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lobalization and the Nation State: A Poulantzian Approach

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Abstract

Having reviewed the major theoretical elements of Nicos Poulantzas' theory of capitalist state, this article questions the alleged loose of nation-states in relation with his theoretical perspective. Poulantzas explains the functioning of the modern state with the conception of institutional materiality of the capitalist state. That is, state power has no locality rather state apparatus materialize and concentrate the power. States are the major subjects of the global relation of domination and in order to secure its reproduction and legitimization, international capital accumulation still needs organized national territories. Therefore, the process of globalization will not bring an end; rather reconfigure the role of capitalist states. Also, as far as the flexible labour forms are promoted and the deregulation is imposed on them by international capital, systematical authoritarian control will grow within the nation states. Poulantzas makes an invaluable contribution to the conception of globalization with his identification of it with the new phase of imperialism, particularly the American imperialism.

Keywords

Poulantzas, globalization, capitalist state, institutional materiality, authoritarianism

Introduction

Today, in discussions of globalization, the role and functions of nation-states are being debated from various angles. In the mainstream discourse on globalization, nation-states lose their capacities to regulate their societies in a coherent manner and are not able to control the globalization process. From a very optimistic standpoint some argue that globalization reflects a peacefully integrated world or the intensification of communication, culture and democracy (Held 2000; Giddens 2000, 2001; Robertson and White 2003; Della-Porta 2006). Against this mainstream discourse, some scholars have turned to the ideas of Poulantzas, one of the significant political theorists of the 20th century. Those who maintain an opposing stand against the fetishized conception of globalization tend to perceive and analyze the process as the new face of American imperialism (Barrow 2006; Jessop 2002; Tsoukalas 2002). In this article, I intend to discuss the elements of the Poulantzian approach to globalization at the level of his theory of the capitalist state, conception of relative autonomy and conception of internationalization. Before doing this, it would be useful to touch upon the major elements of his theory of the capitalist state and reviewing firstly the Poulantzas-Miliband debate. Then I will proceed with Poulantzas' conception of state, relations between base and superstructure, the role of class struggle and his relative separation between state and economy, referring also to exceptional forms of state regimes. Lastly, I will focus on the features of institutional materiality of the capitalist state and pass to its contemporary relevance related to globalization.

A Framework for Poulantzas' Thought

Nicos Poulantzas is a Greco-French Marxist political sociologist. He was a professor of legal philosophy at the Sorbonne and continued teaching at French universities. At the beginning of the 1970s, he was known as a structural Marxist influenced by British Marxists associated with the *New Left Review*, especially Althusser and Gramsci. His reputation was secured by the publication of *Political Power and Social Classes* (PPSC), which he wrote in 1968. The book has been translated into English in 1973. But he was first known within the English-speak-

ing left with his review of Miliband's book, *The State in Capitalist Society*. According to Göran Therborn (1987) (as cited by Barrow 2016), Poulantzas was arguably the most influential living political theorist in the mid-1970s. His book, *PPSC* has influenced many left-wing academicians and political activists in Europe, North America, Latin America and beyond. On the other hand, Miliband was an independent socialist intellectual who never joined a political party. He was one of the founding editors of the *New Left Review* and cofounder of the *Socialist Register*. Miliband gained his intellectual reputation with his book, *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969) (Barrow 2002: 6-8).

The Poulantzas-Miliband debate was a debate which was never confined to Poulantzas and Miliband. During the debate, most of the political theorists at that time were divided into two camps: those who defended Miliband's instrumentalist theory and those who defended Poulantzas' structuralist theory of the state. It was not only a methodological debate but also a debate about the conceptual and empirical disagreement about the nature of the capitalist state (Barrow 2002, 4). "Miliband initially criticized Poulantzas' theory of the state for its 'structural super-determinism,' because the latter seemed to claim that state officials and institutions automatically respond to the functional imperatives of the capitalist system to such an extent that there is no place for the role of personal ideological beliefs, party affiliations, or even class struggle in a theoretical analysis of the capitalist state" (Barrow 2006, 3). The structural abstractionism for which Poulantzas was criticized can be described as favoring abstract concepts over the empirical and historical analysis of the state. In spite of this, Poulantzas continued to defend his position, as his intention was to attack the economic and historical determinism of Marxism. Poulantzas criticized Miliband because he believed that "Miliband nowhere deals with the Marxist theory of the State as such, but instead attacks bourgeois conceptions of the state and political power by rigorously deploying empirical data to challenge the assertions of liberal-pluralist democratic

ideology” (Barrow 2006, 13). Accordingly, for Poulantzas it is never sufficient to juxtapose empirical facts against theoretical concepts because “Poulantzas is not content with an empirical analysis that critically demystifies the assumptions of bourgeois social science. He insists that one must reject the very concepts of bourgeois social science and replace them with ‘the scientific concepts of Marxist theory’. This is because empirical facts only become ‘concrete’ by having a new theoretical meaning conferred on them by their place within an alternative theory” (Barrow 2006, 14).

According to Poulantzas, the relation between social classes and state cannot be an inter-personal relationship as Miliband had proposed. He claimed that, “it is visible in the difficulties that Miliband has in comprehending social classes and the State as objective structures, and their relations as an objective system of regular connections, a structure and a system whose agents, ‘men’, are in the words of Marx, ‘bearers’ of it” and he sees the problem of Miliband same with the problem of Weber in seeking the origin of social action in individual (Poulantzas 1969, 70). Similarly Barrow argues that, while explaining state power, Miliband articulated the Weberian methodological assumptions of power structure; that is, that power could be explained through interpersonal relations. And he claimed that the state is still the guardian of economic interests of the dominant class because there is an interpersonal relation between the capitalist class and state elites. Poulantzas, on the other hand, used the Parsonian methodological assumptions of structural functionalism. To him, this cannot be an interpersonal relationship, but rather it follows from the structural logic of the capitalist system (Barrow 2006, 12). In other words, “the relation between the bourgeois class and the state is an objective relation. This means that if the function of the State in a determinate social formation and the interests of the dominant class in this formation coincide, it is by reason of the system itself: the direct participation of members of the ruling class in the State apparatus is not the cause but the effect, and moreover a chance and contin-

gent one, of this objective coincidence (Poulantzas, 1969: 73). Within the context of the debates on the managerial revolution, Poulantzas criticized Miliband by asserting that the determination of the class positions of managers does not hinge upon motivations of their conduct, but rather their relationship to the owners of the means of production. Similarly, analyzing the divergence in state elite and distinguishing state system from state institutions, and political system (which is composed of political parties, mass media and etc.) should not be the matter to Poulantzas; rather fractions in capitalist class should be focused on (Poulantzas 1969, 72). In fact, conceiving of an ideological role of state as outside of the state elite would mean the denial of the repressive and ideological role of the state over the political system. For Poulantzas ideology can be embodied in institutions; besides the repressive apparatus, there are also the ideological apparatuses such as the Church, political parties, unions, schools, mass media and family in a sense and these are all composing part of the State (Poulantzas 1969, 77).

At the end of the debate, there were two camps: the instrumentalists and the structuralists, especially in academic circles of the United States and England. Yet, not only Poulantzas but also Miliband rejected the labels attached to their views. The Poulantzas-Miliband debate is historically an important debate in terms of the conceptualization of the state during the transition to the post-Fordist era. After the debate, Poulantzas mainly gave up Althusserian epistemological and theoretical position to embark on a theory based on a peculiar structuralism that he mostly dealt with in *State, Power, Socialism* (1978).

The Class-State Relation

In *State, Power, Socialism*, Poulantzas rejects the instrumentalist conception of state power and historical and/or economical determination in the articulation of state with economy. He faults the view that, “the State is constituted by an original, impenetrable kernel and by ‘the rest’, which the ruling classes, coming on to the scene as if by chance are able to affect and penetrate” furthermore, he is also

critical about the view that “the state is equivalent to political domination and each dominant class constructs a state according to its requirements, bending it at will to suit its own interests. In that sense, “every state is merely a class dictatorship” (Poulantzas 1978, 12). That would mean, for Poulantzas, reducing the state apparatus to state power. He thinks that it is not the case that the state has no class nature, but the point is that state should be conceived of as related to the given relations of production. It should be realized that the bourgeoisie always seeks to maintain its domination through recursing to the national popular state. Put in other words, the bourgeoisie is not always content with the state and tries to adopt the state according to its requirements. So, there is no evidence that state is merely the state of bourgeoisie (Poulantzas 1978, 12). To put it differently, “the state is a mere appendage which reinforces a pre-political domination” (Jessop 2007, 118). Another criticism on the part of Poulantzas is about the discrepancy between material framework of the state and its capacity of political domination. In contrast to classical Marxist thought, for Poulantzas, the state cannot be reduced to mere political domination. The state apparatus is not exhausted in state power. Because, “political domination is itself inscribed in the institutional materiality of the State” and “the basis of the material framework of power and the State has to be sought in the relations of production and social division of labor” (Poulantzas 1978, 14).

To continue with the relationship between state and economic base, we see that Poulantzas distances himself from other structuralists and their formalist-economist position towards a different kind of structuralism. Firstly, not surprisingly, Poulantzas rejects the economical determinism of traditional Marxism in the sense that the economy has unchanged -essential- elements throughout various modes of production and those elements could reproduce and regulate themselves. “It views the economic instance, as well as the state-political instance, as a fixed set of structural relations between essentially immutable forms” (Barrow 2006, 25). It also conceptualizes the state as a mere reflection of the economic sphere. Yet,

for him, social totality or articulation of social reality cannot be explained with fixed levels, instances or forms which are autonomous from each other. For him, this would be an extended analogy of unchanged elements of economy at the level of superstructure for example, unchanged elements of state or ideology. On the other hand, state and economy cannot be external to each other and their internal functioning and problems or their transformation cannot be explained through a “general theory of economy” or a “general theory of superstructural level”. If one accepts such a general theory of state for instance, one must also accept that state has some immutable (fixed or stable) boundaries (Poulantzas 1978, 16). In Barrow’s view, what most disturbs Poulantzas in this sense is that “the essential autonomy of the superstructural instances (the State, ideology) would then serve to legitimize the autonomy, self-sufficiency and self-reproduction of the economy” (Barrow 2006, 26). Allowing the determining role of economic sphere over political sphere, or vice versa, it is same with accepting their exteriority. Poulantzas also asserts that “structuralist references to the State’s intervention in the economy are theoretically incorrect because they suggest that the State is something external to the economic that only periodically intrudes into its otherwise autonomous functioning and development” (Barrow 2006, 27). On the other hand, for him, a general theory of economy could only provide several keys in explaining the superstructure.

These objections to the classical Marxism and formalist-economist conceptualizations of the state and its relationship with the economic sphere, in fact, hinges upon his envisagement of state as a relation. According to him, the state and economy are “from the very beginning constituted by their mutual relation and articulation” (Poulantzas 1978, 17). Barrow also underlines Poulantzas’ historical structuralist epistemology as being opposed to formalists, because Poulantzas conceptualizes the history as a totality of instances or levels which gave the shapes of modes of production according to relationships between those levels produc-

ing different combinations (Barrow 2006, 27). At this level, one can realize that German Marxist state deviationists are opposed to the functionalist conception of the state in a parallel manner with Poulantzas. They argue that economic, political and social spheres are not fetishized forms of appearances; rather, there is a unity in separation of these different forms and they should be analyzed as being relational (Holloway and Piccioto 1978). Along with this, the conception of the state cannot be fully grasped without considering its relation to social classes and class struggles. According to Jessop, Poulantzas makes an analogy with Marx's analysis of capital as a social class that is reformulated as such: "the state is not a thing but a social relation between people mediated through their relation to state capacities or again the state is not a subject but a social relations between subjects mediated through their relation to state capacities" (Jessop 2006, 4). This indicates its conjunctural character and also its power as a "condensation of a changing balance of forces" in a relevant struggle. While rejecting a general theory of the state according to Jessop, he also "recognized that state's historical and formal constitution is not pre-given but results from past struggles and is also reproduced (or transformed) in and through struggle. He also refused to treat the balance of forces as fixed" (Jessop 2006, 5). Similarly, as Thomas underlines, "state power is to be understood rather as the condensation of, or form taken by, class struggles, which are going to vary from time to time and from place to place" (Thomas 2002, 78).

Poulantzas' conceptualization of modes of production and social formations also help us in understanding the relationship between class-state relations and facilitates the transition into his theory of the capitalist state as a particular theory -considering the impossibility of a general theory. For him, mode of production is "an abstract-abstract formal object in its economic, ideological and political determinations" while "social formations are the actual sites of the existence and reproduction of modes of production"; they are the sites of various forms of the

state and sites of class struggle (Poulantzas 1978, 25). Accordingly, the realization of the state of the capitalist mode of production cannot be considered as a direct outcome of the abstractly reproduced capitalist mode of production (Barrow 2006, 29). This realization can only be conceived through class struggles. For this reason the state comes first in the constitution and reproduction of social classes. Also there is not an economic structure outside of or before social classes. Social classes cannot belong to a field external to power and class struggles. The condition of the emergence of social classes is their oppositions in struggle. Furthermore the presence of political and ideological relations “finds expression in class powers that are organically articulated to political and ideological relations which concretize and legitimize them” (Poulantzas 1978, 26).

One can realize that particularly in his more recent works, he begins to describe the state’s relationality as a relation with the dominant class. And he will define state power according to class power of the dominant class gained through a result of struggles. We will see it in the institutional materiality of the capitalist state. For him, state power has no locality. On the other hand, state apparatuses materialize and concentrate the power. State apparatuses also condense the global relation of domination of the classes in an institutional form (Hirst 1997, 151). He describes state power in *Political Power and Social Classes* (1973) as the capacity of a social class to realize its objective interests through state apparatus. State power is capitalist to the extent that it creates conditions required for capital accumulation (Barrow 2002, 28). Before turning into the institutional materiality of the capitalist state and its features which represent the power of it, it would be better to focus on the relative autonomy of the state. “Poulantzas first introduced the idea of the relative autonomy to perform a precise function in his regional theory of the capitalist state. It referred to that form and degree of institutional autonomy relative to the dominant classes and fractions which was necessary to organize their unity as a power bloc and to secure their hegemony over the people-nation” (Jessop 2007,

132). “In capitalism the direct producers are entirely dispossessed of the object and means of their labour”. We witnessed the emergence of free laborers. Labor power became a commodity and its surplus converted into surplus value.

As regards the relationship between the State and economy, this structure further generates the relative separation of the State and the economic sphere (accumulation of capital and production of surplus value), a separation that underlines the characteristic institutional framework of the capitalist State since it maps out new spaces for the state and the economy by transforming their very elements. This separation of the State and the space of the reproduction of the capital is therefore specific to capitalism (Poulantzas 1978, 18). Likewise, he denoted that this separation between state and economy is no other than “the capitalist form of the presence of the political in the constitution and reproduction of relations of production” (Poulantzas 1978, 19).

Poulantzas needs such a conception of relative autonomy in order to truly develop a theory of the capitalist state. Considering its specificity and particularity, for him that is the only legitimate way of building such a theory. Relative autonomy of political space under capitalism is a specific circumstance that legitimizes the theorization. As I have mentioned before, it is not possible to develop a general theory of an economy as well as the state since each are historically interrelated spheres that both constitute and reproduce each other. In fact, the theory of relative autonomy directly refers to or makes possible the theory of the capitalist state. Poulantzas not only criticized the general theory of the state or economy, but also seriously questioned the general transition theory from one state to another. Actually, this was the mistake of Marxist theory and other political theories that they have never filled the gap between theory and practice due to general abstractions, general laws of transitions etc. Because of this, they could not truly analyze the regimes in the countries of the East. The theory of the capitalist state,

for this reason cannot be isolated from the history of its constitution and reproduction which includes class struggles and the relations of production and social division of labor. We should conceive these totalitarian regimes as exceptional forms of the capitalist state indicating crises in it and we should understand the conditions within which elements of the crises are reproduced within the capitalist state (Poulantzas 1978, 21-25).

According to Jessop (2006), in *State, Power, Socialism*, Poulantzas “moves step-wise from general propositions about the state through a theory of the capitalist type of state to a more concrete-complex theory of this type of state in the current phase of capitalism” (Jessop 2006, 2). Likewise, he,

(...) not only regards the state as an integral element in political class domination but also insists on its crucial role in securing important economic and extra-economic conditions for accumulation. At each step in his argument, he also stressed the centrality of class powers and struggles to the nature and development of the labor process, social relations of production, and the state (Jessop 2006, 2).

As regards exceptional regimes, Poulantzas has certain important arguments to understand the reasons behind crises in capitalist states in the 1970s. True enough, the problems that Poulantzas underlines in terms of the totalitarian regimes of that period are still current and on the agenda in relation to debates on globalization and the reemphasis on the role of nation-states. Jessop identifies the newly emerging state form as an authoritarian state, the role of which is more and more attached with its security function. Jessop (2006) suggests that in *State, Power, Socialism*, Poulantzas combined the state in its generic normal form (liberal, bourgeois, democracy) and exceptional form (Bonapartism, fascism, totalitarianism) together and concluded that the “capitalist type of state is now ‘permanently

and structurally characterized by a peculiar sharpening of the generic elements of political crisis and state crisis' rather than showing intermittent signs of short-term, conjunctural crisis" (Jessop 2006, 8). To Poulantzas (1978), these permanent crises could be seen as "the erosion of democratic sentiment and spirit within the emergent 'authoritarian statist' system of bourgeois political domination" (Thomas 2002, 77). In *Fascism and Dictatorship* (1973) Poulantzas underscores that political crises occur when there is a crisis of hegemony within the power bloc: "This occurs when no class or fraction can impose its 'leadership' on other members of the power bloc, whether by its own political organizations or through the 'parliamentary democratic' state. This is typically related to a general crisis of hegemony over the whole society" (Jessop 2006, 8). Accordingly, while "normal states correspond to conjunctures in which bourgeois hegemony is stable and secure exceptional states are responses to a crisis of hegemony" (Jessop 2006, 9). In exceptional states, democratic institutions of the representation and legal rules are suspended and ideological state apparatuses lose their autonomy and leave their place mainly to a repressive state apparatus under the name of solving the crises, yet resulting in the legitimization of the coercion. This produces greater centralization of political control in order to reorganize hegemony, to overcome internal divisions and short-circuit internal resistances.

"Poulantzas argued that representative democratic institutions facilitate the organic circulation and reorganization of hegemony because they offer a space for open class and fractional conflicts. Democratic institutions thereby inhibit major ruptures or breaks in social cohesion"; this is quite the contrary in exceptional regimes and makes them vulnerable in the face of ruptures, contradictions and collapse (Jessop 2006, 10). So, behind their strong appearance there is this fragility, since neither of the exceptional states is able to secure an organic regulation of social forces. Instead they always experience lack of legitimacy at the level of the popular nation. One of the most important features of today's authoritarian states

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is that they concentrate their powers on the executive rather than the legislature. The result of that is a fusion between them and this makes the representative bodies dysfunctional and contributes to the growing of parallel informal power networks. These indicate the rise of the state's centralism on the basis of its growing economic role. "This change is the product of the permanent instability of monopoly hegemony within the power bloc and over the people as well as of changing economic imperatives" (Jessop 2006, 14). Increasing contradictions and permanent crises--tendencies of contemporary capitalism—actually signifies the relative weakness of the authoritarian state to Poulantzas. Ultimately in *State, Power and Socialism* Poulantzas concluded that "the rise of 'authoritarian statism' involves a paradox. While it clearly strengthens state power at the expense of liberal representative democracy, it also weakens its capacities to secure bourgeois hegemony" (Jessop 2006, 16).

The questions of how the capitalist state makes use of its power and how it manages the material bases of consent as well as secure the bourgeois political domination, especially during the process of internationalization are important ones, the answers of which could be analyzed by the help of the institutional materiality of the capitalist states denoting the role of state and class. According to Poulantzas, the most important feature of the institutional materiality of the capitalist state is the new form of division of labor between mental and manual labor. That means "total dispossession of the direct producers from the means of production" and separation of intellectual elements from direct labor. The growing importance of scientific technocratism and the emerging "specialized intellectual labor" help to legitimize the exercise of power because this distinctive intellectual labor is closer to political class domination. "Indeed he claimed that the state itself is the distinctive material embodiment of intellectual labor in its separation from manual labor". In a capitalist state we see organic relations between knowledge and power. Establishing a distinctive national language, the state, according to

Poulantzas, is involved in reproducing the mental-manual division via such institutions as education. These institutions serve to exclude ‘popular masses’ from effective participation in political power. This official discourse of the state obscures the realities of political power (Jessop 2007, 119-120).

Institutional materiality of the capitalist state has three other features. First one is its isolation effect or individualization of the body-politic. To Poulantzas, totalitarianism is grounded in the basic individualization of capitalist societies. Second is the role of law as a code of organized public violence. It helps to organize consent and legitimizes economic and political domination. The last but not least feature is nationhood and the nation state. For Poulantzas, modern states are the nodal points of transnationalization of production insofar as internal markets are constituted. States also try to master different territories, repress their traditions, adapt different models of development and even chart the futures of the other nations. It is this nation state that also organizes the bourgeoisie as the dominant class (Jessop 2007, 124).

The capitalist state, through constituting a favorable terrain for political maneuver of hegemonic fraction, organizes the power block and disorganizes the popular masses through the mobilization of the petty bourgeoisie and rural classes and by rendering them unavailable for alliances with the proletariat. However, this does not mean that popular masses have no political implications. He gives the example of the collapse of the military dictatorships in Greece, Spain and Portugal. So that popular struggles go through the state system from top to bottom. At this level, one can realize the dual power within the capitalist state; that it represents the political class power of labor as well as capital. Popular masses can pressure the state by establishing self-management networks or movements for rank-and-file democracy. One can argue that this dual power of the capitalist state secured and reproduced its legitimacy in the minds of popular masses by a Gramscian

manner. Poulantzas also underlines the critical place of state personnel that organize the structure of the state system. In spite of internal conflicts rising from different class affiliations, state personnel seek to maintain the continuity of the state apparatus during transition periods. So, the socialist movement must gently deal with the state personnel during the transition period to democratic socialism (Jessop 2007, 125-126).

Poulantzas, especially in his later works, conceives that the state “as strategic terrain ensures that a general line imposed on the diversified micro-policies of the state” (Jessop, 2007: 127). To bring an explanation to extreme incoherence and the chaotic character of state policies, Poulantzas uses the concepts of ‘structural selectivity’ which he derived from Althusser’s ‘structural causality’. “Structural selectivity of the state consists in a complex set of institutional mechanisms and political practices which serve to advance (or obstruct) particular fractional or class interests” (Jessop, 2007:127). In spite of the decentralized, complex, chaotic character of the state, there is the class unity of the state power that represents the local and global interests of hegemonic fraction of the capitalist class. Interestingly, this political domination is not a rational project; rather, it is a process of strategic calculation without a calculating subject. In line with this vision, one realizes that in the course of time he turns to a strategic relational theory referring to class struggle within each social formation which corresponds to state’s distinctive role performing through its institutions.

However, this does not mean that the two approaches are indifferent to each other. On the contrary, they are still important and relevant for the state theory of Poulantzas. Because actually presenting such a questionable and twofold situation he enables us to ask central questions about the functioning of modern states. Indeed, “he sought to explain why national-popular, representative, democratic government is the normal form of political domination in capitalist societies. In

particular, he sought to explain how the state functions as a means of political class domination even though class as such is specifically absent from its institutional and ideological organization” (Thomas 2002, 79). As a contribution to this problematic, Hirsch (1978) who focused on the nature of the capitalist relation, the relation of exploitation of labor by capital, argued that “the state once established as an autonomous body because of the need to separate the exercise of force from the relations of capitalist exploitation and it can only perform certain functions within the limits of its form” (Hirsch 1978, 57). Overall, one can argue that, Poulantzas’ examination of institutional materiality of the state, a materiality, in which political class domination is embedded, is very relevant to contemporary debates regarding globalization.

As Thomas (2002) stated, Poulantzas was able to speak the language of globalization within which being autonomous is getting harder for nation states in the face of the internationalization of capital, since their accumulative autonomy becomes more and more limited within national boundaries. On the other hand, the other side of the coin is, as Poulantzas insisted in 1975, that “every process of internationalization is affected under the dominance of the capital of a definite country”. So as Jessop points out, the insistence of Poulantzas on that “the process of globalization will not, in the end, diminish so much as reconfigure the role of the capitalist state”. Accordingly, politics should be placed into a global relation of social classes as the power of a nation-state is more dependent on its capacity to regulate international ‘deregulation’ and to control over the accumulation of international capital as well as tackling with the contradictions among fractions of capital within national boundaries and sustaining the unity and cohesion of the power bloc represented by the state (Thomas 2002, 82-4).

Tsoukalas (2002) identifies four trends of today that justify the predictions of Poulantzas as well as Miliband about the new phase of capitalism. The first is the

impossibility of a national bourgeoisie capable of retaining a relative autonomous basis of capital accumulation; the second is the growing fragmentation of the laboring population into mobile, differentiated and largely antagonistic fractions. The third is the emerging authoritarian as well as deregulation functions of the capitalist state and lastly the articulation between ideological state apparatuses and professional political personnel. With respect to the first one Tsoukalas maintains that since “the contradictions and antagonisms of international capital are now directly present within national socioeconomic formations”, “there could no longer be a dominant fraction of the domestic ruling classes that might continue the accumulation process within the narrow horizon of the domestic market” as Poulantzas has already stated in his time (Tsoukalas 2002, 225-6). By now, on the one hand, international capital accumulation needs delocalized strategies, and yet on the other, in order to secure its reproduction and legitimization, it still needs organized national territories. The second trend of the current capitalism again verifies Poulantzas’ interpretations about the emerging conditions of authoritarian states. As such, flexible labor form and growing number of the unemployed trigger further a socially and politically fragmented society. This social and political marginalization, in fact, sharpens the growingly systematized authoritarian control. Parallel to this, in the third trend, another reason for the emerging tendency for authoritarianism is the creation of contradictions within national states by international capital due to the imposed deregulation of economic and labor relations. Again, similar to what Poulantzas predicted as a result of the internationalization of capital, today “nation states provide the necessary mechanisms and ‘take charge of the interest of dominant imperialist capital in its development within the national social formation’. Indeed on the material level, deregulation, labor fragmentation, productivity, and profit maximization can only be ensured within a juridically given territorial context”. In a parallel respect, states still materialize the cohesion of social formations through “reproducing coherent socioeconomic



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and legal environments necessary for any productive organization. The jurisdictional fragmentation of sovereign political formations can consequently be seen to correspond ideally to the interests of delocalized capital”. According to this, state power could be conceptualized no other than what Poulantzas was saying that: “Post-Fordist national state system provides a perfectly suitable ideological setting for ensuring the reproduction of transterritorial forms of accumulation” (Tsoukalas 2002, 233-6).

Following the theoretical considerations of Poulantzas, Jessop (2002) underlines certain points about the contradictions raised from the current role and functions of nation states. To Jessop, it is important that Poulantzas insisted on the posing of the question of internationalization in terms of imperialism. Furthermore, he examined changes in the international division of labor, looked into uneven development and explored how these changes related to the extended reproduction of capital on the international level “are reflected in the reorganization of the institutional materiality of the national state” (Jessop 2002, 187). According to Poulantzas, there are three stages of capitalist development: Transnational phase, competitive capitalism and monopoly capitalism (or imperialism). Moreover, monopoly capitalism is marked by (1) legal ownership rather than economic ownership; (2) the export of capital rather than of commodities (circulation of finance capital); (3) the displacement of dominance from the economic (market) to the political (state); and (4) a focus on the economic functions of state (Jessop 2002, 188). Power blocs are now located at the international level and are connected heavily with the American imperialist capital. National bourgeoisies experience internal contradictions on the structural and conjunctural relations with the American imperialist capital. Moreover, imperialist foreign capital is represented by certain fractions of internal bourgeoisie within the national state apparatus. In this respect, Poulantzas already stated that as every process of internationalization is affected under the dominance of the capital of a definite country, nation states

remain central to the extended reproduction of their bourgeoisies. Therefore, “the nation state will neither wither away in favor of some ‘superstate’ standing over and above national states, nor in favor of a borderless and stateless world organized by multinational firms” (Jessop, 2002: 191-2). It does not mean that, as Poulantzas underlined in 1975, the process of internationalization has no effect on the nation states. In contrast, there are many modifications in the forms and functions of national-states. For example, the legal concept of national sovereignty is in question. Yet, the point is that the process of internationalization cannot be grasped as a peaceful integration of capitals over the state level because we cannot construe the process as a play between juxtaposed states and capitals” (Jessop 2002, 191-2).

Poulantzas rejects the discourse of the supranational state on several grounds. Firstly, he objects to the idea that economic function of the state is disassociated from its political and social functions. According to Poulantzas, this is not possible since he stresses the ‘extended reproduction’ of the state including economic, political and social functions. Secondly, the role of nation states in international competitiveness cannot be transferred to the supranational state. Third, nation states are focal points for the reproduction of the bourgeoisie. So that national interests cannot be discarded. Fourth, nation states are still responsible for maintaining social cohesion in a class divided by national formation. Fifth, supranational politics should reflect the national specificities, national forms of class struggles, and the path dependent balance of class forces. Lastly, there is a risk that social categories employed in the state apparatus (i.e., military personnel, police, civil servants, professionals) can resist the loss of various capacities and powers which they live by (Jessop 2002, 193-4).

On the other side, nation-states experience some contradictions in the face of globalization. First, they have to reconcile the responses of economic impera-

tives with the general demands of securing political class domination and social cohesion. Next, nation-states have to combine the national bourgeoisie under the national base while at the same time they have to facilitate their relations with international capital. Last, nation states faced with crises of hegemony as far as their political, economic and social functions are left to supranational bodies. They have difficulties in providing social cohesion and in becoming a natural arbiter, the result of which is political instability and declining legitimacy (Jessop 2002, 195).

According to Jessop, there can be several objections to the myths of globalization from a Poulantzas perspective. Particularly, the ungovernable and autonomous character of global capital should be seriously questioned because the ungovernability of global capital does not grow out of its nature, but rather out of the contradictions that are permanently reproduced in national power-blocs of nation states. Other than this, the assumption of ‘the relative autonomy of the nation’ should be questioned because the relation between states and nations cannot be explained with simple economic ties. National forms of class struggles should be taken into consideration because tradition of each specific nation state might influence economic, political and ideological struggles in global sense. As far as they are conceived as separate and unrelated, and as far as the rising neo-ethnic nationalism wave is not taken into consideration there is always a risk of turning into authoritarian statism. Related to this, it should be kept in mind that economic integration does not bring about the cultural and political integration of different nations. The third argument is about the analysis of weak and strong states. According to Jessop, rather than the competition between different nation states, the core matter is the contradictions among domestic bourgeoisie within nation states.

Eventually, one can argue that, through the impact of changing economic imperatives as in the 1970s, in the new millennium nation-states face the permanent

Conclusion

crises-tendencies not only related with their efforts upon the maintenance of the hegemonic power bloc within their territories but also partaking in global capital accumulation across the national boundaries.

As a conclusion, in this study I have reviewed the major theoretical elements of Nicos Poulantzas' theory of the capitalist state and tried to reconcile it with the discussions around the process of globalization or the internationalization of capital. Overall, Poulantzas gave us an opportunity to approach globalization from an alternative perspective different from today's mainstream globalization literature. Indeed, what made this opportunity possible is his conceptual framework of the theory of the capitalist state, particularly key theoretical considerations such as relative autonomy. He also presented us epistemological foundations in analyzing reasons behind the emerging authoritarian statism as an exceptional regime of the capitalist state. In my view, one of the most important contributions of Poulantzas to the globalization literature is his identification of globalization as a new phase of imperialism, mainly American imperialism. In particular, in the post September 11 attack era, analysis of Poulantzas seems to be more adequate considering today's authoritarian and security privileged tendencies of the nation states. According to this, we would reach the conclusion that, more and more centralized and nationalized socio-political structures of nation states reflect probably an effort of abstention from the authoritarian panorama of the 1970s; and the strategic maneuver towards the understanding of 'personal is political' or/and that of the glory of the civil society associated with non-governmental organizations seems on the wane. Rather, unpredictable and concurrent social uprisings depending on the severe political economic or social measure of the nation states will have been on sight during near future.

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Küreselleşme ve Ulus Devlet: Poulantzasçı Bir Yaklaşım

Öz

Öncelikli olarak Nicos Poulantzas'ın temel teorik öğelerine değinen bu makale, ulus-devletin çözümlenme iddiasını bu teorik öğelerden yola çıkarak Poulantzas'a referansla sorgulama hedefini taşımaktadır. Poulantzas modern devletin işleyişini kapitalist devletin kurumsal maddilik kavramı ile açıklar. Buna göre devlet gücü herhangi bir yerelliğe sahip olmamakla birlikte devlet aygıtları gücü görünür kılar ve yoğun hale getirir. Dahası devletler küresel baskı ilişkilerinin ana öznelidir çünkü esasen uluslararası sermaye birikimleri hala organize ulusal alanlara ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Bu sebeple küreselleşme olgusu kapitalist devletlerin sonunu getirmek yerine onları yeniden şekillendirecektir. Esnek emek formları ve bu anlamda uluslararası sermayenin empoze ettiği artan düzensizleşme baskısı ulus devlet içerisinde devletin otoriter ve kontrolcü yüzünü ortaya çıkaracaktır. Sonuç olarak Poulantzas küreselleşmeyi emperyalizmin—özellikle de Amerikan emperyalizminin— yeni bir dönemi olarak tanımlarken, küreselleşme kavramına benzersiz bir katkı sağlamış olmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler

Poulantzas, küreselleşme, kapitalist devlet, kurumsal maddilik, otoriterizm