

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE

THEORIZING THE STATE AND ITS AUTONOMY IN WESTERN IR: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REALIST AND HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES

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Kaliber, A. (2021). Theorizing The State And Its Autonomy In Western IR: A Comparative Analysis Of Realist And Historical Sociological Approaches. *Aurum Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 6 (2), 131-151.**Abstract**

This article examines how the state, its core characteristics, domestic and international agential capacities are conceptualized by the realist paradigms of IR and Weberian Historical Sociology (WHS) as its critique. In doing this, the study seeks to address the pitfalls and deficiencies of the realist conception of the state and unravel limitations and strengths of WHS to remedy these Realist deficiencies to reach a more sophisticated theory of the state. It also calls for a serious engagement between WHS and post-positivist IR to theorise the historically and politically constructed nature of state identity and to transcend the internal/international divide characterising the Realist epistemology.

Keywords: Neo-Weberian Historical Sociology, Realism, State in International Relations, State's international agency, State autonomy.

BATI MERKEZCİ ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLERDE DEVLETİN VE DEVLET ÖZERKLİĞİNİN KURAMSALLAŞTIRILMASI: REALİST VE TARİHSEL SOSYOLOJİK YAKLAŞIMLARIN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR ANALİZİ**Özet**

Bu makale, Realist uluslararası ilişkiler geleneğinde ve onun eleştirisi olarak Yeni-Weberci Tarihsel Sosyolojide devletin, onun temel niteliklerinin ve ulusal ve uluslararası siyasal kapasitelerinin nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığını incelemektedir. Bunu yaparken makalenin başlıca amacı, Realizmin devlet kavramsallaştırmasının tuzaklarını ve eksikliklerini ortaya koymak ve daha gelişkin bir devlet teorisine

ulaşma yolunda bu eksikliklerin aşılması için Yeni-Weberci Tarihsel Sosyolojinin kısıtlılıklarını ve güçlü yanlarını açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu çalışma ayrıca devlet kimliğinin tarihsel ve siyasal inşa edilmişliğini kuramsallaştırmak ve Realist epistemolojiye damgasını vuran ulusal/uluslararası ayrımını aşabilmek için Yeni-Weberci Tarihsel Sosyoloji ile Pozitivim sonrası uluslararası ilişkiler yaklaşımları arasında sıkı bir diyalog kurulması çağrısında bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Neo-Weberci Tarihsel Sosyoloji, Realizm, Uluslararası ilişkilerde devlet, Devletin uluslararası kapasitesi, Devletin özerkliği.

1. INTRODUCTION

Theorising the state, its power and autonomy vis-à-vis the domestic and international society has been a central concern for a great number of scholarly efforts within the broad terrain of Western social sciences and philosophy. As Migdal aptly states, “over the course of twentieth century” various social scientists “from Weber and Gramsci to Almond, Verba and Skocpol” (Migdal, 1997: 231) concentrated on the investigation of the formation of the state and its position relative to non-state actors both in domestic and international politics. Yet, the discipline of International Relations (IR), often assumed to have been born soon after the World War I, has long remained silent regarding theorization of the state. Realism, as the main discourse of IR, has taken the state as a foundational category of meaning and the principal actor of international relations. Yet, the realist tradition has relied on an ahistoric, static conception of the state, and mostly left it under-theorized. The neo-Realist approach, emerging as a critique of classical Realism, also failed to contribute to the theorization of the state and its core characteristics. Rather than putting the state’s agency into analytical inquiry, it has substantially reduced the state’s power and autonomy vis-à-vis the structural influences of the ‘anarchic’ inter-state system.

The emergence and development of post-Positivist IR discourses, (i.e., Feminism, Post-structuralism, and Post-colonialism) have stirred up debates regarding the state and its disciplinary practices. These critical approaches have all problematized the state’s nature, sources of its legitimacy, its ontological and epistemological status, the stability of its identity, and so forth. A better incorporation of valuable analytical tools developed by some other social science disciplines into the IR theory, i.e. comparative politics, political economy and historical sociology, has made substantial contributions to enrich these discussions. For the purposes of this study, the crucial attempt came from neo-Weberian historical sociology (WHS), whose primary concern is to reintroduce the category of agency and ‘bringing the state back in’ the analysis. Historical sociologists such as Theda Skocpol, Charles Tilly, and Michael Mann have all contributed to a voluminous literature stressing the specific role and influence of the state in historical transformations leading to modernity.¹ Realist approaches to IR, attaching centrality to the state and geopolitics, seemed useful to them to develop an integrationist theory that will “bring the

¹ For a concise analysis of the evolution of Historical Sociology and its contributions to the theory of International Relations in Turkish, see Yalvaç (2013).

international back in" the sociology of state (Hobson, 2002b: 63). They attached due importance to the international dimensions of state formation and state behaviour, and "expanded the remit of sociology to include an active engagement with understanding global and international processes" (Bhambra, 2010: 132). Historical sociologists examined "in some depth such big issues as the causes of social development, the rise of the West, the development of the modern state, the nature of the capitalist dynamic, etc." (Mann, 2004: ix). For Skocpol, Historical Sociology (HS) embraces a research tradition that is "devoted to understanding the nature and effects of large-scale structures and fundamental processes of change" (Skocpol, 1998: 4). WHS is defined as neo-Weberian, since it is considered "as part of a revival of interest in what may be called the 'macro-historical' sociology of Durkheim, Marx and Weber" (Jacoby, 2004: 9).

On the other hand, from the 1980s on, the students of IR have developed an increasing interest in the analytical tools devised by HS "as a means of enhancing and reconfiguring their discipline" (Hobson, 2002a: 3). A "growing convergence" (Hobson, 2002: 3) between IR and HS has come into being since the early 1980s, where each of these disciplines moved towards each other (Hobson, 2002a: 3-41). An increasing number of IR studies have benefited from WHS to examine the historical origins of modern international relations, the international implications of domestic social change and revolutions (Halliday, 1999). To some, these works define a new, burgeoning 'sub-section' within IR that may be labelled as Historical Sociology in International Relations (HSIR), or the second wave HS or International Historical Sociology (IHS) (Hobson, Lawson and Rosenberg, 2010).²

The aims of this study are mainly twofold: first, addressing the pitfalls and deficiencies of the Realist conception of the state; and secondly, unravelling the limitations and strengths of WHS to remedy these Realist deficiencies to reach a more sophisticated theory of state agency in domestic and international politics. Among the Realist deficiencies are a lack of a theory of the state and an overemphasis on 'structure' to the detriment of 'agency'; an inability to theorize the integrated nature of global politics; the assumption that there is fundamental separation or dichotomy between the international and national realms; a lack of a theory of international change; and a static, ahistorical and Eurocentric approach (Hobson, 2007) to state, geopolitics and international relations (Hobson, 2000). While discussing the potentials and weaknesses of the historical sociological engagement with IR for a fuller theory of the state in international politics, this study focuses on the early body of work known also as the first wave WHS.³ It is this strand of works that came up with ambitious objectives of adopting historical sociological insights to understand the origins and development of modern nation states system and "bringing the state back in" the analysis. And it is this body of works that aimed at exploring the interconnectedness between domestic power and agency of states and their positions in international geopolitics and economy.

This study argues that taking historical sociological approach is of particular significance for IR, when it comes to theorizing state and its agency in both domestic and international politics. Even though neo-

² For a concise discussion of the engagement between IR and Sociology, see Lawson and Shilliam (2010).

³ For a few prominent examples of the first wave WHS see, Skocpol, 1979; Skocpol, 1994; Mann, 1986; Tilly, 1990.

Realism essentially treats the state as the fundamental unit of analysis and as the key actor of international politics, it does not need to raise theoretical questions about its nature and core characteristics. WHS may well be operationalized for a more accurate and historicized account of the state and international politics as well as “the co-constitutive relationship between the international realm and state-society relations” (Hobson, Lawson and Rosenberg, 2010: 3359). WHS also presents a historical and comparative account of the state’s relations with diverse social groups and civil society, the nature and extent of its autonomy, the sources and evolution of its social power in domestic politics. It is suggested in this study that the neo-Weberian attempt is successful in incorporating domestic specificities, historicities and unique characteristics of the state into the analysis, which is deliberately omitted by the conventional IR theory. By revealing the intertwininess of domestic and international processes/structures, WHS enables us to discuss how the specific features of states have been implicated in their international behaviours.

Yet, I argue that both the first wave WHS and its critiques, e.g. Hobson’s ‘structurationist’ second wave WHS are ill-equipped to transcend the internal/international distinction advocated by the conventional IR. All strands of WHS have often contented with mentioning the mutually constitutive nature of internal and international political domains. These domains are assumed to enter into relations with each other as completed and independent entities having their own institutional patterns. This is because all waves of WHS conceptualises the international dimension of the state within the confines of the Realist notion of foreign policy drawing on a clear distinction between the domestic and the international realms. Foreign policy in this view is external and rational initiatives of states towards others all acting with pre-given and secure identities. At this juncture, I suggest that to fulfil its promise of historicizing the state and international politics (Halliday, 2002: 245), WHS needs to enter a firmer dialogue with the post-positivist IR scholarship mainly due to two reasons. First, post-positivist IR has revealed the historically and politically constructed nature of boundaries demarcating national and international, inside and outside, domestic and foreign (Walker, 1993). Secondly, it also allows to explore how these demarcations are utilized by states to (re)produce their institutional autonomy and political identity. The international dimension of state’s institutionalized practices including foreign policy are not external to, but integral part of state identity construction both in domestic and international politics. Injecting post-positivist notion of state identity which is always in the making into analysis enables us to reveal the historically contingent nature of state behaviour in domestic and international politics.

To materialise its objectives, this study compares and contrasts the Realist and historical sociological approaches to the state under two sections. These are the ontological and epistemological status of the state, and the degree of international agency assigned to the state in international politics. In each section the Realist assumptions and the ways in which WHS engage with them are addressed to achieve a fuller account of the state in IR. Having summarised the central arguments of this article, the concluding part calls for a serious engagement with post-positivist IR scholarship for WHS. This engagement enables WHS (a) to theorise the historically and politically constructed nature of the state identity and agency; and (b) to transcend the internal/international divide created by the Realist epistemology.

2. ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL STATUS OF THE STATE

A myriad of critical studies draws our attention to the very paradox characterizing the Realist and the neo-Realist (Realisms) approaches to the state. Even though they assign it a centrality and primacy as a category of meaning, they tend to deny and reject the possibility of theorizing the state. Although the state is accepted as the fundamental unit of analysis by the Realist discourses, its historicity and specificities are not taken into account. Modern state is assumed as a trans-historical 'timeless present' phenomenon as if it existed in all historical periods of time. This is due to the ahistoric character of Realism, where the present is sealed off from the past, and from the "historical socio-temporal context" shaping it. To Hobson, this may be defined as "tempocentric ahistoricism" which "finds its clearest expression in neorealist historiography, wherein the features of the present system are extrapolated back in time thereby effecting a smoothing out of historical ruptures and social differences in international history" (Hobson, 2007: 415). This also explains the Eurocentrism of the realist IR where the Europe-born modern nation state is assumed as a transhistorical reality. The ahistoric realist conception makes invisible diverging political organizations and characteristics of states, i.e. imperial, national, as well as their different levels of centralization and legitimation (e.g., weak, strong, fragile). Particularly Waltzian neo-Realism takes the Westphalian order as typical of interstate relations and extrapolate it "back in time to encompass all previous states systems" (Hobson, 2002a: 17).

However, historical sociologists have shown us that different conceptions of loyalty, territoriality and governmentality have characterised pre-modern and modern interstate systems (Mann, 1986; Tilly, 1990; Rosenberg, 1994; Spruyt, 1994; Teschke, 2003). As Hobden argues, "all social interactions are affected by what has gone before, and in the understanding of the present the past cannot be avoided" (Hobden, 1998: 24). Historical Sociological approach "refuses to treat the present as an autonomous entity outside of history" (Hobson, 2002a: 13 emphasis original), and investigates the specific socio-temporal contexts shaping the present. The Realist paradigm recognises an epistemologically privileged status to the state rendering it "the key to comprehending the operation of the international system, its structure and its fundamental characteristics" (Keyman, 1997: 56). Keeping Waltzian neo-Realism aside, we face with a theoretical context where all other units of analysis are downgraded and subjugated vis-à-vis the state. As Richard Ashley argued, in Realist paradigm "the state is viewed as the 'essential actor' whose interests, power, decisions, practices, interactions with other states define and exhaust the scope and content of international politics as an autonomous sphere [...] There is no political life absent of state, prior to state or independent from state" (Ashley, 1983: 470). In this theoretical construct, the existence of international politics is assumed to be dependent on and sustained by only the interactions among the nation states. Therefore, the primary concern of the international political theory is fixed as the analysis of behaviours of states toward others struggling for maximization of national power and interests within a contending and anarchic environment. This leads to the consolidation of the idea that domestic and international political processes are only shaped by states' institutional interests, needs and priorities which are often treated as pre-given facts.

At the ontological level, the conventional IR theory represents the state as a unitary rational actor and a privileged subject of political history. Within a linear and teleological interpretation of history, the nation state refers to the highest degree of political institutionalization developing as the natural consequence of the evolution and progress of humankind. The Realist tradition is prone to universalize the nation state as the sole natural and objective form of political institutionalization, which is, in effect, unique to the historical development of Western societies and modernity. The inevitability and naturalness assigned to the nation state precludes it from being rendered object of any critical/theoretical enquiry. As Rob Walker (1986: 531-32) reminds us, “although the state has long been the central category of international political theory, its precise nature remained rather enigmatic.” For this reason, one might witness an epistemological essentialism, where the theorization of the nature of the nation state and the sources of its autonomy are rejected in an a priori manner. In Realism, the state “does not need to be theorized, because it speaks for itself – just as the facts do in positivism. Thus, the state is taken for granted, no theoretical question is raised about its precise nature, as well as about the basic characteristics of the social formation in which it is embedded” (Keyman, 1997: 57).

For Realism, states whose interests, and objectives are pre-determined, are rational actors taking the most appropriate decisions. They are also viewed as unitary subjects having acquired the necessary consensus for implementing those decisions. Seen from this perspective, states that have similar interests and objectives are conceptualized as homogenous and ‘like-units’ “operating within a determinist mechanical system” (Walker, 1986: 531-32) like billiard-balls or black-box. Therefore, in the Realist discourse, as in the case of nation states themselves, their specificities, unique differences, and historicities are not made object of any theoretical enquiry. Waltz suggests that the socializing effect of competitive international anarchy forces states to be homogenous and ‘like units’ with similar objectives and interests (Waltz, 1979). All states whether liberal or authoritarian, capitalist or communist are functionally undifferentiated and behave similarly to survive and maximize their interests in the anarchic international order. Domestic specificities or identities of the states do not have an impact on their actions in the international realm. Hence, domestic features of the states are meaningless for, and need not be included in the theory of international politics.

An important reason why Realist IR scholarship ignores the domestic specificities of the states is related to the notion of ‘continuity’ in international politics. Realisms portray a very static picture of international politics where historical discontinuities and ruptures are disregarded for the sake of creating transhistorical governing norms for IR (Hobson, Lawson and Rosenberg, 2010: 8). For instance, for Gilpin (1981: 7), the nature of international relations as a “recurring struggle for wealth and power among independent actors in a state of anarchy” has not changed over the millennia. In the same vein, for Waltz “the texture of international relations remains highly constant, patterns recur, and events repeat themselves endlessly” (Waltz, 1979: 66-67). When the specific features or unique characteristics of the domestic realm are taken into account, it would be difficult to explain that everything is continuing in a similar vein. This also partly explains why in the Realist analysis, the state remains as “an external

object, untheorized fact and ahistorical entity” (Keyman, 1997: 57). Therefore what we come across is an ontological essentialism claiming its state-centeredness, where the state itself is largely excluded from the analytical investigation.

By considering these limitations, neo-Weberian historical sociology has developed a theoretical framework incorporating domestic specificities and historicities of the state into analytical inquiry. The origins of the state power, sources of its institutional autonomy, international dimension of state behaviours have been conceived as indispensable elements of any theory of state and modern politics. WHS sets out its analysis by emphasizing institutional autonomy and agential capacity of the state having its own life and history that cannot be reduced to any other factor. For instance, to Giddens, both capitalism and industrialism have decisively influenced the rise of nation states, but the nation state system cannot be accounted for in terms of their existence. The modern world has been shaped through the intersection of capitalism, industrialism and the nation state system (Giddens, 1985: 4-5). This approach does not neglect the interactions between the rise of capitalism and that of nation state. However, it rejects the presumption that nation states are the products of capitalist development. Accordingly, Skocpol proposes that “[j]ust as the capitalist development has spurred transformation of states and the international state system, so have these ‘acted back’ upon the course of capital accumulation within nations and upon a world scale” (Skocpol, 1979: 110). To Rosenberg, the emergence and rise of the capitalist relations of productions and the sovereign state as distinctive forms of “modern international power” are intimately linked to each other. Similarly, he conceives international anarchy “not as the timeless condition of geopolitics, but as the characteristic social form of capitalist modernity” (Rosenberg, 1994: 123).

WHS places emphasis on the need to examine the emergence and development of different entities, structures or processes within their particular historical contexts, yet in a relational way. This conception of history calls for an epistemological stance which is not foregrounding one single factor—say anarchy—but rather mentioning multicausality, first employed by Weber himself.⁴ This notion considers the interactions among different institutions and processes in explaining socio-political change leading to modernity. To Anthony Giddens for instance, “there are four institutional clusterings associated with modernity: heightened surveillance, capitalistic enterprise, industrial production and the consolidation of centralized control of the means of violence. None is wholly reducible to any of the others” (Giddens, 1985: 5).

As regards the theory of state, WHS claims that it has reintroduced ‘the category of agency’ overlooked by the structuralist accounts of social theory (liberalism and Marxism), and the realist IR, particularly by Waltzian neo-Realist systemic understanding. WHS aims to present a historical account of state “by which the state as an institutional agent is theorized through a historical analysis of interactions between structures and agencies” (Keyman, 1997: 59). It is this rediscovery of the state that provides the

⁴ For a critique of the notion of multicausality, see Lapointe and Dufour, 2012.

basis for the neo-Weberian analysis to radically alter the structural deterministic theoretical positions. This it does by making the state an epistemological object that has to be studied in its own right. In this respect, the basic questions with which the state-centric WHS deals could be stated as (1) under which historical circumstances the nation states emerged and gained their institutional autonomy so as to act independently as an agent both in domestic and international politics and (2) what the specificities of nation states are that make them influential in transforming history.

For some students of IR, the emphasis on the category of agency in WHS may rescue the IR theory from the neo-Realist reductionism premised on the system reproduction and the functionalist account of the state. However, the neo-Weberian state-centrism (particularly the first wave WHS in Hobson's terminology) tends to replicate reductionist and essentialist inclinations of realism. The state-centric WHS recognizes a privileged and inadequately problematized status to the state in the analysis of the emergence and rise of the modern politics and society. It runs the risk of reifying the state's institutional capacities at the expense of other institutions and structures. As Keyman observes, while escaping functionalism and arguing for the necessity to recognize the specificity of the state, WHS "eventually constructs an institutionally essentialist theory of the state" (Keyman, 1997: 60). For instance, although WHS suggests that changes in civil society cannot be explained without due reference to the state, changes in the state are accounted for without taking civil society into account. It is assumed that the state, as the primary organizational form of political power and autonomous actor in society, is "capable of acting either in or against the interests of dominant groups within civil society" (Jacoby, 2004: 12).

However, the constitution and sustenance of any social system could not be explained only due to the institutional agency of the state but rather by virtue of its relations with the social formation in which it is embedded. As Jessop correctly argues, "if modern society is not unitary nor a functional totality, then there can be no single centre from which its reproduction is secured. Instead, the very possibility of reproduction arises from the configuration or the condensation of political forces in a given time, and in that sense it is without guarantees and a priori determinants" (Jessop, 1991: 48). Yet, WHS is conducive to identify political power with state power, which has resulted in the consolidation of the state's privileged ontological status at the expense of civil society. As such, it reproduces the conventional understanding of politics where the political struggle for power within societies is reductively theorized only with reference to state power. "However politics contains struggles over structures of meaning, as well as, over the process of construction of collective identities, both class and nonclass" (Keyman, 1997: 80). Power-domination relations in modern societies are much more complex than they are assumed in Historical Sociology and comprise different social-political groups, national and transnational advocacy networks and interest groupings.

WHS, giving primacy to the state in analysing the reproduction of the modern society, takes it for granted as a coherent self with an already established identity. As is the case in Realism, WHS overlooks the historically and politically constructed nature of state identity. It does not include in the analysis the processes through which states define and (re)articulate their characteristics at national and interstate

levels. The institutional autonomy and a coherent self accorded to the state in an a priori manner constitutes the most important commonalities between the Realist and the neo-Weberian schools. The neo-Weberian approach adopting similar modes of analysis with Realism does not fully achieve to go beyond Realism's deterministic and teleological framework and to exceed its limitations and inadequacies.⁵ Hence, the concluding section is dedicated to call for a serious engagement between historical sociology and the post-positivist IR scholarship to comprehend better the specific socio-historical contexts where the states' institutional autonomy and identity have been (re)produced.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL AGENTIAL CAPACITY OF THE STATE

Various IR scholars such as Ashley, Walker, Griffiths and Hobson assert that a distinction should be made between classical Realism and its neo-Realist version as to their conceptualization of the state. This distinction does not emanate from their different epistemological and methodological stances, but rather from the different degree of international agential power that they attach to the state. The degree of international agential capacity of states conditions their ability to "determine policy or shape the international system free of international structural constraints" (Hobson, 2000: 17). For Hobson, there exist "two clearly differentiated realisms and two distinct theories of the state" (Hobson, 2000: 17). While neo-Realist Waltz accuses classical Realism of being reductionist as it explains the whole system through its parts, for some others the agential quality of the state is more clearly recognized within the classical Realist statism (Ashley, 1981; Walker 1987; Griffiths, 1992). To Hobson, "for neo-realism, states are in effect 'passive bearers' (Träger) of the international political structure" (Hobson, 2000: 17) whereas in classical Realism, nation states possessing varying domestic agential capacity, through different historical epochs all have "at all times (albeit to varying degrees) sufficient levels of international agential power to shape the inter-state system" (Hobson, 2000: 17).

In classical Realism, a strong corollary is established between the domestic and international agential capacity of the state, according to which a possible decline in the former would forcibly result in a decrease in the latter. Thus, in sharp contrast to neo-Realism, it is accepted that changes in the natures of the units (i.e., a possible reduction of the state's domestic agential power) directly lead to fundamental changes in the structure of international politics. Yet, neo-Realism denies establishing such a linkage and attaching any importance to the state's domestic characteristics. Although it assigns the state high domestic agency (institutional autonomy from the society), neo-Realism substantially reduces international agency of the state vis-à-vis the requirements of conditions imposed by the anarchic inter-state system. Then, in Waltzian anarchy-centric reductionism, states are imbued with no international agential power to transform international politics and/or to mitigate the constraining logic of anarchy. "The paradox of Waltzian neo-realism is that while it is allegedly state centric, it in fact has no theory of the state, given that domestic factors has no role in shaping the international system" (Hobson, 2002b: 68).

⁵ For some studies on the reductionist nature of WHS, see Jessop, 1990; Scholte, 1993; Halperin, 1998.

“The categorical separation of domestic and international spheres of inquiry” (Hobson, Lawson and Rosenberg, 2010) shapes the neorealist research agenda. The Realist school regards the absolute division between these two as “the starting point of any valid theory of international relations” (Hoffman, 1965: 13). So long as humanity has not achieved unification into a universal state, an essential difference will exist between internal politics and foreign politics. The former tends to reserve the monopoly of violence to those wielding legitimate authority, the latter accepts the plurality of centres of armed force (Aron, 1966: 6). To Realists, domestic and international politics, as the spheres of hierarchy and anarchy respectively, are totally isolated and differentiated spheres and are subject to different laws. Hierarchy as the ordering principle of domestic politics is reproduced through authority exercises of the state deplete with full authority and sovereignty within a given territory. It is this hierarchy that makes cooperation, harmony, and solidarity likely between the units (i.e. the individuals) in domestic politics. Division of labour, based on the specialization of the individual units, increases interdependency and mutual trust among the members of domestic society. Yet, this harmony could only be established and maintained when the state of nature is overcome and the security problem is resolved by the state authority.

On the contrary, anarchy as the ordering principle of inter-state system does not allow for the sustenance of such cooperation and division of labour, which would necessitate specialization, functional differentiation, and interdependency among units (i.e. nation states). In the absence of any higher coercive authority that could eliminate the state of nature, states are assumed as entities in the permanent need of ensuring their security and as residing in a competitive anarchic environment. It is this competitiveness and anarchy that lead the state forcibly to adapt to the “self-help” which is defined by Waltz as a system where “those who do not help themselves (i.e. adapt), or who do so less effectively than others will fail to prosper, will lay themselves open to dangers, will suffer” (Waltz, 1979: 102). If they want to survive in the anarchic international order, states have to behave in accordance with the military requirements imposed by the competitive order. Both Gilpin and Waltz explain the rise and decline of states in relation to their ability to adapt to international anarchy and to emulate the successful practises of the “leading or most innovative states” (Gilpin, 1975). To Gilpin and Waltz, those states “who conform to accepted and successful practises more often rise to the top” (Gilpin, 1981: 160), yet the maladaptive ones are destined to diminish in the international scale.

A strong parallelism is manifest between realist accounts of IR and the evolutionist modernization school of the 1950s both of which employ a Eurocentric mode of analysis (Hobson, 2007). For the modernization school, only the West was progressive, rational and capable of modernity. Modernization, largely assumed as natural, inevitable and, once started, irreversible, has become synonymous with Westernization (Kaliber, 2014; Hulme and Turner, 1990). Modernization, for traditional societies, was mainly a matter of technical adaptation to the institutions and ‘evolutionary universals’ of modernity (i.e. social stratification, bureaucratic organization, money and market) innovated in the West (Parsons, 1964). Parsons defines evolutionary universal as ‘a complex of structures and associated processes’

increasing 'the long-run adaptive capacity of living systems' (Parsons, 1964: 340-41).⁶ In the last analysis, all societies were similar in that they were all adaptive systems aspiring to survive. The only secure way for the developing societies to become modern was but to emulate their more advanced counterparts (Hulme and Turner, 1990). Their relative degree of success in replicating Western institutions was supposed to determine their position in the evolutionary scale of development and modernization. In this evolutionary scale, needless to say, Western modernity, imbued with normative superiority, was representing the most developed and the globally relevant (Lerner, 1958: 46). Similarly, The Realist IR universalizes the nation state as the sole natural and objective form of political institutionalization that has been innovated in the West, and then it has become a global phenomena.

I suggest at this juncture that theorization of domestic and international politics as isolated spheres recognizes the state a privileged status in an a priori manner. Realists contend that the state's survival within the anarchic international order is contingent on its power and authority to exhaust the state of nature in domestic politics. They assume that the only way of dealing with the external state of nature in which "the struggle for power is universal in time and space" (Morgenthau, 1985: 328-29) is to acknowledge absolute sovereignty of state authority in domestic politics. As such the state's claim both to full sovereignty in domestic politics and to be the sole decision-making subject in international politics are more or less guaranteed within an essentialist theoretical construct. As put by Bartelson (1995: 25), "internal sovereignty is legitimized with reference to what is externalized at the moment of birth, without ever being abolished wholesale". Yet, this conceptualization of the state and state power may well serve to the legitimization of disciplinary and oppressive policies of the state apparatus for the sake of state survival and interests.

Historical Sociological approach problematizes the essential distinction prescribed by Realism between the internal and international realms and tends to conceive them as mutually constitutive spheres of politics. "International factors are juxtaposed, conjoined and connected with domestic variables" in explaining state behaviours and "international processes: the general and regional crisis that provoke wars, varieties of capitalist development, forms of imperialism and so on" (Lawson, 2007: 346). Halliday questions

why and how participation in the international realm strengthens or weakens states, why and under what circumstances it permits states to gain autonomy and act independently vis-à-vis the social formations they govern, and under what conditions states become less or more responsive to, and representative of their social formations precisely because of their international role (Keyman, 1994: 161).

In the same vein, Skocpol seeks to trace the implications of the intertwindeedness between the national social formations of the state and international dimensions of its actions.

⁶ Among the evolutionary universals of modernisation cited by Parsons are social stratification, cultural legitimation, bureaucratic organisation, money and market, technological progress and universalistic legal system.

The neo-Weberian approach emphasises that “the geopolitical framework of state action preexisted capitalism, and allowed the state to act as an independent actor. It is the territoriality of state action that makes the state operate outside and above civil society, that makes it clear that it preceded capitalist development, and that gives the state its own history” (Keyman, 1997: 61-61). Mann, in turn, underlines the unique place of geopolitics in theorizing state action by maintaining that “[g]eopolitical organization is very different from the other power organizations mentioned so far. It is indeed normally ignored by sociological theory. But it is an essential part of social life and it is not reducible to the ‘internal’ power configurations of its component states” (Mann, 1986: 2). Similarly, Skocpol claims that states function in relation to both their own territories and the boundaries with other states. To her, “the state is fundamentally Janus-faced, with an intrinsically dual anchorage in class-divided socio-economic structures and an international system of states” (Skocpol, 1979: 32). Here, Skocpol is clearly inspired by Otto Hintze’s analysis on two crucially important factors determining “the real organization of the state. These are, first, the structure of social classes, and second, the external ordering of the states—their position relative to each other, and their over-all position in the world” (Hintze, 1975: 183 cited in Skocpol, 1979: 30-31). Therefore, an adequate account of the state necessitates an in-tandem analysis of the domestic and global conditions that state actions shape and are simultaneously shaped by them. Yet, as it will be discussed in the concluding part, this over-centralised and over-territorialised notion of state power reproduces the inside/outside dichotomy of the mainstream IR.

142 In Skocpol’s approach, the international agency of the state—the ability to conduct foreign policy initiatives independently as an autonomous actor—is explained through its ability to conform to anarchic international order. Like the realist IR scholars, Skocpol takes anarchy as a transhistorical characteristic of international politics, substantially determining the actions of the nation states. The state’s adaptability and conformity to the military requirements of the inter-state system change mainly owing to its varying domestic agential capacity. High domestic agential power, defined as the ability of overcoming the domestic socio-economic fetters, would result in high adaptability and conformity to the military exigencies of international politics. On the contrary, insufficient institutional autonomy from the society would naturally bring maladaptability, and failure to conform to the logic of anarchy. To Skocpol, maladaptive states are not just punished through defeat in war but also social revolution in the domestic politics (Skocpol, 1979: 178). For instance, the Czarist Russia, which could not adapt to the exigencies of the modernising European order, was defeated by Japan in 1905, and later was annihilated by the 1917 socialist revolution of Lenin.

Skocpol is criticized for reproducing the systemic reductionism of neo-Realism as she privileges the logic of anarchy to the detriment of the state’s international agential capacity. For Hobson for instance, “like Gilpin and Waltz, Skocpol subscribes to a ‘passive-adaptive’ theory of the state, in which the state’s principle task is to adapt, or conform to the logic of the international political system and international military conflict between states” (Hobson, 2000: 176). Accordingly, military exigencies of international

politics, conceptualized as anarchic as in the case of Realism, constitute the global context where the state's international agency is constrained. Skocpol understands international order "as a transnational structure of military competition" and as "an analytically autonomous level of transnational reality" (Skocpol, 1979: 32). By reminding "the very foundational place of the international anarchy" in Skocpol's approach, Hobson even accuses her of "throwing or 'kicking the state back out', thereby stripping the state of international agential power" (Hobson, 2000: 176). Rather than presenting a historically conscious conception of international politics, the first wave WHS tends to accept geopolitical/militarist rivalry and anarchy as transhistorical, pregiven reality of international politics for all historical periods of time and reifies "interstate structure typical of neo-Realism" (Lapointe and Dufour, 2012: 109; see also Hobden, 1999). Thus, it is highly difficult to claim that WHS has succeeded to reintroduce the category of agency to the analytical domain, but it has rather reproduced the structuralist account of the neo-Realist paradigm.

However, WHS contributes substantially to the enrichment of theoretical debates on the relations between domestic institutional autonomy of the state and its agency in international politics. WHS has demonstrated that the international actions and policies of the state are inherent in the history and life of the modern state. It has also succeeded to draw our attention to the historical interactions between the emergence and rise of capitalism, industrialism, and modern nation state. Yet, as in the case of realisms, WHS tends to overlook the fact that international politics could not be reduced to inter-state relations. While the state is called back as a unit of analysis, it should not be reified and overemphasized at the expense of other agencies (i.e., international organizations, transnational advocacy networks) or structures (e.g., global socio-economic relations). These non-state actors and deepening global processes have increasingly come to determine the state's domestic and international actions in contemporary politics. The growing impact of international organizations, global advocacy groups and other non-state actors, in turn, renders the notion of international anarchy as a transhistorical reality increasingly problematic.

4. CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR A POST-POSITIVIST TURN IN WHS

The central aim of this study has been to discuss and problematize the conception of the state employed by the conventional IR theory and WHS as its critique. In particular, it has sought to understand the potentials and limitations of WHS to remedy the lack of theory of state in Realisms. It has also discussed the strengths and weaknesses of WHS in transcending the essentialist and reductionist conceptions of history, state and international politics put forward by the Realist and neo-Realist IR theories. It has compared and contrasted the realist and historical sociological views of the state under two subheadings: (1) the ontological and epistemological status, and (2) the degree of international agential capacity assigned to the state. This article has argued that WHS provides insights for more accurate and historicized account of the state and its role and influence in socio-political processes. It has achieved to incorporate domestic specificities, historicities and unique characteristics of the states into macro-sociological analysis. Historical sociologists have demonstrated that "without building in

scope for ideology, perception, domestic state-society relations and the like, structural realism fails to explain why states balance or bandwagon, hide or transcend, chain-gang or buck-pass" (Lawson, 2007: 347). In contrast to the Realist paradigm's structuralist account of the state, the neo-Weberian approach has reintroduced the category of agency by making the state an epistemological object that has to be analysed within its peculiar historical context.

However, despite some of its achievements, WHS has largely reproduced "the ahistorical Eurocentric metanarrative" placing "Europe at the centre of all things progressive in the world". While analysing such macro political/historical issues as causes of social development, the development of the modern state, and the nature of capitalism, WHS has failed to deconstruct the Eurocentric scientific rationality where the non-West has largely been absent. Similarly, in analysing the system reproduction, WHS assigns the state a primary and autonomous role at the expense of other entities and structures, reproducing the realist kind of reductionist inclinations. Concentrating on the structure, capacities, power, and policies of the state, WHS tends to confine the scope of the political to the agency of the state. Such scholars as Tilly and Skocpol also tend to replicate the Realist assumptions that the state's agency have substantially been scaled down by international anarchy. As in the case of mainstream IR, they attempt to accept anarchy as a transhistorical governing norm of interstate relations reifying international structures and denying agency to state-society complexes (Hobson, 2002b: 66; Rosenberg, 2007).

To overcome this realist conception of the state, Hobson proposes a new theoretical enterprise, which he names as "the second-wave WHS" the objective of which is to fulfil the incomplete project: namely to genuinely 'bring the state back in' analysis "as a power source that cannot be reduced to any singular exogenous logic" (Hobson, 2000: 193). In this context, the simplistic logic of the neo-realist paradigm, which singles out one key factor—namely the international anarchy—in explaining the state's international agency is replaced by the second-wave HS with 'multicausality' considering the intertwindeedness among multiple variables as interdependent power sources. The second-wave WHS employs the notion of 'multispatiality' to dissolve the primacy of the anarchic inter-state system in analysing the state's foreign policy initiatives. It is asserted that "the various spatial levels— sub-national, national, international, and global— all affect and structure each other, such that none are self-constituting but are embedded in each other" (Hobson, 2000: 195). To resolve the agent-structure dichotomy, it is suggested that all power actors are interdependent and necessary for the existence of the other. The agent and the structure (the state and international politics) both of which have partial autonomy reciprocally shape and reshape each other. States are conceptualized as the "agents which not only constitute other power actors and domestic and international structures, but are simultaneously constituted by them" (Hobson, 2000: 212). For instance Hobson's 'structurationist' approach emphasize the importance of the state's domestic specificities and the structural circumstances of the international political economy in explaining states' changing trade policies (Hobson, 1998).

All strands of WHS has opposed the realist assumption that domestic and international politics are totally different and isolated structures and that international politics can be understood without considering the impact of the domestic realm. Historical sociologists have shown that the domestic

and international realms are “thoroughly interconnected and mutually constituted” (Hobson 2002a: 16). Yet, even if WHS scholars seem to be well aware of the significance of the international dimension of state agency, they (re)produce the internal/international distinction in divergent ways. More often than not, they do not go beyond mentioning the mutually constitutive nature of internal and international political domains treated as completed entities comprising complex web of institutions. For instance, Hobson, an adamant critique of the early WHS, agrees with Skocpol on the Janus-faced quality of the state “with one face looking at the international and global realms and the other facing the domestic arena. This enables the state to play off the different realms and power sources in order to enhance its multiple interests, which in turn leads to changes in domestic and international ‘spheres’” (Hobson, 2000: 210). As Lapointe and Dufour suggest, Hobson uses the term “dual reflexivity” to underline the co-constitutiveness of the domestic and the international as realms shaping each other (Lapointe and Dufour, 2012: 110; see also Hobson, 1997:2). Yet, such concepts as “Janus-faced entity” (Skocpol), “multiplicity of the state”, (Mann) and “dual reflexivity” (Hobson) serve to the reproduction of the ontological and epistemological boundaries between the domestic and international domains rather than transcending it. For WHS the domestic and the international stand out as independent realms of knowing and acting having their own institutionalized patterns. This is because all waves of WHS seem to be committed to the Realist notion of foreign policy drawing on a clear distinction between the domestic and the international realms of states’ institutionalized practices.

Both in early WHS and in its critiques, the international dimension of state is reductively theorised as their foreign policy responses either to the structural impositions of interstate relations or to the policies of individual states. Foreign policy is conceived as a “state-centric phenomenon in which there is an internally mediated response to the externally induced situation of ideological, military, and economic threats” (Campbell, 1998: 36). This approach assuming foreign policy as objective actions of rational and unitary states not only essentialize the internal/international distinction, but also does not allow to explore the ways in which foreign policy discourses are utilized in domestic politics by states to justify and sustain their political identity. Nation state is taken for granted as an autonomous actor, sovereign presence, ontologically pregiven entity having, once settled, completed and coherent identity. Accordingly, international relations are assumed as relations between atomized and completed states with fixed and already established identities. Foreign policy refers to the external and rational initiatives of the state “the identity of which is secure before it enters into relations with others” (Campbell, 1998: 51). It is imagined as a bridge linking sovereign, autonomous and rational states and is assumed external to the (re)production of there institutional autonomy and political identity. However, post-positivist research shows us the historically and politically constructed nature of boundaries demarcating “inside and outside, us and them, domestic and foreign, and the sphere of citizen entitlements and that of strategic responses” (Connolly, 1991: 201).

Integrating the post-positivist notion of state identity, which is always in the making, into analysis enables us to reveal the historically contingent nature of state behaviour in domestic and international politics. The poststructuralist IR rejects to attribute the state a pregiven and pre-discursive identity, but

rather it problematizes the discursive and ideological constitution of state sovereignty as uncontested and natural phenomenon by decentering it. It advocates reorienting “analysis from the concern with intentional acts of pre-given subjects to the problematic of subjectivity” (Campbell, 1998: 8) and rejects the presence of prediscursive, primary and coherent state identity. States are entities in permanent need of reproducing themselves and the core assumptions of their claimed identity. As Campbell (1998:12) observes:

States are never finished as entities; the tension between the demands of identity and the practices that constitute it can never be fully resolved, because the performative nature of identity can never be fully revealed. This paradox inherent to their being renders states in permanent need of reproduction: with no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that constitute their reality, states are (and have to be) always in process of becoming. For a state to end its practices of representation would be to expose its lack of prediscursive foundations; stasis would be death.

Hence, the discourse of primary and stable state identity consolidating the status of the state as a sovereign presence within international politics should be problematized by revealing its historical and political constructedness. In the critical IR literature, the state identity as in the case of all other collective or individual identities is conceptualized as “tenuously constituted in time ... through a stylized repetition of acts” and realized “not through a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition” (Butler, 1990: 140-41).

Following a constructivist line, Banchoff (1999) highlights the fact that state identity has both an internal dimension (“it is what binds the group together”) and an external dimension (situating the state with respect to others). State identity includes (1) the aggregate of images, set norms, narratives and the core characteristics of the state that are expected to be shared by the large majority of the society; and (2) “the self placement of the polity within specific international context. Those contexts consist mainly of the constellation of states, international institutions and historical experiences within which a state is embedded” (Banchoff, 1999: 268). Thereby state identity, which is articulated by the political figures and official representatives of the state before both national and international audiences does not have a fixed essence and monolithic structure, can embrace multiple and even contrasting discourses in the course of different historical stints. Depending on global politics and/or on internal power relations, certain motives of state identity (modern, western, secular, powerful, unitary and so forth) can be more accentuated when compared with other attributes.

“For a given state identity to be of analytical use, however, it must be shared within and across the parties aspiring for state power” (Banchoff, 1999: 268). Therefore the task of pinpointing the content of state identity primarily necessitates exploring major themes, views and ideas frequently articulated across the public sphere within a given polity. One can cite a large variety of sources from which

evidences illuminating the content of state identity can be extracted: “the legal norms that govern foreign policy” (Banchoff, 1999: 268-69), articles of a constitution, images and news fabricated in visual, printed and electronic media, standardized school books, verbal and written statements of official figures across the political spectrum, statements of party leaders in press conferences and in other settings, formal declarations by official and military institutions of a state and parliamentary debates. These constitute the discursive and representative instruments of the state identity which needs to be assessed in conjunction with the concrete actions of the state in domestic and international realms. While dependent on specific historical contexts, one can suggest that for the state, identity can be understood as the outcome of exclusionary practices in which resistant elements to a secure identity on the ‘inside’ are linked through a discourse of ‘danger’ with threats identified and located on the ‘outside’. The outcome of this is that boundaries are constructed, spaces demarcated, standards of legitimacy incorporated, interpretations of history privileged, and alternatives marginalized (Banchoff, 1999: 68).

As post-positivist IR contends, foreign policies and the international dimension of states are not external to, but inherent in the processes of construction of their institutional autonomy and identity. The theorization of the domestic and the international as discrete spheres of states’ agency only serves to the maintenance of a state centered theory and politics where the nature of the state still remains undertheorised. Thus, WHS needs to enter into a firmer dialogue with post-positivist approaches to IR, e.g. constructivism and post-structuralism, to fulfil its promise of historicizing the state. Social Constructivist IR provides valuable insights into the emergence and consolidations of norms configuring inter-state relations, international organisations (Manners, 2002; Barnett and Finnemore, 2004), international rules, procedures and practices (Price 2007; Finnemore 2003). Post-structuralism, on its part, allows us to reveal the historically constructed nature of state identity and agency, which is an invaluable contribution toward a more developed historical sociology of the state.

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