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Geopolitics, Social Forces and the International: Revisiting the 'Eastern Question'

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Abstract This article contributes to current debates in materialist geopolitics and contemporary IR theorising by restating the centrality of social forces for conceptualising geopolitics. It does so by offering a detailed conceptual reading of the corpus of the 'Eastern Question', which is composed of a series of political analyses written by Marx and Engels in the period of 1853–56. This archive presents unique analytical and conceptual insights beyond the immediate temporal scope of the issue. I unpack this argument in three movements. The paper (I) offers an overview of the debates on materialist geopolitics, (II) contextualises the historical setting of the 'Eastern Question' and critically evaluates the great powers' commitment to the European status quo, and (III) constructs an original engagement with a largely overlooked corpus to reveal the ways in which Marx and Engels demonstrated the interwoven relationship between domestic class interests, the state and the international system. I maintain that revisiting the 'Eastern Question' corpus (I) bolsters the existing materialist frameworks by underscoring the role of class as an analytical category, (II) challenges an important historical pillar of the balance of power argument, and (III) empirically strengthens the burgeoning scholarship in international historical sociology.

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The gradual dissolution of the bipolar world order following the disintegration of the Soviet Union ushered in a wave of academic interest in previously neglected or under-researched areas of inquiry. After decades of exile in Anglophone academy throughout the Cold War, geopolitics made a forceful comeback in the late 1980s and 1990s and witnessed a vigorous 'renaissance' in which numerous disciplinary efforts have attempted to make sense of the new 'world political map'.[2] Concomitant with the sober realisation

[1] Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Historical Materialism Annual Conference (London, November 2013), the International Studies Association Annual Conference (Toronto, March 2014) and the 9th Pan-European Conference on International Relations (Giardini Naxos, September 2015). For helpful comments and suggestions, I would like to thank Andreas Bieler, Ian Bruff, Katja Daniels, Adam David Morton, Jeppe Strandsbjerg, Sébastien Rioux and the editors and anonymous reviewers of the Review of International Studies.

[2] David Newman, 'Geopolitics renaissant: territory, sovereignty and the world political map', Geopolitics 3, no. 1 (1998): 13. The post-war expulsion of geopolitics was predominantly a Western response to the term's 'damaging associations with German geopolitics and Nazi Germany'. See Paul Claval 'Hérodote and the French left', in Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought, eds. K. Dodds and D. Atkinson (London: Routledge, 2000), 239. Despite its reappropriation by the American policy circles in the 1970s, geopolitics remained a pariah in Western academia until the 1980s. An important exception to this clause is the French Hérodote school led by radical geogra-

that the end of the Cold War signalled neither a step towards a more peaceful world, nor to 'the end point of human ideological evolution beyond which it was impossible to progress further',[3] the study of geopolitics has proliferated across disciplines, armed with variegated methodologies. From its multiplex reincarnations within mainstream IR approaches to a plethora of deconstructive methodologies devised under the mantle of critical geopolitics and IR, geopolitics has re-entrenched its position as a significant area of study in which dominant practices and narratives embedded in inter-state relations can be explained and/or unveiled.

Since its initial emergence in the late 1980s, critical geopolitics scholarship has taken the lead in unmasking the ideological roots of classical geopolitical discourse. While critical geographers have carefully explored the social Darwinist bent of classical geopolitical scholarship and exposed its pretense of offering a ''scientific' method' of inter-state relations as a 'field of discourse within the long-established domain of geopower, defined as the entwined historical development of geographical knowledge with state power and its imperatives of governmentality',[4] Marxist approaches—to varying degrees—have attempted to position geopolitics within a lateral space of convergence between the capitalist mode of production and the international states-system.[5] The theoretical endeavours to unveil the specific conditions with which these two 'layers' are 'superimposed'[6] within a structural whole have multiplied greatly with a number of important contributions by, inter alia, Giovanni Arrighi, David Harvey and Ellen Meiksins Wood which directly draw from or attempt to reinvent Marxist theories of imperialism to disentangle the mechanisms of contemporary geopolitics.[7] Coupled with these efforts is a new wave of materi-

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pher Yves Lacoste. For an overview, see Virginie D. Mamadouh, 'Geopolitics in the nineties: one flag, many meanings', GeoJournal 46, no. 4 (1998): 237–53.

[3] Francis Fukuyama, The End of History and the Last Man (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 66.

[4] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space (London: Routledge, 1996), 28; Gearóid Ó Tuathail, 'At the end of geopolitics? reflections on a plural problematic at the century's end', Alternatives: Global, Local, Political 22, no. 1 (1997): 39.

[5] Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton, 'Axis of evil or access to diesel? spaces of new imperialism and the Iraq War', Historical Materialism 23, no. 2 (2015): 94–130.

[6] Bob Sutcliffe, 'Imperialism old and new: A comment on David Harvey's The New Imperialism and Ellen Meiksins Wood's Empire of Capital', Historical Materialism 14, no. 4 (2006): 63.

[7] Giovanni Arrighi, The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Time (London: Verso, 1994); Giovanni Arrighi, 'Spatial and other 'fixes' of historical capitalism', Journal of World-Systems Research 10, no. 2 (2004): 527–39; David Harvey, The New Imperialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Ellen Meiksins Wood, Empire of Capital (London: Verso, 2003); Alex Callinicos, 'Does capitalism need the state system?', Cam-

alist geopolitics that puts greater emphasis on 'the relationship between economic and political factors'[8] and investigates the ways in which territory is 'valorised' by capitalism.[9] But while the proponents of Marxist geopolitics maintain that a distinctly Marxist methodology of geopolitics could go beyond the 'discursive' focus of critical geopolitics, thus could fully 'exhaust the potential of geopolitics',[10] critical geopoliticians have identified a number of pitfalls that Marxists seem to have revived from the grave of a long-gone conception of geopolitical analysis. These apparent limitations include the reintroduction of state-centrism, the conceptual framework's dangerously close proximity to the 'old-style realist accounts of international relations'[11] and the omission of agency.

To address some of the fundamental issues raised in these contemporary debates, I revisit and offer a detailed reading of Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engels' writings on the 'Eastern Question' and a survey of the inter-imperialist rivalry in the nineteenth century with regards to the specific issue of the territorial 'management' of the Ottoman Empire.[12] Composed of a series of articles written in the period of 1853–1856, this archive, which deals with one of the primary occupations of nineteenth century international relations,[13] presents unique analytical and conceptual insights beyond the immediate temporal scope of the issue.[14] By constructing an exegesis of this under-utilised archive, the paper:

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bridge Review of International Affairs 20, no. 4 (2007): 533–549; Alex Callinicos, Imperialism and Global Political Economy (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

[8] Julien Mercille, 'The radical geopolitics of US foreign policy: geopolitical and geoeconomic logics of power', Political Geography 27, no. 5 (2008): 577.

[9] Alejandro Colás and Gonzalo Pozo, 'The value of territory: towards a Marxist geopolitics', Geopolitics 16, no. 1 (2011): 211–20; Alejandro Colás and Gonzalo Pozo, 'A response to our critics', Geopolitics 16, no. 1: 236–38; Julien Mercille and Alun Jones, 'Practicing radical geopolitics: logics of power and the Iranian nuclear 'crisis'', Annals of the Association of American Geographers 99, no. 5 (2009): 856–62; Gonzalo Pozo-Martin, 'Autonomous or materialist geopolitics?', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 20, no. 4 (2007): 551–63.

[10] Colás and Pozo, 'The value of territory', 212.

[11] John A. Agnew, 'Capitalism, territory and 'Marxist Geopolitics'', Geopolitics 16, no. 1 (2011): 232.

[12] Unless otherwise noted, all references to the articles by Marx and Engels on the 'Eastern Question' are taken from the Collected Works (hereafter, MECW) and the German Werke (MEW). The volumes cited in this article are, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Werke, Vol. 9 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1960); Werke, Vol. 10 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1961); Collected Works, Vol. 12 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979); Collected Works, Vol. 47 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995). For the sake of brevity, I shall cite only the volume of MECW or MEW that contains the cited article along with the relevant page numbers.

[13] As indicative of its dominant role in public discourse, Nazan Çiçek notes that '[b]etween 1876 and 1885 nearly five hundred articles exploring the different aspects of this subject [Eastern Question] appeared in the ten most widely circulated monthly journals in Great Britain alone'. Nazan Çiçek, The Young Ottomans: Turkish Critics of the Eastern Question in the Late Nineteenth Century (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 1.

[14] I do not claim that all the proclamations made and the details provided in their analysis are accurate though one should not overlook Eleanor Marx's comment: '[N]ot all prophecies have come true, or have been realized in the

1. Conceptually reinforces both the materialist stands in critical geopolitics and Marxist IR frameworks by demonstrating the role of class as an analytical category.
2. Challenges the mainstream IR portrayal of the post-Vienna settlement as an 'order rested on both a balance of power and the great powers' relative contentment'.[15]
3. Empirically contributes to the burgeoning Marxist scholarship in international historical sociology.[16]

Accordingly, the following discussion is designed to expand the analytical register of the 'materialist turn' in critical geopolitics by 'reintegrating class'[17] and strengthen the existing class-oriented Marxist approaches in IR[18] rather than devising an entirely new conceptual framework of geopolitical analysis. It

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precise form in which they were made. But the accuracy of them in the main is astonishing'. See Karl Marx, The Eastern Question: A Reprint of Letters Written 1853–1856 Dealing with the Events of the Crimean War, eds. E. Marx Aveling and E. Aveling (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1897), IX. Among these 'failed prophecies', one can recall their expectation of and hopes for a wave of Balkan movements for self-determination to pave the way for the establishment of 'government[s] more suitable to the wants of the people' and 'the reconstruction of the Ottoman Empire by the establishment of a Greek Empire, or of a Federal Republic of Slavonic States'. See MECW 12, 33 and 212. Engels, in a retrospective overview, noted the ascendancy of ethnic nationalism in newly independent Balkan states wherein 'Slavophil chauvinism which had been encouraged in the hope that it would counterbalance the revolutionary element, continued to grow day by day'. See MECW 47, 515.

[15] Matthew Rendall, 'Russia, the Concert of Europe, and Greece, 1821–29: a test of hypotheses about the Vienna system', Security Studies 9, no. 4 (2000): 54; Richard B. Elrod, 'The Concert of Europe: a fresh look at an international system', World Politics 28, no. 2 (1976): 159–74; Robert Jervis, 'From balance to concert: a study of international security cooperation', World Politics 38, no. 1 (1985): 58–79.

[16] Sébastien Rioux, 'International historical sociology: recovering sociohistorical causality', Rethinking Marxism 21, no. 4 (2009): 585–604; Kerem Nişancıoğlu, 'The Ottoman origins of capitalism: uneven and combined development and Eurocentrism', Review of International Studies 40, no. 2 (2013): 325–47; Kamran Matin, 'Uneven and combined development in world history: the international relations of state-formation in premodern Iran', European Journal of International Relations 13, no. 3 (2007): 419–47; Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, 'What's at stake in the Transition Debate? rethinking the origins of capitalism and the 'Rise of the West'', Millennium: Journal of International Studies 42, no. 1 (2013): 78–102; Cemal Burak Tansel, 'Deafening silence? Marxism, international historical sociology and the spectre of Eurocentrism', European Journal of International Relations 21, no. 1 (2015): 76–100; Luke Cooper, 'The international relations of the 'imagined community': explaining the late nineteenth-century genesis of the Chinese nation', Review of International Studies 41, no. 3 (2015): 477–501.

[17] Neil Smith, 'What happened to class?', Environment and Planning A 32, no. 6 (2000): 1011. For the 'materialist turn', see Jason Dittmer, 'Geopolitical assemblages and complexity', Progress in Human Geography, 38, no. 3 (2014): 385–401; Vicky Squire, 'Reshaping critical geopolitics? the materialist challenge', Review of International Studies 41, no. 1 (2014): 139–59.

[18] Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton, 'A critical theory route to hegemony, world order and historical change: Neo-Gramscian perspectives in international relations', Capital & Class 28, no. 1 (2004): 85–113; Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton, 'The deficits of discourse in IPE: turning base metal into gold?', International Studies Quarterly 52, no. 1 (2008): 103–28; Andreas Bieler, Ian Bruff and Adam David Morton, 'Acorns and fruit: from totalization to periodization in the critique of capitalism', Capital & Class 34, no. 1 (2010): 25–37; Ian Bruff, 'The totalisation of human social practice: Open Marxists and capitalist social relations, Foucauldians and power relations', The British Journal of Politics & International Relations 11, no. 2 (2009): 332–51; Adam David Morton, 'Disputing the geopolitics of the states system and global capitalism', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 20, no. 4 (2007): 599–617; Adam David Morton, Revolution and State in Modern Mexico: The Political Economy of Uneven Development (Lanham, MD.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011); Benjamin Selwyn, The Global Development

is important to stress at the outset that the paper reconstructs the 'Eastern Question' archive with the strict aim of drawing out conceptual lessons for the contemporary debates in Marxist IR and critical geopolitics. As such, while the paper offers an extensive discussion of the broader geopolitical issues that surrounded the 'Eastern Question' to contextualise the work of Marx and Engels, it does not set out to provide a comprehensive historiographical review of nineteenth century international relations. Similarly, while the paper recognises that 'space and geography are inextricably intertwined with the study of international relations',[19] the question of space itself is not examined in detail due to the practical limits of the article.[20]

The paper argues that revisiting the 'Eastern Question' allows us to refute the claims that 'geopolitics does not feature in the writings of Karl Marx'[21] and demonstrate that Marx and Engels, through the particular example of the 'Eastern Question', offered a systematic critique of the contemporary imperialist rivalries by bringing in class antagonisms and domestic class interests to the analysis of international relations.[22] Rejecting an exclusively state-centric conception of world politics, Marx and Engels underscored the interwoven relationship between domestic class interests, the state and the international system as well as the political utility of the 'Eastern Question' for maintaining the balance of power between classes in Europe. Thus reading the 'Eastern Question' through a class-oriented lens reinforces the conceptual arsenal of Marxist geopolitics by offering remedies to the charges of state-centrism, collision

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Crisis (Cambridge: Polity, 2014); Benjamin Selwyn, 'Twenty-first-century International Political Economy: a class-relational perspective', European Journal of International Relations 21, no. 3 (2015): 513–37.

[19] Harvey Starr, 'On geopolitics: spaces and places', International Studies Quarterly 57, no. 3 (2013): 439.

[20] For recent discussions on the question of space in Marxist IR, see, Chris Hesketh, 'The clash of spatializations: geopolitics and class struggles in southern Mexico', Latin American Perspectives 40, no. 4 (2013): 70–87; Chris Hesketh, 'Producing state space in Chiapas: passive revolution and everyday life', Critical Sociology, OnlineFirst (2014), doi:10.1177/0896920513504604; Ray Kiely, 'Spatial hierarchy and/or contemporary geopolitics: what can and can't uneven and combined development explain?', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 25, no. 2 (2012): 231–48; Andreas Bieler et al. 'The Enduring Relevance of Rosa Luxemburg's The Accumulation of Capital', Journal of International Relations and Development, Advance online publication (2014), doi: 10.1057/jird.2014.18.

[21] Ian Klinke, 'What is to be done? Marx and Mackinder in Minsk', Cooperation and Conflict 48, no. 1 (2012): 123.

[22] This is not to say that Marx and Engels did so by using the term 'geopolitics' given the concept in its modern form which signified 'an attempt to reveal textually and cartographically the complex relationships between geography and politics at a variety of spatial scales from the local to the global' was first coined by the Swedish jurist and political scientist Rudolf Kjellén in 1899. See Michael Heffernan, 'Fin de siècle, fin du monde? On the origins of European geopolitics, 1890–1920', in Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought, eds. K. Dodds and D. Atkinson (London: Routledge, 200), 28; Ola Tunander, 'Swedish-German geopolitics for a new century: Rudolf Kjellén's 'The State as a Living Organism'', Review of International Studies 27, no. 3 (2001): 459.

with realist IR theorising and the omission of agency by seeing class relations as constitutive of geopolitics.[23] Beyond its direct contribution to Marxist IR scholarship, such a reading also enriches critical geopolitics by offering a study that goes beyond 'a twentieth- and twenty-first century bias'[24] that has underpinned the literature from the late 1980s and by revealing a route with which to incorporate theoretically informed historical analysis into the extant body of critical geopolitical analyses.

The argument is demonstrated in two sections: The first part maps out a brief overview of the ongoing exchanges in Marxist IR and critical geography regarding the plausibility and value of a distinctly Marxist geopolitics. David Harvey's The New Imperialism is positioned as the mainspring of a reinvigorated attempt at instrumentalising the concept of imperialism as the primary analytical register for explaining contemporary conflicts. Following the skeptical voices questioning the empirical and theoretical validity of dividing structural analysis into 'two distinctive but intertwined logics of power',[25] the reverberating calls for a more comprehensive, and markedly Marxist geopolitics are evaluated with reference to the recent works in Marxist IR.

The second section reconstructs the archive of the 'Eastern Question' and contextualises the international milieu that underpinned the political calculations around the discourses of the 'Eastern Question'. The 'question', if there ever really was one, was whether the European great powers would risk an all-out war in case of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The policy formulations and statements of the leading European powers seemingly supported the maintenance of the Ottoman territorial integrity, yet the Ottoman Empire, described as the 'sick man of Europe' by Czar Nicholas I, witnessed a continuum of territorial contraction throughout the century. Whereas the nineteenth century depiction of the 'Eastern Question' by the European statespeople, intellectuals and press was created in accordance with an ephemeral commitment to uphold the balance of power, and hence anticipated certain tenets of classical geopolitics, Marx and Engels approached the 'question' from a radically different perspective by locating the geopolitical calculations within the broader socio-economic trajectory of global capitalist de-

[23] Morton, 'Disputing the geopolitics of the states system and global capitalism', 606.
[24] Matthew Farish, 'Militarization', in The Ashgate Research Companion to Critical Geopolitics, eds. K. Dodds, M. Kuus and J. Sharp (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 250.
[25] Harvey, The New Imperialism, 30.

velopment and class politics with a view to assessing the prospects of and barriers to revolution. The paper aims to recover this strategy of decoding the multiplex class politics that underpin the dominant geopolitical scripts and policies and to underscore the analytical utility of class (not class determinism) for the extant approaches in Marxist IR and critical geopolitics.

Making 'class' visible: Logics of power and the debate on 'Marxist' geopolitics

Marxist IR's renewed engagement with geopolitics took an 'imperial' turn with the new millennium. Two developments played a pivotal role in putting the study of the 'empire' and 'imperialism' back on the agenda of IR. First, the publication of Empire,[26] the influential book by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri on the deterritorialised character of the political re-constitution of global capitalism; and second, the US-led invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan under the aegis of 'war on terror'. While the former has been found lacking a serious analysis of 'the practical political, economic and military business of imperial governance',[27] the latter development, in stark contrast, accentuated the acute reality of ongoing territorial conflicts and the necessity to develop frameworks with which their sources and modi operandi can be unpacked.

David Harvey's The New Imperialism emerged directly as a strong candidate to theorise and contextualise the US' decision to revert its foreign policy outlook from empire 'lite' to a belligerent territorial power.[28] Contrary to Hardt and Negri who boldly claim that '[i]mperialism is over',[29] The New Imperialism maintains that 'capitalist imperialism . . . a contradictory fusion of 'the politics of state and empire'' still reigns supreme and is constitutive of the processes through which the 'war on terror' unfolded.[30] According to Harvey, the US' catastrophic ventures in Iraq and Afghanistan were products of its declining economic hegemony in the face of greater competition driven by Europe and Asia and stemmed from its desire to regain its leading role by securing access to natural resources. Bluntly reaffirming the

[26] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Empire (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000).
[27] Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'Retrieving the imperial: empire and international relations', Millennium: Journal of International Studies 31, no. 1 (2002): 111.
[28] Harvey, The New Imperialism, 3.
[29] Hardt and Negri, Empire, XIV.
[30] Harvey, The New Imperialism, 26.

essentiality of natural resources in these calculations, Harvey summarily suggests that 'whoever controls the Middle East controls the global oil spigot and whoever controls the global oil spigot can control the global economy'.[31] Despite the concurrence of such statements with that of classical geopoliticians like Halford Mackinder,[32] Harvey's main aim in emphasising the importance of controlling natural resources is to signal how '[g]eographical expansion and spatial reorganization' are utilised to onset the 'chronic tendency within capitalism', that is 'the tendency for the profit rate to fall, to produce crises of overaccumulation'.[33]

Harvey theorises this intermixed dynamic of political authority and capital accumulation within the international system by entering a dialogue with Giovanni Arrighi's two 'modes of rule or logics of power' in the form of 'capitalism' and 'territorialism'. Arrighi's initial formulation of these two logics articulated first a territorial rule which identifies 'power with the extent and populousness of their domains' and subjugates capital as a 'by-product of the pursuit of territorial expansion'; and second, a capitalist rule which gives primacy to 'command over scarce resources'.[34] Harvey's appropriation of the territorial and capitalist logics is based on the same blueprint and aims to explain how 'the relative fixity and distinctive logic of territorial power fit with the fluid dynamics of capital accumulation'.[35]

Despite the influence and popularity the book enjoys in a broad spectrum of the social sciences, it is difficult to conclude that The New Imperialism has solved the perennial Marxist problématique of explaining the relationship between the capitalist mode of production and the (capitalist) state/international states-system. The kind of imperial geopolitics Harvey attempts to unveil in his analysis has been criticised for lacking the 'political' part of the equation, or as Noel Castree has bluntly put, '[w]hile the molecular logic of capital is explicated convincingly, the territorial logic of the state is given

[31] Harvey, The New Imperialism, 19.
[32] Gerry Kearns, 'Naturalising empire: echoes of Mackinder for the next American century?', Geopolitics 11, no. 1 (2006): 88; Felix Ciută, 'Déjà vu geopolitics: Marxism and the geopolitical undead', Geopolitics 16, no. 1 (2011): 223.
[33] Harvey, The New Imperialism, 87–8.
[34] Giovanni Arrighi, The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Time (London: Verso, 1994), 33.
[35] Harvey, The New Imperialism, 93.

none of the attention'.[36] Yet what makes Harvey's account deeply problematic as a template for a geopolitical framework is not necessarily a relative neglect of the 'empirical' analyses of the territorial logic, but the ways in which the 'logics' are irreversibly abstracted from each other. Thus it is not surprising to find that the recent interventions which '[draw] principally on Harvey's work'[37] have attempted to provide an integrative framework in which the two 'logics' are positioned more or less as heuristic categories to explain functionally different modalities of contemporary geopolitics. In other more sustained interrogations where the emphasis is placed on theorising the 'dialectical fusion of capitalist and territorial logics of power',[38] these two logics—with their concrete manifestations on interstate competition and cooperation—are inadvertently reified, thus the analyses risk reproducing structural realist assumptions through the substitution of 'realism's ahistorical logic of international anarchy with an over-generalized account of geopolitical competition'.[39] Moreover, this tendency to 'hypostatise' capitalism and geopolitics 'as always-already analytically separate elements that are then subsequently combined'[40] creates a framework within which the issue of how class forces and their multiplex interests shape—and in turn are shaped by—these 'logics' becomes largely a secondary concern. The 'two logics' argument and its emphasis on the conceptual utility of imperialism, 'understood as the intersection of economic and geopolitical competition',[41] thus fails to formulate a convincing rebuttal to the charge that Marxist approaches to geopolitics are prone to replicating structural realist arguments and minimising the role of human agency.[42]

The reconstruction of the classical Marxist theories of imperialism as captured by the 'two logics' argument is not the only available toolkit that offers a distinctly materialist geopolitical analysis.

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[36] Noel Castree, 'David Harvey's symptomatic silence', Historical Materialism 14, no. 4 (2006): 43; see also Bob Jessop, 'On the limits of The Limits to Capital', Antipode 36, no. 3 (2004): 480–96.
[37] Mercille and Jones, 'Practicing radical geopolitics', 857.
[38] Alex Callinicos, 'How to solve the many-state problem: a reply to the debate', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 22, no. 1 (2009): 91.
[39] Kiely, 'Spatial hierarchy and/or contemporary geopolitics', 237. Jamie C. Allinson and Alexander Anievas, "The uses and misuses of uneven and combined development: an anatomy of a concept', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 22, no. 1 (2009): 53.
[40] Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton, 'The will-o'-the-wisp of the transnational state', Journal of Australian Political Economy 72 (2014): 26–7.
[41] Alex Callinicos, 'How to solve the many-state problem: a reply to the debate', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 22, no. 1 (2009): 103.
[42] Agnew, 'Capitalism, territory and 'Marxist Geopolitics'', 232; Jeremy Black, 'Towards a Marxist geopolitics', Geopolitics 16, no. 1 (2011): 234–5.

In fact, the proponents of two important Marxist approaches, namely Political Marxism and the theory of uneven and combined development (UCD), have not only acutely diagnosed the weaknesses of the logics of power approach, but also constructed sophisticated theoretical maps in which the relationship between capitalism and the states-system can be conceptualised and analysed.[43] Leading the Political Marxist front, Benno Teschke and Hannes Lacher reject the logics of power argument by emphasising that capitalism emerged within a pre-existing system of sovereign states rather than creating or constituting that particular configuration. For Teschke and Lacher, 'territorial framework established in the early modern period' is not a sine qua non component of capitalism but rather a particular form of a broader systemic alignment in which the expansion of capitalism was 'managed'. The corollary of their disassociation of capitalism from the territorial configuration of sovereign states is the rejection of a monolithic conception of 'capitalist geopolitics', defined by the pendulum of conflict and cooperation between sovereign states. According to Teschke and Lacher, since '[t]here is no straight line from capitalism to any specific geo-territorial matrix or set of international relations' , there is no reason to assume that geopolitical relations under capitalism could only materialise in one specific form or that capitalism could only be maintained in a system of territorially demarcated sovereign states.[44]

While the UCD perspectives broadly project a similar degree of heterogeneity in geopolitical relations, their internal variations make it difficult to talk about a unified stance on why and how these relations take different forms. Reworking Trotsky's original formulation, Justin Rosenberg has presented the updated theory as 'a general abstraction of the significance of inter-societal coexistence' within which the variegated patterns of development across time and space can be brought together as part of 'an ontological whole'.[45] This 'generalised'[46] formulation has triggered an extensive debate as many have chal-

[43] For other Marxist approaches that I could not feature in this article due to space constraints, see William Robinson, A Theory of Global Capitalism: Production, Class and State in a Transnational World (Baltimore, MD.: John Hopkins University Press, 2004); Kees van der Pijl, Nomads, Empires, States: Modes of Foreign Relations and Political Economy, Vol. 1 (London: Pluto, 2007).
[44] Benno Teschke and Hannes Lacher, 'The changing 'logics' of capitalist competition', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 20, no. 4 (2007): 574.
[45] Justin Rosenberg, 'Why is there no international historical sociology?', European Journal of International Relations 12, no. 3 (2006): 319, 316 original emphasis.
[46] John M. Hobson, 'What's at stake in the neo-Trotskyist debate? Towards a non-Eurocentric historical sociology of uneven and combined development', Millennium: Journal of International Studies 40, no. 1 (2011): 148.

lenged the conceptual utility of creating a transhistorical conception of development and insisted on a strict periodisation of UCD consonant with capitalist development.[47] Strikingly, the 'generalised' formula shares Political Marxists' recognition that 'the plurality of the geopolitical spaces is not co-emergent with capitalism', and in contrast to the logics of power approach, it refuses to derive geopolitics 'from within a theory of capital'.[48]

A detailed discussion of these theories falls beyond the scope of this paper, but for our purposes it is important to highlight that both theories, while carefully avoiding the shortcomings of the logics of power approach, have shied away from fully exploring the implications of class relations in shaping the linkages between the dominant mode of production and the inter-state interaction. Political Marxists have unearthed the empirical paucity of the rebranded theories of imperialism and stressed the variable character of capitalist competition, but their important goal of uncovering 'how international relations are internally related to politically instituted class relations'[49] has been hampered significantly by 'a formidable narrowing of the historical development of capitalism' due to their theoretical allegiances.[50] One can argue that Political Marxists excel at revealing the variegated impact of class relations in the transition to capitalism but it is difficult to maintain that their interrogation retains its analytical edge once the focus is shifted to the issues of contemporary international relations.[51] In the case of UCD, the neglect of explicating the effect of class partly stems from Rosenberg's 'generalised' formulation which has been charged with devising 'a subjectless and autogenerative process operating outside and above the wills of social

[47] Sam Ashman, 'Capitalism, uneven and combined development and the transhistoric', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 22, no. 1 (2009), 31; Neil Davidson, 'Putting the nation back into 'the international'', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 22, no. 1 (2009), 19.
[48] Matin, 'Uneven and combined development in world history', 439; Alex Callinicos and Justin Rosenberg, 'Uneven and combined development: the social-relational substratum of 'the international'? an exchange of letters', Cambridge Review of International Affairs 21, no. 1 (2008): 96.
[49] Benno Teschke, The Myth of 1648: Class, Geopolitics and the Making of Modern International Relations (London: Verso, 2003), 272.
[50] Sébastien Rioux, 'The fiction of economic coercion: Political Marxism and the separation of theory and history', Historical Materialism 21, no. 4 (2014): 96; Tansel, 'Deafening silence?', 80–4; Jamie C. Allinson and Alexander Anievas, 'Approaching 'the international': beyond Political Marxism', in Marxism and World Politics: Contesting Global Capitalism, ed. A. Anievas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010): 197–214.
[51] Ian Bruff, 'European varieties of capitalism and the international', European Journal of International Relations 16, no. 4 (2010): 621.

agents'.[52] Corresponding to Neil Smith's critique of the 'universalist' incarnations of the concept of uneven development, the transhistorical UCD 'tells us absolutely nothing specific about capitalism, imperialism, and the present moment of capitalist restructuring'.[53] As such, in both cases, theories do underscore human agency and class relations but this recognition does not translate fully into the analyses of capitalism and geopolitics.

The 'value' of Marxist geopolitics as outlined by Colás and Pozo-Martin surfaces at this juncture. Responding to the shortcomings of the logics of power approach—and pre-empting the Political Marxist critique—Pozo-Martin maintains that 'it is not necessary to abandon the notion that territorial competition is in some direct way related to capital and that this relationship, this link, which necessarily passes through the workings of each state as key agents of world politics, be addressed head-on both empirically and theoretically'.[54] On the one hand, the authors' critique of critical geopolitics as a set of exclusively 'discursive' methodological apparatuses is not entirely new or productive. Critical geopolitics scholars, especially the ones who operate in close proximity to Marxist political economy and feminist geography, have already noted that 'deconstructing the terms and strategies of geopolitics tells us how but not why geopolitical knowledge is constructed where it is and by and for whom'.[55] On the other hand, Colás and Pozo-Martin do offer a substantial reconsideration of materialist geopolitics by underscoring

[52] Benno Teschke, 'Advances and impasses in Fred Halliday's International Historical Sociology: a critical appraisal', International Affairs 87, no. 5 (2011): 1102. But see Selwyn's take on U&CD which explicitly states that '[w]ithout class analysis the combined aspect of late, uneven, development is lost … it is this aspect that contributes so fundamentally to the non-linear and unintended nature of late capitalist development'. Ben Selwyn, 'Trotsky, Gerschenkron and the political economy of late capitalist development', Economy and Society 40, no. 3 (2011): 444.

[53] Neil Smith, 'The geography of uneven development', in 100 Years of Permanent Revolution: Results and Prospects, eds. B. Dunn and H. Radice (London: Pluto, 2006), 182–83; Rioux, 'International historical sociology', 591; Sébastien Rioux, 'Mind the (theoretical) gap: on the poverty of International Relations theorising of uneven and combined development', Global Society, Online (2014), doi:10.1080/13600826.2014.983047; Morton, Revolution and State in Modern Mexico, 250–51, n. 1.

[54] Pozo-Martin, 'Autonomous or materialist geopolitics?', 560–61.

[55] John A. Agnew, 'Global political geography beyond geopolitics', International Studies Review 2, no. 1 (2000): 98. See also Klaus Dodds and James D. Sidaway, 'Locating Critical Geopolitics', Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 12, no. 5 (1994): 515–24; Neil Smith, 'Is a critical geopolitics possible? Foucault, class and the vision thing', Political Geography 19, no. 3 (2000): 365–71; Jennifer Hyndman, 'Towards a feminist geopolitics', The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien 45, no. 2 (2001): 210–22; Lorraine Dowler and Joanne Sharp, 'A feminist geopolitics?', Space and Polity 5, no. 3 (2001), 169; Marcus Power and David Campbell, 'The state of critical geopolitics', Political Geography, 29, no. 5 (2010): 243–46; Virginie D. Mamadouh, 'Critical geopolitics at a (not so) critical junction', GeoJournal 75, no. 4 (2010): 320–21.

'the role of territory as 'social infrastructure', as a domain of class antagonism, or as a source of contested value':

> Inspired by a materialist conception of history, we view territoriality as a social process, constantly drawn and redrawn by the production, circulation and accumulation of value, as well as by the relations of power accompanying the global reproduction of capitalism. A Marxist geopolitics, in essence, begins by analysing the capitalist valorisation of territory and ends by explaining its international repercussions.[56]

This brief intervention, however, has not met with much sympathy from the critical geopolitics camp. Among the responses Colás and Pozo-Martin have garnered in and after the Geopolitics forum, critical voices highlighted that their 'Marxist' geopolitics is vulnerable to 'the tendency to downplay the role of human perception of the situation and the extent of choice' as well as to 'the old base-superstructure conception of causation that has bedevilled Marxism since its founding'.[57] Felix Ciută echoed Agnew's above-cited observation that 'Marxist' geopolitics looks uncannily similar to 'old-style realist accounts of international relations' by claiming that 'the authors are actually a lot more like the lay geopoliticians they study than they would like to admit'.[58] Put simply, from the heterogenous prism of critical geopolitics, Marxist geopolitics is seen merely as an accidental attempt to revive the shortcomings of the state-centric, non-agential and determinist pillars of classical geopolitical thinking.[59]

In the next section, I portray one possible vision for Marxist geopolitics by engaging with an under-explored set of writings of Marx and Engels. The proposed account does not aim to negate the important contributions of Political Marxism and UCD and it broadly supports Colás and Pozo-Martin's notion of geopolitics 'as a specific link between territoriality and power in international relations—one where the dynamics of global capitalism are central to the mobilisation of geopolitics as an expression of

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[56] Colás and Pozo, 'The value of territory', 216.
[57] Black, 'Towards a Marxist geopolitics', 234; Agnew, 'Capitalism, territory and 'Marxist Geopolitics'', 232.
[58] Ciută, 'Déjà vu geopolitics', 224. This line of critique has a long history in critical geopolitical thinking. See, for example, Ó Tuathail's dismissal of 'the new radical geography of the 1970s' as '[a] naive rediscovery and enthusiasm for the dogma of old Marxist theoretical debates on capitalism and imperialism'. Ó Tuathail, Critical Geopolitics, 127; cf. Smith, 'Is a critical geopolitics possible?', 367. For a pre-disciplinary confluence between Marxists and classical geopoliticians in the German context, see Mark Bassin, 'Nature, geopolitics and Marxism: ecological contestations in Weimar Germany', Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 21, no. 2 (1996): 315–41.
[59] While it is not my intention to respond to these comments within the parameters set by the intervention of Colás and Pozo-Martin, it should be noted that the authors' previous work partially pre-empts some of the charges levelled againt their vision of 'Marxist' geopolitics. See for example, Pozo-Martin's engagement with the new imperialist conceptions of geopolitics (particularly the one espoused by Callinicos) in which the author underscores the necessity to attend the issues 'agency and micro-foundations'. Pozo-Martin,'Autonomous or materialist geopolitics?', 552.

global power'.[60] The main aim of the discussion is to place a stronger emphasis on class relations and the ways in which domestic class relations/interests are reflected on international politics. Accordingly, the article fulfils a double objective in the following discussion by: (I) Reconstructing the episode of 'Eastern Question' as a conceptual lens with which to explicate how Marx and Engels analysed the geopolitical relations and discourse of inter-imperialist rivalry in the nineteenth century, (II) reaffirming the centrality of class as an analytical register in the study of geopolitics. It is my contention that the 'Eastern Question' offers significant tools for the realisation of a non-determinist Marxist geopolitical framework and recovers class from being 'a gaping hole in the account of the interests that geopolitics stood for' by recognising its constitutive role in the formulation of geopolitical relations and imaginaries that sustained them.[61]

Marx and Engels on the 'Eastern Question'

The Ottoman Empire's quest for stability in the nineteenth century was hampered by an increasingly hostile international milieu. Despite the fact that the Ottoman state 'expanded the area under its direct administration' through a bold reform programme, it simultaneously lost control of a number of significant territories, including Greece, Algeria, and—by recognising their autonomy—Egypt and Serbia.[62] The early multidirectional expansion of the empire which halted by the eighteenth century shifted to a gradual shrinking of territory and sovereign control. Struggling against a relentless Russian expansionism in the Balkans and the Black Sea, the empire was plagued with the secession of Serbia (an autonomous principality as of 1815) and Greece (which won independence in 1830). On the Arab peninsula, Wahabbi revolts gravely crippled the Ottoman authority over an already loosely held territory. The meteoric rise of Mehmed Ali Paşa in Egypt and his 'desire to carve out an empire for himself at the expense of the Sultan's own empire' further deteriorated the state's attempts to re-exert its authority over provinces.[63] Rapidly turning into a major impediment to the ongoing recentralisation, Mehmed Ali constituted a direct

[60] Colás and Pozo, 'The value of territory', 212.
[61] Smith, 'Is a critical geopolitics possible?', 367.
[62] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 71.
[63] Khaled Fahmy, All the *Pasha's* Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002), 25.

threat to İstanbul by defeating the Ottoman forces in Acre and Konya in 1832. Adding insult to injury, Sultan Mahmud II had to accept first the arch nemesis Russia's, then the remaining major European powers' offer to intervene on behalf of the Ottoman dynasty and push back the Egyptian army which was already stationed at the heart of Anatolia.

The Czar's rush to the defense of the Ottoman dynasty against Mehmed Ali should not disguise Russia's own expansionary ambitions which manifested clearly when it directly marched to İstanbul in 1828 after capturing the previous Ottoman capital Edirne (Adrianople). In the same period, Russia's attempts to dismember the empire, take over İstanbul and the prized Balkan possessions as well as to control the lengthy eastern Anatolian border intensified and became the 'ultimate goals of Russian policy'.[64] The threat of a 'Greater Russia' reigning over the entire Black Sea, the straits and the colossal area covering the majority of southeastern Europe gave enough rhetorical ammunition for Western powers to push for the protection of Ottoman territorial integrity and concomitantly brought about the question that would haunt the European decision-makers for decades: 'What is to be done with Turkey?'[65]

Much of this European anxiety was firmly rooted in the ways in which the post-Vienna settlement functioned. Following the resolution of the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the concept of balance of power ascended to the status of sacrosanct for the European powers; none dared to defy it openly, yet all were scheming to utilise it for their own interests. Out of the Ottoman Empire's perceived weakness and what proved to be a misplaced expectation of its immediate disintegration, European states fashioned themselves a new pandora's box in the form of status quo, which in Trotsky's description, 'presupposed not only the inviolability of Turkey, the partition of Poland and the preservation of Austria . . . but also the maintenance of Russian despotism, armed to the teeth, as the gendarme of European reaction'.[66] Formulated as such, the 'Eastern Question' embodied the risk of the collapse of the Vienna settlement, of an all-out war—an imperial scramble for the fragments of the Ottoman Empire

[64] Alan Bodger, 'Russia and the end of the Ottoman Empire', in The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire, second edition, ed. M. Kent (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 73.
[65] The phrase originates from an anonymous publication with the same title printed in 1850 and remained widely-used in public discourse up to the early twentieth century. See Çiçek, The Young Ottomans, 241n.2.
[66] Leon Trotsky, The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects (New York: Pathfinder, 1969), 112.

should it collapse. According to the established narrative, the prospect of a catastrophic conflict ostensibly led European powers to take measures towards the Empire's preservation.

Not all were satisfied with this arguably pan-European policy of the protection of a country that William Gladstone defined as 'the one great anti-human specimen of humanity'.[67] In a letter dated 1854, liberal statesman John Bright lambasted the British foreign policy for its 'false' orientation towards the Ottomans and claimed that the British policy was ensuring 'the perpetual maintenance of the most immoral and filthy of all despotisms over one of the fairest portions of the earth which it has desolated, and over a population it has degraded but has not been able to destroy'.[68]

Thus the 'Eastern Question', both in the nineteenth century political discourse and the literature dealing with its manifold aspects, predominantly formulated the nature of the issue as the maintenance of the delicate balance of power between the European powers and Russia, sidelining the Ottomans as either passive observers or benefactors—and sometimes manipulators—of a chivalrous Western campaign for their preservation.[69] As Simon Bromley has highlighted, this orientation has perpetuated a discourse within which 'the Eastern Question is portrayed either as a European response to a purely degenerative and internally driven Ottoman decline, or as the safety-valve for the pressures emanating from the European balance of power'.[70] Yet as I shall demonstrate below, the diplomatic practices and the political relationship between Europe, Russia and the Ottoman Empire betray this image. Despite the increasing territorial contraction of the empire, European powers rarely manoeuvred to assist the Ottomans in maintaining their hold in provinces. On the contrary, Britain and France often pursued an active policy of annexation and encouraged secessionist movements within the empire. Manifestations of this trend can be detected in

[67] William Ewart Gladstone, Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East (New York: Lovell, Adam, Wesson & Co, 1876), 10.
[68] Quoted in John M. Hobson, The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010 (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2012), 37.
[69] Leslie Rogne Schumacher, 'The Eastern Question as a Europe Question: viewing the ascent of 'Europe' through the lens of Ottoman decline', Journal of European Studies 44, no. 1 (2014): 65–6; cf. J. A. R. Marriott, The Eastern Question: An Historical Study in European Diplomacy (London: Clarendon, 1917); M. S. Anderson, The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: A Study in International Relations (London: Macmillan, 1966); Gerald David Clayton, Britain and the Eastern Question: Missolonghi to Gallipoli (London: University of London Press, 1971); Efraim Karsh and Inari Karsh, Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789–1923 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
[70] Simon Bromley, Rethinking Middle East Politics (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 48.

Britain's formal support of Greek independence and its two-stage annexation of Egypt in 1882 and 1914 as well as in the French occupation of Algeria in 1830 and Russia's permanent involvement in the Balkans which facilitated revolts in Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro throughout the century. Thus, as one prominent Ottomanist put, '[t]he so-called Eastern Question was like a chameleon changing its colors with the environment'[71] and the pharisaism of European powers was not lost on the Ottoman peoples. While the Porte carefully navigated the perfidious seas of the great power diplomacy to capitalise on the contradictory positions of European and Russia empires (as the Crimean War demonstrated), the dominant public discourse—owing to a great extent to the Young Ottoman literature—was shaped around the unjust treatment of the empire at the hands of European imperialists.[72]

Outside the empire, a consistent critique of the 'Eastern Question' was provided by Marx and Engels. The main body of this series of articles and letters was published in the New York Daily Tribune but a number of them received reprints in the Chartist *People'*s Paper edited by Ernest Jones. Marx's extensive research on economic issues of the period which was utilised in his journalistic pieces also featured in the Economic Manuscripts of 1857–58 and Capital Vol. 1.[73] The body of work produced by Marx and Engels on the vagaries of the European balance of power can be read as a deconstructive effort aimed at unpacking the 'official' discourses on European (geo)political relations—hence not entirely dissimilar to many exemplary efforts in contemporary critical geopolitics scholarship. For example, Marx's scathing evaluations of leading statespeople in Britain and Russia and the ways in which they articulated their stances on the 'Eastern Question' can be read as a form of critique that addresses the question of how (geo)political relations embody a 'discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft 'spatialize' international politics in such a way as to represent it as a 'world' characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas'.[74] Nor would it be entirely inconceivable to read Marx's acerbic refutation of Count Nesselrode's defense of Russian policy by utilising Ó Tuathail's suggestion to perceive geopolitics as

[71] Hanioğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire, 206.
[72] Şerif Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000[1962]), 354.
[73] See 'Preface' in MECW 12, XIV–XV.
[74] Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew, 'Geopolitics and discourse: practical geopolitical reasoning in American foreign policy', Political Geography 11, no. 2 (1992): 192.

dramaturgical metaphors. Marx's denunciation of this historical legerdemain offered by Nesselrode is a critique of what Ó Tuathail would call a 'situation description' which signifies the ways in which 'foreign policy actors classify the drama under consideration and construct scenarios and analogies to render it meaningful'.[75] Writing on a circular note of 20 June 1853, Marx demonstrates how Nesselrode designs a 'situation description' whereby the Russian encroachment on Ottoman territories is depicted as a 'defensive' manoeuvre to '[save] Turkey from inevitable dismemberment'. An impervious Marx sardonically wrote:

> In 1833 the Czar concluded, through the famous treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi [Hünkâr İskelesi], a defensive alliance with Turkey, by which foreign fleets were forbidden to approach Constantinople, by which Turkey was saved only from dismemberment, in order to be saved entire for Russia . . . He has carefully preserved the decomposition of the Turkish State, under the exclusive guardianship of Russia.[76]

Yet I argue that the 'Eastern Question' corpus offers more than a set of interlinked threads that criticise the dominant geopolitical representations and the deceptive post-Vienna strategies of the European policymakers. By examining the socio-political effects of the 'Eastern Question' on Europe and the ways in which it was instrumentalised to maintain the extant class power in industrialising European societies, Marx and Engels locate class relations at the heart of their analytical enterprise. I argue that the way in which they constructed their critique helps us locate the geopolitical machinations and ephemeral coalitions that underpinned the whole episode, not as parts of a concentrated operation to resuscitate the Ottoman Empire, but as the symptoms of a rapidly developing inter-imperialist rivalry which was driven by a competitive logic to secure markets and resources and bolstered by the uneven development of social forces across the world. To this end, Marx and Engels repeatedly targeted the justification of the great power policies through a vague commitment to uphold the status quo. One of the clearest statements of this occupation emerges in Engels' 'Turkish Question'. Exposing the European great powers' dissonant formulations of an irresolute commitment to status quo, Engels wrote:

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[75] Gearóid Ó Tuathail, 'Theorizing practical geopolitical reasoning: the case of the United States' response to the war in Bosnia', Political Geography 21, no. 5 (2002): 612.
[76] MECW 12, 195, original emphasis.

> Why, it was precisely to maintain the status quo that Russia stirred up Serbia to revolt, made Greece independent, appropriated to herself the protectorate of Moldavia and Wallachia, and retained part of Armenia! England and France never stirred an inch when all this was done.[77]

Engels' dismissal of the Western narrative of the 'Eastern Question' embodies the first stage of a broader critique of the traditional formulation. In lieu of the conventionally held perspective which affirms the primacy of a narrowly defined geopolitical status quo and the preservation of the Ottoman territorial integrity, an alternative reading—one that was partially developed by Marx and Engels—necessitates the inclusion of social forces into the analytical framework. At the heart of such a reformulation lies the contextualisation of international relations throughout the nineteenth century not merely as a concentrated effort to maintain the status quo between the states, but also between classes.

Marx and Engels repeatedly highlighted the consequences of the 'Eastern Question' for both conservative and revolutionary classes in Europe. 'The real issue in Turkey' for Marx and Engels was the destabilisation of revolutionary class forces under the constant threat of an inter-imperialist war which the 'Eastern Question' prophesied. While Engels initially advanced a stadial perspective, claiming that in the face of Russian absolutism, 'the interests of the revolutionary Democracy and of England go hand in hand',[78] Marx's increasingly critical stance on Britain suggests a departure from the direct association of working-class emancipation with the exponential development of capitalism.

After the repression of the 1848 revolutions, Marx maintained that 'Europe fell back into its old double slavery, into the English-Russian slavery'.[79] Whereas Britain, 'the despot of the world market',[80] represented the full force of the capitalist mode of production reinforced with imperialist expansionism, Russia was the symbol of 'continental retrogression' for which 'every interregnum of the counter-revolution in Europe constitute[d] a right for her to exact concessions from the Ottoman Empire'.[81] Thus the emergent international context was not a repetition of perennial territorial struggles between the major powers, but represented a specific conjuncture in which the 'geopolitical' collided with the global expan-

[77] MECW 12, 24, original emphasis.
[78] MECW 12, 17.
[79] Karl Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital & Value, Price and Profit (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 15, original emphasis.
[80] Karl Marx, Class Struggles in France (1848–1850) (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 42.
[81] MECW 12, 106.

sion of capitalism, the contradictory expression of which was the proliferation of revolutionary struggles that threatened the status quo of bourgeois ruling coalitions all across Europe. For Marx, the dilemmas of European social reform partly stemmed from the conservative role Britain played in the aftermath of 1848 whereby 'an enlightened English aristocracy and bourgeoisie lie[d] prostrate before the barbarian autocrat [Russia]'.[82] As such, the deification of the European balance of power not only greatly reduced the momentum that the movements for working-class emancipation had gained in the early to mid-nineteenth century, it also locked all involved actors in a state of paralysis. As Antonio Gramsci formulated in an equally forceful manner, '[a]ll history from 1815 onwards shows the efforts of the traditional classes to prevent the formation of a collective will . . . and to maintain 'economic-corporate' power in an international system of passive equilibrium'.[83] As far as Marx and Engels were concerned, status quo was the codification of this counter-revolutionary 'collective will'; it was 'the state of putrefaction which forbids the Sultan to emancipate himself from the Czar, and the Slavonians to emancipate themselves from the Sultan'.[84]

An extensive survey of the 'Eastern Question' suggests three thematic areas on which Marx and Engels placed greater emphasis. These areas can be broadly categorised as (I) international relations with a focus on the prospects of revolution, (II) foreign policy formulations as articulated by statespeople and 'intellectuals of statecraft', and (III) position of the European bourgeois press vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire and Russia.

The first aspect of their analyses was primarily concerned with revealing the effects and consequences of the 'Eastern Question' discourse for the revolutionary struggle in Europe. Initially, Marx and Engels welcomed the quagmire in which the European bourgeoisie was entangled. They speculated that the narrative which was perpetuated by the European statespeople would soon become unsustainable given the extent of Russian aggression and the unwillingness of European powers to provide any meaningful support to the Ottoman Empire. At the onset of the Crimean War, Marx wrote:

[82] MECW 12, 196.
[83] Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, trans. and eds. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 132, Q13§1.
[84] MECW 12, 212.

> The revolutionary party can only congratulate itself on this state of things. The humiliation of the reactionary western governments, and their manifest impotency to guard the interests of European civilization against Russian encroachment cannot fail to work out a wholesome indignation in the people who have suffered themselves, since 1849, to be subjected to the rule of counter-revolution.[85]

This consciously maintained dichotomy between 'Russian Absolutism and European Democracy'[86] was repeatedly exploited by Marx and Engels to underscore the urgency of working-class revolution. Russia, perhaps not in an entirely unjustified manner, was clad in the mantle of 'counter-revolution' and tasked with proving how feeble the European bourgeois states had become since 1789. Yet even Russia was not exempt from the forces unleashed by the uneven development of capitalism. Marx answered his own question regarding Russia's involuntary role as follows: 'Does Russia act on her own free impulse, or is she but the unconscious and reluctant slave of the modern fatum, Revolution? I believe the latter alternative'.[87] For Engels, the bourgeoisie's long lost progressive outlook had to be reclaimed by the 'revolutionary party' which was the only agent capable of resolving the 'Eastern Question':

> The solution of the Turkish problem is reserved, with that of other great problems, to the European Revolution. And there is no presumption in assigning this apparently remote question to the lawful domain of that great movement. The revolutionary landmarks have been steadily advancing ever since 1789. The last revolutionary outposts were Warsaw, Debreczin, Bucharest; the advanced posts of the next revolution must be Petersburg and Constantinople.[88]

Thus a working-class revolution, implicitly a European one,[89] was not only registered as the ultimate outcome of the ongoing (geo)political and social conflicts in Eurasia, it was also poised to unleash a transformative momentum which would invalidate the crises that the uneven development of capitalism was perpetuating:

> The Sultan holds Constantinople only in trust for the Revolution, and the present nominal dignitaries of Western Europe, themselves finding the last stronghold of their 'order' on the shores of the Neva, can do nothing but keep the question in suspense until Russia has to meet her real antagonist, the Revolution. The Revolution which will break the Rome of the West will also overpower the demoniac influences of the Rome of the East.[90]

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[85] MECW 12, 212–13.
[86] MECW 12, 36.
[87] MECW 12, 106, original emphasis.
[88] MECW 12, 34.
[89] There is no doubt that the 'Eastern Question' interventions of Marx and Engels are constructed from a European perspective. Nevertheless, the empirical focus on Europe is always accompanied by a universal sensitivity to the prospects of revolution beyond Europe, thus any attempt at unpacking the archive's Eurocentrism has to carefully evaluate its position within the broader corpus of Marx and Engels. I have explored these questions in more detail in Tansel, 'Deafening silence?' and Cemal Burak Tansel, 'Breaking the Eurocentric cage', Capital & Class 37, no. 2 (2013): 299–307.
[90] MECW 12, 231.

The second aspect encompasses both detailed analyses of particular policy directives and speeches—which for Marx and Engels were indicative of their underlying class interest—and rebuttals of 'bourgeois' intellectuals.[91] An illustrative example is Marx's consistent interrogation of the exchanges in the British parliament and a series of articles on Lord Palmerston who was 'never in need of a theme to pique the national prejudices, to counteract revolution abroad, and, at the same time, to keep awake the suspicious jealousy of foreign powers'.[92]

Marx's criticism of the British political establishment reaches its crescendo during the Crimean War. As the commercial interest behind the preservation of European status quo translated into a strong political voice represented in the Parliament, Marx charged 'the Stockjobbers, and the Peacemongering Bourgeoisie' with '[surrendering] Europe to Russia'.[93] The target of Marx's vehemence was what John A. Hobson would later call 'the new well-to-do business classes' who became 'obtrusively dominant in all issues' in the arena of national politics.[94] As Marx attempted to exhibit how the liberal argument for neutrality was devised to maintain the British commercial interests in the continent, he slashed at the proponents of the Manchester school of political economy and their Turkophobic parliamentary wing by claiming that 'the Czar knows his Cobdens and his Brights, and estimates at its just value the mean and abject spirit of the European middle classes'.[95] In light of the historical evidence, we know that the British bourgeoisie as a whole did not adopt this position, which forces us to pay closer attention to class fractions and how their sectoral interests and their relationship to the world market affect their political prefer-

[91] Marx's citation of an article by M. de St.-Marc Girardin published in the Journal des Débats signals the extraordinary extent to which class relations were seen fundamental during the mid-nineteenth century. Mirroring a conservative counter-argument of the revolutionary praxis espoused by Marx and Engels, Girardin wrote: 'Europe has two great perils, according to us: Russia, which menaces her independence; and the Revolution, which menaces her social order. Now, she cannot be saved from one of these perils except by exposing herself entirely to the other . . . [W]hat we know is, that in the present state of Europe, war would be the social revolution'. See MECW 12, 117 original emphasis.
[92] MECW 12, 347.
[93] MECW 12, 313.
[94] John A. Hobson, 'Why the war came as a surprise', Political Science Quarterly 35, no. 3 (1920): 341.
[95] MECW 12, 590. Marx also highlighted the contradiction between liberal discourse and practice vis-à-vis the state: 'These same 'gallant' free-traders, renowned for their indefatigability in denouncing government interference, these apostles of the bourgeois doctrine of laissez-faire, who profess to leave everything and everybody to the struggles of individual interest, are always the first to appeal to the interference of Government as soon as the individual interests of the workingman come into conflict with their own class interests. In such moments of collision they look with open admiration at the Continental States, where despotic governments, though, indeed, not allowing the bourgeoisie to rule, at least prevent the workingmen from resisting'. See MECW 12, 135.

ences. For example, some Manchester merchants with vested interests in the Ottoman market were perturbed with the possibility of a Russian victory which could signal the removal of the Ottoman Empire from the sphere of the British commercial influence.[96] Industrialists and the fractions of the commercial bourgeoisie whose immediate interests laid elsewhere followed Cobden's line as his staunch resistance to the British involvement in the Ottoman–Russian conflict was coupled with his belief that 'England would gain rather than suffer' if 'Russia were to subjugate Turkey'.[97] Cobden would, indeed, continue to praise the development of the Russian commerce and argue that 'wherever a country is found to favour foreign commerce . . . it may infallibly be assumed, that England partakes more largely of the advantages of that traffic than any other state'.[98]

Cobden's pro-Russian 'neutrality', which was rooted in the assumption that the commercial interests of the British bourgeoisie would remain secure regardless of Britain's involvement in the conflict, should not obscure the degree to which the Ottoman market had been colonised by the British up to the 1850s. While '[u]ntil c. 1820, trade within the empire and with Russia certainly was more important than that with Western and Central Europe', by 1850s European companies had already 'made a significant entry into the Ottoman markets to a degree that extended beyond the major urban centers'.[99] The processes that reinforced this expansion materialised largely due to political interventions rather than the 'economic' power or ingenuity of the British bourgeoisie. The Anglo-Turkish Trade Agreement of 1838 created a lifeline for the British companies which, as late as the early 1830s were still struggling to dominate

[96] Arthur Redford, Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade, Vol. 2: 1850–1939 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), 84.
[97] Richard Cobden, Russia and the Eastern Question (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1854), 11. Cobden was of the conviction that 'the Russian trade' was three times more important to Britain than the Turkish. John McGilchrist, Richard Cobden: The Apostle of Free Trade, His Political Career and Public Services. A Biography (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), 198. It is also important to note that Cobden had 'a background in manufacturing and represented constituencies in the industrial northwest of England'. John R. Davis, 'The British Sonderweg: the peculiarities of British free trade, 1845–80', Diplomacy & Statecraft 8, no. 3 (1997): 76.
[98] Cobden, Russia and the Eastern Question, 30; see also Bernard Semmell, The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism: Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism 1750–1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 160.
[99] Donald Quataert, 'The age of reforms, 1812–1914', in An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, eds. H. İnalcık with D. Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 828; Reşat Kasaba, 'Incorporation of the Ottoman Empire, 1750–1820', Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center 10, no. 5/6 (1987): 810.

the Ottoman market and requesting the British government's assistance.[100] The treaty constituted a key stage in the liberalisation of the Ottoman economy by targeting 'local monopolies' and exempting 'foreign (but not domestic) merchants from an 8 per cent internal customs duty that had been levied previously on goods transported within the Empire'.[101] Thus the new arrangements would fulfil Palmerstone's explicitly expressed desire to see the Turkish industry 'discouraged' while buttressing the British enterprises in the Empire.[102] By 1850, the British exports to the Middle East would surpass £3,000,000 (up from £153,903 in 1814), while the number of British ships that 'entered or passed the port of Constantinople' would reach 2,504 by 1856.[103] Consequently, the British government perceived its involvement in the Crimean War—despite the campaign for neutrality undertaken by a 'Peacemongering Bourgeoisie'—as a necessary step to protect its 'extensive' interests which would be endangered not only by Russian aggression but also by the possible elevation of France as the sole privileged partner of the Ottoman trade.[104]

In addition to this critique of the bourgeois (fractions') political positions, Marx also turned the tables on liberals by underscoring that their moral condemnation of the Ottoman Empire, and particularly the treatment of its Christian population, was merely a masquerade with which to valorise and legitimise their particular class interest and ideology.[105] Aiming at Cobden, Marx hypothetically asked:

> Mr. Cobden proceeded to show that there reigns a general dissatisfaction throughout the Christian population in Turkey, threatening to end in a general insurrection. Now, let us again ask Mr. Cobden whether there does not exist a general dissatisfaction with their Governments and their ruling classes, among all peoples of Europe, which discontent soon threatens to terminate in a general revolution?[106]

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[100] Reşat Kasaba, 'Was there a comprador bourgeoisie in mid-nineteenth-century western Anatolia?', Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center 11, no. 2 (1988): 221.
[101] Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'Ottoman de-industrialization, 1800–1913: assessing the magnitude, impact and response', The Economic History Review 64, no. S1 (2011): 161.
[102] Vernon John Puryear, International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East: A Study of British Commercial Policy in the Levant, 1834–1853 (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1935), 118; Edward C. Clark, 'The Ottoman Industrial Revolution', International Journal of Middle East Studies 5, no. 1 (1974): 71–2.
[103] Roger Owen, The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914 (London: IB Tauris, 2009[1981]): 84–5; Puryear, International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East, 127.
[104] Brison D. Gooch, 'A century of historiography on the origins of the Crimean War', The American Historical Review 62, no. 1 (1956), p. 37.
[105] Engels made a similar comment with regards to the British aristocracy who 'would, if need be, sacrifice the national English interests to their particular class interests, and permit the consolidation of a juvenile despotism in the East in the hopes of finding a support for their valetudinarian oligarchy in the West'. See MECW 12, 12.
[106] MEW 10, 83; Marx, The Eastern Question, 258.

This method of interrogation with which Marx and Engels refuted arguments made from/for a narrowly construed class/national perspective becomes even more commanding in their analyses of the European press. In line with the method they followed in their examinations of the policy-makers and intellectuals, class relations of their subjects take precedence in their attempts to unmask the ways in which the press constructed narratives of the 'Eastern Question'. Thus various outlets are described in relation to the specific class interests they promoted and branded, for example, as the organs of 'the English aristocracy' (The Morning Herald), 'liberals' (The Daily News) or 'the Austrian bankocracy' (Wiener Lloyd).[107] Accordingly, Marx maintained that the British press, in accordance with the dominant policy perspectives within the Parliament, significantly distorted the perception of the Ottoman–Russian conflict and 'several organs of the Coalition Ministry' even undertook the 'the business of soothing down the public'.[108] In similar terms with his critique of liberal moralism, Marx slashed at those press outlets who advocated neutrality or a pro-Russian foreign policy. An illustrative example is Marx's critique of a leader published in The Times written prior to the first Russian ultimatum to the Porte:

> The Times wanted to subject the inhabitants of Turkey to the 'pure sway' and civilizing influence of Russia and Austria, remembering the old story that wisdom comes from the East, and forgetting its recent statement that 'the state maintained by Austria in the provinces and kingdoms of her own Empire, was one of arbitrary authority and of executive, tyranny, regulated by no laws at all'.[109]

As with his refutation of Cobden's speech, here too Marx reverses the newspaper's previously published statements to reveal the contradictory nature of arguments devised for the Russian encroachment towards the Ottoman Empire. Of note here is a set of articles by Marx which demonstrate how the British press perpetuated a misconceived dichotomy between 'civilised' Russia and 'archaic' Ottoman Empire by resorting to racist justifications and anti-Muslim sentiments.[110] Marx effectively exhibits the overtly instrumental manner in which the Ottoman–Russian relationship is discussed in the press by singling out an

[107] Marx, The Eastern Question, 90; MECW 12, 175; MEW 9, 177. There are other direct associations made between the political circuits and newspapers. Marx, for example chastises The Morning Post as 'Palmerston's private Moniteur'. See Marx, The Eastern Question, 263.
[108] MECW 12, 537,
[109] MECW 12, 19.
[110] See for example, leader of The Times dated 8 July 1953 which contains the following statement: 'as the Russians could not master their propensity for civilizing barbarian provinces, England had better let them do as they desired, and avoid a disturbance of the peace by vain obstinacy' (quoted in MECW 12, 185).

anti-Russian piece published in The Times on the same day the Allied forces reached Varna. Extensively citing the piece which calls for a European-wide resistance to Russia's machinations on the Ottoman Christians, Marx notes how the discourse had drastically changed once Britain and France joined the Ottoman camp:

> How did it happen, that the poor Times believed in the 'good faith' of Russia toward Turkey, and her 'antipathy' against all aggrandizement? The good will of Russia toward Turkey! Peter I proposed to raise himself on the ruins of Turkey. Catherine persuaded Austria, and called upon France to participate in the proposed dismemberment of Turkey, and the establishment of a Greek Empire at Constantinople, under her grandson, who had been educated and even named with a view to this result. Nicholas, more moderate, only demands the exclusive Protectorate of Turkey. Mankind will not forget that Russia was the protector of Poland, the protector of the Crimea, the protector of Courland, the protector of Georgia, Mingrelia, the Circassian and Caucasian tribes. And now Russia, the protector of Turkey![111]

This demonstration of the sensitivity Marx and Engels showed vis-à-vis the material sources, discursive legitimisation and ideological construction of inter-state relations in the mid-nineteenth century highlights the value of existing conceptual apparatuses for the efforts to construct a framework of Marxist geopolitics. Simultaneously, the multifaceted—but ultimately class and production oriented—framework fleshed out in this article suggests that the source material can also speak to methodologically divergent approaches in critical geopolitics, which, apart from a small number of publications, have largely shied away from entering into a productive dialogue with Marxism.

Conclusion

The above outlined snapshot of the corpus on the 'Eastern Question' aimed to reinforce Marxist frameworks of geopolitical analysis that stress the centrality of class relations and the interaction between states and the mode of production. Following Terry Kandal, such a framework is concerned primarily with how geopolitical relations 'are conditioned by, but not reduced to, the uneven development of capitalism and the class conflicts within nation-states'.[112] As such, the critical evaluation put forward by Marx and Engels on the ever-changing conditions of the preservation of the Ottoman territorial integrity marks the necessity of delineating the ways in which prima facie territorial struggles and geopolitical conflicts are

[111] MECW 12, 113, original emphasis.
[112] Terry R. Kandal, 'Marx and Engels on international relations, revolution and counterrevolution', in Studies of Development and Change in the Modern World, eds. M. T. Martin and T. R. Kandal (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 57.

entwined with the interests of class forces and the development of social relations of production on a world scale. However, contra contemporary IR theorists like Stephen Krasner who has claimed that 'the Westphalian model is organized hypocrisy, a set of principles constantly under challenge by alternative norms or overridden by material or security interests',[113] the form to which the so-called Westphalian system evolved at the juncture of the 'Eastern Question' is neither hypocritical in the literary sense nor a directionless enterprise composed of states that operate within an anarchic system. On the contrary, the seemingly contradictory policy formations in the nineteenth century should be understood as the symptoms of the changing systematic imperatives, rather than political aberrations created by incompetent statespeople or the idiosyncracies of an eternal system of checks and balances. It is in the nineteenth century that capital accumulation extensively took over the anterior system of political accumulation on a world scale and the 'Eastern Question' was one form of these geopolitical calculations that accompanied the transformation of the entire system. In the words of Sadık Rıfat Paşa, a Tanzimat diplomat, by the nineteenth century, '[t]he extent of the territory over which the sovereignty of a state extended . . . was no longer considered to be an accurate measure of its strength'.[114] The Ottoman Empire, while never formally subjected to colonialism, was caught in the web of this transformation through capitalist imperialism which redefined the rationale for geopolitical rivalries by prioritising 'the struggle for opportunities to invest capital'.[115] Combined with aggressive colonialism which increased the European colonial dominion from '148 million inhabitants and 2.7 million miles' in 1860 to '568 million people and 29 million miles' in 1914,[116] capitalist imperialism not only engendered global military conflict but also laid out the basis of a relationship of dependency between early industrialists and the late-comers through financial instruments.[117] In short, the 'Eastern Question' archive allows us to recognise how, by the mid-nineteenth century, geopolitical calculations were increasingly made with a view to securing access to markets and in-

[113] Stephen D. Krasner, Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 129.
[114] Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 180.
[115] Nikolai Bukharin, Imperialism and World Economy (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), 100.
[116] China Miéville, Between Equal Rights: A Marxist Theory of International Law (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 227.
[117] Charles Issawi, 'The Ottoman debt', in The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800–1914, ed. Charles Issawi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 94; Murat Birdal, The Political Economy of Ottoman Public Debt: Insolvency and European Financial Control in the Late Nineteenth Century (London: IB Tauris, 2010), 14.

vesting capital and how domestic classes were instrumental in underwriting this 'qualitatively new process' that 'served to make capitalism itself . . . 'hegemonic''.[118]

The type of geopolitical analysis rendered in this article does not aim to revive an essentialist conception of political geography that reifies 'the central role of the national state, class and racist assumptions, masculinist gaze and metropolitan positioning' and cultivates the provincial modes of thinking associated with the luminaries of classical geopolitics.[119] In contrast to such ahistorical conceptualisations of politico-geographical theorising that falls into the lure of the 'fetish of the geopolitical',[120] a distinctly Marxist geopolitics should strive to unravel the particular modes of the spatialisation of political power that criss-cross national and societal boundaries and their interaction with the structural determinants of the capitalist mode of production. While the analyses devised by Marx and Engels speak to a particular historical setting—i.e. the outlined conceptual apparatus requires extreme care when applied to other spatial and temporal contexts—I argue that the analytical focus on class provides an essential tool with which to bolster the existing materialist approaches. This is not to assert that the ways in which Marx and Engels conceptualised international relations in the mid-nineteenth century signal the existence of a set of transhistorical laws of 'geopolitics', applicable to and binding for all forms of interaction within international politics, but only to insist on the relevance and analytical utility of class for investigating the dominant geopolitical scripts and re-imagining alternative ones. Echoing the previously stated limitations inherent in such constellations, it is important not to close off theoretical avenues with which to conceptualise the changing relationship between geopolitics and capitalism. As Teschke and Lacher remind us:

> [C]apitalist states have adopted different 'strategies of spatialization', ranging from the grant of full juridical independence to subaltern states, via semihegemonic projects like the European Union, to systems of outright territorial control in the pursuit of Lebensraum or 'formal Empire'. . . . What an understanding of these diverse strategies of spatialization requires is an agency-centred perspective that emphasizes the variable politics and geopolitics of territorialization and de-territorialization. Inter-imperialist rivalry is best understood as but one historically limited variation, which needs to be set in the context of capitalism's crisis tendencies and class struggles in this particular conjuncture.[121]

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[118] Hannes Lacher and Julian Germann, 'Before hegemony: Britain, free trade and nineteenth-century world order revisited', International Studies Review 14, no. 1 (2012): 108.
[119] Deborah Cowen and Neil Smith, 'After geopolitics? From the geopolitical social to geoeconomics', Antipode 41, no. 1 (2009): 24.
[120] Benno Teschke, 'The fetish of geopolitics', New Left Review (II), 69 (2011): 84.
[121] Teschke and Lacher, 'The changing 'logics' of capitalist competition', 577–78.

As such the tapestry of imperial diplomatic relations and policies reflective of class interests presented in this retold account of the 'Eastern Question' neither constitutes 'a narrow 'back to class' move'[122] nor negates the possibility of incorporating other agents, socio-spatial levels or developments into a broadly defined 'Marxist' geopolitics. Ultimately the class-oriented focus employed in the analysis of sovereignty, territoriality and the states-system would be all the more stronger if it enters into a dialogue with the feminist and postcolonial currents in IR and critical geopolitics.

[122] Smith, 'What happened to class?', 1013.