

Editor's Note

This issue brings together some of the key papers presented in the first *Spectrum Conference on Historical Materialism, Historical Sociology and International Relations* held at the Middle East Technical University on November 3-4, 2012. The papers published represent some of the works of the most well known critical scholars in this field. It is regrettable that it has not been possible to compile all the papers presented during the conference in this one single issue and we hope to publish the other papers in the coming issues. When all the papers are published, it will be possible to see the the different theories and approaches to International Historical Sociology (IHS) in a more integrated way.

It is no exaggeration to argue that the most important contributions to our understanding of the "international" and criticism of the rationalism, positivism and Eurocentrism prevalent in mainstream IR theory (which no longer can be associated only with (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism but also includes different forms of constructivism and some post-structuralist work) have been done by scholars associated with the tradition of historical sociology but especially those coming from a historical materialist tradition. IR has always had a very parochial and limited understanding of historical materialism and of Marxism partly due to the failure of the Marxist scholars themselves to theorize the "international" which ignore the effects of geopolitical rivalry in social conflicts and socio-political transformation. The most crucial factor in this neglect has been on the one hand the "methodological nationalism" of the traditional field of sociology and the "methodological internationalism" of IR reflecting the disciplinary divisions of positivist social science. As IR have become socialized and sociology became internationalized, it has been possible to develop a more totalistic understanding of the "international" facilitating an interdisciplinary rapprochement of IR with other social science disciplines leading finally today to a superdiscipline of historical sociology that goes beyond disciplinary divisions.¹

After a mainly neo-Weberian (but not exclusively so), two stages of historical sociology, a third stage of IHS has today shifted the center of attention of IHS from state-society-international system relations to the dynamics of inter-social relations, the relation between geopolitical multiplicity and capitalist socio-political dynamics and the Eurocentrism involved in many of the assumptions not only of mainstream IR but also in Marxist as well as non-Marxist historical sociology. The challenges which this stream of critical work pose to mainstream IR are coming from many fronts and the study of IR is being reshaped in a much richer and diversified ways. Benno Teschke's major contribution in this issue is a testimony to this. Teschke locates the center of discussion in IHS within the more general social scientific problematique of the relation between generalising scientific explanations and particularising historicist historical sociology. His focus is on the divergent

¹ John M. Hobson, George Lawson and Justin Rosenberg, "Historical Sociology", in Robert A. Denemark (ed.), *The International Studies Encyclopaedia* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 3357-75.

understandings of the international associated with Justin Rosenberg's utilisation of Trotsky's concept of the uneven and combined development as a transhistorical law and his own views associated with Political Marxism emphasizing social property relations, particularising historical conjunctures and social conflicts. This reconnects the theoretical discussions with IR with the general social scientific controversies on the nature of social science theorizing. There have recently been other attempts to overcome this age old division by integrating the general with the particular and the contextual using relational sociology and mechanismic explanations deriving from a critical realist understanding of science.² Therefore IHS has been very fruitful in generating the potential of IR to develop in new directions.

I would like to thank to all the contributors to make this issue such a special one in its contribution to the general theory of IR. The discussions presented here will provide a benchmark for further expanding our understanding and explanation of what constitutes the "international".

Faruk Yalvaç
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Spectrum: Journal of Global Studies

² Simon Curtis and Marjo Koivisto, "Towards a Second 'Second Debate'? Rethinking the Relationship between Science and History in International Theory", *International Relations*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 2010, pp. 433-455.