

## Sociology 924 Agenda issues from Interrogations #1, Week 2. 9/11/2002 (revised)

### 1. Some basic Concepts in need of clarification

- a. *Relations*. What precisely does it mean to talk about the state “as a relation”? [Matt Dimick, Shamus Khan]
- b. *State power vs State apparatus*: what precisely does the contrast mean? What is the payoff? How do we know the class character of each? [Landy Sanchez, Matt Nichter]
- c. *state vs society: boundaries of the state? permeability of boundaries?* [Sun Jing]
- d. *systemic power vs institutional power*: meaning of “the game itself” vs “rules of the game” [Cesar Rodriguez]
- e. *unity of the state*: does the state have a coherent unity? [Damayanti Banerjee]
- f. *legitimation of the state*: is this a behavior notion or does it imply a specific nsubjective state (Bradly Brewster)

2. **Variations in form of state**. Does Therborn have a conceptual map of variations *within* the capitalist form of state? Would such variations be generated by nonclass factors? Can such variation be formulated at the same level of abstraction as Therborn’s more general analysis? [Landy Sanchez]

### 3. Limits.

- a. *Changes in limits*. On the idea of “limits” of the state, or state action: who would have thought in 1900 that the Swedish state could do what it has done and remain a capitalist state. Have the limits expanded? Is this because of technological change, which crates greater capacity for surplus acquisition and thus more flexibility? [Keedon Kwon]
- b. *Knowledge of limits*: is Offe’s solution to the problem of demonstrating limits plausible? [Cesar Rodriguez]

### 4. Offe’s selection mechanisms:

- a. where do these come from? Are they mainly the effects of class struggle? [Landry Sanchez]
- b. methodological issue: are Offe’s grounds for rejecting various empirical strategies for studying negative selection convincing (Pablo Mitnik)

### 5. Crisis and the State

- a. *Accumulation and legitimation*. Is there a contradiction, or even a tension here? Does the legitimation “function” need democracy? [Cesar Rodriguez, James Benson]
- b. *The “crisis of crisis management”*. Why does Offe think the political system has an inherent tendency to enter into crisis because of contradictions between “positive” and “negative” subordination of the state to accumulation? [Amy Lang, Landy Sanchez]
- c. *dysfunctional effects of state apparatuses*: how should we understand policies that do not reproduce capitalism? How do these bear on the methodological problem of establishing the class character of an apparatus? [Matt Nichter]

6. **Agency and the form of the state**. State apparatuses are filled with people with particular histories and socialization and connected to specific *fractions* of classes. How does this affect state action? How should we think about the relationship between the form of the state and the nature of the motivations of the people in it? [Teresa Melgar]

7. **Working class systemic power**. The capitalist class has systemic power by virtue of the logic of capital accumulation. Does the working class have systemic power also because labor is essential for accumulation? [Cesar Rodriguez]

8. **Gender and the State**. Since gender relations predate class relations historically, what does this mean for the possibilities of a “gendered state”? [Bradly Brewster]