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## 20 Theoretical conclusions: Classes, states, nations, and the sources of social power

This volume has two concluding chapters. This, the first one, begins where Chapter 7 left off, generalizing about the rise of the two major actors of modern times – classes and nation-states – then about the four sources of social power during the period. Because the five countries covered (Austria, Britain, France, Prussia-Germany, and the United States) all differed, I must strike a balance between generalization and acknowledgment of uniqueness. But because history passed its own conclusion on the long nineteenth century, in the form of World War I, the final chapter will analyze the causes of that war, exemplifying and justifying the theory underlying this volume.

As we have seen, states were entwined with both classes and nations. I shall not once again summarize my research on states; rather, I refer the reader to the conclusion of Chapter 14. Here I repeat only the essential point: As the state became more socially significant through late eighteenth-century military and late nineteenth-century industrial capitalist expansion, it partially “naturalized” the West and its classes.

### Classes and states

By the time of World War I, the entire West was becoming industrial. Britain and Belgium already were so, most countries were evenly balanced between industry and agriculture, and agriculture was also thoroughly commercialized. Capitalism had enormously accelerated human collective powers, predominantly diffusely, right across this multi-power-actor civilization. Its second industrial spurt, from the 1880s on, enhanced the material conditions of all classes and both sexes, enabling the conquest of bare subsistence and the near doubling of the human life span. Though unequally distributed, the benefits were spread so broadly that most power actors agreed that authoritative power institutions should support capitalist expansion. The scope of state civilian infrastructures now broadened. Capitalism and state bureaucratization developed similarly across the West.

Capitalism also transformed all countries' distributive power relations, generating extensive and political classes on a scale unparalleled in history. There emerged first a bourgeoisie and a petite bourgeoisie,

then a middle class, a working class, and a peasant class – all non-dominant classes with enlarged authoritative powers of collective organization. All these classes believed (despite the benefits) that they were exploited by dominant classes and political regimes, and all mounted collective protest seeking alternatives. This was evident to Marx and to most subsequent observers. More important, it was also evident to dominant classes and ruling regimes. Yet the outcomes of distributive conflict were not what Marx expected, for four reasons:

1. Because capitalism was predominantly a diffused power organization, its authoritative class organization emerged as essentially ambivalent. Bourgeoisies, petite bourgeoisies, and middle classes were economically heterogeneous. Without intervention from the other sources of social power, their conflicts with dominant classes and regimes turned out partial, mild, and particularistic. Over the first half of the period many compromised and even merged without much drama. Agrarian classes, especially the peasantry, developed as heterogeneous, generating three competing collective organizations: as “production classes,” as “credit classes,” and as an economic sector (in a segmental alliance with large estate farmers, their usual opponents on the other two dimensions). The proletariat also generated three collective organizational tendencies: class, sectionalism, and segmentalism. Thus the economic development of capitalism produced multiple collective organizations, among which classes, though inherently developing the dialectical conflict Marx expected, by no means dominated.

2. The outcomes of competition among these competing economic organizations were determined predominantly by the strategies or drifts of more authoritatively organized dominant classes and ruling regimes, which, after all, controlled existing authoritative states and armed forces. Providing they were concentrating hard on the emerging class confrontation (and that was not always so, as we shall see), most worked out an effective counterstrategy. This was not unusual. I have argued throughout that where class conflict is relatively transparent – that is, where it has the capacity to generate head-on class confrontation of the type Marx expected to result in revolution – then that is where ruling classes and regimes can most effectively use their greater institutionalized power to repress and to divide their opponent.   
 \* | Revolutions, I argued, occur where ruling classes and regimes become confused by the emergence of multiple, nondialectical but entwined conflicts. In this case the most effective regime strategy against transparent capital-labor conflict was to make concessions to some workers and peasants through sectionalism and segmentalism while repressing the rest. By this means they could undercut the class unity required for revolution or aggressive reform. The very emergence, simultaneously,

of three forms of worker organization undercut class because it required hegemony over workers, whereas the other two did not.

3. In turn, the strategies or drifts of dominant classes and regimes, and so therefore of workers themselves, were predominantly determined by the other three sources of social power. I refer the reader to Chapter 7 for my summary of the outcomes of economic struggles up to the 1830s or 1840s. There I stress diffuse ideological but especially authoritative military and then political power sources. Chapters 17–19 give a more political explanation of later worker and peasant movements. Thus, about 1900, outcomes of capital-labor conflict throughout the West were determined by (1) an essentially similar global diffusion of capitalism generating a common ambiguity of collective organizations and interests, interacting with (2) various crystallizations of authoritative states – ideological, patriarchal, military, but especially their two citizen crystallizations, on “representative” and “national” issues.

4. These interactions were not like billiard-ball collisions of separate objects. Classes, segments, and sections all “entwined nondialectically” with authoritative political crystallizations, thus helping to shape one another. Actors’ very identities and interests were changed behind their backs by the unintended consequences of action. In such an uncertain environment, actors were prone to make “systemic mistakes.” Chapter 6 shows how the French regime of 1789 made disastrous mistakes because it did not appreciate the emerging, developing nature of its opponent. Chapter 15 illustrates the inverse. Rather unusually, dominant classes controlling a state were faced “dialectically” by a single, fairly homogeneous class opponent, Chartism. Confronting the enemy squarely, they made no mistakes, firmly repressing its militants and forcing workers with greater market powers toward sectionalism. The last chapters have revealed more persistent world-historical mistakes made by excessively productivist and statist labor movements, under the influence of Marxism or Lutheranism, peculiarly unable to appreciate the distinctive complexities of agrarian struggles and thus converting potential peasant allies into enemies.

These four determinants were not merely external to one another. They were entwined, shaping one another’s form. The relevance of regime strategies-drifts, of representative and national citizen struggles, of unintended consequences, and of mistakes derived from the way they strengthened class, sectional, or segmental identities according to context. Class, sectionalism, and segmentalism continued to battle over the souls of workers and peasants. In terms of their relations to the means of production, battle was joined in both industry and agriculture on deeply ambivalent terms, without decisive outcomes in

this period. Of course, persistent sectionalism and segmentalism did undercut and undermine the broad unity required by class action. In a capitalist world without states this may have permanently weakened labor in relation to capital, and almost certainly it would have prevented revolutionary, even aggressively reformist, outcomes. Yet capitalism inhabited a world of states. In this period, ambivalent tendencies toward class, sectional, and segmental organization were mostly boosted or reversed, often unintentionally, by authoritative representative and national political crystallizations, especially as they impacted on labor-peasant alliances. Classes were not purely economic; nor were states purely political.

Capitalism and industrialism have both been overrated. Their diffused powers exceeded their authoritative powers, for which they relied more on, and were shaped by, military and political power organizations. Though both capitalism and industrialism vastly increased collective powers, distributive powers – social stratification – were less altered. Modern class relations were galvanized by the first and second industrial revolutions and by the global commercialization of agriculture, but they were propelled forward along inherently ambivalent tracks in which varying outcomes were determined by authoritative political crystallizations that had been mostly institutionalized rather earlier.

Why were states already so diverse? Charles Tilly reminds us that European states had originated in the medieval period in many forms – territorial monarchies, loose networks of prince-lord-vassal personal relations, conquest states, city-states, ecclesiastical city-states, leagues of cities, communes, and so forth. Although Tilly charts a decline in state types throughout the early modern period, as territorial states stabilized and came to dominate, much variety remained. The fragmenting of Christendom added religious variety. States varied especially in relations between the capital and the regions. In 1760, Anglican Britain was moderately homogeneous and centralized, absorbing Scottish, Welsh, and Nonconformist regionalism, but with an adjacent imperial colony, Catholic Ireland. Catholic France had a highly centralized monarchy, but with highly particularistic relations with its regions (which also fell into two distinct constitutional types). Lutheran Prussia was a fairly compact state closely integrating monarchy and the nobility of the dominant region. Catholic Austria was a confederal monarchy containing regional religious minorities and languages. America was a series of separate, expanding colonies. All states differed, grossly. States are territorial and territories are laid out in very particular fashion.

Territorial particularity was enhanced by agrarian economies, dim-

inished by industrial ones. Today, in advanced (or post-) industrial society, the economic activities in Britain, France, and Germany are remarkably similar because modern economies transform most of the products of nature many times. But agrarian economies depend on ecology – on the soil, vegetation, climate, and water – and these vary by locality. The ecology of agrarian Europe was unusually varied, in economists' jargon offering a "dispersed portfolio of resources." But as capitalism developed, "national" economies became more similar (as Chapter 14 notes).

Capitalism is an unusually diffused form of power organization, whereas states are essentially authoritative. Especially in its industrial stage, increasingly liberated from the particularities of territory, capitalism spread right through the West in rather similar forms. Its diffused power also allows fairly "free" choice of alternative strategies, more unfinished competition, for collective as well as individual actors. Workers and employers, peasants and large estate farmers may make varied local arrangements that permit class, sectional, and segmental strategies to continue and compete. Yet states, by their very nature as a distinct source of social power, authoritatively allocate and institutionalize. Although parties and state elites may argue and reduce state coherence, laws regarding civil rights, suffrage, state centralization, conscription, tariffs, unions, and so forth, must be laid down authoritatively.

The modern state had first institutionalized the many territorial particularities of Europe. Then states greatly expanded as they faced two waves of common regulatory problems, emanating from the increased militarism of the eighteenth century and the capitalist development lasting through 1914. In this period, states became large, socially relevant, and distinctively "modern." The ways this happened now had an immense impact on social development. Yet, in their expanded roles, they first coped with the particular institutions developed amid the more "territorial" era. In the first phase of expansion, militarism interacted with these to result in distinctive "modernized" institutions in each state: America institutionalized its unique constitution; France institutionalized conflict over its constitution; Britain institutionalized old regime liberalism; Prussia, semiauthoritarianism; and Austria (less successfully) attempted to give its dynasticism more infrastructurally penetrative powers. Modern states – induced by eighteenth-century militarism and nineteenth-century industrial capitalism – now enormously increased their social significance. Thus the structuring power of their existing authoritative institutions, forged in interaction between an earlier age and the militarist phase, also grew. After about the 1830s, most countries' political institutions had a

*Thesis:  
States using  
more than  
capitalism*

solidity absorbing almost all that industrial society could throw at them.

A second dialectic beside Marx's class dialectic was occurring, between what I label "interstitial emergence" and "institutionalization." Because societies are constituted by multiple, overlapping networks of interaction, they perennially produce emergent collective actors whose relations with older actors are not yet institutionalized but then become so. Classes and nations were emergent actors par excellence. They took dominant classes and regimes by surprise, and no existing institutions were directly designed to cope with them. Instead, dominant classes and regimes made do with the institutions designed for older, more territorially particular purposes. States did not grow primarily to cope with emerging classes and nations (but to fight costlier wars and then to assist industrialization), but their enlarged institutions bore much of the brunt of social control. Thus they increasingly determined class and national outcomes.

I give an example of this from Chapters 17 and 18: the diverging development of the American, British, and German labor movements. I focus here only on two forms of authoritative power, state representative and military crystallizations (for a fuller, more adequate explanation, consult those chapters). Eighteenth-century Britain had developed an embryonic form of party democracy primarily to institutionalize "court" and "country," dynastic and religious conflicts. Britain also lacked an effective home army (except in Ireland). Hence coping with emerging middling classes depended mostly on Parliament, and Parliament did cope. By 1820, Prussia had institutionalized noble-professional conflicts primarily within its royal administration and its army. These also helped the regime institutionalize middling classes, especially when the army gained legitimacy by turning Prussia into Germany. The German regime then also made innovative use of limited party democracy, which also bent the middle class Rightward. American party democracy originated primarily to institutionalize relations between large and small farmers. American military and paramilitary organizations developed largely to kill Indians.

When the proletariat emerged, dominant classes and regimes in the three countries handled it very differently. This was not because the British had a "genius for compromise" (until after midcentury they repressed more than they compromised) or because Germans were authoritarian or Americans schizophrenic. Most capitalists and politicians in all three countries wanted the same thing: to preserve order yet keep their privileges. But they had different authoritative state institutions already to hand for accomplishing these tasks. The British had competitive parties and a franchise whose relationship to class

boundaries had varied and could vary again – but not much of a home army. The Germans had institutionalized a divide-and-rule party strategy excluding radical parties – and they had a large army whose shows of force had considerable domestic legitimacy. The Americans had competitive parties – but they also had military and paramilitary forces experienced in crude domestic repression. Thus similar emerging labor movements were deflected by different available state institutions along different tracks. Britain developed mild mutualism; Germany, a rather ritualized encounter between a reactionary state and capitalism and an ostensibly revolutionary Marxism, and America, greater violence and sectionalism and little socialism.

In all these encounters state institutions also changed, but more slowly than capitalism developed and classes emerged. The theoretical model appropriate for this phase of world history – with common diffusing capitalism entwined with more particular authoritative state institutions – is a kind of "political lag" theory, such as I teased out from the institutional theory of the state identified in Chapter 3. Variations between state institutions fostered various "collective laborers" in this period. This casts doubt on all theories asserting that capitalist development necessarily brings *any* determinant set of power relations between capital and labor – whether the theory is Marxist, reformist, or liberal. The collective laborer has been more malleable than these theories would suggest, compliant with (or unable to change) a number of regimes, and capable of crystallizing in many forms.

Indeed, this period seems to have institutionalized more diverse class relations than has more recent advanced capitalism, dominated by party democracies. Throughout most of the twentieth century, authoritarian regimes fared badly. Autocracy and semiauthoritarian monarchy disappeared as dominant strategies from the West, although comparable nonmonarchical regimes exist in many developing countries. Most Western theories have argued that this decline in variety and in authoritarianism was inevitable, the working out of the "logic of industrialism," of the "age of democracy" or of the "institutionalization of class conflict" – variant forms of modernization theory. Evolutionary theories have been boosted by the sudden collapse of twentieth-century authoritarian socialism in the Soviet bloc. But has there been such a "logic"? Why were tsarism, Imperial Germany – indeed, more than half the modernizing regimes – doomed? Were they stumbling and scheming to a viable alternative set of modern power relations to party democracy? These questions await Volume III. But one issue can be addressed here: Because authoritarian regimes bring militarism more directly into class regulation, this may make them

vulnerable to war-induced demise. The causes of the Great War become critical to the first stage in assessing their viability.

Complexity in state crystallizations also turns us toward the war. Contemporary power actors found it as difficult to control outcomes as we find it to explain them. The consequences of their actions were often unintended. Class struggles – agrarian, industrial, or both – did not proceed according to their own pure logics. From beginning to end they were entwined with ideological, military, and political power relations that helped shape classes themselves. These now became even more complex as state militarism intensified. Chapter 21 traces the beginnings of this cataclysmic intervention.

### Nations and states

Chapter 7 presents the first three phases of a four-phase theory of the nation. The religious and the commercial capitalist-statist phases occurred before the time period of this volume began, contributing only what I call “protonations.” Then the militarist phase, detailed in Chapter 7, developed nations as real, partly cross-class, and occasionally aggressive actors. But nations came in three different types: state reinforcing (for example, England), state creating (Germany), and state subverting (across most Austrian lands). I now summarize the fourth, industrial capitalist, phase of these varied nations.

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth, the industrial phase of capitalism, its class struggles, and its impact on the state reinforced emerging nations. States for the first time undertook major civilian functions, sponsoring communications systems; canals, roads, post offices, railways, telegraph systems, and, most significantly, schools. States were largely responding to the needs of industrialism, as articulated primarily by capitalists, but also by other classes, by militaries, and by state elites. Because almost all valued the increasing collective powers of an industrial society, they urged the state on toward greater social coordination. In turn, state infrastructures enhanced the density of social interaction, but bounded by the state’s territorial reach. We saw that social behavior – even intimate social behavior such as sexual mores – became “naturalized,” more nationally homogeneous. Quite unconsciously, most state activities furthered the nation as an experienced community, linking the intensive and emotional organizations of family and neighborhood with more extensive and instrumental power organizations.

The nation was not a total community. Localism survived, as did regional, religious, linguistic, and class barriers within the nation. The Western ideological community and global capitalism also maintained

transnational organization. Because capitalism, the modern state, militarism, mass discursive literacy, and industrialism increased overall social density, there was room for more national and transnational organization.

Nor was the nation an uncontested community. The popular, cross-class nation necessarily involved conceptions of citizenship (though of varying types). But these raised the two dominant political crystallizations of the nineteenth century, turning on the “representative” issue – who should be full citizens – and the “national” issue – where citizenship should be located, that is, how centralized the state and nation should be. I have stressed throughout that the national issue was important and as contentious as was representation. Few states started the period as nationally homogeneous: Most contained regions with distinct religious and linguistic communities, and many regions had their own political institutions, or memories of them.

The military and industrial capitalist phases of state expansion intensified both representative and national issues. The late eighteenth-century fiscal and conscription consequences of increased militarism resulted in greater representative pressures but very different crystallizations on the national issue, ranging from the centralization attempted by Jacobin revolutionaries to the confederalism of most Austrian dissidents. Yet the later industrial capitalist phase intensified pressures toward both more representative and more national societies. “Naturalization” was especially effective because it was unconscious, unintended, interstitial, and so unopposed. It involved the emotions as well as instrumental reason, subtly changing conceptions of communities of attachment.

Yet one area of state expansion in industrial capitalism remained contentious. Though most state infrastructures were expanded fairly consensually, mass education generated conflict with minority churches and regional linguistic communities. If minority churches were regionally entrenched, this could intensify state-subverting nationalism (as in Ireland or some Austrian lands). Educational expansion could also convey a subtler antistatism. Under growing representative pressures from emerging classes, no central regime now could simply impose its language on provinces with their own native vernaculars. The expansion of education in the province of Bohemia, for example, diffused a Czech more than an Austrian sense of nation. Conversely, throughout “greater Germany” and throughout Italy education encouraged a sense of nationhood extending across existing state boundaries. Thus, according to context, the industrial capitalist phase of the nation encouraged three different types of nations: state reinforcing, state creating, and state subverting.

Capitalism's class conflicts also fueled all three types of nations, according to local circumstance. The middle class, peasants, and workers became literate in native vernaculars, which, according to context, either further naturalized the existing state or fragmented the state into more popular regional nations (state fragmenting) or cross-state nations (state creating). Middle class, peasants, and workers demanded political representation, again with the same alternative consequences. By the late nineteenth century, popular nations – in all three guises – were mobilizing the middle class and many peasants and workers in all European countries.

In this phase, nations also became more passionate and aggressive. Passion derived principally from the tighter links between the state and the intensive, emotional sphere of family and neighborhood interaction in which state education and physical and moral health infrastructures loomed large. Ideologies saw the nation as mother or father, hearth and home writ large. Aggression resulted because all states continued to crystallize as militarist; all were geopolitically militarist, and some remained domestically so.

State-subverting nationalism became increasingly violent where repressive imperial regimes would not grant regional-national autonomies and representation. Especially if reinforced by religion, regional dissidents developed intense, emotional protest. Their family and local community lives reinforced their sense of difference from the exploiting imperial nation. The latter returned the sentiments to justify using domestic militarism against them. Each fueled the passion and the violence of the other.

Thus state-subverting nationalism has been most passionate and “fanatical” when nonrepresentative imperial regimes begin to lose their repressive grip. Western states that institutionalized class, but especially regional-national, representation have not experienced fanatic violence even when beset by deeply rooted interethnic disputes. Belgium and Canada may break up, but this would probably occur without fatalities. In contrast, hundreds have been killed in Northern Ireland because the province never institutionalized representation of the minority community while segregating the intimate lives of both communities. Thousands are being killed in Yugoslavia, and may be in the future in more than one formerly Soviet country, precisely because they have not institutionalized representative government amid distinct linguistic, sometimes religious, regional communities, many with their own historical political institutions. State-subverting ethnic violence is a product of authoritarian regimes, not of party democracies. This was so in the long nineteenth century. It appears still true today.

The increasing violence of state-reinforcing nationalism has centered

on interstate wars. In 1900, about 40 percent of state budgets still went toward preparation for war. The use and threat of war was still central to their diplomacy. Military virtues were still a valued part of masculine culture; women were valued as the bearers and nurturers of future warriors. But now these states were becoming more representative and more national. It is often asserted that the middle class, peasants, and even sometimes workers began to identify their interests and their sense of honor with those of their state against other nation-states, endorsing aggressive nationalism. A rival class theory looks to see exactly who was represented in these states. It concludes that full political citizens, primarily the middle class, were the bearers of aggressive nationalism in alliance with old regimes. Indeed, I have emphasized that conceptions of capitalistic profit were also becoming embedded in this period with a supposed “national interest.”

Overall, however, I look rather skeptically at these rival theories. There is a considerable difference between conceiving of oneself as a member of a national community, even if socialized into a mythology of common ethnicity, even common “race,” and supporting any particular national policy, abroad or at home. Most conceptions of what the nation stood for were strongly contested. In France this was obvious, as Republicans, Monarchists, and Bonapartists strongly, emotionally adhered to rival conceptions of the meaning of “France.” But also in mainland Britain the old radical “Protestant” conception of the popular nation, now more secular, fought against more conservative imperialist conceptions, and some liberals advocated a softer imperialism. Everywhere classes and minorities who experienced the sharp end of domestic militarism opposed militarism in general and aggressive nationalism in particular. In all countries, as class theorists argue, full citizens were more likely to endorse the state and its militarism as *theirs*. But I also demonstrated that state diplomacy and militarism remained strongly private, largely hidden from the scrutiny of popular groups, enfranchised or not. Thus aggressive nationalism (or, indeed, any strong foreign policy commitment) did not in fact spread deeply among most middle-class groups – and especially not among the much-maligned petite bourgeoisie.

Yet aggressive nationalism had broadened its appeal. As industrialism expanded states, two sets of tentacles extended an embrace over national society: the civilian and military administrations. Hundreds of thousands of administrators now depended for their livelihood on the state; millions of young men were disciplined by a military cadre into the peculiar morale, coercive yet emotionally attached, that is the hallmark of the modern mass army. These two bodies of men, and their families – not broader classes or communities – provided most of

the core of extreme nationalism. They were what I call "superloyalists," with an exaggerated loyalty to what they conceived to be the ideals of their state. Not all were militarists or aggressive nationalists, as state ideals varied. British civilian officials might be attached to liberal ideals; French, to Republican ones; and German and Austrian, to more authoritarian ideals. But because all states were militarist, their servants were generally mobilizable at least to an ostensibly "defensive" militarism.

So in the fourth, industrial capitalist, phase of its relatively short life, the nation had advanced in three essential ways. First, much of the population, largely unconsciously, had become naturalized, making the nation an extensive community of interaction and emotional attachment. Thus what I call "national" organization increased at the large expense of the local and the regional (unless that now turned into a nation itself) and at the lesser expense of transnational organization. This is where the nation rested for most of the population. Second, many citizens – at this point drawn from middling and upper classes and from dominant religious and linguistic communities – were drawn further toward nationalist organization, regarding national interests and honor as essentially conflicting with those of other nations. Third, the actually nationalist core was disproportionately drawn from state expansion itself, in civilian and military cadre employment. Its ideals then resonated rather shallowly among the families of the citizens. Combined, they could aspire to mobilize the merely national remainder. As we shall see in Chapter 21, the problem was that national populations were now more confined within cages whose relations with other national cages were defined not by the people as a whole but first by private state and military elites, second by the nationalists. Aggressive nationalism would out, but largely behind the backs of most men who composed the nation.

In the industrial capitalist phase the state-reinforcing nation can be simply represented as three concentric circular bands: the outer one circumscribed by and attached to the total national state, the middle more linked to the inner circle, the statist core. More graphically and more relevant to what was to follow, the nation can be represented as that cartoonist's delight, the late nineteenth-century anarchist's bomb, a black, pudding-shaped ball with a protruding fuse. The fuse is composed of the statist nationalists; the combustible material is composed of the full citizens, whose shallow aggressive pressure endures long enough to cause the explosion, which is the enormous power of the military state hurling outward the jagged fragments, coercively disciplined workers and peasants. The fuse needed igniting, however.

While Europe failed to curb the traditional militarism of its states,

ignition could occur. Its violence could be peculiarly nasty when entwining nationalist with class, and sometimes with religious, ideologies. Extreme nationalists could entwine with citizen classes and religions to identify those outside national citizenship but wanting in – the working class and regional, linguistic, and religious minorities – as enemies of the nation-state, *Reichsfeinde* in Germany. The most violent of these statist nationalists directed emotional hatred simultaneously against foreigners and *Reichsfeinde* within. But my model views not even the most extreme as, as it were, "irrational demons." To anticipate Volume III: The Nazis were recognizably just more extreme versions of the European statist nationalists whose emergence I have here charted – more violent, more authoritarian, more racist. They represented the most extreme way in which three Western state crystallizations – militarist, authoritarian, and capitalist – entwined. They received disproportionate core support from "betrayed," "superloyal" ex-frontline troops and state employees, and their ideology resonated most in Lutheran bourgeois and agrarian Germany.

Have I not so far narrated a conventional evolutionary tale of the rise of the nation-state, ever strengthening its sovereignty, its infrastructural powers, and its powers of national mobilization? Obviously state sovereignty has both widened and deepened. Yet, I doubt if these later enlarged states were actually as coherent in many ways as had been the late eighteenth-century British and Prussian states. For as more of social life became politicized, so did its conflicts and its confusions. As the scope of state functions widened, parties and states became more polymorphous. By 1900, politics concerned diplomacy, militarism, nationalism, political economy, centralization, secularization, mass education, welfare programs, temperance, votes for women, plus many more particular issues. Thus politics mobilized state elites against mass parties, class against class, sector against sector, church against church and secular state, peripheral regions against center, feminists against patriarchs – and many others. By comparison, eighteenth-century politics had been relatively simple.

Were states merely in a transitional phase, acquiring modern crystallizations, without having shed all traditional ones? This was truer of the surviving semiauthoritarian monarchies – Germany and Austria, where parliaments competed with courts and factions swirled through ministries to culminate around the monarch. But everywhere foreign policy generated distinctive crystallizations. Diplomacy was conducted largely by a few old regime families, somewhat insulated from nationally caged classes and mass parties, though now buffeted erratically by nationalist parties. Officer corps retained autonomy by combining bureaucratic profession with old regime class composition and ethos.

Officers and noncommissioned officers became a military caste somewhat insulated from civil society and civilian state. More generally, though democracy, bureaucracy, and rational budgeting all sought to set coherent political priorities, all remained highly imperfect by 1914. Even today democratic control over diplomacy and the military remains feeble. It is difficult to regard the whole state as a single cohesive entity; rather, plural elites and parties entwine with one another in confused, varying ways.

Throughout the twentieth century, as state functions continued to broaden, political crystallizations further diversified. Today, the American state might crystallize as conservative-patriarchal-Christian one week when restricting abortion rights, as capitalist the next when regulating the savings and loans banking scandal, as a superpower the next when sending troops abroad for other than national economic interests. These varied crystallizations are rarely in harmony or in dialectical opposition to one another; usually they just differ. They mobilize differing, if overlapping and intersecting, power networks, and their solutions have consequences, some unintended for each other. It is a basic tenet of my work that societies are not systems. There is no ultimately determining structure to our entire social experience – at least, none that we, situated in its midst, can discern. The elites of many historic states were controlled by particular social groups – princes, priests, or warrior bands. They enjoyed considerable autonomy, yet caged little of social life. Their states embodied systemic qualities arising from their own particularities. But when states became the center and radii through which much of social life is regulated, they lost that systemic coherence.

Polymorphism has proved an enduring feature of modern states. When states became important regulators of material subsistence and profit, of ideologies, of intimate family life, as well as of diplomacy, war, and repression, many more parties became activated in politics. In dealing with individual states, I listed their principal crystallizations and showed how they entwined in nonsystemic, nondialectical ways. These structured the very identity of classes and nations, often in ways hidden from the actors themselves. I pursue this, as it was pursued in reality, “over the top,” in Chapter 21.

### The sources of social power

This volume has sustained the general propositions stated at the beginning of Chapter 1. It is possible to steer between Marx and Weber, to make significant yet non-materialist generalizations concerning the “ultimate” structuring of human societies – at least within the confined

time and space discussed here. After all qualifications and disclaimers are made, we can discern two major phases in both of which the overall structuring of Western society from 1760 to 1914 appeared as predominantly dual.

During the first phase, lasting roughly through the eighteenth century to 1815, diffused economic and authoritative military power relations dominated Western societies. Commercial capitalism and the enduring consequences of the military revolution enabled Europeans and their colonists to dominate the globe; commercial capitalism and military states completed the expansion of mass discursive literacy begun earlier by churches, adding to social density, extensively, intensively, and across class boundaries. Capitalism increased collective human ability to exploit nature, it expanded population, and it propelled the emergence of extensive classes and industrialization. Militarism politicized civil societies, their classes and their religious and linguistic communities, around contentious representative and national issues. Militarism strengthened large states and wiped out small ones.

Thereafter, the national state (the main product of these dual determinations) shed its puny historical frame and emerged interstitially – without anyone intending it – as a major authoritative power organization in its own right. At the end of the eighteenth century, citizenship struggles were already being structured by the degree to which states had institutionalized conflicts over increased taxes and conscription. Nineteenth-century capitalism continued to revolutionize collective productive powers, as geopolitics became more pacific and militarism more variable among states (especially domestically), more “private” and castelike within the state. Thus a second phase of dual determination emerged after midcentury. A predominantly (though not entirely) diffused industrial capitalism and the authoritative nation-state became the principal restructurers of Western society, the former providing essentially similar thrusts because so diffuse (and because so desired by all), the latter – principally through diverse representative and national crystallizations – providing most of the authoritative, varied solutions.

Because in both phases the two principal transformers were not colliding billiard balls but entwined, and because they generated emergent, interpenetrating collective actors – classes, nations, and modern states, plus their rivals – it is not possible to weight *their* interrelations. Neither can be accorded a Marxian-style accolade as the wielder of a singular “ultimate primacy” in society, although of course, the economic power of capitalism uniquely remained a part of both phases of dualism.

This civilization during the period came as near to a single general



developmental process as any ever has. In no other time or place has human collective power, over nature and over other civilizations, expanded so greatly or so rapidly. In no other time or place have all power actors except obscurantists and unconscious innovators at the leading edge had such a clear vision of how to increase powers. Desirable models of the future, wanted by almost everyone, were available in the latest, most "modern" form of capitalism, of the state, of military professionalism, and of scientific ideologies. Thus in no other time or place developed so many theories of progress and evolution.

Yet development was not unitary or systemic, "internal" to a single social organism. Even now this was not evolution. We can in principle abstract a single ideal-typical "logic" of capitalism. We may call it the "law of marginal utility" or the "law of value," according to preference. We can also abstract a "logic" of militarism: to concentrate superior coercion on the forces of the enemy. But as soon as we let *both* loose together in phase 1, and as soon as we add messier, polymorphous states in phase 2, then ideal-typical logics become decidedly impure and murky to their supposed carriers. I emphasize that the relative "efficiency" of market (i.e., pure capitalist) versus territorial (more military or political) conceptions of interest and profit remained unclear from beginning to end of the period. Competing political economies remained plausible means of enhancing collective and personal economic powers. Throughout the period, certain secular tendencies can be discerned: toward more capitalist industrialization, toward military professionalism, toward greater political representation, toward more state bureaucratization, toward the more centralized nation-state. Each of these "competed" with alternative structural arrangements and "won" – not in any final sense but as a definite tendency over the period. They won either because they were more desirable to a broad array of power actors or because they were genuinely more powerful. But none of these tendencies emerged from a single "logic." The nation-state was encouraged by all of them; so was capitalist industrialization.

Although I have simplified "ultimacy" into two phases of (roughly) dual determinism, I must also add caveats. The other sources of social power also added their weights, more particularistically and erratically. Ideological power relations, very significant at the beginning of the period, remained a force especially where religious and linguistic communities (the latter given more collective power over the period by the other power sources) did not coincide with existing state boundaries. Ideological power also made decisive contributions to classes and nations in the "world-historical moment" of the French Revolution. Militarism remained important in the West's dealings with the rest of

the world and in the domestic politics of monarchies retaining despotic powers and of the United States. The military caste was also secretly flexing its muscles for its own world-historical moment, July–August 1914. For all these reasons, my overall generalizations remain limited and crude.

For these reasons, too, Western distributive power relations remained unclear to contemporary actors. Their identities and conceptions of interest and honor were subtly transformed by entwinings of more than one power source and by the unintended consequences of actions. For these reasons, too, distributive power relations also remained objectively ambiguous, difficult for anyone to fathom. Economic actors emerged simultaneously as classes, sections, and segments, rendering uncertain the future of the domestic stratification. Its states were now dual civilian-military ones, each *Reichshalf* facing in different directions, controlled by different balances of power between elites and parties.

More broadly, the West comprised simultaneously both a segmental series of nation-state "societies" and a broader transnational civilization. Its ideologies of peace and war; of conservatism, liberalism, and socialism; of religion; of racism – all oscillated uneasily between the national and the transnational. There was no systematic resolution of ambivalences. Yet there was a more particular one. Most ambiguities were resolved in reality, and all these ambivalent actors and ideologies contributed to the resolution. Reality interposed the Great War. So, finally, we go over the top.