the state governments dependent upon it for financial payments between 1883 and 1898. This complemented the secondary motivation, in which the state sought to repress the working class in order to enhance its despotic power, as well as to shore up the economic and political power of the nobility. Tsarist Russia’s primary reason for taxing international trade was to enhance its despotic power over both the working and dominant industrial classes, as well as government revenue accumulation. In contrast, parliamentary Britain’s desire to maintain free trade enabled it to push through radical income tax reforms which fiscally penalized the dominant classes while shoring up its electoral hegemony by attracting the working and lower middle classes.

In short, states are not passive bearers (Träger) of international structures as is assumed in Marxism, liberalism and neorealism, but actively draw upon and use the international economy and system of states to enhance their specific domestic political objectives. In short, states played off the international and national realms in order to promote crucial (but differing) domestic objectives. This analysis can also be extended into the sphere of traditional international political inquiry by examining the interaction of war, revolution and state capacity. However, before turning to this, it is important to link this discussion of trade regime changes to current practices.

I have noted that WHS has in common with Critical international relations theory the objective of explaining the historical origins of modern international institutions and practices. In particular, it can be shown through extending the analysis so far how the modern practice of free
trade in the first world is not as ‘natural’ as is usually thought. A historical approach shows, first, that free trade has existed for no more than 15 per cent of the years between approximately 1600 and 1995. Thus free trade has been the exception rather than the norm. Liberalism, following the arguments of David Ricardo and Adam Smith, assumes that free trade is as natural an economic policy as it is inevitable since it enables the maximization of collective welfare. But the upshot of the analysis made here is that free trade was only possible with the introduction of the income tax, in turn enabled by strong state capacity. Thus relatively weak state capacity in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (relative to the twentieth century, that is) pushed states to rely on indirect taxes and especially tariffs in part because they were so easy to collect. As state capacity developed, especially in the twentieth century, so income taxation became the main fiscal base upon which advanced states relied for their revenues. Freed from the fiscal requirements of tariffs, states could shift towards free trade. This argument is reinforced by the fact that weak states in the Third World, being unable to rely substantially on progressive direct taxes, tend as a result to rely on fiscally lucrative tariffs, which in part explains their protectionist tendencies.

Of course it might be objected that surely the eradication of tariffs has occurred mainly because of the constraints imposed by GATT. While this should comprise a part of the explanation, it needs to be complemented with the argument developed here: that the existence of GATT was only possible in the first place because of the income tax, which in turn was only made possible through strong state capacity. In this way, the argument overlaps with John Ruggie’s notion of the ‘compromise of embedded liberalism’ in the post-war settlement (Ruggie, 1983): that the price of international free trade is a radical social interventionist policy of income taxation. Thus, in sum, far from appearing as the triumphant moment of liberal capitalism, free trade rests fundamentally on a political and fiscal base. Far from demonstrating how the post-1945 world has been shaped by the separation of the political from the economic as liberalism assumes, my argument seeks to show how states, markets, international economic and interstate relations are fundamentally entwined and mutually embedded.

IV A NEO-WEBERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL SPATIAL TRINITY: WAR, REVOLUTION AND STATE CAPACITY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (IP)

Here I draw on the analysis already made in the previous section, and use it to refine Halliday’s basic argument, so that we can see how WHS can be applied to more traditional concerns of IR: specifically the inter-
national politics of states, war and revolution. Halliday has argued that the WHS ‘spatial trinitarian’ conception can be applied to understanding the causes of war. As noted earlier, he claims that external defeat in war leads on to revolution at the national level, which in turn leads back to war as a function of the revolutionary state’s specific political ambitions. This basic-force model provides an excellent starting point. However, it does not fully explain why defeat in war leads to revolution because it does not fully specify the important domestic conditions that made revolution possible, or why military defeat occurred in the first place (though there is no reason why this cannot be developed without in any way invalidating Halliday’s basic approach). Invoking a more refined WHS approach that emphasizes state adaptive capacity and state–society relations can enhance this analysis.

As noted already, the British state was relatively strong and adaptive in contrast to its tsarist and German rivals, since it was able to extract greater fiscal resources for the conducting of war, as was revealed in the First World War. This was because it was able to rely considerably on the income tax, an option that was closed off to the Russian government and was only entered into half-heartedly by the German elite (cf. D’Lugo and Rogowski, 1993). During the war the standard rate of income taxation in Britain rose fivefold (Mitchell and Deane, 1962: 429). Income tax extraction alone enabled the state to finance between 20 and 30 per cent of its war costs, whereas Germany was able to finance only half that amount (Hardach, 1977: 155), and with a reliance on regressive indirect taxes. The British state’s high ‘relative political capacity’ was in large part made possible by its broadly embedded relationship in society, as well as its unitary nature and high infrastructural power (discussed in Section III). The maintenance of a high level of consensus in its fiscal policy through its reliance on progressive taxes enabled the state to keep the working classes on side as well as to maintain extraction for wartime expenses.

This contrasted strikingly with the German and Russian position. Because the German Reich government was unable to rely on direct taxes, it resorted as noted to indirect taxation and above all to loans (since indirect taxes proved woefully inadequate in meeting wartime costs). Accordingly, Germany’s ordinary budget was weighed down simply in paying interest on the massive loans (Gerloff, 1929: 67). With such a narrow fiscal base, the government resorted to printing money, the effects of which were to spur on inflation and undermine the state’s military capacity. Indeed, this reckless fiscal policy directly led on to the hyper-inflation of 1923 (Holtfrerich, 1986: 102–80; Witt, 1987), which of course, in turn, enhanced Hitler’s bid for political power. The regressive indirect taxes simply alienated the working classes (as had occurred before the war), with the absence of a progressive tax regime becoming a major
source of working-class discontent. This helps to explain not only why Germany was defeated, but also why there was a subsequent revolution. The weakness of state fiscal capacity was a major reason why the state lost the war, and the related inability to create a progressive tax regime was a fundamental cause of the revolution (cf. Holtfrerich, 1986: 192–3), and later the rise of Hitler. Thus we return to Halliday’s argument, that defeat in war led on to national revolution, which then led back to war in the interstate system. My refinement of the ‘basic force’ Halliday model involves inserting state capacity into the equation, although the chain of causality remains the same.

This argument can also be applied to tsarist Russia. Russia’s total collection of income taxation throughout the war was so pitiful that it was ‘less than enough to pay for a weekend of the war’ (Stone, 1975: 290). Like Germany, Russia increased indirect taxes, their yield also being vastly insufficient to meet war costs. Accordingly, as in Germany, the Russian state resorted to printing paper money, which also led on to inflation (Stone, 1975). This hit the working classes very hard, since it led to a massive rise in the price of grain, and hence of bread. The skyrocketing prices of foods and basic commodities, when coupled with the fact that the state had treated its population as cannon fodder during the war, led on almost inevitably to defeat as well as revolution in 1917 (Skocpol, 1979; Kennedy, 1988: 264). Weak state capacity led to ‘effective’ military defeat, which promoted, in combination with the state’s repressive fiscal and political policies, the revolution of 1917. This was significant not least because ‘[t]he Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 established the fundamental fissure of this century’s international relations, one that, on the basis of two competing and distinct socio-political systems, respectively contributed to and then dominated the frictions of the inter-war period and of the post-war world’ (Halliday, 1994: 133).

Thus, in sum, I have demonstrated how the spatial trinitarian approach can provide an alternative perspective for understanding traditional IR concerns, in this case warfare. Here I have supplemented Halliday’s basic force approach with a more developed conception of state capacity. However, this is not to say that state capacity differentials can completely explain the war outcomes; clearly many other factors would have to be taken into account. But it is to say that state capacity differentials can provide an important part of such an explanation. It is also worth noting that defeat in war (in both Germany and Russia) strengthened the hand of social groups over the state. We shall see in the next section that defeat in war can also strengthen the hand of the state vis-à-vis social groupings. Thus having dealt with how WHS can reorient the study of IPE and traditional IR, I move on to the final area in which WHS can enhance the study of IR, namely the analysis of systems change.
Within IR, ‘systems change’ generally refers to the change from one system of states to another (e.g. the transition from medieval heteronomy to modern sovereignty). But at least as important is the shift from feudalism to capitalism, a subject which has hitherto (with the exception of some Marxian writers) been sorely neglected within IR. This is particularly puzzling given the original terms of reference of the argument that Ruggie outlined in his 1986 article which was so fundamental in bringing international systems change on to the IR research agenda in the first place. As he noted, an approach that takes the ‘second level’ seriously can ‘provide a basis from which to fashion a more comprehensive view of the “world system”, including both its political and economic dimensions ... it is clear ... that the early modern redefinition of property rights and reorganization of political space unleashed both interstate political relations and capitalist production relations’ (Ruggie, 1986: 148; italics added). He goes on to say that such a model should be able to ‘generate an explanation of this more comprehensive social formation’ (Ruggie, 1986: 148).

As noted earlier, Andrew Linklater has proposed that a critical sociology of IR should be able to explain ‘the interaction between the multiple logics which have shaped the development of the modern world, in which special emphasis is accorded the relations between the growth of state power, strategic interaction, capitalist development and industrialization’ (Linklater, 1990: 6). This final section seeks to show how WHS can achieve this specific set of objectives, and how, in the process, IR can move beyond neorealism. In Section III it was argued that the international economic system is not a realm of necessity (pace Marxism and neoliberalism). This section begins with the notion that the interstate system is not simply one of constraint and necessity, but, like the international economy, is also a ‘resource pool’ which states draw upon so as to achieve certain domestic objectives. Defeat in war has invariably been associated with the undermining of state capacity through revolution (as made famous by Theda Skocpol, 1979; cf. Collins, 1986), as was discussed in the last section. But defeat in war is conceptually a ‘double-edged sword’, in that it can also lead to the enhancement of state capacity. More generally, interstate strategic force can enable a state to achieve certain domestic objectives, mainly because it can enhance the state’s bargaining power vis-à-vis society (cf. Trimberger, 1978; Skocpol, 1979: 31; Block, 1987: 66–7, 87–9). This argument adapts the concept of the ‘displacement effect’ (Peacock and Wiseman, 1961), which refers to the ability of states
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to extract higher taxes after a war (compared to the amounts raised prior to the war). Part of the reason why, in the aftermath of war, states are able to maintain higher rates of taxation (to those prior to the war) is because warfare shifts the political terms of rule towards the state, enhancing its domestic bargaining power. Warfare can decrease the state’s costs of bargaining within society (Levi, 1988), thereby making possible radical domestic restructuring.29

This can be demonstrated by focusing on the shift from feudalism to industrialization, through which I examine the close interaction of state power/capacity, interstate relations and state–society relations. Britain after 1700 and Russia after 1860 are the two main cases examined, though reference will also be made to Japan. As regards the conceptualization of state capacity, this final empirical section takes a slightly different tack to that found in Sections III and IV. As already noted, state capacity is derived from a combination of state powers. Here, the important powers are: ‘infrastructural’ (the ability of a state to penetrate society logistically); and second, the degree to which a state is embedded within the capitalist class. While state capacity during and after the First World War was maximized through a state’s broad embeddedness within society as a whole, in the earlier period reviewed in this section what is important is the ability of a state to embed itself within the capitalist class; what has been dubbed the ‘capital-coercive’ state trajectory (Tilly, 1990), or the ‘militarized-capitalist’ path of economy formation (Weiss and Hobson, 1995). This contrasts with tsarist Russia’s ‘militarized-despotic’ path of economy formation. Once again, the British state enjoyed the highest capacity.

Up to the 1850s Russia was a predominantly feudal society, where the nobility held considerable sway over the peasantry, and where production was based around the manor. As is commonly recognized by Russian economic historians, this changed after 1860, with Russia moving towards industrialization (e.g. Gerschenkron, 1962; Gregory, 1991; Crisp, 1991). What made this possible was Russia’s surprising defeat in the Crimean War (1854–6), where the state’s ‘feudalized army’ was no match for the industrialized war machines of France and especially Britain. Nevertheless, the defeat enhanced the state’s ability to restructure society along patrimonial/despotic lines. The state used the defeat to move against the nobility through a ‘revolution from above’, in order to enhance its own fiscal, military and despotic political power. The problem here was that the nobility had historically acted as a constraint on the accumulation of tsarist state capacity, mainly because this class was responsible for collecting taxes, much of which were simply not passed on to the state. This was one factor in the state’s recurring problem of fiscal crisis (which was to an important extent the cause of its defeat in the Crimea). So the state, under the primary
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auspices of the Ministry of the Interior (MVD), launched a major assault against the nobility through the peasant emancipation of 1861. Because the result of the emancipation would be to undermine the nobility’s economic position (since the peasants would be socially relocated into the village commune, where they would be presided over by the MVD rather than the nobility), the dominant class naturally attempted to resist. When it became clear that the nobles would not cooperate, the MVD simply forced the situation and went ahead unilaterally with the expropriation of the peasants from the nobles (Emmons, 1968: 24). As the subsequent fifty years would show, ‘the peasant emancipation dealt the gentry class an economic blow from which it never recovered’ (Emmons, 1968: 421).

Russian Marxist historians claim that the rationale for the emancipation lay with emergent bourgeois interests and their desire for industrialization (e.g. Lyashchenko, 1970). Actually, this could not have been the rationale, since there was barely a bourgeoisie in existence. Rather, the state expropriated the peasantry so as to increase fiscal revenue accumulation as well as to enhance its despotic power over societal forces, which could only be achieved by ousting the nobility’s position of control over the peasants (Gregory, 1991; Skocpol, 1979: 89; Rieber, 1966). The state sought a ‘partial’ rather than a ‘full’ industrialization. This was sought, first, to enhance the state’s short-term security objectives, and second to maximize the state’s despotic autonomy over society. Tsarist autocracy considered that a full industrialization would only have led to a strong bourgeoisie and proletariat, which could challenge the state’s despotic autonomy. So tsarism sought to enhance its military base, with a ‘partial’ industrialization occurring largely as an unintended consequence, while attempting to confine economic development within narrow limits.

To this end, the state set about a massive railway-building programme, mainly to improve the country’s military-supply infrastructure, revealed by the Crimean defeat as woefully inadequate for the purposes of modern warfare (Kipp, 1975: 446; Miller, 1926: 183). It also set about improving the iron and steel industries through favourable supply contracts, tariffs, etc. (a crucial component of an industrialized war economy). It went onto the gold standard, not simply to attract foreign capital into the country to promote industrialization, but also to enhance the state’s loan base, which was vital for its military capacity. The state also raised tariffs, not so much to protect industry as a whole, but more to raise government revenues (as noted in Section III above). The key point here is that in following these military objectives, the economy moved, albeit largely unintentionally and tentatively, towards industrialization.

But industrialization was also subject to intended intervention by the state, as its despotic objectives aimed to hinder and constrain economic
development. As mentioned above, a full industrialization was dangerous since it would bring about a strong bourgeoisie and proletariat, both of which, it was feared, would demand political liberalization.\textsuperscript{30} Industrialization was constrained through a series of despotic practices. First, ‘patrimonial arbitrariness’ prevented the emergence of a rule of law and company laws which were crucial to full industrialization (Bendix, 1978: 106–23, 504–8; McDaniel, 1988). Second, patrimonial autocracy sought to ‘divide and rule’ the bureaucracy so as to retain political initiative at the top and to prevent its diffusion downwards. Accordingly, state policies became incoherent, swinging from economic to military to political rationalities, all of which cut across each other and again precluded the chances of full industrialization (McDaniel, 1988). Third, autocracy sought consciously to constrain the development of social groups, the classic trait of patrimonialism (Weber, 1978; Pipes, 1974; McDaniel, 1988). Both the proletariat and industrialists were kept out of the political process. The industrialists were also subject to divide and rule through a range of policies (Hobson, 1997: ch. 3).

This contrasted dramatically with the British case. British industrialization is always understood as the case which supposedly shows that a minimalist state is the best possible political shell for the successful development of capitalism (which, of course, reaches its apogee in neoliberalism). But an alternative approach is possible. While the state was not a heavy-handed ‘engineer’, it shall be argued that it played a crucial role in stimulating industrialization mainly through the unintended consequences of its military policies, as well as by purposefully embedding itself in, and promoting the development of, the capitalist class.

The British state spent much of its time during the long eighteenth century (1688–1815) at war (approximately 52 per cent of the time). Its military burden (defence expenditure measured as a proportion of national income) was almost as high as that between 1914 and 1980 (in which period, of course, it fought two world wars). Moreover, the British national debt in 1815 was higher in real terms than at any point in subsequent British history (and three times higher than the current US national debt).\textsuperscript{31} How did the state respond to this unusually pronounced and sustained fiscal-military challenge? In shoring up its fiscal-military capacity, the state enacted various institutional reforms, the effects of which were to promote economic development and industrialization. First and foremost, the state instigated what the historian Peter Dickson (1967) called the ‘financial revolution’. The state set up the Bank of England in 1694, the major activity of which was to broker loans for the state’s warfare activities. In turn, the British national debt significantly promoted the development of the City of London, since the majority of its business went on financing the British national debt. In turn, the substantial profits that the financiers made on the debt were invested in the

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private economy, which substantially enhanced development in general (O’Brien, 1989: 345–56; Mathias, 1983: 40–2). Moreover, the British national debt, in conjunction with the regressive indirect tax regime of the eighteenth century, led to a transfer of income from the poor to the rich investor classes (O’Brien, 1989: 376–7; Mathias and O’Brien, 1976: 616). This was, to coin Gerschenkron’s famous phrase, equivalent to a highly effective policy (albeit unintended) of ‘forced savings’, through which income went from the consuming classes to the investors, and hence into shoring up the economic growth rate (cf. Braun, 1975: 304). Unlike in Russia, the British state formed a close, supportive and embedded relationship with the financial capitalist class.

The state’s military activities stimulated the growth of the economy and the drive towards industrialization in a number of additional ways. These included the state’s ‘blue water strategy’, in which the promotion of the navy had unintended consequences for the development of the iron and steel industries, the growth of commerce, and pacification of the colonies to enhance foreign investment, as well as the development of the building, engineering and chemical industries (Baugh, 1988: 40; Brewer, 1989: 168). Most importantly, as British economic historians point out, the base upon which British industrialization was built lay in two key industries – iron and cotton (Deane, 1965: 100–14; Mantoux, 1961: 271, 305–10). These industries would probably not have developed had it not been for the impact of warfare, which prompted crucial technological innovations such as Darby’s coke-smelted cast iron innovation (1709), Cort’s puddling process (1784) and Watt’s steam engine (1775) (Sen, 1984: 104–11). Finally, British fiscal policy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was based on indirect market taxes and high tariffs. Tariffs, which aided the development of industry, had in part a fiscal-military core, since they were used to provide the government with tax revenues to meet military expenditures (cf. Davis, 1966: 317; Brewer, 1989: 169; Mathias, 1983: 33). Nevertheless, they were also part of an intended economic strategy implemented by the state to enable the development of various key industries such as iron and cotton.

Russia followed a very different trajectory to that of Britain. While both faced intense military challenges in their industrialization phases, the economic outcomes were markedly different. In following a militarized-capitalist path, the British state enabled the growth of a strong capitalist class, in strict contrast to the militarized-despotic preferences of tsarist patrimonialism. Likewise, Japan faced a relatively strong geopolitical challenge in 1853 when Commodore Perry forced open its ports to foreign trade. This led to domestic political restructuring with the ‘revolution from above’ that led to the Meiji Restoration in 1868 (Bendix, 1978: 483). It then enacted in the economic sphere a further ‘revolution from above’, in which it brought about a full industrialization. This successful and
broad-based industrialization was informed by the popular maxim ‘fukoku kyohei’, or ‘rich country, strong army’ (Weiss, 1993: 333–7). The difference between the Japanese and British strategies in clear contrast to Russia’s was that the former two sought an embedded relationship with key social groupings.

This section began by noting that geopolitical challenges (in particular, defeat in war) can enhance state power. This happened in each case considered here. Whether it was defeat in war (Russia in 1856), or a profound geopolitical national crisis (Japan in 1853) or simply a sustained geofiscal challenge (Britain in the long eighteenth century), in each case a geopolitical challenge enabled the state to instigate domestic reforms which it might not otherwise have been able to push through. This argument can also be applied to South Korea and Taiwan in the modern period, where invasions and the Second World War enabled the state to move subsequently against the entrenched feudal elites, thereby bringing about a conducive environment for industrialization (Weiss and Hobson, 1995: 163–7). Thus the geopolitical system and its pressures often act as a resource pool which states draw on in order to rearrange their domestic systems the better to conform to their multiple domestic and foreign policy objectives. But the outcomes were different, depending on the nature of state–society relations.

An analysis of state ‘infrastructural’ power can shed light on the ‘timing’ of industrialization. Tsarist Russia was only able to instigate a ‘revolution from above’ against the dominant feudal class in 1860, and not before, because only by then had the state acquired sufficient capacity to penetrate into society. Before then, the state had little choice but to rely on the nobility to collect taxes (G. Gill, 1996: 92). By 1860, however, the MVD had acquired sufficient administrative power to collect taxes relatively free of noble interference.33 The same is true in Prussia in 1807 (Hintze, 1975: ch. 2), as well as Japan in 1868. In each case, the state had wanted to push through the revolution from above earlier, but only gained the sufficient transformative power to do so through the enhanced autonomy conferred by defeat in war. Britain was able to move towards industrialization after 1688 in part because it had a relatively high degree of infrastructural power. This was one major reason why Britain led the way in European industrialization, the others following once state infrastructural power had developed sufficiently. It is worth noting that this position is very different to the analysis made by Alexander Gerschenkron (1962), who argued that the later the industrialization drive, the greater the degree of state intervention. In my formulation, states played an important role throughout, most especially in the early industrialization of Britain. Indeed the British state demonstrated overall, considerable capacity in relation to its continental counterparts.
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CONCLUSION: A NEO-WEBERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AGENDA FOR IR

WHS is generally known for its insistence that the state must be treated as an autonomous conceptual variable. This article has sought to show that WHS invokes a non-realist definition of state power, which places significant emphasis on institutional and state-society variables in the understanding of IR. As the comparative discussion of British state power has tried to show, state strength is maximized when a state is able to embed itself broadly within society (as Sections III and IV argued), or, in the case of the post-1688 period, to embed itself deeply within the capitalist class (Section V). Thus, ironically, WHS seeks to reject ‘state-centric’ realism precisely by ‘bringing the state and state-society relationship back in’. This suggests that IR does not have to move ‘beyond the state’ in order to incorporate non-state actors and processes; rather, these can be brought back in alongside a revitalized non-realist conception of state autonomy. In short, WHS calls for an approach which reactivates and rearticulates the state as a Janus-faced and adaptive agency within a multi-power and multi-spatial social universe.

It is worth briefly spelling out a possible research agenda for IR. In the conclusion to his recent book, Fred Halliday (1994: 241–4) produces a five-point agenda, in which he places considerable emphasis on analysing capitalism and its emergence. A complementary agenda can be specified as follows.

1 An analysis of the rise and development of the modern state, interstate system and capitalist world economy from AD 500 to 2000. This should involve:
   2 analysing the interrelationship of sub-national, national and inter/transnational forces, as well as
   3 analysing the adaptiveness of states, conceived as Janus-faced agencies, to transform domestic and international society in the face of domestic and international challenges, as well as analysing the non-political forces that shape state development and state power/capacity.
   4 Demonstration that neither the international economy nor, above all, the interstate system is self-reproducing and acts in accordance with a single logic – whether the logic of capital or the logic of anarchy respectively. Nor can domestic developments be reduced to the ordering principles of the world economy (neo-Marxism, neoliberalism) or the anarchic system of states. This can be achieved in part by conceptualizing these international arenas as effective resource pools on which states and non-state actors draw in order to enhance their position domestically, just as the domestic arena provides states with resources with which to maintain their positions internationally
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(though at the same time recognizing that these arenas also constrain the action of states).

5 Demonstration that the anarchic system of states is not natural through an analysis of the social construction of international society through changes in domestic and international norms.

6 In theorizing IR and the relationship between states, attention should focus on a non-realist theory of state power and state–society relations, with a concomitant downgrading (though not eradication) of the global logics of anarchy and capital.34

NOTES

I would like to thank Randall Collins, Graeme Gill, Steve Hobden, Andrew Linklater, Michael Mann and Linda Weiss for their various comments, as well as the editors and an anonymous reviewer for his/her most helpful suggestions. Naturally I remain responsible for the final product.

1 Nevertheless useful discussions of the various works of historical sociologists can be found in: Almond (1989); Gourevitch (1978); Linklater (1990: chs 6–7); Jarvis (1989); Scholte (1993a, 1993b); Keyman (1997: ch. 3); Little (1994); see also note 12 below.

2 The six principles of WHS overlap directly with some of those outlined by Ann Tickner (1988) in her gendered approach, most especially her emphasis on collective power (discussed here in terms of embedded autonomy), the interconnectedness of the international and domestic realms, and the emphasis on multi-causality.

3 See for example: Hintze (1975); Elias (1939/1994); Weber (1978); Mann (1986, 1993); Hall (1986); Tilly (1975, 1990); Weiss and Hobson (1995); Levi (1988); Giddens (1985); McNeill (1963, 1982); Baechler (1975); Poggi (1978); Collins (1986).

4 While I agree that warfare has played an important part in state formation, it nevertheless cannot provide a sufficient account of state formation. This will be discussed in Hobson (forthcoming).


6 In contrast, Jan Aart Scholte (1993b: 116–17) argues for a fivefold set of partially autonomous but overlapping forms of power, specifically: political, economic, ecological, cultural and psychological.

7 Justification of the two positions can be found in Mann (1986: ch. 1, 1993: chs 1, 12); Hall (1986: 19); Runciman (1989: 14–15). Following Mann, it seems that military power should be separated from political power. One obvious reason for this is that the current institutional conflation of military and political power is only a recent development in world-historical terms, and that for much of European (as well as non-European) history, the means of violence were owned by the nobility rather than the state. A second justification is that military technologies have had an autonomous impact upon states and especially state formation (see Weiss and Hobson, 1995: chs 2–3).

8 While this paper critically addresses neorealism, it also provides a critique of Marxism and liberalism. Of course the claim that Marxism operationalizes a ‘base–superstructure’ model is not accepted by most Marxists. My argument is that a non-reductionist Marxism is a non sequitur. Although a
lack of space prevents me from discussing this further, see Hobson (1997: 221–7, 232, 276–8) and my ‘Reply’ to Halperin in this journal (pp. 353–7).

See also the comments in Palan and Amin (1996: 213–14). For an alternative conception of hegemony, see Frank and Gills (1996).

For Weber’s switchman metaphor, see Gerth and Mills (1946: 280).

For an excellent discussion, see Poster (1984).

For a sustained and insightful discussion of this with reference to the conceptualization of the international system in the writings of Mann, Tilly, Skocpol and other neo-Weberian writers, see Hobden (1998).

David Lake (1988) argued similarly that states have more autonomy in the external arena in the sense that they are less constrained by social forces in foreign policy decision making; see also Krasner (1978).

This conception is also found in some of the more Marxist-inspired discussions of ‘state autonomy’ (see, for example, Block, 1987; Trimberger, 1978).

Waltz’s definition is that ‘an agent is powerful to the extent that he affects others more than they affect him’ (1979: 192).

The analysis made by Nettl (1968: 562) remains especially relevant in this context. As he puts it,

the difficulty of relating state and sovereignty as a primary identification is not so much that the relationship is, in socio-economic terms, inapplicable as that it is insufficient, both in the sense that it is too narrow by leaving out spatial and social dimensions and that it is too broad in that it fails to ‘prepare’ the concept for the right level at which it relates to other relevant concepts.

In this way, I hope to answer the interesting challenges laid out by Fuat Keyman (1997: ch. 3), in his thoughtful discussion of the Weberian historical sociology of the state.

Ruggie’s piece first appeared in 1983 and Cox’s in 1981.

In a different way, Markus Fischer (1992) has attempted to apply realist insight into explaining medieval international development.

Moreover, Susan Strange’s (1988) emphasis on four sources of structural power in the international arena echoes the multi-causal approach of WHS.

Halliday is here referring to Martin Wight’s Power Politics (1986: ch. 6).

This analysis is drawn from Hobson (1997). Choosing international trade as a case study does not imply that trade is the most important aspect of international economic relations; merely that it is a particular case study in international economic change that enables me to advance the understanding of IR through the application of WHS.

For one of the most sophisticated analyses of tariff protectionism (discussed with reference to contemporary Canada), which similarly argues that international and domestic forces need to be taken into account for understanding protectionist outcomes, see Ramesh (1994).

Expressed as a percentage of total net tax revenues the figures are: 74 per cent (Germany 1870–1913); 83 per cent (Canada 1870–1913); 84 per cent (Switzerland 1870–1913); 87 per cent (USA 1789–1913); 98 per cent (Australia 1902–13); see Hobson (1997: 206).


The term is borrowed from Kugler and Domke (1986).


Here, I draw on the analysis made by Margaret Levi (1988).
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29 For an excellent discussion of how warfare can promote international restructuring under US hegemony, see Ikenberry (forthcoming).
30 Ironically, in constraining the proletariat, the state was actually responsible for radicalizing it politically, leading to tsarism’s eventual overthrow.
32 Something like 8.5 per cent of British national income was redistributed to the rich investor classes during the Napoleonic wars alone (O’Brien, 1989: 376) – a phenomenal sum.
33 Nevertheless, the resulting peasant commune (obshchina) proved to be relatively inefficient as a revenue-yielding institution. Moreover, the nobles still played a role with respect to the commune (with the Land Captains being selected from the gentry class).
34 In particular, I take up point 5 – the social construction of international society – as well as the rest of this research agenda in two books (Hobson, 2000; Hobson, forthcoming).

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