

SOCIOLOGY 924

Theories of the State

FALL 2011

Room 8108 Social Sciences

Thursday, 2:30 – 5:30

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WHAT THIS SEMINAR IS ABOUT

This seminar is motivated by a moral and political concern: to what extent is it possible to achieve a more egalitarian, humane and democratic society within a capitalist society? Even if in many of the discussions we will not explicitly address this issue, ultimately a crucial political stake in understanding the nature of the state in capitalist society is the problem of emancipatory social change.

It is a fundamental tenet of Marxist theories of the state that the state in capitalist society is deeply shaped and constrained by the class relations of capitalism, but this leaves quite open the extent to which progressive change can be achieved within those constraints. At one extreme is classical Leninism, which sees the capitalist state as so profoundly imbued with a capitalist character that even where nominally democratic institutions exist, there is little prospect for progressive change. The state is fundamentally a “superstructure”: its form and structures functionally reproduce the basic class relations of capitalism. As a result the state must be smashed and radically reconstructed on a new basis; serious reforms in an egalitarian direction using the capitalist state will inevitably fail or be reversed. At the other extreme is classical social democracy which views state apparatuses as basically class neutral and regarded class structure as simply one among a variety of obstacles to be overcome. Popular mobilization, particularly when organized through a coordination of the labor movement and socialist parties, had the potential to gradually reform capitalism in a radically egalitarian direction through social democratic state policies. Between these extremes are a variety of theoretical and political positions which see the constraints on radical change imposed by the capitalist state as variable, both in terms of the kinds of changes they permit and the extent to which struggles can transform the constraints themselves. The “contradictory functionality” of the state creates a complex, variable political space within which egalitarian, democratic, and even emancipatory politics can be pursued.

The central task of this seminar, then, is to explore a range of theoretical and empirical issues that bear on the problem of understanding such possibilities for radical, egalitarian politics in capitalist societies. Above all we will focus on the problem of the complex interconnections between class, the economy, and the state in capitalist societies. To develop the theoretical tools to approach these issues we will have to grapple with some fairly abstract of conceptual questions: what does it mean to say that the state has a “class character”? What is the difference between an external constraint on state actions imposed by class relations and an internal institutionalization of class constraints within the state itself? What does it mean to describe the state as having “autonomy” -- relative, potential, limited or absolute?

In more practical terms, this seminar has two primary objectives: First, to deepen students’ understanding of alternative theoretical approaches to studying the state and politics within broadly Marxist and critical traditions of state theory, 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.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

The semester is built around three different kinds of written assignments:

1. Weekly reading interrogations

To facilitate discussions of the core readings, all participants are required to prepare a “reading interrogation” each week which will form the basis for the discussion. These interrogations are not meant to be mini-papers on the topics of 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: **they should clearly specify what you would most like to talk about in the seminar discussion.** A good interrogation is one that poses a clear and discussable question – not a half a dozen different questions, but one focal question. (Since I use the memos to distill the seminar agenda, it is pretty frustrating when I have to read a memo several times in order to extract an agenda item from it.) There is no set length for these interrogations. It is fine (even preferable!) 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. The interrogations should be written *single-spaced* in MS-Word.

These interrogations are due by Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m. of each week so that I can assemble them into a single document, provide some comments, distill an agenda, and distribute these materials to all students by email by Wednesday morning. (I generally will not have time to do this carefully on Wednesdays). All students should read these interrogations before class meets on Thursday afternoon. At the seminar when we get to a specific agenda item, students whose memos contributed to that issue will be asked to speak first on the topic.

2. Term paper and Classroom Presentation

For this seminar I have a very specific kind of assignment for term papers, rather than an open-ended research paper as sometimes is assigned in graduate seminars. I have assembled a list of historical case studies, nearly all of which were originally dissertations. Some of these directly deploy Marxist theories of the state. Others are not embedded in the tradition of Marxist state theory, but nevertheless present empirical material directly related to Marxist themes. The list of books can be found at the end of this syllabus. I have posted the table of contents and first chapter of all of these books on the course website.

The components of the assignment are as follows:

- i. Each student will rank-order four (or more) books that they are interested in working on from this list. I want each student to pick a different book, so if more than one person indicates a particular book is their first choice, I will randomly select the person for that book. Students can pick a case study not on the list, but if they do so, they need to confirm their choice with me. Students are free to switch books with other students after the allocations have been made.
- ii. Students in the seminar will prepare a 20-25 minute presentation in which they distill a talk on the basis of the book *as if they had written the book*. This is a very specific kind of task, one which graduate students eventually face: how to distill a complex piece of work – their dissertations! – into a short, punchy presentation which is still intellectually exciting. Since the books on this list are (nearly) all revisions of dissertations, preparing this presentation can be an occasion for honing this skill.
- iii. The term paper itself will be a review essay of the book (not just a simple review, but a review essay) of the sort that appears in the journal *Contemporary Sociology*. Such essays are typically in

the 2,500-5,000 word range. Review essays differ from ordinary reviews in that they nearly always involve more than one book and they bring to bear on the discussion references other than those in the principle book under review. So, to prepare this review essay will require some additional reading beyond the core book for the classroom presentation. Since the books are nearly all more than a decade old one strategy is to look for some more recent literature on the same topic as a point of entry into the review.

3. Wikipedia Editing Project

All students in the class are required to make a contribution to Wikipedia as a spin-off from the work on their term paper. Academic papers typically are *argumentative* in the sense that they argue for a specific point of view within some terrain of discussion or debate. Encyclopedias in general – and Wikipedia in particular – try to adopt a neutral point of view, or what is called in the Wikipedia world NPOV. This does not mean that a Wikipedia article cannot discuss a debate, but it should not take a position on the debate itself. The idea of this assignment, then, is to contribute to Wikipedia a descriptive piece connected to the term paper. This can either be an entire new article or a new section to an existing article. I have no fixed expectation about length for this assignment, but something in the 600-1,500 word range seems reasonable. The seminar will have a Wikipedia Campus Ambassador to help students with this assignment. I will arrange early in the semester a tutorial session to teach Wikipedia editing and discuss Wikipedia cultural norms, and the campus ambassador will be available throughout the semester to help with any problems that arise.

Visits of Claus Offe & Göran Therborn

There will be two occasions during the semester when authors whose work we will be reading will be giving Havens Center visiting scholar lectures and attending the State Theory Seminar. Both of these visitors – Claus Offe from Germany and Göran Therborn from Sweden – have made extraordinary contributions to the debates over the theory of the state, among many other topics. At least one of the lectures Offe and Therborn will be giving will be a retrospective look at their work on the state from the 1970s and early 1980s.

We will spend two weeks engaging the work of each of these visitors: In the first session, before their visit, we will have a conventional seminar on their core contributions to the theory of the state. We will use that week to refine a set of questions and themes to raise during the week when they are each in Madison.

On the weeks of their visits, it would be very desirable for students in the seminar to attend the Havens Centers lectures given by Offe and Therborn. These lectures are held from 4:00-5:30 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The dates are as follows:

	Pre-visit seminar	Lecture 1	Lecture 2	Seminar
Claus Offe	September 8	September 13	September 14	September 15
Göran Therborn	September 22	October 25	October 26	October 27

SPECIAL EVENT, DECEMBER 11-12: MINI-CONFERENCE ON SOCIALISM, REAL UTOPIAS, AND THE STATE

On the last weekend of the semester – December 11-12 – we will be having a two-day mini-conference jointly with the students in Sociology 621. The workshop will have three sessions:

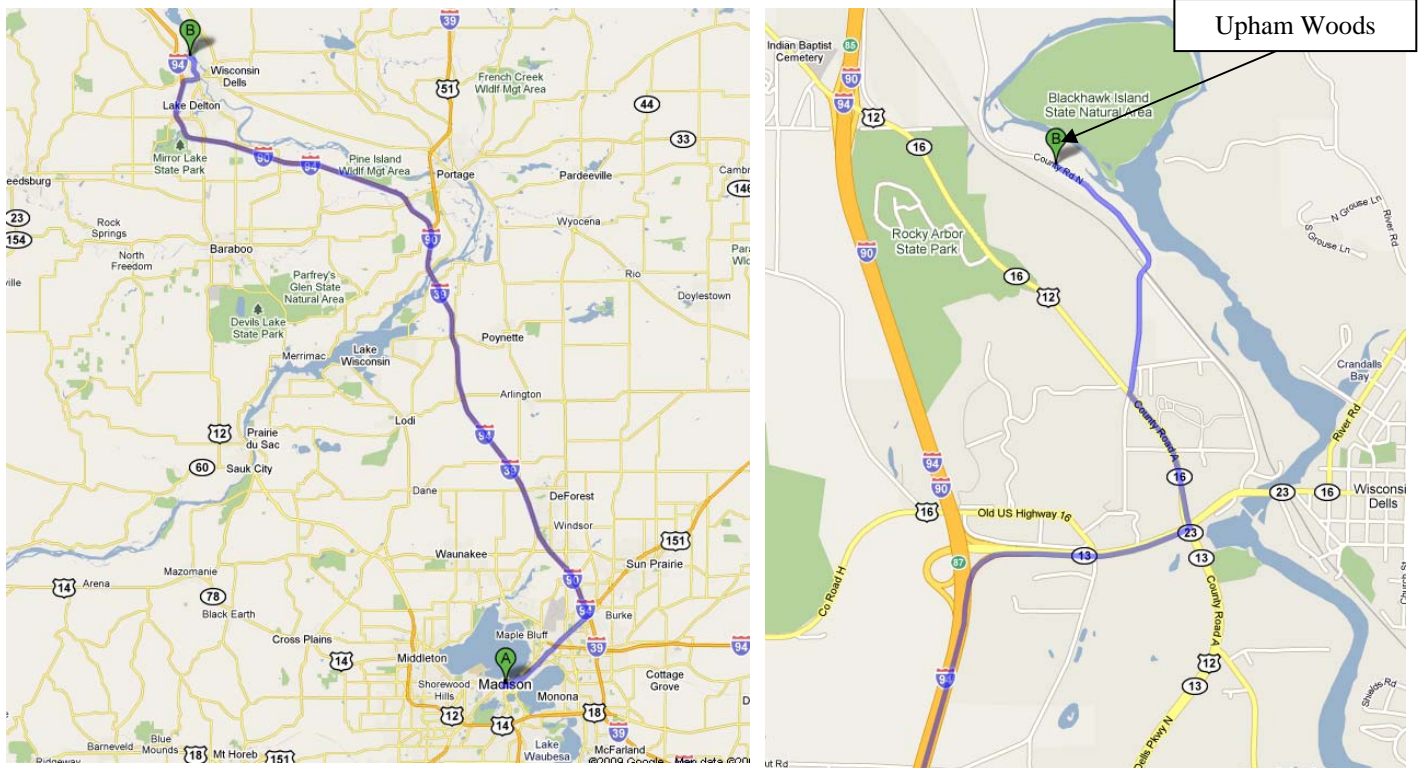
- (1) What is Socialism? (Saturday morning)
- (2) Envisioning Real Utopias: New Models of Emancipatory Futures. (Saturday afternoon)
- (3) Strategic Logics of Transformation: ruptural, interstitial, symbiotic. (Sunday morning)

The second of these sessions is the one most directly connected to the themes of the Theories of the State Seminar. In it we will explore the question of what kinds of institutional transformations in the state within capitalism can contribute to forms of democratic empowerment that point beyond capitalism.

The workshop will be held at Upham Woods, a beautiful University of Wisconsin facility on the Wisconsin River about an hour north of Madison. In addition to the academic sessions, the retreat will also include a gourmet potluck and party Saturday evening – with music, dancing, singing, general carousing – and, if we have snow, a couple of hours of tobogganing on a wonderful toboggan run at the conference center.

Spouses/partners, friends and children are also welcome to come for the weekend – there are nice activities in the area for children while the workshop is in session (including indoor water Parks in Wisconsin Dells). I will cover part of the costs of the retreat, so the out-of-pocket expenses should be about \$35/person for room and board. While it is not an absolute requirement for students to participate in this event, I feel it will be a valuable and enjoyable way to wrap up the semester so I strongly urge everyone in the class to come.

Directions to Upham Woods



Readings

Most of the Readings for the course come from books. When books are out of print or are incredibly expensive, I have made pdfs of the relevant chapters and placed them on e-reserve at the social science reference library. Books have been ordered from Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative. I strongly urge you to buy your books from the cooperative even if you can find them slightly cheaper on line. The Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative is an important community resource in Madison and it relies heavily on textbook sales. The books that have been ordered at the bookstore are:

- Goran Therborn – *What does the ruling class do when it Rules* (Verso)
- Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge)
- Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State* (Polity Press)
- Gosta Esping-Anderson, *Three worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton, 1990)
- Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy* (Princeton, 1995)

I have also ordered some copies of Clyde Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State* (University of Wisconsin Press) for students who want a fairly clear introduction for some of the sessions.

General Background Readings

Students interested in general background readings on the perspectives we will be examining can consult the following:

- 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* (New York University Press: 1982)
- Ralph Miliband, *Marxism and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- Albert Szymanski, *The Capitalist State and the Politics of Class*, (Winthrop, 1978)
- David Gold, Clarence Lo and Erik Olin Wright, "Recent developments in Marxist Theories of the State," *Monthly Review*, October and November, 1975.
- Fred Block, "The Ruling Class Does Not Rule," *Socialist Review* No.33, 1977.

COURSE WEBSITE

The course website is: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/sociology924-2011.htm>

This website will house readings that are not on the e-reserve at the Social Sciences library, the weekly reading interrogations, and a range of other materials.

Schedule of sessions

1.	9/8	Claus Offe – readings on the state
2.	9/15	Claus Offe – visit to the seminar
3.	9/22	Göran Therborn – <i>What does the ruling class do when it rules?</i>
4.	9/29	Bob Jessop – <i>Future of the capitalist state</i>
5.	10/6	The Poulantzas-Miliband debate
6.	10/12*	Adam Przeworski – <i>Capitalism & social democracy</i>
7.	10/20	Charles Tilly – <i>Coercion, Capital and the State</i>
8.	10/27	Göran Therborn -- visit to the seminar
9.	11/3	Michael Mann -- <i>The Sources of Social Power</i>
10.	11/10	Gøsta Esping-Anderson – <i>Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism</i>
11.	11/17	Peter Evans – <i>Embedded Autonomy</i>
12.	12/1	Student presentations of case studies
13.	12/8	Student presentations of case studies
14.	12/10-11	Weekend retreat: workshop on Socialism, Real Utopias and the State
15.	12/15	Student presentations of case studies (if necessary)

* Note: I need to hold the seminar this week on Wednesday evening, October 12, 6:30-9:00 rather than Thursday afternoon.

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS

* = items available on e-reserve from the social sciences library

Session 1. September 8 Claus Offe

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:

All Offe readings are available at: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/sociology924-2011.htm>

Core readings by Claus Offe on the state from the 1970s and 1980s

“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

“The Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation,” in Leon Lindberg (ed), *Stress and Contradiction in Contemporary Capitalism* (D.C. Heath, 1975)pp.125-14

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

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

More recent writing on the state

“Governance: an empty signifier?” *Constellations*, Volume 16:4, 2009

“Crisis and innovation in liberal democracy: can deliberation be institutionalized?” *Czech Sociological Review* (3) 2011

“Ungovernability”, unpublished manuscript, 2011

“Political disaffection as an outcome of institutional practices? Some post-Toquevillean speculations”, in Mariano Torcal and J.R. Montero (eds), *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies* (London: Routledge, 2006: 23-45)

Supplementary reading

Clyde Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State*, c.4, “Post-Marxism I: The systems-analytic approach”

John Keane, “The Legacy of Political Economy: thinking with and against Claus Offe,” *Canadian Journal of Political & Social Theory*, 1978.

Session 2. September 15 Visit by Claus Offe to the seminar**Session 3. September 22 Göran Therborn**

Probably more than any other Marxist theorist, Göran Therborn has attempted to elaborate a formal framework for specifying 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. In this session we will examine in detail Therborn's claims. The readings by Barrow from 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.

Reading:

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

Supplementary reading

Clyde Barrow, *Critical Theories of the State*, c2. “Neo Marxism: the structuralist approach”

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

Session 4. September 29 Bob Jessop

Bob Jessop is a prominent British Marxist political scientist who, like Therborn, was strongly influenced by Nicos Poulantzas. Since the early 1980s he has written a series of books attempting to develop a broad Marxist theory of the state that is responsive to a variety of criticisms and weaknesses – *The Capitalist State: Marxist Theories and Methods* (1982); *Nicos Poulantzas: Marxist theory and political strategy* (1985); *State Theory: putting the State in its place* (1990); *The Future of the Capitalist State* (2002). His most recent work, especially, attempts to integrate issues of space and scale into the analysis and to connect the theory of the state to large scale changes in the nature and dilemmas of capital accumulation.

Reading:

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

Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State* (Polity Press, 2002)

Session 5. October 6 The Poulantzas-Miliband Debate

No writer had a bigger impact on the debates over the theory of the state in the heyday of the renaissance of Marxist theory in the late 1960s and 1970s than Nicos Poulantzas. Poulantzas was a Greek Marxist who lived in France and was closely associated with the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. 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.

The key text in which Poulantzas explores the problem of the state is also probably his most difficult work, *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 during this period at constructing a rigorous Marxist theory of the state, and it immediately sparked a great deal of debate. This book is exceptionally difficult, especially for American students not used to the obliqueness of continental European writing, but even for seasoned social theorists the formulations are often murky and elliptical. For this reason I am only assigning a few pages from the book – just enough to give students a flavor for this kind of theoretical exposition.

Mostly we will focus on what came to be known as the Poulantzas-Miliband debate, carried out over several years in the pages of *New Left Review* between 1969 and 1976, with one final piece by Miliband in 1983. This debate revolved around the problem of the extent to which the state should be analyzed primarily in terms of the structural properties connected to its functional location within a class-defined social system, or, in contrast, in terms of the nature of collectively organized social forces that shaped its actions. This contrast was sometimes referred to as structuralist vs instrumentalist views of the state.

Background Readings (summaries and exegeses of Poulantzas):

*Erik Olin Wright, "A reading guide to Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*" (typescript, 1977; updated, 1981) available at:
<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/sociology924-2011.htm>

*Martin Carnoy, *The State and Political Theory* (Princeton University Press, 1984), chapter 4, "Structuralism and the State: Althusser and Poulantzas"

- *Bob Jessop, "Recent Theories of the Capitalist State," chapter 1 in Bob Jessop, *State Theory: putting capitalist states in their place* (Penn State University Press, 1990), especially pp. 29-34.
- * Gøsta Esping-Anderson, Roger Friedland and Erik Olin Wright, "Modes of Class Struggle and the Capitalist State", *Kapitaliststate* No 4/5, 1975

Readings

- *Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London, New Left Books, 1973), pp. 37-56, 186-194
- *"The Problem of the Capitalist State," Nicos Poulantzas, NLR I/58, November-December 1969, pp. 67-78
- *"The Capitalist State--Reply to N. Poulantzas", Ralph Miliband, NLR I/59, January-February 1970, pp. 53-60
- *"Poulantzas and the Capitalist State," Ralph Miliband, NLR I/82, November-December 1973, pp. 83-92
- *"The Capitalist State: A Reply to Miliband and Laclau," Nicos Poulantzas, NLR I/95, January-February 1976, pp. 63-83
- *"State Power and Class Interests," Ralph Miliband, NLR I/138, March-April 1983, pp. 57-68

Further Readings:

A. Other work by Poulantzas

- Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: NLB. 1974)
- Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (NLB, 1975)
- State, Power, Socialism* (NLB, 1978)

B. Critiques of Poulantzas:

- 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.
 - Simon Clarke, "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.
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Session 6. October 12 Adam Przeworski

Adam Przeworski's work on the state, especially the work he did in the 1980s, falls within the theoretical tradition often called Analytical Marxism." One of the hallmarks of this approach is a focus on the micro-foundations of social processes, especially the problem of rational strategic action and human agency. It thus constitutes a sharp contrast to the kind of state theory elaborated by Nicos Poulantzas and others working in the structuralist tradition.

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.

Analytical Marxists place 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 of struggles 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

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

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* (Cambridge, 1992)

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

Session 7. October 20 Charles Tilly

Charles Tilly was one of the most prolific and influential macro-sociologists of the last four decades. In the first part of his career his main focus of research was social movements and their impact on large scale social change. In the last two decades of his life he turned to more institutional questions, and in particular the problem of the development of the modern state. While Tilly (like Michael Mann in session 9) draws heavily from Marxist ideas, he sees class as only one of the forces impelling the development of state forms, and probably not in general the most central one. Tilly deploys an interesting, eclectic mix of Marxist and Weberian elements in a theory of state formation that places the state-centered dynamics of war-making on a par with economic forces in explaining social change in general and the formation of the state in particular.

Reading:

*Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990-1990* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), chapters 1-5. (Note this book is out of print, so it is available on e-reserve).

Session 8. October 27 Visit of Göran Terborn

Session 9. November 3 Michael Mann

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 at 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.

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)

Session 10. November 10 Gøsta Esping-Andersen

Perhaps the most influential book of the last decade or so on the Welfare State was Gøsta Esping-Andersen's *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. Esping-Anderson's new book, *Social Foundations of Post-Industrial Economies* attempts a reassessment of the problem of policy regimes in light of these new developments. These are relatively short books, so both are assigned for this week.

Reading:

Gøsta Esping-Anderson, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton, 1990)

Session 11. November 17 Peter Evans

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 the 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.

Reading:

Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton University Press: 1995)

Session 12. December 1 Student Presentations

Session 13. December 8 Student Presentations

Session 14. December 15 Student Presentations

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 systematically around the week's 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 ON 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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. Men, 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 can 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 lead 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. REFLEXIVITY. 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 problems should be dealt with through open discussion and not left to the end of the seminar. Please let me know if you have concerns of any sort, and it is always appropriate to raise issues with our collective process.

Books for term paper project

(* books from UW sociology PhDs)

1. David Abraham, *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic*. (second edition, Holmes and Meier, 2002). An analysis of the complexity of forming stable coalitions of dominant class fractions and their relation to subordinate classes, and how the failure to form a stable block created the conditions for the collapse of Weimar Germany
2. *Julia Adams, *The Familial State: ruling families and merchant capitalism in early modern Europe* (Cornell University Press: 2005). An exploration of the complex relationship between elite family dynamics and state formation in the Dutch Republic.
3. *Gianpaolo Baiocchi, *Militants and Citizens: the politics of participatory democracy in Porto Alegre* (Stanford, 2006). An analysis of the transformations of the relationship between state and civil society through participatory budgeting in Brazil.
4. *Carolyn Baylies, *Class structure and State formation in Zambia* (PhD dissertation, 1978). A study of the formation of a proper colonial state with relative autonomy from local class relations as a response to the initial completely nonautonomous state established by the colonial capitalist class.
5. Richard Bense, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State autonomy: 1859-77* (Cambridge, 1990). An analysis of how the Civil War shaped the structure of the national state in both North and South.
6. *Vivek Chibber, *Locked in Place: state-building and late industrialization in India* (Princeton, 2003). Analysis of the ways in which particular configurations of class forces both within countries and across countries generate institutions that constrain state strategies for development.
7. *Gosta Esping-Anderson, *Politics Against Markets* (Princeton, 1985). An explanation of variations across Scandinavian countries in the dynamics of social democracy, and how the class base for social democracy was more firmly established in Sweden than in Denmark.
8. *Roger Friedland, *Power and Crisis in the City: corporations, Unions and Urban Policy* (McMillan 1982). An analysis of the link between (a) the location of cities in the national system of capital accumulation, (b) the relationship between the national state and the local state, and (c) variation across cities in policies around urban renewal.
9. *Ran Greenstein, *Genealogies of Conflict: Class, Identity, and State in Palestine/Israel and South Africa*. (University Press of New England, 1995). This book compares the relationship between the state and national minorities in Israel/Palestine and South Africa during the apartheid era.
10. *Nora Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy* (Princeton, 1982). An exploration of the problem of the "relative autonomy" of the capitalist state and the role of strategic intervention by dominant class forces to block autonomy when it threatens their interests.
11. Patrick Heller, *The Labor of Development: Workers and the transformation of capitalism in Kerala, India* (Cornell University Press, 1999). A study of the way class formation and communist party politics shape the strategies of the state.
12. *David James, *The Transformation of Local State and Class Structures*" (unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin 1981). A study of the local racial state in the U.S. South and how variations in its relationship to both the local class structure and the national class structure shaped the patterns of its transformation across the South in the Civil Rights era.

13. Kathleen McNamara, *The Power of Ideas: monetary politics in the European Union* (Cornell, 1998). An analysis of the power of capital mobility and the pressures that induced European states to form the EU
14. Vedat Milor, *A Comparative Study of Planning and Economic Development in Turkey and France* (Berkeley, PhD dissertation, 1989). A study of how the contrasting relationship between the capitalist class and the state in Turkey and France helps explain the different capacity for planning by the capitalist state in the two countries.
15. Ton Notermans, *Money, Markets and the State* (Cambridge: 2000). An argument about the dilemmas of social democracy, about the conditions that blocked its emergence and the conditions of its reproduction.
16. Ann Orloff, *The Politics of Pensions: a comparative analysis of Britain, Canada, and the United States, 1880-1940* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1993). An explanation of the timing of national social security pensions in different countries on the basis of the way path-dependent historical processes interact with the institutional structures of states.
17. James Ron, *Frontiers and Ghettos: state violence in Serbia and Israel* (California 2003). An exploration of the use of violence by the state to secure social control over ethnic minorities when minorities are located on the borders of a country or in the interior.
18. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: a comparative analysis of France, China and Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 1979). An argument for a purely structural account of revolutions that emphasizes the “potential autonomy” of the state and the conditions under which it collapses from the combination of internal contradictions and contingent shocks.
19. Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State* (Cambridge University Press, 1982). An explanation for why the difficulty in creating effective administrative capacities in the state undermined the ability of the U.S. national state solving certain kinds of regulatory problems.
20. Richard Snyder, *Politics After Neoliberalism: reregulation in Mexico* (Cambridge University Press: 2001). An analysis of variations across states in Mexico in the response to neoliberalism, showing how variations in configurations of class structures and class forces conditioned the response of the local state,
21. *George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: the welfare state and local politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton University Press, 1993). An account of variations across regions of Germany in the process of constructing the modern capitalist state and how this conditions the forms of development of the welfare state,
22. Ellen Kay Trimberger, *Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt and Peru* (Transaction Books, 1978). A study of the role of the initiatives of military bureaucracies in transforming states.
23. Jeffrey Winters, *Power in Motion: capital mobility and the Indonesian State* (Cornell, 1996). A book about the subordination of the Indonesian state to the structural power of capital through an examination of 40 years of Indonesian history.