

## **SOCIOLOGY 924**

# **SEMINAR ON THEORIES OF THE STATE**

**Fall Semester, 2002**

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Madison, Wisconsin**

**Wednesdays, 6:00-8:30, room 8108 Social Science**

This seminar has two primary objectives: First, to deepen students' understanding of alternative theoretical approaches to studying the state and politics, and second, to examine a range of interesting empirical/historical studies that embody, in different ways, these approaches in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between abstract theoretical ideas and concrete empirical investigation.

We will focus on three broad theoretical approaches:

1. *Marxist or class-analytic approaches* which anchor the analysis of the state in terms of its structural relationship to capitalism as a system of class relations.
2. *Weberian or organization-analytic approaches* which emphasize the ways in which states constitute autonomous sources of power and operate on the basis of institutional logics and dynamics with variable forms of interaction with other sources of power in society.
3. *Microfoundational approaches* which emphasize the ways in which the actions of states are rooted in the interests, motivations, and strategic dilemmas of the people who occupy positions in the state.

While these three approaches have long pedigrees, we will not explore the classical formulations or the historical development of these traditions of analysis, but rather will focus on the most developed versions of each approach. Also, while these approaches are often posed as rivals, in fact much contemporary work combines them in various ways. One of the tasks of the seminar is to examine the ways in which these different traditions of theoretical work complement rather than contradict each other in generating compelling explanations of concrete historical problems of understanding states and politics.

## PREREQUISITES

This is an advanced graduate seminar. The seminar discussions will not serve as basic didactic introductions to the subject matter. As a result, it is important that participants have a fairly solid background in order to participate effectively in the discussions. This does not mean that it is necessary to have read deeply on the theory of the state as such, but it does mean that participants should have a pretty good foundation in contemporary Marxist theory -- ideally the equivalent of Sociology 621 -- and a background in political sociology equivalent to Sociology 724. If you do not meet these criteria you must discuss with the professor whether or not it is appropriate for you to take the course.

## REQUIREMENTS

There are two basic writing requirements for the seminar: (1) Preparation of weekly reading interrogations on seminar readings (200-400 words); (2) Term paper (about 20-25 pages)

### Weekly reading interrogations

I believe strongly that it is important for students to engage each week's readings in written form prior to the seminar sessions. My experience is that this improves the quality of the discussion since students come to the sessions with an already thought out agenda. *This is a requirement for all auditors as well as students taking the seminar for credit.*

I refer to these short written comments as "reading interrogations". They are not meant to be mini-papers on the readings. Rather, they are meant to be think pieces, reflecting your own intellectual engagement with the material: specifying what is obscure or confusing in the reading; taking issue with some core idea or argument; exploring some interesting ramification of an idea in the reading. These memos do not have to deal with the most profound, abstract or grandiose arguments in the readings; the point is that they should reflect what you find most engaging, exciting or puzzling, and above all: *what you would most like to talk about in the seminar discussion* These interrogations will form a substantial basis for the seminar discussions: I will read them and distill the issues into an agenda for each session. It is therefore important to take the task seriously. I have no length specification for these interrogations. It is fine for them to be quite short -- say 200 words or so -- but longer memos (within reason -- remember: everyone in the class will read them) are also OK. These memos should be e-mailed to everyone in the class *by 6 pm on the Tuesday night* before the seminar meets. (For the session before Thanksgiving, which will be held on Tuesday, November 26, the memos must be circulated by Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm). Everyone should try to read all of these memos before coming to class on Wednesday evening.

This is a real requirement, and failing to hand in memos will affect your grade. I will read through the memos to see if they are "serious", but will not grade them for "quality". Since the point of this exercise is to enhance discussions, late memos will not be accepted. If you have to miss a seminar session for some reason, you are still expected to prepare an interrogation for that session.

### Term paper/project

All participants taking the seminar for credit are expected to write a term paper on the state and politics. My strong preference is for papers to revolve around some historical or contemporary substantive problem -- a particular state policy, a particular example of state transformations, a case of a particular struggle over the state, etc. A Warning: The least satisfactory papers I have had from previous seminars have attempted to deal broadly with "The Theory of the State", trying to synthesize too much, too abstractly, and often too pretentiously. In general, therefore, while I want papers to engage systematically theoretical issues, I think that such theorizing should be linked to some more concrete substantive problem or puzzle. Collaboratively written papers are acceptable (in which case, of course, both students will receive the same grade for the paper).

I want to discuss each term paper with the student(s) involved by the middle of the semester. If a paper has not been formulated by mid-semester it is very unlikely that it will be completed by the end of the semester. All students must give me a 2-3 page statement about the topic of their term paper with an accompanying bibliography no later than October 9 (sixth week of the term). The final term papers are due by the last seminar session, Wednesday, December 11. Late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made in advance.

### GRADING

In an advanced seminar of this sort, I find grading an extremely aggravating task. I want the sessions and discussions to be a stimulating and exciting as possible, with a collegial and supportive atmosphere, and yet in the end I have to evaluate your work and assign a grade. This reinforces the ultimate authority relation that is lurking behind the social relations of the seminar.

My basic principle of grading is as follows: I put more emphasis on good faith, serious effort on the part of students than on sheer brilliance. If a student does all of the assignments seriously, then they will almost certainly receive at least a B for the course regardless of the "quality" of the work. The weekly issue memos will not be graded for quality, although I will keep track of whether or not they were completed.

The final grade will be based on a point system in which completion of all requirements can improve the seminar grade above the term paper grade. The points are as follows:

Assignment	Points for task
Weekly interrogations: 5 points each	70
participation in seminar	30
Total points for ungraded components	100

Term paper: 100 points (90-100 = A; 80-89 = AB; 70-79 = B; 60-69 = BC; 50-59 = C)

Final Course grades: 185-200 = A 175-184 = AB; 165-174 = B; 155-164 = BC

## PRINCIPLES FOR SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS:

The following guidelines are intended to facilitate seminar discussions. Some of them may sound obvious, but from past experience it is still important to make them explicit.

**1. READINGS.** At least for the first part of each seminar session the discussions should revolve around the weeks readings rather than simply the topic. There is a strong tendency in seminars, particularly among articulate graduate students, to turn every seminar into a general “bull session” in which participation need not be informed by the reading material in the course. The injunction to discuss the readings does not mean, of course, that other material is excluded from the discussion, but it does mean that the issues raised and problems analyzed should focus on around the actual texts assigned for the week.

**2. LISTEN.** In a good seminar, interventions by different participants are linked one to another. A given point is followed up and the discussion therefore has some continuity. In many seminar discussions, however, each intervention is unconnected to what has been said before. Participants are more concerned with figuring out what brilliant comment they can make rather than listening to each other and reflecting on what is actually being said. In general, therefore, participants should add to what has just been said rather than launch a new train of thought, unless a particular line of discussion has reached some sort of closure.

**3. TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS.** Not every seminar intervention has to be an earth-shattering comment or brilliant insight. One of the reasons why some students feel intimidated in seminars is that it seems that the stakes are so high, that the only legitimate comment is one that reveals complete mastery of the material. There are several general rules about comments that should facilitate broader participation:

- a. No intervention should be regarded as “naive” or “stupid” as long as it reflects an attempt at seriously engaging the material. It is often the case that what seems at first glance to be a simple or superficial question turns out to be among the most intractable.
- b. It is as appropriate to ask for clarification of readings or previous comments as it is to make a substantive point on the subject matter.
- c. If the pace of the seminar discussion seems too fast to get a word in edgewise it is legitimate to ask for a brief pause to slow things down. It is fine for there actually to be moments of silence in a discussion!

**4. BREVITY.** Everyone has been in seminars in which someone consistently gives long, overblown speeches. Sometimes these speeches may make some substantively interesting points, but frequently they meander without focus or direction. It is important to keep interventions short and to the point. One can always add elaborations if they are needed. This is not an absolute prohibition on long statements, but it does suggest that longer statements are generally too long.

**5. EQUITY.** While acknowledging that different personalities and different prior exposures to the material will necessarily lead to different levels of active participation in the seminar discussion, it should be our collective self-conscious goal to have as equitable participation as possible. This means that the chair of the discussion has the right to curtail the speeches by people who have dominated the discussion, if this seems necessary.

**6. SPONTANEITY vs. ORDER.** One of the traps of trying to have guidelines, rules, etc. in a discussion is that it can squelch the spontaneous flow of debate and interchange in a seminar. Sustained debate, sharpening of differences, etc., is desirable and it is important that the chair not prevent such debate from developing.

**7. ARGUMENTS, COMPETITIVENESS, CONSENSUS.** A perennial problem in seminars revolves around styles of discussion. Feminists have often criticized discussions dominated by men as being aggressive, argumentative, competitive (although there are always plenty of men who find such styles of interaction intimidating). Some people, on the other hand, have at times been critical of what they see as the “feminist” model of discussion: searching for consensus and common positions rather highlighting differences, too much emphasis on process and not enough on content, and so on. Whether or not one regards such differences in approaches to discussion as gender-based, the differences are real and they cause problems in seminars. My own view is the following: I think that it is important in seminar discussions to try to sharpen differences, to understand where the real disagreements lie, and to accomplish this it is generally necessary that participants “argue” with each other, in the sense of voicing disagreements and not always seeking consensus. On the other hand, there is no reason why argument, even heated argument, need be marked by aggressiveness, competitiveness, put-downs and the other tricks in the repertoire of male verbal domination. What I hope we can pursue is “cooperative conflict”: theoretical advance comes out of conflict, but hopefully our conflicts can avoid being antagonistic.

**8. CHAIRING DISCUSSIONS.** In order for the discussions to have the kind of continuity, equity and dynamics mentioned above, it is necessary that the discussion be led by a “strong chair.” That is, the chair has to have the capacity to tell someone to hold off on a point if it seems unrelated to what is being discussed, to tell someone to cut a comment short if an intervention is rambling on and on, and so on. The difficulty, of course, is that such a chair may become heavy-handed and authoritarian, and therefore it is important that seminar participants take responsibility of letting the chair know when too much monitoring is going on.

**9. PREPARATION FOR SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS.** Good seminars depend to a great extent on the seriousness of preparation by students. The following generally helps:

- a. Above all, do the readings carefully. This need not mean reading every word, of course, but give yourself time to study the readings, not just skim them.
- b. Read the interrogations of other students. It is also a good idea to write down reactions to any that you find especially interesting. The more written “virtual dialogue” that occurs

before the seminar session the more lively the sessions are likely to be.

- c. Try to meet with at least one other student to discuss the weeks reading prior to the seminar session.

**10. DISCUSSION FORMAT.** I will come with an organized agenda for each session. I may make some introductory comments as well, but this will depend upon the character of the interrogations provided by students.

**11. SELF-CRITICISM.** The success of a seminar is a collective responsibility of all participants. Professors cannot waive magic wands to promote intellectually productive settings. It is essential, therefore, that we treat the process of the seminar itself as something under our collective control, as something which can be challenged and transformed. Issues of competitiveness, male domination, elitism, bullshit, diffuseness, and other sins should be dealt with through open discussion. We will therefore have periodic self-criticism discussions (not “trash the professor” sessions, but self-evaluation discussions, hopefully) to try to improve the process of the seminar itself.

## SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS, SOCIOLOGY 924, Fall 2002

### I. Broad Theoretical Frameworks for Thinking about the State

Week 1.	9/4	Introduction: setting the theoretical and political agenda
Week 2.	9/11	Class-analytic Approaches
Week 3.	9/18	Organization-Analytic approaches
Week 4.	9/25	Microfoundational Approaches

### II. The State in developed democratic capitalism

Week 5.	10/2	Adam Przeworski, <i>Capitalism and Social Democracy</i>
Week 6.	10/9	George Steinmetz, <i>Regulating the Social: the welfare state and local politics in Imperial Germany</i>
Week 7.	10/16	Peter Swenson, <i>Capitalists Against Markets</i>
Week 8.	10/23	Esping-Anderson, <i>Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i> , and <i>Social Foundations of Post-Industrial Economies</i>
Week 9.	10/30	Duane Swank, <i>Global Capital, Political Institutions and Policy Change in Developed Welfare States</i>

### III. The State and Third World Development

Week 10.	11/6	Peter Evans, <i>Embedded Autonomy</i> and David Waldner, <i>State Building and Late Development</i>
Week 11.	11/13*	Vivek Chibber, <i>Locked in Place</i>

### IV. The Future of the Capitalist State

Week 12.	11/20	Bob Jessop, <i>The Future of the Capitalist State</i>
Week 13.	11/26**	Archon Fung and Erik Wright, <i>Deepening Democracy: innovations in empowered participatory governance</i>

### V. Two approaches to state collapse: the case of Weimar German

Week 14.	12/4	David Abraham, <i>The Collapse of the Weimar Republic</i>
Week 15.	12/11*	Ivan Ermakoff, <i>The abdication of democracy</i>

\* In these two session the authors of the book manuscripts we will be reading will attend the seminar.

\*\* Because the seminar falls on Wednesday evenings, we cannot realistically have a seminar session on 11/27, the evening before Thanksgiving. Since I do not want to drop a seminar session, we will reschedule that session for earlier in the week. I propose: Tuesday, November 26, 6-8:30.

## READINGS FOR THEORY OF THE STATE SEMINAR

### BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

Arthur Stinchcombe once said to me that the most important thing students can discover in graduate school is a book that they wish they had written. If you can find such a book, then the task of educating yourself can have much greater focus: you apprentice yourself to a book, learn what you have to learn to be able to write such a work. In much of contemporary sociology, the model is very different: you apprentice yourself to articles, not books, and you learn to write short, well-focused pieces on relatively narrow topics.

There is a tendency in many sociology courses for professors to assign lots of little bits and pieces from many sources: a chapter here, an article there, sometimes even just parts of chapters and articles. This reinforces an image of scholarly work that sees the article as the essential intellectual product. Books are usually not just long articles, nor (usually) just a series of articles stuck together; they are a different kind of intellectual product in which an extended argument can be developed and crafted.

When you read a book it is important to remember that someone sweated over it, that the author felt that she or he had a statement that required such treatment. The “reader’s digest” approach to teaching that sees the synoptic summary of the “main idea” of an author as the essential task of assignments, I think, misses much that is important. The real excitement of much scholarly work lies in the details as much as in the simple punchlines.

Thus: for much of this seminar, I am assigning entire books rather than chapters or articles. While I may indicate sections that are particularly important, I would encourage you to read the entire book, to understand the gestalt as well as the details.

### BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR PURCHASE

The following books have been ordered as required books at Rainbow Cooperative Bookstore. Most of them should also be on reserve in the library. They are all worth having in your permanent library

1. Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?*
2. Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy*
3. Peter Swenson, *Capitalists Against Markets*
4. Gosta Esping-Anderson *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*
5. Gosta Esping-Anderson *Social Foundations of Post-Industrial Economies*
6. Duane Swank, *Global Capital, Political Institutions and Policy Change in Developed Welfare States*
7. Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy*
8. David Waldner, *State Building and Late Development*
9. Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume II. The Rise of classes and nation states, 1760-1914*
10. Yoram Barzel *A Theory of the State: economic rights, legal rights and the scope of the state* (Cambridge)

One of the books we will be reading, George Steinmetz's *Regulating the Social: the welfare state and local politics in Imperial Germany*, is available only as a downloadable "e-book" from amazon.com or from Princeton University Press at <http://pup.princeton.edu/titles/5289.html>.

Two other books we will be reading are not yet in print: Vivek Chibber's *Locked in Place* and Ivan Ermakoff's *Democratic Abdication*. Photocopies of both of these will be made available for students in the class. Finally, one book, Bob Jessop's *The Future of the Capitalist State*, will be published in December. I am trying to arrange with the publisher for prepublication copies to be sent directly to us.

### BACKGROUND READING FOR SEMINAR

The seminar assumes a general familiarity with Marxist and other thinking about the state, as well as a fairly good understanding of the broader Marxist tradition. If you need to brush up on this background, the following readings might be helpful:

Clyde Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1993)  
Martin Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton University Press, 1984)  
Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State: Marxist Theories and Methods* (NYU Press: 1982)  
Bob Jessop, *State Theory: Putting Capitalist States in their Place* (Penn State Press, 1990)  
Robert Alford and Roger Friedland, *The Powers of Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1985)  
Ralph Miliband, *Marxism and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).  
Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule," *Socialist Review* No.33, 1977.

### SEMINAR SESSIONS & READING ASSIGNMENTS

*Note: Readings with an \* are on electronic reserve in the Social sciences Reference Library.*

#### PART I. BROAD THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

##### Week 1. Introduction: Setting the Political and Theoretical Agenda

Since the late 1960s there has been an extraordinary flowering of radical theory dealing with the state and politics. Initially most of this theoretical work was rooted in one way or another in the Marxist tradition; more recently there has emerged a growing body of radical theoretical work on the state which explicitly distances itself from Marxism. During the first few sessions of the seminar we will review some of the major currents in this recent work.

There is a tendency in broad discussions of alternative theoretical approaches to focus on very abstract methodological and epistemological problems rather than on substantive theoretical issues. In effect, the discussion of the *metatheoretical* differences between approaches tends to pre-empt systematic analysis of the substantive differences. During our discussion of the various theorists in the seminar I hope that we can maintain a reasonable balance between a concern with abstract methodological principles and more concrete theoretical themes.

In many ways the central problem in any theoretical endeavor is to figure out what are the critical questions. An unsatisfactory posing of questions can lead to endless fruitless debate regardless of the conceptual sophistication of the protagonists. The purpose of this initial seminar session will be to explore a range of salient questions that will help to guide the overall agenda of the seminar. Among other possible questions, the following clusters seem particularly important:

- (1). In what ways and to what extent does the institutional form of the state in capitalist societies (a) constitute a systematic impediment to socialism or other projects of radical social change; (b) create opportunities for the radical transformation of capitalism?
- (2). Does the state in capitalist societies have a distinctively capitalist form or is it simply constrained or influenced externally by its existence within capitalism?
- (3). How should we *conceptualize* the variations in the form of the state in capitalist societies? What are the salient dimensions of these variations? What defines the specificity of the “welfare state”, the “laissez faire” state, the “interventionist” state?
- (4). How should we *explain* the variability in forms of the capitalist state? Are these to be explained primarily by the changing *functional requirements* of capital accumulation? By the *instrumental interests* of the capitalist class? By *class struggle*? By the interests of *state elites*? By dynamics located internal to the organizational structure of the state? Or what?
- (5) At what level(s) of abstraction can we formulate a coherent *concept* of the state? At what levels of abstraction can we formulate systematic *theories* of the state?

READING ASSIGNMENT: No reading during the first week.

## Week 2. Class Analytic Approaches to the State

[Note: I am assuming that the central ideas in this week’s session are largely review for most people in the seminar, and therefore that most students will have already read a significant part of the reading. The reading is obviously too much for a single session if this is the first time it has been encountered.]

The reinvigoration of the analysis of the state, both as a theoretical problem and empirical object of investigation, was largely the result of the vitality of Marxist discussions of state theory in the late 1960s and 1970s. While explicitly Marxist analyses are now less common than they were twenty years ago, nevertheless much of the current discussion has a clear Marxist inflection. We will therefore begin our general discussion of theoretical approaches by reviewing the central ideas of Marxist-based class analytic approaches to the state.

There are, of course, many currents of Marxism and many varieties of Marxist theorizing on the state. Here we will focus on two clusters of theoretical argument that are especially

relevant to empirical research: one centering on structural accounts of the state, often with a functionalist undercurrent, and one which focuses more on the contradictory and contested functionality of the state.

### *Structural approaches*

Probably more than any other Marxist theorist, Göran Therborn has attempted to elaborate a formal framework for elaborating a structural account of the class character of the very form of the state. Following on the work of Nicos Poulantzas, Therborn insists that the state should not be viewed simply as “a state in capitalist society” but must be understood as “a capitalist state”, i.e. a state in which capitalist class relations are embodied in its very institutional form. However, whereas Poulantzas and most other theorists who make these claims leave them at a very abstract and general level, Therborn sticks his neck out and tries to develop a fairly comprehensive, concrete typology of the class character of formal aspects of state institutions. This enables him to also attempt to map out the ways in which these institutional properties of the state vary across a variety of different kinds of class states: the feudal state, the capitalist state of competitive capitalism, the monopoly capitalist state, the socialist state. The readings by Barrow provide a general overview of the theoretical context of Therborn’s work. The readings by Wright and by Jessop provide additional commentary on the kind of analysis Therborn pursues.

### *Contradictory functionality*

Much traditional Marxist work on the state work has been rightfully criticized as emphasizing the essential functionality of the relationship between the institutional form of the state and the requirements for the reproduction of capitalism. While there is often talk about “contradictions” in the functioning of the state, these are generally much less rigorously elaborated than are arguments about functionality. In contrast, Claus Offe has constantly stressed the problem of contradiction and the problematic functionality of the state. He has approached these issues both as a methodological problem and as a substantive problem.

Methodologically, Offe interrogates the meaning of the claim that the state has a distinctive, functionally specific class character which can be specified at the level of abstraction of the capitalist mode of production. Offe asks: by what criteria could we establish the truth of such claims? How can we distinguish a situation in which the state does not engage in anticapitalist practices because it is prevented from doing so by its form from a situation in which it does not engage in such practices simply because the balance of political power between contending forces in the society prevents it from doing so. This leads him to elaborate a systematic conceptualization of what he calls the “negative selectivity” of the state, that is, the properties of the state which exclude various options from state action. The methodological task, then, is to establish that these exclusions have a distinctive class logic to them. Framing the problem in this precise way opens up the possibility that these negative selections operate in a much more contradictory, less functional manner than the structural-Marxists generally acknowledge.

Substantively, Offe has explored a variety of ways in which the internal structures of the state and the problems it confronts in “civil society” lead it to act in quite contradictory ways. The forms of rationality which it institutionalizes to cope with certain demands are

systematically dysfunctional for the accomplishment of new tasks thrust upon it by the development of capitalism. The end result is that far from being a well-oiled functional machine for reproducing capitalism, the state is, in his view, much more of an internally contradictory apparatus in which it is always uncertain the extent to which it will function optimally for capitalism.

#### READINGS ASSIGNMENT:

##### *Background readings*

Clyde Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State*, Chapter Two, “Neo Marxism: the structuralist approach” and Chapter four, “Post-Marxism I: The systems-analytic approach”

\*Bob Jessop, “Some recent Theories of the State”, chapter 1 in Bob Jessop, *State Theory: putting states in their place*

##### *Class-analytic Structural Analyses*

\*Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (Verso publishers, 1978) (especially part one)

\*Erik Olin Wright, “Class and Politics”, chapter 5 in *Interrogating Inequality* (Verso: 1994). pp.88-106.

\*Bob Jessop, “Putting States in their Place,” pp.338-369 in Bob Jessop, *State Theory: putting states in their place* (Penn State University Press, 1990)

##### *Contradictory functionality*

\*Claus Offe, “Structural Problems of the Capitalist State: Class rule and the political system. On the selectiveness of political institutions”, in Von Beyme (ed). *German Political Studies*, vol. I (Sage, 1974).pp.31-57

\*Claus Offe, “The Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation”, in Leon Lindberg (ed), *Stress and Contradiction in Contemporary Capitalism* (D.C. Heath, 1975)pp.125-144

\*Claus Offe, “Theses on the theory of the State”, in *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, by Claus Offe (MIT Press 1984), pp. 119-129

\*Claus Offe, “Crises of Crisis Management: elements of a political crisis theory”, *International Journal of Politics*, 6:3, Fall, 1976, pp.29-67

### Week 3. An Organization-analytic approach to the State

Perhaps the main rival to class-analytic approaches to the state are strategies of analysis that treat the state as a formal organization with specific powers and forms of autonomy that it enable to act in ways not dictated by class and capitalism. This does not imply that the state is unaffected by economic conditions; it just means that class dynamics and capitalist imperatives do not have a privileged explanatory role in understanding why the state does what it does.

This general stance has gone under a variety of names – Skocpol calls this the “state centered approach” to the state and politics; some people call it an institutionalist approach; others – like Mann – have used the expression “organizational materialism” to capture the underlying reasoning. Generally sociologists identify this strand of theorizing with the Weberian tradition of social theory since Weber placed such importance on questions of organizational structure and certainly treated the state as a special kind of organization, but many people who adopt this approach are also significantly influenced by the Marxist tradition. In any case, the contemporary theorizing on the organizational logic(s) of the state go far beyond Weber’s own formulations.

Although the contemporary sociologist most identified with this approach is probably Theda Skocpol, especially in her early work on *States and Social Revolutions*, we will focus on sections from Michael Mann’s monumental work, *The Sources of Social Power*. Mann, more than any other organization-analytic theorist, has attempted to integrate his specific account of the state into a more general framework for the study of social power and social change. His central idea is that all power depends upon organizations; different kinds of power, then, is based on the characteristics of different kinds of organizations. “Political power” (the distinctive power linked to states) is based on the development of organizational infrastructures to authoritatively administer territories. Unlike most Weber-inspired theorists he thus sharply distinguishes the political power of states from military/coercive power. Political power constitutes a *sui generis* source of power which, in variable and often contingent ways, becomes “entwined” with other forms of power (economic, ideological, and military). The relative power of different actors, collective and individual, depends upon the character of this entwining.

In many ways, this approach is more like a conceptual menu than a “theory” – it provides a complex array of categories in terms of which to analyze power in general and states in particular, but generally shies away from general, abstract theoretical arguments or models. Generally the explanations offered are formulated a relatively concrete levels of abstraction for explaining specific historical events and processes. One of the issues we should focus on, then, is the problem of levels of abstraction in this kind of organization-analytic approach compared to Marxist class-analytic approaches to the state.

#### READING ASSIGNMENT:

##### *Background reading*

Clyde Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State*, chapter Five, “Post-Marxism II: The Organizational Realist Approach”

*Required Reading:*

\*Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume I. A History of power from the beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), chapter 1. “Societies as organized power networks”, pp. 1-33

Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume II. The Rise of classes and nation states, 1760-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), chapters 1-3, 7-8, 11-14, 20

*Additional reading in the Organization-analytic approach*

Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990-1990* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990)

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge University Press, 1979)

Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge University Press, 1985)

Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: the expansion of national administrative capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 1982)

**Week 4. Microfoundational approaches to the state**

The third general approach to the state we will examine attempts to derive a theory of the state from an abstract theory of the rational/strategic action of individuals. This approach goes under a variety of names – rational choice theory, game theory, strategic action theory. I like the expression “microfoundational approaches” since this emphasizes the problem of anchoring macro/organizational analyses in an account of the micro-levels of individual action without deciding in advance that rational action will be sufficient to this task. In any event, the most elaborated versions of microfoundational accounts are firmly based rational choice theory and game theory so this is the version we will explore.

In this session we will examine three different uses of rational choice theory to develop theories of the state. The most systematic – and I imagine for most students the most difficult – is Masahiko Aoki’s attempt to develop a fully general comparative institutional analysis based on game theory which he then deploys to model a variety of different kinds of institutions, including the state. At the core of this effort is the idea that equilibrium “rules of the game” (i.e. stably reproduced rules) are endogenous to the interactions of actors, and that explaining an institution requires modeling the process by which such equilibria are produced. Yoram Barzel’s book, *A Theory of the State*, is very much in the tradition of the work of Douglas North, trying to derive a theory of the state from the problem of generating enforceable property rights in a world of economic interactions. The exposition is much less formal than Aoki’s – and accordingly, much more accessible. The selection from Margaret’s Levi’s, book, *Of Revenue and Rule*, is the

most empirically focused of any of these readings. It applies general ideas from game theory to understand one of the central problems faced by any theory of the state: how to explain the capacity of states to extract resources from the people under its jurisdiction. She argues against a pure coercive extraction model and develops a set of interesting ideas about the conditions for what she terms “quasi-voluntary compliance” of citizens to taxation.

### *Required Readings*

\*Masahiko Aoki, *Toward a Comparative Institutional Analysis* (MIT Press, 2001), pp. 1-30, 151-179

Yoram Barzel *A Theory of the State: economic rights, legal rights and the scope of the state* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)

\*Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (University of California Press, 1988) pp.1-70.

### *further readings*

Douglas North, “A Neoclassical Theory of the State”, in Jon Elster (ed) *Rational Choice* (NYU Press, 1986), pp.248-260

Douglas North and Robert Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* (Cambridge University Press, 1973)

James Buchanan, “The Threat of Leviathan”, in *The Limits of Liberty* (University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp.147-165

Adam Przeworski, “Marxism and Rational Choice,” *Politics & Society*, 1986, 14:379-409

Frederick Hayek, “Majority Opinion and Contemporary Democracy”, c.12 in *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (vol.3 of *The Political Order of a Free People*), Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979

Robert Ekelund and Robert Tollison, *Mercantilism as a rentseeking society* (Texas A&M University Press, 1982)

Richard Emerson, “State Formation in Baltistan,” forthcoming in *Politics and Society*, 1984.

Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), pp.3-74

Michael Hechter and William Brustein, “Regional Modes of Production and Patterns of State Formation in Western Europe,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 85:5, 1980.

Jon Elster, "Marxism, Functionalism and Game Theory," *Theory and Society*, July, 1982

Brian Barry, *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy* (Collier McMillan, 1970).

## II. THE STATE IN DEVELOPED CAPITALIST DEMOCRACIES

In each of the weeks of this section of the course we will focus on the work of one specific scholar who has done important empirical work on the state in developed capitalism. Most of these scholars focus on what is generally called "the welfare state", understood in the broad sense of the activities of the state that attempt to reduce the various life-course risks of living in industrialized, capitalist societies. The work we will read represents different empirical strategies of research as well as different mixed sets of theoretical ideas.

### Week 5. Class Compromise in Democratic Capitalism: Adam Przeworski

The notion of strategic action (i.e. action in pursuit of goals based on the conscious, rational calculation of likely actions of others) has a relatively precarious place in Marxist theory. On the one hand, as is often noted, the ultimate purpose of Marxism is to "change the world", not simply to understand it, and this implies a central concern with agency and strategy. On the other hand, in the actual elaboration of theoretical positions about the state, Marxists have tended to marginalize the role of strategic action. When it is discussed, furthermore, the main focus is on the way in which dominant classes constitute strategic actors with respect to state institutions (especially in power structure research); relatively little systematic attention is given to the problem of strategic action by subordinate classes.

One of the consequences of marginalizing the strategic practices of workers and other subordinate groups is that the role of the state in reproducing class relations tends to be viewed either as primarily involving repression or ideology (in the sense of mystification). In the former case, strategic action is unimportant because there are no real choices available to workers; in the latter case, strategic action is unimportant because the state engenders forms of subjectivity which render choices illusory.

Recently, a number of theorists have placed the issue of strategic action at the center of their analysis of the state. Of particular importance for the general study of politics in this regard is the work of Adam Przeworski. He treats workers (and other potential collectively organized actors) as rational, strategic actors in pursuit of interests under a specified set of "rules of the game". These rules are determined both by the underlying property relations of the society and by the institutional characteristics of the state. His fundamental argument is that in developed capitalist democracies these rules help to create the conditions for a hegemonic system in which the interests of exploited classes are objectively coordinated with the interests of dominant classes through the rational, strategic choices and practices of workers. This hegemonic system cannot be viewed as primarily the result of repression or ideological distortions of subjectivities; it is the result of the way rational, strategic choices are structured within the social conflicts of the society.

## READING ASSIGNMENT:

*Required Reading*

Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism & Social Democracy*, chapters 1, 3 - 5

\*Adam Przeworski and Michael Wallerstein. "Popular Sovereignty, State Autonomy and Private Property," *European Journal of Sociology* XXVII (1986), 215-259, reprinted in *European Journal of Sociology*, 2001 (XLII: 1), pp. 21-65

*Further reading*

Adam Przeworski and John Sprague, *Paper Stones* (University of Chicago Press, 1986)

Adam Przeworski. *Democracy and the market : political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Adam Przeworski. *Economic reforms in new democracies : a social-democratic approach* (Cambridge, 1992)

Adam Przeworski . *State and the economy under capitalism* (New York : Harwood Academic Publishers, 1990).

Adam Przeworski et al.. *Sustainable democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

**Week 6. Class formation and State capacity in explaining the origins and variability in the Welfare State: George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social***

The study of innovation in state institutions is often a particularly good context for studying contending general theories of the state. Steinmetz uses a peculiar fact about German history to examine in a fine-grained way the relationship between *state capacity* and *class forces* in shaping the state and state policies. In the 19th century a series of national enabling laws were passed which made it possible for German municipalities to introduce new forms of welfare provision, but which did not mandate that they do so. We therefore have a kind of controlled experiment: all German cities were operating under the same basic "rules of the game", but some rapidly introduced these new forms of welfare state provision while others did not. One hypothesis is that cities varied in their bureaucratic capacity for administering such programs, and this variability explains the variability of outcomes. A more Marxist hypothesis is that it was the balance of class forces and class struggles which explain the variability. And, of course, there is the possibility that the outcome reflects an interaction of the two. Steinmetz creatively explores these issues through a combination of quantitative and qualitative historical analysis.

George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: the welfare state and local politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton University Press, 1993)

**Week 7. Capitalist Strategies and the formation of the welfare state: Peter Swenson,  
*Capitalists Against Markets***

I have not read this book yet – it is being published in early fall 2002. But elsewhere Swensen has been one of the most acute analysts of the development of the Swedish Welfare State arguing for the importance of both working class pressure and capitalist strategies in forging the institutional innovations that we know as the welfare state.

READING ASSIGNMENT:

Peter Swensen, *Capitalists Against Markets: the making of labor markets and welfare states in the United States and Sweden* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

**Week 8. Explaining Variation in forms of the Welfare State: Gosta Esping Anderson**

Perhaps the most influential book of the last decade or so on the Welfare State was Gosta Esping-Andersens *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. In it he proposes a simple typology of forms of the welfare state – social democratic, liberal democratic, and conservative corporatist – which embody different logics of policy intervention and are rooted in different historical trajectories of class struggle, state formation and cultural contexts. Although subjected to a fair amount of criticism (usually for being “too simple” – the fate of all conceptual lines of demarcation) this typology has become the standard frame for talking about variations of the welfare state during their period of what might now be called “equilibrium development.”

That book was published in 1990. Since then there has been increasing talk of the unraveling and perhaps even the demise of the welfare state. Es[ping-Anderson’s new book, *Social Foundations of Post-Industrial Economies* attempts a reassessment of the problem of policy regimes in lights of these new developments. These are relatively short books, so both are assigned for this week.

READING ASSIGNMENT:

Gosta Esping-Anderson, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton, 1990)  
Gosta Esping-Anderson, *Social Foundations of Post-Industrial Economies* (Oxford, 1999)

*Further reading*

\*Harold Wilenski, *Rich Democracies: political economy, public policy and performance* (University of California Press, 2002), especially 83-130, 211-251

Gosta Esping-Anderson, *Politics Against Markets: The Social Democratic Road to Power* (Princeton University Press, 1985)

:

Michael Shalev, “The Social Democratic Model and Beyond: Two generations of

- comparative research on the welfare state” *Comparative Social Research*, vol. 6, 1984
- Walter Korpi, *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978)
- Richard Scase, *Social Democracy in Capitalist Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1977)
- J.A. Fry, *The Limits of the Welfare State: critical views on post-war Sweden*, (Farnborough, England: Saxon House, 1979)
- John Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism* (London: McMillan, 1979)

### **Week 9. The Welfare State and Globalization**

There has been much debate about the impact of the increasingly intense globalization of capitalism, especially of financial markets, on the capacity of states to continue broad-spectrum welfare policies. One view emphasizes the “hollowing out of the state” in the face of these market pressures; others talk of “globallony”, stressing the enduring capacity of states to engage in significant levels of taxation and public spending. The Swank book is one of the most recent interventions in this debate.

Duane Swank, *Global Capital, Political Institutions and Policy Change in Developed Welfare States* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)

*Further reading explaining recent policy changes in the welfare state*

\*Walter Korpi, “The Great Trough in Unemployment: A Long-Term View of Unemployment, Inflation, Strikes and the Profit/Wage Ratio”, *Politics & Society*, September 2002

Jonas Pontusson, 1992. *The Limits of Social Democracy* (Cornell University Press)

*further readings on globalization and the state*

- Michael Stewart, *The Age of Interdependence: Economic Policy in a Shrinking World* (MIT Press, 1983)
- Paul Hirst and Graham Thompson *Globalization in question*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Polity, 1999)
- Adrian Wood. 1994. *North-South Trade, Employment and Inequality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), ch 1, “Summary and Conclusions”, and chapter 10, “Policy Options for the North”, pp. 1-26, 346-394.
- Herman Schwartz, “Small States in Big Trouble: State reorganization in Australia,

- Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden in the 1980s", *World Politics*, July 1994, 46 (4) 527-55
- Bob Jessop, "Changing Forms and Functions of the State in an Era of Globalization and Regionalization," in Delorme & Dopfer (eds) *The Political Economy of Diversity*
- Paul Hirst & Thompson, "The Problem of Globalization..." in *Economy and Society*, Nov, 1992 357-396
- Eric Helleiner "Freeing Money: Why have states been more willing to liberalize capital controls than trade barriers?" *Policy Sciences* 27 (4) 1994 pp.39.9-318
- John Ikenberry, "Funk de Siecle: Impasses of Western Industrial Society at Century's End," *Millenium* (Spring, 1995)
- Ton Notermans. 1993. "The Abdication from National Policy Autonomy: why the macroeconomic policy regime has become so unfavorable to labor." *Politics & Society*, 21:3, 133-168
- Jonathan Moses.1994. "Abdication from National Policy Autonomy: what's left to leave?" *Politics & Society*. 22:2, 125-148
- Ton Notermans. 1994. "Social Democracy in Open Economies: a reply to Jonathan Moses" *Politics & Society*. 22:2, 149-164
- Andrew Glyn. 1995. "Social Democracy and Full Employment". *New Left Review*. #211. pp. 33-55

### III. THE STATE AND THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT

We will unfortunately only be able to spend two weeks explicitly focusing on the state in the contemporary Third World, although the sessions which follow on "the future of the capitalist state" also bear on understanding the dilemmas faced by third world states.

#### **Week 10. State elites, State Autonomy and State capacities: Peter Evans and David Waldner**

Peter Evans's well-known book on states in developing capitalist economies revolves around the problem of specifying the forms of "state autonomy" that affect the capacity of the state to effectively support economic growth and development. He offers an account of what he terms the "embedded autonomy" of the state: an autonomous capacity for initiative and action that comes from the specific forms of connection between state and elite interests in society rather than from the isolation or separation of state from society. This concept is then used in a comparative study of the variability of autonomy across countries which he uses to explain te variability in the success of their developmental projects. Waldner also accords the state considerable capacity to generate impacts on economic development, but he sees the pivotal issue that determines the success of development projects to be the extent to which elites in the state are forced to forge cross-class alliances or are able to act as a more or less unified class in launching development projects. Where they are forced into cross-class alliances, this leads to a "precocious Keynesianism" which ultimately stifles innovation and productivity enhancing competition and thus undercuts development.

Since the Evans book should be familiar to most students, I am only assigning the general theoretical sections of his book. The Waldner book will also provide a useful counterpoint to the discussion of Vivek Chibber's study next week.

READING ASSIGNMENT:

Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton University Press: 1995), pp. 1-73

David Waldner, *State Building and Late Development* (Cornell, 1999)

*Further Readings on the State in the Third World:*

- H. Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies -- Pakistan and Bangladesh", *New Left Review* #74, 1972.
- Alfred Stepan, "State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America", in Evans, et. al (eds). *Bringing the State Back In*, pp. 317-346
- Peter Evans, "Transnational Linkages and the Economic Role of the State: an analysis of developing and industrialized nations in the post-World War II era", *ibid.* pp.192-226
- Barbara Stallings, "International Lending and the Relative Autonomy of the State," *Politics & Society*, 1986
- W. Ziemann and M. Lanzendorfer, "The State in Peripheral Societies", *Socialist Register*, 1977.
- B. Harrison, "The Chilean State After the Coup", *The Socialist Register*, 1977.
- G. Therborn, "The Travail of Latin American Democracy," *New Left Review*, #113, 1979.
- C. Leys, "The Overdeveloped Post-Colonial State: a reevaluation", *Review of African Political Economy*, #5.
- G. O'Donnell, "Corporatism and the Question of the State," in *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America* (Malloy, ed.), 1976.
- M. Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (MR Press)
- Dietrich Rueschmeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens and John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

**Week 11. State Capacity as the Embodiment of Class Forces: Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place***

While sharing a belief in the potential capacity for third world states to play a dynamic role in economic development, Chibber is generally quite skeptical that this has a lot to do with "autonomy" and sees it much more closely linked to the ways in which outcomes of class struggles and class formations shape the strategies of states and state elites. In *Locked in Place* Chibber examines the apparent "failure" of industrial planning in India since the early 1950s as the outcome of successful strategies of the leading segments of the Indian capitalist class to constrain the state to act in specific ways. He contrasts this with Korea where the specific

constellation of dominant classes interests pointed towards different strategies. This work grew out of Chibber's dissertation at Wisconsin. He will attend the session.

Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: State-Building and Capitalist Industrialization in India, 1940-1970*, Princeton University Press, forthcoming 2003

#### IV. THE FUTURE OF THE CAPITALIST STATE

##### week 12. Macro-structural perspective on the future of the state: Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State* (Polity Press, 2003)

Bob Jessop's new book, *The Future of the Capitalist State* (Polity Press, 2003) frames the problem of the future trajectory of the state in terms of a general, abstract understanding of the logic of the capitalist state and its place in the problematic reproduction of capitalist society. This is a difficult and complex book but, I think, worth struggling with. It draws heavily on the early work of Nicos Poulantzas and attempts to reconstruct the central ideas of abstract, structural Marxism by combining it with various other strands of social theory to produce a general approach to understanding the tendencies for transformations of the state. I have also included a recent debate on the problem of a Transnational state, which also draws on Poulantzas, by points in a different direction from Jessop's formulations.

Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State* (Polity Press, 2003)

\*Debate in *Theory & Society*, 2001 (30):

William Robinson. "Social Theory and globalization: the rise of the transnational state" pp.157-200

Philip McMichael "Revisiting the Question of the Transnational State" pp201-210

Walter Goldfrank, "rational kernels in a mystical shell," pp201-210

Fred Block "Using social theory to leap over historical contingencies" pp215-221

William Robinson, "*Responses*", pp 223-236

##### week 13. Deepening Democracy

In this second session on the future of the democratic capitalist state we will shift from the macro-structural problem of state as a whole and focus more on the prospects for transformation of institutions of democratic governance. Specifically we will examine the problem of "deepening democracy" within capitalist states through institutional innovations of new forms of popular participation, what Archon Fung and I have called "empowered participatory governance" (EPG). EPG envisions a form of democratic governance in which ordinary citizens actively participate in political governance in ways which genuinely empower them to make decisions and allocate resources. Skeptics see this simply as a recipe for cooptation and symbolic politics. The question, then, is whether or not institutional designs can be contrived which make

this a stable, sustainable possibilities within the constraints of capitalism?

\*Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright. *Deepening Democracy: innovations in empowered participatory governance* (Verso:2003), chapter one

\*Archon Fung, “Collaboration and Countervailing Power” (unpublished manuscript, 2002)

## V. THE COLLAPSE OF DEMOCRATIC STATES

We will end the year by discussing some very different kinds of problems from those that have mainly concerned us. Here we will focus on a very specific historical problem: the conditions for the collapse of democratic states and the triumph of authoritarianism. Specifically we will examine two extraordinary studies of the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the triumph of the Nazis: David Abraham’s *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic*, and Ivan Ermakoff’s *The abdication of democracy*. The first of these works firmly with the structural Marxist tradition, drawing especially on the work on Nicos Poulntzas, and seeks to find the root of the collapse of Weimar in an intractable stalemate of class forces and the deepening incapacity of the bourgeoisie to forge a “hegemonic block” capable of providing a basis for political leadership and democratic compromise. Hitler emerges as a solution to this problem. This is a more subtle argument than the old fashioned Marxist view of the Nazi’s as the tool of Big Business, but it still emphasizes the ways in which the balance of class forces define the terrain of power within which political parties can act on states.

Ivan Ermakoff adopts a completely different strategy of analysis. For him the pivotal question is understanding how individuals form their strategies under conflict conditions of deepening uncertainty. He wants to figure out the micro-explanation for the choices made by different political actors as a way of understanding the more aggregate configurations of choices that constitute the pivotal “events” of history, in this case the “event” of the vote by the Weimar parliament to give power to Hitler.

### Week 14. The Collapse of the Weimar Republic: A Class Analysis

\*David Abraham *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic* (Princeton University Press, 1981).  
This book is out of print but is available through electronic reserve.

### Week 15. The Collapse of the Weimar Republic: Microfoundations of State Collapse

Ivan Ermakoff, *The abdication of democracy* (unpublished manuscript), copies to be made available.

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## SUPPLEMENTARY TOPICS & BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following topics and readings have been compiled over the years for previous versions of this seminar. I have not attempted to update the readings for these topics for this syllabus.

### A. GENERAL THEORETICAL ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES

#### 1. What is “Politics”? What is “the state”?

Many of the debates over the state and politics, both within Marxism and between Marxist and non-Marxist perspectives, are confused because the labels are being used to designate different phenomena, different concepts, different structures and processes. While it may seem somewhat scholastic to have a discussion centering entirely on what we mean by these terms, a sharp clarification of these issues is important.

#### CORE READINGS:

Ellen Meikins Woods, “The Separation of the Economic and the Political in Capitalism,”  
New Left Review #127, 1981

Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, in Althusser, Lenin and  
Philosophy (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971)

Alan Wolfe, “New Directions in the Marxist Theory of Politics”, *Politics & Society*, 4:2,  
1974

Max Weber, “The Political Community”, *Economy and Society*, chapter 9 in volume II  
(University of California Press edition, 1978).

#### SUGGESTED READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, “The Status of the Political in the Concept of Class Structure”, *Politics  
& Society*, 11:3, 1982.

Barry Hindess, “Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory,” in Littlejohn,(ed), *Power and the  
State*, (London: Croom Helm, 1978)

Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Marxism and Socialist Theory* (Boston: South End  
Press, 1981), chapter 3. “Politics and History.”

Ernesto LaClau, “The Specificity of the Political”, in LaClau, *Politics and Ideology  
in Marxist Theory*  
(London:NLB, 1977)

G.A. Cohen, “Base and Superstructure, powers and rights,” chapter VIII in Cohen, Karl  
Marx’s *Theory of History* (Princeton University Press, 1978).

Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, especially part IX, "Barbarism and Civilization"

## 2. Conceptualizations of "Power".

Lurking behind the alternative concepts of politics and the state are divergent conceptualizations of "power." At least the following definitions of power appear in the literature:

- (1). Behavioral definition: power is the ability of A to force B to do something over the objection of B or in spite of the resistance of B. (Weber)
- (2). Power as limits: power is the ability of one actor to determine the limits of possibilities for action of another actor -- nonevents, nondesired outcomes, negative selection, etc. (Offe, Bachrach and Baratz, "the two faces of power").
- (3). Power and interests: Power is the capacity to realize one's interests against the actual or potential resistance of opposing interests. (Lukes, "the three faces of power")
- (4). Power and action: Power is the capacity to act where that capacity depends upon mobilizing the intentionality of other actors for action. (Giddens)

There are undoubtedly other conceptualizations which could also be included here, but this captures some of the salient alternatives. The readings for this session encompass a fairly wide range of views on power. In assessing them it is important to continually ask: what real difference does one conceptualization or another make for the kinds of substantive questions one can ask and the problems one can investigate.

### CORE READINGS:

- Steven Lukes, *Power: a Radical View* (London: McMillan, 1974)
- Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (University of California Press, 1979), pp.85-94
- Anthony Giddens, "Domination, Power and Exploitation: a analysis", chapter 2 in *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (University of California Press, 1981)
- Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?*, pp.129-153.
- Jeffery Isaac, "Beyond the Three Faces of Power: a realist critique (unpublished manuscript, 1982).

### SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (NLB, 1978), pp 356-2, 123-154.
- Roderick Martin, *The Sociology of Power* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977)
- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Vintage, 1979)

### 3. The State as Superstructure in Marx's theory of history.

It is very unfashionable these days to treat the state as a "superstructure". Partially because of the increasingly intense forms of involvement of the state in economic processes and partially because of the concerted attack on all forms of "economism" in theory, very few theorists are prepared to adopt the base-superstructure metaphor in their analyses of the state or anything else.

Nevertheless, the image of the state as a superstructure to the economic base was certainly present in Marx's more abstract discussion of the state. In this session we will examine what precisely this conceptualization means. To facilitate this analysis, we will also consider G.A. Cohen's discussion of the functional relation between superstructures and the base in historical materialism. Particular attention should be paid to Cohen's account of functional explanation, since the issue of functionalism will occur many times during the semester.

#### CORE READING:

Karl Marx, "Preface" to *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (this text can be found on pp.viiviii in Cohen's book)

G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense*, (Princeton University Press, 1978) chapter VIII, "Base and Superstructure, Powers and Rights", pp. 216-248

#### SUPPLEMENTARY:

G.A. Cohen, *KMOTH*, chapters IX and X (further elaborations on the logic of functional explanations in historical materialism)

F. Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, section V, "The Rise of the Athenian State"

Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State* (New York University Press, 1982), chapter 1, "Marx and Engels on the State", especially pp.9-12

### 4. "Structuralist" approaches to the State: Nicos Poulantzas

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of Nicos Poulantzas' contribution to the development of the Marxist theory of the state. While there is a great deal to criticize in his work, both in terms of the form of exposition (opaque & marxiological) and many of his specific formulations, still his ideas have systematically shaped the analysis of the state of both his critics and supporters for more than a decade. In spite of its difficulty, therefore, it is important to become familiar with the central themes and theses of his work.

Although it is probably his most difficult work, we will focus on Poulantzas' most general theoretical statement on the state, *Political Power and Social Classes*, published originally in France in 1968 and translated into English in 1973. This book was the first major, comprehensive attempt at a construction of a rigorous Marxist theory of the state in the recent renaissance of Marxist theory, and it immediately sparked a great deal of debate.

The book comes out of the Althusserian philosophical framework, and was seen as a contribution to developing the basic insights of Althusser's Marxism around the problem of the

state. Nevertheless, I think that it is important to read the work not simply as an “illustration” of Althusserian methodological principles, but as a substantive analysis of the nature and effects of the state in capitalist society.

Poulantzas’s book is exceptionally difficult, especially for American students not used to the obliqueness of continental European writing. To facilitate the reading, I have included two “guides” to Poulantzas in the xeroxed course materials: the first is a general summary of Poulantzas’s theoretical argument written by myself and Luca Perrone; the second is a section-by-section annotated guide to the book itself in which I indicate what the central issue or point of a particular part of the book is. Hopefully these will make the reading somewhat less arduous.

#### BACKGROUND READINGS (summaries and exigeses of Poulantzas):

Erik Olin Wright and Luca Perrone, “The structuralist-Marxist approach”, part 3 of “The Structuralist-Marxist and Parsonsian Theories of Politics”, unpublished manuscript, 1973.

Erik Olin Wright, “A reading guide to Poulantzas’ Political Power and Social Classes” (mimeo, 1977; updated, 1981)

Martin Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory*, op.cit., chapter 4, “Structuralism and the State: Althusser and Poulantzas”

Bob Jessop, *The Capitalist State*, op.cit., Chapter 4, “Hegemony, Force and State Power”

#### CORE READINGS:

Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (NLB/Verso, 1973). Try to read the entire book, but you can focus on the following sections:

Required. 25-141 [especially: 25-33, 44-50, 73-77, 104-114, 130-137], 147-152; 187-194, 225-245 [especially 229-234], 255-289 [especially 275-289], 296-321 [especially: 317-321].

Optional. 11-25, 142-146, 153-187, 195-224, 246-252, 290-295, 326-359

#### SUGGESTED READINGS:

##### A. Other work by Poulantzas

“The Problem of the Capitalist State,” *New Left Review* #58, 1969.

*Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: NLB, 1974)

*Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (NLB, 1975)

*State, Power, Socialism* (NLB, 1978)

##### B. Work which explicitly adopts and extends Poulantzas’ Framework.

Goran Therborn, *What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?*

David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic* (Princeton University Press, 1981)

##### C. Critiques of Poulantzas :

Ralph Miliband, “Poulantzas and the Capitalist State”, *New Left Review* #82, 1973

Ernesto LaClau, “The Specificity of the Political”, in LaClau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (NLB, 1977)

- Simon Clarke, "Marxism, Sociology and Poulantzas' Theory of the State" *Capital and Class* #2, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Capital, Fractions of Capital and the State: Neo-Marxist Analysis of the South African State," *Capital and Class* #5, 1978.
- Amy Bridges, "Nicos Poulantzas and the Marxist Theory of the State", *Politics & Society* 4:2, 1977.
- John Solomos, "The Marxist Theory of the State and the problem of Fractions: some theoretical and methodological remarks", *Capital and Class* #7, 1979.

### **5. State Interests, State Capacities, State Managers: Theda Skocpol and Peter Evans**

One of the most interesting and important theoretical developments in the past several years in discussions on the state has revolved around the problem of the state managers, state capacities, state interests and, more generally, the state as such as an actor (rather than just as a structure or a terrain of action/struggle). Particularly in the debates in the United States, a number of influential theorists -- Theda Skocpol and Fred Block, for example -- have argued for the centrality of state-centered interests and capacities in understanding the state and its effects. The core thesis of these theorists is that state managers have interests which are irreducible to class interests and state apparatuses have capacities which are at least partially autonomous from class power. This thesis comes in weak versions, in which no claim is made that these state-centered processes have greater importance than class-centered processes, to strong versions in which at least implicitly it is maintained that these state variables are more important than class.

#### **CORE READINGS:**

Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: False Leads and Promising Starts in Current Theories and Research," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer and Theda Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In* (eds), Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3-37.

Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer and Theda Skocpol, "On the Road to a More Adequate Understanding of the State", *ibid.*, pp. 347-366

Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: its origins, mechanisms and results," *Arch.Europ.sociol.*XXV (1984)

#### **SUGGESTED READINGS:**

Martin Carnoy, *The State*, pp.217-223, 235-245

Kenneth Finegold and Theda Skocpol, "State, Party and Industry: From Business Recovery to the Wagner Act in America's New Deal," forthcoming in Charles C. Bright and Susan F. Harding (eds) *Statemaking and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).

Fred Block, "Beyond Relative Autonomy: state managers as historical subjects", *The Socialist Register*, 1980.,pp.227-242.

- Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: NeoMarxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," *Politics & Society*, 10:2, 1980
- Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule", *Socialist Review*, May-June, 1977
- Ralph Miliband, "State Power and Class Interests" *New Left Review* #138, March-April, 1983.
- Theda Skocpol and Ken Finegold, "Economic Intervention and the Early New Deal", *Political Science Quarterly*, 97:2, 1982, pp.255-278.
- Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge University Press: 1978)
- Margaret Weir and Theda Skocpol, "State Structures and Social Keynesianism: responses to the Great Depression in Sweden and the United States", *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, December, 1983.

## 6. Critical Theory approaches to the state: Habermas

Discussions of the state in the tradition of critical theory have been marked by two interconnected concerns: (1) the problem of state rationality; and (2) the problem of legitimation. Claus Offe's work (which we have discussed in several sessions) is particularly preoccupied with the first of these. He asks: given the formal, institutional separation of the state and economy in capitalist society, what (if anything) guarantees that the state will pursue policies that are rational from the point of view of the interests of the capitalist class? Habermas has also been concerned with analyzing rationality and the state, but his central focus has been on the question of legitimation, more specifically, for the tendencies for the contradictions of the capitalist economy to become displaced onto the political arena as the role of the state expands with capitalist development. The core of his work on the state thus concerns the dynamics of what he calls "crises of legitimacy." Although the idiom of his analysis often seems closer to sociological systems theory than to Marxism, nevertheless the underlying theoretical problems are closely linked to traditional Marxist concerns with contradictions, capitalist development and revolutionary transformation.

### CORE READINGS:

- Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Beacon Press, 1975), especially Part II and Part III.
- Alan Wolfe, "New Directions in the Marxist Theory of Politics", *Politics & Society*, 4:2, 1974.

### SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Tony Woodiwiss, "Critical Theory and the Capitalist State", *Economy and Society*, 7:2, 1978.
- Bertell Ollman, "The State as a Value Relation", in *Alienation* (Cambridge University Press, 1976, second edition, pp.212-220.
- Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," *Telos*, 1:3, 1974
- Paul Connerton (ed) *Critical Sociology* (Penguin, 1976), essay on "Legitimation" by Habermas
- Goran Therborn, "A Critique of the Frankfurt School", *New Left Review*, #63, 1970.

## 7. The State as a “Condition of Existence” of Capital: Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst and “post-Althusserian” British Marxism.

The work of Poulantzas and Althusser had a particularly important impact on certain tendencies within British Marxism in the 1970s. In particular, a group of Marxists sometimes referred to as “post-Althusserians” (because of the way in which they have extended Althusser’s framework and carried it to a logical extreme which resulted in a wholesale rejection of Althusser) have had a major influence among academic Marxists in sociology and related disciplines.

Within this group, the work of Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst have been the most widely read and discussed. Their basic point in the analysis of the state is that attempts to derive any kind of “essence” of the state from the analysis of class relations must be rejected. The state, they argue, cannot be understood in terms of the fulfillment of necessary functions dictated by the class structure of capitalism or as the ideal expression of those class relations. Rather, the state must be understood in terms of the historically specific ways in which certain “conditions of existence” of capitalist production relations are secured. The securing of these conditions of existence, they argue, can never be taken for granted and is never guaranteed by the simple fact of capitalist class relations; rather, such conditions are only created through concrete struggle.

### CORE READINGS:

- Barry Hindess, “Classes and Politics in Marxist Theory”, in Littlejohn (ed), *Power and the State* (Croom Helm, 1978)
- Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, “Primitive Communism, Politics and the State”, in *Precapitalist Modes of Production* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).
- Anthony Cutler, Barry Hindess, Paul Hirst and Athar Hussain, “Mode of Production, Social Formation, Classes”, chapter 6 in *Marx’s Capital and Capitalism Today vol I.* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

### SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Barry Hindess, “Marxism and Parliamentary Democracy”, in Hunt (ed) *Marxism and Democracy* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1980).
- Barry Hindess, “Democracy and the Limitations of Parliamentary Democracy in Britain,” *Politics & Power* #1, 1980

## 8. Capital Logic and State Derivation Perspectives.

Perhaps the least familiar tradition in the Marxist theory of the state in North America is the tradition which attempts to derive the central features of the capitalist state from the “logic” or “form” of the capital relation. This tradition has been extremely influential in West Germany and Scandinavia, and has begun to have a certain influence in Britain as well among more “orthodox” Marxists.

The essential thrust of the approach is to attempt to derive logically various characteristics of the state from the analysis of capital accumulation and/or class struggle in Capital. These

properties of the state are not, in general, derived on a functional basis, but on a logical/definitional basis. Take for example one of the properties of the state that is most frequently discussed: the formal institutional separation of the state from the economy (production). A functionalist argument would explain this by saying that such an institutional arrangement is functional for capitalism. The Capital logic school, in contrast, would simply argue that because of the definition of what makes capitalism “capitalism”, from a logical point of view the system would not be capitalist unless this institutional separation existed. This separation is thus logically entailed by the concept of Capital.

Holloway and Picciotto provide a good overview of the approach in the introduction to their book, *State and Capital*, and the chapter by Hirsch is an example of the approach by one of the leading German proponents.

#### CORE READINGS:

John Holloway and Sol Picciotto, “Towards a Materialist Theory of the State”, chapter 1 of *State and Capital* (University of Texas Press, 1978).

Joachim Hirsch, “The State Apparatus and Social Reproduction: elements of a theory of the Bourgeois state”, in *State and Capital* ed by Holloway and Picciotto.

Bob Jessop, “Form and Functions of the State”, chapter 3 in *The Capitalist State*

#### SUGGESTED READINGS:

John Holloway and Sol Picciotto, *Capital, Crisis and the State*”, *Capital and Class* #2, 1977.

Margaret Fay, “Review of *State and Capital*”, *Kapitalistate* #7, 1979

John Holloway and Sol Picciotto (eds), *The State and Capital* (University of Texas Press, 1978): an anthology of capital logic essays.

### 9. Gramsci and the State

Gramsci’s fragmented work on the state has probably been more influential in shaping the thinking of recent Continental discussions of the state than any other writer of the first half of the twentieth century other than Lenin. Because of the conditions under which he wrote (in a Fascist prison in the 1920s and 1930s) his work is often very difficult to decode, and the theoretical arguments are often elliptic and ambiguous. Nevertheless, his discussions of hegemony, war of position/war of manoeuvre, civil society and the state, intellectuals, passive revolution and various other topics have helped to define the terrain of much contemporary work.

#### CORE READINGS:

Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (International Publishers, 1971), especially the following essays:

“State and The Civil Society” (206-275)

“Problems of Marxism: Economy and Ideology” (pp.407-409)

“The formation of Intellectuals” (pp.5-14)

“The Modern Prince” (123-202)

#### OTHER READINGS ON GRAMSCI:

- Perry Anderson, “The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci”, *New Left Review* #100, 1977.  
 Carl Boggs, *Gramsci’s Marxism* (Pluto Press, 1976)  
 Christine Buci-Gluksmann, *Gramsci and the State* (hardback: Humanities Press, 1981; paperback: London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1981)  
 “State, Transition and passive revolution”. in Chantal Mouffe (ed) *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979)  
 Biagio de Giovanni, “Lenin and Gramsci: state, politics and party”, in Mouffe, *ibid.*  
 Walter Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: Antonio Gramsci’s Political and Cultural Theory*, especially chapter 7, “The Autonomy of Politics”, pp. 202-228, (University of California Press, 1980)  
 Anne Showstack-Sassoon, *Gramsci’s Politics* (Croom Helm, 1980)  
 Harvey Kaye, “Antonio Gramsci: an annotated bibliography of studies in English”, *Politics & Society*, 10:3, 1981.

#### 10. Bob Jessop: a “Strategic Relational” approach to the state

Bob Jessop is one of the best known commentators on state theory writing in English. His work on the subject now spans the entire period of the growth of radical state theory since the early 1970s. His writing, at times, is somewhat difficult, but he has a sophisticated understanding of the range of issues of contemporary state theory and engaging his work will be helpful in giving a general overview of these problems. The readings in part I *State Theory: Putting Capitalist States in their Place* (chapters 1 and 3 in the assignment) survey a wide range of approaches to studying the capitalist state within the broadly defined Marxist tradition. Of particular importance is seeing how Jessop explores the problem economic determinism. The readings in Part II concern the problem of democracy and interest representation in the capitalist state, both as this relates to the interests of workers and the interests of capitalists. The readings at the end of the book criticize various currents of post-Marxist “deconstructionist” approaches to the state and presents systematically his suggestions for how we should build a theory of the state. He tries to develop a theory of the state which manages to sustain the insight of post-Marxists that there is a great deal of contingency and indeterminacy in social processes without abandoning a class analysis of the state altogether. This is a tricky juggling act, and at times Jessop’s solutions are not entirely clear, but I think it is worth grappling with his line of thinking.

READING ASSIGNMENT: Bob Jessop, *State Theory* (Penn State University Press)

#### 11. An Attempt at a Mega-Synthesis: Robert Alford and Roger Friedland

Grand syntheses of theoretical disputes are generally precarious enterprises. Typically, they either involve systematic distortions of the diverse perspectives being synthesized, or the

“synthesis” takes the form of an eclectic juxtaposition of distinct theories without any serious integration into a unified, coherent framework.

In these terms, the recent book by Robert Alford and Roger Friedland, *The Powers of Theory*, represents a bold and stimulating effort. They propose a meta-framework within which the distinct logics of what they term pluralist, managerialist and class theories of the state and politics can be subsumed, and they do so without serious distortion of each of the theories they discuss. More specifically, they argue that each of these theories has a home “domain” in which their concepts are coherent and powerful: pluralism is a theory of what they term the situational domain; managerial theories of the organizational or institutional domain; and class theories of the systemic domain. The task of a general framework for the study of the state and politics is to establish the relationships among these domains and to integrate the distinct theories of the basis of those interconnections. While I think that there are problems with this proposed synthesis, nevertheless it needs to be engaged seriously.

#### CORE READING:

Robert Alford and Roger Friedland, *The Powers of Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 1-58, 136-183, 223-249, 271-287, 387-443

### B. ADDITIONAL SUBSTANTIVE TOPICS

#### 12. The State and the Oppression of Women

The development of feminist theory in recent years has posed a significant challenge to Marxism. Is it possible to understand the specificity of the oppression of women within a theory that revolves around the concept of class? Does Marxism ultimately entail some kind of reduction of gender oppression to class relations? These and related questions have underwritten a wide ranging and lively debate which has, I think, enriched both Marxism and feminism.

Relatively little of the dialogue between Marxists and feminists, however, has centered on the state. The site of the debate has been much more on the family and work. Yet, in many ways the analysis of the state should be an especially fertile terrain for trying to understand the relationship between class and gender. The challenge to feminists in terms of the theory of the state would be: Can the state be understood as a form of patriarchal domination/relations? Can the state become a theoretical object within the conceptual framework of feminist theory as it now stands? In answering these questions it is not enough to simply document the effects of the state in reproducing male domination (any more than in a class theory of the state is a catalogue of the class-effects of the state sufficient). What is needed is a theory of the mechanisms which generate and reproduce such effects. To use a familiar expression: is the state just a state in patriarchal society, or is it in some theoretically coherent sense a patriarchal state?

The challenge of these issues for Marxists, on the other hand, would be: Can a theory of the state which understands the structures, mechanisms and effects of the state in terms of class

provide an account of the state's role in the reproduction of gender relations? Does such an attempt inevitably lead to a class functionalism within which sexual domination can be understood only in terms of the ways in which it contributes to class domination?

CORE READINGS:

- Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: toward Feminist Jurisprudence", *Signs*, 8:4, 1983, pp. 635-658. (Note: this is part II of a two part essay. Part I is cited in the suggested readings below)
- Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State* (Harvard University Press, 1989)
- Lena Bruselid, "Women, Class and State: evaluating social policy and political demands", in *Work and Inequality*, ed by Paul Boreham and Geoff Dow (Melbourne: McMillan of Australia, 1980).
- Mary McIntosh, "The State and the Oppression of Women," in *Feminism and Materialism*, ed. by A. Kuhn and A. Wolpe (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
- Michael Mann, "A Crisis in Stratification Theory? Persons, Households\Families\Lineages, Genders, Classes and Nations", in *Gender and Stratification*
- Anne Philips, *Engendering Democracy* (Polity Press, 1991)

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Jalna Hanmer, "Violence and the Social Control of Women," in Littlejohn (ed). *Power and the State* (Croom Helm, 1978)
- Rayna Reiter, "Men and Women in the South of France: public and private domains," in *Towards and Anthropology of Women*, ed. by Reiter, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).
- Lesley Caldwell, "Church, State and Family: the women's movement in Italy," in *Feminism and Materialism*, op.cit.
- Ann Corine Hill, "The Protection of Women Workers and the Courts: a case history," *Feminist Studies*, 5:2, pp.247-274
- J. Humphries, "Protective Legislation, the Capitalist State, and Working class men," *Feminist Review*, #7, 1981.
- Diana L. Barker, "The Regulation of Marriage: repressive benevolence" in Littlejohn,

(ed), op.cit.

Linda Gordan, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*, esp. pp.313-402

### 13. The Logic of Capitalist Democracy

In a famous passage from *Class Struggles in France* Marx portrayed the linkage of democracy and capitalism as an intensely contradictory couplet:

The comprehensive contradiction of this constitution, however, consists in the following: the classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate, proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, it puts into the possession of political power through universal suffrage. And from the class whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws the political guarantees of this power. It forces the political rule of the bourgeoisie into democratic conditions, which at every moment help the hostile classes to victory and jeopardize the very foundations of bourgeois society. (Marx/Engels, *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, vol.I, Moscow, pp.235-6)

Lenin, writing some sixty years later in *The State and Revolution*, claimed that parliamentary democracy was the “best possible shell” for the perpetuation of bourgeois rule. Can these two positions be reconciled? Do they reflect distinct theoretical stances towards the problem of “bourgeois democracy” or do they simply reflect the changing conditions of bourgeois rule from the mid-19th century to the twentieth century?

These issues are hardly simply questions of textual interpretation: the debate over the class character of parliamentary democracy remains at the very heart of both theoretical and political debates over the state on the left today. Can the state be “used” by different classes in the pursuit of their class interests, or does the state have a monolithic class character? Does the parliamentary form of the capitalist state contain within itself contradictory principles? Particularly since the “problem of democracy” has become such a central political concern given the history of “actually existing socialist” states, the answers to such questions are of fundamental importance. In this session we will look at how capitalist democracies work, how they structure class struggle in such a way that they simultaneously contribute to social reproduction and open opportunities for potentially explosive social changes. Particular attention will be paid to the dynamics of electoral competition and the ways in which this shapes the possibilities of radical objectives.

### Readings

Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, *On Democracy* (Penguin, 1983). c.3, “Structure”, pp.47-87

Bob Jessop, “Capitalism and Democracy: the Best Possible Shell?”, in Littlejohn, et. al.

(eds) *Power and the State* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

Perry Anderson, “The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci”, *New Left Review* #100, 1977.

Goran Therborn, “The Rule of Capital and the Rise of Democracy”, *New Left Review*

#103, May-June 1977.

Bob Jessop, "The Political Indeterminacy of Democracy", in Alan Hunt (ed) *Marxism and Democracy*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), pp. 55-80.

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, (London: NLB, 1978), chapter 4.

"Bureaucracy and the State"

Barry Hindess, "Marxism and Parliamentary Democracy" in Hunt, op.cit., pp.21-54

Barry Hindess, "Democracy and the Limitations of Parliamentary Democracy in Britain,"

*Politics & Power*, #1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).

Bob Jessop, "Parliamentary Democracy: the limitations of Hindess", *Politics & Power* #2, 1980.

Barrington Moore, Jr. *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

Andrew Levine, *Liberal Democracy: a critique of its theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981)

#### **14. Reconstructing Capitalist Democracy, Joshua Cohen & Joel Rogers, *Associations & Democracy***

Throughout the semester we have focused on the institutions of the capitalist state as they exist today and how they have developed historically. The fundamental point of a critical analysis of the state, however, is to expand our vision of alternative possibilities and sharpen our analysis of how to get there. Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers have developed the outlines of a model of a radical democratic alternative to existing democratic institutions. The pivot of the model is a proposal to expand the role of various kinds of secondary associations -- organizations that stand between individual citizens and state apparatuses -in the democratic governance. This involves not merely deepening their role as vehicles for interest representation, but also involving them in the actual implementation and administration of public policy. In this session we will examine the Cohen and Rogers proposal and a range of criticism and amendments offered by various commentators on their project.

Joshua Cohen & Joel Rogers, *Associations & Democracy* (Verso, 1995)

#### **15. The Crisis of the Democratic Capitalist State I: Legitimation and Accumulation**

Perhaps the most common general explanation for the current crisis of the welfare state found in Marxist discussions is that the crisis reflects a deep contradiction between the legitimation and accumulation functions of the state. In this line of thought, the welfare activities of the state expanded largely out of the need for the capitalist state to create legitimacy (either for itself or for capitalism) among subordinate groups/classes. This expansion was possible so long as such policies did not conflict with the requirements of capital accumulation. Eventually, however, the expansion of welfare spending began to undermine accumulation itself for various reasons -- it was a drain on surplus value because it was unproductive; it reduced the effectiveness of the reserve army of labor and thus resulted in a lowering of the rate of exploitation; it directly raised the value of labor power by transferring income to the working class (raising the "social wage").

The result, then, is a particular kind of economic crisis -- “stagflation” -- combined with a particular kind of political crisis -- initially a fiscal crisis of the state, followed by a concerted assault on welfare state programs. In this session we will examine a number of versions of the legitimation/accumulation contradiction thesis.

#### BACKGROUND READINGS:

Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State*, chapter 3, “Historical Transformations of Capitalist Crisis Tendencies”

#### CORE READINGS:

Ian Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State*, chapter 6. “The Welfare State and the Capitalist Economy” and chapter 7. “The Welfare State and the Crisis”, pp.102-152

James O’Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1973), pp.5-12, 40-64, 97-178, 221-260

Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, “The Crisis of Capital and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy: the case of the United States”, *Politics & Society*, vol.11:1,1982, pp. 51-94.

Alan Wolfe, “The Legitimation Crisis of the State”, chapter 10 in *The Limits of Legitimacy* (New York: Basic Books, 1977)

#### SUGGESTED READINGS:

Alan Wolfe, *The Limits of Legitimacy*, pp.214-321

Claus Offe, “Competitive Party Democracy and the Keynesian Welfare State”, *Policy Sciences*, 15, 1983, pp.225-246. reprinted in Offe, *Contradictions in the Welfare State*, op.cit.

Sam Bowles, “Have Capitalism and Democracy come to a Parting of the Ways?” in *U.R.P.E., Capitalism in Crisis* (URPE, 1978)

Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon, 1975)

### **16. Crisis of the Democratic Capitalist State II: form and function**

While the central theme of most analyses of the current crisis of the state is some sort of version of the legitimation/accumulation contradiction, there is a second line of thought that has emerged which focuses more on the internal organization of state apparatuses -- what Therborn calls their “administrative technologies” -- and the tasks required of those apparatuses. In this case, instead of their being a contradiction between two functions of the state, there is a contradiction between its form and its functions. The implication of this perspective is that the resolution of the crisis requires more than just a change of state policies -- elimination or reduction of programs, changes in emphases among types of state spending, etc. -- but a structural reorganization of the apparatuses as well.

## CORE READINGS:

Claus Offe, "The Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation", in Leon Lindberg (ed), *Stress and Contradiction in Contemporary Capitalism* (D.C. Heath, 1975)

Stephen Skorownek, "National Railroad Regulation and the Problem of State Building: interests and institutions in late nineteenth century America", *Politics & Society*, 10:3, 1981

## SUGGESTED READINGS:

Stephan Leibfried, "The Bureaucracy of the 'Statist Reserve': the case of the U.S.A." Western Societies Program Occasional Paper No. 12 (Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1979)

David Abraham, "State and Classes in Weimar Germany," *Politics & Society*, 7:3, 1977

**17. Resolutions of the Crisis: New forms of Representation and State Intervention.**

The readings in the previous two topics focussed on two faces of the contemporary crisis: the dimension of the crisis which revolves around the welfare activities of the state -- what the state does -- and the dimension which revolves around the institutional form of the state, specifically is "bourgeois democratic" forms of representation.

As one would expect, the discussions about the possible resolutions to the current crisis also revolve around these two dimensions. On the one hand there are discussions which focus primarily on the new types of state intervention needed in the context of global, transnational capitalism. The emphasis here is on new forms of state regulation and management of investment, state coordination of productivity changes, new kinds of manpower-planning, etc. On the other hand, there has been considerable discussion about the new form of the state needed to accomplish these tasks while simultaneously containing the new forms of social conflict characteristic of advanced capitalism. The heart of this discussion has been around "neo-corporatism" -the various institutional arrangements in which organizations representing different social categories (unions, business, consumers, the handicapped, etc.) are represented on government decision-making bodies. Instead of representing citizens as atomized individuals as in parliamentary democracy, corporatism is a system of representing categories of individuals who are already organized into some sort of corporate entity.

In this session we will focus on the debate over neocorporatism. To what extent are neocorporatist arrangements actually replacing traditional parliamentary democratic forms of representation? Is it plausible that such forms will eventually become the central institutional form of legitimation-representation in advanced capitalist societies? Under what conditions are such neocorporatist forms likely to be stable and under what conditions unstable and ineffective? Overall, are corporatist institutions a more or less favorable terrain for struggles for socialism?

## CORE READINGS:

- Philippe Schmitter and Gerhard Lehmbruch (eds), Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1979), Especially the following essays:
- Philippe Schmitter, "Modes of Interest Intermediation and Models of Social Change in Western Europe", pp.63-95
- Leo Panitch, "The Development of Corporatism in Liberal Democracies", pp. 119-146
- Bob Jessop, "Corporatism, Parliamentarism and Social Democracy", pp. 185-212
- Leo Panitch, "Trade Unions and the Capitalist State," New Left Review #125, pp.21-43, January-February, 1981.
- Ian Gough, The Political Economy of the Welfare State, pp.146-152.
- Nicos Poulantzas, "The Decline of Democracy: authoritarian statism" in State, Power and Socialism by Nicos Poulantzas (London: NLB, 1978).pp. 203-247

## SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Adam Przeworski and Michael Wallerstein, "Democratic Capitalism at the crossroads", Democracy, July, 1982
- Bob Jessop, "Capitalism and Democracy: the best possible shell?" (concluding section, pp.40-49) in Littlejohn, (ed), Power and the State (London: Croom Helm, 1978).
- J. Westergaard, "Class, Inequality and 'Corporatism'" in A. Hunt,(ed) Class and Class Structure (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977)
- Leo Panitch, "Recent Theorizations of Corporatism: reflections on a growth industry," British Journal of Sociology, June 1980
- Peter Katzenstein, "Corporatism and the Politics of Industry" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1982)
- M.Crozier, et.al., The Crisis of Democracy (NYU Press, 1975)

**18. The State and Racism**

Most Marxist discussions of racism focus primarily on how racial divisions serve the interests of the capitalist class, both economically (superexploitation) and politically (divide and conquer).

Where the state is included in the analysis it is typically in a relatively instrumentalist way: the bourgeoisie has interests in racism and unproblematically translates those interests into state policies. It is only recently that a more concerted analysis of the specificity of the state's relationship to racism has begun. Much of this analysis has centered on debates over the South African state, since South Africa is the modern example of a state organized to its core systematically around the issue of race, but similar analyses have appeared for the U.S. South, Northern Ireland and a variety of other places. In this session we will explore this basic question: how should we understand the specificity of the role of the state in the production and reproduction of racial (or ethnic, or national, etc.) oppression? Is there a racist form of the state, or does the state simply engage in racist policies contingently?

[Note: The readings below do not reflect a thorough knowledge on my part of the literature on race and the state. If students chose this topic as an optional topic for the seminar, therefore, I will try to identify any additional readings that would be important to include]

#### CORE READINGS:

Michael Burawoy, "The Capitalist State in South Africa: Marxist and Sociological Perspectives on Race and Class," in Zeitlin (ed), *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 2, 1981. (JAI Press).

Gideon Ben-Tovim, et. al., "Race, Left Strategies and the State" *Politics & Power* #3, 1981

Manning Marabel, "Black Politicians and Bourgeois Democracy," chapter 3 in *Black American Politics* (London: Verso, 1985)

#### SUGGESTED READINGS:

David James, *The Resistance to the Civil Rights Movement in the South* (unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, 1981).

Stanley Greenberg, *Race and State in Capitalist Development* (Yale University Press, 1980)

Michael Burawoy, "State and Social Revolution in South Africa: reflections on the comparative perspectives of Greenberg and Skocpol," *Kapitalistate* #9, 1981

Harold Wolpe, "Towards an Analysis of the South African State", *International Journal of Sociology of Law*, 8:4, 1980

### 19. The State and the Labor Process

The labor process constitutes one of the most fundamental categories of Marxist analysis, and yet there is very little theoretical or empirical work which attempts to link this category to the

problem of the state. Michael Burawoy argues that it is impossible to satisfactorily understand either the logic of development of the labor process itself or the nature of political struggle around the state without a structural investigation of the linkage between the two. The state helps to define the rules of the game of struggles in the labor process; the nature of the labor process, its contradictions and dilemmas helps to define the development of the state.

#### CORE READINGS:

Michael Burawoy, "The Production of Politics and the Politics of Production", in *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. I (JAI Press, 1979).

Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production* (Verso, 1985)

### 20. Historical Studies of State Formation

There are two historical circumstances in which the "experimental" conditions exist for potentially observing the formation of the class character of state apparatuses: First, in the historical periods in which states are initially formed, and second in periods in which they undergo rapid, radical transformations. When states are formed, many of the institutional properties which later become taken for granted are objects of conscious choice, objects of struggle and debate, and thus the class-specificity of those choices may become observable. Similarly, in periods of rapid transformation, the structural properties of institutional forms are likely to be objects of debate and contestation, and in such contestation the class logics of the alternatives may be revealed. In this session we will examine a number of historical case studies which try to investigate the class character of the state in periods of formation and transformation.

#### CORE READINGS:

Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), especially, pp. 1-46, 121-176, 248-292

Carolyn Baylies, *The Formation of the State in Zambia* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, 1978), excerpts to be made available in class.

David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic* (Princeton University Press, 1981)

#### SUGGESTED READINGS:

Margaret Fay and Margit Mayer, "The Formation of the American Nation-State", *Kapitalistate* #6, 1977, pp.39-90

## 21. A Debate over the centrality of class analysis to understanding the New Deal state (Skocpol, Domhoff, Gilbert, Howe)

The New Deal has been a favorite object of debates within state theory. It offers an exceptionally good empirical setting for exploring many of the issues in class theories of the state. The New Deal reforms were vehemently opposed by many segments of the capitalist class and thus pose a *prima facie* challenge to strong Marxist accounts of the state. Here is an instance of a massive set of reforms in the practices -- and even the structure -- of the state in a capitalist society which, on the surface, was opposed by the dominant class. And yet, by most accounts, these reforms helped to stabilize and even strengthen American capitalism. The New Deal thus sharply poses the problem of the "relative autonomy" of the state: a state capable of (apparently) acting against the wishes of many powerful representatives of the bourgeoisie in order to serve the interests of the class as a whole. Alternatively, the New Deal reforms have been understood by some theorists as largely a statist project, driven by state elites and policy intellectuals, only weakly responsive to the "needs of capital" and much more preoccupied with the task of expanding state capacities in their own interests.

### READING ASSIGNMENT:

Skocpol, Theda, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the state and the Case of the New Deal", *Politics & Society* 10:155-201

Skocpol, Theda, and Kenneth Fiengold. 1982. "State Capacity and Economic Intervention in the Early New Deal," *Political Science Quarterly*, 97: 255-278

G. William Domhoff. 1993. "Class Conflict or State Autonomy in New Deal Agricultural Policy: yet another counterattack on a theoretical delusion." *Political Power and Social Theory*, volume 8, pp.45-78

Jess Gilbert and Carolyn Howe. 1991. "Beyond 'state vs society': theories of the state and New Deal Agricultural Policies". *American Sociological Review* 56, April: 204-220

## 22. Quantitative Research on the State

Marxists have generally been quantophobic. Nevertheless, in recent years a number of interesting quantitative studies of state questions have emerged, many of them from graduate students in the Wisconsin sociology department. The danger of such research, of course, is that in attempting to use statistical techniques, the substantive theoretical preoccupations of the research become subordinated to the constraints of the research technologies: dynamic processes become emptied of any "dialectic", the contingencies of historical processes become obliterated in the search for regularities, etc. In the end, it sometimes seems that after the expenditure of such enormous effort, we really do not learn anything very new from quantitative research. On the other hand, there may be situations in which the only effective way of adjudicating between contending claims is to subject those claims to quantitative scrutiny.

## CORE READINGS:

Roger Friedland, "Class Power and Social Control: The War on Poverty", *Politics and Society*, 6:4, 1976.

Gosta Esping-Anderson, "Social Class, Social Democracy and the State: housing policy in Denmark and Sweden", *Comparative Politics*, Fall, 1978.

Alexander Hicks, et. al., "Class Power and State Policy", *The American Sociological Review*, vol. 43, 1978.

David R. Cameron, "The Expansion of the Public Economy: a Comparative Analysis", *The American Political Science Review*, 72:4, 1978.

Michael Mann, "State and Society, 1130-1815: an analysis of English State Financies", in Zeitlin (ed.) *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. I, 1980, pp.165-208.

**23. Law and the State**

The law and the legal system have rarely been systematically studied by Marxists. Most investigations have either collapsed the discussion of the law into the discussion of ideology, seeing law as simply one variety of legitimating ideology, Or, the problem of the law has been collapsed into the theory of the repressive apparatus of the state, seeing the legal system as simply the technical form through which repression is exercised in capitalist society. Relatively little attention has been given to law in its own right, as a structure or set of practices and relations within which struggles take place and contradictions of a specific sort develop. This session will try to identify some of the key features that a Marxist theory of law should develop.

## CORE READINGS:

Bob Jessop, "On Recent Marxist Theories of Law, the State and Juridico-Political Ideology," *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 8:4, Nov. 1980.

Issac Balbus, "Commodity Form and Legal Form," *Law & Society Review*, 1977.

## SUGGESTED READINGS:

Bernard Edelman, *Ownership of the Image: Elements for a Marxist theory of Law*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

Pashukanis, *Selected Writings on Marxism and Law*, ed. and introduced by P. Bierne and R. Sharlet, (Academic Press, 1979).

Maureen Cain and Alan Hunt, *Marx and Engels on Law* (Academic Press, 1979)

Colin Sumner, *Reading Ideologies: an investigation into the Marxist Theory of Law and Ideology* (Academic Press, 1979)

Isaac Balbus, *The Dialectics of Legal Repression*

Erik Olin Wright, *The Politics of Punishment* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).  
Mark Tushnet, "A Marxist Analysis of American Law," *Marxist Perspectives*, 1978.  
Boaventura Santos, "Law and Community: the changing nature of state power in law  
capitalism," *Int. jour. of the Sociology of Law*, 8:4, 980.