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# Dialectic of Foreign Policy and International Relations

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A Social Theory of a Disciplinary Gap

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**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX**  
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Social Theory of a Disciplinary Gap**

**SUMMARY**

This thesis problematizes the disciplinary gap between the related fields of International Relations (IR) and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). It claims that this gap is generated as a consequence of the deeper ontological and epistemological assumptions of these disciplines. While IR theories are more concerned with macro-level phenomena and reduce foreign policies of states to structural imperatives, FPA theories are inclined to focus on micro-level determinations and reduce relational phenomena to non-relational and singular behaviours of states and policy makers. This meta-theoretical gap, the thesis argues, can be bridged by a dialectical onto-epistemology that reconstitutes IR and FPA as the aspects of the same disciplinary undertaking by offering an inter-subjective and praxis-oriented view of international politics. Through this onto-epistemology, the thesis contributes to wider debates in social scientific discourse on the so-called agent-structure problem in favour of an agent-based approach by conceptualising macro-level social phenomena not as structures, but as inter-subjective consequences of diverse and contradictory praxes of a multiplicity of diachronically-situated individual and collective agents. The more specific contribution of this thesis to the fields of FPA and IR is that it establishes international relations as the cumulative and contradictory results of the inter-subjective praxes of states in making foreign policies and devising foreign policy strategies.

To illustrate these onto-epistemological arguments empirically, the thesis demonstrates that the 2003 Iraq War as a major international relations development was the long-term result of the dialectical interplay of the reproductive strategies of a series of states and other agents. Similarly, how the individual states discussed in the empirical chapters contributed to the transformation of the so-called international system through their foreign policy strategies also illustrate the practical bridging of FPA and IR by individual and collective agents.

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## INTRODUCTION

On June 9 2014, reports from Iraq that militants of the extremist Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS) had taken control of Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq, hit the international desks of major news agencies. ISIS' first act was to slaughter in their hundreds people they saw as affiliated with the Maliki government or the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in the North. In two days, ISIS captured the nearby city of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown and capital of Salah ad Din province, and in a week, Tal Afar in Nineveh province. Images were shared via social media, extensively featuring barbarian displays of ISIS members terrorising their enemies. ISIS then changed its name to the Islamic State (IS), dropping the territorial reference in its name, presumably in a bid to symbolically register that they were 'erasing' the borders determined by the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 (Jacobs 2014). Controlling large swathes of territory both in Iraq and Syria, the IS also seized control of part of the Iraq-Syria border, establishing a territorially contiguous rule in the region. Having arisen out of a complex set of circumstances, including the war in Iraq in 2003, the spread of Arab uprisings following self-immolation of a disaffected individual in Tunis, and the grievances of the Sunni population in Iraq among other things, IS led the US and many other states to form a coalition, leaving a mark on the international politics of today's world. How are we to relate the self-immolation of a disgruntled individual in Tunis to these tectonic changes in international politics? At any rate, are states not the exclusive agents of foreign policy and international relations? Is the field of international relations not autonomous from domestic politics? What about wider social relations? Are they related to international politics? Are Politics, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and International Relations (IR) not three freestanding disciplines with exclusive fields of inquiry? Do both FPA and IR not problematize international politics?

To answer these questions, and specifically to explore the relation between FPA and IR, this thesis problematizes the disciplinary gap between FPA and IR, and seeks to bridge this gap by interweaving them as aspects of a single disciplinary undertaking. FPA, like much of IR, of which it is considered a subfield,<sup>1</sup> aims to disentangle the complex issue of external behaviour of state-actors in the context of a very composite environment. From the beginning, IR attempted to provide a general theory of international relations. Traditional studies on foreign policy, however, have limited themselves for a long time to the analysis of external behaviour of specific states, within a historically-delimited timeframe, focusing on a limited number of instances of foreign policy-making. Exclusive focus on specificity observed in single-country

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<sup>1</sup> Carlsnaes (2002, p.332) points out how foreign policy analysis was traditionally assumed to be part of 'public policy' rather than international politics. Although this has changed today, it is important to register the historical distance between IR and FPA.



case studies also gives rise to another problem: although it may be possible to inductively generalize findings of research<sup>2</sup> on one state to the rest, this requires the researcher to presuppose that states are 'like units' with similar functions. Thus, it results in either an unsubstantiated generalization, or, in the case where conclusions are not generalized, produces a one-sided account of the *explanandum*: a specific foreign policy decision of a specific state under a certain set of circumstances within a given historical context evaluated from the vantage point of the relevant state or its officials. Any change in circumstances bears the possibility of invalidating the analysis, while any attempt to apply the findings to other, similarly-positioned states may either prove completely useless or, even worse, end up imposing the subjective conditions of one state onto another. Empirically speaking, and as the early history of American foreign policy studies made abundantly clear, analyses of foreign policy at every instance were impressed with the stamp of the subjectivity of the US state, making FPA more American than IR.<sup>3</sup> In short, its field-definition, the subjective vantage point it adopts by necessity<sup>4</sup> and its exclusive focus on the (sub-)unit level, make it very difficult for students of FPA to generalize their conclusions, and thereby establish FPA as a standalone social science discipline comparable to IR.

On the other hand, the international system orientation of 'actor-general' (Hudson 2005, p.2) mainstream IR does not leave much space for internal differentiation within the system. Contrary to FPA's 'actor-specific', 'agency-oriented' subjectivism, mainstream IR theories are content to provide a general framework for understanding how the international system itself works in shaping the behaviour of states. Waltz's systemic treatment of international relations, for instance, despite allowing for variation within the international system among states according to their capabilities in relation to others, refrains from explaining why states, similarly located and constituted and with comparable capabilities, act differently when they are under similar systemic pressures (cf. Hudson 2005; Skidmore and Hudson 1993, pp.2-4). From an FPA perspective, liberalism and constructivism are no less guilty than neorealism when it comes to subordinating agency to structure (Hudson 2007, pp.7-13; Hill 2003, p.3).

To sum up, the two modes of theorizing can be differentiated along four interrelated axes: specificity and generality of their view of actors, their position regarding the agent-structure problem, their reliance on subjective or objective explanations, their levels of analysis, i.e.

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<sup>2</sup> Snyder, R. C, Bruck, H. W, and Sapin, B. M (1962) is a case in point.

<sup>3</sup> For the conceptualization of IR as an 'American Social Science' see Hoffmann (1977). See also Smith (1989) and Krippendorff (1989) for the function and relevance of IR, and particularly FPA, for the US.

<sup>4</sup> Subjectivity imputed to FPA throughout this chapter refers loosely to the necessity of the FPA student to explain foreign policy conjunctures and decisions through the subjective point of view of the state in question.

specific unit level vs. general system level. It should be noted here that these are all related to the respective field- and *explanandum*- definitions of FPA and IR. FPA, taking foreign policy decisions as its *explananda*, seems actor-specific, agency-oriented, subjective and broadly context-specific. In studying why and how a specific foreign policy decision is made, the most general level on which it can conduct its analysis is that of the state, since in a world organized politically along territorial boundaries, a foreign policy decision is taken as a decision made by a state in an attempt to influence what is external, i.e. 'foreign', to that state (Hill 2003, p.3; cf. Rosenau 1968, pp.309-10). This, by definition, renders the analysis actor-specific. It also accounts for the emphasis on agency in FPA studies, since the analysis needs to explain why and how a specific agent made a specific decision or formulated a specific policy. Moreover, because such an analysis requires an account of the circumstances as the agent in question sees them, it is necessarily subjective. Following from these is the almost exclusive focus on the unit or sub-unit level. IR, on the other hand, appears to occupy the other pole on all four counts: generality, structure-orientation, claim to objectivity, and actor-generality. While IR is able to see the bigger picture of world politics and its systemic properties that govern relations among states, this prevents it from taking into account agency and actor-specificity adequately, although it may be able to formulate broadly the likely range of expectations concerning the external behaviour of specific states. Emanating from such a perspective is also an imposition of likeness to states as units in the international system, as exemplified in generalised propositions such as 'liberal states do not fight each other' and 'bipolar system structures are more stable than multipolar system structures', or 'states are constituted through the collective identity generated by international political culture'.

The foregoing evaluation of FPA and IR modes of theorising shows that both may help develop each other's understanding of world politics and external behaviour of states if the aforementioned theoretical gap can be bridged. FPA may contribute to remedying IR's deficiency in accounting for variation across units and increase its sensitivity to agency. IR, on the other hand, may help FPA acquire a broader perspective, with its potentially relational perspective regarding the multiplicity of agents. No matter how different their *explananda* are, a theoretical integration is needed because of the extensive overlap between their *explanantia* (cf. Rosenau 1968, pp.311-17). What is required for this theoretical integration is not a limited conversation between the fields that would make them recognise each other's potential contribution, however. A catalogue of independent variables bringing together lists of correlations identified in each field will not do the work either. Neither of these will bridge the seemingly unbridgeable gap between FPA and IR. What is needed is a rethinking of FPA and IR

together, starting from the meta-theoretical level, since their respective epistemological and ontological assumptions, either explicit or implicit, are irreconcilable.

What this thesis offers, accordingly, is this meta-theoretical rethinking of the relation between FPA and IR. The central claim of this thesis is that it is through the inter-subjective praxes of states, including making foreign policies and devising foreign policy strategies, that FPA and IR are bridged, and that perceived patterns in international relations are nothing but the cumulative consequences of the foreign policies of temporally and spatially differently situated states. States, I argue, in developing strategies of reproduction and putting these into practice, abstract aspects of reality, generating *practical* gaps not only between their specific foreign policies and the 'international system', but also between the economic and the political, and the domestic and the external. These gaps, in turn, are practically bridged when states act to respond to the cumulative unintended consequences of their and others' actions. In other words, when states act, both the sources and influences of their actions have a bearing on all levels and fields of analysis. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, these acts express the domestic and the external, the political and the economic as united in practice. The multiplicity of states and their praxes in turn relationally constitute what we call international relations. The disciplinary gap, in turn, is bridged when theory reflects reality, i.e. when IR is seen as the cumulative consequences of the strategies of reproduction of states in the form of foreign policies, and FPA as the 'ground' of IR.

The argument is developed in six steps. Chapter 1 starts with a review of two attempts by James N. Rosenau and Valerie M. Hudson in the FPA literature to theoretically bridge the gap between IR and FPA. Seeking to develop a universally-applicable theory of foreign policy, Rosenau instead ends up with an abstract taxonomy with innumerable determinations. Hudson's attempt, in turn, is marred by the problems surrounding any version of methodological individualism. The first chapter then goes on to review general IR theories, namely realism, liberalism and constructivism, represented by Kenneth Waltz, Michael Doyle and Alexander Wendt respectively. It shows that while Waltz's approach presents a closed generative system with implicit and unexplained assumptions about the foreign policies of states, reducing external behaviour of states to imperatives of the system, Doyle's liberalism attributes causality to the domestic ordering of states in determining their foreign policy orientation, reducing it to whether the state in question is liberal or not. Finally, the chapter shows that notwithstanding the sophistication of Wendt's attempt to provide a 'social' theory of international politics, deriving foreign policies from ideational structural imperatives, Wendt reproduces Waltz's large-scale reductionism, this time in an ideational way. What this

literature review shows is that pre-conceived analytical abstractions, taken as ontological structures, make it impossible to bridge FPA and IR once they are conceived of as autonomous scientific enterprises. The chapter concludes by claiming that a dialectical onto-epistemology can reconstitute FPA and IR as a single scientific enterprise as part of a social theory of international politics.

Chapter 2 constitutes the main (meta-)theoretical argument of this thesis. Through a series of onto-epistemological arguments, it claims that the gap arises from the temporal and agential decoupling (or abstraction) of individual states' praxes and their inter-subjective consequences and that the gap is bridged and generated practically through the contradictory and concrete praxes of states. First, I argue that real abstractions are made practically by human beings in reproducing their life, and as they find themselves in the presence of others and surrounded by practical abstractions transmitted by older generations, these real abstractions confront them, most of the time, as 'concrete structures'. Building on this notion of abstraction, the chapter goes on to discuss abstraction in different versions of the dialectical method. Providing a critical overview of extant versions of the dialectical method, the chapter presents a dialectical onto-epistemology based centrally on a notion of praxis understood as purposive activity. Qualifying praxis as inter-subjective, contradictory and active, such dialectic offers an agency-based perspective on FPA and IR. Finally, conceiving states and their foreign policies as real abstractions, Chapter 2 argues that finding themselves facing historically-inherited and externally- and internally-generated real abstractions, states face these as 'concrete structures'; and in coping with these, they contextually generate and bridge foreign policies and international relations. The disciplinary gap between FPA and IR, then, is bridged when, in a given conjuncture, the theory reflects the inter-subjective, contradictory and practical nature of interrelations between the praxes of states. Finally, the chapter makes the methodological recommendation that a 'thick narrative' of praxes of the relevant agents guided by a well-formulated research question is the key both to FPA and IR.

In a bid to illustrate these (meta-)theoretical arguments, the next three chapters problematize three seemingly counter-intuitive decisions by three states. Chapter 3 discusses the American decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The argument of the chapter is that the American state, under the neoconservative Bush administration, sought to perpetuate and expand its primacy in the American-led capitalist order that was in the making throughout the twentieth century and consolidated after the Cold War, by actively pursuing regime change in states recalcitrant to incorporation in this order. This argument is developed by historically reconstructing the making of American primacy as an inter-subjective consequence of the praxes of a variety of

temporally and spatially differently situated and motivated agents, including America's ruling classes, Presidents, other states, working classes and etc. throughout the twentieth century. While this primacy was inherited and confronted as a real abstraction by the neoconservative Bush administration, the decision was more the expression of a subjective interpretation of and active intervention into this abstraction than a necessary function of American primacy.

Chapter 4 discusses Turkey's decision to deny passage and basing rights to the invading American forces. Unpacking the Turkish state complex, it is argued that the decision was an inadvertent outcome of a fragile balance in the power struggle between the governing Justice and Development Party (JDP) and the military-bureaucratic establishment who ruled the country for most of the twentieth century. The military-bureaucratic establishment, emerging in late Ottoman times as a result of the interplay of contradictory strategies of reproduction of the local notables, the Sultan, the Great Powers and a variety of other agents, consolidated its rule during the Republican period, establishing itself as the final arbiter of national security and foreign policy matters by the end of the twentieth century. Confronting the military-bureaucratic establishment and its near-automatic pro-US foreign policy as an inherited 'structural' constraint, the JDP sought to avoid alienating it despite public pressure to reject American demands. The reluctance with which the government took the relevant motion to the Parliament reflected the fine balance of this dialectical interplay of different social forces. The reluctance itself, therefore, was an active practice by the government in a situation where either strong approval or defiance would be more politically costly positions to sustain.

Chapter 5 raises the question of Saddam Hussein's defiance in cooperating with the UNMOVIC inspectors, risking invasion by the US. The answer is that Saddam did not sufficiently appreciate the threat of invasion; rather he was almost certain that the main challenge to his rule was a possible US-backed military coup. Conspiratorial politics and its corollary political autonomy in Iraq were faced by Saddam as 'structural' aspects of political life in Iraq. Both the autonomy and the conspiratorial nature of the Iraqi state were in the making throughout the twentieth century, emerging as the unintended consequences of Ottoman and British rules in Iraq as well as reproductive strategies of the King, the tribal *shaikhs* and the nascent military officer-cum-politicians. The 'rentierism' of the later Iraqi Republic and the expansion and strengthening of the internal security network only consolidated the relative independence of political life from wider social relations. This autonomy, an asset in the 1990s, turned out to be the reason why Saddam believed that the only serious threat to his rule would come from the military and disregarded the real threat.

Finally, this thesis ends with an interweaving of these foreign policy acts in two ways in the Conclusion. First, I show that the real abstractions of American primacy and Iraqi autonomy were made by the contradictory praxes of a variety of diachronically-situated agents including the Great Powers, the American state, American ruling and working classes, the Ottoman Empire, King Faisal, and the British colonial administration as well as many others. Therefore, their praxes and the asynchronous relations between these praxes constitute the social historical content of the making of the 2003 Iraq war. Second, in a bid to demonstrate that the dialectic of these praxes not only led to a major international event, but also contributed to the making of the new parameters of international politics, I claim that in combination with the inability of the US to respond to the Arab uprisings and the world financial crisis with a sound strategy, the Iraq war led to changes in the way the new world appeared to other major powers. While American primacy, as a real abstraction, was taken for granted before the Iraq war, as the world appears differently significantly to China and Russia now, a unipolar international system is no longer a given.

# 1. FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: EXPLORING THE GAP

## 1.1. Introduction

This chapter surveys the literature in FPA and IR with a view to these aspects of FPA and IR theories as the first step in an attempt to theoretically bridge the gap between the two. The main claim in this chapter is that the theoretical integration desperately sought for by students of FPA cannot be achieved simply by combining aspects of pre-existing IR orientation towards macro-level 'structures' with established FPA sensitivity to micro-level processes. Rather, a dialectical rethinking that socialises the reproductive strategies of states is required to consider these two seemingly separate enterprises as aspects of the same scientific undertaking.

In doing this, the following section evaluates first Rosenau's efforts to initiate a project of developing a scientific approach to FPA by reaching collectively to a general theory of foreign policy with cross-nationally applicable, testable generalizations (see Rosenau 1966).<sup>1</sup> The section ends with an assessment of Hudson's attempts to 'ground' IR theory in an 'actor-specific' and 'agency-oriented' FPA. The importance of Hudson's work lies in the fact that she explicitly aimed to establish FPA as the micro-foundational ground of systemic IR theories. The third section provides an outline of the respective approaches to and/or implications for foreign policy analysis of three mainstream IR theories, namely neorealism, liberalism and constructivism. Kenneth Waltz's structural realism, Doyle's liberal peace theory, and Wendt's ideational perspective will be reviewed with a focus on their ability to respond to the theory-integrative challenge raised by FPA scholars. The literature to be reviewed in these two sections will be organized in particular according to their take on the aforementioned meta-theoretical problems of levels of analysis and agency. The fourth and final section will recapitulate the problem, followed by a conclusion that the solution to the problem lies in a dialectical rethinking of the so-called question of theoretical integration of FPA's 'agency-oriented', 'actor-specific' approach to micro-processes with IR's structural approach to macro-level generalities.

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenau's work represents the first and most comprehensive attempt to develop a general, and comparative theory of foreign policy and international relations. FPA stagnated for a long time after Rosenau and his colleagues stopped pursuing the comparative approach. Recently, however, the field has seen a revitalisation of both comparative approaches and traditional descriptive case studies (Kaarbo 2003).

## 1.2. FPA

### 1.2.1. Rosenau and the behaviouralist aspiration to general theory

An initial attempt at theoretical integration was undertaken by James N. Rosenau, who saw FPA as a 'bridging discipline' by definition (Rosenau 1987, p.1). Discontent with the unscientific, 'classicist' approach to foreign policy, Rosenau set out to outline a comparative study of foreign policy which would remedy descriptive, unscientific, noncumulative, moralistic deficiencies of traditional single country case studies. His dissatisfaction was so intense that he felt compelled to note that 'our indictment of the state of research in the field may be exaggerated, but the foregoing evidence provides no basis for revising it' (Rosenau 1980a, p.76); his indictment being that the then extant case studies in the field did not reflect 'scientific consciousness' at all, and indeed were responsible for the 'slow progression' of the field 'toward general theory' (Rosenau 1980a, p.122). No matter how detailed and accurate the descriptions these studies generated, they were not able to elevate foreign policy studies to the status of science, comparable to other fields of social sciences. The main problem with these studies was that their analyses were over-specified, that is to say, they restricted themselves to the external behaviour of one specific state 'at a specific moment in time or ... over a period of time' (Rosenau 1980a, pp.121-22; 1968, p.298). The field of foreign policy, 'dominated' by these studies, lamented Rosenau, failed to generate a cumulative, scientific theory of foreign policy. Moreover, according to Rosenau (1965; 1980a, p.35, 43; cf. Singer 1961, pp.83-84), the subjective nature of these studies gave rise to a moralism in their descriptions of cases. What Rosenau generically calls the 'classicist' approach to foreign policy, therefore, could not match the scientific stature of other disciplines that analyse human behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

The remedy Rosenau proposed was to develop a 'general theory' of foreign policy. Briefly stated, in the 'reorientation' of the field of foreign policy toward generality, the *explanandum* was to be 'undertakings' rather than 'decisions' or 'policies' (Rosenau 1980a, pp.60-61), the method, comparison (Rosenau 1968),<sup>3</sup> and the *explanans*, any variable that is shown to be in

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<sup>2</sup> Even attempts to utilize methods of the then-fashionable behaviouralism in the field that Rosenau treasured immensely, were harshly criticized by him for their failure to deliver on their promise of scientificity; see Rosenau (1965). His former teacher Snyder's foray into the decision-making approach (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin 1962) was no exception in Rosenau's dismissal of existing literature (Rosenau 1967; see also Smith 1983, p.139; 1986, pp.16-17).

<sup>3</sup> These three aspects of the proposed 'reorientation', i.e. undertakings, comparison, and the scope of variables are clear indicators of Rosenau's theory-integrative purposes. While 'undertakings, unlike policies and decisions ... fuse commitments with their enactment, decisions with their outcomes, resources with their utilization' relating decisions and policies to their larger context (Rosenau 1980a,



correlation with 'undertakings'. First of all, however, according to Rosenau, a scientific consciousness was necessary, requiring the student to ask the question 'Of what is it an instance' in order that she can look for the underlying pattern (Rosenau 1980a, pp.41-42):

To think theoretically is to be at home with abstractions, to generalize, to discern the underlying order that links otherwise discrete incidents, and such a mode of thinking cannot be achieved and maintained unless every observed phenomenon is approached as merely one instance of a recurring sequence (Rosenau 1980a, p.25).

Even single country case studies could contribute to the development of a general theory of foreign policy if they were taken as instances of a 'larger pattern'.

A general theory of foreign policy, however, does not emerge by itself. In Rosenau's view, 'pre-theories' are needed to 'facilitate the development of general theory' (Rosenau 1980a, p.135), since they render empirical material comparable. In other words, pre-theories are necessary milestones on the path leading to general theory, with cross-nationally applicable, testable generalizations expressed in 'if-then' hypotheses derived from empirical data collection processes. Pre-theories would also serve to identify the 'relative potencies' of each set of variables (Rosenau 1980a, p.129) helping develop the multi-level, multi-causal theoretical integration that Rosenau desired to offer (Hudson and Vore 1995, p.213). His pre-theory was based on a taxonomy of states drawing on the biological concept of 'genotypes' along axes of political accountability (open vs. closed), size (large vs. small), and level of development (developed vs. underdeveloped). He then went on to add two more variables: The level of penetration by the international system (penetrated vs. non-penetrated) and issue areas. Giving five sets of sources of foreign policy behaviour 'listed in order of increasing temporal and spatial distance from external behaviours', i.e. individual, role, governmental, societal and systemic variables, he proposed a pre-theory of foreign policy where the relative potency of these sources are ordered according to the type of the state in question (Rosenau 1980a). This way, Rosenau was able to enumerate 16 genotypes of states and three issue areas and the corresponding relative potencies of each source of foreign policy in the case of each issue area, culminating in 48 sets of weighting of sources.

If researchers in the field subscribed to this project of theoretical integration whereby they standardised their empirical material so as to allow comparison, and thus generalization,

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p.61), comparison serves to show the larger pattern of which an undertaking is an instance; for his methodological guide to 'Comparing Foreign Policies' see Rosenau (1974). Finally, a wider scope of variables in the comparative study of foreign policy aims to link the international to the domestic, the political to the economic, and the individual to the national.

Rosenau did not see why, in the end, a general theory of foreign policy should not emerge. Indeed his proposal gained much following and in a postscript to his article, 'Comparative Foreign Policy: Fad, Fantasy, or Field' (Rosenau 1968), in which he had initially condemned the state of affairs in foreign policy research, he celebrated the establishment of the comparative study of foreign policy as a scientific discipline, and registered his hope for the immediate future of the field (Rosenau 1980a, pp.104-14). Not only were many studies along the lines he proposed published through ICFP (Inter-University Comparative Foreign Policy Project) (S. Smith 1985, p.597), but also Comparative Foreign Policy (CFP) turned into a 'major industry', supported by generous US government funding (Carlsnaes 2002; Hudson 2005; Hudson and Vore 1995), all of which helped launch an effort to collect empirical data on foreign policy 'events' in order to reach 'scientific' generalizations. Creation of events data sets generated 118 propositions expressing correlations between variables and events (McGowan and Shapiro 1973). In this period, Rosenau himself published extensively on individual variables in the context of different 'genotypes' of states, and on possible ways of linking variables.<sup>4</sup> Rosenau's dream did not come true, however, and the expectation that studies in CFP would generate a general theory of foreign policy was never realized. What this enterprise produced in the end was a myriad of propositions and matrices of foreign policy behaviour, not a theory of foreign policy.<sup>5</sup>

'You can't have your parsimony and eat it, too...' noted Valerie Hudson (2007, pp.28-29) in her evaluation of the CFP approach, '... CFP methods demanded parsimony in theory; CFP theory demanded nuance and detail in method.' This tension between generality and specificity, no matter how detailed Rosenau's pre-theory was, could not be resolved, since no attempt was made to resolve it. The positivist and behaviouralist approaches Rosenau and others in CFP tradition adopted proved unsustainable when considered in light of a potentially endless proliferation of source variables and genotypes of states.<sup>6</sup> In other words, they hoped that

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<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, his 'Toward the Study of National-International Linkages' (Rosenau 1969) for an attempt to theoretically combine the domestic and the international within a linkage framework; for an example of his call for greater integration of the economic and the political in the analysis of international politics see Rosenau (1988).

<sup>5</sup> Rosenau himself registered his disappointment about the failure of the CFP project to generate general theory (Rosenau 1980a). See also Carlsnaes (2002); Smith (1983).

<sup>6</sup> With the rise of post-positivism, the label positivist is used for a variety of positions. Here it simply denotes the belief that empirical generalisations about observable social facts generate causal explanations by identifying a constant conjunction between two or more social facts. Behavioralism in political science emerged in the United States in the 1950s, modelled itself after behaviorism in psychology, and gained an immense following in the 1960s. The aim of behavioralism in political science was to identify regularities in observable individual political behaviour in aggregate, and it was marked by a strict separation of facts from values. So naïve was the positivism of Roseanu that he admitted not having heard of the word 'positivist' until he was charged with it (Rosenau 2003, p.417).

establishing correlations between variables would automatically lead to a general theory of foreign policy, but even in positivist epistemology ‘correlation is not [sic] causation’ (S. Smith 1986, p.23), and a catalogue of sources of foreign policy arranged according to their ‘relative potencies’ in the context of issue areas facing ‘genotypes of’ states is not theory. Writing in the mid-1960s, when there were slightly over 160 internationally recognized states, Rosenau listed 16 types of states. Not only is any taxonomy, including Rosenau’s pre-theory of foreign policy, arbitrary, but also even in the case that Rosenau’s genotypes corresponded to the reality of the states, there is no guarantee that any set of propositions derived from constant conjunction of foreign policy ‘events’ with sets of source variables will automatically generate a general theory of foreign policy.<sup>7</sup> To be fair, in the face of what he perceived to be growing interdependence, Rosenau developed his own theory of foreign policy around another concept from biology, i.e. adaptation,<sup>8</sup> but this theory, despite utilising Rosenau’s earlier genotypes and sets of variables to a certain extent, fell short of delivering the promise of a general theory of foreign policy sensitive to specificity, and is not clearly linked to his earlier work (S. Smith 1983, p.144). Put another way, while his early work could not generate general theory because of its sensitivity to variations, his work on adaptation surrendered specificity in return for parsimony and generality: every actor adapts to its environment. In spite of his fierce criticism of classical realism’s assumptions about the international system (anarchy) and the external behaviour of states as unitary actors (pursuit of interest defined in terms of power) (Rosenau 1980a), rather than challenging these core assumptions of realism, he simply changed its methodology (Vasquez 1999; Carlsnaes 2002; S. Smith 1989; 1986). Nevertheless, his coming to terms with growing interdependence, or what he called ‘framgregation’ (Rosenau 1997), forced him to distance himself from his realist assumptions, positivist epistemology, and behaviouralist methodology towards ‘pre-postmodernism’, at the expense of his aspiration to unified general theory.<sup>9</sup>

After this appraisal of Rosenau’s work on his own terms, a brief assessment of it according to the gap problematised in the first section of this chapter is in order. Rosenau’s ‘pre-theory’ and longing for general theory represent a ‘significant ... failure’ (Carlsnaes 2002), both in

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<sup>7</sup> Theory building, as Smith (1986, p.23) notes, is an ‘entirely separate cognitive act’ from data collection, and therefore theory does not emerge by itself. Rosenau, in fact, registered this point elsewhere (Rosenau 1980b) in relation to his framework of ‘linkage politics’ designed to link variables between national and international systems (Rosenau 1969). He recognised that his ‘typology that yielded ... 144 linkages was barren of theory’ (Rosenau 1981, pp.26-27). For a critical appreciation of his ‘linkage politics’ see Hill (2003, pp.208-14).

<sup>8</sup> A collection of his articles on his theory of ‘political adaptation’ can be found in his ‘The Study of Political Adaptation’ (Rosenau 1981).

<sup>9</sup> For an understanding of Rosenau’s later ‘pre-postmodern’ position see his *Distant Proximities* (2003).

terms of accounting for the specificity of actors, and for the generality of theory. Increasing the number of 'genotypes' in trying to draw out more specific knowledge of the external behaviour of different classes of states, he could not account for the variation of foreign policies within the same genotype, or the overlap between the foreign policies of states located in different genotypes; nor could he manage to develop a general theory. His theory of political adaptation, in contrast, focused mostly on the adaptation of states qua actors to their external environment, thereby providing a more general perspective on the external behaviour of states. Making this move, however, Rosenau sacrifices specificity in favour of generality. Relatedly, both his early and later work deny agency to states, as they are conceptualised as fulfilling the requirements of imperatives emanating either from their size, accountability, penetratedness, level of development in given issue areas, or from four types of adaptation available to them in an interdependent world. Furthermore, denying agency to states does not, as one would expect, result in a well-developed structural-functional theorization. In a similar vein, his efforts toward theoretical integration of multiple levels and fields of causality failed primarily because of a prior acceptance of their separation, or confusion of their analytical separation for their real separation. No matter how many times he tried to bridge domestic- and international- systemic 'factors' in various ways –as source variables in his pre-theoretical ordering of variables, through his linkage politics framework or political adaptation framework, or later in his 'prepostmodern' times through the concepts of 'fragggregation' and 'distant proximities'– both the international and the domestic remain reified, notwithstanding his dismissal of realist assumptions. Although, in short, both domestic and international determinations are present in his framework as different independent variables, one finds it very difficult to see how they are integrated into a general theory of foreign policy so as to drive home his initial view of foreign policy as a bridging discipline. To quote Rosenau (1980a, p.118) himself 'to recognize that foreign policy is shaped by internal as well as external factors is not to comprehend how the two intermix'; one should add: to provide a catalogue of internal and external factors is not to comprehend how they are united. The same holds true for his bridging of the economic and the political. They figure only as sets of variables among others without any theoretical integration but for a matrix of their relative weights in different states within the context of different issue areas.<sup>10</sup> Even his postpositivism or prepostmodernism does not allow him to reconsider the analytical boundaries abstracting 'spheres' vertically (the domestic and the international) and horizontally (the political and the economic) from each other not as what they are, i.e. abstractions made for analytical

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<sup>10</sup> Rosenau later acknowledged that his pre-theory had failed to account for international political-economic processes in determining foreign policies of states (Rosenau 1988; cf. Starr 1988).

purposes; instead he introduces even more 'factors' without theoretically integrating them. The theoretical gap between FPA and IR in the end remains as wide as ever.

### 1.2.2. Hudson and FPA as the ground of IR

Valerie M. Hudson is no less enthusiastic and assertive about FPA's theory-integrative and natural 'bridging' role than Rosenau, and she goes so far as to claim that FPA has the potential to serve as the 'ground' of IR theory (Hudson 2005). She shares with Rosenau not only the dissatisfaction with the realist generic view of state behaviour, but also an aspiration to a 'multifactorial', 'multilevel', multidisciplinary, and theory-integrative orientation, all of which she considers identifying characteristics of the FPA tradition. The other two 'hallmarks' of FPA that she lists, on the other hand, are what differentiate her approach from that of Rosenau: agency-orientation and actor-specificity (Hudson 2005, pp.2-3). It is these latter two aspects of Hudson's approach to FPA as the ground of IR that the present review of her work shall bring to the fore for the purposes of our analysis.

Hudson (1997, pp.4-6; 2005, pp.4-5), unlike Rosenau (1980a) who saw climbing the 'ladder of abstraction' as the way forward in developing a scientific-theoretical consciousness, views IR as marred by an omnipresent exaltation of abstraction. The problem for her is not that IR uses abstractions such as the state; the problem is rather that when these abstractions are devoid of concrete content, as in the case of much IR theory, 'agency vanishes' (Hudson 2002, p.10). Echoing Wight (1999), Hudson (2007, pp.9-12) argues that IR theories, neorealist, neoliberal or constructivist variants alike, are actor-general theories because of their international-systemic orientation, which leaves no space for a theorisation of human agents in their specificity, although 'all that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in *human decision makers acting singly and in groups*' (Hudson 2005, p.1, italics in original). Individual human beings is the locus where all determinants of foreign policy, however mediated, take their final shape as foreign policy decisions, and they are both the 'source of change' of, and the source of internal variation in, an international system (Hudson 1997, p.5). According to Hudson, in order that 'the entire enterprise of IR theorizing' is saved from 'irrelevance and vacuity' (Hudson 2005, p.5), its empty abstractions should be filled with the appropriate concrete content, i.e. the actual foreign policy decision-making acts of human beings, and FPA is the natural candidate for doing this by generating the 'concrete theory' that will provide the 'micro-foundations' of and the 'ground' for IR theory (Hudson 2005, p.21). 'Concrete theory', from this perspective, is distinguished from 'abstract theory' by its 'focus on actual decision makers' and on actual actions of decision-making, its emphasis on behaviour- and situation-specificity, and its freedom from 'analytical preconceptions' (Lane 1990, p.928).

Building on Lane's formulation of 'concrete theory', Hudson places utmost emphasis on the sub-unit level, despite her acknowledgment that sub-unit level, unit level and system level of analysis can and should be theoretically integrated. More than anything else, her work focuses on the perception, psychology, and personality of foreign policy decision-making elites, as their decisions constitute the instances and the concrete content of theory. As a result of her dissatisfaction with taking states as utility-maximising unitary actors constituting homogeneity in the international system approaches (actor-general IR theories), she turns to human individuals who make foreign policy decisions. Replacing the abstract conception of states with humans, however, does not automatically resolve the problem of the assumption of actor-generalizability, as becomes obvious in her attribution of an unchanging nature to all human beings based on their 'genetic' basic needs, and by analogy, to all regimes (Hudson, Sims and Thomas 1993).

This problem becomes more visible when the focus is strictly on the relation between 'political psychology' and foreign policy making processes. It is not unusual that students of foreign policy rely on explanations based on the personality and perception analyses of foreign policy making officials. As individual human agents make the decisions constituting the concrete content of state behaviour, the subjectivity of analysis (of state behaviour) in FPA mentioned in the first section, turns into the subjectivities of individual political elites taking part in foreign policy decision-making processes in Hudson's view (Singer and Hudson 1992), requiring an investigation of the variables within the factor areas of perception and personality. Underlying this focus on the psyche of the decision-making political elites is the assumption that causal proximity is the best criterion against which causal weight can be judged. Put another way, although Hudson seeks to integrate levels of analysis and factors, she almost exclusively focuses on one level, i.e. the individual, and on one factor, i.e. psychology.<sup>11</sup> Her attempt to identify a meaningful correlation, for instance, between the birth order of leaders and their personal characteristics, and between these characteristics and foreign policy behaviour of leaders (Hudson 1990; 1992) unsurprisingly does not yield any significant correlation between a typology of birth order, personal characteristics and foreign policy behaviour. Even in the case that she was able to identify a correlation, Carlsnaes' critique of Rosenau's method evoking the positivist dictum that 'correlation does not imply causation' equally holds for this analysis. What Rosenau did with a focus on the unit level, Hudson does

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<sup>11</sup> To be fair she also wrote on cultural (Hudson 1997) and societal (Hudson, Sims and Thomas 1993) 'factors' in foreign policy making, yet all these, from her perspective, crystallise in the decision-making act of the policy-making individuals and her oeuvre lacks any theoretical integration of these diverse 'factors' going beyond research agendas.

by moving the focus to the sub-unit level: sets of variables, typologies of personal characteristics and national attributes do not yield by themselves a theoretically-integrated approach to foreign policy. What they yield is an unlimited number of isolated variables and types of cultures and personalities from different levels of analysis and factor areas, the theoretical integration of which was aptly designated a 'hopeless task' (Macridis 1976). It is no surprise, then, that Hudson (2007, p.188-189) left the task of theoretical integration not to the 'upcoming generation' but to the 'subsequent generation' of students of foreign policy who, she hopes, using recently developing methods of neuroscience can enter into the minds of human beings.

Hudson's failure in theoretical integration because of her almost exclusive focus on the specificity of decision-making individuals, one may hope, would at least bring forth a robust conception of agency. She focuses on the actual decision makers as the concrete actors of foreign policy who, she believes, not only form the micro-foundations of all forms of interaction in world politics with their acts of decision making in line with Weberian methodological individualism, but also the central locus of scientific explanation. Therefore, unlike Weber, who accepts that there are different levels of explanation (Wight 2006, p.64), Hudson leans toward psychologism.<sup>12</sup> Denying the state any agency, because she sees it as a 'metaphysical abstraction',<sup>13</sup> Hudson does not realise that her pre-social decision-makers are not any less abstracted than states, in that human decision makers, 'singly and in groups', are abstracted from social relations that are in fact constitutive not only of their decision-making roles as political elites, but also of their perception and personality (Hollis and Smith 1990; Hill 2003, pp.29-30). Although Hudson acknowledges the challenge that this problem poses for her FPA approach and appreciates the need to account for the social sources of decision-makers' psyche and mind (Singer and Hudson 1992, pp.258-60), one wonders how it is possible to reconcile this with inductive empirical generalisations regarding leader personalities. Furthermore, because of both methodological individualism and psychologism, and 'neuro-scientism' for that matter, she reduces a central and irreducible aspect of sociality that arises from relations to individual determinations.

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<sup>12</sup> Traceable to Weber's (1978) theory of action, methodological individualism in social studies refers to a methodological orientation to interpret rather than explain social phenomena in terms of individuals' subjective social setting. Whatever the problem in question is, methodological individualism takes individuals as its unit of analysis. Gellner (1956, p.176) captures the main problem with methodological individualism as follows: 'History is *about* chaps. It does not follow that its explanations are always in terms of chaps. Societies are what people do, but social scientists are not biographers *en grande série*.' Psychologism denotes the tendency in social sciences to explain social phenomena and social action in terms of psychological factors.

<sup>13</sup> The case for a theory of the state as an 'actor-like' entity in FPA is made by Hill (2003, pp.30-37) and will be touched upon in the last section of this chapter and further discussed in the next chapter.

Theoretical integration, in short, proves impossible in Hudson's case primarily due to her individualist methodology and assumptions. What Rosenau does at the unit level, Hudson does at the sub-unit level, substituting his actor-general theory of states with an actor-general theory of human decision-makers. Although she recommends developing 'interlockable propositions,' it is quite difficult to see how this interlocking may occur when one starts with hypotheses regarding isolated observable empirical regularities that claim to reflect correlations between independent variables and foreign policy decisions. Her strong focus on agency fails too to deliver on its promise, as the human decision-makers she takes to be the agents of all that is social, and by extension international, are abstracted from social relations that constitute their subjectivity as individuals in relation to other individuals. The matter is not that she abstracts; it is rather that she ontologically and methodologically prioritises one abstraction over others, mistaking it for the concrete.

The failure on the part of FPA scholars who strived to propose general theories of foreign policy by combining the virtues of both systemic and unit-level analyses led to a tendency to abandon this aspiration. As S. Smith (1986, p.21) notes, general theory-oriented FPA tradition gave way to more systemic theories of international relations, such as structural realism and world systems theory, and what he calls the 'residual FPA approach' came to be represented by 'middle range theories' that concern themselves with a smaller universe of determinants and abstracted sets of correlations between foreign policy decisions and a set of predetermined areas of independent variables.

### **1.3. IR**

#### **1.3.1. Kenneth Waltz and the Systemic Theory of International Politics**

Systemic approaches to international relations find their purest expression in the work of Kenneth Waltz. His theory operates at the most general level, with no explanatory role assigned to specific agents or their actions, individually or collectively. Waltz himself is keen to distinguish the theory of international politics from the theory of foreign policy according to the level of generality the theory requires (Waltz 1979, pp.71-73, 121-23), not because in reality foreign policy and international politics are not intertwined, but because so far no one has come up with a satisfactory theory that can show interrelations between a theory of foreign policy and a theory of international politics (see Halliday & Rosenberg 1998). Nevertheless, like all other structuralist theories, Waltz's systemic approach to international politics has some very crucial implications for foreign policy analysis and agency, and therefore it finds itself a place in textbooks on foreign policy (e.g. Smith, Hadfield & Dunne 2008).



Waltz, like Rosenau, starts developing his systemic theory partly as a result of his dissatisfaction with classical realism, albeit from a very different point of view. For Waltz, classical realism, or traditionalism, for all its contributions to our understanding of international relations by virtue of its micro-theories of anarchy, balance of power, etc., remains a reductionistic approach since it derives these qualities of the international system from the behaviour of units, thus revealing its underlying behaviouralist nature (Waltz 1979, pp.62-64). Waltz, in contrast, believes that a non-reductionist approach to international politics should limit itself to the properties of the system which cannot be derived from the behaviour of units, 'nor can one arrive at an understanding of international politics by summing the foreign policies and the external behaviors of states' (Waltz, 1979, p.64). This is why, argues Waltz, 'low-level explanations' keep failing to account for the 'sameness' of international political life and constant repetitions in international history of certain phenomena such as war despite the changing qualities of units interacting within the system (Waltz 1979, p.67-68). It is in this sense that, for Waltz, a systemic theory of international politics can and should be developed in isolation from a theory of foreign policy which operates at the unit level. This isolation is a precondition of theory-building although it does not represent an ontological separation between international politics and domestic politics, for 'in reality, everything is related to everything else' (Waltz 1979,p.8). As theory cannot reproduce reality as it is in its totality, it should isolate and abstract from observable reality its object of study (Waltz 1979, pp.8-9). In the case of a theory of international politics, if this theory is not isolated from the observable reality of behaviours of units, one ends up with innumerable variables (Waltz 1979, p.45) where causes and effects are mixed up (Waltz 1979, p.78), a problem I identified earlier in Rosenau's work. This can be remedied by elegance and parsimony, both of which come about by 'creatively' identifying the organizing principle of this seemingly unrelated pile of variables (Waltz 1979, pp.9-10). This organizing principle in international politics, according to Waltz, is anarchy, which refers to the absence of 'agents with system-wide authority' (Waltz 1979, p.88). International systems are characterized by the functional likeness of units, unlike domestic social systems, which are organized by the principle of hierarchy and a functional differentiation of and division of labour among units. The structure of the system conditions the behaviour of units by punishing deviant behaviour and encouraging compliant behaviour (Waltz 1979, p.106). The international system is also characterised by a balance of power politics, which, for Waltz, holds in any system which meets two requirements: anarchy and the units' will to survival (Waltz 1979, p.121). Balance of power, then, is an unintended result of the 'coaction' of states, all of which are assumed by Waltz to be maximising their security in an anarchical environment. A theory of international

politics, then, isolating its object of inquiry from those of theories of domestic politics and foreign policy, makes assumptions about the behaviour of units; it does not explain their behaviour (Waltz 1979, pp.118-119). To explain unit-level processes requires a unit-level theory, in this case a theory of the state and its foreign policy. This strategy of isolating the system from its constituents and everything else makes the theory impervious to any form of falsification. It is the behaviour of states that, wittingly or unwittingly, gives rise to the systemic conditions which, in turn, constrain state behaviour, yet it remains outside the purview of the theory. It is the actions of states that change the structure of the system, yet again they remain outside the domain of international politics. Although the number of great powers is highly dependent on sub-unit level processes, these processes are also left out. Structural change depends on changes in the relative capabilities of great powers, but the domestic sources of relative capabilities are not problematized by the theory. Finally, system change occurs as a result of a change in the organising principle of the system from anarchy to hierarchy, which can be identified by studying the functional differentiation of states in the system and the extent of international division of labour if there is any, but nevertheless any such study is dubbed reductionist from the outset. This 'immunization strategy' of externalising any possible input to explanation from the (sub-)unit level makes it impossible to critically engage with his work on any but the meta-theoretical level (Teschke 2003, p.15). The crux of the problem is that by abstracting the *explanandum* from the *explanantia*, Waltz builds a self-enclosed theory which relies on *assumptions* about externalities (i.e. unit-level properties and relations) which happen to play an immense role in constituting the system (cf. Wendt 1999, pp.99-105). Assumptions about state behaviour are useful, but only in the sense that they allow assumptions about the system to be useful. This circularity not only safeguards the theory from criticism, but also undermines any explanatory power it has both regarding the system *and* the behaviour of units.

The empirical repercussions of this become more manifest in Waltz's analyses of actual international-political developments. For many critics of structural realism, the end of the Cold War struck it a deadly blow, and empirically demonstrated that it was markedly obsolete. This was because the structural change from bipolarity to unipolarity originated at the unit-level when the Soviet Union collapsed. Waltz (1993) in response argues that the end of the Cold War was due to a combination of structural and unit-level causes: the Soviet Union could not economically carry the burden of an externally-induced arms race and collapsed after a failed attempt at internal reorganisation of its economy. Although structural change brought about by structural factors started at the unit-level, it then began eroding the structure (Waltz 1993,

p.49). As unit-level processes cannot be part of the explanation, erosion of the structure explains the structural change. Furthermore, for Waltz, structural change from bipolarity to unipolarity does not necessarily point at a systemic change, as the system remains anarchical, but more importantly because 'international politics abhors unbalanced power' just like 'nature abhors a vacuum' (Waltz 2000; see also Layne 1993), and therefore balance will naturally be restored by the rise of new powers. 'Both friends and foes ... will work to right the balance' for the 'present condition of international politics is unnatural' (Waltz 1999, p.700). 'Sooner or later, usually sooner' other great powers will emerge and restore the lost balance, and if a potential great power restrains itself, this would constitute a structural anomaly (2000, p.9) and anomalies are penalised by the structure.<sup>14</sup> Although Waltz admits that some 'virtuosos' such as Bismarck can overcome systemic constraints for a given period (1986, p.344) and that some potential great powers can choose not to be great powers, he posits that the balance will be restored 'sooner' rather than later. We never know, however, how soon 'sooner' is after over two decades. In a word, the balance of power holds when there is balance of power, and similarly, systemic constraints manifest themselves only when reality matches theory, notwithstanding the initial conscious separation of theory from reality.

The implication of Waltz's theory of international politics for foreign policy is two-fold. First, states uniformly seek to maintain their position and ensure their survival in an anarchical environment. The self-help system forces units to balance. Systemic imperatives override any domestic source of foreign policy. Whatever foreign policy decision a state makes, it intentionally or unintentionally serves to restore balance in international politics. While any state behaviour that overcomes systemic pressures is a sign of a virtuoso in action, non-conforming state behaviour is anomalous and likely to be punished by the structure. The state, as the primary agent of both foreign policymaking and international politics, is tightly constrained by the structure. In a way, the agency is almost absolutely attributed to the structure itself. It is no wonder that Waltz often refers to mainstream economics in clarifying his arguments: building analogies between the market and international politics on the one hand, and between the firm and the state on the other, he comes up with the notion of a self-regulating international system with its balance of power, much like the self-regulating market of the mainstream economics with its invisible hand (cf. Rosenberg 1994, pp.139-42). Depriving states or any other actor of any agency, Waltz does not provide a detailed

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<sup>14</sup> The prediction by Waltz and other neorealists (e.g. Layne 1993) as to the ascendance of Japan as a rival to the US has been refuted by history and effectively by the actions of the US, and it was not the structure, but the US, through international organizations such as the IMF, that punished Japan for her *system-conforming* behaviour. See Gowan (1999a, p.103-25) for an excellent analysis of the 1997-98 Asian crisis and the curbing of Japanese potential by the US.

description of the structure and its workings, arguing that theory means omission, simplification, assumption and parsimony (Waltz 2004, pp.2-4) and has nothing to do with representing reality (Waltz 1979, pp.8-9). Rejecting unit and sub-unit level explanations even as inputs to a larger explanatory framework and placing the ultimate and exclusive focus on structural explanation do not help Waltz to develop a better theory than those he labels reductionist; this merely makes his version a reductionism of a larger scale (cf. Wendt 1987, pp.341-43). Concomitant to this large-scale reductionism, theoretical integration of different levels is for Waltz not necessarily undesirable, but almost impossible notwithstanding the close ontological proximity and interrelatedness of processes of foreign policy and international politics.

It might be argued that Hans J. Morgenthau could be a better fit to inquire into the gap between FPA and IR in realist terms considering his hermeneutic emplacement of statesmen as agents of international politics at the intersection of foreign policy and international relations. He recommends an empathetic understanding of statesmen and, where this is not possible, a vantage point to look over their shoulders (Morgenthau 1985) to sufficiently appreciate their contextual situatedness (cf. Behr and Heath, 2009, pp.327). This sensitivity to the role of circumstances, however, does not automatically absolve him of the reductionism of more structuralist strands of realism. In the final analysis, not only does he reduce politics to power and power to human nature, but also this human nature is expressed in every individual, making his notion of international politics ultimately a version of methodological individualism (Hollis and Smith, 1990: p.97). While this ultimate reliance on human nature could be played down as having no central role in his theory, this would be a mistaken conclusion considering the fact that Morgenthau's more central notions of anarchy and balance of power and the resulting principle of realist rationality are all emanations of it. Statesmen as agents are only mediators of these perennial forces generated by the universal 'will to power'. Furthermore, both classical realism of Morgenthau and neoclassical realism seek to explain foreign policies only with limited regard for international outcomes, leaving them, in the case of neoclassical realism, to the predetermined mechanisms of the international system, while problematizing the mediation of systemic mechanisms by states (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro, 2009, p.19-21).

### **1.3.2. Michael Doyle and the Liberal Peace Thesis**

Among IR approaches discussed in this chapter, Doyle's liberal peace thesis is the most flexible approach, in that it freely floats back and forth between levels of generality in its explanation of an empirical observation in international relations in the last two centuries. This observation

that “liberal states do not make war with each other” seeks the source of absence of war in foreign policies of liberal states in their domestic constitution. Rooted in Immanuel Kant’s 1795 essay ‘Perpetual Peace,’ the claim is that states with republican constitutions are less likely to resort to violent resolution of their conflicts. In his two-part article entitled ‘Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs’ (Doyle 1983a and 1983b), Doyle entertained the idea that ‘a separate peace exists among liberal states’. This separate peace does not extend to the foreign policies of liberal states towards non-liberal states. International relations between liberal and non-liberal states, according to Doyle, are still governed by the premises of the realist theory of international politics: anarchy, self-help, and balance of power.

For Doyle, liberal peace has three sources and these are the republican constitutions of liberal states, which place checks on governments to act in restraint, international law within a federation of republican states arising out of the ‘ideological commitment’ of liberal states to human rights and rights of other liberal states as moral persons, and cosmopolitan law ensuring that all liberal states recognise that free trade and ensuing interdependence, rather than war, is the best way to further the interests of all (Doyle 1983a; 2005). Furthermore, claims Doyle, the world market partially ‘removes’ rivalries of an economic nature from the domain of action of states, thereby reducing the likelihood of interstate conflict between liberal states (1983a, p.231). These three causal mechanisms together, but *only together*, explain the absence of war among liberal states (Doyle 2005), which according to an observer is the closest thing ‘we have to an empirical law in international relations’ (Levy 1988, p.662). They do, however, fight non-liberal states for two related reasons. First, the security dilemma caused by anarchy still reigns outside the pacific zone, and, following from this, ‘the very constitutional restraint, shared commercial interests, and international respect for individual rights that promote peace among liberal societies can exacerbate conflicts in relations between liberal and non-liberal societies’ (Doyle 1983b, pp.324-25; 1986).

The democratic peace thesis attracted a variety of criticisms ranging from statistical insignificance (Spiro 1994) to selectivity in choosing cases (Layne 1994) and exhibiting definitional problems (Layne 1994; Owen 1994).<sup>15</sup> Doyle, as mentioned above, starts with a statistical empirical observation and attempts to explain it by proposing three causal mechanisms which respectively operate at domestic, international, and transnational levels. Confirmation of the thesis is made again through statistical analysis. The objections raised by Layne and Owen about the lack of clarity in definitions of central concepts, such as war and

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<sup>15</sup> For a reply to criticisms by Doyle and Russett, another proponent of democratic peace thesis, and a rejoinder by the critics see Russett, Layne, Spiro and Doyle (1995).

democracy, in the democratic peace thesis are significant, not because they are a product of 'intellectual suppleness' (Layne 1994, p.40), but more crucially because these concepts are formal abstractions devoid of historical content. It does not bother Doyle, for example, that it was the democratic constitution of Wilhelmine Germany that not only failed to prevent war, but also prepared the ground for war through the democratic pursuit of interests by different interest groups in society (Waltz 1991, pp.669-70).<sup>16</sup> He goes to great lengths to argue why German foreign policy was not liberal although its domestic policy was (Doyle 1983a, pp.216-17n8). The lack of historical sensitivity also partially vindicates the statistical insignificance charge raised by Spiro (1994). 'Wars are rare' (Layne 1994) and even rarer were democracies in three-fourths of the period that the liberal peace thesis purports to account for.<sup>17</sup> The matter is not so much that this compromises the statistical strength of the thesis; the problem is rather the transposition of an observed statistical correlation in the contemporary world to a period encompassing two centuries when not only the content of concepts such as democracy, war, and peace varied, but also when agents including states, their strategies, and capabilities of actors were different.

Empirically, this also underpins the failure to appreciate post-World War II reorganisation of the transatlantic international order and the role of the United States in it as a qualitatively different explanation of absence of war among liberal states. Notwithstanding his awareness of the preeminent role the US played in constructing the liberal international order, and the potential dangers for liberal peace a declining American hegemony may pose (Doyle 1983a, pp.232-33), he fails to drive this home and insists on the complementarity of his three causal mechanisms (cf. Rosato 2003). It is the historically-specific institutional and international political-economic arrangement made after WW II under the aegis of the American state that has underwritten the absence of wars among major capitalist liberal states since then (Panitch and Gindin 2005; cf. Ikenberry 2001).

Methodologically, although Doyle (1983a; 1986; 1997) persistently claims that none of the three sources of foreign policy behaviour of liberal states are sufficient to explain or sustain peace among them by themselves, he does not show how these three causes are related. One may infer from his definition of liberalism that for him all three causes are reducible to the first cause. Liberalism for Doyle (1983a, p.206) is an 'ideology' and a 'set of institutions' organised

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<sup>16</sup> Layne (1994, pp.42-44) compares the foreign policy decision-making process of Wilhelmine Germany with those of Britain and France and concludes that their decision-making processes were as unchecked as that of Germany.

<sup>17</sup> Russett (1993, pp.20-21) recognises this difference between the first 150 years of 'democratic peace' and the peace of the post-1945 period, but explains it in reference to a perfection of democracies.

around this ideology. Norms and values associated with this ideology, along with domestic and international institutions they create, have the dual effect on the foreign policies of liberal states: friendship towards liberal states and aggression towards non-liberal states. In this sense, at the root of all three causes lies liberal ideology.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, he admits that the primary danger to liberal peace may arise out of diminishing US pre-eminence, both militarily and economically. He tasks major liberal powers with maintaining the domestic constitution of other liberal states in the case of a change of leadership (Doyle 1983a: 234-35), prioritising one source of foreign policy over others and thereby undermining his own tripartite causal mechanism.

In brief, the sources of foreign policymaking listed by Doyle are left unintegrated. Assessed against actual history, their alleged complementarity is unsustainable, as are the levels of analysis that show these causes as related to one another, although he freely moves between them in picking causes. Only by inference can we reach the conclusion that direction of causality is from the domestic to the transnational. The zones of peace and war compel liberal states to act in specific ways, depriving them of any agency in their external relations. The actions of non-liberal states are already given by the realist state of nature with all its problematic baggage, evaluated in the preceding section. Indifference to historical specificity undermines both the explanatory power of the democratic peace thesis due to incorrect historical generalisation, and its ability to account for the rich diversity of foreign policy behaviour of states.

### 1.3.3. Alexander Wendt and the 'Social' Theory of International Politics<sup>19</sup>

Among the approaches to foreign policy and international relations we have covered thus far, Alexander Wendt's constructivist theory of international politics is by far the most sophisticated, with its explicit problematisation of meta-theoretical and theoretical issues central to social scientific research in general, and to the study of international politics in particular. Wendt's 'social' theory of international politics aims at developing a holistic approach to international relations, and to that extent is comparable to Waltz's project in scope, but is richer in content in the sense that he wishes to fill the 'empty vessel' that is the anarchical system (Wendt 1999, p.249) by providing a sociology of it. He develops his argument building upon dichotomies found in implicit and explicit ontologies of approaches in the field. Two such central dichotomies are materialism-idealism and individualism-

<sup>18</sup> Russett, for instance, admits that by repeating liberal norms as 'descriptive principles' he aims to 'make them true' (Russett 1993, pp.136-37).

<sup>19</sup> It is crucial to note from the outset that in Wendtian terms 'social' refers exclusively to inter-subjectively constructed *ideational* or cultural structures.

holism/structuralism. Positioning his theory at the intersection of holism and idealism, Wendt goes on to construct his structural idealism. The whole project, arguably, is about formulating this structural idealism and showing its implications for the study of international politics.

Critical of neorealism's exclusive focus on material determinants in explaining the structure of the international system, Wendt is no more satisfied with neoliberalism's introduction of ideas and institutions than with their explanation of international regimes, albeit praising neoliberals for seeing ideas as 'relatively autonomous' factors (Wendt 1999, pp.92-93). More fundamentally, Wendt challenges the content of the material and the ideational as they are generally used in the social sciences. Dividing the 'stuff' that the world is made up of into categories of material and ideational, he bases this radical ontological separation on the Cartesian separation of body and mind. This distinction has an important bearing upon his resolution of the agent-structure problem. Unconventionally, Wendt limits the content of the material to what he calls 'brute material forces' and expands the ideational to encompass all else that exists. According to this view, although central categories of IR, i.e. power and interests, stand on a material base, they are constituted by ideas because their material aspect acquires meaning only through ideas. Structures, in this sense, are ultimately cultural structures, although an analytical distinction between material structures, interest-based structures and ideational structures can be made (Wendt 1999, p.139).

Regarding the agent-structure problem, Wendt's central claim about mainstream IR is that they are closer to individualism than holism. This holds counter-intuitively for Waltz's systemic theory too, in view of Waltz's strategy of basing his theory of the system on assumptions about units. Theories with individualist ontologies, Wendt maintains, prioritise agency over structure, leading to a disregard for the constitutive effect of structure over agents; structures for Wendt also constitute agents as agents. Structural-functionalist theories such as the world-system approach developed by Wallerstein, on the other hand, provide a solution to the agent-structure problem by prioritising whole over parts, albeit at the expense of making agents merely passive instruments of the structure, and their actions mere instantiations and expressions of the whole, resulting in a reification of the structure. Against both positions, Wendt proposes a third, which does not ontologically prioritise either agency or structure. Instead, claims Wendt (1987), agents and structures should be given 'equal ontological status' by being posited as 'mutually constituted' and 'co-determined entities'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere Wendt (1999, pp.243-44) argues that states as agents are to be given ontological priority when doing systemic theorising.



Key to Wendt's theorisation of the relation between structures and agents is the distinction he makes between causation and constitution. While causal relations are external relations between 'self-organized' independent entities, one of which is chronologically prior to the other, constitutive relations are internal relations between a structure and its parts, the status of the latter dependent on their relation to the former. Causal explanations raise 'why' and 'how' questions, whereas constitutive explanations raise 'what' and 'how possible' questions and are interested in the conditions of possibility of the *explanandum* within a constraining and enabling structure. The natural world is composed of entirely self-organized, mind-independent material entities and the social world is composed of partly self-organised, partly externally (i.e. in Wendtian parlance 'socially') constituted ideational entities (such as states), with the relative weight of this internal-external constitution differing in degrees according to the object of study. This does not mean, however, that the material world requires causal explanation and the social world constitutive explanation,

since it is wrong to think that material conditions imply causal theorizing and ideas imply constitutive theorizing. Both kinds of stuff have both causal and constitutive effects. Ideas have constitutive effects insofar as they make social kinds possible .... differences between those [causal and constitutive] questions cannot be reduced to the differences between physical substances and ideas... Things get caused in society just as much as things get constituted in nature (Wendt 1998, pp.107-108).

Constitutive theory for Wendt (1999, p.87) is not a rival to causal theory; rather it provides the 'basis for causal explanation'. Ontologically too, constitution by structures is that which gives agents their causal powers. Wendt's structural approach, unlike the Waltzian version, differentiates between a micro-level of interaction among units and a macro-level of system irreducible to interactions, but constituted by them. The effect of the former structure on the agents is behavioural and causal; the latter has a constitutive effect on the identities and interests of agents (Wendt 1999, pp.189-90).

States, in this sense, although partly constituted by the international system (external social structure), are essentially constituted in virtue of their (internal) self-organisation, and self-organised entities 'resist denial and misrepresentation' (Wendt 1999, p.73) generating in time external recognition, thus becoming more fundamentally constituted by the structure. State behaviour accordingly is also caused by the structure to a certain extent. Taking states as unitary and intentional actors, Wendt argues that the cultural structure of the international political system does not directly constitute states until the norms of this culture (enmity, rivalry or friendship) are collectively seen as legitimate –the ultimate degree of internalisation. Anarchy defined as the absence of central authority lacks content and can only be filled by a distribution of ideas. The structure of the system has its constitutive power not in virtue of

anarchy per se, but thanks to a dominance of a shared set of ideas composing international political culture. Structural change occurs when the collective identity associated with the dominant political culture changes, and 'master variables' of a new collective identity formation are 'interdependence, common fate, homogeneity, and self-restraint', the latter playing a crucial role in connection with any of the former three (Wendt 1999, p.343).

Two problems crop up immediately and both are fundamental to Wendt's argument: (1) his radical ontological separation of the material and the ideational, and (2) his juxtaposition of a dynamic category of agency constantly in motion with a static category of structure, ultimately requiring a synthetic category of process. At pains to apply scientific realism to international relations and social theory, and simultaneously willing to remain loyal to constructivist premises, Wendt reduces human activity to intersubjective ideational activity. The distinction made at the ontological level is not sustainable, as becomes conspicuous in Wendt's conflicting statements about the nature of the separation. On the one hand, he maintains that material forces in social matters are constituted by the ideas which give them their causal powers, while on the other he claims that material forces have independent causal powers in virtue of their self-organised independent existence (cf. S. Smith 2000). Nor does he provide a better explanation for his retreat into the Cartesian mind-body duality than stating that it is necessary for want of a better way of being a scientific realist (Wendt 1999, p.112). This attempt to ontologically separate the material and the ideational makes him divorce human beings from any relation to nature, aside from their universal characteristics as a species-being. In Wendt's theory, only biologically-specified human nature remains a material part of the explanation in social life.

Secondly, for all his emphasis on the 'mutual constitution' of agency and structure, there is little in his work which shows how agents actively constitute and transform structures, for his conception of structure is static, synchronic and 'logical'. Banishing spatio-temporality from relations of constitution to relations of causality, he cuts off agents from structures in actual history. A mediating category, process, is introduced to reconnect them, but it is quite difficult to see how this will happen considering the irreducibility of macro-level structure of culture to micro-level relations between units. His claim to provide a 'social' theory of international politics does not live up to its promise, as micro- and macro- level structures are abstracted from unit-level processes, and behaviours from their concrete content. The distinction between causation and constitution as explanatory rather than interpretive modes of analysis also generates problems for Wendt's solution of the agency-structure problem. While he posits that structures both constitute identities and interests of agents and cause their

behaviour, the 'mechanisms' through which these effects of structures over agents are not clear, considering that causation presupposes independent entities in a spatio-temporal context, unlike constitutive relations which presuppose co-existence.

Finally, the 'mutual constitution' claim fails to make any contribution to the discussion. This is primarily due to a view of the agent-structure problem as agency-in-general vs. structure. In order to illustrate the relation of mutual constitution between states and international political culture as the macro-level structure of the international system, Wendt argues that where international political culture is characterised by enmity, rivalry, or friendship, states will also take on identities respectively of enemies, rivals, or friends. Since structures (here, international political cultures) are constituted by processes of collective identity formation, they will be characterised by enmity, rivalry, or friendship when states construct their identities as enemies, rivals, or friends. What is claimed to be a relation of mutual constitution seems in fact to be a relation of circularity and sameness (cf. Suganami 2006, pp.68-69). For states are *assumed* to be like units, and are counter-posed *in aggregate* to the structure. This failure is a result of Wendt's inattentiveness to the specificity of different agents, each of whom stands in a different relation to one another and to existing international institutional equilibrium (or in Wendt's terms, international political culture). Temporarily leaving aside unit-level processes and properties may be a useful theoretical strategy, but when the relation between agents and structures are built on this basis, any later re-introduction of these after the constitution of agents and structures as distinct but interrelated entities, will not allow the establishment of these as mutually constitutive.

Wendt, just like Waltz, is not directly interested in explaining state behaviour. His primary aim is to develop a systemic theory of international politics. Although he develops a very sophisticated and versed ontology of agency and structure, abstracting two higher levels of analysis from a lower level of analysis, he fails to deliver on his promise of filling the 'empty vessel' of international structure with social content. Even though he explicitly registers that his approach leaves out considerations of state external behaviour and foreign policy, his explanation of the relation between culture and identity makes implicit assumptions about foreign policy, albeit at a very general level. States, in this sense, display a disposition towards shared identity properties constituted by international political structure. In this respect, with no theory of state and domestic level processes states qua agents seem to be not constituted, but caused by the system.

While Wendt's interest in ontology is an exception among constructivists, he is not alone in separating what is called the 'brute or natural facts' from social relations (Guzzini, 2000,

p.160). What differentiates him from other constructivists is that he seeks to find ways to incorporate ontology and epistemology in light of his critical realist perspective, however unsuccessful. Regarding the separation itself, the reduction of the intersubjective social content to consensual norm and institution formation and recognition (e.g. Ashley 1984), and the disregard for the conflictual nature of this intersubjectivity, other constructivists share Wendt's position.

#### **1.4. Conclusion**

This chapter explored the theoretical gap between FPA and IR theories. The gap is important, for as the foregoing survey of literature shows, no student of either field can dispense with what is considered as belonging to the other field, without at least making assumptions about it. This generates a need to raise this issue particularly in reference to larger social scientific concerns such as the agent-structure and level of analysis problems, since any attempt to integrate these two theoretical enterprises evokes questions regarding the relation between actors and their contexts of action, status of states and individuals as agents, and relations between multiple determinants. Most of the time, these questions have carried the discussion to meta-theoretical domains of ontology and epistemology.

One crucial conclusion that emerges from this literature review is that all authors surveyed here at least make assumptions at every level, albeit focusing primarily on one of them and abstracting it from the others. Added to this is the static nature of their faulty abstractions. This is an indication that foreign policy and international relations cannot be theorised separately. Nor can they be bridged after their respective constitution as abstract fields. They should be thought of together, as parts of human sociality. A perspective that places human social action at the centre of the analysis is required. This does not mean that human social action is reducible to the actions of individuals; on the contrary, it calls for a meta-theoretical discussion of the constitution of human social action. Placing human social action at the centre also problematizes the agent-structure problem in a different way by emphasising the specificity of agents. Coupled with historical specificity, such emphasis on agential specificity is the key to a better understanding of the relation between foreign policy and international relations. This does not imply a return to historical single country case studies; rather it calls for a research question-guided inquiry into the specificity of agents (particularly of states) based on their relations with other agents. Only in the context of these relations can we genuinely account for the specificity of agents. The gap between IR and FPA, I conclude, arises because of a lack of theorisation at the level of interaction, where interaction is not limited to relations among states as like units, but encompasses the whole social relations of

reproduction, thereby providing theory with genuine social content. A historical materialist dialectic, as I will argue in the next chapter, is the best candidate to develop such a research perspective that can close this gap. Dialectic, with its focus on relations, its sensitivity to actual, concrete historically specific relations, and its view of actors as standing in determinate relations with other actors, will be able to integrate foreign policy-making as an aspect of human sociality, with the international as the relational aspect of this form of sociality.

## 2. THE REAL ABSTRACT AND THE DIALECTIC OF THE CONCRETE: THEORISING THE GAP

### 2.1. Introduction

The first chapter explored the gap between two ways of theorising that field of human activity that involves relations between societies, namely FPA and IR. Attempts to theoretically bridge the disciplinary gap between these ontologically-related, yet epistemologically-polarised endeavours were shown to be unsatisfactory in the sense that they failed to represent the ways in which states seek to control and govern their relations to one another, much less the ways in which a multiplicity of determinations interplay in shaping these relations. Notwithstanding fundamental differences in terms of their substantial claims, methodologies, levels of analysis, background philosophical assumptions etc., one unifying thread binds them all: their use of abstractions. They all abstract foreign policy from international politics, although they implicitly or explicitly make very strong assumptions about the parts they leave out. This attempt to emulate natural sciences by establishing conceptual laboratories where *ceteris paribus* assumptions are thought to hold, does not allow them to integrate the variables they first isolate, then refine and consolidate, or reify as ontologically distinct. No matter how many new variables they introduce, no matter the number of ways they strive to show that these two 'separate' fields are related, they cannot bridge the gap *after* constituting these areas as ontologically separate. Aspects of human social life cannot be arbitrarily cut off from others. Nor can units of analysis take on completely different roles in and according to different fields of knowledge. We need an approach that conceives of foreign policy and international relations as part of a wider conception of human social activity with abstractions derived from actual relations between human beings and from their relations with nature.

This chapter proposes that such an approach needs to be grounded in a dialectical view of human social existence. It develops a series of interrelated ontological, epistemological, and methodological arguments to claim that the disciplinary gap between FPA and IR is a reflection of the temporal and agential decoupling of individual states' purposive actions from the cumulative consequences of these actions. This gap is contextually generated *and* bridged in the concrete and contradictory praxes of states. The concrete content of foreign policy is indeed the 'ground' of international relations. In other words, what we call the international system-cum-structure *is* the cumulative and unintended consequences of dialectically-intertwined foreign policies, which are socially produced and reproduced as a result of the contradictory interplay of strategies of reproduction of a diverse set of actors. This argument is

developed in four steps. Section 2 starts with a discussion of abstractions in human social life, claiming that human beings practically abstract aspects of reality in coping with its vastness and externality. Then it goes on to argue that these real abstractions emerge as a consequence of the diverse and contradictory strategies of reproduction of a diverse set of agents and that they appear to individual agents as concrete structures, misleading many scholars, who mistake real abstractions for concrete structures. In the third section, I distinguish dialectical abstractions from non-dialectical abstractions and discuss two main existing versions of dialectics to show their shortcomings. The section ends with a presentation of an alternative, historical materialist dialectic that is based on a praxis-oriented, intersubjective onto-epistemology. In Section 4, building on this onto-epistemology, I argue that states as real abstractions, in developing strategies of reproduction and putting these in practice, abstract aspects of reality, generating practical gaps not only between their specific foreign policies and the ‘international system’ as a real abstraction, but also between the economic and the political, and the domestic and the external. These gaps, in turn, are practically bridged when states respond to the cumulative unintended consequences of their own and others’ actions. The disciplinary gap, in turn, is bridged when IR is seen theoretically as the cumulative consequences of the strategies of reproduction of states in the form of foreign policies, and FPA as the ‘ground’ of IR.

## 2.2. Real Abstraction<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2.1. Abstraction in Human Social Life

In the preceding section, I argued that the unifying thread accounting for failure in the reviewed authors is the way they conceptualise the abstract and the concrete. This failure crystallises in Hudson’s treatment of the state as a ‘metaphysical abstraction’ and her suggestion of the individual-cum-leader as the ‘concrete’ unit of analysis instead. This view of the concrete and the abstract lies at the root of the problem, for it mistakes the concrete for the abstracted act of foreign policy-making, and thus replaces concrete individuals, with all the social relations that constitute them as individuals, with individuals *abstracted* from these relations, stripped of their individuality. It is not my contention that abstraction should be avoided by all means; rather my argument is that scientific/philosophical abstractions should represent practical abstractions, *and* should then be concretised instead of being reified and imposed on reality as external conceptual structures.

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<sup>1</sup> It will become clear below (section 2.2) that what is meant by this phrase is much wider in scope than in the works of some Marxist scholars who reserve the term exclusively for labour under capitalism: (e.g. Murray 2000a, 2000b; Toscano 2008; Arthur 2004; Finelli 2007).

This section, therefore, deals with abstraction as it occurs in everyday interactions between human beings and nature, and among human beings. In one sense of the term, I take abstraction<sup>2</sup> as a practical cognitive process by means of which human beings in their daily lives cope with the enormity of what appears external to them, i.e. the concrete totality to which they also belong, in producing and reproducing their lives by purposefully acting on it.<sup>3</sup> By totality I refer, at this point, to the simple fact that in reality ‘everything is related to everything else’ (Waltz 1979, p.8), and the quality of being concrete arises from this relatedness. Subjects *qua* concrete individuals find themselves ‘thrown’ into the world, or find the world as given. This ‘givenness’ of the world or ‘thrownness’ into the world appears to subjects as a relation of externality between them and the world.<sup>4</sup> To produce and reproduce their lives, they act upon this seeming externality, i.e. nature and other individuals. This *activity* is objective (or ‘object-related’ (Heine and Teschke 1996)) in the simple sense that purposeful actions of human beings as subjects are ‘directed towards’ what appears to them as external *objects* (Kitching 1988). However, this objective externality appears differently to different subjects because the set of relations they find themselves in that given world is different. Moreover, partly because of this difference, and partly because of any other possible individual differences, purposes also differ. All this difference makes individual human actions, including cognitive actions, subjective. However, as they act individually and collectively in the world, their actions almost never meet their initial purposes, as these entire differences clash, reinforce, subsume, transfigure, and destroy one another. All these modes of interaction, including legacies of dead generations,<sup>5</sup> constantly produce a new and ever-changing externality which confronts subjects as given. If this simple sketch of the onto-epistemology of human social existence reflects things as they are, the historical materialist approach I propose involves an inter-subjective materialist view of social reality and of the process of abstraction in practice (cf. Heine and Teschke 1996).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The term abstraction itself comes from Latin word *abstractus*, which is the past participle of *abstrahere*, to pull from (Ollman 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Purposeful action does not have to result in the attainment of the purpose. The action remains purposeful, nevertheless.

<sup>4</sup> Despite this borrowing of terminology, the use of the concepts of ‘givenness’ and ‘thrownness’ fundamentally differs from the way Heidegger (1996) used them, as will be seen in the exposition of the argument.

<sup>5</sup> Kitching (1988, p.45–6) details how ‘circumstances’ created by previous generations are experienced as structural constraints by humans. See also Heine and Teschke (1996).

<sup>6</sup> Marx (Marx and Engels 1998) makes this point in his *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology* where he finds Feuerbach’s ‘objective materialism’ deficient in that it fails to capture the dynamic aspect of reality, leaving it to Hegel’s dialectical ‘objective idealism’, and ignores the ‘subjective’, practical nature of human activity. He therefore sees Feuerbach’s materialism as a ‘contemplative



As they interact with this seeming externality –of which they are a part– humans perform a double practical abstraction: they simultaneously abstract themselves from this externality as subjects, and abstract that externality from themselves as objects. They thus practically disregard both the part played by this externality in their constitution as subjects, and the part they play in constituting what they treat as objects. In the sense that they act on this externality as their object of action, this externality is objective. This is not mere illusion; this is rather how things appear to individuals from their particular subjective vantage points. It goes without saying, however, that the externality will appear differently to different subjects each of whom, by way of acting, will ‘assume’ other subjects to be part of that externality.<sup>7</sup>

At the very moment men and women abstract themselves from what they act on and abstract it from themselves, they also abstract aspects of this objective world from its other aspects by acting on them, i.e. by making them the object of their ‘sensuous activity’ (Marx and Engels 1998, *passim*). In using stones, for example, as weapons for the purpose of hunting, they make another abstraction: they abstract those stones from their concrete existence, that is, from all other relations they have to other things in nature, including animate and inanimate things. A piece of stone in its concrete existence can be potential soil to the nearby plant, a part of its own to the mountain it broke away from, something blocking the river bed to a stream, an indication of their decomposing powers to the sun and the wind, a building material to a person, an ornament to another and so on (see Marx and Engels 1986, pp.28–29). It is all of this and more in itself. ‘Thing-in-itself’, in other words, does not possess inherent qualities independent of its relations to other things, including human beings. It is, therefore, abstracted in practice through being acted upon by human beings in a particular way. In this very same moment, human beings also abstract a class of things as a genus. This abstraction is also carried out practically. By putting similar objects to the same use, or by acting upon these seemingly similar objects in similar ways, they abstract all those concretely different stones from other objects. All flints, granites, basalts and pebbles, notwithstanding their differences, are classified under the same genus as different species. This genus-species type of abstraction also reflects the way men and women interact with one another and nature. Any species is also an abstraction; they are abstracted from the rest of the genus (cf. Sayer 1987, pp.54–5).

In short, any purposeful human action is at the same time an abstraction, a practical act of isolating one aspect of reality into manageable proportions (cf. Ollman 2003, p.60ff). This is

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materialism’ (or ‘disguised idealism’ (Balibar 1995, p.24)) which still tries to represent an external, objective world in the contemplating mind of an abstracted ego.

<sup>7</sup> “Assuming” here does not denote an intentional act of reflection; rather it refers to a necessary condition of purposeful human action.

not a purely cognitive process that occurs in the mind of the thinking subject. It is a practical-cognitive process that occurs simultaneously in the mind and in practice as part of acting on the world (Sayer 1987, pp.85–8). Practically, though, most of our abstractions are passed on from former generations in an ossified and reified form. Depending on the frequency of their occurrence or the balance of social forces, they turn into social institutions; some are codified, others remain conventional. These ossified legacies I broadly call *real abstractions*.<sup>8</sup> The modern state as we know it, for example, is not a ‘metaphysical abstraction’ as Hudson would have us believe, but a *real abstraction*: a cognitive-practical outcome of the interactions of a multiplicity of actors, living and dead. The state under capitalism, or ‘political constitution’ in a capitalist society, as an entity independent from civil society, is a product of the practical abstraction of the so-called private and public spheres from each other (Marx 1977, p.32).<sup>9</sup>

### 2.2.2. Social Origins of Real Abstractions or the Agent-Structure Problem

Real abstractions are made, modified, and replaced by active human subjects in a *given* world and *in the presence of others*, that is,

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living (Marx 1972, p.10).

That is, individuals at any point in history find themselves thrown into a world which has already developed modes of producing and reproducing social life. In short, ‘reality is... a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals’ (Marx and Engels 1998, p.90). As these are found by individuals as already existing, they appear to them as external ‘alien powers’, as social structures constraining their actions (cf. Marx and Engels 1988, 1998, p.53). “To the single individual”, for example, “distribution naturally appears as a social law, which determines his position within [the system of] production in which he produces” (Marx and Engels 1986, p.33). The second reason why these modes appear so is that individuals also find themselves in the presence of others, in definite forms of social interaction. Depending on the social location of agents, i.e. the complex of social relations they find themselves thrown into, the ways these ‘structures’ appear to different individuals exhibit variations. In the face of such vastness, however, these institutionalized real abstractions appear as concrete structures. It is no wonder, then, that structuralist approaches like that of Waltz picture agents as passive

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<sup>8</sup> Constructivists variously name these social institutions ‘cultural structures’ (Wendt 1999), ‘social conventions’ (Kratochwil 1991), etc.

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller discussion of this separation see Wood (1981). Rosenberg (1994) traces the development of modern sovereignty from a historical-sociological perspective. This will be problematized again later in this chapter in section 4.

victims of the system and forget that it is the agents that make what he calls the system in the first place. This ideological primacy of structure rests on the surface-level representation of this necessarily one-sided perception. On the other hand, individualist approaches primarily associated with followers of Weber (unlike Weber himself) abstract individuals from their circumstances to varying degrees. What is of more concern to us here, however, is the *via media* structurationist theory that agents and structures are mutually constitutive of each other (e.g. Giddens 1986; Wendt 1987).

Wendt, it will be recalled, argued for an approach that gives ontological priority neither to the agent nor to the structure; rather they should be given 'equal ontological status' in synthesizing them dialectically (Wendt 1987). Claiming that agents and structures are mutually constitutive, he distinguished causation from constitution (Wendt 1998). For Wendt, causation occurs between two independently existing things, one of which (cause) is temporally prior to the other (effect). In this sense, causation is an external relation. Constitution in turn, is an internal relation between a structure and an agent without which neither the structure, nor the agent can exist as a structure and an agent respectively. The social world embodies relations of both causation and constitution. To sustain this claim, Wendt (1998) has to attribute causality to human beings' reasons for action; that is, he takes reasons as causes. However, recognizing that human reasons are based on desires, which are constituted, not caused, by cultural structures, and which therefore do not exist independently, precludes any identification of reasons with causes, although this does not deter him from holding these conflicting views simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> This is closely related to a central debate in social sciences and I shall discuss this shortly in relation to abstraction.

Abstraction in scientific research generally follows a similar logic (similar to practical abstractions) in dealing with phenomena. Apart from mathematics, where one is already 'in the realm of ... absolute abstraction' (Whitehead 2011, p.27), all sciences abstract in order to isolate an aspect of reality into manageable proportions and to scrutinise this aspect more deeply. Moreover, sciences also abstract theoretically, what is abstracted practically. Abstraction in this sense *precedes* contemplation (but not cognition, with which it is simultaneous). The current state of technology may give the illusory impression that we now know much more about nature than we did, say, five hundred years ago, but we know more about nature only in terms of our practical interaction with its aspects. To use the same

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<sup>10</sup> Smith (2000) challenges Wendt's equation of reasons with causes and still holds that 'there are two sorts of stories to tell' in the social world and these are not reducible to each other (Hollis and Smith 1991, p.1).

example, our knowledge about a certain type of stone must surely have increased exponentially to this day. But there is no way that we can assume that we know *what it is in itself* without the mediation of human social practice upon it any more than we did five hundred years ago. Perfection of an aircraft does not mean that we have mastered the laws of nature; rather, it shows how we historically and practically dealt with an experienced empirical force, i.e. gravity. This is not to say that there are no differences in the ways natural and social sciences approach reality, but at a very general level their orientation is based on the practical relation of humans to one another and to nature, or on what Marx (1976, p.283) called 'social metabolism'. One such difference identified as fundamentally important by many is that while natural sciences look for empirical regularities that may be raised to the level of general causal laws in explaining phenomena from the subjective viewpoint of humanity to the 'external' world of objects, the social sciences historically have grappled with the problem of the subject looking at herself, treating herself simultaneously both as object and subject. This so-called difference between natural and social sciences (or 'cultural sciences' in Weberian terminology (Weber 2011)) also finds an echo *within* social sciences between explanatory and interpretive methodologies.<sup>11</sup>

Positivist approaches in the social sciences, as we saw in the first chapter in the cases of Rosenau, Waltz, and Doyle, seek to emulate the methods of natural sciences by externalising the object of research and thus abstracting the object from the subject. They try to identify and explain causal mechanisms in human social life also by abstracting objects of research from one another in establishing variables. 'Ex-planation' itself suggests that the object to be explained is external to the subject (see Krombach 1997) and can be isolated from other objects of explanation. Now, if in reality 'everything is related to everything else', including the inquiring subject, how are we to externalise objects, and how are we to legitimately isolate the object of our study from other objects so that we can study it in a natural-scientific manner? Positivist approaches assume the Cartesian point of view of the knowing ego as a response to the first question, and elevate recurrent conjunctions between previously isolated aspects of reality to the level of law-like propositions as causal relations. Their answer to the second question is to take a real abstraction (i.e. an actually existing abstraction that is an outcome of the practical-cognitive interaction of human beings with one another and with nature over a period of time), isolate it from other abstractions (aspects of reality), and then seek to

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<sup>11</sup> This distinction goes back to the works of Neo-Kantians such as Ernst Cassirer and Heinrich Rickert. William Dilthey can also be listed among these neo-Kantians although he also makes use of Hegel's work. For a more contemporary treatment of the distinction and its historical intellectual roots, see Habermas (1988). In the field of international relations the most renowned exposition is that of Hollis and Smith (1991).

establish causal relations between these isolated aspects now called variables. In this way they claim to reach an objective account of reality. What they reach, however, is only one aspect of this reality, by reducing the rich world of human subjectivity to an externalised aspect of it (Kosík 1976, p.11).

Interpretive approaches, on the other hand, provide 'intentional' accounts of human social action (e.g. (Wright 2004)). Therefore they are 'internalist' perspectives. This subjective view of human action aims to reach an emphatic understanding of acting individuals and groups by trying to see things from their point of view within a given sociocultural surrounding, variously conceptualised as 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger 1996), 'lifeworld' (Husserl 1970; Habermas 1985), etc. Unlike positivist approaches, they are after reasons for action, rather than its causes. They thus abstract one point of view from others and, when driven home, this may lead to a myriad of ways of seeing the same phenomenon without relating these ways to one another and thus accounting for the phenomenon. In other words, it may lead to a radical relativism with countless subjective accounts of reality. Then, attempts to complement internalist accounts with natural-scientific methods may result in logical contradictions, as in the case of Wendt.

In light of this discussion, I will now make two counter-intuitive claims: First, contrary to common scientific wisdom, causality holds neither in the animate nor in the inanimate world.<sup>12</sup> What is analytically accepted as a relation of causation between two 'independent' things is in fact established as a result of human endeavour to pragmatically cope with the world by abstracting its aspects from one another. Secondly, and related to this first point, I argue that in attempting to 'understand' things from a certain subjective vantage point, internalist accounts in fact look at a one-sided externality and thereby 'ex-plain' how things appear from that subjective vantage point. To 'understand', in this unconventional sense of the term, requires bringing together these 'explanations' from the multiple subjective vantage points of relevant agents.<sup>13</sup> Willing to retain a holistic perspective, Wendt fails to see how, in practice, unit and sub-unit level relations historically make what he sees as a structure. Accordingly, his solution to the agent-structure problem remains tautological in the sense that agency is conceptualised as agency-in-general as opposed to and ontologically equal to a supposed structure. Agents are counter-posed to structure *in aggregate*. In his endeavour to identify 'unobservable entities' such as structures in accordance with scientific realism, he mistakes the

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<sup>12</sup> For an alternative dialectical conceptualisation of cause and effect see Dietzgen (2010, p.56–66).

<sup>13</sup> Relevance is a practical question and should be answered practically within the specific framework of a question-guided research process.

abstract for the concrete by reason of its real, practical character. His radical ontological separation of the ideational and the material serves to disguise this mistake, in that the reality of abstractions is presented as the ideality of structures. Moreover, Wendt's exclusive interest in collective identity formation disregards the conflictual aspects of this process, ignoring the contradictions that constantly arise even when a 'structure' is institutionalised.

To sum up, human individuals find themselves surrounded by givens inherited from the past and in the presence of others at any point in their lives, and together these comprise what appears to them as 'alien' forces. In producing and reproducing their lives, these givens institutionalise their ways of acting, and in acting upon what appears to them as an external structure, their wills and acts do not necessarily converge with those of others to whom this externality appears in different ways. Real abstractions emerge as a result of a temporary stabilisation of these contradictory relations, when one abstraction is institutionalised at the end of a historical process. However, this process is full of contradictions and conflicts as well as convergences. The actions of individuals in producing their lives and in acting upon this externality almost always generate unintended consequences, not only for themselves but also for the others. Unsurprisingly, then, these institutions appear to individuals as structures, for the constraints on action emanating from these institutions are quite real; the fact that the state is an abstraction, for example, is in no way an indication of its unreality in practice as seen in the very real ways states organise the lives of individuals. Most crucially, these real abstractions reflect the conjunctural balance of social forces. This real quality of abstractions is dealt with in social scientific research in two equally misleading ways: these abstractions are taken to be either concrete material structures or concrete ideational structures. They are and still remain abstracts though. Neither a Hegelian objective idealism, nor Feuerbach's and (later positivists') objective materialism, nor, we may add, a constructivist inter-subjective idealism can sufficiently reflect the dynamic, concrete and inter-subjective *ontos* that is the world (see Teschke and Heine 2002, p.171). What is needed is an equally dynamic, inter-subjective and concrete theorisation of this world, and this is provided by the dialectical method.

## 2.3. Real Abstraction and Dialectic

### 2.3.1. Abstraction in Dialectical Method

In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx notes that political economy abstracts a quality of human beings and sees them only as workers and leaves other things that concretely constitute them as living human individuals to 'criminal law, to doctors, to religion, to the statistical tables, to politics...' (Marx and Engels 1988, p.27). Political Science in representative democratic countries sees them as voters and citizens, Anthropology sees them

as cultural subjects, Sociology sees them as individuals as against, and in societies, Medicine sees them as patients, Law as criminals, claimants or defendants, etc. From these disciplinary perspectives the respective subject-matters of these fields are doubly abstracted: both from their concrete existence in their other roles and from their relations with others. The matter is not that they abstract arbitrarily, for these abstractions are based on real abstractions. The matter is that once abstracted from themselves and their relations, and conceptually and theoretically refined and systematised, any attempt to re-establish their initially severed relations from themselves and others is futile because in the process of logical refinement it is ignored that *the concept itself* was constituted by these concrete relations in the first place. So, in a word although dialectic too abstracts, it does this in a different way.

‘Dialectics is after the “thing itself” ’ (Kosík 1976), much like any other view of the world. The ‘thing itself’, in the Kantian sense of the term, in essence, however, is not directly accessible, not because human beings are unable to perceive it, but because ‘thing-itself’ itself is ‘a mental thing’, a conception of the mind, abstracted from its relations (Dietzgen 2010); and ‘if we stick to the “mere-in-itself” of an object, we apprehend not its truth, but the inadequate form of mere abstraction’ (Hegel 2010, p.192).<sup>14</sup> So, first of all, dialectical abstractions are made with the awareness that the ‘thing-in-itself’ is not something that exists independently, the essence of which is to be discovered upon investigation. As mentioned above, what is abstracted as the essence of the ‘thing-itself’ is itself constituted by the concrete relations of that thing to other things and its other potential modes of being. For this reason, when dialectical approaches abstract aspects of reality based on real abstractions such as state, money, capital, international system, and so on, they do not stop there. This, on the contrary, is where the actual contribution of dialectic starts. Instead of climbing up ‘the ladder of abstraction’, dialectic uniquely ‘*rises*’ from the abstract to the concrete (Marx 1993, p.101), whereby ‘reality is intellectually reproduced *on all levels and in all dimensions*’ (Kosík 1976, p.15 italics in original). The first difference between dialectical and non-dialectical approaches, then, is their opposite conceptions of the abstract and the concrete.

Secondly, while non-dialectical approaches deal with contradictions logically, dialectics sees contradictions as inherent in the complex existence of reality, and unlike non-dialectical methods it does not hold that abstractions require purification from their concrete

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<sup>14</sup> With Ollman (2003, p.63), we should note that dialectical abstractions cannot be completely different from non-dialectical abstractions, not only because it would constitute a Wittgensteinian ‘private language’ as Ollman says, but also because both dialectical and non-dialectical abstractions have to start with real, practical abstractions. Any radical diversion from real abstractions would only be an indication of poor skills of imagination and thinking.

contradictions. On the contrary, dialectics sees contradictions as constitutive of the concrete existence of any entity. In short, there is a fundamental difference between the ways in which dialectical and non-dialectical approaches deal with contradictions. Non-dialectical views recognize only formal-logical contradictions between two logical propositions. Dialectical method, on the other hand, instead of wishing away real contradictions in the concrete relations between things, deals with them.

Thirdly, and directly following from the second difference, while non-dialectical approaches reify real abstractions in the form of definitions, or at best, of 'ideal-types', dialectical approaches have an inherent sensitivity to change, and recognise that theory has to respond to constant changes that take place in the concrete existence of what it abstracts, and that these changes arise from the contradictory relations that really-abstracted entities have in reality. Moreover, as distinct from any idealist dialectics, historical materialist dialectics does not expect these contradictions to be resolved conceptually through the reconciliation of logical categories. For real, practical contradictions are not resolved, but temporarily settled in the form of social institutions following lengthy, conflictual processes of interaction between real agents. These are widely accepted properties of a dialectical perspective. Many differences exist between extant dialectical approaches. Among these, two main versions stand out, namely logical-historical dialectics and systematic dialectics, and now I will turn to the first of these.

### 2.3.2. Logical-Historical Dialectic

Logical-historical dialectic stemmed largely from Engels' interpretation of Marx's method (Arthur 2004),<sup>15</sup> which found a wide following among Soviet Marxists (Jacoby 2002). His admiration for the nascent modern science led Engels to write his infamous *Dialectics of Nature*, where he tried to establish the general laws governing the natural world (Marx and Engels 1987). Reducing these to the three laws of dialectics ('transformation of quantity to quality and vice versa', 'interpenetration of opposites', and 'negation of the negation' (Marx and Engels 1987, p.356)), he sought to establish dialectics as *the* objective science of nature and society. Plekhanov (1972) continued this tendency and turned this positivistic and economistic version of dialectical materialism into the official ideology of the Soviet Union.

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<sup>15</sup> This is a very controversial topic among Marxists. Engels' interpretation of Marx has been seen as a distortion by many (Lichtheim 1961; Avineri 1978). Others, however, have argued that there was a unity in their thinking (Rees 1994). Ollman (2003) states that it is not plausible to assume that Marx did not know Engels' arguments in the *Dialectics of Nature* and *Anti-Duhring*.



This vulgarised version of dialectics blurred the lines of demarcation between dialectics and positivism (Levine 1975).<sup>16</sup>

This variant of 'dialectical materialism' carried with it all the maladies of the positivist method in social sciences. First of all, it held that everything in the natural and social worlds could be reduced to law-like general statements even though the content of these laws preach the central importance of motion, change and contradiction. This underlies all sorts of reductionism traditionally associated with Marxism, including the belief that the 'economic base' in every instance or in the last instance determined the political, legal, ideological 'superstructure', that the opposition between the forces and the relations of production would cause revolutions, that history would follow a predetermined course and every society would go through the same developmental stages, and so on.

Most important and unfortunate of all, it saw historical events as instances of these laws, that is, it subordinated history to the 'dialectical' laws of motion. The proponents of such a dialectic assumed a perfect correspondence between logic and history when 'disturbing accidental occurrences' are excluded (Engels cited in Rosdolsky 1977, p.115). They took dialectics as something to be applied to history. They also claimed that this was the method used by Marx himself. It reached the apex of its notoriety, under the rubric of 'dialectical and historical materialism', or 'diamat', when Stalin (1940) described historical materialism as an extension, or application of the dialectical materialist method to social life. It did not trouble them that the October Revolution of 1917 appears on this account as a 'disturbing accidental occurrence', defying the laws of development.<sup>17</sup> When the 'laws of motion' did not match historical developments, instead of doubting these laws, they wanted to coerce history into conforming to theory, as exemplified by the Soviet Union's forced collectivisation programs and purges from the party.

All these and many other problems emanating from the logical-historical reading of Marx's dialectical method are due to its separating theory from history first, and, having constituted them as distinct, *applying* the theory to history later. These problems haunted not only those who subscribed to the Soviet official ideology, but also those who developed much more nuanced views of the dialectical method. For example, in their discussion of the capitalist state,

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<sup>16</sup> Labriola (1903) provides an excellent early critique of those who conflate Marx's dialectical method with positivism, or social or political Darwinism.

<sup>17</sup> Not the Revolution itself (he did not live long enough to see that), but the developments leading to it, though, troubled Marx himself. In drafts of his letter to Vera Zasulich, he questioned the uniqueness of the Russian developmental trajectory (Marx and Engels 1989). Later Trotsky (1932) expanded on this observation in his *History of the Russian Revolution*.

Holloway and Picciotto (1991, p.123) characterise Marx's dialectical method as proceeding 'in a *logical-historical* manner'. Since they see this method as presenting the abstract-logical and the concrete-historical together to complement one another, there is a wide discrepancy between their theoretical work and historical analysis. Although, for instance, they see the state as a 'form of appearance' of the essential capital relation, their actual analysis remains state-centric, as correctly observed by Bruff (2009). This is because whenever one analyses a concrete conjuncture of a specific state, one either assumes the subjective, one-sided vantage point of that state, and sees the world from that vantage point, or explains the actions of that state in terms of a predetermined or conceptually-formed abstract-logical framework.

In a word, for our purposes the core problem with the logical-historical view of dialectics is that although it seeks to see theory and history in union with each other, this unity is only a forced one, since it conceives them separately in the first place. This results in a search for concrete reality in logical abstractions which are then imposed on reality. Moreover, seeking causal geneses in history and logical geneses in theory are irreconcilable endeavours. While the former requires the identification of chronological relations between things, the latter requires the development from one another of conceptual categories which are only related synchronously. As a result, the logical-historical notion of dialectics fails to overcome the problems of positivism, ultimately coming up either with a conceptual objectivism that Marx sought to dislodge from materialism, or a radical subjectivism which, in seeing the world through the eyes of a single subject, leaves the subjective historical analysis and objectivist conceptual architecture as two separate, forcibly related accounts of reality.

### 2.3.3. Systematic Dialectic

In response to the problems generated by this logical-historical reading of Marx's dialectical method, the last two decades have seen a return to Hegel's work in its relation to Marx's writings, and a new dialectical method known as 'systematic dialectics' or 'the new dialectic' or 'New Hegelian Marxism' has been developed (Arthur 2004, p.1). Represented by a diverse cohort of scholars<sup>18</sup>, this approach finds its most systematic exposition in the works of Christopher J. Arthur (and Tony Smith). Critical of logical-historical dialectic, Arthur sets out to develop a systematic-dialectical view of Marx's method especially in *Capital*. Authors in this current in general, and Arthur in particular, make the distinction between logical-historical and systematic readings of Marx's dialectic that while the former is in search of the causal genesis

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<sup>18</sup> Arthur (2004, p.15) lists the names of R. Albritton; C. J. Arthur; J. Banaji; R. Bhaskar; M. Eldred; I. Hunt; M. Lebowitz; J. McCarney; P. Murray; R. Norman; S. Sayers; B. Ollman; M. Postone; G. Reuten; T. Sekine; A. Shamsavari; F. C. Shortall; T. Smith; H. Williams; M. Williams within this current.

or historical origins of capitalism, the latter tries to systematically present the conceptual categories of capital so as to represent it as an organic totality and show the interrelations that reproduce it (T. Smith 1990; Arthur 2004). Relations between the moments or aspects of capitalist totality are presented synchronically. In this manner, argue systematic dialecticians, Marx follows a systematic route in presenting his concepts, starting from the most abstract category, i.e. the commodity, and introducing step by step, more concrete categories which arise out of the internal contradictions of the more abstract categories (Arthur 2004, p.66; T. Smith 1990; Reuten and Williams 1989, pp.19–20; cf. Sayer 1979, pp.96–103).

Arthur (2004, pp.118–19) argues that what is more important for Marx is the ‘ability of the system to constitute itself as a self-reproducing totality’ rather than its historical origin, and that although this ‘totality is constituted out of its moments, ... the totality reproduces itself in and through its moments, even when the material reduced to such moments existed in some sense prior to the constitution of the totality’. Moreover, claims Arthur (2004, p.9), as the capitalist reality ontologically has ‘the shape of an ideality’, historical-causal genesis plays no part in explaining the current reality. Thus, systematic dialectical reading ‘abandons the historical perspective with its problematic of causal genesis, in favour of a structural problematic requiring an account of “genesis” in logical terms’ (Arthur 2004, p.116). For capital as a totality has to absorb historical material resistive to its reproduction by making it aspects of its reproduction. In other words, it either has to bring into being or subsume the conditions of its existence, that is, it has to posit its presuppositions. This ‘positing’ of historical preconditions poses one of the most significant methodological problems of dialectical social theory (Psychopedis 1992).<sup>19</sup> For the extent to which capital is able to posit its presuppositions and ensure its total reproduction is in no way certain. Finelli (2007, p.66), for instance, in his criticism of Arthur’s work, claims that capital as ‘the totalizing subject’ does not ‘tolerate any presupposed ... element if it is not *posited*’. The abstract ‘world’ of capital, for him, ‘organizes’, ‘pervades’, and colonizes ‘all of reality’, the concrete world, with its ‘need for production and reproduction’ (Finelli 2007, pp.64–65, 70). Capital *qua* Subject, in the Hegelian sense of the term, can posit all its presuppositions, however, *only logically*, responds Arthur, for then it is on its native terrain (see Arthur 2004, p.10; see also Albritton 2005, 2007). Only in the logical realm can it become a closed totality where all the presuppositions of its reproduction are posited. Capital, in reality, has both internal and external ‘others’: labour and nature respectively (Arthur 2004, p.77; cf. Reuten and Williams 1989, pp.68–69). These constitute for

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<sup>19</sup> For a well-articulated exposition of the conceptual pair ‘presupposing-positing’ and its Hegelian foundations see Bellofiore and Finelli (1998), who introduced these terms to the English language.

Arthur (2006, pp.97–98) the limits to its totalization, or in other words, although capital subsumes pre-capitalist forms under itself as its moments or aspects of reproduction and ‘blocks their alternative uses’, capital encounters them as ‘externality’. Labour remains capital’s other, since, although it is more or less both formally and really subsumed under capital globally, it continues to be recalcitrant to the reproduction of capital in accordance with its presuppositions regarding the reproduction of labour as a technical input to the circuit of capital. The same goes with nature: although land, natural resources, and raw materials appear to capital as replenishable elements of production and reproduction, it does not as yet have the means to reproduce them (see Foster 2008, p.78). In this sense, according to Arthur (2009, p.171), although it ‘*really* imposes itself’ onto what it has to subsume under itself, ‘capital as an ideal totality cannot account for what is in excess of its concept of itself, the concrete richness of social labour, not to mention that of nature’ and there is an unbridgeable gap between form and content, or the conceptual and the real.

Systematic dialectical presentation ends when all the necessary and essential moments for the reproduction of the object totality are exposed with all their interrelations (Reuten and Williams 1989, p.23). So the systematic exposition of the capitalist totality reaches closure, according to Arthur (Arthur 2005), with the category of finance capital, or ‘interest-bearing capital’, where capital reproduces itself without any external condition, although in reality it has to incorporate its ‘others,’ land and labour, to achieve full totality (Arthur 2005, pp.196–197).

These qualifications, however, do not save Arthur and other systematic dialecticians from the pitfalls of idealism (Saad-Filho 1997). The claim that the real material world has taken on an ideal shape under capitalism because of the real abstractive powers of capital does not licence one to avoid the analysis of the real concrete. In true Hegelian fashion, Arthur attributes Subjectivity to Capital and disregards ‘what is in excess of its concept of itself’. Moreover, systematic dialectic banishes time and space from its exposition along with history, since it deals with the conceptual categories that constitute the ‘ideality’ of capitalist totality only synchronically. Ultimately, he has to admit that there is an unbridgeable gap between the conceptual and material existence of capital; nevertheless, he takes this gap as the ‘fatal flaw’ of the self-conception of capital itself, rather than of his own approach (see Callinicos 2005; Arthur 2005, 2009). All these problems, I argue, originate from the one-sided view of reality only from the ‘subjective’ vantage point of capital. While Arthur acknowledges that capital has its material conditions of existence outside of itself, he does not drive this home and afford possibility that these concrete conditions of existence of capital constantly constitute and re-

constitute it even in the abstract, in its ideality. Finally, human agency vanishes in systematic dialectic together with time and space. The only agent that remains is capital as a 'ghost-like' entity which is claimed to have transformed and be transforming the rich diversity of human activity according to its reproductive needs.

Both logical-historical and Hegelian systematic dialectics remain mired in the problems of positivism and idealism. While logical-historical dialectic freezes its abstractions historically due to its focus on the causal genesis of its subject-matter, and thereby either separates theory from history or imposes theory upon history, systematic dialectic freezes its logical-conceptual abstractions, and thereby either disregards history altogether, or subsumes history into theory by attributing a conceptuality to history itself. Accordingly, while in the former the concrete is divorced from the abstract and left unaccounted for, in the latter the concrete itself is claimed to be abstract and again remains unaccountable. Last but not least, in the former, concrete agents exist either as instances of abstract-logical relations or as absolute subjects without any relation to other agents, whereas in the latter, nothing has agency apart from *the* unfolding Subject, namely capital. A historical materialist dialectic is needed and the following provides a picture of such a dialectic.

#### 2.3.4. Dialectic of the Concrete

Dialectic, above all, is about 'change, all change' (Ollman 2003, p.59). This is not to say, however, that dialectic deals with change as if it was one category among a set of other categories of being. Rather, at an ontological level it sees change as inherent in the constitution of things. Change takes manifold forms ranging from movement to quantitative increase or decrease and qualitative transformation. Everything is in a constant process of becoming something else. So the first ontological premise of dialectic is that nature (including human beings and their creations) is in constant flux. Placing such a central emphasis on change does not mean that dialectic takes this as the ultimate law of nature; otherwise such a dialectic would at best offer a simple ontological truism, at worst a very extreme form of reductionism (as was the case with Engels' dialectic of nature). Prioritising change over equilibrium is not the exclusive contribution of dialectic to social sciences, however. Emanuel Adler (2005, pp.30-36), for instance, registered the problem of the equilibrium-seeking orientation of mainstream IR in its many guises. Social change, in Adler's view of it, takes place in an evolutionary way, as perceptions and cognitions of agents match material transformations in the external world. Moreover, despite his 'immanent' understanding of change and his objection to a teleological conception of change, his evolutionary view of change embodies an inherent *telos* in the form of ideational consensus among international

communities (Adler 2005, *passim.*, esp. ch. 3). Such a view of change disregards contradictions and contestations in the emergence and consolidation of social and international change. Reflecting a common deficiency of the constructivist IR theory, Adler's theory also seeks ideationally-generated intersubjective equilibria viewed as structures.

Secondly, then, and somewhat at a more fundamental level, dialectic deals with contradictions and sees them as the source of change. Again, from the dialectical perspective, contradictions are ontological, that is, they are general existential properties of things. They arise from the simple ontological premise that things as abstracted by human beings are not identical with other things even when the abstraction is made of a class of things (e.g. stones). At the same time, since things are also related to one another as parts of a complex totality, they also interact. Changes occur as a result of this unity in difference. In this sense, *contra* the formal-logical view of contradictions which holds that contradictions exist between two logical statements, dialectic sees contradictions in reality and identifies them as practical, as is the case with dialectical abstractions. Contradictions are found not ideally or conceptually, but in the existence of (really, practically) abstracted aspects of reality. Furthermore, contradictions cannot be resolved or even reconciled in thought. Any conceptual suggestion to resolve or reconcile contradictions can only point at one of the many potential resolutions or reconciliations. How contradictions unfold remains indeterminate. To keep the consistency in examples I shall now go back to our piece of stone for an illustration. In its concrete existence a piece of stone, as noted above, is many things at the same time depending on its relations with other things. Its becoming then depends on the ways its contradictory relations with other things are resolved. There is a real contradiction, for example, between its existence as a piece of stone in nature and its exposure to the decomposing powers of other natural forces. Simultaneously another real contradiction emerges when a human being makes an axe of it by polishing it. There are as many possibilities of becoming as there are contradictions and reconciliations. This example also helps us distinguish between a strict Hegelian dialectic and a historical materialist dialectic of the concrete. While contradictory development of conceptual categories in idealist dialectic involves, by necessity, the sublation of both concepts by a third, higher concept, historical materialist dialectic takes contradictions as they manifest themselves in concrete reality, and there, more than one contradiction may (and usually do) exist simultaneously. Historical materialist dialectic may abstract contradictions one at a time as well in analysing them at a deeper level, yet this is less an ontological and epistemological than a methodological issue. Reuten and Williams (1989), for instance, offer a systematic dialectic of capitalist totality based on the notion of value-form along the strict Hegelian lines

mentioned above in an attempt to show the state as being in a necessary relation to civil society. Starting from the 'transhistorical universal' categories of 'sociation' and 'dissociation', they go on to derive ever more 'concrete' dyads, each of which emerges from the contradictions of the previous, more abstract dyads. Then they leave the real concrete unaccounted for by relegating institutional differences among states to the level of contingent differentiation as inessential for the reproduction of the 'capitalist totality' (Reuten and Williams 1989, pp.177–180). Notwithstanding the etymology of the term, historical materialist *dialectic*, by contrast, does not see contradictions as existing only between *two* things or concepts. Moreover, it does not see things that stand in a contradictory relation to each other as necessarily polar opposites; it does not accept polar opposition in the real existence of things. Finally, historical materialist dialectic recognises that contradictions may be antagonistic (existential) or non-antagonistic, that is, they may continue to exist for prolonged periods of time without any resolution or reconciliation, and in the real world of real human agents, whether they will be sublated or not depends on the activities of real human agents (cf. Brincat 2011, pp.682, 686–688).

Thirdly, and most importantly, the central category of historical materialist dialectic is, therefore, praxis, conceived as sensuous and 'goal-directed' human activity (Bernstein 1999, p.43). It is synonymous with neither the automatic 'behaviour' of conventional positivist sociology that emerges in response to external stimuli, nor the meaningful 'action' of individuals in Weberian social theory. Nor can the more recent notion of 'practices' match the philosophical depth of praxis. Inspired by the 'practice turn' in the social sciences (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, von Savigny 2001), Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot sought to reproduce this turn in IR. The idea of practices here is very limited in scope, however: it refers exclusively to the patterned meaningful social action of practitioners who act within 'communities of practice' (Adler 2005; Adler and Pouliot, 2011a and 2011b) composed of diplomats, statesmen, bureaucrats, etc. These 'transnational communities' socialise their individual members into patterned ways of doing diplomacy, statesmanship, and bureaucracy. The difference between 'praxis' and a 'practice' is that while praxis refers to all human action, practice is only one class of action among others: patterned social action. The notion of praxis, in contrast, is resistant to an ontological definition – like the conception of humans as rational utility maximisers – as it has to remain historically open to its many-sided manifestations.

Praxis is what bridges the world and thinking (Kitching 1988, p.29). It is the relay point in the dialectic of subject and object. It constitutes the fusion of ontology and epistemology providing instead an onto-epistemology of human socio-historical reality. It establishes human

beings firmly inside nature without reducing their active life to it. In the following, I will discuss how a historical materialist dialectic based on the notion of praxis can do all this drawing upon the general discussion on abstraction in praxis above (Section 2). Praxis before all else refers to all activity that human beings carry out in producing and reproducing their life.<sup>20</sup> But praxis is also what distinguishes man and woman as a species from other species in the animate world in that praxis is *purposive* activity (Bernstein 1999). Marx wrote:

A spider conducts operations which resemble those of the weaver, and a bee would put many a human architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax (Marx 1976, p.284).

Both positivists and constructivists establish the human subject as *homo cogitus*, thinking and contemplating about an external world. While in positivist epistemology this thinking subject is totally severed from her object of thought, in constructivism either her only relation to the material world is supposed to be the fact that her body has material, i.e. physical, bodily, existence (Wendt 1999), or the object of thought itself is reduced to the thought of object (e.g. Kratochwil 1991). Thinking in historical materialist dialectic is an integral aspect of any kind of action. It is not a type or a class of action among other types or classes. Being purposive and objective, i.e. directed to objects, human activity embodies thinking in action. It is this aspect of historical materialist dialectic that distinguishes it both from all other philosophies, and from other dialectical approaches. It is in this light that Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach that 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it' (Marx and Engels 1998, p.574) acquires another meaning: that philosophy always separated thinking and activity until the 'philosophy of praxis' showed their togetherness in praxis (Kitching 1988).

Marx to some extent, and many Marxists later on, however, failed to fully capitalise on this notion of praxis that grounded Marx's early writings -especially his *Theses on Feuerbach* and *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*- and concerned themselves with the sum total of human activity, most of the time expressed in the categories of the reproductive circuit of capital. The general tendency in justifying this move has usually been a reference to the real abstract nature of human labour under capitalism. We already saw the extreme version of this tendency in systematic dialectical works when they attributed 'ideality' to capitalist reality. The labour theory of value, for instance, being one of the central elements of

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<sup>20</sup> The entry for 'praxis' by Petrovic (1983) in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (1983) presents different conceptions of praxis both in Marxist and non-Marxist traditions.



Marx's critique of classical political economy exemplifies this very well.<sup>21</sup> The magnitude of value, according to Marx, is determined by the socially necessary labour time embodied in a commodity, i.e. the amount of time it takes on average to produce a given product in a given capitalist economy. Trying to 'scientifically' show that it is labour that creates value, Marx puts labour into a quantitative relation to constant capital (machines) which simply 'transfers' value to the commodity, thereby establishing both as quantitatively expressible equivalents. What Marx could have simply said from a more ontological standpoint was that since only human activity is purposive, it is human praxis that creates value, although the *magnitude* of value could be expanded if machines are *purposively* used by human beings to satisfy capitalists' desire to increase relative surplus value. Therefore, although praxis can also be conceptualised in terms of productive activity, which is in itself creative and purposive, I take production in a broader sense as production and reproduction of human social life (Wood 1995; Sayer 1987). 'Sum total', 'on average' or 'in aggregate' treatment of human activity may prove to be useful if, and only if, the concrete praxes of human agents that constitute this conceptualised consequence are accounted for relationally, for human purposes show immense variation for a range of reasons. Any attempt, then, to present an aspect of human social life in 'in aggregate' terms, without exposing its concrete existence, necessarily produces a structuralist account. The rich diversity and unintended quality of the aggregate results of human praxes emanate from the rich diversity of human purposes and interaction, and an account of any human social phenomenon requires a relational, that is, inter-subjective analysis of the relations that give rise to that phenomenon.

The fourth aspect of a historical materialist dialectic, then, is its view of human social reality as *inter-subjectively constructed*. Heine and Teschke (1996) make mention of inter-subjectivity and state its importance in a historical materialist dialectic, yet they do not 'expand upon' it sufficiently according to Brincat (2011, p.684), who himself calls for a 'social-relational', that is, inter-subjectivist dialectical approach to world politics. Although there is a great degree of overlap between the dialectical approach presented here and in Brincat's work, there is one crucial difference in the very distinct ways both approaches conceptualise inter-subjectivity. At a very fundamental level, Brincat sees inter-subjectivity on the basis of recognition theory, following Hegel and Axel Honneth (Brincat 2011). Notwithstanding his criticism of idealist dialectics, he comes dangerously close to a constructivist conception of inter-subjectivity which separates the mental and the material. It is not 'mutual recognition', but temporary

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<sup>21</sup> The following critique of labour theory of value from the point of view of Marx's early writings is derived from Kitching (1988 esp. ch. 4).

equilibrium of the contradictory praxes of human subjects that should underlie a historical materialist dialectical notion of inter-subjectivity. By ‘inter-subjectively constructed’ I refer at a very basic ontological level to a property of human reality, namely that it is formed as a result of clashes, convergences, partial overlaps, and antagonistic conflicts between the praxes of differently situated and motivated subjects. Any social phenomenon that gives rise to a ‘puzzle’, or a research question is in reality constituted inter-subjectively through relations between humans. How these different relations will be acted out so as to give rise to the social phenomenon in question cannot be predetermined in any way, but can only be analysed on the basis of its concrete historical existence as part of a larger social context.

Fifthly, then, historical materialist dialectic sees social phenomena as part of a complex of relations. This totality, at first glance, appears to be a mess of things where everything is related to everything else chaotically (Marx and Engels 1986, p.37). To ‘rise’ then from this chaotic abstract totality to the concrete, historical materialist dialectic first abstracts a social phenomenon from this totality along the lines it is really, practically abstracted by acting human subjects. Next the activities of those who really constituted this practical abstraction *and* the relations between this and other abstractions must be historicised in order to concretely show how this abstraction came into being in the first place, and how it is concretely related with other abstractions. This notion of dialectical totality rejects Hegelian forms of expressive or genetic totality (Lukács, 1971), whereby the social whole is organised around and expresses a central unifying principle – the so-called central contradiction of capitalist production between the forces and relations of production. Nor does it resemble an autopoietic system that reproduces itself self-referentially (Luhmann, 1982; Waltz 1979). Both systems-theories and expressive notions of totality propose close and self-reproducing systems and deny the subjective capacity of agents to act. A hermeneutically-informed dialectical notion of totality, on the contrary, is based on the ‘situational consciousness of acting individuals themselves’ (Habermas, 1976, p.139). This ‘situational’ nature of human activity provides the context of analysis from the vantage point of the ‘acting individuals’.

## **2.4. States, Foreign Policies, International Relations**

### **2.4.1. The State as a Real Abstraction**

What does all this have to do with the disciplinary gap between FPA and IR? Let us retrace the argument so that we can see its direction. I argued that the existing theories of FPA and IR either totally abstract one from the other or artificially integrate them after their initial analytical separation. The integration remains unsuccessful since the initial abstraction is frozen conceptually as a result of mistaking the analytical separation for an ontological

separation. The end result is either to admit that this is a 'hopeless task', or to juxtapose reifications as factors or variables. To solve the problem at its root, this chapter questioned their method of abstraction, and compared and contrasted it with the dialectical method of abstraction. In the process, abstraction in human social praxis was inquired into at an onto-epistemological level. Then praxis itself was presented as the central aspect of a historical materialist dialectic. Following from this, it was argued that reality was constructed inter-subjectively through the contradictorily related praxes of human subjects.

This section looks at the state as a real abstraction, as the social location where the act of foreign policy making crystallises and as the subject, accordingly, of international relations. Drawing upon the preceding discussion, my argument is that it is the activity of human beings that both abstracts foreign policy decision-making processes from their cumulative outcomes, and integrates them. More specifically, it is the inter-subjective activity of states and other individual and collective human agents that really abstracts and concretely integrates FPA and IR.

To say that the state is a *real* abstraction is to point at the manifold ways in which this institutional aggregate affects the lives of human subjects. Weber defines the state as 'the form of human community that (successfully) lays claim to the *monopoly of legitimate physical violence* within a particular territory'. Historically, for Weber (2004, pp.37–38),

the modern state begins to develop wherever the monarch sets in train the process of dispossessing the autonomous, "private" agents of administrative power who exist in parallel to him, that is to say, all the independent owners of the materials of war and the administration, financial resources, and politically useful goods of every kind. The entire process provides a perfect analogy to the development of a capitalist enterprise through the gradual expropriation of independent producers. We end up with a situation in which in the modern state control of the entire political means of production is concentrated in a single culminating point so that not a single official is left who personally owns the money he spends, or the buildings, supplies, tools and military equipment that are under his control.

The analogy with the rise of capitalism is instructive. The language Weber uses resembles that of Marx (1976) in narrating the emergence of capitalism, whereby independent producers were completely separated from and deprived of the means of production. If, as Weber maintained, this is what marks the rise of the modern state, England, not continental monarchies, represents the first modern state (Teschke 2005, p.15).<sup>22</sup> It was also in England that the real abstraction of the political from the economic took place in the shape of an institutional differentiation of the market and the state through the reproductive struggles of

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<sup>22</sup> Weber himself, and later Weberians kept on leaving out "the English case" as not representing the modern state (e.g. Poggi 1978).

social agents over rule (Gerstenberger 2007). Centralisation of rule in the Parliament and as a corollary the depersonalisation of power (Teschke 2003) combined with the 'internalisation' of the absolutist legacy of 'bounded territoriality' (Lacher 2006) characterise what we call today the modern state. The form of this state, which first emerged in England, has been universalised through war, colonisation, structural adjustment programs, emulations, geopolitical competition, economic competition, etc. and today world geography is organised along territorial lines, so much so that there is almost no piece of land that is not under the jurisdiction of this or that state. This is not to say, after this much discussion on the pitfalls of any structuralism, that states in the end are really 'functionally like units' as Waltz would have us believe; rather, all states have become 'like units' only *formally*, as a result of protracted historical contradictions they faced in reproducing themselves. Moreover, the degree to which other states approximated the original English case differs according to the way they dealt with these contradictions. All we can say at such a general level is that the ways in which this form of state is universalised show immense variations in every case (Badie 2000).

Now, both FPA and IR take the state thus abstracted as their primary unit of analysis and the primary agents of these fields. The agency of the state, however, constitutes a central problem in both fields although there is broad agreement that the state has a quality of personhood. Wendt (2004, p.289) notes, "in a field in which almost everything is contested, this [state personhood] seems to be one thing on which almost all of us agree." But most scholars of world politics, especially those of empiricist and positivist orientations, accept the state as a person only insofar as it is a useful scientific abstraction, and they proclaim that 'the state does not really exist' (Gilpin 1986, p.318). This makes it extremely difficult for them to justify attributing agency to the state. Wendt (2004) tries to solve this problem by *literally* attributing personhood to the state, and compares the state to real individuals in psychological terms in substantiating his argument. Besides being superfluous, this conceptualisation of the state generates problems in treating human agents themselves (Wight 2004, p.270). Instead, argues Wight, we should see states as 'complex institutional ensembles', as 'structures', or contexts for action. For the fact that people act 'as if' states exist should not in itself be a sufficient reason for students of the state to accept its existence without question, according to Wight (2004). Referring to Marx's (1990, p.956) dictum that 'all science would be superfluous if the form of appearance of things directly coincided with their essence', he claims that reality is not 'exhausted by appearances' and science is needed to go beyond appearances (Wight 2004, p.271). It will be remembered from our preceding discussion that structures themselves are appearances, but this does not make them any less real. Institutions are inter-subjectively

constructed (by contradictory purposive actions of previous generations), and reproduced and contested (by contradictory purposive actions of contemporary human subjects) *real* abstractions. Wight, just like Wendt, mistakes the real for the concrete, and this is a common denominator of critical realist epistemology. This is not to say that states do not have agency, but that state agency is concretely constituted by human agents in reproducing themselves. The fact that states act purposively may not bestow upon them personhood in the literal sense, but it gives a status of an agent capable of purposive action no matter how 'thin' this remains as a 'criterion for personhood' (Wendt 2004). Furthermore, the conception of the state as a structure presupposes *predetermined* conceptual constraints on human action, a hallmark of structuralist thinking. It is true that there are constraints on human action at all times, but these cannot be accounted for *in abstracto* without looking at the concrete conjuncture. It is, in any case, the actions of human agents that inter-subjectively constitute these concrete conjunctures.

Besides being purposive, states are generally considered to share some common formal properties. These are generalisation of rule (a feudal legacy), territoriality (an absolutist legacy), and the abstraction of politics from economy (a legacy of the transition to capitalism). As real abstractions, these are nominally recognised, but this recognition, itself being practical, is practically challenged and contested at all times. All real abstractions, I argued, are created, reproduced, contested, modified or replaced by the inter-subjective and contradictorily related praxes of agents. These are no exception, and therefore cannot be taken as structural constraints that predetermine to this or that extent the concrete praxes of states. This is not some methodological mantra, constantly repeated but not really given heed to; it is rather a precondition of any theorisation if theory is to represent reality.

Take the abstraction of the economic and the political from each other under capitalism, for example. Building upon Brenner's work (1985a, 1985b), Ellen Wood (2002) shows how England was the first country to institute such separation, and claims that the distinguishing feature of capitalism is that the state and the market are abstracted from each other which enables 'economic agents' to pump the surplus out of producers through 'economic' means. Teschke (2003, 2005) provides a compelling argument as to how this unique institutional form was adopted by other states under the strain of military competition with the 'military-fiscal' English state (Brewer 1989). The problem is that, seen as the verification of the existence of capitalism, this criterion, when 'applied' to other cases, ultimately proves formalistic. The desire to challenge the structural Marxist orthodoxy generates a Weberian ideal-typical thinking where the English case serves as the ideal type. Can one say, with a clear conscience,

that India or China, where the state is directly in the business of pumping the surplus out of producers, is not capitalist (Banaji 2010)? One could instead argue that different states respond differently to pressures emanating from capitalist property relations (which, it is to be remembered, appear differently to different states) in reproducing themselves, and therefore effect this separation to this or that extent, or remain recalcitrant to it as much as they can. The existence of 'imperatives' does not licence one to expect states, or any other social agent for that matter, to abide by them, and such theorising is reminiscent of structuralism (e.g. Brenner 2004).

Similarly, generalisation or institutional centralisation of rule has been challenged since its inception as a real abstraction, directly by other disenfranchised social forces, but also through the actual struggles of some social actors who do not necessarily challenge it directly but through their practical utilisation of institutional mechanisms that this real abstraction provides in reproducing themselves. That is to say, in reproducing themselves *within* what seems to be the internal logic of this institutional complex, the intercourse of social actors may, and often does, modify or change that institutional logic itself.<sup>23</sup> A political party in a representative democratic polity, for example, in trying to reproduce itself within the logic of electoral politics by utilising populist discourse, can unleash social forces that it may not be able to direct, giving rise in the end, to a transformation of the form of electoral politics, or even the whole social order.

For our purposes, the most important aspect of what is generally accepted as modern statehood is territoriality, since it is closely related to what appears internal and external to states. The discussion above holds also for territoriality, first of all, in the sense that although world geographical space is organised along territorial lines, this territorialisation came into being as a result of constant clashes. Moreover, the really abstracted territorial boundedness is constantly contested both by other territorially-bounded states and by different social groups. Most crucially, states willingly or unwillingly suspend, or even partially give up, their nominally absolute territorial sovereignty when they join international organisations, make treaties, sign agreements, make wars, etc. My argument is simply that what constitutes the internal and the external changes in connection with the concrete actions of states in relation to other states within given historical conjunctures. When, for instance, a state intends to

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<sup>23</sup> The generalisation of rule itself historically emerged as a result of reproductive struggles of social forces, and the process is marvellously depicted by Gerstenberger (2007). An example of a process in which social actors transformed what appeared to be a system through their struggles to reproduce themselves *in accordance with* the social-reproductive logic of that 'system' is the transition to capitalism in the English countryside (Brenner 1985a, 1985b).

make a foreign policy decision, its action may well have domestic consequences and vice versa, as all scholars reviewed in the first chapter are well aware. States, therefore, do not make decisions and take actions in a vacuum as really abstracted territorial units of human collectivity. Interstate relations are thus also inter-subjective and it is this inter-subjective quality of interstate relations to which we now turn our attention.

#### **2.4.2. States, Foreign Policies, International Relations**

I argued in the first chapter that there was a disciplinary gap between FPA and IR. This disciplinary gap, I maintained, is a result of the respective vantage points of these endeavours. While FPA assumes the subjectivist vantage point of a given state in order to reconstruct in thought how it sees the world around it so as to explain why and how specific foreign policy decisions are made, IR assumes the objectivist vantage point of the 'international system' and tries to present the general working of the system itself. But once the aim is to explain a foreign policy decision of a specific state, the world around it is necessarily seen through its eyes, as it is the subjective activity of that state that is accepted as requiring an explanation. On the other hand, once the aim is to posit objectively how international relations work without taking into consideration the subjective actions of states that constitute it, later inclusion of this into the theoretical construct does not really add up. For in both cases analytical abstraction of an aspect of reality is assumed to be an ontological abstraction, radically influencing the way reality is seen. If two things are assumed to be really separate, then the relation between them is necessarily seen as a relation of causality. But as noted above, agents constitute and are constituted by what appear to them as 'structures', i.e. the actions of other agents, both living and dead. And as agents of foreign policy and international relations, states are constituted not only by the actions of those over whom they lay claim to sovereignty, but also by those of other states and 'external' agents, all of whom enter into contradictory intercourses with others in reproducing themselves. So are their foreign policies.

Both international relations and foreign policies, therefore, ontologically have an inter-subjective quality (Ruggie 1982; Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986; cf. Brincat 2011). To reiterate, however, this inter-subjectivity is not based on some ideational criteria such as 'convergent expectations' (Krasner 1983) or 'recognition' (Brincat 2011); rather, it is based on the interrelations of concrete praxes of a variety of social actors, including states. At the same time, this inter-subjectivity is not only about 'convergence' but also about contradiction. Real abstractions, or 'structures' in the common social-scientific discourse, as I argued in this chapter, emerge when contradictory strategies of reproduction of different agents reach a

temporary equilibrium, and they keep being contested, intentionally and unintentionally, even after they take entrenched institutional forms.

Real contradictions, however, cannot be reconciled or resolved conceptually. Real contradictions play out in the real praxes of social agents. Therefore, one cannot automatically derive results about what is commonly called 'the international system' from the inter-subjective quality of international relations per se. On the other hand, universalised properties of real abstractions such as territoriality and rule-generality of, and the separation of the economic and the political in, 'the modern state', while useful in analytically distinguishing states as a genus from trees, NGOs, professional associations, etc., do not conceptually predetermine what states actually do.

All this requires a research-question-guided and agency-based analysis in FPA and IR, as in all other social sciences, since only such an analysis can remedy the problems associated with both structuralism and constructivism by providing a well-defined context around the agents the research question identifies. In the process, one may have to step out of the context-definition of the research question, but this should happen only in pursuit of the agents who constitute this context through their contradictory praxes. This has fundamental implications for the unit and level of analysis problem. Both in FPA and IR it is again the praxes of social agents that determine the unit and level of analysis. An influential individual, a social class, a group of bureaucrats, a minister, a state, etc. may be the unit of analysis depending on the concrete praxes of these social agents within the context of a given matter of foreign policy or international relations. The opening of a new border crossing point between two neighbouring states, for example, may be the result of an intention to increase local, cross-border trade where small producers inhabiting the border towns may turn out to be the primary unit of analysis: a local association of small producers. The same action in another context, where two states with historical animosities open a new crossing point, may simply be an indication of a rapprochement attempt, states or governments being the primary unit of analysis. Therefore, FPA and IR should not attempt to identify a 'system-wide' type of unit that can invariably be taken as the primary unit and level of analysis. Identifying the primary unit of analysis depending on the context, however, does not exhaust the agential content since the primary agent itself is constituted by other agents at the same or different unit levels. This does not mean that the interactions of states are absolutely indeterminate and therefore untheorisable. Insofar as states act *as if* real abstractions such as international institutions, rules of engagement, trade regimes are concrete structures, these can constitute the starting point of the theorisation, subject to later historicisation.



States as agents, then, also find themselves surrounded by historically-inherited givens at any point in time. These givens constitute for them an externality upon which they act in reproducing themselves as states. Just like individuals, states abstract aspects of reality into manageable proportions as well. These abstractions manifest themselves, for example, in the form of state departments which are commissioned to deal with aspects of reality. What is external, or foreign, to a particular state appears as a structure, an 'alien power', or what is called in the literature 'the international system', from its subjective vantage point. Abstracted as the system, this externality presents itself in different ways to different states generating particular conditions of reproduction in a given conjuncture. Through the same practical act of abstracting the external as 'the international system', states also abstract themselves from the 'system'. That is, by acting upon this externality in reproducing themselves, states practically abstract their actions as 'foreign policies' from the 'international system', i.e. the actions of others. Partly because of particular conditions of reproduction they find themselves in, partly because of other indeterminate subjective-conjunctural reasons, strategies of reproduction show immense variations. These differences generate contradictions in the sense explained above (Section 3.4), as different states develop different strategies of reproduction. Purposive activities of states may or may not generate the initially intended consequences for individual states, but in the end they certainly change the conditions of reproduction by creating a new foreign policy conjuncture, or a new externality for every individual state. The disciplinary gap between FPA and IR is a reflection of this divergence between individual states' purposive actions and the cumulative consequences of these and previous actions and their practical abstraction in the process of their actions and the actions of others. So my argument is simply that this gap is contextually generated *and* bridged in the concrete and contradictory praxes of states, which are themselves results of the interplay of the concrete and contradictory praxes of other agents including state elites, individual and collective agents, other states and other institutional agents.

This dynamic and complex reality is presented in an extremely static manner by the existing approaches in the field. Theory, however, must reflect this dynamism and complexity. This, I argue, is possible through a historical materialist dialectic. Such dialectic, in answering a question about an aspect of reality, starts from agents before all else. This enables it to provide a context-definition by presenting how the reality appears to that particular agent, in our case a particular state. Agents, however, are not taken as abstract and general categories with abstractly conceptualised properties (such as 'the state', 'the individual', or 'the bureaucrats'). Rather their actions constituting them as agents should be of primary import.

Therefore the inter-subjective constitution of that particular state that establishes it as an agent should be analysed through identifying how contradictory relations between social agents are resolved, reconciled, or set aside. In the process, the vantage point will have to constantly change, along with the specific agent the theory is dealing with. This shall make it possible to see how 'the domestic' is abstracted from 'the international', 'the economic' from 'the political', and foreign policy from international relations through the interaction of states and other social actors.

Nevertheless, like all purposive actions, foreign policies are directed to 'objects' of action, that is, they objectify the subjective existence of other agents. Other states, however, find themselves in different sets of relations and conditions of reproduction, and therefore devise different ways of dealing with externality, namely different foreign policies. In view of this, theory must also represent how the world appears to other states objectified by the first state as subjects of the same conjuncture, since they also act upon what is external to them by implementing their foreign policies. Furthermore, the interpretation of states and other agents of these objectified appearances may be diverse resulting in further differentiation in their foreign policies-cum-reproductive strategies. The next foreign policy conjuncture they create inter-subjectively for themselves, for one another, and for the reproduction of the concrete totality has an unintended quality precisely because of this inter-subjective nature of the cumulative consequence.

## **2.5. Conclusion: Explaining and Understanding, or Foreign Policy and International Relations**

The first chapter problematized the theoretical gap between FPA and IR. The review of the literature showed that those who have attempted to bridge this gap have failed to do so for various reasons. Notwithstanding the differences among them in terms of their substantive arguments, they converged in their use of abstractions. The problem was that they all reified their abstractions and failed to concretise them. In order to overcome this problem, the second section of this chapter presented an account of how human beings abstract aspects of reality practically and how these real abstractions emerge and are inherited from previous generations so that they appear to individuals as structures, i.e. 'alien powers' constraining them. In doing this, the section also attempted to contribute to the famous 'agent-structure' problem in the social sciences in general.

The third section provided an alternative mode of theoretical abstraction informed by the dialectical approach. It then analysed two variants of the dialectical approach, namely logical-historical and systematic dialectics. These, I argued, remain undialectical ultimately, because

while the former tries to graft theory onto history, the latter attributes a theoretical quality to history. This brings them respectively closer to positivism and idealism, instead of dialectic. Finally, the section presented a third, historical materialist version of dialectic which provides a unique view of reality with change, contradiction, praxis, inter-subjectivity, and totality constituting its central aspects. A discussion of these in relation to one another was presented at both onto-epistemological and methodological levels.

The fourth section treated the contemporary state with its general properties as a real abstraction. These properties, I maintained, themselves historical inter-subjective constructions, are inherited from different historical periods and constitute the state as a real abstraction. *Pace* Hudson, who sees the state as a metaphysical abstraction, states can still be agents by reason of their capability to act purposively. Contradictions arising from the differences in the ways the world appears to them and, following from this, from their different concrete praxes in reproducing themselves constitute the context for action. It is through this inter-subjective encounter of praxes that states abstract foreign policy from international relations and bridge them, and theory must reflect this practical nature of relations among states in concrete historical conjunctures.

In international relations 'there are always two stories to tell', remarked Hollis and Smith (1991): one inside, the other outside. These two, they claimed, were unbridgeable. I argue, on the contrary, that there are as many stories to tell as there are agents. For stories are but one-sided representations. There are always other sides to stories. However, the concrete content of the field is not exhausted no matter how many stories are told. These reflect merely how the world appears to the agent in question and how that agent 'ex-plains' the world external to itself. This can only be the starting point of the investigation. If reality is inter-subjective, in order to mentally reproduce reality we need to take into account the 'ex-planations' of other subjects so that we have a concrete picture of it. We come to an understanding of reality only by identifying the relations connecting 'ex-planations'. Praxis, as the unity of thinking and action, as purposive activity, is the most crucial aspect of this reconstruction. For it is not the contemplative ego, but the real, flesh and blood individual that acts in reproducing herself.

So much discussion on praxis, inter-subjectivity and concreteness remains unfulfilling when these theoretical points are not illustrated in practice. Therefore, the next three chapters will try to reconstruct in thought a specific foreign policy conjuncture: developments leading to the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies. Three counter-intuitive foreign policy actions by the US, Turkey, and Iraq will be analysed in an attempt to present an inter-subjective account of the formation of each state, developments prior to the (in)actions of

states, and the emergence of a new reality as a result of the clash of their contradictory strategies of reproduction. As vehemently argued in this chapter, however, the practical actions of agents are not instances of abstract general theories. Therefore, first and foremost, the following three chapters individually illustrate that foreign policy strategies of states, as part or result of their wider reproductive strategies, are made inter-subjectively by a variety of agents, who perceive and experience what is external to them in diverse ways and who therefore develop different strategies of reproduction. This diversity requires a 'thick narrative' rather than predetermined conceptual apparatus so that the diverse praxes are put into their specific contexts for a better understanding of their dialectical making.

### 3. THE US AND THE WORLD OR 'US AGAINST THEM'

#### 3.1. Introduction

In order to illustrate the theoretical argument developed in the preceding chapter, this and the following two chapters will examine three apparently counter-intuitive foreign policy decisions by three states, namely the United States, Turkey, and Iraq. This chapter will analyse the decision by the US government to invade Iraq in 2003. The next chapter will focus on the decision by the Turkish state to block the American request to use Turkish soil as a launchpad for the invasion of Iraq from the North, purportedly a much safer option for the American forces. The fifth chapter will problematise the decision by the Iraqi government to reject further cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) in rebuffing the claim that it was in possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). The first of these three acts defies the realist and liberal cost-benefit analysis. The second 'violates' the liberal 'bandwagoning' principle, while the third challenges the very core of much IR and FPA thinking, i.e. the will to survival. From a traditional IR or FPA perspective, these foreign policy decisions by three different states may appear, at best reckless, and at worst hostile. An evaluation of these acts in their specific contradictory complexity along the lines developed in the preceding chapter, however, will demonstrate that they not only represent various 'reasonable' motives and reasons of the actors, but also serve to help understand the contradictory ways in which both these motives and reasons, and their inter-subjectively constructed yet unintended consequences interrelate.

This chapter problematizes the American decision to invade Iraq. It inquires why, amidst protests by a range of actors, including former statesmen, academics, journalists, states, and publics, and despite the counterintuitive nature of the decision from a realist perspective, the US invaded Iraq. The argument of the chapter is that the invasion was a specific application of the long-standing American grand strategy of primacy by a group of neo-conservatives who came to hold key foreign policy-making positions in the George W. Bush administration. However, rather than a necessary or natural extension of this strategy, the decision was an active and purposeful intervention by a group of individuals in the Bush Administration who came to believe that the strategy of primacy is better served by more proactive engagement with reorganisation of the world. In other words, the strategy of primacy provided the context for action for the neoconservatives in the Bush Administration, rather than determining the way in which they pursued primacy. American primacy, I argue, consists of a strategy of

binding the reproductive strategies of other states to that of the American state. This strategy, however, is not the result of a process of contemplation by a group of strategists or statesmen who are above and beyond history; on the contrary, it has been in the making since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and has taken on its current shape through successful and unsuccessful responses to world-historical developments, which, in turn, are the results of the praxes of other states. The protracted character of this process is captured in the successive reformulations and different implementations of policies. While a more isolationist stance was taken in response to developments in Europe during the inter-war years, the US took a much more proactive and order-building role, as it was very much aware of the huge capability gap between itself and the other major powers, by institutionalising its position through integrated trade, monetary, and security arrangements. The threatening presence of the Soviet Union helped the United States to consolidate cohesion, but at the same time prevented the US strategy of tying every state to its reproductive strategies on a global scale. When the Soviet Union collapsed, neoconservatives in the US wanted to be more assertive and proactive to globalise the reach of American primacy, although their attempts were blocked, first by the realist wing of the Bush Sr. administration, and then by the Clinton administration. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, neoconservatives found the opportunity to push through their agenda and coercively compel a series of states, starting with Afghanistan and Iraq, to integrate themselves into the American-led capitalist order.

In order to make sense of this specific application of a long-standing grand strategy, this chapter provides a historical reconstruction of the developments that institutionalised US primacy. In line with the onto-epistemological and methodological principles set out in the preceding chapter, the primary agent of the decision is initially and temporarily taken as the American state as an institutional complex to be later subjected to socio-historical unpacking. Throughout WW II and in its immediate aftermath, the American political elite consciously established foreign policy-making as an exclusive domain of the executive, limiting input of the wider society and even the legislative organs of the Federal State. Furthermore, apathy of the American electorate towards issues of foreign policy consolidated the role of the executive as the locus of foreign policy-making. Therefore, the abstraction of the American state as the primary agent of American foreign policy reflects its reality, more than it would in the case of any other state. Reflective of this consensus in the American public, the notion of primacy has constituted the thread of continuity in American foreign policy strategy since the end of WW II, with roots going back to President Wilson's time. As the general public became increasingly excluded from the domain of foreign policy, isolationism and deep-seated cultural notions of

anti-imperialism waned toward the end of the first half of the twentieth century. The political elite and the top brass of the business world were keenly aware of the need to engage with the rest of the world. By the end of the Cold War, this consensus was maintained by the Bush and Clinton administrations, and reached its apogee at the turn of the millennium when members of the Bush Administration increasingly felt that the US now had a much freer hand to pursue this strategy. Therefore, first and foremost, this chapter seeks to show historically how the strategy of establishing and maintaining American primacy came to be the continuous thread of American foreign policy-making. The context for action, or the totality of inter-subjective social relations that historically contributed to the making of the strategy of primacy, however, does not by itself tell us why, instead of resorting to many options that were available at the time, policy-makers chose invasion. Contextualising the decision within this strategy, the chapter offers the answer that while this strategy was also adopted by the Bush Jr. Administration and the neoconservatives, their subjective view of the world underpinned the decision to invade Iraq, since they thought, unlike the preceding post-Cold war US administrations, they should and could pursue this strategy proactively and unilaterally and bring down Saddam's regime through the military option.

The argument is developed in four sections. The next section reviews the limited literature on the Iraq war. FPA literature on the Iraq war offered explanations on the basis of personalities, leadership styles, or belief systems of the foreign policy leadership. While these might be helpful in understanding the motivation of foreign policy-makers within a larger socio-historical context, FPA literature abstracts a very limited spatiotemporal section of reality, confining itself to the immediate spatial and temporal context of the decision. The IR literature, in turn, assessed the invasion against a set of predetermined conceptual and structural logics. Even more historically-aware approaches tended to reduce the invasion to the requirements of geopolitical, geoeconomic or cultural 'structures'. The third section turns to the immediate context of the decision and discusses how the world appeared to the American state in the early 2000s, and concludes that the American state found itself in a position of primacy at the time although this position faced multiple challenges. The fourth section provides a historical reconstruction of the formation and development of American primacy. This 'thick' description traces the emergence of this world-historical development in the twentieth century and demonstrates how what appeared to be the 'structure of the international system', i.e. American unipolarity, was indeed a result of protracted historical developments, a cumulative consequence of the inter-subjective and contradictory praxes of innumerable agents including American big capital, working classes, other states, and

international and national institutions. The fifth section, in turn, shows how the longer-term strategy of the American state was inherited and implemented in a specific way by the Bush Administration. It also shows that the strategy of primacy was both inherited as a 'real abstraction' and remade as a proactive strategy of worldwide domination by this Administration, and that the war on Iraq was conceived as part of this strategy. The decision to invade Iraq, therefore, was neither made by free-floating statesmen nor a functional emanation of the strategy of primacy; rather, it was an active and subjective decision by the Bush Administration.

## 3.2. The War on Iraq: Contending Explanations

### 3.2.1. FPA on Iraq War

The decision to invade Iraq has been subject to many journalistic accounts and to a limited number of scholarly analyses (Mitchell and Massoud 2009).<sup>1</sup> These mostly failed to match the analytical requirements of scholarly explanation, as 'polemicism', rather than analytical perspective held sway (Dodge 2006, p.454). FPA approaches limited themselves mostly to the analysis of leadership styles, character traits, worldviews, and the perceptions and personalities of the members of the Bush Administration. Shannon and Keller (2007) for example, take the leadership styles of the foreign policy bureaucracy (except Rice) as their main variable and measure their traits based on their lexical output. Similarly, Dyson (2009) measured Rumsfeld's trait scores to determine the role of his leadership style on the decision. Perception of 'rogue states' by the individuals in the Bush administration is also taken as an explanatory factor (O'Reilly 2007). Michael Mazarr (2007) utilised the agenda-setting framework, whereby policy agendas of policy communities make their way into the higher echelons of governmental power in the form of actual policies. For him, regime change in Iraq was such an agenda, long pursued by Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Cheney and others in the Bush administration, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks provided the window of opportunity for the realisation of this agenda (Mazarr 2007).

Mitchell and Massoud (2009) on the other hand, strived to incorporate conventional FPA frameworks into one overarching 'integrative' model, based on a combination of insights from small-group decision-making analysis, leadership typologies and bureaucratic politics. Categorising Bush's leadership style as formal, they go on to argue that formal management styles cause 'anticipatory compliance' on part of advisors, and bureaucratic infighting within the ranks of the administration. Anticipatory compliance, particularly by the National Security

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<sup>1</sup> These journalistic accounts most prominently include Mann (2004), Woodward (2004), Fallows (2006), and Ricks (2007).



Adviser Condoleezza Rice, but also by figures such as General Tommy Franks, precluded any assessment of the value of the preferred decision itself, and led the bureaucrats to limit their input to the execution of the plan. On the other hand, bureaucratic infighting, especially between State and Defense departments in the persons of Powell and Rumsfeld resulted in defects in the decision-making process leading up to the invasion (Mitchell and Massoud 2009).

For all their differences, these approaches fit squarely into the tradition of FPA, in that they abstract one aspect in the decision-making process, and this aspect is mostly related to the psychology, worldview, or belief system of a handful of individuals. FPA approaches to US foreign policy toward Iraq therefore remain mostly 'first image explanations' (Flibbert 2006, p. 318). Although Mitchell and Massoud's (2009) approach has a wider scope, it leaves out more than it lets into the analysis. In this respect, decision-making models reproduce many of the limitations of traditional FPA. Moreover, because of this narrow scope, they fail to see what lies beyond the immediate policy-formulating environment of the leaders. This results in an almost complete disregard for the historical origins of American foreign policy, leaving many other determinations outside the purview of the analysis, and the impression that everything started with the Bush administration. Relatedly, the constitutive influence of the position of the American state in world politics and global political economy does not figure in these models.

### 3.2.2. IR on Iraq War

The realist discussion of the American invasion of Iraq revolved around the Cold War dual conception of deterrence and containment. Realists of offensive and defensive strands found the war unnecessary (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003; Mearsheimer 2005).<sup>2</sup> The realist discussion of the war, however, never went beyond advice as to how the American state should behave, and did not feature any attempt to explain why the US wanted to invade Iraq. As they generally explain wars with reference to systemic qualities of international politics, i.e. anarchy and balance of power, states, for realists, follow the rationality dictated by the 'international system'. The decision to go to war with Iraq was irrational (Hinnebusch 2007), because the rationality of the system would require the states to act prudently and resort to instead containment and deterrence in the face of threat. Containment and deterrence would work, because the historical record shows that it worked in the past, against both the Soviet Union

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<sup>2</sup> The names of both offensive and defensive realists, along with a cohort of other IR scholars appeared on a paid advertisement in the *New York Times* of 26 September 2002 recommending prudence, and providing reasons as to why the United States should not go to war with Iraq.

and Saddam Hussein himself in the decade following the Gulf War (Mearsheimer and Walt 2003). The irrationality of the decision was due to the extremism and the ideologically-motivated character of a group of 'hawks' who happened to seize power in the Bush administration (Hinnebusch 2007).

Given that Bush did not heed the realists' advice, one wonders how realism can sustain its claim to represent the reality 'as it really is'. The matter is not so much that they failed to make their voice heard in the ranks of the Bush administration; rather it is that when their policy recommendations were ignored, instead of questioning their ability to account for reality, they put the blame on the irrationality, imprudence, and/or the extremist ideologies of foreign policy officials. This is not to undermine the morally-admirable quality of the realist warnings regarding the war on Iraq, but if normativity is to serve as the criterion of truth in realist explanations of foreign policy decisions, realists may need to revise their claims to scientificity, and revisit the works of Morgenthau, who proposed a reconciliation of universal morality with a constraining reality in a 'practical morality' (A. Murray 1996).

Mearsheimer was drawing attention to the liberal internationalist character of Bush administration foreign policy when he described it as 'Wilsonianism with teeth' (Mearsheimer, 2005). After all, it made explicit reference to 'making the world safe for American democracy'. Liberal scholars of IR were also worried that 'the crisis of Bush foreign policy had become a crisis of liberal internationalism' (Ikenberry 2009, p.4). While some liberals supported the war against Iraq,<sup>3</sup> others saw it as a radical rupture from Wilsonianism, and lamented multilateralist diplomacy being replaced by a unilateralist exertion of American power. The foreign policy of the Bush administration, for Ikenberry, as well as for other liberal internationalists such as Anne-Marie Slaughter and Thomas J. Knock, constituted a 'radical break' in US foreign policy (Ikenberry et al 2009). Wilsonian principles, although openly subscribed to by the Bush administration, were betrayed when the American state decided to act on a unilateral basis following the events of 9/11, especially when it did not seek the support of other powers in starting the war against Iraq. Tony Smith, also a self-proclaimed liberal, is highly critical of the way these liberal internationalist authors assign such a high level of centrality to the concept of multilateralism in liberal internationalism as the most important determinant of discontinuity between the American internationalist foreign policy tradition and Bush Administration practices (T. Smith 2009, pp.57-60). Moreover, 'the intellectual

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<sup>3</sup> Those liberals who came to be called 'the liberal hawks' included Thomas Friedman, Fareed Zakaria, George Packer, Jeffrey Goldberg, Richard Cohen, Paul Berman, Christopher Hitchens and Kenneth Pollack. Some of these authors revised their opinions long after the invasion, but were ardent supporters during the prelude to war.

heavy-lifting' for the Bush Doctrine was undertaken mostly by those neoliberals of different traditions, ranging from democratic transition theorists, liberal peace theorists, liberal political philosophers, and liberal internationalists (T. Smith 2007, p.143, *passim.*; 2009, p.66). T. Smith shows not only that the Bush Doctrine can be seen as a new form of neoliberal internationalism, but also that both Ikenberry and Slaughter subscribe to a foreign policy strategy that largely concurs with this Doctrine. The only difference of opinion with the Bush administration is their emphasis on multilateralism instead of the Bush Administration's limited unilateralism. The reason why Ikenberry claims that Bush Doctrine is a deviation from the long-standing American tradition is that he simply confuses means with ends (T. Smith 2009, p.84).

Constructivist-ideational explanations unsurprisingly attribute causal primacy to the formation, diffusion and establishment of a set of ideas in the context of the post-9/11 American state of affairs. Flibbert (2006), for one, argues that it was a set of shared ideas, and not psychological, domestic, or international systemic factors that was the primary reason for the war on Iraq. Flibbert reproduces Wendt's theoretical failures in the context of an analysis of a practical situation. First, just like Wendt, he abstracts what he calls ideational and material factors and prioritises the former over the latter.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, he almost attributes agency to these ideas which almost replace real, living human beings, and bestows explanatory power to these ideas. Finally, even though he accepts that ideas are contested before they are established (Flibbert 2006, p.328), true to the constructivist view, he assumes a resolution of these contestations in his account. State actions, however, represent not a shared idea about a given policy issue, but a temporary equilibrium of contradictory strategies of different agents, reflecting not even simply the strongest idea, but a dialectical mix of contradictory positions.

What all these explanations share (with the partial exception of Mazarr's (2007) agenda-setting approach) is a certain type of short-sightedness that underlies their effort to locate the source of the decision within a time period that spans one and a half years from the 9/11 attacks. This lack of 'historically grounded analysis' (Dodge 2006, p.456), is a trademark of what Robert Cox (1981) once called 'problem-solving' approaches in IR. They fail to appreciate not only the historically specific character of the decision, but also the inter-subjective making of it. Studies with historical awareness, on the other hand, generally fall into two modes of explanation: (geo)economic and (geo)political. The former usually refers to the interests of

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<sup>4</sup> But unlike Wendt, he considers his constructivist account complementary to other mainstream accounts (Flibbert 2006). Such a position, however, is susceptible to Mearsheimer's (1994) criticism that this kind of theorisation is problematic for its relapse back into 'materialism' notwithstanding its strong subscription to 'idealism', undermining intellectual coherence.

groups of people who are influential in American politics and who shape decisions of the American state directly through their connections in the government, think-tanks and media, and campaign-financing, as well as indirectly through their functional role in the reproduction of general capital accumulation. The influence of the military-industrial complex over the Bush administration was one such explanation provided for the Iraq war (e.g. Hossein-zadeh 2007). A second line of geo(economic) argument involves oil as the primary motive for war. These arguments variously refer to the personal and corporate interests of some members of the Bush government, American dependence on foreign oil, and the geo-economic importance of controlling the world oil market (Mercille 2010).<sup>5</sup> Geo(political) arguments cite variously the appeal of foreign adventures in light of the domestic problems Bush faced, the demonstration effect for other 'rogue regimes' or potential rivals, the creation of permanent military bases in the region, and most prominently, the reproduction and perpetuation of American primacy/hegemony/empire in the world.<sup>6</sup>

There are also those who try to combine these two perspectives by demonstrating the political in the economic and the economic in the political. Take the 'war for oil' explanations, for example. Mercille (2010) convincingly argues that the US is interested in the Middle East oil not for its domestic consumption or to further the interests of American oil companies, but as part of its long-standing strategy to control the world oil supply. Moreover, claims Mercille (2010), the US wanted to demonstrate that its military power was unsurpassable and that even attempting to challenge it would be in vain.<sup>7</sup> Mercille, in short, combined geopolitical with geo-economic analysis. This analytical framework goes back to Giovanni Arrighi's (1994) distinction between 'capitalist and territorialist logics of power'. More recently, David Harvey (2003) and Alex Callinicos (2009) reached the same conclusion that imperialist practices, such as the war in Iraq, take place when territorial and capitalist logics intersect. These two logics, for them, are two sources of power and cannot be reduced to each other. This way, they establish preordained logics for state action that invariably apply to all states, and therefore

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<sup>5</sup> American dependence on oil was cited, most prominently by Klare (2004, 2008), as the main reason for war on Iraq. The "war for oil" explanation found a large audience among critics of the Bush administration. See Mercille (2010) for a survey of the relevant literature.

<sup>6</sup> These two sets of explanations do not necessarily mutually exclude one another and are separated here only for analytical purposes. The notion of primacy is explored in Gowan (2006). While 'hegemony' became the central conceptual tool to designate the American position in the world for many, including liberals (Keohane, 1984, 1991; Ikenberry, 2001), realists (Gilpin, 1981), and neo-Gramscians (Cox, 1981; Morton, 2007, van der Pijl 1984), albeit with a very wide margin of difference, empire and imperialism are also utilised as explanatory devices by Panitch and Gindin 2004; 2005), Harvey (2003), Wood (2003), and Callinicos (2009) among others.

<sup>7</sup> The 1992 Defense Policy Guidance Draft Document and the 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States do not conceal that securing American primacy was the primary defense objective of the US.

separate real practices of differently positioned states from these predetermined logics. Finally, Ellen Wood's account of the 'war on terror' reduces the war to a structural requirement of capital accumulation, and thereby fails to represent the richness of the practice itself (Wood 2003). Predetermined logics of action are, at best, abstractions that cannot be invariably applied to all states in the world. It is in the inter-subjective and socio-historical specificity of the event itself that we should look for answers.

### **3.3. The World as It Appeared to the American State: The Position of the US in the World in 2001**

This section discusses the American state as a collective abstract agent made at the time or rather before the invasion. The American state in 2001 maintained its superiority over the rest of the major powers according to many indexes. Military spending in the US, although stagnating in the preceding decade, was still much higher compared to other major powers, not to mention the technological superiority of the US forces, especially due to the so-called 'revolution in military affairs' (RMA). The picture was similar in terms of economic data. The volume of the economies of next five countries combined could not match that of the US. Its command over finance gave it enormous leverage in the world market. The major role the US played in the governance of international institutions such as the United Nations, IMF, World Bank and NATO continued during the 1990s and into the 2000s. Indeed, through NATO enlargement, the US brought more countries under its security umbrella. With no challengers on the horizon following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, US primacy seemed secure. A tamed Japan could no longer present a threat. The European Union, thought to be the only potential competitor to the US by those who believed from the 1970s onwards that the US was in decline, was bound to the American-led international order, politico-militarily through NATO (Gowan 1999a), and economically through international institutions (Bromley 2008; Ikenberry 2001; Panitch and Gindin 2004). Russia was nowhere near its former glory, either economically or militarily. The only imaginable contender was China, and it was, as yet, very far from rising to the challenge at least militarily, although it was fast developing capabilities economically and financially (Harvey 2003).

The picture was not all bright, however. Nine years of economic growth was coming to an end in the first quarter of 2001. Unemployment, increasing steadily throughout 2001, was again becoming a central issue in the US economy. The dotcom bubble of the second half of the 1990s was finally bursting, as dotcom companies went down one by one without realising expected future profits, which had kept their shares high on the stock market for a long enough time. Other sectors also saw equity prices pushed upwards on the basis of expected

future profits. Most notably, energy companies used this strategy to increase their equity prices, resulting in corporate corruption scandals that shook public opinion in 2001.<sup>8</sup> Years of support by the Federal Reserve to keep equity prices high was not sustainable indefinitely. The downward pressure on equity prices as a whole hit both corporations and households making it difficult to find liquidity for productive investment or consumption respectively, and both consumer and investment demand was falling (Brenner 2002, p.251). On 2 October the Federal Reserve, reversing the course it had followed in the 12 months from June 1999 to May 2000, decreased interest rates for the ninth time in 2001 to a record low 2.5% to stimulate both consumer and business demand as consumer confidence tumbled.<sup>9</sup> Manufacturing output growth stabilised at negative percentages, and manufacturing capacity utilisation continued the decline that had started in mid-2000, undermining the position of US exporters. The trade deficit was breaking record after record and reached its highest level in American history.

Internationally, too, then, American primacy faced some formidable challenges. The US recorded immense foreign trade deficits with almost all developed capitalist countries. China was enjoying high annual growth rates, increasing its exports constantly. Sino-Russian cooperation took on institutional form when the Shanghai Five (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), along with Uzbekistan, declared the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in mid-2001. Although China was projected to surpass all advanced capitalist powers economically in the next few decades, the primary perceived challenge to US primacy was the European Union (EU). In the absence of a common threat, such as that from the USSR during the Cold War, the American state feared that the EU could contend with it, at least economically. The institution of the Euro as the common currency of the Euro Area (commonly referred to as the Eurozone) in 1998 was a significant step in coordinating a common European monetary and economic policy. At the same time, the French-British summit in Saint Malo in late 1998 constituted a move towards further integration in foreign policy and security within the existing framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), with the explicit aim of creating the conditions of a common institutional structure for European security independent of NATO. Combined with the increasing calls for a more

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<sup>8</sup> The Enron and Worldcom scandals were the most infamous examples among corporate corruption scandals, but one should note that other energy companies such as Dynegy and Reliant Energy used similar accounting practices.

<sup>9</sup> In November the Fed would cut interest rates further to 2% and fears of recession dominated many analyses. At the time, many analysts, and even Fed itself, put the blame for the problems the American economy was going through on the terrorist attacks of 9/11. However, the first 7 cuts had come before the attacks allegedly hit the US economy.

independent Japanese economic policy, the rise of a China fast embracing the rules of the capitalist game, the possibility of a resurgent Russia, and European aspiration to an independent role in the world, the challenge to US primacy could not be simply brushed aside as insignificant.

Last but not least, the challenge from smaller states with regional aspirations went against the semi-institutionalised US-led global order. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, these states were to be called the 'axis of evil' by President Bush.<sup>10</sup> Iran and Iraq were competing for influence in the Middle East, and their designs for the region ran counter to those of the US. The third country that was designated as part of the 'axis of evil' was North Korea, which was seeking to become a nuclear power despite the rapprochement between the two countries since 1994 when they signed the Agreed Framework. From the American perspective, what distinguished these states from other states outside the purview of the American-led global order such as Somalia, Burma, Chad, etc. was that these latter states were inward-looking and did not have capacity to challenge this order, even at a regional level. Unlike these failed states, Iran, for example, wanted to expand its influence throughout the Middle East, and had both the military and the economic capacity to do so. Similarly, and in competition with Iran, Iraq wanted to bring together the Sunni world under its banner, presenting itself as the bulwark against both Iran's and Israel's perceived expansionary tendencies. North Korea's nuclear program, on the other hand, was taken to constitute a threat to Pacific security.

In short, at the beginning of the millennium the American state found itself in a position of primacy in the world with an unmatched relative capability in terms of both military power and economic sway. Based on this practical abstraction, the main goal of the American state, above all, was to reproduce its position of primacy in the world in the broadest sense of the word. This strategy of reproduction, however, faced multifarious contradictions arising from the fact that it was developed at the highest level of social complexity, and at such a level, social relations of reproduction among innumerable agents necessarily create contradictions. To account for this complexity, the following section will reconstruct the historical development of the American position of primacy in the world, retracing it to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, which generated triumphalist accounts such as

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<sup>10</sup> These same countries were included in the 'rogue states' of the Clinton administration, although the concept was abandoned in 2000. The concept 'outlaw states' was coined by the Reagan government and referred to by the Bush Sr. administration, yet it was Anthony Lake, the National Security Advisor to President Clinton, who elaborated on the concept in 1994 (Lake 1994).

Fukuyama's now-defunct 'end of history' thesis (Fukuyama 2012).<sup>11</sup> To keep the research on track, a few questions and a few short answers will be provided here tentatively: Why Iraq? Why War? Why in 2003? Why invasion? The first question will find its answer given already in the early 1990s in the context of the first Gulf crisis. The selection of Iraq as the target of US action goes back to these years and regime change was the desired result. As to the second question, one could immediately say that war came when all other options available for this purpose, including toppling Saddam through military coup with covert CIA support, organising oppositional forces to take him down, and imposing sanctions to force his hand, were exhausted.<sup>12</sup> Why in 2003? Because the September 11 attacks opened a window of opportunity to mould the region in a manner that fitted into larger American strategic goals. Finally, the invasion was perceived to be necessary from the vantage point of the impatient neoconservatives in the Bush Administration. These will be elaborated in section 5, after a discussion of the sources of American power and of maintaining primacy in the world as the primary strategy of the American state.

### **3.4. The Strategy of Reproduction of the American State: Enduring Primacy**

#### **3.4.1. Sources of American Power during the Cold War: 1945-1990**

On 25 December 1991, when Gorbachev resigned from his post and passed the nuclear controls to Yeltsin and the flag of the Union was replaced with the Russian tricolor in Moscow, the US found itself, to its own and everyone else's surprise, the sole superpower in the world. Even before these historic events, Gorbachev and Bush Sr. declared a 'New World Order' of superpower cooperation. But developments in the last days of the Soviet Union leading to its disintegration signalled that in the coming years this 'New World Order' would have only one superpower at the helm: the US. In another sense, now the whole world became its sphere of influence. While the sources of American primacy lie in its unchallenged status after the Cold War, it went through two other historical 'formative moments' (N. Smith 2003, p.5): the first two decades of the twentieth century, and the post-WW II period.

The first formative period came at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the American state was no longer able to expand in 'absolute space' (N. Smith 2003, pp.12-15). Westward expansion

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<sup>11</sup> Although the conditions of US primacy took shape in world history long before the end of the Cold War, the US genuinely found itself as the leader of a global order only after its sole rival for this position, the USSR, was decisively left out of the competition.

<sup>12</sup> Indeed the idea of toppling Saddam was spoken of within the Bush administration even before the First Gulf War (Khadduri and Ghareeb 1997).



was almost complete<sup>13</sup> and the US ruling classes faced an existential contradiction. While they enjoyed the reinvestment opportunities of continuous geographical expansion under the banner of Manifest Destiny, they increasingly felt the pressure of overaccumulation and a lack of profitable outlets for the investment of surplus capital (N. Smith 2003, p.15). Although other imperial powers had faced and were still facing such problems, the options available to them were not available to the US at the time. At any rate, it was the US government who developed the doctrine of Open Door and who harshly opposed colonialism, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, as part of the Monroe Doctrine. Indeed, the strategy of opening doors, while keeping frontiers closed, that would serve the United States particularly well after the Second World War (see Colas 2008),<sup>14</sup> was first experimented with in the case of international trade with China, where the US maintained that China should not be an exclusive domain for any power. The US attempt to establish an open door system internationally failed because the major powers stuck to their 19th century geopolitical guns during the Paris Peace Conference. President Wilson's failure to gain Senate approval to join the League of Nations resulted in the shelving of the idea later completely. The US would pursue a non-interventionist policy in the inter-war period and well into the Second World War. That the US grand strategy throughout and after the Cold War was maintaining its primacy should not be taken as an indicator of a linear unfolding of the realisation of this strategy (N. Smith 2003, p.24). The US Senate blocking League of Nations membership, later Republican presidents refraining from engaging with the Eurasian landmass in the 1920s, the Great Depression limiting opportunities to engage, and internal opposition preventing earlier intervention in the Second World War must all serve as indicators that the emergence of the US at the apex of a world order was the result of a protracted historical development.

Almost completely unscathed in WW I, and triumphing in WW II, the US emerged as the best-positioned state to lead a world of territorial states by 1945. Moreover, by the mid-twentieth century, the domain of foreign policy-making was successfully monopolised by the executive, with the 'provincialism' and the apathy of the electorate further contributing to this exclusivity (Anderson 2013, pp. 5-9). While the distaste for internationalism was still very strong in the agricultural Western and Southern hinterland, large-scale industrial manufacturers and banks of the Northeast, understanding that their very prosperity depended upon incursion into Eurasian markets, lined up significant support for Roosevelt's post-war vision (Anderson 2013, p.20). Initially, this vision was based on an assumed security framework under the leadership

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<sup>13</sup> It would be fully complete when Arizona was incorporated into the Federal State in 1912.

<sup>14</sup> Colás (2008) argues that this two-sided strategy generates tensions as seen in the US invasion of Iraq, which represents direct political control of a territory and population.

of the 'four policemen' and an open and free world market; both mechanisms, Roosevelt thought, would work to the advantage of the US (Anderson 2013; Gowan 2003). In short, the American state had both the capacity and the will to extend its sway beyond its borders.

The attempt by the US to rule through the United Nations, however, failed in the face of Soviet defiance of the idea of a free world market and the onset of the Cold War (Gowan 2003). The response to this failure was to limit American rule to Western European and Japanese states while containing the USSR, thus giving rise to two different orders: the 'containment order' and the liberal capitalist order (Ikenberry 2001, p.170). The containment order was devised to prevent the expansion of communism, and in the context of this perceived threat from the Soviet Union, the US institutionalised an 'American-led liberal order' in the capitalist world through military and economic integration (Bromley 2008). Militarily, through NATO, the US provided a security umbrella to capitalist states upon their request, earning itself the epithet of 'empire by invitation' (Lundestad 1986). Economically, the US undertook responsibility to reconstruct other capitalist societies through the Marshall Plan and Bretton Woods institutions in order to prevent the economic rivalry among them that had led to two devastating World Wars in the first half of the twentieth century. What many called US hegemony in this period consisted of locking capitalist states in an institutional framework that accrued benefits to all (Ikenberry 2001 *passim*.).

The roots of American power from the 1940s to the early 1970s can be found in the way these institutions bound the conditions of reproduction of Western European and Japanese states tightly to the reproduction of the US-led liberal capitalist order. In other words, these states needed the US more urgently than the US needed them to ward off the perceived Soviet threat and a possible resurgence of Germany as well as to rebuild their economies. The pre-war economic fragmentation was to be replaced by a tight integration. As part of the Bretton Woods framework, free trade, capital controls, fixed exchange rates with the US dollar pegged against gold serving as the international reserve currency were the norms to regulate economic relations among these countries. The integration of the capitalist world, or rather the 'penetration' of other states and their social relations by the American state (Panitch and Gindin 2004), institutionalised American primacy in several ways. First of all, free trade provided open markets for American companies at a time when US manufacturing output accounted for almost half of total world output. The reconstruction of war-torn European and Japanese economies not only increased the productive capacity of these countries but also, as a result, brought about effective demand for American products. Europe's share in total American foreign direct investment went up to 30% (Barratt Brown 1974 cited in Panitch and

Gindin 2004; Gowan 2002, p.5). Moreover, American surplus capital found a profitable outlet of reinvestment in European and Japanese markets. The increase in competitiveness of German and Japanese exporters enabled the American state to provide cheaper imports for its consumers, contributing to the political legitimacy of its international strategy of reproduction. Decreasing profitability, however, generated tensions among major capitalist powers (Brenner, 2004). Furthermore, the deficit this caused in American balance of payments was made worse by increasing military spending in the context of the Vietnam War. These tensions, along with disputes involving the role of the dollar, did not result in an existential challenge to the role of the American state in the world, although they gave rise to the crisis of the early 1970s.

Resolution of the crisis in the 1970s mainly involved the abolition of capital controls and freeing the dollar from the gold anchor. Despite negative reaction from all other major capitalist powers, the US went on to reconstitute its dominance through free financial flows which benefited American finance disproportionately. What Gowan (1999a) called the 'Dollar-Wall Street Regime' would constitute the new source of American power in the next several decades. Penetration of European and East Asian financial markets by American finance in this period complemented the earlier integration of capitalist states and societies. This did not happen without contradictions, though. The balance between manufacturing capital and finance capital strongly tilted towards the latter, much to the dismay of American manufacturers as the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Paul Volcker increased interest rates dramatically in 1979. To register this change does not mean that this was a 'financial coup' against manufacture, however (Panitch and Gindin 2004, p.21); rather, manufacturing capital as a whole would later enjoy the discipline imposed by financial capital in the face of the worldwide crisis of profitability that locked the export-oriented economies of Japan, Germany and the US in the same vicious circle of secular decline of rates of manufacturing profits (Brenner 2004).

The 1970s also saw the rise of the 'Sunbelt' in the Southern and Western hinterland of the US (Davis, 1984). The barren, impoverished hinterland of the rich, industrial Northeast in the past, these regions enjoyed industrial development in the high-tech and science-based sectors such as aerospace and electronics, as well as in industrialised agriculture. The development of these sectors was funded by the state, with military spending at the helm (Davis 1984, pp.12-13). The subsidised sectors of military industry, electronics, aerospace, agriculture and oil were all concentrated in this region and contributed to the competitiveness of American industry against German and Japanese manufacturers (N. Smith 2005, p.14). The emergent political consensus between the region's disciplined and conservative labour-force and nascent big

capital would later constitute the socio-political base of the neoconservatives in the Republican Party (N. Smith 2005, pp.21-22).

The consensual nature of American leadership of the capitalist world led scholars to argue that it was a positive-sum game (Bromley 2008, *passim*). Ikenberry (2001, p.210) went so far as to argue that this order showed 'constitutional characteristics' because it was established by democratic-constitutional states, and that the order could be sustained even in the absence of an hegemonic power such as the United States as it was based on a set of 'binding institutions'. Institutional orders, however, constitutional or not, are nothing more than an obscured expression of underlying social power relations, although these institutions do not necessarily represent an exact mirror image of them (cf. Gilpin 1981). As I argued in the preceding chapter, institutional orders are real abstractions that emerge as a temporary equilibrium of the contradictory coexistence of divergent social strategies and relations of reproduction. This is not to be confused with realist system-theory or hegemonic stability theory, both of which assume a smooth and contradiction-free correlative reflection of power capabilities of states in institutions. Relational social constructs almost always generate dynamics which cannot reflect the powers of agents in an exact fashion. Bretton Woods institutions, for example, were designed to give the US enormous leverage and for a period they indeed did, yet the institutional framework they provided collapsed when the gold standard was not in the interests of the US anymore as a result of the actions of a set of other states. This leaves us with the idea of 'empire' which dominated writings on the US after the 'unilateral turn' of the Bush administration.<sup>15</sup> This characterisation has a certain academic purchase, yet remains problematic, in that it evokes historical images of imperial practices which have almost nothing to do with the current stature of the United States insofar as it denotes a form of territorial expansion. While some figures such as Ignatieff (2003) and Ferguson (2004) were explicitly in favour of a liberal American empire, apologists for American power in the world, such as Ikenberry (2004), Keohane (1991) and Baker (2010), along with Donald Rumsfeld and George W. Bush (Daalder & Lindsay, 2003b), argued against such designations. Although the primary motive of liberal institutionalists and internationalists was apologetic, they had an important point: that empire was not a useful category to account for the specificity of the form of American power. Wood (2003), among others, was acutely aware of this problem, which led her to distinguish the American exercise of power in the world from historical empires, albeit in a rather schematic framework. This generated tensions between her wish to historically

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<sup>15</sup> In the six-month period preceding their time of writing, Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay (2003b) observed that the word 'empire' was used by over one thousand news reports.

specify the form of American power and the formalistic tendencies that haunt any schematic classification. To differentiate the contemporary from the historical, she overemphasised the economic nature of the 'American empire' ending up with a structuralist account. Harvey (2003) designated the condition as 'new imperialism' to distinguish it from historical empires; his description of imperialism, however, as noted above, utilised predetermined logics to account for his indeterminate historical object. Finally, in a series of articles Panitch and Gindin provide a more nuanced approach to US 'informal empire', which is characterised by 'penetration' of the institutional complexes of other states by the American state (Panitch and Gindin 2004, 2005). Panitch, however, admits that he 'wanted to retain' the word only because it was used passionately by many on the left, although he is well aware of the tendencies to conflate this with a classical Leninist notion of imperialism (Gowan, Panitch and Shaw 2001). A Gramscian notion of hegemony, in turn, may capture the nature of the role the US plays in the world, in that the rule of the order is partly consensual on the part of major European powers. Notwithstanding the immense contribution to an understanding of the nature of the American-led capitalist order, this notion of hegemony, however, relates 'ideas' and 'institutions' externally as separate 'spheres of activity' (Bieler and Morton 2005, p.88). I prefer for all intents and purposes, to follow Gowan (2006), and use the term 'primacy' as the long-term strategic goal of the American state. Unlike empire or hegemony, the notion of primacy is a more accurate designation, since it emphasises the *formal* likeness and multiplicity of states in terms of their real abstract existence. It also emphasises the position of the American state as the *primus inter pares* among states. Finally, it reflects the self-perception of both American state elites and its 'foreign policy experts', thereby also indicating the subjective and inter-subjective character of American rule. What is obvious is that the role played by the US characterised the whole Cold War period

#### **3.4.2. The Strategy of Reproduction of the American State after the Cold War: Maintaining Primacy**

When Bush Senior took over the Presidency from an ailing Reagan, he faced immense challenges. Comprehensive tax cuts and massive spending in armaments to deter the Soviet Union had turned the United States into 'world's leading debtor' nation during the Reagan period (Cohen 2005). Free flow of financial funds had made possible the servicing of US debt by countries with current account surplus. Yet this did not help mitigate concerns regarding the soaring US balance of payments deficit. Although finance underwrote American power in the world, it also generated considerable volatility as exemplified by the collapse of the

Savings and Loan framework in 1989, resulting in a bailout of savings and loan institutions by the Bush Administration.

The end of the Cold War caught almost everyone by surprise, including IR theorists and foreign policy-making circles.<sup>16</sup> As Soviet power was unravelling, Bush Sr. did not at the time fully appreciate the extent of this, largely because of continuing Cold War-based strategic concerns. As it was trying to come to grips with this new unfolding situation, it looked like, as Cohen (2005) put it, the American state was 'in search of a compass'. The unravelling of the Soviet Union gave rise to the problem of order among states in the world, to which the Bush government's initial response was a notion of 'superpower cooperation'. This idea had a very short life span as the Soviet Union fully collapsed. The Bush Sr. Administration generally responded erratically to these challenges as developments largely outside the control and reach of the American state (Gowan 1999a). The lack of the 'vision thing' would turn into a trademark designation of the father Bush.

This designation is, at the very least, an underestimation of American strategic thinking and action, however. Although Bush Sr. may have lacked the 'vision thing', he brought together a team of defence, security and foreign policy veterans with a vision. The leaked 1992 Draft Defense Planning Guidance Document (DPG), prepared by Zalmay Khalilzad under the supervision of the then undersecretary of defense policy Paul Wolfowitz, explicitly made preventing the emergence of another rival that would challenge US power its strategic goal. This strategic goal can be traced back to the NSC-68 of 1950, which was in fact a response to the possibility of the USSR having acquired nuclear technology, but did not refrain from noting that 'the absence of order among nations was becoming less and less tolerable' indicating that the world needed an American-led world order. DPG 1992 generated intense uproar when it was leaked to *The New York Times*, and the Pentagon had to revise and republish it in 1993 after toning down remarks on US primacy. The underlying logic and the main strategic objective (i.e. creating a world order conducive to American 'values' and a military capability which would be so strong that other states would be deterred even from conceiving of challenging it), however, were all the same.

The developments surrounding the publication of this document reflected divisions in the Bush Sr. Administration between neoconservatives and republican realists. More importantly, it reflected the unpreparedness and confusion of the American state in its responses to the new situation in the world. The American strategic-conceptual abstraction of the Cold War-world of

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<sup>16</sup> As Gaddis (1992) observed, IR theory had mostly failed to predict this world-historical development.

two rival superpowers failed to capture the inter-subjectively made new real abstraction. Two international crises broke out even before the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Two former allies of the United States, Manuel Noriega in Panama and Saddam Hussein in Iraq had become sources of nuisance for the US. Despite international outrage, the US swiftly deposed and arrested Manuel Noriega, who had served American interests well in the region for decades. The next incident was the invasion of Kuwait by a defiant Saddam Hussein. Supported and encouraged by the Arab states and the US, Iraq had been at war with Iran from 1980-8. Iraq was seen both by Sunni Arab states and the US as a bulwark against the export of revolution from a Shiite Iran. Iraq emerged 'victorious', though exhausted, from the war, as its oilfields were completely destroyed and much-needed oil money planned to be spent on infrastructure had been lost (Khadduri and Ghareeb 1997). After the war ended, the US wanted to keep normal ties with Iraq, considering the security of oil supply and stability in the region. National Security Directive 26 of October 1989, declassified in 1999, read: 'Normal relations between the United States and Iraq would serve our longer-term interests and promote stability in both the Gulf and the Middle East' (The White House, 1989). No more than a year later, on 2 August 1990, Iraq launched a full-scale invasion of Kuwait after its claims on Kuwaiti territory were strictly rejected by Kuwait. The main reason for this aggression was to make up for lost oil revenues, and the Iraqi government strongly believed that in return for its preventing the expansion of Iranian influence and power in the region, it deserved compensation by the Arab states in the Gulf region. The larger strategic goal of the Iraqi state was to become the leading power in the Islamic world and the Middle East.

The US reaction to Iraqi military build-up near the Kuwaiti border conveyed mixed messages. It was widely reported that when Saddam wanted to see what the Americans would do in case of an invasion, he was relieved to hear from April Glaspie, then US Ambassador to Iraq, that the US did not have a strong opinion on conflicts between Arab nations. As noted by Mearsheimer and Walt (2003), the US 'may not have intended to give Iraq the green light, but that is effectively what it did.' Even if it did, the US was strongly against a regional superpower in the Middle East, and an Iraq with the combined reserves of Iraq and Kuwait would constitute a threat not only to a US dependent on Middle Eastern oil for its domestic consumption as well as in the form of petrodollars, but also to other advanced capitalist countries who were even more dependent on the region. This would presumably give Iraq enormous leverage in its external relations and a considerable level of control over the price of oil in the world market.

After a series of negotiations in the ensuing five months, the US acted swiftly and decisively when Saddam rejected withdrawing his forces unconditionally. The ability to do this was

bestowed on the American state first by the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and then by a unanimous decision in the UN Security Council (UNSC) that produced UNSCR 678, authorising the use of military force against Iraq. After a very successful air campaign against Iraqi forces and infrastructure, the US was able to deploy ground forces to ensure a substantial blow to Iraqi military capability. American forces did not go so far as to occupy Iraq and change the regime, although there were elements in the Bush administration who wanted to remove Saddam from power. This was largely because the US needed a stable Iraq against a strong Iran. The Kurds could deliver this stability, yet they not only constituted a small minority in Iraq as a whole, but also were considered a threat by close US ally Turkey, which had a sizable and restive Kurdish minority of its own and was concerned about possible spill-over effects of any formal status for Kurds in Iraq. The Shia had both the demographic advantage and a strong will to replace Saddam, who had persecuted them as well as the Kurds for years. Both the Shia and the Kurds rebelled against Saddam during the coalition campaign hoping that he was going to be overthrown. When the coalition forces ceased fire, Saddam was left in power and the only shields to protect the Kurds and the Shia from his retribution were two no-fly zones, one in the North and one in the South, but Iraqi helicopters were exempted. These helicopters and the rest of the Iraqi military launched a brutal campaign to suppress the rebellions and liquidated both of them in a short time.

Clinton inherited many of the problems the American state faced after the end of the Cold War. Among these were US involvements in Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although Africa was a theatre of operations during the Cold War, the fall of the Soviet Union caused a change in American strategic priorities, which were now focused less on containing the expansion of the Soviet system and more on the absence of order both within former Soviet-style regimes and in other regions of the world. In line with the post-Cold War cooperative practices, US involvement in Somalia did not cause significant dispute among major capitalist powers. The problem with US involvement in Somalia was rather a problem of continuing an operation that was costing the lives of American soldiers without a significant strategic objective or gain. The second US involvement was in Yugoslavia. Held together by Tito in the 1970s, Yugoslavia was crumbling as a result of economic crises throughout the 1980s after his death. As the Cold War was approaching its end, Western capitalist powers wanted to integrate Yugoslavia into the capitalist order at once. The US, UK and France were primarily interested in full capital account liberalisation, while a reunified Germany, Austria and Hungary wanted both liberalisation and the breaking up of Yugoslavia. When Croatia and Slovenia declared independence, Germany pushed the members of the European Community to recognise these countries, but the US



waited to see if it could help to maintain Yugoslavian unity. Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence as well after strong encouragement from the Bush Administration and it was also recognised as an independent country by the EC; the following day the US recognised all three countries and they were given seats at the UN on 22 May.

The lack of will on the part of the US in these two wars can be attributed to the unpopularity they generated for Bush as presidential elections loomed. The war in Iraq earned Bush large electoral popularity. At the same time, however, the reunified Germany, with its newly-acquired confidence, had already started posing problems for the emerging order in the East of the Atlantic. The Maastricht Treaty came to fruition in 1991, and the Single Market was established on 1 January 1993. Further integration of the EU was desired by the US, but both the US and other European major capitalist states such as the UK and France were wary of German motivations. The UK maintained its distance, yet France and other members of the European Union were increasingly pulled into the orbit of German power. Unable to compete with the US and Japan, Germany sought to create the conditions for improving its position by integrating Europe under its leadership. Simultaneously, with the Soviet threat now removed, it sought to create a European military force independent from NATO.

This was anathema to the US strategy of reproduction. The US, under the Clinton administration, would respond to this throughout the 1990s through a two-tiered strategy involving as its main strategic instruments the expansion both of NATO and the US hold on world financial markets. So, although the Clinton Administration was also muddling through regarding the crises in Somalia and Yugoslavia, and it relied on economic election promises in securing the presidential vote, it came to realise that it could not depend solely on its economic power to reproduce itself as the most powerful state in the world. To demonstrate its willingness to lead, or as Anthony Lake, then National Security Advisor to Clinton put it, to establish its own and NATO's 'credibility' (Daalder 1998), the US took the lead in liberating Bosnia-Herzegovina within a NATO framework. In Somalia, however, under public pressure following the famous Black Hawk incident, the US pulled out, leaving that country in a condition of instability that would last decades and earn it the label of a failed state.

The intervention in Bosnia served a double purpose. First, it demonstrated that NATO was still a relevant player, despite it being rendered unnecessary as a collective security arrangement by the disappearance of the perceived threat of the Soviet Union. Secondly, it served as a display of American leadership, without which, apparently, Europe could not take care of even the European heartland. The US was taking every opportunity to re-establish NATO's waning significance in Europe, including in conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh and elsewhere. 'Partnerships

for Peace' would be set up with non-member states, paving the way for the later incorporation of states in South- and North-Eastern Europe as part of NATO expansion. The US simply would not let NATO be irrelevant, and Germany came to terms with this and NATO expansion eastward was agreed upon in 1994 (Gowan 1999b). On the other hand, the Uruguay round and the ensuing establishment of the World Trade Organisation created 'a new unity' between Germany and the United States (Gowan 1999b, p.96), as it served the interests of both governments in a time of crisis and opportunity by opening up not only former communist states and other formerly non-aligned countries to the operations of foreign capital, but also by deepening financial interlinks among the core capitalist countries.<sup>17</sup>

The opening up of these markets offered new value creation opportunities through FDI. New export markets would also absorb surplus product, and liberalisation of capital accounts in these new market societies would generate new opportunities for finance adding to its dominance in the world market. The IMF and the World Bank served as institutional mechanisms through which the markets of other states were opened up, with the active role played by the US Treasury (Konings 2008). Financialisation also meant an enormous increase in debt, both public and private. In the 1990s, government, consumer and corporate spending became increasingly dependent on the availability of liquidity, and its provision via a continuous rise in equity prices was a priority of the Clinton Administration. Constant availability of funds continuously increased both productive and unproductive consumption, leading to skyrocketing levels of trade deficit. The chronically-increasing American trade deficit, which would be deadly for any other economy, turned out to be manageable, and indeed essential to the reproduction of global capitalism and with it American primacy in the world. The servicing of US debt was mostly undertaken by states that had trade surpluses with the US. These countries bought US Treasury securities both to protect their financial markets from external shocks, and to keep the value of the dollar high against their currencies, which benefitted them for purposes of export. The high value of the dollar, in turn, enabled 'American consumers and businesses to import foreign goods cheaply' (Panitch and Gindin 2008, p.42) and helped to keep inflation low. This created a 'virtuous circle' binding the conditions of reproduction of aspiring economic rivals to American strategies of reproduction.

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<sup>17</sup> One should note that at the time although Germany was enjoying the geopolitical advantages of German reunification, the Kohl government was trying hard to contain the economic pangs that came with it. At pains to maintain his legitimacy, he chose not to rely solely on taxes to cover the costs of reunification. Facing this problem, the Bundesbank saw no other option but to increase interest rates to attract more capital. Germany would suffer from years of recession and the European Monetary Union would collapse in the meantime.

Penetration of the world financial markets by American financial capital assisted the ascent of American financial regulators such as the US Treasury and the Federal Reserve along with its private financial operators. The deepening of financial markets worldwide benefited the US both when these markets were stable and in crisis. In cases of stability, American private operators could get good and fast returns for their investments. When erratic crises occurred, capital fleeing from the host country would take shelter in the relatively safe American financial markets. When the East Asian crisis of 1997 broke out, these patterns would be repeated, but it would also be seen that financial problems taking place in other localities could also be dangerous for the US, and indeed the whole financial system of the world amidst such a high level of financial integration.

The East Asian crisis would also mark the fall of Japan, from its position of economic contender with American power to irrelevance. This was not simply a side effect of the crisis; rather it was long in the making, as the US grew intolerant of Japan's former position as the showcase of an export-oriented ally. The raising of interest rates by Paul Volcker in 1979 and the fight against inflation from 1980-1985 by the Reagan government caused an appreciation in the value of the dollar against other major currencies. Although this would underwrite the financial nature of American power in the coming decades, it was hitting American exporters hard. After extensive campaigning by some key sectors of manufacturers, the US pushed other core capitalist states to accept the Plaza Accord of 1985, which depreciated the value of dollar against other currencies, but whose primary target was the Japanese yen. An appreciating yen resulted in a state-induced bubble in equity prices (especially in the real estate market) with the ease of acquiring credit, which later burst (Brenner 2002, pp.110–111) and initiated what is widely called the Japanese economy's 'lost decade'. From 1985 onwards, some Japanese manufacturers started to respond to the rising value of yen by moving their production to East Asian countries, whose currencies were pegged against US dollars, and this trend gained speed during the recession of 1991-95 (Brenner 2002, p.156). This way they could, to a certain extent, protect themselves against the fall in the value of the dollar.

This was all reversed when the US and Japanese governments accepted what was called the Reverse Plaza Accord in 1995, depreciating the yen against the dollar to save Japanese manufacturing. The move envisaged funding of American consumption of Japanese exports by surplus Japanese capital. This played a role in the East Asian crisis along with the lack of capital controls in these markets. Currencies of the East Asian countries including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and later South Korea collapsed following speculative attacks by American hedge funds (Gowan 1999a). What is of more interest here for our purposes is that the US was able

to prevent the consolidation of what Gowan (1999a, p.51) called a dynamic 'new growth center' emerging in East Asia and possibly a 'yen-zone'. The Japanese proposal to bailout East Asian economies by establishing an East Asian equivalent of the IMF was rejected by the US and swiftly removed from the table. Thus, Japan increasingly found itself subject to the whims of American institutions and private financial operators. The US was able to neutralise what could become a threat to American primacy in the world before it materialised.

European integration in this period could have been much more challenging to the US, for the European states were taking very concrete steps toward economic and political integration, including the creation of the Schengen Area in 1995, signing of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, and the launching of Euro. A strong impetus to create and expand the ground and capability of a common European military force was present in Germany and France. The US appeared to support common foreign policy and security arrangements, although it insisted that European security should tightly lock into a NATO framework. The US demonstrated its leadership this time in the case of Kosovo, and through the bombing of Yugoslavia, it established the credibility and usefulness of NATO once again.<sup>18</sup> Earlier in the same month, the eastward expansion of NATO had started with membership of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. Although Russia protested, it was in no position to challenge the American drive to expand NATO to its detriment.

### 3.5. US Primacy and the Invasion of Iraq

The story of the reproduction of the United States from the end of the Cold War onwards, I claimed, was a story of the American state trying to perpetuate its primacy by institutionalising its position, and tying the conditions of reproduction of other states to its strategy of reproduction. This is not an innovation per se within the different strands of historical materialist literature on American power as exemplified by the works of Panitch and Gindin, Gowan, and Harvey among others. Indeed, this chapter makes immense use of their works. What it does differently is to theoretically incorporate the 2003 invasion of Iraq into this wider American strategy of reproduction. Panitch and Gindin, while they incessantly and accurately point at the political nature of apparently economic decisions, remain in the traditional field-definition of political economy most of the time. Harvey, on the other hand, provides a very credible explanation for the American decision to invade Iraq by arguing that the US wanted to control global oil supplies in order to exercise control over the rest of the major capitalist

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<sup>18</sup> This time it was Madeleine Albright who was referring to the 'credibility' of the US and NATO. Credibility once again would denote a willingness on the part of the United States to intervene when things develop in a way it sees as undesirable to itself.

powers, who were much in need of the Middle Eastern oil, and thus potentially prevent the rise of a challenger to its power. Theoretically too, he does justice to both aspects by postulating a dialectic of two externally-related preconceived logics at the intersection of which such imperial interventions take place (Harvey, 2003). This theoretical straitjacket, however, is predetermined and violently grafted onto actual history. Gowan does a fascinating job in bringing together every aspect of the American drive to achieve global primacy (Gowan 1999a). His presentation of American strategies and tactics to achieve this goal, as if every moment was intended, carefully planned, and implemented by the American state, however, is problematic. This is not and cannot be the case, even for the most powerful state in the world. Failures to predict important developments haunted American policy elites. Gowan (2006, p.133) further claims that '[t]he attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq were to be tactical means in a global strategy for global programmatic goals' and that '[t]he war on Afghanistan and then Iraq as well as the other campaigns against the axis of evil and the Palestinian armed resistance should thus be seen as steps towards the goal of asserting US disciplinary power at the global level', indicating that the real target was potential challengers of American power. As true as this may seem in the first instance, such a claim remains problematic as well. When put in such a perspective, every action of the United States can be seen as part of the US grand strategy, which may very well be true also, and would not be a problem in itself, if the question guiding the research was not the specific event of invasion of Iraq by the United States. At a deeper epistemological level, positing specific events as instances of a more general abstraction, one may lose sight of the very specificity of that event. Gowan's explanation, although extremely compelling, cannot bring together the grand strategy of the American state with this specific event without sacrificing its specificity. It is this bringing together the general and the particular that this section will attempt to do.

After the Cold War, the US was the only remaining superpower. The 'New World Order' it envisaged was also based on tying the conditions of reproduction of other states to its strategies of reproduction. In some ways, this was an extension of the relation between the US and Western European and Japanese states during the Cold War. In other ways, especially in that the US was now able to push forward its agenda more freely as the sole superpower, it was new. Throughout the Cold War, the US had successfully subjected other states in the capitalist world to take part in the world market by transforming their institutional configuration to embrace market relations. This neoliberal drive of opening markets went on apace with the incorporation of Russia and former communist states of Eastern Europe, and the deepening of the reach of US financial capital throughout the world during the Clinton

term. Although it is true that opening up the markets of other states has 'given continuity' to US foreign policy throughout the twentieth century (Dodge 2006, p.459; cf. N. Smith 2005, pp.11-12, 25-26), what needs accounting for is how this central thread of US foreign policy figured in the decision to invade Iraq. It is possible to see the invasion of Iraq in 2003 as part of this long-standing strategic goal with a 'tactical flexion', as Gowan does, but the issue is not that clear-cut. In any case, while this strategy was in place for a long time and Iraq remained recalcitrant, at least since the invasion of Kuwait, it was not the Bush Sr. or the Clinton government that resorted to the option of invasion. The wider strategy of maintaining primacy does not directly translate into foreign policy choices, and it is mediated by the strategic decisions of administrations. In the case of US foreign policy toward Iraq, this grand strategy manifested itself in the form of a containment and deterrence strategy during Clinton's two presidential terms.

The Baathist regime in Iraq had outlived its usefulness by the end of the Iran-Iraq war, during which it had helped the US to contain the revolutionary Iranian regime, and now became a nuisance for it. The US and coalition intervention in the first Gulf crisis aimed to prevent two interrelated results: a strong regional power that could threaten much-needed stability in the Middle East and challenge US primacy regionally, and Baathist hold over world oil prices. At the time, Saddam was extremely unhappy about the price of oil, which fluctuated around USD 20 a barrel. The US was very well aware of the potential effects of oil price volatility on international markets; however, starting from the 1970s, it had managed to institutionalise the recycling of petrodollars through American financial instruments, and later to make Gulf states compensate for any instabilities arising from the actions of other oil-producing countries. Throughout the 1990s, the US tried every means at its disposal to change the regime in Iraq and establish a friendly government who would contribute to stability in the region. The Clinton administration implemented a 'dual containment' strategy, which sought to prevent any expansion from both Iran and Iraq. In the meantime the US went on trying. It hoped that a sanction-stricken Saddam would lose his grip on power, yet he was able to turn the sanctions to his advantage, thanks to the immense levels of autonomy from wider social relations of the Iraqi state (Dodge 2006). Thus, although sanctions eroded Iraq's power-projecting capabilities in the region, they did not weaken Saddam's hold on power in Iraq, and even entrenched it (Dodge 2010). The US even supported military officers to stage a coup, but Saddam's penetrating internal intelligence uncovered the plot. The US also supported Iraqi exile groups in the US, hoping that they could organise the Iraqi opposition and one day even overthrow Saddam. In 1998, under the Clinton government, came the Iraqi Liberation Act, which officially

declared regime change as the strategic objective of US foreign policy toward Iraq. Moreover, throughout the 1990s, the US would hit Iraqi targets on several occasions, including following the alleged assassination attempt against Bush Sr. in 1993 and the hindrance of UNSCOM inspection work by the Iraqi government in 1998, hoping that this would undermine Saddam's grip on power, and pledged to work with Iraqi opposition forces until the change of regime (Weiner 1998). The Clinton Administration, however, did not go so far as to invade the country. Instead, it adopted a strategy of 'neoliberal incrementalism', something despised by the incumbent neoconservatives (N. Smith 2005, p. 20). Iraq had long been on Wolfowitz's agenda (Mann 2004, pp.80-81), and he was critical of Bush Sr. administration's unwillingness to march into Baghdad and oust Saddam Hussein (Daalder and Lindsay 2003a, pp.26-27). War came when the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the WTC buildings and the Pentagon created the opportunity (Gowan 2006). The assertive unilateralism of the Bush Administration, although aiming at the same strategic goal that the Clinton government had pursued throughout the 1990s working with other major powers as long as it suited its goals, believed it could impose whatever it wanted, and let it be known that negative responses would be unacceptable and attract the formidable military might of the US. War could now be seen not necessarily as an instrument of last resort, but an alternative that was constantly on the table.

The wider strategic goal of ensuring US leadership of the world through binding the conditions of reproduction of other states to its strategies of reproduction was largely inherited both by Bush Sr. and Clinton governments. It was in the making throughout the 20th century, partly institutionalised after the Second World War, and coming to fruition by the end of the Cold War, when the US became the sole remaining superpower. The administration of Bush Sr. responded to developments erratically, but it was never unaware of the opportunities that the fall of the Soviet Union would present; it was simply being prudent. The Clinton administration was freer to exercise American power and it did so, although its primary method was what Gowan (1999a) called 'economic statecraft'. The 1990s, consequently, saw a strengthening of the US vis-à-vis other centres of power. By the turn of the century, the US had managed to tie the conditions of reproduction not only of its allies, but also of its former rivals, to its own wider strategies of reproduction. The new government led by George W. Bush, both aware of the 'unprecedented... strength and influence' of the United States and worried about potential challengers, was bent on making the world 'not just safer but better' (NSS 2002). As the 2002 National Security Strategy Document amply demonstrates, the invasion of Iraq could achieve this aim in several ways. First of all, the American state showed the rest of the world that it could go it alone or with compact and *ad hoc* 'coalitions of the willing' (NSS 2002), by

disregarding vocal opposition not only from its traditional rivals China and Russia, but also from its traditional 'allies' France and Germany. Secondly, it demonstrated to the rest of the smaller powers with regional aspirations, also known in American government parlance as the 'rogue states', that they either had to be incorporated into the American-led capitalist order or be coercively compelled to do so (Dodge 2013, p.1191). Thirdly, and most importantly, it signalled an unending war, not only against 'terrorist networks', but also against a series of so-called 'harboring' states including Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran.<sup>19</sup> This was in line with the NSS 2002, which saw 'failing' and 'rogue' states as the greatest threat (NSS 2002) and declared sovereignty as something conditional upon the ability of these states to adapt themselves to the strategic goals outlined in the NSS 2002 (Dodge 2006).

Fourthly, in addition to these two 'demonstration effects' and the larger plan to reshape 'unfriendly' states so that they were also integrated into the American led capitalist order, the invasion and reconstruction of Iraq would pass control of a large percentage of the world's oil supply to the American state.<sup>20</sup> This would further enable the US to tie the conditions of reproduction of not only a new Iraqi regime and other Middle Eastern states, but also those of larger European and Asian states with the potential to challenge American leadership in the world, to its wider strategy of reproduction. Fifthly, the war on Iraq prevented a would-be regional superpower from emerging. Such a development would not only destabilise the region and the world oil market; it could also undermine American primacy in the world. A possible Iraqi control of all Gulf oil reserves would also destabilise the balance of power and this was something the 'Vulcans', particularly Wolfowitz, had been worried about since the late 1970s (Mann 2004, p.26-27). Sixthly, from the perspective of the US government, the Iraq question had to be resolved one way or another. Sanctions were taking their toll on the general population rather than hurting Saddam Hussein, and this was generating problems of legitimacy. Sanctions simply could not be imposed indefinitely. The American state had the resources, the capability and the will to end this problem once and for all and that was what it attempted to do as part of a larger campaign to change regimes in several other countries. What is of more significance, is that all these were planned within the framework of the notorious 'Rebuilding America's Defenses' document (PNAC 2000), prepared by a group of

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<sup>19</sup> In an interview conducted by Amy Goodman, US General Wesley Clark noted that he saw a memo from the Department of Defense enumerating the states on the hitlist of the US Government along with Iraq.

<sup>20</sup> It must be noted here again that the US was not primarily interested in loosening the pressure of its energy dependency, contrary to claims by radical or left-liberal pundits. Acquiring the needed oil from Iraq through the market would cost much less political and economic capital than through an invasion. See Mercille (2010). Cf. Dodge (2006) and N. Smith (2005, p.24).



neo-conservatives, who aptly called their think-tank The Project for the New American Century and of whom many would later assume key positions in the Bush Administration. The PNAC echoed many of the recommendations of the 1992 DPG document, including the necessity to preclude the rise of any rival to the US by establishing a 'full spectrum dominance', as formulated in the 2000 'Joint Vision 2020' Defense Department Document, including in space and cyberspace. All these recommendations were reflected in the NSS 2002 document, and the first stage of implementation was the invasion of Iraq.

In short, although the central thread of the US grand strategy had long been to expand and maintain US primacy in an integrated world market, it was not until the end of the Cold War that neoconservatism, in the making for a while, could make its presence felt in the formulation of US foreign policy and grand strategy. Furthermore, only when the Clinton administration was replaced by the Bush administration, could they assume key positions in the government. While maintaining American primacy through tying the conditions of reproduction of other states to its wider strategy of reproduction continued to be the main strategy of the American state, capitalising on the window of opportunity opened by the 9/11 attacks, the new Bush administration set out to implement the blueprints provided in the neoconservative 1992 DPG and 2000 PNAC documents. Regime change in Iraq was therefore intended to be a first step in the attempt to establish full spectrum dominance, based on American pre-eminence at every military venue, as well as the continuing financial power of the American state and capital.

### 3.6. Conclusion

This chapter was intended to constitute one part of a three-part illustration of the theoretical points made in the preceding chapter. I argued in the preceding chapter that every research question in itself provides an immediate definition of its context, including relevant agents, relevant units and levels of analysis, and relevant spatial and temporal sections of reality. This immediacy provides insight into widespread abstractions about the issue that the question raises. This chapter, therefore, started from challenging these abstractions in terms of all these aspects. First of all, the temporal section of reality that was generally abstracted in the literature was the period from 9 September 2001 to March 2003, although the roots of the decision required us to go back to 1989, and then to the 'formative moments' of the American grand strategy, and trace the development of conditions that finally led to the event in 2003. The temporal abstraction I made here reflected the relational abstractions made practically by a series of agents, but primarily the American and Iraqi states, through the consequences of their contradictory strategies of reproduction. Secondly, the spatial abstractions in the

literature consisted almost exclusively of a very tiny locality: White House, Capitol Hill or Washington. Although this may constitute a starting point, the American state's spatial strategy covers the whole world and this chapter reflected this spatial abstraction by focusing on regions such as the Middle East, East Asia, Western Europe, former territories of Yugoslavia and Somalia, insofar as these were the spaces that the United States directly acted upon, or its actions partially determined by, throughout the time period in question. Thirdly, the level of analysis was determined practically; accordingly when the matter at hand was, for example, the Plaza Accord, the level of analysis moved from and to the international order and state levels, and when it was financialisation in the US, it focused on the policies of the Federal Reserve, the American state, private finance capital and manufacturing capital. Fourthly, and following from the third, the unit of analysis changed along with the level of analysis. Fifthly, in contrast to the literature on the topic, which mostly takes George W. Bush, his government, or certain individuals in the government as the primary agent, the main agent in the present chapter has been the American state, essentially because it was never seriously challenged in its decisions by any other social power capable of providing considerable input to the decision.<sup>21</sup> While there is a comprehensive literature on the age-long evolution of the role of the American state in the world providing good empirical accounts of aspects of this historical evolution, what is missing is the theoretical dynamism that a dialectical perspective offers. At any rate, although there is significant correspondence between approaches with preconceived theoretical frameworks or models and the case at hand, this is less due to the ability of their frameworks, but to the sharp skills of observation and analytical competence of their respective authors. Regardless of preconceived frameworks, dialectic offers a 'kaleidoscopic' view of complexity, moving from vantage point to vantage point. Accordingly, when there were significant differences between different administrations, the agent analysed was the specific administration in question. However, when second order questions other than the primary question of this chapter (concerning the invasion of Iraq) were addressed, other agents and their relations with the American state were also evaluated.

This last point is crucial for the central theoretical premise of this research. Reflecting how the world appeared to the United States and how it acted upon its abstractions of this world, this chapter still remains a one-sided representation of the aspect of reality in question from the vantage point of the American state. The next two chapters will serve to complement the picture, by presenting the subject matter from the vantage point of the Turkish and Iraqi states,

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<sup>21</sup> The lack of any domestic challenge in the 1990s can be attributed to the availability of credit for all, including corporations, individuals and the state, and the secular growth of the American economy in this period.

with the aim of reproducing a concrete picture of the whole episode, but before that, the specific significance of the US must be emphasised in illustrating the integrated character of foreign policy and international relations in the actions of states. The US is specifically important because of its unique position in the world, which allows it to easily move back and forth between really abstracted domestic and international spheres. As demonstrated throughout the chapters, the American state has the unique ability to change the course of events by simply enacting a law in its national legislative organs, raising or cutting its interest rates, etc. Moreover, almost all foreign policy decisions of the American state have both immediate and long-term effects on what mainstream IR calls the 'the international system'. Although this chapter is not enough by itself to illustrate the theoretical argument, the unique position of the American state provides a significant insight into it.

## 4. TURKEY AND THE IRAQ WAR OF 2003: TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

### 4.1. Introduction

As the second leg of a three-chapter illustration of the theoretical argument advanced in Chapter 2, this chapter examines the decision of Turkey to deny passage and basing rights to the invading troops of the United States as well as to refuse a troop contribution to the notorious ‘coalition of the willing’ to see how this decision was made as the inter-subjective consequence of the asynchronous and contradictory praxes of a diverse group of agents. 1 March 2003, the day when the Turkish Parliament made this decision, has been commonly seen as a turning point in Turkish foreign policy in general and in Turkish-American relations in particular (Bila 2004; Hale 2007). When the motion was brought to the parliament floor, officially titled Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, or Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), authorising the government to decide whether and under what conditions it would allow the US to use its territory, bases, and airspace, it was rejected on a widely debated technicality. Of 550 MPs eligible to vote (360 of them members of the governing Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or Justice and Development Party (JDP), 178 members of the opposition Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or Republican People’s Party (RPP), and 9 independents), 533 of them cast their vote. When the vote count ended, then speaker of parliament, Bülent Arınç, who himself was against the resolution, announced the result: 264 ayes, 250 nays and 19 abstentions, along with 17 absences. Technically speaking, this was not an outright rejection. The TGNA charter stipulates that a decision requires the support of a majority of those present, that is, in this case, 267 votes for or against the resolution, meaning the resolution fell short of approval by three votes only. In the case of any other motion, the speaker of the parliament would, considering his links to the government<sup>1</sup>, reschedule the voting, or the government would bring it to the parliament once again. Instead, Arınç quickly announced the rejection of the motion and the government shelved it without much ado.

Successive American governments since the Korean War had taken for granted Turkish support in each and every world political issue, and the Bush government was doing likewise in its negotiations with Turkey. This expectation that Turkey would always side with the US was so entrenched in American foreign policy circles that a report in *The Observer* titled ‘Inside the Pentagon’ noted that although the American state shifted from a strategy of collective security

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<sup>1</sup> Then speaker of the parliament, Bülent Arınç, was one of the three leading founders of JDP, along with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül.

with fixed alliances in the NATO framework to *ad hoc* 'coalition[s] of the willing', at the centre of these new shifting coalitions, 'where all the circles overlap', three countries remained unchanged: 'US, Britain, and Turkey' (cited in Wood 2005, p.145). How, then, are we to explain the wafer-thin rejection of the motion in the TGNA, the apparent indecisiveness of various political power centres within the Turkish state in early 2003, and the ensuing break with five decades of near-automatic pro-US Turkish foreign policy alignments?

The argument of this chapter is that this decision must be put into its concrete context, which could be described in terms of an unstable socio-political equilibrium, as much of the contemporary commentary and later scholarly FPA and IR analyses suggest. However, this chapter, in contrast to this dominant ahistorical tendency in the literature, re-historicises this more immediate context of decision-making by placing it in the wider trajectory of Imperial and Republican state-formation. Through this move, the chapter demonstrates that the accumulated institutional and socio-political consequences of the twentieth century Ottoman-Turkish history generated a situation in which the absence of strong leadership over the issue of the US request appears less an explanation by default, but as a specific act of calculated party-political diplomacy rather than state failure. Therefore, the subjective indecisiveness of political actors is re-anchored in a specific conjuncture, which was exploited, if by inaction, to enable the survival of the governing JDP. In short, the apparent passivity of key policy-makers and power-blocs within the state in the run-up to the March 2003 vote should be re-read as the active and conscious grasping of a very uneasy and fragile political stand-off, brewing since the end of the Cold War, between the secularist military establishment and new social forces, represented by the newly elected JDP. This led to the delegation – highly unusual by Turkish standards – of the decision to the Parliament, a tactic that enabled ultimately the survival and consolidation of the JDP in government. In other words, the ultimate explanatory locus for the break with US demands has to be sought in the history of domestic Turkish politics that framed the decision-making context. More specifically, although unwilling to cooperate with the US over the invasion of Iraq, the JDP, due to strong existential challenges to its rule, still took the motion to parliament in the hope of securing the grace and support of the US government as well as not alienating the all-powerful military and its institutional allies in the high judiciary and bureaucracy, resulting in the rejection of the motion in the parliament over a technicality.

As will be seen below, the literature on this specific episode of Turkish foreign policy is based on either a variety of existing theoretical models of foreign policy analysis or conventional modes of analyses of various mainstream IR approaches, all of which fail to account for or take for granted the institutional equilibrium that generated the deadlock in the months leading to

the invasion. They treat the real abstract qualities of the Turkish state, particularly the sway of the military, as the real concrete nature of it. On the contrary, I argue that the role the military came to play at the time of the decision is the contradictory and unintended result of the social struggles of a set of actors, including fractions of the capitalist class, urban working classes, and their alliances with the military-bureaucratic establishment or elected and appointed officials as well as with other states. This role cannot be appreciated sufficiently without a historical unpacking of the processes that led to the entrenchment of the military order in Turkey in the 1990s and the constitution of the military-bureaucratic establishment as the central actor of the Turkish state starting from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This historical unpacking will serve to demonstrate that the unintended consequences of the contradictory practices of reproduction of a set of social forces put the military-bureaucratic establishment in a crucial role in the formation of the Turkish state, a role it would jealously embrace until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the end, none of these social forces achieved their aims; instead, the nascent military-bureaucratic cadres emerged as the locus of power representing the dialectical outcome of these 19<sup>th</sup> century social struggles. Furthermore, it will demonstrate how religion, having been relegated to the individual lives of the rural masses, came to dominate the political scene starting from the 1970s, and increasingly in the 1990s, as an unintended consequence of the clash of different reproductive strategies of the working and capitalist classes, and particularly as a result of attempts by the military-bureaucratic establishment to ward off the so-called communist threat. The combination of the anti-Kurdish, anti-left, and pro-US stance of the military establishment further entrenched the position of the military in the 1990s. Having thwarted the communist threat and marginalised the Kurdish threat, the military's only contender became the Islamists who capitalised on public discontent with the economy, with the subordination of religion to secularism and with the perceived failures of the state as a whole to deliver social and economic goods. These, in turn, will make it possible to understand why and how the military and the JDP did what they did in early 2003 when the US government expected a response from Turkey. Both the hesitation of the military and the lack of strong commitment in the governing JDP are the result of the long-term historical development of the Turkish state and the specific ways these institutionalised manifestations of social forces responded to these developments.

To do this, I will roughly follow the same steps as in the preceding chapter. The next section will summarise the limited literature on this specific episode of Turkish foreign policy and point at its shortcomings. The following section will provide a snapshot of the world-political conjuncture from the vantage point of the Turkish state and particularly the governing JDP and

the military-bureaucratic establishment as the primary agents involved at the time of the decision. The fourth section, then, will historicise aspects of this picture in the historical development of the Turkish state and its foreign policy tradition. As the central section of this chapter, the fourth section will first argue that the emergence of the military-bureaucratic rule was the unintended consequence of the reproductive strategies of the Ottoman Palace which sought to respond to the challenge posed by the European great powers and the local notables. Having inherited this institutional configuration, the Republic continued to establish the military-bureaucratic elite as the sole locus of rule; even the nascent capitalist class could exert power only insofar as they were incorporated into this regime. Entrenching itself as the sole source of power in the 1990s, the establishment faced its latest challenge from the Islamists. Finally, in the fifth section I will place this seemingly counter-intuitive foreign policy decision into its theoretical and historical context, and show how this specific moment in Turkish history unfolded as the differently situated and motivated agents responded to what appeared to them as external structures.

#### 4.2. Decision or Indecision? Contending Explanations

As was the case with the US decision to invade Iraq, Turkey's decision to deny passage to American forces attracted little attention from academics<sup>2</sup> and the best accounts of this episode of Turkish foreign policy remain journalistic,<sup>3</sup> although it was commonly referred to as a turning point in the orientation of Turkish foreign policy. Some analyses provided catalogues of reasons as to why the motion was rejected (Bal 2004). Many accounts limited themselves to the immediate temporal and spatial context of the. Rubin (2005 p.71), for instance, argued that the result of the vote was caused by 'a combination of AKP disorganization, internal political machinations, and misguided American diplomacy'. Kapsis (2006) provided a similar explanation adding internal divisions and confusion within the general staff. These accounts generally reflected the Report for Congress by the Middle East specialist Carol Migdalovitz (2003), who cited the 'inexperienced leadership' of the governing AKP, 'competing influences'

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<sup>2</sup> This holds even more for this case than in the American decision to invade Iraq. This may in part be because of a lack of willingness on the part of the current government to declassify the minutes of the parliamentary debates on the issue. The problem of access to primary sources in studying recent developments remains a significant challenge for students of FPA across the board (Kapsis 2006).

<sup>3</sup> By far the most comprehensive and impartial story of the period is told in Yetkin (2004), which provides an excellent starting point. Among other journalistic accounts are Bila (2007), which relates the debates revolving around the issue to the wider power struggles in Turkish politics, and Mahalli (2006), which offers a highly opinionated and moralistic story of the event. The memoirs of the ultra-nationalist Bölükbaşı (2008), who served as the chief negotiator at the time, provide an insight into the inner workings of the foreign policy bureaucracy and the government during the negotiations with the American representatives.

and the strong public opposition to the bill as the source of the rejection (cf. Robins 2007). In this sense, they also reflected the American reception of this development.

Among FPA-oriented analyses of the decision, Kesgin and Kaarbo (2010) raise the question of the influence of parliaments over foreign policy decision-making in parliamentary democracies. Rather than accounting for the decision itself, they focus on the puzzling role of the parliament in blocking the motion, and they test whether and how parliaments (in the abstract) are influential in foreign policy decision-making. Their explanation consists of an eclectic blend of abstractly formulated 'factors' such as 'leadership, intraparty politics', and public pressure, in addition to the influence of the parliament. In line with this eclectic predetermined model, their explanation rests on the division within the governing AKP, and the ensuing lack of strong leadership as the cause of parliamentary influence over this specific foreign policy decision.

Ozdamar and Taydas (2012), in turn, utilise Herman's (2001) 'decision-units framework' in order to capture the complexity of the case. Herman's framework, in their view, provides a more comprehensive approach than other foreign policy models in that it can employ a combination of individual models in an eclectic manner. This way, they believe, the theoretical framework can match the dynamic nature of reality. Although the question they raise concerns the reasons for the decision in question, their answer attributes the indecision to the absence of strong leadership. Instead of examining the practical problem, they look for the predetermined limits of the possible (Ozdamar and Taydas 2012, p.16) in an otherwise good empirical discussion. They seek to place the historically specific act of the decision into preordained theoretical pigeonholes and when the actual reality does not fit into those categories, they explain this with reference to the *absence* of something.

As was the case with the analyses of the US decision to invade Iraq, FPA models derive their abstractions not from really existing social relations, but from extant decision-making models and frameworks. As a result, they fail to overcome the usual problems of FPA, although they seek to provide more comprehensive and more eclectic models with more variables. This effort, however, does not produce a more integrated account of the subject matter; rather it leads to a reproduction of the problems that haunted behaviouralists in the mid-twentieth century, namely, endless typologies trying to cover all possibilities. Even then, they all refer to 'divided leadership' as the primary reason why the Turkish state rejected American request to use its territory and bases in its war against Iraq. This demonstrates that FPA remains short-sighted, in that it cannot see beyond the immediate agential, spatial and temporal context of the decision.



IR approaches fare no better in accounting for the Turkish reaction. A realist evaluation of the incident referred to 'soft-balancing' as a regulatory rule governing the relations of two states with unmatched capabilities where Turkey, unable to balance American power in terms of conventional power capabilities and unwilling to bandwagon, went for the option of soft-balancing (Yesiltas 2009). While liberals with economic concerns supported the motion, worried about the financial and economic ramifications of a possible rejection, those with human rights concerns strongly opposed it along with almost all other NGOs (Ozkazanc 2005). Interestingly enough, identity-based accounts similarly emphasised the absence of strong leadership and internal divisions within the AKP leadership as the primary determinant of the (in)decision. Kardaş (2006), for instance, claimed that although the AKP leadership purported to follow an interest-based, pragmatic approach to foreign policy, they were unable to 'escape' from identity-based concerns in the end. The AKP's seeming pragmatism, in short, gave way to ideational determinants, underlying the final indecision and the internal division of the government (Kardaş 2006, p.326). In a traditionally constructivist manner, however, Kardaş abstracts what he sees as ideational from interest-based concerns, and counterposes these as opposites.

Notwithstanding the diversity of their theoretical frameworks and empirical emphases, all these explanations shared the claim that it was the division in, or even the absence of, leadership that caused the failure of the motion. As noted in the preceding chapters, this convergence in different approaches is an indication of a common failure in the literature, namely faulty abstractions. The most common manifestation of these faulty abstractions is the tendency to limit one's examination of events to their immediate spatial, temporal and agential environment. The accompanying tendency to examine historical developments with reference to a set of predetermined categories further undermines the existing analyses. To make up for these problems, this chapter will place this episode of Turkish foreign policy into its wider spatiotemporal and agential context by reconstructing the history of the formation of the specific configuration of social relations of power and reproduction that was in place in the early 2000s. Before doing this, however, a snapshot of the immediate context of decision is in order, so that we know what to trace in history.

### **4.3. The World as it Appeared to the JDP Government and the Turkish State: Turkey in Transition**

The November 2002 elections broke a cycle of weak coalition governments that had dominated the political scene of Turkey in the 1990s, and brought the moderate Islamist JDP to power with a landslide victory. While this might be seen as a sign of coming years of

stability, things were not that smooth, neither for the governing JDP nor for the country as a whole. The leader of the JDP, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, had been barred from active politics for reciting a poem which was hardly subtle in its Islamist tones, in addition to being imprisoned for ‘enticing hatred and enmity’.<sup>4</sup> The new government, moreover, had to oversee the recovery of the country from the worst financial crisis in its history, following the prescription of the IMF-blessed senior World Bank technocrat Kemal Derviş.

The secularist-nationalist establishment posed the biggest challenge, however. The establishment consisted of the military represented by the General Staff, high judiciary including the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeals (*Yargıtay*), the Council of State (*Danıştay*), the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (*Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu* – HSYK), the Presidency, the National Intelligence Organisation (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı* – MİT), the Council of Higher Education (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu* – YÖK), the Radio and Television Supreme Council (*Radio-Televizyon Üst Kurulu* – RTÜK), media tycoons, big capital, and shady networks of individuals who represented what came to be called the ‘deep state’, or ‘state within the state’. The JDP was fearful of what these institutions were capable of, and the historical record suggested that it had every reason to be worried. The military had deposed four governments in the previous four decades: the 1960 military coup, the 1971 coup by memorandum, the 1980 military coup, and finally the 1997 ‘postmodern coup’. This last instance demonstrated that the military was able to utilise other means than direct takeover when it perceived a threat to the secular character of the Republic. Throughout the 1990s, the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu* – NSC) acted as the conduit through which the military imposed its will on elected officials. Although the primary threat came from the military, the JDP leadership were acutely aware of the capabilities of other establishment institutions. The Constitutional Court, for example, was no less heavy-handed when it came to ‘protecting the Republic’. It had turned the country, in the words of the current chairman of the Court, Haşim Kılıç, ‘into a graveyard of [political] parties’ having closed 25 of them (mostly pro-Kurdish or Islamist) by 2000 (*Radikal* 2013). The Presidency was endowed with powers to dissolve the parliament, to appoint a significant number of members to judicial and supervisory boards, to veto resolutions passed by the parliament and to take these resolutions to the Constitutional Court or to referendum. Other institutions served diverse functions, all

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<sup>4</sup> He could lead his party as the Prime Minister only after he was elected an MP when the results for a southeastern province, Siirt, were contested and cancelled due to irregularities and the Supreme Electoral Council held a by-election on March 9th. By then, however, the motion had already failed. This means that the JDP indeed lacked strong leadership, as the leader of the party was barred from politics at the time. This lends a degree of empirical credence to the mainstream accounts of the indecision, although is not in itself a sufficient explanation.

intended to keep a tight leash on elected governments. While YÖK served to discipline academics and students, RTÜK did the same in the case of TV and radio stations. RTÜK was not the only constraint over the press, however. Large media conglomerates either self-censored for fear of reprimand, actively ruled by boards staffed with actively serving or retired generals, or served the interests of the establishment to win lucrative contracts for their enterprises in other areas.<sup>5</sup>

The legacy of the Kemalist state, moreover, haunted the JDP government with a series of thorny issues of domestic and foreign policy, ranging from the Cyprus problem to historical matters such as the long-denied Armenian genocide and a low-intensity warfare with the PKK, or Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan). The Kemalist establishment who controlled the most of the policy-making devices of the state knew no strategy other than a paradigm of national security squarely based on a very strict notion of national interest: stay under the Western security umbrella and pursue the most immediate traditional territorial and economic security concerns. Throughout the 1990s, in the context of a post-Cold War setting, this traditionalist view of national interest resulted in the isolation of Turkey with Europe sceptical about the prospects of its Cold War alliance with Turkey, Arab countries suspicious of Turkey's close relations with Israel and the US, and the US unsure regarding the potential use of Turkey in a new world order, following Turkey's loss of its Cold War geopolitical value. Relations with Greece were at best sour because of on-going territorial waters and airspace disputes. The border with Armenia, which had been closed since the Nagorno-Karabakh war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, was still closed and Turkish-Armenian relations kept deteriorating in the shadow of the historical debate as to whether the mass killing and deportation of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during WWI amounted to genocide. To the southeast, Iran constituted a double challenge to the Kemalist Republic, both as an aspirant regional hegemon and as a model for the supporters of an Islamic theocracy. Furthermore, the Kurdish question had fast become internationalised during the 1990s, and the first steps towards an autonomous Kurdistan were taken (Robins 2003, p.312ff) generating problems both with Iraq and Syria. The issue of the volume of water to be released by Turkey from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers also occasionally increased tension between Turkey and these two countries. Turkey, in a word, was 'surrounded by enemies on four sides' as

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<sup>5</sup> A recent interview with a former media boss, Cem Uzan, revealed that Hurşit Tolon, former chief of general staff who has recently been sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment, determined the headlines of a major national newspaper in the late 1990s. Veteran columnist Yavuz Baydar evaluates the interview in English: Yavuz Baydar, 'Confessions of a fugitive media mogul', *Today's Zaman* [Daily], 08 October 2013, available from <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/null-328459-confessions-of-a-fugitive-media-mogul.html>.

Kemalists would love to claim, and the primary motive of all these enemies was to carve up some territory from Turkey for themselves. This existential paranoia was legitimised with reference to the 1920 Treaty of Sévres, which stipulated the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Although the treaty was never implemented, it left a persistent scar on the collective psyche of the Turkish people, primarily because of continuous efforts by the Kemalist regime to keep this paranoia alive (Oran 2010, pp.667-68). This national security approach found its reflection in relations between Turkey's socio-political forces leading some Western diplomats to call Turkey 'the last Stalinist regime' in Europe in the late 1990s (Robins 2003, p.13). The practical expression of this approach was repressive policies against the citizenry. To the establishment the main internal threat to the Republic came from the Kurds and the Islamists.

It is under these circumstances that Erdoğan and the JDP came to power in late 2002 and were faced with the US request as the first foreign policy crisis to be defused and the 1 March vote took place in this context. The President and the General Staff, both staunchly secularist republicans, did not make it any easier for the government and refrained from publicly supporting the cabinet position. Alone against the full power of the American state, the government reluctantly brought the motion to parliament floor. To fully account for the positions taken in the months leading to the parliamentary vote on the so-called 1 March Permit, this institutional configuration must be analysed in detail, and its historical roots and evolution must be laid bare.

#### **4.4. The Formation of the Turkish State Complex and the Strategies of Reproduction of Social Forces**

##### **4.4.1. The Social-Historical Sources of the Power of the Turkish Military-Bureaucratic Establishment**

As noted in the previous chapter, the collapse of the communist bloc caught everyone unprepared and Turkey was no exception. Integrating itself into the capitalist order in the aftermath of WWII, Turkey enjoyed the security provided by NATO and the US throughout the Cold War. As the Soviet Union dismantled itself piece-by-piece, Turkey's increasing sense of isolation was due to the recognition that it could not anymore serve as the southern flank of NATO (Robins 2003). No longer of such geopolitical value for the US, Turkey had to reorient the main pillars of its foreign policy, which had been in the making since late Ottoman times and institutionalised after WW II.

Anyone studying Turkish politics or foreign policy can immediately discern the role the military and bureaucracy have come to play (e.g. Ahmad 1993). The origins of this elevated role of state bureaucracy can be accounted for with reference to the social relations of reproduction

in the late Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state reproduced itself primarily on three bases: direct extraction of surplus from independent agricultural producers through its functionaries, territorial expansion, and control over long-distance trade routes (Keyder 1987, p.14). The loss of control over long-distance trade as a result of European discoveries of alternative trade routes was accompanied by the loss of access to agricultural taxes to the *ayans* (the local notables); the central authority was now dependent on the *ayans* both for purposes of taxation and for troops (Zürcher 2004). Autonomy of the *ayans* reached such proportions that Mohammad Ali, the former Roumelia *ayan* and later the *wali* (governor) of Egypt, defeated the Imperial army several times and, had it not been for intervention by the Great Powers, could possibly have seized the capital. At the same time, the inability to raise taxes to feed its huge military crippled the ability of the state to expand territorially. The failed siege of Vienna in 1683 had already demonstrated the limits of territorial expansion as a strategy of reproduction. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became obvious that the Ottoman military was no match for the armies and navies of the major European Powers. Both to match the geopolitical challenge and to curb the power of the *ayans*, the Ottoman Palace tried to reform the military, which by resulting in a series of reforms around the military, also served to create a new group of bureaucrats and state functionaries.

Combined with the reformed military, this new class of functionaries constituted a strong social force in the Empire, and they were able to force Sultan Abdülhamid to declare a constitutional monarchy, temporarily as it turned out, in 1876, consolidating their position gradually as a ruling elite. In the meantime, the disparity between the Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers reached unbridgeable levels. Indeed, the Empire could have collapsed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had it not been for the British balancing strategy against Russia and France, and the Palace successfully exploited this (Hale 2000, pp.18-21). The Western-oriented military-bureaucratic elite finally acquired full control of the state in 1908, turning the once-absolute rule of the Sultan into a ceremonial monarchy that now functioned as a legitimisation mechanism. In brief, the central role the military-bureaucratic elite would come to play in Turkish politics was an unwitting result of the interplay of a set of contradictory praxes by a series of actors including the *ayans*, the Palace, the Great Powers, the peasantry and the tradesmen, all of whom acted with different purposes in mind.

The Republican regime inherited this institutional configuration, and when the sultanate and the caliphate were abolished along with the conservative segments of the bureaucracy, the military-bureaucratic class acquired unchallenged dominance. This enabled the state to propagate nationalism as the unifying ideology of the society instead of religion, albeit with

limited success; the introduction of Western mores did not penetrate sufficiently into the daily life of the nascent citizenry, driving a wedge between rural and urban populations. Religion would remain a strong undercurrent regulating and informing the way social relations were conducted. Both religious and Kurdish opposition were liquidated in a series of bloody purges and massacres. The central state continued to extract the surplus of direct producers without any alternative power centres in the provinces. Liberal development strategies of the 1920s were designed to create an indigenous (read Turkish-Muslim) capitalist class to replace deported, massacred or emigrated minorities who had steered the financial system and the Empire's external trade, albeit under state bureaucracy control. In this period of primitive accumulation, the state transferred public wealth to private individuals, provided cheap credit to entrepreneurs, and encouraged foreign direct investment in cooperation with a Turkish partner, provided no political demands were attached (Boratav 1981, p.168).<sup>6</sup> The result was a 'politically strengthened' party-state 'combating rival principles of social cohesion, while allowing development of the market' (Keyder 1987, p.90). State control over the new entrepreneurs continued in the étatist 1930s, although the position of the industrialists improved remarkably, with wages suppressed continuously. Yet they could not consolidate their position in a way that would enable them to challenge the military-bureaucratic class (Aydın 2005, p.27). Indeed the state entered the market with state economic enterprises, but only in areas where private investment was not possible. The net result of the reproductive strategies of the late Ottoman and the early Republican Turkish state was the new developmental state with Western-oriented and secularist, yet inward-looking and ultranationalist, military-bureaucratic cadres dominating not only foreign policy-making, but also the whole of socioeconomic life. Furthermore, Islamic religion was side-lined and reduced to a cultural element of rural life. This way, the socio-historical seeds of the institutional configuration we observe at the time of the 2003 decision were sown, with the military-bureaucratic elites successfully barring any entry of newly-emerging and extant social forces to the mechanisms of rule.

The integration of Turkey into the American-led capitalist order also served the consolidation of the military-bureaucratic rule, although it was a painful process. The Republic had inherited the strategy of reproduction of the Empire in its external relations, and tried to balance the influences of the Great Powers. Relations with the Soviet Union, who helped the Republic in its

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<sup>6</sup> This period was liberal not in the sense that the state did not interfere in the economy; it was liberal in that the state was not directly active in the processes of capital accumulation.

War of Independence and in its economic planning, were good.<sup>7</sup> The claims advanced by Stalin over Turkish territory and the Straits, however, overshadowed these friendly relations.<sup>8</sup> Turkey's neutrality in WWII had isolated the country internationally, and the state at the time was desperate to build an alliance with the Western bloc. The Truman Doctrine was the first confirmation of the incorporation of Turkey to the anti-communist bloc, and it was followed by the inclusion of Turkey in the Marshall Plan (officially European Recovery Program) and later the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). The country also joined the IMF and the World Bank in 1947 and pledged to liberalise its economy. Funds delivered to Turkey were primarily used to modernise the military in case of Soviet attack. This was not a total relief for the Turkish state, however, as Turkey was keen to secure American commitment to its security against a possible intervention by the Soviet Union, and the government thought this was possible only through full membership of NATO. At pains to join the alliance, Turkey sent a brigade to Korea in 1950 to fight alongside the allied forces in the Korean War. It was even ready to change its single-party political system to a multi-party one, and in 1946 Turkey had its first general multi-party elections, which, despite widespread irregularities detrimental to the newly-founded Democratic Party, (DP) resulted in its dealing a humiliating blow to the governing RPP. Both pressure from the US and the World Bank, and opposition from the Democratic Party between 1946 and 1950 had already pushed the RPP to veer from protectionism towards further liberalisation. Widespread discontent among the population because of the state's repressive policies and its condescending view of the religious masses, very high levels of inflation during the war and the perception of instability in the business environment among the capitalists due to the notorious Wealth Tax of 1942,<sup>9</sup> brought the DP to power in 1950. If the first steps of integration into the American-led capitalist order were taken between 1945 and 1950 by the RPP (Yalman 2009, p.198), further incorporation into this order took place under the DP. Mechanisation of agricultural production created a surplus of labour who were granted new lands by the government. It also enabled the peasantry, who continued to be families of independent producers, to send family members to the cities to work as wage labourers. The second half of the decade saw a return to protectionist measures (Keyder 1987, p.134).<sup>10</sup> Intent on keeping the economy growing, the DP government sought to provide external financing in the form of aid and loans. Economic difficulties and increasing

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<sup>7</sup> Turkey received extensive support from the Soviet Union in sketching and implementing the First 5-Year Development Plan in the form of expertise, machinery, etc.

<sup>8</sup> On whether Stalin's threats were genuine see Leffler (1985); and Mark (2005).

<sup>9</sup> The Wealth Tax was introduced to further nationalise/Turkify the economy by eliminating the influence of minorities (Aktar 2000).

<sup>10</sup> In any case, Turkey had never completely abandoned étatism or protectionism, even in the liberalised period of 1950-3, despite increasing pressure from the IMF, WB and US (Yalman 2009, p.202-10).

authoritarianism planted the seeds of discontent among the population, but this discontent could not translate itself into electoral reaction as the democratic process was interrupted by the military in 1960. While the establishment had lost political rule to the more conservative DP, the DP never challenged the main parameters of its wider position as the final arbiter of strategic decisions regarding the social organisation and foreign policy orientation of Turkey. The post-war period, in short, saw the integration of Turkey into the American-led capitalist order under the aegis of the all-powerful military-bureaucratic establishment, who consolidated its rule both through a military coup and a new constitution, and through its newly-forged alliance with the US.

In the liberal and relatively prosperous atmosphere created by the 1961 Constitution, socialist student movements and the labour movement flourished. They took up arms, and civil strife spread across the country. In response, the military staged another coup (by memorandum), and three revolutionaries were executed. In the meantime, under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, the National Order Party emerged in 1970 as the first Islamist party to represent those small Anatolian capitalists who were alienated by the import-substituting industrialisation (ISI) strategy that favoured big industrial capital (Gülalp 2001), and left out of government mechanisms (Buğra 1998, p.525).

If the years following the 1960 military coup saw high growth rates and across-the-board prosperity, they were also marked by a continuous escalation of class conflict (Yalman 2009, p.214). The successes of the ISI strategy were undone when the 1973 world oil crisis hit Turkey, especially after the Turkish invasion of the northern half of Cyprus in 1974 due to the ensuing embargo by the US. Increasing upward pressure on labour costs among other things rendered the ISI strategy unsustainable. A network of military personnel, ultranationalist paramilitaries (known as the Grey Wolves), members of the judiciary and other elements in the state constituted what is commonly called the 'deep state', whose main task was to take illegal measures to combat the left. Armed conflict cost a growing number of lives and contributed to the instability of the country. Finally on 12 September 1980 the military staged another coup, citing the inability of elected officials to ensure stability. The coup and the emergence of the 'deep state' helped the military-bureaucratic establishment to thwart the challenge to its exclusive rule from the working classes and revolutionary movements.

The decade following the 1980 military coup was characterised by a full frontal class attack on the workers in order to 'restructure the state' and eliminate class struggle from the political scene (Yalman 2009, p.298-99). One aspect of this policy to counterbalance left-wing tendencies was strengthening the role of religion in social relations, which would give rise to



the re-entry of Islamic parties to the political arena in the 1990s. In the meantime, the Kurdish national movement, which acted in unison with the Turkish socialist left in the 1970s, was the only remaining contender of the new rule, not least because they were subjected to the most horrendous forms of torture at the hands of the military regime. Reformed as a national liberation movement after the coup, the Kurdish left increasingly established itself as a formidable opponent of central Turkish rule, and in 1984 the PKK began its armed campaign. The state responded with a scorched-earth strategy to root out the organisation, including the use of criminal gangs who had been members of the deep state in the 1970s. To increase the level of penetration into and control over society, the military junta established or restructured many of the institutions (see Section 3 above) that would go on to have extensive political influence throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. These helped the military-bureaucratic establishment not only to consolidate its rule, but also to institutionalise it so that it did not have to directly intervene in politics. In the meantime, it unwittingly helped create the next contender to its rule, i.e. the Islamists.

For all the attempts by the military junta to institutionalise its reign over society, its rule was contested, albeit not openly. In 1983, in the first general elections after the coup, none of the parties established or supported by the military gathered the votes necessary to form a government. A third party, Turgut Özal's economically liberal, social conservative centre-right Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi – MP), won the elections by a comfortable margin. Although Özal was a trusted bureaucrat who had masterminded the pre-coup stabilisation policies and had been tasked with economic affairs by the junta, the generals had in mind a bipartisan system with the two parties they created. In any case, however, the junta gave Özal a free hand to restructure the economy along neoliberal lines, while it continued to ensure political stability by crushing any opposition. In return, Özal tolerated or overlooked the illegal activities of the deep state, who now controlled gambling, drug-trafficking, money-laundering and other organised crime activities. Having crushed labour, the Özal government pursued an export-oriented growth strategy throughout the 1980s that it hoped would resolve the balance of payments crisis of the late 1970s. Across-the-board incentives for exporters were provided, although larger capitalists would have preferred a more selective implementation, and 'phantom exports' soared as entrepreneurs moved to get their 'fair share' of the incentives. Although the export-oriented growth strategy was hailed as the 'Turkish miracle', it failed to produce the declared aims of the programme. The single most important positive outcome of the economic policies of the decade was the diversification of exports in general

and the shift in trade partners from Europe to Iran and Iraq in particular in the context of the Iran-Iraq War.

Another upshot of the policies pursued by Özal was to prepare the ground for the rise of a group of new capitalists in the Anatolian heartland, later to be known variously as 'Anatolian Tigers', or Islamic Calvinists (Yavuz 2003, p.89), who would later be the ones to challenge the military-bureaucratic establishment. While the Anatolian small and medium size capitalists and their religious networks would constitute the social and electoral base of the governing MP, the government's export-promotion, market liberalisations and anti-labour policies helped them to utilise an underpaid and in most cases unregistered workforce, produce for multinational companies, and increase their political influence. Moreover, these small capitalists, who came to enjoy exclusive state patronage, constituted a formidable rival to the big capitalists. Özal's preferential treatment of these smaller capitalists, his favouritism towards family members and Islamic networks, general instability, chronic inflation, and the like irritated the big capitalists, mainly represented by TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), and led it to exclude these newly-emerging Anatolian capitalists.<sup>11</sup> In response, smaller Anatolian capitalists established the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği – MÜSİAD) to represent their interests.<sup>12</sup> The members of MÜSİAD not only enjoyed support from the government in many forms, but also benefitted from religion and religious networks in disciplining labour, in generating, supplying and disbursing financing for their investments, and in servicing their debts.

In short, the 1980s saw a complete reconfiguration of social relations in Turkey. Open class war between the bloc of fascist paramilitaries, capitalists and the state on the one hand, and labour and the militant left on the other was brought to an end by the military in favour of the former bloc (Bedirhanoglu and Yalman 2010). While the national security framework created by the military junta continued to suppress any opposition even slightly resembling the left, the Özal government broke the back of labour (Ercan 2002, p.25). Liberalising external trade and domestic prices, Özal fully integrated Turkey into the American-led capitalist order under the aegis of the IMF. To cap it all, Turkey fully liberalised capital accounts at the end of the

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<sup>11</sup> The sense of exclusion of the founders of MÜSİAD turned out to be the motivation for establishing the organisation and reached its apogee when some later members of MÜSİAD were blocked from participating in an international business meeting organised by the Association of Foreign Economic Relations (Buğra 1998: 529).

<sup>12</sup> Conveniently, the Turkish word for 'Independent', that is 'Müstakil', had been considered to refer to the Islamic credentials of the association as well with the acronym 'M' expressing both its Muslim and Independent characteristics.

decade. Most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the 1980s saw the emergence of a new fraction of the capitalist class, who increasingly sought not only to further their interests, but also to have a say in the socio-political organisation of the country. However, the military-bureaucratic establishment institutionalised itself as the final arbiter of political rule and the exclusive locus of foreign policy. The story of the formation of the Turkish state until the 1990s was therefore a story of the emergence, consolidation and institutionalisation of the rule of the military-bureaucratic establishment. Now, I turn to Turkey's 'lost decade' to understand the nature of the challenge that this establishment would face by the end of the century and the rise of its main challenger, the Islamist movement that would culminate in the JDP rule.

#### **4.4.2. 'The Lost Decade' and after: the Entrenchment of Ultranationalist Military Republicanism and the Rise of its Contenders**

Just as Prime Minister Özal resigned from his post to become the President in late 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall signalled a new world order. As Özal strengthened his position and the re-civilianisation of political life continued, the military and the deep state would register their discontent at every turn. Economic growth had already slowed down in the last years of the 1980s, and this translated into lower electoral support for the Motherland Party in the 1989 local elections, where it can only came third after the centre-left Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti - SDPP) and the centre-right True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi – TPP) (Hale 1994, pp.281-82). Özal's fallout with the military, when in 1987 he appointed Necip Torumtay as the Chief of General Staff (Robins 2003, p.55), would serve as one of the first signs of his strongman status. Moreover, he wanted a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem. He would not confront the military directly, however, as exemplified by his authorisation of the establishment of the Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counterterror Group Command (Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele Grup Komutanlığı – JİTEM), which coordinated the illegal activities of the state in combatting the PKK and the Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol).<sup>13</sup> Simultaneously, a reinvigorated labour movement, manifesting itself in the form of waves of strike action in the late 1980s, forced the government to shelve its large-scale privatisation plans. Escalation in the low-intensity warfare in the Southeast and the redefinition of the Kurdish question as a matter of identity, along with the entry of Islam to political and social life (partly as a result of the military junta's policies of counterbalancing the left with religion) brought identity politics centre stage. 'The last Stalinist regime in Europe'

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<sup>13</sup> Authorities continuously denied the existence, let alone the illegal activities, of JİTEM until the late 1990s. Although the organisation was officially disbanded, it continued to operate in a similar function with the British MRF (Mobile Reconnaissance Force), which conducted a series of extrajudicial killings. A series of court documents listing the terroristic activities of JİTEM and other branches of the deep state have recently been compiled by TESEV (2013).

increasingly felt isolated as its Cold War allies were celebrating a new age marked by the rise of human rights and democracy. As the West was debating whether NATO was now necessary or not, Turkey ardently supported its continued existence (Robins 2003, pp.20-21).

In these challenging times, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait presented itself both as a challenge and an opportunity for Turkey. Özal wanted to re-establish Turkey's geopolitical indispensability for the US. Although involvement would be very costly considering the trade volume between the two countries, the flow of oil through the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline and the formidable military capabilities of Iraq, Özal thought Turkey could be part of George H. W. Bush's 'New World Order'. Furthermore, he wished to establish a presence in Northern Iraq, an oil-rich Kurdish-majority area, which would also considerably ameliorate border security, especially by curbing PKK's influence. In doing this, he acted as the sole decision-maker, alienating the Chief of General Staff Torumtay, PM Akbulut, Foreign Minister Ali Bozer and others in the government.<sup>14</sup> While Özal wanted to support the coalition forces with a Turkish contingent, his strongman status was challenged by the backbenchers of his former party led by Mesut Yılmaz, who managed to block a government motion to deploy military forces abroad. The whole episode saw the resignations of Bozer and Torumtay. In the end, Turkey did not contribute to the coalition forces in the face of mounting domestic political challenges to Özal's policies and confined its contribution to opening bases to US and British forces, as well as massing troops in the border region to tie down several divisions of the Iraqi army in the North.

The immediate cost of the war was over 2 billion US dollars a year for Turkey, as it significantly damaged revenues from exports, the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline, and construction contracts as well as tourism. More importantly, the Kurdish question was increasingly internationalised as Iraqi Kurds fled from attacks by the regime. The influx of Kurdish refugees challenged Turkey in two ways. First, Turkey was not able to handle such a massive inflow of refugees logistically and financially. Second, the Turkish state feared that Kurdish regions of Turkey could be adversely affected by rising Kurdish nationalism. To counter both, and under increasing international humanitarian pressure, Turkey proposed the formation of a buffer zone in Iraqi Kurdistan to be supervised by the US, the UK and Turkey. Özal's strongman status would be dealt a final blow when the liberal backbencher Mesut Yılmaz seized leadership of the MP in 1991, alienating conservatives, who would veer towards the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi – WP), the inheritor of the pre-coup National Salvation Party. The 1991 general elections also saw the resurgence of the National Outlook tradition, with Erbakan's WP getting

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<sup>14</sup> Özal would not even let Bozer in on negotiations with President Bush during their visit to Washington (Hale 1992).

almost 17% of the votes, and representation of the pro-Kurdish People's Labour Party (Halkın Emek Partisi – PLP) among SDPP ranks, both thorns in the side of the military. The rise of political Islam was partly the making of the military, who propagated Islam as a counterweight to the left. What worried the generals most, however, was Özal's independent and proactive style of governing. However, the establishment managed to keep him in check and continued to consolidate itself as the 'guardian' of the regime.

As the Kurdish insurgency gained momentum, the counter-guerrilla forces increasingly employed special warfare tactics. Although terrorising the Kurdish masses was the primary activity of the counter-guerrilla forces, they saw the state of emergency in the Southeast as an opportunity to fill their coffers as well. In addition to extrajudicial killings, widespread torture, and forced disappearances, they were also involved in drug trafficking, extortion, and arms trading, feeling safe in the knowledge that they could impute all these crimes to the PKK. In response to politicisation of the Kurdish question, counter-guerrilla units assassinated Kurdish political figures, journalists, and opinion leaders starting from 1991 (von Bruinessen 1996). Authorities mostly turned a blind eye to these gangs for fear of reprimand. Özal still wanted to resolve the Kurdish question peacefully and reached out to Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (*Yeketî Nîştîmanî Kurdistan* – PUK), in the hope of convincing PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to cease hostilities. Öcalan responded positively and declared ceasefire, pending a resolution proposal by Özal. Both Özal and Eşref Bitlis, a general who proposed a roadmap for solution of the problem, died under suspicious circumstances in 1993.

The next year would turn out to be one of the worst years in Turkey's 'lost decade' under full control of the military and the deep state. Conflict with the PKK cost thousands of lives, including over a thousand members of the security forces. Besides that, the economy was hit by a devastating currency crisis as a result of mounting public debt, an import boom and an overreliance on the Central Bank to finance the fiscal deficit. When Moody's downgraded Turkey's sovereign creditworthiness below investment grade, a full-blown financial crisis broke out. Full account liberalisation in 1989 would take its first toll when speculative foreign capital, expecting devaluation, left their Turkish lira positions. Cheap credit from abroad had ignited an import boom, resulting in a widening trade deficit and a record-level current account deficit. To increase confidence in the banking sector, the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund guaranteed all deposits, paving the way for the 2001 banking crisis. Increasing isolation of the country led the government to seek allies in Israel, reversing a decades-long policy of neutrality in Arab-Israeli matters and entrenching its international status as a nominally-democratic-cum-military regime in the eyes of the US. The Arab-Israeli peace process culminating in the 1993 Oslo

Accords made it easier for Turkey to legitimise Turkish-Israeli rapprochement, both to domestic and Middle Eastern Muslim public opinion (Altunisik 2000). Securing the support of the US gave the establishment a free hand to continue oppressing its own citizens and ensure its dominance.

The 1995 general elections saw Erbakan's Islamist Welfare Party winning a plurality. This was due to its ability to represent the rising Islamic small and medium size capital in Anatolia, and the urban poor, alienated by the failed promises of the SDPP and finding new hope in Welfare's promise of a 'just order' (Gülalp 2001).<sup>15</sup> The 1994 local elections had already indicated the rise of political Islam and been marked by the ascent of a group of local politicians who would later constitute the backbone of the JDP, including the current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Under Erdoğan's term as metropolitan mayor in İstanbul, water shortages, air pollution, fiscal problems of the municipality, and many other problems of urban life were either solved or significantly ameliorated, and this would give a hint as to what he could manage if he governed the country. Having emerged in the early 1970s in reaction to its exclusion from political and economic life, the National Outlook movement had capitalised in the 1980s on the social conservatism of the rural masses, the exclusion of Islamic capital from economic life, the failure of social democrats and the centre-right to deliver on their promises of prosperity, and social networks of solidarity. Despite a variety of unlawful obstructions, the WP could finally form a coalition with the centre-right TPP.

On 3 November 1996 at 7.25 pm, as truck driver Hasan Gökçe was leaving an intercity service area near Susurluk, a Mercedes 600 SEL crashed into his truck. There were four people in the car: Abdullah Çatlı, a state-employed terrorist and his girlfriend Gonca Us, Sedat Bucak, TPP MP and a tribal chieftain whose tribe fought against the PKK, and Hüseyin Kocadağ, former İstanbul Deputy Chief of Police. It was not only the convergence of paths of state officials and terrorists that aroused interest; an inventory of the car's contents revealed a much larger web of relations among state officials, ministers, police chiefs, members of parliament, terrorists, drug traffickers, money launderers, extorters etc., along with automatic weapons. The scandal rocked the country and a deep-seated hatred of these mafia-state-counter-guerrilla networks surfaced among the citizenry. A research commission to investigate these criminal networks was established in the TGNA, and although its findings incriminated many, no higher rank military personnel or police were tried. MIT and the General Staff did not provide any

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<sup>15</sup> As Gülalp (2001) notes, the name of the party, Welfare, reflects its promises to the urban poor and the rural shopkeepers and artisans, referring partly to a pre-industrial, Ottoman social order.

information to the commission at all, as they saw ‘themselves as the owners of the state’ (TGNA Susurluk Commission Report 1997).

A citizen initiative was organised by lawyer Ergin Cinmen with the motto ‘One minute of darkness for lasting light’, which asked people to turn off their lights every night at 9.00 for a minute in protest. The size of the protests reached immense proportions and people hit the streets, peacefully and hesitantly marching against the deep state. The government was unrepentant, however. Çiller openly defended the criminal networks, as her party became a hotbed for their accomplices, and her coalition partner Erbakan played down the matter, expecting that the deep state would cover it up in any case. Erbakan had pressing problems of his own at hand, originating in the military’s full-court press on the so-called reactionary activities of his party, and Çiller supported him, partly because she wanted to become Prime Minister for the next two years as per their coalition agreement. The General Staff had long been irritated by what it saw as the creeping Islamisation of the country under Erbakan’s premiership. It successfully channelled the social unrest toward an anti-government movement.

When the NSC convened on 28 February 1997, it forced the government to implement policies targeting what the General Staff saw as reactionary and fundamentalist activities. The recommendations of the Council included stricter supervision and closing down of Quran courses for children, curbing the number of religious schools, and exclusion of Islamic capitalists from state tenders and contracts in a bid to undermine the social base of the WP. When, in June, Erbakan resigned as part of the coalition arrangement to hand the prime ministry to Çiller, President Demirel did not authorise Çiller to form the government although the two parties had a majority in the TGNA. Effectively, then, the months-long campaign of the military forced Erbakan and Çiller out of government. As there was no direct military takeover, the coup was to be called a ‘postmodern coup’.

Following the coup the top generals exercised complete control over policymaking through their decisive control of the National Security Council. Meanwhile, the Constitutional Court closed down the WP on 16 January 1998 for its activities against the secular character of the Republic, barring its leaders from politics. The party cadres regrouped later in the year to establish the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi – VP). The government also faced criticism for its lack of resolve in dealing with the criminal networks uncovered in the Susurluk scandal. The minority government fell following corruption claims over the privatisation of a state bank in January 1999. Ecevit established a caretaker government to take the country to general elections in April 1999. In February 1998, in the most unlikely turn of events, PKK leader

Abdullah Öcalan was captured in Kenya's Greek Consulate by a team of Special Forces, allegedly with the assistance of Israeli and US intelligence services (Robins 2003). As expected, this boosted the electoral fortunes of Ecevit's DLP as well as those of the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), which came respectively first and second in the general elections. Although the VP lost electoral support to parties across the spectrum, it still maintained a core of 16% electoral support, securing several metropolitan mayoralities including İstanbul and Ankara in the local elections held simultaneously.

The new DLP-NAP-MP coalition government had two priorities at the time: reversing the economic fortunes of the country, and getting closer to the EU by acquiring the official status of a candidate country. Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kivrikoğlu, however, had a different agenda, and warned PM Ecevit that the 28 February policies would have to be implemented for another 1000 years if necessary. With these three agendas at hand, the government groped its way back and forth between authoritarianism and democracy. Making economic revival a priority, the government had agreed with the IMF on a disinflation programme based on decreasing the budget deficit, controlling inflation around 25%, and continuing privatisations as well as fighting widespread corruption. The programme failed, however. The fragility of the Turkish financial system, caused primarily by the deregulated financial market with speculative flows of capital controlling asset markets was even contributed to by the IMF-led disinflation programme (Cizre and Yeldan 2005). The first wave of the crisis came in November 2000 in the form of capital flight. In response, the IMF released USD 7.5 billion as part of a stabilisation package. The second wave came in February 2001 following a spat between the President and the PM. Based on the assumption of a stable political environment, the IMF programme collapsed as news of political crisis spread. Unable to prevent the ensuing capital flight through Central Bank foreign exchange sales, the government initiated a floating exchange rate regime which resulted in a doubling of the value of the US dollar against the Turkish lira. The rest of the year saw a volatile economy, with World Bank official Kemal Derviş joining the government as Minister of State for Economic Affairs and overseeing the implementation of a new IMF programme. The November 2002 early general elections followed from this general crisis of government.

No party from the preceding legislative period made it into the new one. The unpopular austerity programme took its toll on members of the coalition government. The JDP garnered support from the former electoral base of the WP, as well as from disillusioned centre-right voters. It mobilised the urban poor and small landholders in addition to the now-



disenfranchised Anatolian capitalists. The rise of the JDP and its leader Erdoğan was no secret, and indeed disturbed the establishment.

### 5. 'A Fine Balance': Foreign Policy in the Shadow of the Military

From 28 February 1997 to the 2002 general elections, the military made its presence felt all over the country. The clandestine West Working Group (Batı Çalışma Grubu – WWG) established by the top brass to supervise the so-called struggle against reactionary movements, illegally indexed personal information on millions of individuals in cooperation with the intelligence services. Every major news outlet and large corporation had one retired or active high-ranking officer on their executive boards and the mainstream media, as they had done throughout the 1990s, tried hard to discredit Kurds, Islamists, and socialists. The military and the WWG were aware of the fractures among the ranks of the VP, and tried to widen these by supporting Erdoğan and the reformists against Erbakan and the traditionalists. Their calculation was that Erdoğan could split the party (Bulaç 2010). As the elections neared, however, opinion polls showed increasing support for Erdoğan's JDP, and with a few percentage points increase every month leading up to the elections, the media started a campaign to discredit him and others in the JDP. The Supreme Court of Appeals' Chief Public Prosecutor filed a suit against the JDP just before the elections demanding its closure.

All these machinations against Erdoğan and his party backfired, and he won a sweeping victory in the general elections. This, however, would not deter the military-bureaucratic establishment. The JDP sought to accommodate them by limiting its activities to economic recovery, harmonisation with the EU *acquis communautaire* as well as distancing itself from its past. Sympathetic analyst Bulaç (2010, p.101) noted that the JDP cadres followed a carefully-crafted strategy of accommodating not only the generals, but also big capitalists, mainstream media, the US government, and the EU. The JDP also conveyed the message to the US that it was willing to play the role of a moderate Islamic force in the Middle East as part of a larger US plan to incorporate the Middle East into the US-led capitalist order. Simply put, the first step of the JDP's strategy of reproduction was based on political survival as part of a longer-term strategy of gradually establishing itself as the sole source of institutional power in Turkey, by slowly confining the military into its barracks, disciplining secularist capitalist forces, and presenting itself as a democratising force in the Middle East and its neighbourhood through its role as a conduit of American power.

It is in this context, then, that we return again to the time of the 2003 decision, when the governing JDP found itself enmeshed in a crisis with the US. The Bush Administration was

certain that it would enlist the support of the Turkish government. At any rate, the US baptised the new JDP government as a forward-looking, liberal, democratic Islamic force that could contribute to stability in the region (Bulaç 2010, pp.102-105). Besides, the Bush Administration was sure that the military would support and even push the government to accept US demands. The US government engaged in a full-court press on Turkey as Abdullah Gül formed the new government in mid-November. In return, the US guaranteed the territorial integrity of Iraq, a say over Mosul and Kirkuk, and compensation for Turkey's possible economic losses, as well as the authority to keep a 60 thousand-strong Turkish force in Northern Iraq to secure its borders against any PKK or Iraqi incursion. Although Erdoğan had no official role due to his ban from political activity, he held comprehensive talks with the authorities in the US, as the American government realised that they had to convince him. Both Erdoğan and Gül were trying to buy time, although the Bush Administration was losing patience. The General Staff refrained from recommending any concrete steps; the way it presented options, however, implicitly recommended that Turkey should support the war effort, not least because non-compliance would risk Turkish-American relations (Yetkin 2004, pp.115-17).<sup>16</sup>

The government was under immense pressure from many sides: across the political spectrum, from socialist left to far-right, public opinion was very strongly against the war, albeit for different reasons. Many JDP MPs with origins in the Islamist tradition had strong reservations about taking action against a neighbouring Muslim-majority country. The NSC explained to the government that Turkey could not stay out of it, the President warned that without a UNSC resolution, the war would be illegitimate, and the US government continuously urged the government to secure parliamentary approval. The party leadership was not enthusiastic about joining the coalition forces either. The JDP government had tried hard to enlist EU and US support in demonstrating its Western-looking democratic credentials and continued recognition as a democratic force. Furthermore, they knew very well that the military would normally be supportive of the US. At the time, the JDP depended on its strong electoral and American support to politically survive. As a result, it reluctantly agreed to take the motion to the Parliament. As the military knew that the war would have deleterious consequences for Turkey whether it supported the coalition powers or not, it wanted to make sure that all the heat was taken by the government. Prime Minister Gül was at pains to secure the public approval of the President, the NSC, or the opposition, or at least one of them. At stake was the survival of the JDP and it could not afford to alienate either the US government or the NSC.

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<sup>16</sup> Later on, the General Staff would tell the Foreign Affairs Committee that Turkey's interests required an urgent decision to take part in the coalition (Yetkin 2004, pp.118-19).

None of the important actors supported the motion publicly. The JDP leadership waited for two more NSC meetings in the hope of securing positive recommendation from the Council, but to no avail. The self-designated 'guardians' of the state chose to leave the decision to the elected government, maybe for the first time in the Republic's history, when an essential national security matter was under discussion.

Four historically specific and interrelated developments made this possible. First, the military had successfully deposed the Erbakan-Çiller government in 1997 in a bloodless coup, and having created the conditions of leading from behind the scenes, it tried to limit its political activities to making recommendations through the NSC. Secondly, in entrenching its position throughout the 1990s, the military established itself as one of the largest capitalist corporations in the country with its OYAK (*Ordu Yardımlaşma Kurumu*, Armed Forces Mutual Assistance Society, originally a pension fund) controlling majority shares in a series of companies including in automotive, banking, insurance and other important sectors of the economy, binding its fortunes to the general political stability of the country.<sup>17</sup> Thirdly, the international isolation of the country throughout the 1990s, and Turkey's attempts to break it by gradually harmonising its political and legal regimes to those of the EU, side-lined the military in decision-making processes, rendering any direct political intervention of the military unlikely. Fourthly, then Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök, adopted in general a conciliatory tone, attracting fury from the rest of the high-ranking officers within the military cadres.<sup>18</sup> The cumulative effect of these developments, combined with the desire of the generals to make the government take the heat for any decision, prevented the military from taking a strong position on the motion.

Desperately evading decisive action, the government sought to convince Saddam to cooperate. The JDP leadership was not even able to convince their MPs, let alone their constituency. The party's membership consisted of a broad-based coalition of 'reformists' from the National Outlook Movement, nationalists, conservatives, some left-wing and liberal opinion leaders, and politicians. Conservative and National Outlook elements in the party were uncomfortable with the idea of supporting a US invasion of a neighbouring Muslim country. Nationalists were accommodating, provided that Turkey's demands in return for support were met; in this sense their position matched that of the military. PM Gül was vocal about the fact

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<sup>17</sup> For further information on OYAK see Akça (2010).

<sup>18</sup> Claims abound as to whether Gen. Özkök did what he did because he was a principled democrat, a latent Islamist, or a pragmatist. All three positions have strong evidential bases, although it is more likely that he took the third way, rejecting binding his fortunes to those of the hawkish generals or the government.

that he would not easily be able to convince JDP MPs to support the motion. In the last few days before voting on the motion, text messages from ordinary people flooded the cell phones of JDP MPs urging them to say no. The RPP members urged JDP MPs 'to fear God, not the US', in explicit reference to JDP's Islamic credentials. Thousands on the streets marched against a war in Iraq. One could speculate with much sense that had the JDP been in opposition, it would have rejected the motion as strongly as the RPP MPs did. The reluctance of the JDP leadership was so obvious that no binding parliamentary group decision was taken forcing the MPs to vote yes. If group decision had been taken, the motion would probably have passed considering that no other important motion to be brought by the Cabinet to the parliament in the 13 years of JDP governments would fail. That the motion did not pass was not a failure, but a relief for the JDP leadership. Although Turkey attracted much reprimand from the US, it could refer to the democratic nature of government in Turkey and firmly place Turkey in 'Old Europe'. In any case, the newly-established coalition government in Germany had recently brought the Social Democrats and Greens to power. The SPD leader, Gerhard Schroeder, and the Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, of the Greens were willing to see Turkey in the EU. Similarly, Jacques Chirac of the Socialist Party in France was cautiously supportive of the Turkish bid. That both countries were also ardent critics of the US policy toward Iraq, helped Turkey break its isolation, while simultaneously contributing to the indecisiveness of the JDP.

## 6. Conclusion

As the second leg of a three-chapter illustration of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, this chapter problematized Turkey's decision to deny passage and basing rights to the United States in its planned war on Iraq in 2003. The chapter started with a review of the limited literature on the so-called '1 March permit' in Turkish parlance, and showed that the existing literature depended on faulty abstractions and frozen taxonomies to account for failure of the motion. Real agents were put into containers of roles, real institutions into abstract concepts, and temporal configurations into frozen abstractions. To make up for the deficiencies of the existing literature, in Section 3 I located the real abstractions from the point of view of the main agents involved: the JDP and the military. The institutional configuration (that is, the real abstractions) that these agents found themselves in were historicised, and their formation and emergence were traced back to the Ottoman times in subsections 4.1 and 4.2. Section 4 as a whole showed the formation, rise, consolidation, and further entrenchment of the military-bureaucratic rule in Turkey through various institutionalised patterns of relations. Furthermore, it showed that the social reproductive strategy of the military-bureaucratic establishment consisted of integrating Turkey into the American-led capitalist

order throughout the Cold War years and of repressing any challengers to its rule using a variety of means including instigating chaos, assassinations, cooperating with criminal networks, placing its operatives into key media, finance, and industrial corporations, staging coups as against elected governments and so on. Finally, the preceding section discussed the conundrum the JDP leadership tried to evade. The central argument of the chapter was that, reluctant to go through with the motion, the JDP found a direct rejection of US demands unfeasible, for hanging in the balance was its political survival. As the military-bureaucratic establishment had entrenched itself throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, the JDP's survival depended on its ability to accommodate the military and secure the support of the US. On the other hand, the JDP's electoral success owed much to the disillusionment of the population with the preceding coalition government's economic performance, and a rejection could mean losing billions of dollars promised by the US government. Squeezed by the US government and the Turkish populace, the JDP government failed to secure public approval from the generals, parliamentary opposition or the President, and proceeded to take the motion to vote without strong parliamentary support. In a word, it brought the motion to the parliament reluctantly. The result was a relief for the JDP government, rather than defeat.

Building on the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2, this chapter followed the footsteps of the primary agents involved in this episode of Turkish foreign policy-making. In order not to reproduce the fallacious abstraction that takes the military-bureaucratic establishment as a given, unchanging and natural reality of the Turkish state, it historically analysed the contradictory social reproductive strategies of agents in late Ottoman times that bestowed a prominent role on the establishment in Turkey now in alliance with a strengthening industrial capitalist class. Although the alliance between the military-bureaucratic establishment and the big industrial capitalists was contested many times throughout the Republican Era by different forces, the strongest challenge came in the form of socialist labour movements in the 1970s, before the 1980 military coup. The coup not only restored the role of the establishment, but also helped the industrial capitalists to restore profits. The next significant challenge came from the Islamists, whose ascendance was in part an inadvertent consequence of the generals' wish to counterbalance socialist tendencies in society. Rising throughout the 1980s, the small capitalists of Anatolia supported the Islamist Welfare Party *en masse* and the WP became the larger partner of a coalition government. This challenge was thwarted by the military in a 'postmodern coup'. In a word, by late 2002, the Turkish state did not exist as a consolidated and relatively well-established social institution, or to put it in the conceptual language of this thesis, although the Turkish state was a real

abstraction, its status as a real abstraction was time and again challenged by different social forces in a way that does not apply to the American state; only through the use of coercion had the military imposed itself as a real abstraction upon society. The latest challenge by the reformed Islamists had not yet been met by the military at the time of the decision, creating a fine balance. This fragile balance between the JDP and the military-bureaucratic establishment marked the institutional configuration that was in place. This is why, unlike in the preceding chapter where the American state was taken to be the main agent of foreign policy, I picked the military and the JDP as the primary agents, and not the Turkish state as a social-institutional complex. This also called for what mainstream IR and FPA studies call a sub-unit level analysis, as the foreign policy decision in question was the unintended consequence of a specific balance of forces among actors vying for control of the state. That the JDP leadership sought to prove its democratic and Western credentials to the US in order to politically survive in Turkey and that the foreign policy decision in question took shape as a result of different social actors' contradictory strategies of reproduction showed explicitly that in reproducing themselves, actors bridged what we analytically divide as domestic and international. Both the configuration of the Turkish state as a real abstraction and other conjunctural abstractions surrounding the decision, as the long-term results of the contradictory and diachronically related praxes of differently situated and motivated agents, provided the context of action for the JDP leadership. However, just as every other agent who contributed to the inter-subjective making of this conjuncture, its actions did not directly emanate from the context; rather the indecision was an active subjective intervention to what appeared as an overwhelming externality.

This is not yet the end of the story, however. This represents only the vantage points of the relevant actors in Turkey. Along with the preceding chapter, it still does not show how what we call foreign policy and international relations are bridged in praxis. It is yet another one-sided representation of reality. The picture will reveal itself more fully, when the next chapter provides an analysis of the decision by Iraq not to fully cooperate with IAEA and UNMOVIC inspectors.

## **5. SADDAM'S IRAQ: FOREIGN POLICY OF AN INSECURE DICTATORSHIP**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this third part of the three-chapter illustration, I problematize Iraq's failure to fully comply with the demands of the international community led by the US to disarm and allow international inspectors to monitor and help carry out the disarmament process. In other words, this chapter seeks to understand why the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) inspections turned into a 'cat and mouse game', as the Anglo-American press called it, and last ditch efforts by regional leaders proved futile. The unwillingness to give heed to warnings from the international community on Saddam Hussein's part defied the logic of prudence and caution. The heated rhetoric of Saddam and other regime figures against the 'imperialist designs' of the USA, and Iraq's continued retaliations against the allied aircraft which monitored the so-called 'no-fly zones' to the north and the south of the country, further contributed to increasing hostilities between the US and Iraq. Moreover, there were gaps in the 12,000 page declaration the Iraqi government submitted to UNMOVIC regarding the status of its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) arsenal and programmes. For instance, UNMOVIC and the IAEA found eleven chemical warheads which were not declared in the report submitted by the Iraqi government (UNMOVIC 2003). Finally, the Iraqi state rejected offers by regional powers such as Egypt and Turkey to mediate, ignoring their warnings to back down.

Briefly, then, this chapter interrogates the reason why the Iraqi government did not fully comply with the requirements of several United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) including the last, UNSCR 1441, which demanded that Iraq fully cooperate with the UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors in documenting the status of Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare capability, at the expense of risking imminent invasion by the US and its allies. The answer is that Saddam did not appreciate the US resolve to change the regime in Iraq, as he was preoccupied with the perceived threat from within Iraq, which he thought would take the form of a US-backed coup. What requires explanation, however, is exactly this failure on Saddam's part to see what was coming. This, in turn, cannot be explained simply with reference to the immediate context in which Saddam found himself in late 2002 and early 2003. Without accounting for the formation of the Iraqi state and the role of coups and conspiratorial politics in its evolution it is only normal that Saddam's behaviour is seen as reflecting psychopathological tendencies. I argue that Saddam's fear of internal machinations

was not unfounded, particularly after his strategies of reproduction were undermined first by the Iran-Iraq War, then by the Gulf War and sanctions, and finally by the several US attempts to overthrow him, and its adoption of regime change as the official American policy toward Iraq. Neither can the context generated by the real abstractions formed around the Iraqi state complex and the way they work automatically produce an account of Saddam's and his inner circle's miscalculation of the developments that led to the invasion. The historical narration of the formation of the real abstractions that he and his aides found themselves in must therefore be complemented with an account of how they experienced these externalities as well as how they responded to them.

The argument is developed in four steps. The next section reviews the literature on Iraqi foreign policy in general, and its response to pressure by the US in late 2002 and early 2003 in particular. Section 3 presents a snapshot of the circumstances in which Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi state found themselves in this period. Building on the shortcomings of the literature, Section 4 takes a longer historical route to locating the historical sources of Saddam's fear of a coup in the formation and evolution of the Iraqi state. Furthermore, it provides a historical narration of the emergence and consolidation of Saddam's rule as well as its gradual demise in the 1990s to prepare the ground for putting Saddam's seemingly pathological behaviour in the run-up to the US invasion into its proper context, which is done in Section 5. To make up for any objectivising that a historical reconstruction of the formation of the context causes, Section 5 makes use of a series of classified intelligence reports as well as transcripts of captured recordings of Saddam's meetings with his inner circle.

## **5.2. Saddam's Ambiguity: Contending Explanations**

If the academic literatures on the US decision to invade Iraq and Turkey's decision to deny passage and basing rights to invading US troops are limited, the literature on Iraq's decision to escalate the standoff with the United States in late 2002 and early 2003 is almost non-existent. Not only accounts of this specific foreign policy episode, but also Iraqi foreign policy in general failed to capture much scholarly attention. Some exceptions include studies in intelligence (Seliktar and Dutter 2009; Katz 2006), but they reduce Iraqi foreign policy under Saddam to the rationality of an 'autocrat'. Iraqi foreign policy is generally covered as part of studies either on the foreign policies of the Middle East states (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami 2002; Ismael 1986; Telhami and Barnett 2002; Halliday 2005; Brown 2004) or on the foreign policies of Arab states (Korany and Dessouki 1991; Mohamedou 2003). There are several interrelated reasons for this, all of which generated general tendencies in the analysis of the foreign policies of Middle Eastern and Arab states: first of all, IR took shape in response to the needs first of the US and



then of similarly organised polities, and FPA more so.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, states in the Arab world or the Middle East in general are not considered actors capable of autonomous external behaviour because of their subordinate position in the international system. Thirdly, even when these states are not lumped together as Arab states or Middle Eastern states, their foreign policy is analysed through a lumping together of their leaders as dictators and examination of their individual (mostly psychological) characteristics. The three research tendencies mentioned above were called by Mohamedou (2003) 'the great powers approach', 'the reductionist approach', and 'the psychologistic approach', based on Korany and Dessouki's (1991) seminal work on *The Foreign Policies of the Arab States*.<sup>2</sup>

What Mohamedou (2003) calls 'the great powers approach' represented an extension of structural realism. To the structural realist mind, the foreign policies of Arab or Middle Eastern states are nothing but a function of the struggles among great powers. Similar to this 'great powers approach' is dependency theory, which again downplays the ability of so-called Third World states to formulate their external relations (Marr 2004, p.181). Mearsheimer (2003), for example, maintained that Iraq's foreign policy would reflect US foreign policy toward Iraq, and that deterrence and containment would ensure Iraq's wider compliance with international norms, just as they would in the case of every other similarly-positioned state according to realism because it is the prudent course of action. Others influenced by realist epistemology refer to Iraq's policy of strategic ambiguity that would enable it to simultaneously comply with the demands of the international community and deter others from taking military action against it (e.g. Rubin 2003). This remains problematic, however, as it takes external 'systemic' determination as the sole source of Iraqi foreign policy. Secondly, what Mohamedou (2003) calls 'the reductionist, or model-building approach' examines the foreign policies of Middle Eastern or Arab states within the framework of models originally devised to analyse the foreign policies of economically and institutionally complex states. These 'middle-range theories' fail to take into account the specificity of the former, each of which embodies different sets of social relations, and reduce their foreign policies to one of its aspects, such as public opinion or bureaucratic structure. Thirdly, individualistic approaches, again derived from models based on North American and Western European states, focus on the leaders of Middle Eastern or Arab states, and lump together all these leaders as dictators or autocrats who generally suffer from delusions or suicidal tendencies. These approaches at best disregard

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote 3 in Introduction. A very influential figure in the field of FPA, Graham Allison, admitted that when he developed his FPA model, he did not have in mind non-Western states at all (see Korany and Dessouki 2010, p.25).

<sup>2</sup> The following review of the literature follows a slightly modified version of this classification.

the role played by actors other than leaders, and at worst attribute psychopathological tendencies to these leaders, and brush away complexities of the relations that constitute their rule as well as relations they have with what is external to them (e.g. Glad 2002).

Accounts of Iraqi foreign policy, then, are provided within these parameters in general. The complexity of the matter, however, is demonstrated by the fact that all these approaches suffer from self-imposed theoretical and conceptual limitations. They fail to account for this or that aspect of Iraqi foreign policy-making processes and to reflect a more comprehensive picture of it (Marr 2004, pp.181-182). But more historically and locally sensitive accounts fare no better. In treating 'the state of Iraq as a unit of analysis and as an international actor', Tripp (2002), for instance, does not fall into the trap of a realist unitary view of the state; but the problem with his account is less about his sensitivity toward the (primarily symbolically) 'contested' nature of the Iraqi state, and more about his unquestioning use and eclectic combination of the pre-conceived conceptual apparatus of the literature. In the end, what we learn about Iraqi foreign policy is that it results from an interaction of the ideational and the material, the domestic and the international, and the economic and the political, where one aspect of each couplet may play a larger role than the other. Constructivist accounts (e.g. Dawisha 2002) cite contesting identities in Iraq as determining factors for Iraqi foreign policy-making. Iraq stays out of the purview of liberal peace theory, which automatically assigns Hobbesian qualities to non-liberal states.

Only a very limited number of sources strive to explain why Saddam behaved the way he did in response to escalating tension with the US. One such example is Braut-Hegghammer's (2006) article on WMD proliferation and Iraq's response to external pressure for non-proliferation. Braut-Hegghammer's (2006) explanation is that Saddam Hussein pursued two contradictory strategies simultaneously: while willing to convince the UN that the country did not have any WMDs or WMD development programmes, the Iraqi state also wished to deter Iran by manipulating it into believing that it had an active programme. Similarly, Woods, Lacey and Murray (2006) advance the argument that Saddam did not believe that the US would dare invade Iraq for fear of reaction from France and Russia. Even if it were certain that Saddam believed so, this raises further questions as to the relations between him and others in the government, the role of the Baath Party, the configuration of relations that constitute the real abstraction that we call the Iraqi state within a context of wider social relations, the combination of which made this belief plausible.

### 5.3. The World as it Appeared to Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party

After a decade of a devastating regime of sanctions, Iraq started to recover in the early 2000s. The oil-for-food programme administered by the UN was expanded over time to include other sectors such as health, and Iraq's economy saw signs of improvement in the late 1990s. By 2000, Iraq's oil exports reached USD 30 billion after the upper limit to exports were removed. There were sufficient grounds to believe that Saddam's hold on power and Baathi control of the Iraqi state could continue. Notwithstanding these positive signs, Saddam's rule faced enormous challenges.

The US-led sanctions regime not only broke the back of the Baathi regime economically, but posed a significant threat to its survival following the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, which publicly declared regime change as official US policy toward Iraq, and more particularly when the Bush government held Saddam responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Increasing pressure on the Iraqi state peaked when UNSC Resolution 1441 gave a final chance to Iraq to disarm itself of WMDs in November 2002. Iraq was asked to fully comply with the Resolution, which involved full cooperation with UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors. Furthermore, since the 1980s Iraq had exhausted all opportunities for good relations with its neighbours. The Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s and the atrocities it committed during the war, the invasion of Kuwait, hostile relations with Saudi Arabia as well as its failure to fully comply with the UNSC Resolution that ended the Persian Gulf War in 1991 (UNSCR 687) indicated that the noose was tightening around Iraq. Meanwhile, Iran had restored diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and all important regional powers stood against Iraq in the period.

Saddam thought he could still manage these challenges as he had done throughout the 1990s. The source of his primary fear was domestic. Kurds in the north had shown time and again their aspiration to further autonomy or even wring independence from the central Iraqi state. Although the Kurds were granted autonomy in the 1970s, their fortunes depended mostly on the calculus of power in Iraq's relations with neighbouring countries as well as the superpowers. The Shia had never enjoyed the influence that the Kurds enjoyed throughout Saddam's rule. They were always underrepresented in government and they had no external support to lean on but for irregular support given by Iran to segments of their population. Both minorities, however, were extremely discontented with Saddam's rule, as demonstrated by their repeated uprisings against him. What Saddam feared most, however, were the machinations of the fractions of the ruling elite, including the military and intelligence organisations, as well as the Baathi leadership. In any case, the Kurds did not raise claims to central authority and they could be contained in the North, and the Shia were sufficiently

neutralised to pose no real threat to Saddam's rule. The rest of the population were too oppressed to rise up without endangering their own and their families' lives, reflecting the conditions that Kanan Makiya (1998) once described as *The Republic of Fear*. It is safe to argue that Saddam's fears were not unfounded; it is no secret that the United States tried to depose Saddam Hussein through CIA operations recruiting or enticing Iraqi military or intelligence officers (Allawi 2007, p.63). Furthermore, throughout the short history of the modern Iraqi state, changes of rule have always taken the form of military or palace coups. In a way, this had become an institutionalised practice of power transition.

It is under these circumstances that Saddam Hussein faced growing pressure from the international community led by the US following the adoption of UNSCR 1441, and imminent threat of invasion by the US and the UK. Resolution 1441 decided that Iraq was 'in material breach' of its obligations under Resolution 687, which had ended the First Gulf War. Iraq was given a 'final opportunity' to fully account for its existing WMDs, WMD programmes, disarmament activities and ballistic missiles with a range of more than 50 kilometres, and to cooperate fully with the UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors.<sup>3</sup> Saddam responded by complying partially, as he felt confident that pressure and protests by the French, Germans and Russians as well as some Arab states and the publics of the United States and the United Kingdom would make it almost impossible for the US to launch a ground attack. Sanctions and US covert operations against his regime in the 1990s, such as the Shahwani-INA-CIA coup plot (Allawi 2007, p.63), had prompted Saddam to hold on to and consolidate his totalitarian rule. He had reason to believe that the gravest threat to his rule would arise from within the officer corps. This has roots in the formation and the historical evolution of the Iraqi state and the role of different officer factions in it. Although the Baathi regime was established in 1968, its configuration had much to do with the preceding period of dictatorships that followed the overthrow of the monarchy.<sup>4</sup> The role officers came to play in Iraqi politics, in turn, had its social origins in the monarchical period, to which we will now turn.

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<sup>3</sup> Although this resolution sounded like a final warning, it did not automatically authorise the use of force in case of noncompliance. The Bush administration argued that all UNSCRs concerning Iraq's WMDs were based on UNSCR 678, which authorised the use of force. This was taken by many as a stretch of reasoning.

<sup>4</sup> Batatu's (1978) seminal work provides an excellent exposition of the social sources of the new Iraqi state in its formative period. For an alternative account regarding the sources of dictatorship in the militaristic nature of the Iraqi polity during the inter-war period, see Simon (2004).

## 5.4. The Social-Historical Sources of the Baathi Dictatorship

### 5.4.1. The Formation of the Iraqi State and the Emergence of the Baathi Dictatorship

It is commonplace in historical studies on the Iraq to note that Iraq 'did not exist' until it was created by the British following the WW I (N. Smith 2005, p.3; Marr 2011, p.8).<sup>5</sup> This does not mean that the complex of social relations that would later give form to the Iraqi state did not exist as well, however. In the absence of a central state, different regions of Iraq were ruled by different confederations of tribes, each with diverse sets of social relations of reproduction. The *shaikhs* (chieftains) of these tribes had historically established a patrimonial rule over their tribesmen, whereby they appropriated a portion of whatever their tribesmen produced in return for security and stability. These tribal confederations were, first and foremost, military confederations (Batatu 1978, p.67). This centuries-long social reproductive pattern started to change in the 19th century as a result of attempts by the Ottoman Empire to catch up with its European rivals. As the Ottoman Empire grappled with military and economic competition from the European great powers in the 19th century, it found exercising central control over its Middle Eastern territories increasingly difficult. The risk was not only of territorial losses, but also of possible loss of revenues, since the Palace relied on tax-farming through *shaikhs* in its Mosul, Baghdad and Basra provinces. As part of centralisation efforts, *walis* (governors) and *qaimaqams* (governors of smaller administrative units) of these provinces were directly appointed by the central administration, but held in check through the *shaikhs*. When the Palace realised that it was no longer capable of exercising direct military control over its Mesopotamian provinces, it relied on a strategy of divide and rule, pitting *shaikhs* and tribal confederations, and smaller groups of tribesmen and its own administrative officials against one another. Through *tapus* (usufructuary rights over land), it turned segments of the peasantry into small landholders. The gradual integration of the Empire into the world market also made its presence felt in Iraq. *Shaikhs* competing against one another for land and peasants lost their former status as overlord-like rulers of self-sufficient tribal communities..

The *shaikhs'* rule over social life, therefore, seemed to be coming to an end by the first years of the twentieth century. However, they found new life when the British, lacking the resources to directly appoint British administrative officials, reversed the Ottoman policy of undermining them, and instead began to rely on them to rule Iraq as commercial landowners (Marr 2011, p.23). Following the suppression of the 1920 tribal revolts, the British established a checks and

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<sup>5</sup> Indeed the construction of the nation had to follow the forcible external imposition of the state (Zubaida 2002).

balances regime in Iraq, installing Faisal as king, while putting much weight behind the *shaikhs* as a counterbalance. Urban nationalist elements (mostly Ottoman-trained officers and bureaucrats) on which the king depended, as they were the only educated military and administrative human resource, constituted a third pole in the configuration of power relations. Although installed by the British Faisal had his own agenda for unifying his rule (Batatu 1978, pp.89-90).<sup>6</sup> Both the officers he depended on and Faisal himself tried to introduce a system of conscription and land redistribution to weaken the *shaikhs*, but the British were unrelenting. The British also limited the expansion of the Iraqi army, and Faisal would lament that while there were a hundred thousand rifles at large in the country, the state had only fifteen thousand (Batatu 1978, p.90). Finally, the British severed the ties between urban centres and rural areas controlled by the *shaikhs*.

Throughout the years of British mandate, King Faisal actively supported the rise of the army against the British-supported *shaikhs*. By the time Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations, the army had risen to prominence and gained an autonomous political role in Iraq. Now the king, *shaikhs* and other 'old social classes' joined forces to curb the power of the officers, who were allied with the leftist and nationalist intelligentsia and the urban masses (Batatu 1978, p.102). In 1936, the rise of the army would result in the Arab World's first military coup, led by the authoritarian general Bakr Sidqi and supported by the leftist *Ahali* group, in the hope that the traditional landowner-*shaikh* dominated social configuration of the country would be replaced by a more equitable social order. Instead of delivering on its promises, the coup paved the way for a series of other coups in the next five years. As aptly observed by Batatu (1978, p.118), starting from the mid-1930s, the political power of the *shaikhs* decisively ended and Baghdad became the centre of political life.

Decomposition of the Iraqi monarchy continued until British reoccupation in 1941 following another coup. During WW II, nationalist officers seized power hoping that they could finally get rid of the British. Without German support, the British reoccupied the country easily, breathing new life into the monarchy. Five years of British occupation re-established the ruling coalition of the monarchy, large landowners, and pragmatist career politicians. Wide segments of the Iraqi population, including many nationalist officers, held the British responsible for the plight of the Iraqi nation. The urban poor were getting poorer every day, the peasantry were reduced to serf-like status, and the emergent educated segments of the population found

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<sup>6</sup> Dodge (2003b) shows how power accumulated as a contradictory consequence of the different strategies of the King, the High Commissioner, the Council of Ministers and their British advisors in the first few years of the Mandate, and how the arrangement evolved in response to changes in British domestic politics, the rise of the United States and Wilson's notion of sovereignty.

offices and positions filled by the *shaikhs*. Baghdad's population had doubled from 1922 to 1947 due to rural-to-urban migration, industrialization gained pace, and imports had come to a halt because of war-time supply problems all over the world, all of which contributed to the emergence of an urban working class movement (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett 2001, pp.36-38) staging strikes with students protesting occasionally. In response, the regent-prince Abd-al-Ilah introduced liberalization measures, granting licences to several political parties, including the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), and to labour unions. Insufficient reform, and more importantly, the signing of the Portsmouth Agreement, which meant the colonial involvement of Britain would continue, led to *Al-Wathba*, or the leap, where students, workers and the poor, led by the Communists, rose to protest the signing of the treaty. Although *Wathba* forced the government to resign, several hundred protesters were killed due to police brutality, and the new government of Nuri Said, a pragmatist politician who had served as Prime Minister 12 times since the 1920s, was quick to suppress opposition. More significantly the *Wathba* marked the emergent role of the 'street' in Iraqi politics (Marr 2011, pp.65-66).

The 1950s saw Iraq oil revenues playing a much more important role. Under pressure from domestic opposition, the Iraqi state took the nationalisation of Iranian oil, and Nasser's rise to power in Egypt both as pressure and opportunity to increase oil revenues. Iraq's share in the IPC (Iraqi Petroleum Company) had already started increasing upon negotiations with the British in 1950, but the real push came after the tapping of new reserves and further negotiations over the share of Iraq. Between 1948 and 1958, oil production increased over ten-fold, while revenues went up forty-fold to 80 million Iraqi Dinars (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2011, p.42) 'contribut[ing] some 60% of the government budget' (Marr 2011, p.68). Growing dissent pushed the government to introduce social programmes, which, however, mostly consisted of funds for agricultural projects as opposed to industrial ones, while at the same time increasing the repression of organised movements. This further alienated the urban working classes whose real wages continuously fell, and no real benefits accrued to the peasantry. The programmes merely consolidated the class rule of the large landowners in the country. Developments in Palestine as well as in Egypt, and Iraqi participation in the Baghdad Pact, infuriated the Communists and Arab nationalists. Communist-led uprisings in the Shiite-majority towns Najaf and Hayy in 1956 mounted a formidable challenge to the Nuri Said government, but were unable to bring him down (Batatu 1978, p.757). It would be left to the military officers to depose the government and the monarchy.

The immediate forces that mobilised the Free Officers of the Iraqi army appear to lie outside the borders of Iraq. The Tripartite Aggression in 1956 over the nationalisation of the Suez

Canal by the Nasser government in Egypt, the signing of the Baghdad Pact, pledges of support by the Soviet Union to those fighting colonial powers, and the general tendency in the Arab world toward Pan-Arabism all had immediate influence on the course of developments in Iraq. These do not suffice to account for the 1958 revolution, however. Social tension had long been in the making, and had manifested itself on different occasions, starting from the various coups between 1936 and 1941, through the *Wathba* of 1948 and the unrest of the 1950s, and culminating in the Communist-led uprisings of the 1956. All these reactions had different social sources and objectives; what united them historically was a hatred of class rule by the large landowners (*shaikhs* in the country, *mallaks* in the city). By the 1950s, urban populations including the working class, the unemployed, salaried professionals, university and secondary school students as well as army officers, found their fortunes dependent on the elimination of this class rule. This anger found expression, however, in a hatred directed at everything British or Western, because it was them who had established and now perpetuated this class rule. 'Arabisation' of the Communists (Batatu 1978, pp.749-750) and their failure to initiate large-scale social change despite their extremely efficient use of mass movements, the formation of an alliance among the political leadership of the opposition, and penetration of the officer corps by Arab nationalism and radical social ideas all prepared the ground for military takeover by the 'Free Officers'. When it became clear after the Najaf and Hayy uprisings that 'the street', while able to shake the government, was not capable of dealing it a final blow, Free Officers took the matter into their own hands, led by Abdul-Karim Qasim and Abdul-Salam Aref, who, after almost two years of planning, came to power in an almost bloodless coup.<sup>7</sup>

Once the monarchy and its allies were eliminated, the leadership of the revolution, lacking any common enemy, turned against one another. With the support of the Communists, Qasim established himself as the "Sole Leader" of the revolution. As Arab nationalists pushed for union with the United Arab Republic (UAR)—a state formed by the merging of Egypt and Syria in 1958— the forces of Qasim and the Communist Party coalesced around a more particularist position, albeit with different motives: Qasim did not want to lose his position to Nasser; and union would require the Communist Party to be dissolved, naturally unacceptable to the Communists. Furthermore, the Kurds had concerns regarding their status in the UAR.

After the purge of Aref and other Arab nationalists, however, and contrary to expectations, governmental and military positions were not filled by the Communists, due to Qasim's distrust of them. They had to rely on their organizational prowess to make inroads into the

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<sup>7</sup> Whether this episode of regime change constituted a revolution or a military coup is discussed in detail in Batatu (1978, pp.805-807).



government and the military, especially through organising in peasants' federations and professional associations as well as unions, but following the Mosul and Kirkuk incidents, Communist influence began to wane.<sup>8</sup>

Qasim's volatile relations with the Communists proved to serve and undermine him simultaneously. While the Communists provided whatever popular legitimacy Qasim had, he was worried that they would, if left unchallenged, become the main force in the country. Moreover, Qasim had a more reformist agenda, and he was concerned that the Communists might push forward more radical policies (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, pp.62-65). What Qasim did in the few years of his rule, however, was still more radical than what many expected at the time. Land reform broke the back of the *shaikhs* and redistributed land to the peasants, constituting them as small landowners. Social policies in urban areas included huge residential projects as well as access to modern amenities. The reach of education expanded enormously and new laws were promulgated to subject rural areas to the same laws as those in place in urban areas. Women's rights were also improved, with polygamy banned and the minimum marriage age brought up to eighteen. All these social policies did not indicate a move towards socialism, however. The Qasim government pursued a strategy of industrialisation and favoured investors by exempting them from taxes that applied to other segments of the population.

By undermining the Communists, Qasim also undermined himself, in the process empowering the Arab nationalists, led by the Baath Party. Disaffected during the early months of Qasim's rule and failing to assassinate him in 1959, Baathist officers harvested the fruits of their three years of careful planning in 1963, overthrowing Qasim's government. During the first few months following the coup, Baathists terrorised the Communists, killing and arresting them in their thousands after Qasim himself had been executed. Although development plans continued under Aref (and later under his brother), they did not constitute a coherent strategy; rather they seemed to be approximations of Nasser's policies in Egypt, devised to ensure allegiance of Nasserite elements in Iraq. Nationalisation of banks and large commercial enterprises resulted in a massive flight of capital, and unskilled state administrators contributed to the downfall of the economy. Nor was the political scene stable. There were divisions among the Baathists and Aref played on these. It became quickly obvious that the

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<sup>8</sup> In response to a coup plot by the Arab nationalists backed by the UAR, Qasim mobilised the communists in Mosul to organise a parade which turned into an intercommunal fight between Kurdish and Arab tribes in Mosul and then between Kurdish and Turkmen tribes in Kirkuk. The atrocities committed against both Arabs and Turkmen by the Kurds were largely blamed on the communists (Batatu, 1978, pp.912ff).

new political forces lacked any concrete programmes. When Aref died in a helicopter accident in 1966, a power vacuum emerged, to be filled once again by Baathi officers, who, along with the rest of the officer corps, were disgruntled by the humiliation in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 (Batatu, 1978, pp.1063-66).

The manner in which the Baathists, led by Ahmad Hassan Al Bakr, pulled off the act of filling this vacuum is significant, not only because of its historical significance in marking the beginning of the Baathist era proper, but also because of its being a reflection of the way the Iraqi state was constituted as a real abstraction. Bakr and other Baathists were acutely aware that the crucial government and military positions were held by Aref loyalists, so what they did was to bring round to their own way of thinking three of Aref's four most important allies, without whom he could not ensure continuance of his regime, all of whom were concerned about their position under Aref (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, p.112). While the new cabinet reflected the power-sharing agreement of these three individuals (Abdul Razzaq al-Nayyif, Abdul Rahman al-Da'ud and Sa'dun Ghaydan) and the Baathists, real capability lay with the Revolutionary Command Council, where the Baathists, mostly from Tikrit (Bakr's hometown) held sway (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, pp.113-4). In less than two weeks, however, Bakr's faction took full control of the new regime, excluding two of these three individuals from the new arrangement.

All this reflected the conspiratorial nature of Iraqi politics in the post-monarchy period up until the 1968 coup. It seemed as if the whole game of power was played out in complete detachment from wider social relations. Individual officers knew very well that their fortunes were strictly dependent on their ability to create power bases for themselves in the army. This has to do in part with the historical legacy of the pre-monarchy period, when the fragmented nature of tribal rule within what came to be called Iraq was reinforced by the Ottoman Court. Tribal relations continued to play an important role throughout the period of monarchy, as the British administrators found this socio-political configuration suited their needs. Although officers during the monarchical period came from diverse backgrounds, every high-ranking officer and political office-holder sought to bring their loyal followers to key positions.

Secondly, and more importantly, the immense increase in oil output and oil revenues starting from the 1950s bestowed on the state an enormous degree of autonomy (Dodge 2003a; 2005, p.708; cf. Makiya 1998). This autonomy, enabled the Iraqi state, especially under Saddam, to 'tie' the Iraqi population *individually* to the state (Dodge 2003a, p.106) for their day-to-day reproduction, with 40% of households living on 'government payment'. This resulted in an atomisation of social relations (Dodge 2003a, p.107), for individual households did not need to

enter into reproductive relations with one another. Although social reforms were introduced in different periods, this was more due to the new rulers' desire to eliminate competition from tribal *shaikhs* than to any attempt to bridge the gap between wider society and the political arena. This phenomenon, observed in other oil-producing Middle Eastern countries, is generally explained in terms of the 'rentier state' argument in the literature. First introduced by Mahdavy (1970) in the case of Iran, and refined by Beblawi (1990), the concept came to be utilised as the central *explanans* for the authoritarian and non-democratic character of these states (Ross 2001) uninterested in collecting taxes, legitimising their rule and establishing social bases to reproduce their rule, or investing in productive sectors. Notwithstanding the purchase of the concept, it reduces a diversity of practices into one overarching and predetermined formula. It does not explain, for example, Iraq's industrialisation drive under Saddam. Neither can it explain the differences between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on the one hand, and Iraq on the other, in the area of redistribution of rent. Even if one accepts the usefulness of the concept, then, it suffers from a conceptual overstretch (Okruhlik 1999). As the Iraqi case demonstrates, rents accruing to a state do not automatically translate into a specific regime type or a specific foreign policy strategy. This is not to deny that it was rentierism that enabled the Iraqi state to gain autonomy from wider social reproductive strategies of the population, and thereby be relatively insulated from the pressures of the American strategy of 'economic statecraft' that the Clinton administrations implemented in the 1990s. Indeed, as Dodge (2006) shows, the American state resorted to invasion when it was unable to compel the Iraqi state into the orbit of the American-led capitalist order. Making possible a strategic choice, however, is not the same as making it necessary. Other dictatorships, emblematically Saudi Arabia, chose to be submissive despite the rentier nature of their polities. The real challenge is to show how this autonomy, was dealt with by the Iraqi state in building an oppressive state complex, which, for conjuncturally specific reasons adopted a recalcitrant foreign policy strategy.

The cumulative unintended consequences of the actions of the monarchy and the military rulers were massive rural-to-urban migration, expanded education, and the rise of a worker population who, along with the urban unemployed and other salaried groups, expressed themselves practically as the working class, and who joined the ranks of the ICP –the sole conduit between an isolated group of officer-politicians and larger society. This is not to say that other organised groups did not have any relations with larger society, but that they were also enmeshed in these conspiratorial relations. So thirdly, liquidation of the Communists by successive governments severed the state machinery even more from wider social relations.

Left to their own devices, officers-cum-politicians competed for power, forming and breaking alliances and recruiting trusted supporters. One could find different regiments reporting to different individuals who, in turn, had diverse loyalties; that they could trust only individuals from their own tribes or extended families was both a result and a constitutive aspect of the conspiratorial nature of political change (Marr 2011, p.126). It was the Baath Party under Saddam Hussein that would bring a halt to the fragmented nature of rule in Iraq, albeit to the detriment of others and the rest of Iraqi society.

#### **5.4.2 Saddam is Iraq, Iraq is Saddam: Tribalisation and Personalisation of Rule against the 'Enemies within'**

The full consolidation of the state security institutions as Baathi security institutions was achieved under the Bakr administration. Initiating a new reign of terror against every potential competitor and dissenter, he established a totalitarian state in Iraq. Yet again, he was well aware that the challenge would, as it almost always did, come from within his government. Both Interior and Defence Ministers were aiming to form their own organs of security, but at the same time competing with each other regarding their respective jurisdiction. Bakr was also establishing his own security apparatus, under the supervision of his relative Saddam (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001, pp.119-20). By 1970, the Bakr-Hussein faction was able to remove both ministers and secure its unchallenged rule, and Saddam became the vice-president of the all-powerful Revolutionary Command Council. In order to break the cycle of coups, the Bakr-Hussein regime replaced military officers with Baath members, established control over recruitment and indoctrination within the army, and most importantly, tried to socialise support for their rule. This latter strategy would serve to consolidate their rule in several ways: while socialist-cum-state capitalist control over the economy would earn the respect of workers and peasants, it would also expand the political control of the Baathi state over the whole social life of the country. Moreover, at a time when the Baathi regime did not lack perceived and real enemies abroad, it would secure the backing of the Soviet Union, providing external security for the regime. Finally, in view of the IPC's sway over the country's economy they pursued a strategy of diversification, modernisation, and industrialisation in an attempt to achieve economic independence (Marr 2011, pp.161-162). Accordingly, the new regime undertook a programme of land redistribution, followed by the expansion of literacy and health services, all of which benefited the urban poor, as well as a nascent group of semi-private entrepreneurs who exploited the opportunities offered by government investments. It was also the Bakr-Hussein regime that finally achieved nationalisation of the oil industry, the revenues from which were used to fund these social projects as well as military modernisation

projects, increasing Iraqi military capability considerably. The new regime also sought to incorporate the Kurds, Shia and Communists, while at the same time oppressing their organised movements, especially in the case of the latter two groups. Kurds enjoyed a certain level of security after Saddam and Barzani agreed on Kurdish allegiance to the government in return for national rights, to include recognition of Kurdish as an official language in Kurdish regions. Pacifying these groups was one more way to buttress the Baathi rule. Later in the decade, however, the government toned down its conciliatory remarks significantly, returning to its primary strategy of oppression.

Throughout the period from 1968 to 1979, Saddam prepared the ground for ultimate transition to his presidency, significantly by entrenching his control over the security and intelligence services of the country. The first such apparatus was formed by Saddam in Syria, when he had had to flee Iraq after his attempt on Qasim's life in 1959 failed. *Jihaz al-Khas* (Special Apparatus) as it was called then, became an official institution after 1968 (Makiya 1998, Marashi 2002) and was dissolved in 1973 when Saddam overhauled the whole state security and intelligence service following a coup attempt against himself and Bakr by the chief of *al-Amn al-'Amm* (General Security Service or State Internal Security Service), Nazim Khazzar, notorious mastermind of all Saddam's dirty work in oppressing dissent in the country. *Al-Amn*, established in 1921 during the British mandate, normally reported to the Minister of the Interior, and was composed of civilian policemen.<sup>9</sup> With the 1973 restructuring, it reported directly to the Presidential Palace, and had most of its powers transferred to the General Intelligence, or the *Mukhabarat*. The *Mukhabarat* was filled with former members of *Jihaz al-Khas* and those most loyal to the party. Finally the Military Intelligence, or the *Istikhbarat* was tasked with monitoring military officers to pre-empt coup attempts, as well as carrying out the routine task of collecting strategic information on perceived enemies abroad. Through his control over these institutions, it was only normal that in 1979, when the ailing President Bakr resigned from his post, Saddam replaced him as the president.

Saddam's first decade in power was largely marked by the 8-year Iran-Iraq War, which had a crippling effect on Iraq. Although Iran and Iraq had, to the surprise of many, reached agreement on various issues including border disputes in 1975, the intention of the Baath government was to uncouple the Kurdish insurgency from Iran –as a result of which they managed to put an end to the Kurdish uprising– and Iraq took this agreement as a truce rather than a comprehensive settlement (Ghareeb 1981). After the elimination of the Kurdish

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<sup>9</sup> Information on the state security and intelligence services is compiled from Makiya (1998) and Marashi (2002).

insurgency, the Shia remained the major obstacle in Saddam's mind on the course toward national unity, and Khomeini's calls for the overthrow of the Baathi regime in 1979 found an audience in Iraq, giving rise to widespread demonstrations which were harshly suppressed. As cross-border skirmishes intensified on the Iran-Iraq border throughout 1980, the war that would devastate both countries started in September that year with an Iraqi offensive.

Even before the Islamic Revolution, Saddam considered Iran an enemy who, with the help of Israel and the US, had ambitions to dominate the Persian Gulf.<sup>10</sup> This was also among the reasons why the Iraqi state was willing to cooperate with the Soviet Union in the 1970s. As Iraq developed its military capability through oil revenues, it could now credibly claim leadership in the Arab world, especially at a time when Anwar Sadat, the President of Egypt after Nasser, was engaging in diplomatic relations with Israel, resulting in the Camp David agreement (Tripp 2007). Saddam saw the increasing tension with Iran both as a threat to the reproduction of the Baathi regime, and an opportunity to assert leadership in the Arab world, by offering itself as a buffer between an expansionary regime and the rest of the Arab world.<sup>11</sup> As the tide turned against the revolutionary regime in Iran, with US solidly against it and the USSR remaining neutral, Saddam responded to threats from Khomeini in kind, and instigated an abortive coup attempt in Iran (Hiro, 1991, p.36). Finally, he went on the offensive.

As the war raged, Saddam made sure that his regime, now more personal than partisan, ruled unchallenged. If the Bakr presidency was marked by the Baathification of the state, Saddam's term was characterised by the embodiment in Saddam of all state power. Even before the war, shortly after his inauguration, Saddam purged opposition from the Baathi ranks in a farcical rendition of Stalin's show trials. In 1982, following an attempt on his life, Saddam established the notorious *Jihaz al-Amn al-Khas*, or Special Security Apparatus, which served as a presidential intelligence service (Marashi 2002). Staffed by those most loyal to Saddam from all three agencies that operated in the country in the 1970s (*Al-Amn*, *Istikhbarat*, and *Mukhabarat*) and led by Saddam's cousin and son-in-law Hussein Kamil, the main task of this apparatus was to coordinate intelligence and security and provide oversight as part of its function to protect the president and presidential facilities. As Marashi (2003, p.203) puts it, it served 'as the nerve center of Saddam's security apparatus'. As well as monitoring other agencies and high-ranking officials including their families, the Special Security Apparatus

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<sup>10</sup> Saddam never gave up on his suspicions as to a possible collusion of Iran with the United States and Israel, even after the Islamic revolution in Iran, as demonstrated by the recovered tapes of his secret meetings with his closest aides on the Iran-Contra Affair (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, pp.25-29).

<sup>11</sup> Saddam knew very well that the major states in the Arab world attributed a balancing role to Iraq in the region, and sought to manipulate this (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, pp.30-31).

controlled the units in the Iraqi army responsible for chemical weapons (Marashi 2002), turning Iraq into a 'Mukhabarat state'. Furthermore, the network among these agencies was designed in such a way that every operative and chief monitored the actions of every other within the agencies and every agency monitored every other one. That all of them reported directly to the Palace also ensured that no concentration of power and influence would be possible. While the extensiveness of the apparati made sure that the whole population was under the dictator's watchful eye, the competitive nature of inter-agency relations served as a bulwark against coup attempts that had made, unmade, and remade rulers throughout the post-monarchy period.

It would be incorrect, however, to attribute the Saddam's strategy of reproduction of his role solely to the repressive instruments of the state (cf. Makiya 1998). As mentioned above, starting from 1968, the Baath Party implemented a series of social policies. While social goods were distributed unevenly among different sections of society, whereby those from Tikrit, hometown to both Saddam and Bakr, were the prime benefactors, poor Shia also benefited. That the bulk of non-commissioned officers and conscripts composed mainly of Shiite Iraqis did not desert *en masse* during the war with Iran is a case in point. While the Shiite population may not have been in agreement with the policies of the Baath Party ideologically, they enjoyed the social policies designed to make them the 'client base' of Saddam's personal rule (Tripp 2007, p.119).

What is of significance here regarding this intelligence and security network is that it never functioned as a locus of foreign policy decision-making, this remaining firmly in the hands of the Revolutionary Command Council and Saddam Hussein himself as chair of the council. There are two main reasons for this. These organisations were, first and foremost, preoccupied with spying on other agencies to ensure loyalty to the Presidency. Secondly, and more importantly, even when they offered analyses of external threats, Saddam would dismiss these analyses and task them only with fact-finding. During a meeting in late 1990 with his senior officials, Saddam declared that he wanted only facts from the intelligence organisations, because analysis 'is my specialty' (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, p.36).

As the Iran-Iraq war progressed, the Iraqi state and Saddam had to acknowledge that the war would not result in a quick and decisive victory. By 1982, Iran had reversed the balance in its favour. From now on, it seemed the tide would turn against Iraq in the war, even with the support of the US. It became clear, however, that the US, while worried about a possible spread of the Iranian revolution, was also unwilling to bestow decisive victory on Iraq, as demonstrated by the revelation of the Irangate scandal, which disclosed that US officials were

selling armaments to Iran despite its arms embargo in order to fund anti-communist *contras* in Nicaragua, although US congress had prohibited support for *contras* earlier. To turn the tide once again, Iraq resorted to chemical weapons, utilising satellite imagery provided by the US.<sup>12</sup> Having lost access to the world market through the Persian Gulf or through Syria, who shut down the pipeline, with its oil fields destroyed, its manpower depleted and revenues diminished, Saddam increasingly relied on external debt and repressive instruments of the state to reproduce himself. As the price of oil fell in the mid-1980s, and Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates caused it to fall even more by not observing their quotas set by OPEC, Iraq lost its ability to fund the war. Anxious to contain Iran, the US took action and attempted to isolate Iran, which in the end forced Iran to accept UN mediation and end hostilities in 1988.

The human cost of the war was over 500,000 dead according to conservative estimates, and as many injured. Although Iraq's casualty numbers were much lower than those of Iran, Iraq lost a larger proportion of its 17 million population. Considering that those who died also constituted the active workforce of a country already suffering from labour shortages, the possible long-term effects of the war on the livelihoods of Iraqis and the reproduction of the regime were much greater. More significant for the reproduction of the Iraqi people and the regime was the loss of oil revenues. Not only had Iran destroyed Iraqi oil fields, refineries, and equipment, but also blocked its already limited access to the Persian Gulf, compelling a landlocked Iraq to use pipelines through Turkey and Saudi Arabia for its exports. Hoping that the war would end quickly, Saddam had flooded the country with imported foodstuffs and other consumer products to boost the morale of the population as well as to make up for the losses in agricultural output due to lack of the workforce (Alnasrawi 1994). Plummeting oil prices did not help either, not only dramatically decreasing revenues, but also undermining Iraq's ability to procure primary consumer goods, continue social policies, and service its debts, let alone funding its war with Iran. In brief, the war had a devastating effect on Iraq as a whole.

Iraq was backed by an unlikely coalition during its war against Iran. France and the Soviet Union had provided arms, the US had provided intelligence and naval support, and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had extended their financial support and access to the world market (Stork and Lesch 1990). Both the Gulf States and most Middle Eastern states now sought to restore the balance between Iraq and Iran in the face of an Iraqi claim to regional leadership. Most

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<sup>12</sup> In one instance of Iraqi chemical weapon use, and as part of Saddam's genocidal Al-Anfal campaign against Kurds, Iraqi aircraft dropped chemical gas over Halabja, a town controlled at the time by the Kurdish peshmerga, who were cooperating with Iranian forces. See Rabil (2002) for an analysis of Saddam's war against Kurds in this period through official state documents of Iraq.



importantly, Kuwait repeatedly rejected Saddam's calls for pardoning of its debts to Kuwait, escalating tension with Iraq.

In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, citing historical claims to Kuwaiti territory, accusing Kuwait of tapping Iraqi oil through slant drilling, and charging Kuwaiti authorities with economic warfare through overproduction of oil. The annexation of Kuwait would restore revenues crucial both for credibility of the regime in the Arab world and for social reproduction of Baathi rule in Iraq. As I argued in Chapter Three, Iraq's larger foreign policy strategy was to establish itself as the hegemonic power of the Arab world by representing itself as a bulwark against the spread of Iranian Islamic revolution and a countervailing force against Israel.<sup>13</sup> The US wanted to establish 'normal relations' with the Iraqi government in the hope of containing Iran, and this may help explain why Iraq assumed that the US would remain neutral. Furthermore, as evidenced by the recording of a discussion between Saddam and his advisors, they were at pains to win the hearts and minds of the Arab public by charging Kuwait with collusion with Israel (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, pp.170-71). In any case, neither the US nor Kuwait nor other Arab states assumed that Iraq would go so far as to invade the country (Tripp 2007). In the period following the invasion, while the US was working to build up pressure on Iraq, regional powers including Arab states and Turkey were ambivalent. While Saudi Arabia was more eager to listen to Iraqi demands at the beginning, it became concerned when Iraq changed the Kuwaiti regime to a republic, delegitimising the Saudi monarchy (Marr 2011, pp.220-21). In the end, Saudi Arabia, along with Turkey, agreed to block Iraqi oil pipelines, depriving Iraq effectively of most of its export capability.

As Iraq rejected cooperation, coalition forces led by the US expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the retreating armoured units of the Iraqi army were destroyed. The immediate result of the war was the exposure of the weakness of the regime when confronted by a superior force. More importantly, it marked a turning point in Iraqi history, in that both the sanctions regime and the inspections regime undertaken in accordance with a series of UNSC resolutions would start the process of the unravelling of Saddam's rule in Iraq. Sanctions were tied to the confirmation of the absence or destruction of any WMDs or WMD development programmes by the United Nations Special Commission, or UNSCOM, the precursor of UNMOVIC. The mission required cooperation by Iraqi authorities and Saddam's regime was extremely reluctant to offer this unless compelled to do so (Oudraat 2002, pp.141-142).

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<sup>13</sup> In a recorded conversation with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and other aides, Saddam was certain of a stronger Iraq's value to the American state as well as the Arab states, and was willing to play on their concerns, despite the revelation of the Iran-Contra affair and his conviction that the US policy was one of balancing rather than taking sides (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, pp.30-31).

Encouraged by the intervention of coalition forces and US calls for Iraqi people to rise up (Jabar 1992), the Kurds rebelled against the regime and took control of Kurdish-populated towns. The response by the central state was brutal and, without any support from outside, the Kurds lost their acquisitions in a few weeks. The result was a humanitarian disaster with thousands dead and 2,500,000 refugees fleeing to Iran and Turkey because of fresh and painful memories of the 1988 Anfal Campaign. Upon request of the governments of Turkey, France and Iran, the UNSC passed resolution 688. Based on this resolution, the US, UK and France established a no-fly zone for Iraqi aircraft over Kurdish areas of the country, although the resolution did not specifically mention such a zone (Graham-Brown 2001). Following operations by the allied forces, this no-fly zone effectively helped establish a *de facto* Kurdish administration in northern Iraq, which would later gain a *de jure* status as the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) (Stansfield 2003). Two main Kurdish parties in the region, the KDP led by Barzani and the PUK led by Talabani, set their differences aside to form a coalition and held elections in 1992. Similarly encouraged by the US, and disillusioned with both the social character of the state after the first few years of the Iran-Iraq war and with wartime patriotism, the Shia embraced a more religious stance, following the clerics.<sup>14</sup> Left to its own devices, the opposition, notwithstanding its ferocious sweep of state and party buildings in the first days of the uprising, was crushed by the Republican Guard in a massacre. Another no-fly zone was formed in the south of the country, and later expanded to south of Baghdad, with the aim of protecting civilians from regime oppression. Both no-fly zones served to corner Saddam's rule to central areas of Iraq around Baghdad, consolidating in the process the already existing division among the three main ethno-religious groups in the country.

The sanctions regime that would devastate Iraq was put in place, ostensibly targeting the regime, not its people. Sanctions encompassed all imports except medical goods and foodstuffs. Export of oil, on which the Iraqi economy largely depended, was blocked, further crippling both the Iraqi state and society. The quality of life in Iraq deteriorated, with high ratios of infant mortality, lack of healthcare, very poor conditions of living, with salaried professionals reduced to poor recipients of state rations, while waged workers reduced even further by a diet lacking sufficient protein. If the population did not suffer from widespread starvation, it was because of the government-managed system of rationing (Graham-Brown

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<sup>14</sup> This is not to say that the uprisings in Shia majority cities were primarily motivated by religious sentiments; rather religious groups led by clerics such as the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Dawa Party forced their way into the leadership of the uprisings See Jabar (1992). Indeed it was the retreating Baath officers who initiated the uprising in the Sunni majority towns of Abul Khasin and Zubair then in Basra (Graham-Brown 1999, p.154; Jabar 2004, p.134). Also see Marr (2011, p.228).

2000, p.9), which was put in place during the occupation of Kuwait in response to the embargo. The lack of access to basic needs on the part of the population gave rise to what Jabar (2000) called the 'retribalization' of Iraqi social life, as kinship and tribal networks gained importance once more when the state was no longer able to distribute benefits. Those who were privileged enough through networks of the 'shadow state' suffered less from the sanctions because of their close relations with the regime (Dodge 2003a, p.107), and the Baathi regime adapted to the sanctions in time (Graham-Brown 2000, p.9) displacing the burden onto the larger disaffected population.

'Retribalization' of social relations in Iraq was also due to Saddam's conscious strategy of securing his rule. Now Saddam's son Qusay led the top secret service organisation, the Special Security Apparatus, while the elite Special Republican Guard was staffed with his tribesmen. Even the strategy of entrusting family members with key offices and positions failed to secure his rule, as demonstrated by Hussein Kamil's defection and cooperation with UNSCOM regarding Iraq's programmes of WMD. In 1983, Saddam had arranged the marriage of his eldest daughter Raghda to Kamil in order to consolidate his own position, despite protests from the elders of his own tribe, and particularly his half-brothers.<sup>15</sup> Having been appointed to the helm of the notorious Special Security Apparatus, Kamil was also charged with overseeing a non-conventional weapons procurement and development programme. The bitter power struggle between Kamil and his brother Saddam Kamil on the one hand, and Saddam's sons Qusay and particularly Uday on the other, alienated Kamil from Saddam's regime. As Saddam threatened to deport UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors in two months (for the sanctions were still in place in mid-1995 despite Iraq's alleged cooperation), Kamil defected to Jordan with an entourage including his brother Saddam Kamil and their wives (Saddam's daughters Raghda and Rana). In a move to ease the pressure and pre-empt trouble, Saddam declared Kamil personally responsible for concealing WMD-related documents on his farm (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, pp.296-297). Kamil's defection marked another turning point: It revealed the extent of Iraq's weapons programmes, making it impossible for Saddam to continue the policy of concealment. Indeed, Saddam stepped back and sought to assuage the concerns of the international community by withdrawing the earlier report and submitting a more accurate one. Furthermore, he had to accept the Oil for Food Programme that the UN had been calling for over the previous five years.

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<sup>15</sup> Saddam did not refrain from arranging the marriages of his other children for the same purpose (see Karsh and Rautsi, 1991, p.180-181)

While Kamil's defection and later cooperation with the UN officials was significant in that it increased the isolation of Iraq internationally, its real importance lies in the fact that Saddam's strategy of entrusting key positions to family members was not producing the consequences he had intended. Although Saddam was able to hold on to the intelligence and security service network and the Republican Guard after to maintain his position, what he feared most throughout his dictatorship became real when a family member defected just at a time when he thought he was about to break Iraq's international encirclement, with consensus as to the usefulness of sanctions eroding in the UNSC and the Arab world (Graham-Brown 1999).

In January 1996, Saddam informed the UN that he was ready to discuss Resolution 986 (also known as the Oil-for-Food Program) that he had rejected back in April 1995 when he still hoped he could persuade the UNSCOM inspectors. Ensuing inflow of foodstuffs and limited export of oil resulted in a degree of economic recovery which improved standards of living, especially in the regime-controlled regions. Vanishing consensus on the benefits of sanctions, increasing pressure from the publics of the Western world as well as the Arab world regarding the toll the civilian Iraqis had to pay, and the lucrative trade relations of Iraq with three UNSC permanent members (that is France, Russia and China) helped Saddam to further consolidate his position in Iraq. Moreover, the split between the KDP and the PUK in the Kurdish north weakened the Kurdish threat. Attempts by the US to overthrow Saddam through CIA-backed operations of the Iraqi National Accord (INA) and Iraqi National Congress (INC), led respectively by CIA assets Iyad Allawi and Ahmed Chalabi, failed because of discord among their constituents. In one such episode, Saddam was able to uncover a coup attempt in 1996 through the extensive reach of his internal intelligence and security network, and executed tens of officers.<sup>16</sup> However, this was an instructive reminder for Saddam that the most formidable challenge to his rule was the constant danger emanating from the security apparatus of Iraq.

By 1997, although revelations by Kamil and the findings of the UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors verified that Iraq did not have any WMDs, the UNSC wanted the report to include all the names, companies and countries that Iraq had cooperated with in acquiring WMD capabilities in the past, as well as the names of all personnel who worked in the production and destruction of WMDs. Saddam rejected this, believing that whatever they did, the US would not be satisfied until he was overthrown. He also sought to maintain a degree of deterrence

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<sup>16</sup> Marine Captain and UNSCOM inspector Scott Ritter (2005) gives a detailed account of how UNSCOM was used as a front organization by the CIA to overthrow Saddam. According to Ritter, it was the Mukhabarat that uncovered the plot.

capability against Israel and Iran by remaining ambiguous (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, pp.256, 293).<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he did not accept the inspection of 'Presidential Sites' without notification. This was also related to Saddam's suspicions regarding the intentions of the US: he thought these inspections were organised to acquire intelligence for other purposes, such as determining targets in a possible attack by the US or Israel. Capitalising on discord among UNSC permanent members as well, Saddam made it increasingly difficult for the inspections to proceed. Uncooperativeness, in this context, turned into a bargaining chip in Saddam's hands. Meanwhile, the Iraqi Liberation Act passed in the US Congress in October 1998 openly declared US foreign policy toward Iraq as regime change.<sup>18</sup> Combined with this, limited strikes by the US and the UK as part of Operation Desert Fox marked the end of UNSCOM's mission.

In brief, Saddam's strategy of reproduction in the 1980s consisted of three main elements: expanding and perfecting a security and intelligence network with loyalist tribesmen and kinsmen at the helm designed to thwart any coup plots, incorporating whomever he could from the disenfranchised segments of the population and oppressing the rest, and implementing large-scale social projects as well as adopting a reformist and populist rhetoric to increase his legitimacy. These were added to his aspiration to lead the Arab world and become a regional power in the Middle East. As the war came to an end, dealing a strong blow to his aspirations as well as his strategies of reproduction by devastating Iraq's revenues, Saddam increasingly had to rely solely on coercive tactics. Sanctions imposed by the UNSC in the 1990s further crippled the regime, reducing its effective control to the central provinces of Iraq. Saddam tried to maintain his sway over the security and intelligence network by installing even closer relatives in key posts. Even this strategy proved risky when his sons-in-law defected. To make up for this internal security deficit, a new security force, Fedayeen Saddam, was established in 1995 to protect the President. Incorporating members of Shiite and Kurdish communities into his regime by appointing them to some relatively minor positions in government also fell victim to his strategy of tribalisation. While the disaffected Shia turned to religious organisations, Kurdish parties reached a power-sharing agreement in the North, although Saddam would do his best to pit one against the other throughout the 1990s. As the social programmes failed due to sanctions and wars, Saddam could not continue to fund even the basic needs of the society. Although the regime somewhat successfully implemented a rationing system, it far from satisfied the needs of the population and was selective toward

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<sup>17</sup> Woods, Palkki and Stout (2011, p.256) claim that this may also be related to a lack of reliable records available to the Iraqi government.

<sup>18</sup> Although the Act allocated approximately USD 100 million to supporting opposition groups in Iraq, only a very limited amount of this was spent until the Bush administration came to power (Marr 2011, p.254).

regime supporters. As replacement for social policies, Saddam increasingly adopted a religious rhetoric, ostensibly without discriminating against the Shia.<sup>19</sup> Combined with an anti-imperialist and anti-Semitic rhetoric, this was designed to maintain a degree of patriotism among the population. Finally, he turned to strategic ambiguity as a way of deterring any aggression against Iraq, while at the same time partially cooperating with UNSCOM and IAEA experts. Saddam felt that the biggest challenge to his reproduction was an American-backed military coup, and although scathed, his control over the oppressive intelligence and security apparati remained in place. Moreover, until the invasion of Iraq in 2003, he successfully manipulated the discord among the permanent members of the UNSC, to the chagrin of the US and the UK. These further contributed to Saddam's belief that the US would not dare to launch a ground invasion.

### **5.5. Caught by Surprise: Saddam's Misjudgement of American Intentions**

Since Operation Desert Fox in December 1998, Saddam increasingly came to believe that the US would continue its airstrikes, but refrain from launching a land attack. He expected that the US would try to overthrow him through supporting Shiite and Kurdish opposition or disgruntled military officers. Therefore, on Saddam's list of priorities of strategic threats, apart from those emanating from his aides, an American invasion came only in third place, preceded by the possibility of a coup attempt or an attack by Iran, Israel or Turkey, the most likely being Iran (Classified Intelligence Report, April 2004, cited in Woods et al. 2006, p.25). US military interventions in Somalia and Bosnia gave Saddam the impression that the US would not engage in a costly war against Iraq.<sup>20</sup> While he knew that the passing of the Iraqi Liberation Act was the work of the Republicans to corner the Clinton government, he was still confident that his regime would be under no threat in Clinton's term.<sup>21</sup> Even though Saddam and his advisors knew the difference between the Republicans and the Democrats, their assessment was still that the 'Republicans [knew] that the regime cannot be ousted' (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, p.57).

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<sup>19</sup> In one such show of piety, Saddam had a calligrapher write a copy of the Quran using 27 litres of his own blood (Chulov 2010).

<sup>20</sup> In the minutes of Saddam's meeting with Vojislav Seselj, leader of the Serbian Radical Party, Saddam registers his views on the weakness of the US (Captured Iraqi document dated 12 December 2001, cited in Woods et al. 2006, p.16). In a captured audiotape, Saddam is heard of talking to his aides about the US: 'if America doesn't condition [itself] to the new international situation... they will see problems... didn't they [the Somali] shame the US Army?' (Woods et. al 2006, p.21n79). Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz also confirmed that Saddam was 'very confident' that the US would not attack (Classified Intelligence Report, May 2003, cited in Woods et al. 2006, p.28).

<sup>21</sup> In a discussion with his senior advisors Saddam registers his belief regarding the declared American policy to change the Iraqi regime and the Clinton position on it (Woods, Palkki and Stout 2011, p.56-57).

This strategic calculation made Saddam spend all his energy on securing his regime against any internal threat. To this aim, he ordered the division of the country into four military zones with loyal allies at the helm, devoting Iraqi military preparation to quashing internal dissidence. He believed further that France and Russia would do his bidding in the UNSC. The replacement of UNSCOM by UNMOVIC was a move to alleviate some of the concerns that Saddam had regarding the American and British inspectors, whom he claimed turned UNSCOM into a locus of US spying activities.<sup>22</sup> UNMOVIC would report directly to the UN. Russia and France showed that they would not allow UNMOVIC to operate like UNSCOM by, for example, blocking the appointment of Rolf Ekeus (former chair of UNSCOM) as head of UNMOVIC.

Saddam was very confident that the US would not send ground forces, so much so in fact that he openly expressed his view of the 9/11 attacks by broadcasting a message over Iraqi television that “America is reaping the thorns planted by its rulers in the world” (Rubin and Rubin 2002, p.283). A defiant Saddam would not cooperate with the UNMOVIC until it became clear that the US was giving serious consideration to a ground invasion. As the 12 months between the 9/11 attacks and September 2002 saw a US-induced escalation of tension, Iraq declared in a letter in mid-September to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that it would unconditionally allow inspectors to continue their work. When the UNSC accepted Resolution 1441 on 8 November, Iraq officially agreed to the Resolution in five days and the inspections recommenced on 27 November. Even then, however, Iraq’s report regarding its WMD activities left unaccounted-for gaps according to UNMOVIC (2003). Saddam still thought the objections of Russia, France and Germany could prevent the war and his Chief of Staff opined that even if the invasion started, the US would have to step back due to international pressure as well as domestic political reaction (Woods et al. 2006, p.30).

As war was becoming more likely in early 2003, Iraqi authorities did everything they could to satisfy the demands of the inspectors. However, neither relatively positive reports by the UN Chief Weapons Inspector Hans Blix nor the protests of Russia, France and Germany among others appeared to prevent escalation. Saddam and his aides now realised that war was almost inevitable. Realising this, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz reportedly noted that ‘America has long since decided to attack Iraq and nothing Iraq could do would prevent it’ (Polk 2005, p.169). The Iraqi government was so desperate that they tried to establish backchannel diplomatic links with the US government, promising to hold elections (*Guardian*,

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<sup>22</sup> Most famously, UNSCOM inspector Scott Ritter would confirm this, causing outcry in Iraq and controversy abroad. Ritter would later tell the whole story in a book shedding some light on the American intelligence operations in Iraq. See Ritter (2006).

2003), and even proposing to open Iraq to FBI agents to search for WMDs or any proof that linked Iraq to Al-Qaeda, although the proposal was 'killed' by the White House (Polk, 2005, p.168). As late as 28 February, that is three weeks before the war, Saddam ordered the destruction of Al-Samoud missiles in a demonstration of cooperation. Other last-minute attempts by Turkey and Egypt failed, as what they offered to Saddam was refuge and nothing more. Knowing that any agreement would require his exile along with his two sons, Uday and Qusay, Saddam refused these proposals. Finally, when George W. Bush issued an ultimatum requesting that Saddam and his sons leave the country so that Coalition forces could disarm Iraq, Saddam publicly rejected it, and the war to end his rule began, since Bush had also declared that whether Saddam stepped down or not the invasion would proceed.<sup>23</sup>

The preceding must have shed some light on the necessity of unpacking the historical becoming of a conjuncture that resulted in war. Unlike what many saw as a pathological outpouring of impulsive behaviour, Saddam's actions reflected his strategy of reproduction as a dictator which had been in the making since the 1960s. As aptly observed by Kevin Woods and his collaborators in the Iraqi Perspectives Project, 'While ... the choices Iraq made may appear dysfunctional..., the regime's response to the threat ... were logical within the Iraqi political framework' (Woods et al. 2006).

## 5.6. Conclusion

This chapter is the third and final part of a three-chapter illustration of the theoretical discussion presented in Chapter 2. It started with raising the question of why Saddam Hussein's regime reacted to the threat of war the way it did, defying the established logic of mainstream IR: prudence and caution. Then in Section 2, it engaged with the existing literature, and argued that while the literature on this episode of Iraqi foreign policy is very limited, existing works generally saw Iraq through a reductionist lens, either by reducing it to another Arab or Middle Eastern state or to yet another dictatorship. The specificities of the combination of social relations that helped shape both the conditions and strategies of the Iraqi state are largely disregarded, resulting in psychopathologies of dictators in which these specificities are seen as instances of general abstract properties of dictators or dictatorships. In Section 3, I claimed that Saddam had good reason to most fear a military coup. To overcome the problems found in the literature and to historically locate the role of the internal

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<sup>23</sup> In a meeting with the Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar on 22 February, Bush reportedly said that Saddam proposed to go into exile if he was allowed to take USD 1 billion and information on WMDs with him and implied that whether he left or not he would face charges for his crimes against humanity (Report Says Hussein Was Open To Exile Before 2003 Invasion, *The Washington Post*, 27 September 2007).



machinations that came to alarm Saddam, in Section 4, I proposed and undertook a historical reconstruction of the formation of the Iraqi state, the emergence of the officers as a social force, the autonomisation of the political struggle from wider social relations, and finally the responses Saddam gave to what appeared to him as the constant threat of a palace coup, which in turn gave shape to the Iraqi state from 1979 to 2003 and beyond. The historical reconstruction revealed that Saddam's fear of a coup was not unfounded at all. As I argued in section 4.1, both Ottoman and later British reliance on tribal relations to reproduce their rule in what was to become an independent Iraq contradicted the influence of market relations that both empires gradually introduced. Moreover, the reliance of the Iraqi Monarchy on British support on the one hand and its strategy of expanding a national army on the other, further deepened the contradiction whereby emergent officers showed their dissatisfaction through a series of coups starting from 1936 until reoccupation of the country by the British. Finally, an officer movement overthrew and abolished the monarchy in 1958, marking the beginning of another turbulent period in Iraqi history.

Significant increases in oil output and oil revenues starting from the last years of the Monarchy until the early 1980s contributed to the decoupling of the state from wider social relations, while at the same time enabling it to deliver social goods. The liquidation of the ICP after Qasim was overthrown severed any direct link that enabled wider segments of the population to participate in the formation of the new Iraqi state. This made possible a relentless power game among higher-ranking officers, each of whom entered into conjunctural and pragmatic alliances and tried to expand their power bases within the military. Power transitions throughout the post-monarchy period took the form of military coups by unlikely allies who almost always immediately fell out after seizing power. This mode of power transition led Saddam to strive for taking control of the whole of means of violence, control, and information available to the Iraqi state starting from the 1970s. This is why, I argued throughout this chapter, Saddam feared most a palace coup by military officers. To preclude possible attempts, Saddam reconfigured the whole security and intelligence apparatus that monitored almost every act of the officers with all agencies reporting directly to the Presidency, while spying on one another. This complex of agencies also served to oppress the disenfranchised segments of the population whereby everyone was relegated to the status of informer on everyone else, themselves fearful of the watchful eye of the regime. While Saddam also catered to the needs of wider society in terms of providing social goods, wars, first with Iran and then with the coalition forces, as well as the following sanctions regime rendered this strategy obsolete. Oppression of Kurds and the Shia resulted in their total alienation from the regime, and

Saddam felt increasingly encircled by the regional powers, the US and its allies, and their opposition. Relying on family members did not turn out to be as safe as he assumed when his sons-in-law defected in the mid-1990s. At the turn of the century, as circumstances seemed to ameliorate, with discord in the UNSC, limited economic recovery, departure of the UNSCOM inspectors, and relative stabilisation of the security situation, at least in the central parts of Iraq, Saddam thought he could finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. Having uncovered CIA-instigated coup attempts in the past, securing the support of Russia and France as well as the opposition of many others to US war plans, Saddam did not think the US would launch a land attack; rather he was preoccupied with another coup attempt as the most dangerous threat to his rule. This is why he adopted a strategy of gradual or partial compliance in the face of pressure by the UNSC. This is also why, when he realised that the US government meant business, he accepted every condition set by the successive UNSC resolutions that he had vehemently rejected in the past, understanding that now war had become unavoidable.

Just as the preceding two chapters did, this chapter also demonstrated that foreign policy decisions are inter-subjectively made not only by the actors who have immediate official capacity, but also by a variety of agents who occupy different spatiotemporal locations with diverse distances and mediations in their relation with the actual decision. The Iraqi decision, in this sense, was the result of the contradictory reproductive strategies of seemingly spatiotemporally unrelated agents. As will be argued in the Conclusion of this thesis, these foreign policy decisions, in turn, contribute to the inter-subjective and dialectical making of the real abstraction called the international system.

## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1. Introduction

This thesis problematized the disciplinary gap between FPA and IR. The gap, I argued, is the result of the disciplinary self-definitions of these two enterprises, notwithstanding extensive overlaps in their subject matter. While FPA seeks to explain specific foreign policy decisions of specific states, IR tends to focus more on the complex consequences of these decisions, and seeks to explain the patterns of relations between states. In doing this, they externalise each other: FPA takes the 'international system' as a given independent variable, while IR attributes predetermined forms of behaviour to states. Abstracted as different ways of seeing the same set of phenomena, these enterprises in fact freeze practical historical-social aspects of reality as unchanging conceptual architectonics. Attempts to bridge this disciplinary gap fail as a result, since rather than concretely relating these phenomena, they seek to juxtapose frozen conceptual abstractions without integrating them.

This failure, I claimed, can only be addressed at a deeper onto-epistemological level where we can problematise what an abstraction is, how abstractions are made in wider social relations among human beings, how real these abstractions are, and how they help us to understand and theorise, and bridge this gap in our scientific undertakings. To do this, I offered a fundamentally different conception of abstraction, one that finds its most developed expression in a dialectical mode of thinking. In this framework, derived mostly from the works of Karl Marx, I demonstrated that real abstractions such as the 'state', 'capital relation', 'the international system' and etc. are the products of protracted and contradictory historical processes that are generated by the contradictory strategies of a variety of agents in reproducing life. Inasmuch as they are experienced as a set of constraints, they appear as real structures to agents. In order to highlight the contested and transitory nature of these real abstractions, I maintained that they are no more than a temporary equilibrium of the contradictory historical strategies of reproduction of a multiplicity of agents. The main argument of this thesis, accordingly, is that in their concrete existence states practically bridge foreign policy and international relations. In their practical acts of reproduction, what is external to them, the so-called international system and its structure, appear to them as a constraining framework for action. By acting upon it, however, even within the perceived limits that face them, they contribute to changing the structure of the international system. To put it differently, foreign policies of states as part of their reproductive strategies constitute the concrete historical content of international relations. As states do not operate in a

vacuum, their foreign policy strategies do not translate into structural determinants of international relations unmediated; both the formation of foreign policy strategies and their constitutive influence in the shaping of international relations are subject to the socio-historical dynamics mentioned above. States as real abstractions, and their foreign policy strategies are themselves the temporarily institutionalised and ossified results of the interplay of contradictory strategies of reproduction of a variety of agents, constantly contested and changing in response to these strategies. By the same token, what appear to be patterns in international relations are the real abstractions generated by the interplay of foreign policy strategies of a multiplicity of states. In a word, what states do as part of their reproductive strategies unwittingly contributes to the making of what appear as international relations.

It is in this onto-epistemological framework that I claimed that the units and levels of analysis change according to the specific foreign policy question that we raise. To match this onto-epistemology, I offered a research question-guided methodology in FPA. This requires following the footsteps of the relevant agents immediately active in a foreign policy-making conjuncture. As foreign policies are themselves subject to contradictory strategies of reproduction and emerge as their unintended results, the analysis of every foreign policy decision requires a historical tracing back of its making. Analysis matches theory only when our study reflects the concrete complexity of reality.

To illustrate what all this means empirically, I analysed three counter-intuitive foreign policy decisions by three states in the early 2000s. The first case was the US decision to invade Iraq in 2003. I argued that the US grand strategy of ensuring and maintaining US primacy was reformulated by the Bush administration in its implementation, with the adoption of a more proactive policy of compelling 'failed' and 'rogue' states, i.e. states that escape the orbit of the American-led capitalist order, to integrate themselves into this order. The second case was the Turkish decision to deny passage and basing rights to invading American troops. I explained this decision with reference to the uneasy relationship between the military, the traditional locus of foreign policy-making in Turkey, and the newly-established JDP government. Paralysed by contradictory pressures from public opinion, its own constituency, the military as well as the other tutelary institutions of the Republic and the US government, the JDP government, I argued, did not push through the motion in the parliament forcefully enough to secure the vote. Finally, I raised the question regarding Iraq's defiance in the face of imminent invasion by the US. I argued that Iraq's recalcitrance was based on a miscalculation on the part of Saddam Hussein and his closest advisors that the gravest danger for his rule was the risk of a military coup, a miscalculation that cost him his life and regime. The aim in these individual analyses

was not to propose novel explanations for these three cases and the overlaps between the literature and the analyses offered here are indicative of this. The aim, first of all, was rather to demonstrate that these foreign policy decisions were not instantiations of pre-conceived theoretical models, but long-term consequences of the contradictorily related praxes of spatiotemporally differently situated and motivated agents. Secondly, the cases were meant to show that, in developing reproductive strategies, individual states and leaders practically bridge not only foreign policies and international relations, but also what researchers analytically separate as the economic, political, legal, geographical, psychological, and etc.

In analysing these decisions, therefore, I took the longer historical route to demonstrate that these decisions were not made in a vacuum originating in the personalities, psychologies, or leadership styles of the leaders. Nor were they the strategic calculations of states in response to imperatives of anarchy in international relations. In the case of the United States, the strategy of binding other states' conditions of reproduction to the American grand strategy of continued American primacy in non-coercive ways has long been in the making. When the opportunity arose to make the world 'not just safer, but better' with the end of the Cold War and particularly after the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration took the proactive route and attempted to coercively compel defiant states into joining the American-led global capitalist order. That it was the Bush Jr. administration, rather than the Bush Sr. or Clinton administrations, who adopted this more aggressive stance, serves to demonstrate that the decision was not simply an imperative of the long-standing American strategy; rather it was the result of a different view of a different world by the new administration. Similarly, in the Turkish case, to make sense of the rupture in Turkish foreign policy, I historically reconstructed the formation of the Turkish state in a bid to show the continuity that characterised it. I argued that the traditional locus of foreign policy-making, the military, had come to occupy centre-stage in the Turkish polity. In this particular conjuncture, however, the military refrained from taking a strong position, not least because it wanted the governing JDP to take the heat by passing the motion. Under contradictory influences from a variety of domestic and international political and economic sources, the JDP reluctantly took the motion to the Parliament, and failed to secure the vote. Lastly, in the case of Iraq, I argued that Saddam's fear of a military coup was not unfounded. The story of the formation of the Iraqi polity showed that the state developed an autonomy due to rents from oil production, and that this autonomy resulted in the consolidation of a conspiratorial political life, the emergence of which was a result of the specific formation of the Iraqi state under contradictory and asynchronous influence from Ottoman and British rules. As changes of rule almost always took

the form of military or palace coups, not least because the society was repressed under the omnipresent security and intelligence network of the regime, Saddam's primary concern was internal threats to his reproduction. Furthermore, he was almost certain that the US would not attack because of the discord in the international community in general and in the UNSC in particular, and the domestic legitimacy and financial costs of a US involvement in a possible ground war. While these three cases were accounted for dialectically as foreign policy outcomes of protracted historical developments involving the seemingly unrelated praxes of diverse sets of agents, they are yet to be presented as interrelated and constitutive aspects of international relations. This is what the next section seeks to achieve.

## 6.2. The Dialectical Making of the Iraq War

In 2002, a senior adviser to George W. Bush (believed to be Karl Rove) would say in an interview with the journalist Ron Suskind:

We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality ... we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too... We're history's actors... and you ... will be left to just study what we do (*The New York Times Magazine*, 2004).

In a way, this thinking has a point that I raised in this thesis. Historical process is not static and as agents act upon reality, they simultaneously change that reality. In another sense, however, that the objects of those actions are at the same time the subjects of other actions on that same reality almost always generates unintended consequences for all the parties involved. It is this inter-subjective nature of international relations that makes it possible to conceptualise it as the contradictory and cumulative result of a diverse set of foreign and domestic policy acts.

How did these three acts of foreign policy by three different states contribute to the making of international relations, then? I already argued in Chapter 3 that, thanks to the immense network of relations that was institutionalised in the second half of the twentieth century with the US as the central actor and the relative capabilities of the American state, even seemingly domestic American policies had international implications. This is even more so with US foreign policy. Foreign policy acts of the US more often than not presented themselves as 'international system-constitutive' acts from the vantage point of other states. For instance, when the Cold War started, the emerging international order had direct influence on how other states conducted their foreign policies and even domestic policies. While the influence of the US in world politics in general can be easier to appreciate due to its unique capabilities, the contribution of other actors to international relations is far from ignorable, although they

are not as directly constitutive as US foreign policies. Turkey's alignment with the US in the Cold War, for instance, served well the containment strategy of the US. If Turkey had fallen to the Soviet Union, the Soviets would have gained access to the Middle East, possibly changing the balance in its favour. Similarly, as soon as the Iraqi state achieved independence from the British, its foreign policies started to leave their mark on international relations. Oscillations of the Iraqi state between Soviet-backed Arab nationalism and Iraqi nationalism influenced the Cold War order, not least in the shape of oil price volatility.

This much intertwinement between the domestic and foreign policies of individual states and international relations is accepted by even the most rigid approaches of FPA and IR, albeit in the form of correlations between abstracted variables. As I argued in Chapter 2, foreign policy strategies of states are part of their wider reproductive strategies, including their domestic policies. These subjective strategies of reproduction of individual states also inter-subjectively, but crucially asynchronously (that is, through the interaction of a diverse set of praxes of different actors at historically different moments), construct what we call international relations. The asynchronous nature of this inter-subjectivity of the making of international relations makes it invisible to the undialectical eye. To demonstrate how foreign policy strategies as part of wider reproductive strategies inter-subjectively make international relations, the remainder of this chapter will first reconstruct the making of the Iraqi war and then discuss how the Iraqi war remade international relations so that it had enormous influence in shaping the new international conjuncture that we have today.

The 2003 war in Iraq was as much the making of the Ottoman Empire and the British colonial administration as it was of the Iraqi and American states. As Dodge (2006) registers, in order to make sense of the invasion of Iraq, it is necessary to analyse not only the long-term institutionalisation of American foreign policy, but also the formation of the institutional complex of the Iraqi state which was largely autonomous from wider social relations. As argued in Chapter 5 this autonomy was, to a certain extent, the result of the 'rentierism' of the Iraqi state. But even before the Iraqi state became an independent rentier state, the seeds of this autonomy were sown first by the Ottoman Empire in its attempt to respond to the increasing geopolitical challenges from the Great Powers. As part of its centralisation policies, the Empire had adopted a strategy of empowering its appointed officials in its provinces in what was to become Iraq, driving a wedge between Ottoman-trained officer controlled urban centres and *shaikh*-controlled tribal rural areas. The British colonial administration, in turn, severed the town from the countryside even further to be able to rule via tribal *shaikhs* and the King. These two moves by the Ottoman and British administrations, devised for different

subjective reasons, created the conditions for the rise of an autonomous officers group. Indeed, the British observed the autonomy of political life at a very early time (Dodge 2003b, p.70). Furthermore, King Faisal's attempts to centralise his rule through strengthening the army also contributed to the emergence of this social force to his own expense. Finally, increasing revenues from oil from the 1950s onwards made the Iraqi state almost completely insulated from the needs and demands of its wider society, leading to a conspiratorial form of politics. Conspiratorial politics, in turn, played the prominent role in forming Saddam's threat perception, elevating US-backed coup plots to top of the list. Accordingly, Saddam could not see that the US intended to invade Iraq. Furthermore, the opposition of Germany, France and Russia as well as Turkey and the Arab states to the invasion encouraged Saddam to be recalcitrant. How did all this contribute to the making of the war in Iraq? Was not it, after all, the US who invaded the country? Saddam's recalcitrance was not really about getting hold of weapons of mass destruction; rather it was about his bid for regional power status and as a corollary, more independent foreign policy. Therefore, it challenged the long-standing US strategy of primacy (cf. Dodge 2006), which, in turn, was as much the making of the Soviet Union and the Western European states as it was the making of the American state and the ruling classes in general. American primacy, as argued in Chapter 3, was in the making throughout the twentieth century. Beginning from the Open Door policy –a product of American capital and the state– the US gradually established itself as a superpower. American primacy, first institutionalised within the framework of the American-led capitalist bloc with the consent of the other states in the bloc, had become fully-fledged American rule by the 1990s. The rise of the neoconservatives with a more assertive agenda of domination, combined with Iraqi resistance to integration into an American-led capitalist order resulted in the Iraq war of 2003.

The 2003 Iraq war was the long-term dialectical making of the reproductive praxes of a variety of agents that crystallised in the clash between the American quest for maintaining and forcefully asserting primacy and Iraqi resistance to this. King Faisal, the British Colonial Administration, the Ottoman Empire, American ruling classes, the American state, the Soviet state, Western European states and many others played a role in the making of it. The asynchronous nature of the praxes of differently-situated agents usually leads to an insufficient appreciation of their dialectical interrelations in making specific international developments. As indicated by the case of the war in Iraq, however, the domestic and the international, the political and the economic, and foreign policy and international relations are diachronically related through the diverse praxes of a diverse set of actors. To put it in



dialectical language, the 2003 war in Iraq was a social-relational consequence of the reproductive strategies of two belligerent states: the US and Iraq. While the US pursued a strategy of maintaining and expanding its primacy in an American-led capitalist order, the Baathi regime under Saddam sought to remain in power in the face of international pressure. While the decision-makers of these states, namely the Bush administration and Saddam Hussein, were the immediate actors in the making of the war, they did not do what they did 'under circumstances chosen by themselves'. Just as the neoconservative Bush administration inherited the state of primacy, Saddam's regime inherited conspiratorial politics and its corollary state autonomy. These, in turn, were the real abstractions that enabled the two states to make the decisions they made. These real abstractions were constructed inter-subjectively and diachronically through the seemingly-unrelated reproductive actions of a variety of actors facing different 'structures' and having a variety of purposes. The Ottoman state faced both a geopolitical and a domestic challenge, respectively from the Great Powers and the local notables, and responded to this by trying to centralise and consolidate its rule, separating urban political life from its rural social base. The British administration in Iraq sought to rule through the King, balancing him meanwhile with the re-empowered tribal *shaikhs*, further alienating the urban population from the rural. The King, in turn, faced the British mandate as a 'structural' force and, in trying to centralise his rule by expanding the armed forces, inadvertently helped the rise of an autonomous urban-based officer class. Mostly proponents of Arab nationalism, these officers vied for power, turning this largely autonomous political life into a conspiratorial politics, staging coup after coup. Increasing oil revenues and Saddam's extensive intelligence network further contributed to the severance of ties between politics and wider social relations, generating the context of Saddam's decision. The conspiratorial nature of Iraqi politics, the recent history of American foreign policy toward Iraq and the international opposition to war led Saddam to underestimate the threat of war and to focus rather on a possible threat from within the Iraqi state. This, in itself, would not have caused a war, if it had not challenged the specific neoconservative interpretation of how to pursue American primacy. Primacy, in turn, was in the making throughout the twentieth century. US ruling classes sought to access markets in the Old World to resolve their over-accumulation problem at the beginning of the century and the Wilson administration was keen to pursue the path of international engagement. To their dismay, they would have to wait until WW II to break American antipathy toward internationalism. The crucial moment in the making of American primacy came at the end of WW II when the US found itself in an unprecedented position vis-à-vis the other great powers. The main aim of the American state was to maintain this position by institutionalising it. Other great powers sought to keep

whatever was left of their former status and, fearful of a possible Soviet expansion, consented to binding themselves to an American-led capitalist order. The increasing competitiveness of German and Japanese manufacturing capitals and the embargo of the oil producing states resulted in the collapse of the Bretton Woods framework and the oil crisis of the 1970s. The US responded to this challenge with a strategy of financialisation. US manufacturing capital, while at pains to maintain its post-war levels of profitability in the face of intense competition from abroad, also enjoyed the discipline imposed by finance capital. When the Cold War ended, the US sought to expand the scope of its primacy through 'economic statecraft' notwithstanding challenges from a resurgent Germany and from a group of so-called 'failed' or 'rogue' states. Following the 9/11 attacks, the neoconservatives who for long had wished to pursue a more assertive and unilateral foreign policy found the opportunity to do so and against a recalcitrant Iraq they took action to implement it.

In short, then, both American primacy and Iraqi autonomy were made inter-subjectively as a result of the interplay of the praxes of differently situated and motivated agents, who in reproducing themselves devised strategies that had both domestic and international sources and influences. In acting upon perceived 'structures', both domestic and external, their strategies generated, at interplay with the strategies of others, the Iraq war, a significant issue in international relations. In entering into relations with one another, and irrespective of their underlying motivations, these agents generated multiple influences. Whether domestic or external, economic or political, (sub-)unit level or system level, the praxes of these agents generated a dialectical international result, bridging meanwhile not only foreign policies and international relations, but also the economic and the political, and the domestic and the external.

### **6.3. The Dialectical Making of International Relations and the Iraq War**

The Iraq war is important for this thesis not only in terms of its making, but also for its worldwide repercussions. On 1 May 2003, Bush triumphantly declared that the mission was accomplished in Iraq. The regime of Saddam Hussein was deposed and a democracy in Iraq was in the process of emerging. As months passed, the war continued to take its toll. Resistance against the American forces spread, and a sectarian civil war continued to claim many lives. In October the same year, *Time* magazine featured a cover showing Bush on the day of his victory speech with the headline, 'Mission not Accomplished'. It was becoming increasingly clear that the US plan to reform state structures was evidently misconceived. Total collapse of state institutions and exclusion of former members of the Baath Party from public offices compelled the occupying US forces to undertake the gigantic (and unwanted) task of

state-building (Dodge 2005). The Bush administration and its officials including Paul Bremer, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, maintained their optimism as power was transferred to the Iraqi Interim Government in mid-2004. The transfer of power continued with the election of a constitutive assembly and a permanent government in 2005 and 2006 respectively.

None of these would successfully address the problem of the insurgency. The insurgency started right after the invasion, although the first insurgents were Saddam and Baath loyalists in the Sunni areas of Iraq as well as some Shia militant groups. Contrary to expectations, the resolve of the insurgents was not broken by the capture of Saddam Hussein in late 2003. Joined by Al-Qaeda militants and other radical Islamist groups, the insurgents expanded their scope of operations and claimed increasingly more lives. Unmindful of the potential for sectarian tension, the Americans sought to accommodate the Sunni and the Shia along with the Kurds by distributing government posts. Disenfranchised throughout the Baath rule and disgruntled by the practices of the occupying American forces, sections of the Shia also took up arms. Particularly starting from 2006, a civil war erupted between al-Qaeda militants, the Islamic State of Iraq (which would become ISIS later) and Baath loyalists on the one side, and the Mahdi Army led by Shia cleric Muqtada as-Sadr and some other smaller Shiite factions on the other. The response was a surge in troops that was supposed to contribute to security and stability in Iraq. The surge in troops, the recruitment of some Sunni tribes to ward off the threat posed by the more radical elements within the Sunni population, and finally the pacification of the Shia groups thanks to the new power-sharing arrangement that would decisively and effectively give control of the government to the majority Shiite population seemed to have worked in creating a condition of relative stability by 2008.

In late 2011, as the last US troops withdrew from Iraq, President Obama would announce that they were 'leaving behind a sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq' (The White House, 2011). By mid-2014 it became obvious that this could not be further from the truth. Today, ISIS (now simply the IS or the Islamic State) is in control of almost half of Iraqi territories outside Kurdistan. Let alone 'stable' or 'self-reliant', Iraq does not match even the loosest criteria associated with sovereignty. After years of oppression and exclusion under the Nouri al-Maliki government following their best days under Saddam, the disaffected Sunni population, whether radical or moderate or even secular, joined forces with the IS in a bid to reverse their fortunes.<sup>1</sup> The on-going chaos in Iraq has led the country to the brink of disintegration and total social collapse. Although I argued throughout this thesis that the results of foreign policy

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<sup>1</sup> On cooperation between the IS and the secular Baathi forces see Harris (2014).

strategies are almost always unintended to this or that degree, US strategy in Iraq produced almost the polar opposite of the initial intention. Instead of a stable and US-friendly state in Iraq, what it had in the end was a haven for a militant group that is found extremist even by the standards of al-Qaeda. The mission is far from accomplished. Indeed the war in Iraq as a dialectical outcome of the contradictory reproductive strategies of a variety of agents changed the nature of international relations. Just as the individual decisions of state agents were the dialectical results of the domestic and international influences of the praxes of a variety of diachronically-situated agents, what appears to be the international system is also a dialectical result of these foreign and domestic policies-cum-reproductive strategies.

The world before the Iraq war was characterised by an institutionalised American primacy whether one calls it a liberal constitutional order or a unipolar system with liberals and realists respectively. The US enjoyed unparalleled status as the sole superpower. A decade later, as US relative power declines, the world now is sailing toward a more multipolar 'system'. Along with the financial crisis of 2008 and the Arab uprisings of the late 2000s, the Iraq war of 2003 played a crucial role in the reshaping of international relations. As argued above, the war generated exactly the opposite results that the American leaders had in mind. First of all, the aim of incorporating Iraq into an American-led world capitalist order failed miserably. Similarly, the two 'demonstration effects' that the Iraqi war was meant to generate did not serve the intended aim. The US, it will be remembered, wanted to make an example of Iraq by showing that a tyrannical dictatorship could be deposed and replaced with a stable liberal democracy. The war would also make it clear to friend and foe alike that the US had the resources, capacity and will to compel defiant states, be they medium-sized powers with regional aspirations or great powers with global aspirations, to accept that their aspirations were futile. Thirdly, the strategic objective of controlling Iraqi oil supply also proved a failure, as countries such as China and Turkey among others seek to get their share of the country's oil.<sup>2</sup>

The responses of traditional US allies, and significantly that of Turkey, its last Cold War-type ally, demonstrated that in the absence of a Soviet-like system-wide threat to the American-led capitalist order, their allegiance would no longer be automatic. Throughout the 1990s, while Germany and France sought to devise a more European and independent security and foreign policy framework, Turkey, facing a series of perceived domestic threats, remained in the orbit

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<sup>2</sup> By 2013, China was buying almost half of all Iraqi oil output (Arango and Krauss 2013). Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq have recently agreed to export Kurdish oil from Turkish ports in defiance of the Iraqi central government (Morelli and Pischedda 2014).

of the US. Turkey's self-imposed isolation made this more of a necessity than a choice in the eyes of the military-bureaucratic establishment. Yet American assertiveness and unilateralism, along with the domestic challenges the ruling party faced, led Turkey to break its long-standing pro-US foreign policy in this case. Experienced as a 'structural' aspect of the international system, the Turkish decision demonstrated that even the closest of US allies could sever ties.

The Iraqi decision, in turn, while proving fatal for Saddam Hussein, demonstrated that the capabilities of the US do not necessarily translate into an ability to change international reality at its pleasure. While other states recalcitrant to US attempts to incorporate them into the American-led capitalist order still face American primacy as a 'structural' constraint, they now are more confident that the US will not seek to invade to change their regimes. The defiance of the Bashar Assad regime in Syria is a case in point. When Assad's Syria was also hit by protests and demonstrations like many Arab countries at the time, his harsh response attracted international condemnation as well as resulting in the rise of an armed struggle against his dictatorship. The opposition, quickly organised under the umbrella organisation Free Syrian Army (FSA), was composed of various disaffected segments of the Syrian people. While it seemed very likely that Assad's regime would be toppled fast with the US and Europe, as well as Arab allies of the US and Turkey supporting the rebels, the 'leading from behind' doctrine that worked initially well in the case of Libya could not be employed in Syria, not least because the Libyan case proved unsuccessful as time passed. Furthermore, the US and its allies have yet to formulate a viable post-Assad arrangement.

Combined with the failure in Afghanistan to turn the country into a stable democracy, the financial crisis of 2008 and the resurfacing of a general dislike of wars and foreign adventures among the American public would lead the newly elected Barack Obama to pursue a less adventurous foreign policy starting from 2008. Even before his election to office, US failures in Afghanistan and Iraq, US disregard of international law in invading Iraq, and NATO's expansive tendencies were taken by Russia as a license to intervene in Georgia in response to exchanges of fire between pro-Russian South Ossetians and regular Georgian forces. When Obama came to office and declared his priority to be mainly domestic social and economic matters, the expectation was that he would reverse eight years of aggressive, unilateral American foreign policy strategy. In essence, the foreign policy strategy of the Obama government was to ensure the continuation of American leadership in the world, but he had a different conception of this leadership, especially when it came to wars: 'leading from behind' as put by one of his advisors. While the strategy seemed to be successful in the case of Libya, it failed to

produce the intended result in the longer term, as Libya slipped back into conflict after the NATO intervention led by the UK and France in 2012.

The more prudent approach the Obama administration adopted translated into reactive responses to major international problems in the world. Its failure to lead the recovery from the financial crisis raised questions as to the ability and willingness of the US to govern world financial markets effectively, as it had done throughout the 1990s. The uprisings in the Arab world, primarily directed at American-supported dictatorships in the region also caught the US unprepared. These inabilities and lack of resolve on the part of the US government, coupled with its failures to transform Iraq and Afghanistan along intended lines left US leadership open to dispute. Experienced as an indisputable fact by the rest of the world in the post-Cold War period until the failures of the US in Iraq and Afghanistan surfaced, the overwhelming gap between the US and the rest of the world according to every available index did not appear to directly translate into an ability to subject others to its strategies. It is this new understanding that the US may not in fact be able to 'create' its own reality and leave us to study it that informs the increasing recalcitrance of other states towards the US strategy of creating a 'better' world. As it became clear that the US lacked the will and power to deal with other problems such as the Arab Spring and the financial crisis, the way the world appeared to other major and minor powers changed significantly, in a way that will probably be seen in the near future, *in abstracto*, by realists as a slide toward multipolarity in the 'structure of the international system', with 'balance of power' tilting towards the new contender of the hegemon (i.e. China), or, depending on the outcome, by liberals as an 'increasing interdependence' and a 'diffusion of democratic values', or by constructivists as a diffusion of competitive, cooperative, or conflictual ideas in the world.

The recent resurgence of Russia, for example, coincides with this transformation in international relations. The favourable changes in energy prices and the ensuing secular growth of the Russian economy with state enterprises in the lead helped to reinforce its position. This newfound strength would make itself felt starting from 2008 when Russian troops entered Georgia under the pretext of peacekeeping, but in fact was in the making since the early 2000s. When he assumed power in 2000, Putin was probably as aware as Bush was that the US was occupying an unmatched and unprecedented position in the world, with its closest rival languishing far behind. The assertive posture of the US and the meagre position of Russia, informed a moderate Russian foreign policy strategy whereby Russia shied away from challenging the US in issues that were deemed central to US interests, while it was strongly assertive in matters not considered of central importance by the US (MacFarlane 2006). By

2008, however, the inability of the US to achieve any of its objectives in Iraq or Afghanistan, the outbreak of the financial crisis, and the wavering responses of the US to the uprisings in the world contributed to the Russian view of the US as declining, a view that was reinforced by the perceived US inability to deal with the rising influence of China. Fully aware that the US neither has the will nor the confidence to engage in an overseas military adventure, Russia sought to reverse the course of its containment by the US by breaking it in Georgia and Ukraine. The same assertiveness made its presence also felt as Russia acted to break the deadlock over the use of chemical weapons in Syria by brokering an agreement with the Syrian regime, when the US was largely inert. Russia, in short, wanted to capitalise on what appeared to it as a decline in US capabilities.

It was China, however, who made the most of the perceived American decline. Today it is not the US, but China who taps half of Iraqi oil production. This turn of events and the gains made by China led pundits to declare China the winner of the Iraq war (e.g. Schiavenza 2013). Following Deng Xiaoping's caution to lie low in foreign policy, China generally refrained from engaging in unnecessary tensions with the US or with other relatively great powers for that matter. While the globalising interests of the Chinese state also globalise its problems, some regional tensions aside, China seems to be unwilling either to challenge the role of the US or enmesh itself in the problems of the faraway lands. This is not say that China is not aware of the relative decline in the abilities of the United States to project its power over; rather it indicates that although China benefits from this, it as yet does not wish to risk its uninterrupted march toward the status of great power. Furthermore, locked on the Middle East, the Bush administration had largely ignored the rise of China, allowing the Chinese rise to be relatively peaceful.

This is not to claim that the realist analysis of polarity of the system captured the essential principle of international relations. This is to show that what appears as the structure of the 'international system' at specific conjunctures, in fact are the historical and inter-subjective results of not only the foreign policies of states but also other reproductive strategies of states and other agents. The transformation of this 'structure' does not take place according to an independent logic; the piecemeal, relational and complex nature of large-scale social change conceals the inter-subjective and praxis-based character of the transformation of real abstractions such as the 'structure' of international relations. What is crucial, from a historical materialist dialectical point of view are exactly the processes through which these changes in what we call international relations take place, and it is through the concrete praxes of concrete agents that we can analyse these processes. The bridge between FPA and IR,

therefore, can only be established through such dialectical analyses of seemingly discrete concrete praxes, which, in the case of the emergence of foreign policy strategies almost always already involve, wittingly or unwittingly, a bridging of foreign policy and international relations. The war in Iraq, understood as the dialectical making of differently motivated and situated agents, marked a turning point in international relations: the failure of the US to achieve its goals, the defiance of the Turkish state as well as other US allies, and the recalcitrance of the Iraqi regime generated the perception in the Chinese and Russian states that the US, unable to exercise leadership, had entered a phase of decline. While by itself, it did not 'cause' the transition to a multipolar or bipolar world, together with the inability of the US to resolve the 2008 financial crisis and to manipulate the uprisings in the Arab world, it dialectically contributed to the making of the new set of interrelations in international relations. It was the active intervention of the historically and spatially differently situated agents to what appeared to them as constraining international structures that generated international relations today as experienced by states.

#### 6.4. Concluding Remarks

Just as the British and Ottoman Administrations in Iraq had no idea that they were contributing to the making of a war a century later, the Turkish state, the American state and the Iraqi state, and the institutions and individuals making up these states, were completely unaware that they were contributing to a change in *status quo* among the major powers of the world. This is not to say, however, that a structural international logic was at work, independently of the actions of agents. What we call international relations, therefore, are neither a set of patterned relations between functionally like or isomorphic units, nor a direct product of the decisions of major powers, no matter how 'capable' they are. What we call international relations are rather the cumulative consequences of seemingly spatially and temporally unrelated praxes of differently situated and motivated agents from all levels of analysis, acting in a dynamic environment. It is the foreign policy decision-making and strategy-devising processes of states that dialectically interweaves the multiple influences of these praxes into one crystallised decision and turns them into constitutive aspects of international relations. The practice of foreign policy-making, then, not only bridges foreign policy and international relations, but also makes them one in the praxes of states. Dialectic uncovers both the practical abstractions that states make in devising foreign policy strategies and their concrete sociohistorical content as well as how these strategies interact with other strategies so as to constitute what we call international relations. Dialectical method, just like reality itself, strives to match the complexity of things and relations rather than caging them in pre-



conceived conceptual architectonics; thus, in describing the inter-subjective making of foreign policies and international relations it reflects the unity between the two instead of conceptually inventing it.

The implications of this dialectical method for the study of IR are numerous. First and foremost, instead of studying international relations and foreign policies on their own right in a vacuum, it places them into their wider sociological context and seeks to uncover their social content. This way it is able to establish IR and FPA as aspects of a larger sociological undertaking. Secondly, rather than seeing international developments as instances of predetermined formulae, dialectic is after the concrete social-historical relations that generate international and foreign policy outcomes. By doing these, it contributes to an ever-expanding literature on international historical sociology which strives to see international relations as aspects of human social life. Thirdly, offering the notion of real abstraction as a central category, it contributes to the agent-structure problem by arguing that this conceptual dichotomy is the result of a false formulation, in that it juxtaposes individual agents with the cumulative result of their actions, i.e. real abstractions.

Notwithstanding its contributions to IR, the method utilised here has some limitations as well. Most importantly, the historicism of the dialectic employed here does not offer a clear-cut methodological procedure. This, in turn, generates difficulties in linking meta-theoretical principles to concrete historical material. This is the result of a specific methodological strategy adopted in this thesis. One of the central arguments of the thesis is that preconceived conceptual abstractions, and therefore theories, cannot be superimposed upon concrete reality. Concepts based on either a systematization of so-called empirical regularities or pure philosophical speculation is of such nature. That is why the onto-epistemological principles offered in this thesis recommend a research question guided analysis.

The consequent lack of middle-range theories or mediating categories or concepts generates a seeming disjuncture between theory and empirical analysis. But intermediate theories as complexes of conceptual relations and concepts presuppose regularities or patterns. Then those who set out to utilise them posit the presuppositions of concepts and theories in their research and force reality to comply with theory, or at best add another concept derived from another research to cover what's in excess of the theory in question. To an extent this is inevitable, unless the procedure is reversed and research is initiated with a well-formulated research question. The difference between a dialectical-historicist and a positivist method is that whereas the former only temporarily freezes the explananda to be reproblematised if research shows it to be wrongly formulated, the latter freezes both the explananda and

explanantia. Such open-ended process may be adversely affected by the potential presence of infinite determinations. It may open the door to infinite causal regression in time and space. These limitations are inevitable if one insist on the historicist method; at any rate historicism is more an art than an exact science, and unlike its alternatives it does not raise a claim to exactness.

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