

Autonomy of the state and development in the democratic capitalism

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The paper argues that if the state, as an expression and part of a pact of domination, operates as a corporate actor with relative autonomy, vision and capacity to promote the development, it is a key institution to the economic transformation. Supported in the neo-Marxism, exposes the limits of institutionalist approach of autonomy of the state to explain its origin, but does not rule out this approach. Maintains that the class-balance theory of the state may explain its relative autonomy and at the same time aid in understanding the historical experiences of social-developmental state action, particularly in the social democratic regimes and in the current Latin America.

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If the state, as an expression and part of a pact of domination, operates as a corporate actor with relative autonomy, vision and ability to promote development, it is a key institution for economic transformation. Several authors elucidated the importance of the state in the industrialization, either in the 19th century European countries that were late, as Germany, Austria and Russia (Gerschenkron, 1962), or in the 20th century, from East Asia, such as Japan (Johnson, 1982), to geopolitically distinct countries, such as South Korea, India and Brazil (Evans, 1995).

In recent decades, the subject of state autonomy has excelled in the state-development relations debate, especially when it is seen in a state-owned pro-activism perspective. The article states that the autonomy of the state (AOTS), especially one of its settings, is a key force for development.

There are two major theoretical approaches to the AOTS, the society-centered,

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this mainly in the (neo)Marxism, and the state-centered, sheltered, especially in the historical institutionalism. The analysis considers that these two approaches of the AOTS, although they have different theoretical-methodological sources they do not need to be exclusive, on the contrary, they can be complementary to the understanding of developmentalist experiences. It is discussed that AOTS settings resulting from the combination of class balance between capital and labor, coalition with socio-developmental orientation, in which elites of the public bureaucracy actively participate, and state capacities (productive and redistributive), in the democratic capitalism, are strong AOTS, with content both society-centered as state-centered.

This strong AOTS, with sociopolitical and institutional bases built in democratic regimes, was present in important development experiences that occurred in the 20th century, especially in European countries with institutions generated in social democratic government contexts. Lately, some Latin America countries — such as Brazil — which take up the growth after the crisis of the neoliberal paradigm pursue, in democratic context and rearrangement of class coalitions, a path that has allowed them generate, in some measure, the AOTS specified above. The wider explanation of this autonomy is, on the one hand, in the Marxist-based class-balance theory of the state, and on the other, in the analytical hints that historical institutionalism has about AOTS.

Here are three sections. The first and second are theoretical. They respectively approach the AOTS in the neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian perspectives. The third rescues certain characteristics of state-society relations in European social democratic experiments in the 20th century, discusses transformations of the state in Latin America today, emphasizing Brazil, and concludes.

AUTONOMY OF THE STATE IN NEO-MARXISM

The state immersed and emerged in academic debate. In the North American political science following the World War II, the state was replaced by the political system. That change impacted the world out and lasted until the early 1980. At this inset, in the late 1960, some Marxist intellectuals in Europe, but also in the United States, restored the theoretical debate of the state. They were induced by converging circumstances, as the crisis of Stalinism in the USSR and its impact on the European left, the permanence of the state in the socialist countries and, especially, economic and political changes experienced by capitalism in the Second Postwar, which brought new questions about the relations between state, economy, and interests (Carnoy, 1984; Jessop, 1990; Przeworsky, 1990). Economic growth in Europe then resulted in the formulation of concepts such as neo-capitalism or late capitalism to grasp the transformations. In this environment, Marxist intellectuals, deviating from the economism, study the political role of the state and the ideology. Furthermore, those Marxists considered necessary to complete the job of building a Marxist political theory of the state that would not have been made by Marx

and Engels with the accuracy dedicated to *The Capital*.¹ Neo-Marxism was built in that context, with the works of Poulantzas, Miliband, Block and Offe, among others, that impacted the social sciences in the 1970's.

A concept or, more than that, a theme emerges in neo-Marxist literature about the state: the autonomy of the state. As the Marxist theory links structure and superstructure, the neo-Marxist approach to the AOTS is society-centered. Several neo-Marxists think in the AOTS, as Poulantzas, O'Connor, Offe, Holloway, Hirsch, Jessop and Miliband. Poulantzas will serve here as a point of departure of this debate, because he is the most important Marxist political theorist of the Second Postwar.

Poulantzas (1968) introduces the theoretical reflection on the AOTS. He defines the state for its cohesion function, order and organization principle of the various levels of a social formation. The state cohesions the set of levels of a complex social unit and also regulates the overall balance of the system.² On social formation dominated by the capitalist mode of production, there is a specific autonomy of various instances (economic, political, ideological etc.).³ It is the responsibility of the state, as the main structure of the political instance, through its specific autonomy, to be the cohesion factor, which condenses the various contradictions between the instances. Although the state structures are not autonomous regarding to the relations of production, the state has relative autonomy *vis-à-vis* the classes or fractions.⁴ It is then a relative autonomy of the state (RAOTS). Such autonomy does not imply that the power of the capitalist state is not a political unit of the dominant classes.

While in the classics of Marxism (Marx, Engels and Gramsci) the thinking about the RAOTS always binds to class balance situations, in Poulantzas it is conceived as specific of the capitalist state and inseparable from it. The RAOTS in capitalism is a structural feature, and not conjunctural.⁵ There is class balance or not and be this balance of general type or catastrophic, the capitalist state is a political structure that carries out functions which require the RAOTS.

The state has the repressive function and other three, isolation, unity and organization of a class or fraction hegemony in the power block. As, in the relations of production, the reality of class structure is not immediately evident, providing an appearance of fragmentation, it is responsibility of the legal-political and ideological structures of the state, with their featured autonomy, meet the isolation and unit functions. The state consolidates, for bourgeois and workers, the isolation of

¹ See Poulantzas (1968b, p. 92) and Jessop (1990, p. 25).

² Poulantzas (1971, vol. 1, p. 42).

³ Idem, pp. 8-12.

⁴ Poulantzas (1971, vol. 2, p. 90).

⁵ Poulantzas (1971b, pp. 90-97). For him, Gramsci inserts the AOTS in the analysis of the caesarism. The Gramscian Bonapartism is a kind of caesarism, that occurs in situations of catastrophic equilibrium, when there is a great chance of violent conflict between forces in political dispute.

relationships that, in the essence of the social structure, are fused in class and, at the same time, blocks the emergence, in the consciences, of the unified reality of classes, replacing it by the imaginary ideological unit of the nation people. State institutions and the practices that they promote, particularly in democracies, conceal the class domination, representing, embodying and producing notions as people, nation, general interest, individual, citizen, freedom and equality. The capitalist state operates as a society cohesion factor, isolating the individual from the class and uniting it to the nation. So, it is a popular-national-state-of-class, of a single class, bourgeois, to which all supposedly belong to.⁶

The third political function of the autonomous state is to organize the hegemony inside the power block. Given the structural complexity of capitalist societies that overlap multiple modes of production, although with the capitalist mode predominance, which also has its own socio-economic and socio-political diversity, several classes and fractions coexist and integrate the class struggles. On addressing this complexity, Poulantzas formulates the concept of power block, which, in Marx, is not explicit. The state institutions are impacted by the reality of the struggles of classes and fractions. One of these impacts is the universal suffrage. The impacts configure the power block.

The fractionated constitution of the bourgeoisie is a political problem for it. Its heterogeneous interests defy it to organize itself internally to exert political domination: “the bourgeois class [...] it seems, save in exceptional cases, being unable to erect itself, through their own political parties, to the hegemonic level of organization”.⁷ This difficulty will be increased as the dominated are on the rise. But the capitalist state decisive aid, thanks to its autonomy *vis-à-vis* the dominant classes, solves the organizational challenge, providing to the bourgeoisie the seam of the indoor unit so difficult to be reached. Through the bureaucracy, the autonomous state unifies, on the political level, its common interests while ruling class.⁸ But it is not a symmetric unification. The state ensures that, in the power block, which gathers dominant classes and fractions, there is a hegemonic fraction, which interests represent the general and common interest of the others. General interest content is the economic exploitation and political domination. The power block is then a hierarchized unit, with contradictions. If not always, the general rule is that the hegemonic class or fraction holds, ultimately, the state power on its unit. Contexts in which there is some kind of class balance can be an exception to that rule.⁹

Thus Poulantzian RAOTS is not explained by the arbitration model. It stems from three political functions of the capitalist state: organize the ruling classes; disrupt the working class; and represent classes of the modes of production that

⁶ Poulantzas (op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 112 and 141-145).

⁷ Idem, vol. 2, pp. 122-123.

⁸ Idem, vol. 2, p. 124.

⁹ Idem, vol. 2. pp. 138 and 141-147.

are not dominant in the capitalist social formation, often associated to small property. In relation to the political organization of the ruling classes, the capitalist AOTS can operate in three different ways, depending on the specific roles that it is performing in relation to such classes and of the class relations configuration: it can act as factor of political organization of dominant classes and fractions through the relationship between the state and the parties of these classes and fractions; it can propitiate that the state replaces such parties, continuing to function as hegemonic organization factor of these classes and fractions; and, in certain cases, such as in Bonapartism, the state can “*take full responsibility for the political interest of these classes. [...] In the latter case, the relative autonomy of the state is such that the classes or dominant fractions will appear to renounce to their political power*”.¹⁰

These variations in the operation modes of the RAOTS are distinct of the cases in which the AOTS is due to the class balance. The RAOTS deriving from the balance of classes is a special case, that Poulantzas differentiates of what he considers to be the constitutive autonomy of the capitalist type of state. The AOTS due to the balance of classes, whether it is general or catastrophic, can be accompanied by two situations. At first, occurs the conjugate coexistence between the typical autonomy and the autonomy linked to balance of classes, without there is a crisis of state. At second, the prevalence of autonomy founded on the balance of classes occurs, but in a context of arbitration and distribution of power, which puts at risk the capitalist state typical autonomy and is followed by crisis of hegemony.¹¹ In addition to these two special situations of the AOTS, there is the regular situation, characterized by the exclusive presence of the capitalist state typical AOTS, in varying degrees, close or distanced of the instrumentalization. The hypothesis considered here is that the temporary stabilization, not necessarily its origin and future developments, of the social democrats experiences and of some current trends in Latin America are inserted in the first mentioned situation, the one characterized by the coexistence of the typical capitalist state autonomy and the autonomy linked to class balance (capital and labor), without hegemony crisis.

The explanation of the fulfillment of the three no repressive functions performed by the AOTS requires clarifying the role of public bureaucracy. Poulantzas conceives it as a specific category. Category is a social set “which distinctive feature lies in its *specific and overdetermining relationship with others structures apart from the economical*”.¹² The public bureaucracy results from the specific effect of the state over the agents which act on it. The public bureaucracy is also bureaucratism or bureaucratization, “a specific system of organization and internal functioning of the state apparatus”.¹³ As a social category or bureaucratism, the bureau-

¹⁰ Idem, vol. 2, pp. 126-128. The quote is in p. 126 (italics in the original).

¹¹ Idem, vol. 2, p. 130 (footnote 22), vol. 2, p. 97 and vol. 2, p. 128.

¹² Idem, vol. 1, p. 89 (italics in the original).

¹³ Idem, vol. 2, p. 130.

cracy is related to the state apparatus, and not to the state power. Not being a class or fraction, the bureaucracy does not have an own power. Neither the state has an own power, being its institutions, although autonomous, a center of political power of class, even though the class power is not immediately reducible. The social origin and class belonging of the bureaucracy members do not matter. Even if the bureaucracy can consist of several layers in terms of class belonging, it has an own political unity while category, which is defined by the social role of the state and its relations with the classes and fractions. If there is an AOTS, there is a relative autonomy of bureaucracy in relation to classes and fractions, even those in the power block, including the hegemonic fraction. But, in some specific junctures, Poulantzas admits that the bureaucracy can be a social force, and then assume a proper role in political action, but, even so, without having an own power.¹⁴

Poulantzas (1968; 1976) sometimes exaggerates the theorization. Says, appropriately, that the state is a social relation, a relation of forces or the condensation of relations of forces between classes and fractions, but he denies the state — even if so contradictory and not cohesive — is a subject, fearful that would imply the idea of the subject-state would wield absolute autonomy. But cannot the RAOTS very well be unfolded on the idea that the state, even though it is a social relation between subject, it is also a relative subject, which, being composed of men (bureaucracy and politicians), makes the story, although in certain circumstances, i.e., relatively, as men in general do (Marx, 1852a)? The thesis that the state apparatus and the state itself have no power is formalist. For him, the state power is exclusively the power of certain classes or fractions. On denying any power to the state and bureaucracy, even relative, Poulantzas makes ethereal the materialization both of the RAOTS and the bureaucracy. If the state and bureaucracy have relative autonomy, why they would not have relative power? What is the difference between autonomy and power? This conception is implausible. Just because the bureaucracy is not a class or fraction is it devoid of power? Several authors and theories address the relative powers of the bureaucracy, such as Marx, Michels, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky, Weber, the capture theory of regulation, O'Donnell etc. Insulated or embedded, the bureaucracy is an actor and has relative power and that is not incompatible with a sociocentric approach of the state. If Poulantzas admits that, on certain occasions, the bureaucracy can act as a social force, how empty it out *a priori* of any power? What is a force without power?

Carnoy (1984), based on the neo-Marxist Hal Draper, distinguishes two levels of AOTS in Marx: the autonomy in ordinary times, which the German thinker understands as autonomy of public bureaucracy and the autonomy of exceptional times. Marx (1852a, pp. 395-396) makes such a distinction clearly when addressing the French Revolution process. It is worth quoting him:

¹⁴ Idem, vol. 2, p. 209.

The first French Revolution, with its task of breaking all separate local, territorial, urban, and provincial powers in order to create the civil unity of the nation, was bound to develop what the monarchy had begun, centralization, but at the same time the limits, the attributes, and the agents of the governmental power. [...] All revolutions perfected this machine instead of breaking it. [...] But under the absolute monarchy, during the first Revolution, and under Napoleon *the bureaucracy was only the means of preparing the class rule of the bourgeoisie*. Under the Restoration, under Louis Philippe, under the parliamentary republic, it was the *instrument of the ruling class*, however much it strove for power of its own. (Emphasis mine)

In the snippet above, lies the idea of *autonomy of public bureaucracy*, which dynamics operate to make the state an *instrument of the ruling class*. Advancing in the analysis of Louis Napoleon coup, Marx refers to AOTS configured in the Second France Empire by the impact, in the political superstructure, of the class balance, when “all classes, equally powerless and also change, fall on his knees before the breach of the rifle. [...] Only in the second Bonaparte the State seems to become completely autonomous” (idem, pp. 395-396). This AOTS is the central element of Bonapartism. It matters, then, distinguishing the autonomy of the bureaucracy in normal times from the AOTS by class balance. But the autonomous state, resulting from the class balance, is capitalist:

Only the Chief of the Society of December 10 can still save bourgeois society! Only theft can still save property; [...] As the executive authority which has made itself independent, Bonaparte feels it to be his task to safeguard — “bourgeois order” (idem, p. 402)

While Poulantzas disagrees that the AOTS in the Second France Empire is due to class balance, he does not deny the distinction between two types of AOTS, present in Marx and observed by Hal Draper and Carnoy: the typical autonomy of the capitalist state (autonomy of bureaucracy) and the autonomy deriving from the class balance.

In a later publication, Poulantzas (1976) considers that the hegemony of monopoly capital can restrict the limits of the RAOTS. So, although Poulantzas does not see the mere instrumentalization of the state by the bourgeoisies, and there is always a structural dimension of the RAOTS, its limits vary, and may be more or less extensive or restricted.

It became familiar in the neo-Marxist state debate the distinction between the structuralist approach of Poulantzas and the instrumentalist, of Miliband (1969). Instrumentalism, associated with the Marx of the *Communist Manifesto*, would conceive the state as a committee for managing the common affairs of all the bourgeoisie, while Poulantzas sees the RAOTS. But, discussing with Poulantzas, Miliband (1983) says not to think that the state acts at the behest of the bourgeois-

sie, but on behalf of it or in its interest. Whether there are common businesses of all the bourgeoisie, it is implied that there are singular businesses and fractions, being the state necessary to make feasible their general class interests. To do so, there must be not only exceptionally, but always some level of AOTS.

Even for different theoretical paths, neo-Marxists converge on analytical identification of the RAOTS and also that its levels vary. The rigid opposition between autonomous and instrumental types of state is inadequate. Evans (1995) considers that the state in Zaire has little Weberian bureaucratization, it is much instrumentalized by small elites and so far from civil society that comes to be autonomous. The state, especially in capitalist societies with modern bureaucracy, it will hardly be absolutely autonomous or instrumental. The rule is that there is, in a relative mode and in varying levels, autonomy and instrumentalism in the state power.

The analytical Marxist Jon Elster (1985) argues that, *circa* 1850, Marx abandons his instrumentalist theory of the state and puts forward a more complex political theory that conceives the autonomy of the political phenomenon and of the state. Politics and the state face economic constraints, but are not reducible to them. In this way, Marx, according to Elster, formulates two theories of the AOTS: abdication/abstention and class balance.

The abdication/abstention theory explains situations in which the state serves the bourgeoisie and capitalism as a system, but does not represent the bourgeois class directly. The state may sacrifice individual capitalist interests and even short-term capitalist interests of all the bourgeoisie. When Marx says, in the *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, that the bourgeoisie abandons the crown to save the stock market, he is, in part, formulating the abdication theory. In the coalition between the bourgeoisie and the Whigs, established since the *Glorious Revolution*, occurs the abstention, since the bourgeoisie leaves the government monopoly and the exclusive possession of public offices in the hands of that fraction of the aristocracy (Marx, 1852b; Elster, 1985).

But Elster assesses that, in Marx, the general theory of the modern state is the *class-balance theory of the state*, which provides a more comprehensive explanation for the AOTS. According to it, the struggle between two opposing classes enables the state to assert itself for the practice of divide and conquer. This theory is embedded in the Marx analysis about the absolute monarchy, state which autonomy is based on the sharing of power by royalty, aristocracy and bourgeoisie. But the class-balance theory of the state is also in the analysis of Bonapartism, being the Second Empire “the only form of government possible at a time when the bourgeoisie had already lost, and the working class had not yet acquired, the faculty of ruling the nation” (Marx, 1870, p. 64). The AOTS supports in its role of protecting, at the same time, the interests of both classes, against the prevalence of exclusive interest of one or another. But it has been seen that Marx also explains the Bonapartist state as the only possible form of government of the abdicante bourgeoisie. For Elster, that apparent tension between the two theories of the autonomous state in Marx is almost verbal. To explain it he resorts to the *strategic conception of the state* approach and the thesis of the structural constraints of the state

in relation to the capital. No matter how much the state can take advantage of the class balance, creating maneuvering spaces to drive their corporate interests, such interests, in general, cannot be satisfied if they go against the relations of production in which social classes are inserted in capitalism. State and society depend on structurally of the capital. Taxes collected by the state come from capitalist relations of production. Individuals and groups depend on the decisions of firms, which affect levels of economic activity, employment and consumption. And society as a whole depends on the investment decisions taken by the private sector (Przeworski, 1986). However, class balance situations propitiate that the government actively mediates to divide and conquer.

Elster analysis is shared by various neo-Marxists authors (Miliband, 1969; Offe, 1975; Block, 1977; Przeworski, 1986) and even by researchers of other approaches, such as the pluralistic Dahl and Lindblom (1976). Structural dependence of the state *vis-à-vis* the capital may be extended to the society as a whole. Therefore, the AOTS, even in class balance contexts, is relative, and it may no longer be so in cases of serious crisis of the state or revolution. Of course the state is dependent, also, in relation to work. It necessarily relates with capital and labor, the productive classes that generate the income taxed by taxes, in socio-political and political-institutional conditions that vary historically and nationally. The legitimacy of the state relies heavily on its ability to create and sustain the conditions for accumulation of capital as being a general yearning (Offe, 1975). State, capital and labor are interdependent. The capital also depends on the state. But the powers of the capital are asymmetrical in relation to those of the work and they impact on the capitalist nature of the state, induced to reproduce, not without contradictions, the capitalist relations of production. It is to be considered that very strong versions of structural dependence of state and society in relation to capital may fall into economism, denying autonomy to the state and politics to overcome capitalism (Block, 1980).

THE STATE-CENTERED APPROACH OF THE AUTONOMY OF THE STATE

The reflection on the AOTS driven by neo-Marxists since 1968 endures through time and crosses intellectual frontiers. In 1980, it mobilizes researchers in historical institutionalism, which is based in Weber and, to a lesser extent, also in Marx. This neo-Weberian stream is an alternative to the neo-Marxism, considering itself state-centered. Its reflection on the AOTS persists and is relevant in research on public policy and development. Neo-weberians consider that “all states seek to maximize their autonomous institutional powers and to advance the interests of state officials in controlling more resources, people, and territory” (Barrow, 1993, p. 9). Through its administrative and coercive organizations, the state operates in class struggles with own grounds and may act against the short and long-term interests of the ruling classes. The concept of state (in)capacities is key in this approach.

The work *Bringing the State Back In* (Evans, Rueschemeyer & Skocpol, 1985)

is a landmark in the state-centered approach of the AOTS. In the book, Skocpol (1985) criticizes the society-centered explanations of politics and governmental actions from pluralism, structural-functionalism and modernization theory, all perspectives in vogue in the social sciences of the USA since the mid-1950. She criticizes also the neo-Marxism for not abandoning theses like that the class struggle format the state and that the function of it is to preserve and expand modes of production. She believes that the neo-Marxism does not assign real autonomy to the state. But Skocpol assesses that, then, social scientists were motivated to offer state-centered explanations for social change, occurred in the countries themselves pioneers in the industrialization, such as England and the USA. The state is mobilized to explain not just totalitarianism or the late industrialization.

The state-centered onslaught rescues the Germans Max Weber and Otto Hintze, whose works would support a vision of the state much broader than merely an “arena in which social groups make demands and engage in political struggles or compromises”. The state is autonomous for pursue “goals that are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society”.¹⁵

In the analysis of the AOTS to setting goals, the historical institutionalism distinguishes the *state capacities*, which permit formulate and implement strategies and goals of public policies. But the implementation process can reach or not the intended outcomes. Both need to be analyzed. In methodological terms, this tradition focuses on the institutional analysis. Studies on isolated national experiences are seen as insufficient. States and their capacities are examined in historical and comparative perspectives. In the analysis of the state capacities, one observes the presence or absence of a centralized bureaucratic state, endowed with Weberian bureaucracy perspective, recruited meritocratically, efficient, specialized, with budgetary and material resources, motivated by a long-term career, corporately consistent, that sharing rationally assumptions and expectations, able to redraw itself organizationally, when necessary, capable to implement measures universalists and long-term, and to some extent, isolated from social demands.¹⁶

Weber (1918) argues that the capitalist society undergoes a double modernization, in the economy and the state. The development both of the bureaucratic state as of the economy has close relations. The bureaucracy may or may not be critical to the effective capacity of the state to support, while corporation, the markets and the capitalist accumulation. An evil bureaucratic development limits the ability of state intervention and therefore its autonomy. The AOTS is not a fixed structural feature, it varies, but the neo-Weberian tradition assesses that the states are potentially autonomous (Skocpol, 1985; Evans et al., 1985).

The state capacities are also analyzed by the identification of some important agencies of its organizational structure that stand out in the performance of relevant tasks. In this identification is important look historically the process of institutional

¹⁵ Skocpol (1985); quotes: pp. 8 and 9.

¹⁶ Evans (1995, p. 59; 1985, pp. 50-51).

construction of public machinery and of the public policies implementation. A classic case of developmental state action is the performance of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) on Japanese industrial policy (Johnson, 1982).

Another component of the neo-Weberian vision of the AOTS is the occupation of territory, analyzed by the sociologist Michael Mann (1984). He agrees with the Skocpol criticism of neo-Marxist, liberal and functionalist theories of the state, by denying an effective autonomous power to the state. He also resorts to German sources of the social sciences, going even further back in time to rescue Gumplowicz, who he considers represent the militaristic tradition in the theories of the state. In that approach, the state was both physical strength and driving machine. According to Mann, the good Germans, including Weber and Hintze, were influenced by the militarist tradition inserted in that theory of the state, but filtered from its evils of approach that served to authoritarian and racist political interests.

The pioneer militaristic approach of the theory of the state is also reductionist, once it sees the physical strength of the state as incorporation of the society physical strength. But the theoretical junction of the two great reductionisms, the social and the militaristic, the latter properly filtered by the good Germans, was, then, according to Mann, giving new and great theoretical fruits. On arguing that the state has and can use an effective level of autonomy, being against the ruling class or anti-war or peace of domestic factions and foreign states, Mann exposes the strong institutionalist and state-centered meaning of the AOTS. The origin and mechanism of the autonomous power of the state lie exactly in the fact that it is an arena.

The statist approach emphasizes the role of force in the formation of the society. In the limit, the society is a state creation. Strictly speaking, in some state-centered theories there is no way to speak in AOTS, but in domination of the state over society. However, since these theories do not ignore emancipatory trends of society from the state, which led to the formation of the modern civil society, liberal market and democracy, they solve this problem arguing that the development of the history goes from state to society, and not *vice versa*, as do the sociocentric theories (Przeworki, 1990).

Mann wants to debug the confusion on the concept of state, which definition in general would contain two distinct levels of analysis, the institutional and functional. The institutional analysis focuses on what the state seems to be institutionally and the functional, on its functions. He formulates a mixed definition of the concept of state, with strong institutional content and Weberian approach, composed of four elements. The state is a set of institutions and officials; is endowed of centrality; acts on a territorially demarcated area; and monopolizes the *authoritative binding rule-making*. The first three elements are institutional, the last, functional. The major interest of Mann is the centrality of the state and the state elite.

His conclusion is that the state has two great powers: infrastructural and despotic. The despotic power is the coercion of the state, more pronounced in pre-industrial societies. Infrastructural power is the state ability to penetrate civil society, running political decisions logistically throughout the territory. This power

arises, effectively, in the industrial phase. While the despotic power declines, infrastructural power increases. In democracies, despotic power is weak and the infrastructural power, strong. The main dimension of infrastructural power is *territorial centralization*, attribute that is specific and proper of the state, not enjoyed by any other social group. For the state has a different territorial objective from other social organizations, there is no way it can be mere class instrument. It is relevant to support the autonomous action of the state over society in the argument that it has a different territorial objective from other organizations. The territorial integrity of the state is an important element for the investigation of the state capacities.

In *Bringing the State Back In*, Rueschemeyer and Evans (1985) present a rich approach of the AOTS, which does not conceive its genesis in state-centered terms, but based on state-society interactions. They adopt a Weberian definition of the state, although they do not see it as simple bureaucracy, but also as an instrument of domination. The character of the state is that of a *pact of domination*, which covers a basic alliance between dominant classes and fractions, institutional norms, agencies and bureaucracy. The state expresses this pact and, at the same time, participates on it as active corporate actor, with self-interests. The concern with the state action effectiveness leads them to focus the state as a corporate actor. They divide the analysis in two parts: the variations of the state apparatus structure and the variations of relations between state and ruling classes. They show the dilemmas of state intervention in the capital accumulation and the impacts on its autonomy and capacities.

What differentiates capacity from autonomy? Autonomy refers to the relationship between bureaucracy and society. Existing clear independence among the goals, targets and public decisions and the interests and pressures of the social actors, there will be autonomy, which intensity can vary. Capacity has to do with the requirements of the institutional structure of the Weberian bureaucracy. The neo-Weberians classify *strong and weak states* according to their proximity or distance of the ideal type of bureaucracy (Evans et al., 1985). Such a distinction, which observes the trajectory of state structures and public policies, helps explain, for example, different models of welfare state, as the liberal prevailing in the USA, and the Swedish social democratic, both established in response to the *Great Depression* (Weir and Skocpol, 1985; Barrow, 1993).

But it is not mandatory that there is mutual reinforcement between state intervention, autonomy and capacities.¹⁷ A poor autonomous state and quite captured in some crucial areas of action can have capable agencies. In comparative and historical perspectives, the capacities of the states vary and change, the same occurs under the intrastate scope, in accordance with the state agencies.

Evans (1995) argues that the AOTS varies according to the state-society relations. In the classical Weberian model, insulation is the default and it is assumed that the market and the private agents are the transforming power. The state com-

¹⁷ Rueschemeyer and Evans (1985).

plements and supports natural tendencies of investors. This is a state-centered vision of the AOTS. In models in which state-society relations are built with a look that approximates these two large spheres, the nexus are rethought and requalified, observing *partnerships* between private actors and state institutions in the development of projects. In recent elaborations on the development, Evans (2008) explores broader trends in partnership, incorporating the *public deliberation* and the *civil society* as essential components. In Evans (1995) there were already reports of partnerships with employees, in Austria, and peasants, in Kerala, both associated with well-being, although only the first also linked to development. Such partnerships, which bring together corporate coherence and social connection, anchor the concept of *embedded autonomy*, which merges state-centered and society-centered elements and comes close to the idea of RAOTS.

What reasons lead to a bigger AOTS? Skocpol (1985) speaks on factors and conditions. Singularly, all state performs exclusively political tasks: administrative, legal, extractive and coercive. In some measure, the state competes with the dominant class in the appropriation of economic resources. Some historical moments, like the economic and international crisis, can lead to strengthening the state and to a greater autonomy, as occurred in the USA, in general a weak state, in the *New Deal* agricultural interventions. In addition, the AOTS may be outstanding only in some policy areas, also as it is in the USA case, with the foreign policy.

Rueschemeyer and Evans (1985) argue that the division of the ruling class is the social structural condition that favors major AOTS. When comparing the pre-1930 agro-exporter Brazil, that had a weak state, with a poor elite and class structure and autonomy, and a oligarchic pact of domination, hegemonized by the agrarian bourgeoisies, with the later period, in which the state is institutionally strengthened, recruits, at least partially, a Weberian bureaucracy — highlighting some excellent state agencies — which, combined with the industrial bourgeoisie and the oligarchical sectors, implements the national-developmental project (Bresser-Pereira, 2007a), it is exemplified the importance of the class structure and the division of the ruling classes for the development of the AOTS. The *1930 Revolution* takes place in international crisis of 1929 and its outbreak relates with the crisis of oligarchies and their internal dissidences.

Another source of the AOTS is the growing pressure of the subordinate classes. But these elements — division of the ruling class and pressure of the dominated — also can not lead to increased AOTS, but to the balkanization of the state. The two political sources of the AOTS pointed by Rueschemeyer and Evans — division of the ruling class and pressures of the subordinate classes — can be illuminated by the *class-balance theory of the state*, seen in the previous section.

With the exception of Rueschemeyer and Evans, that approach the theoretical theme of this paper with a less statist way, this brief exposure of the state-centered conception of the AOTS shows that it has strong institutionalist content and emphasizes the state capacity to formulate and implement its own goals, different from the interests of social actors outside of the public bureaucracy. It is an useful approach for an endogenous look about what goes on inside an autonomous state,

especially about its (in)capacities to avail the opportunities that the context of autonomy unfold. The opposition of this state-centered approach to neoutilitarianism and idealistic visions of the state, which deny the bureaucracy any public spirit and believe in the self-regulatory benefits of the *invisible hand of the market*, brings fertile contributions to the analysis of state action.¹⁸

The main theoretical problem is the genesis of the AOTS. According to the strong state-centered vision, the autonomy, although it does not exist in any conditions and does not express itself in equal levels in time and space, it is endogenous to the state, being seen through the look of the sociology of organizations. But, crisis situations, for example, that can increase the AOTS, impact on the interests of the society as a whole, in the state apparatus and in the state-society relations. If the increase of the capacities of the bureaucratic leaders of the state apparatuses pursue autonomous goals and play more freely their exclusive policies tasks depends on the circumstances, as is it possible to argue that broad social factors triggering greater autonomy operate only at the started of the process of strengthening the state, without influencing its unfolding, content, objectives and goals? When, in situations of crisis, state officials gain autonomy in relation to dominant fractions, implementing public policies that rely on their greater control over organizational and financial resources and are directed to broader social *strata* that were targeted *ex ante*, at least it must also mean a functional state-owned response to the striking change of circumstances (Barrow, 1993). A functional response relates to the social system as a whole, involves peculiarities of state and society, so their developments differ in time and space, as illustrates the example cited of the different Keynesian cut reactions to the *Great Depression*. Evoking a systemic response does not mean thinking of national undifferentiation nor in social stability. Considering that there are peculiarities and contradictions is more realistic. Being the state a pact of domination, breaks up the dichotomy between rigid approaches, the stateless sociocentric (instrumentalism) and the estate-centered without society (coercive state). And then how can the AOTS not be a RAOTS? How can the statist conception be, effectively, a paradigm of the state-society relations if the history comes configuring, for centuries, a social order in which society enters the state? As says Przeworski (1990, p. 52), autonomy “is an efficient instrument of analysis when indicates one among different possible historical situations”.

STATE AND SOCIAL-DEVELOPMENTALIST COALITIONS

It will be now historically approached the AOTS. As the objective is to discuss the AOTS in democratic contexts, in the light of class-balance theory of the state, two cases will serve as reference: the social democratic experience and some current trends in Latin America, particularly in Brazil. On both, each one with its specifi-

¹⁸ See Evans (1995).

ties, it is noted the synergy between, on the one hand, social-developmental coalitions encompassing capital, labor and the state and, on the other, the strengthening of state capacities, including through the implementation of partnerships. In these cases, the AOTS generates in contexts in which some key nexus between state and social forces converge significantly, even with contradictions (Nordlinger, 1981).

The capitalist state relates, in a good or bad way, with a wide range of actors. Marx and Weber show that the history of state institutions is linked to social interests. It can facilitate or make things difficult for entrepreneurs of various sectors and sizes, workers, professionals, independent producers of the city and the countryside. The state can repress the subordinate classes and ensure its intense exploitation by the proprietary classes or it can implement, in democratic regime, welfare policies; it can try to stimulate the activity and employment levels or let the market take care of that; can even, in extreme cases, enforce policies that run counter to the interests of the bourgeoisie, as occurred after 1936 in Nazi Germany (Block, 1980). Also varies the political regime in which relations between state and society occur.

The concept of pact of domination, already seen, realizes the state as being, at the same time, corporate actor, subject, object and product of class struggles. The AOTS enhances its role as a corporate actor. Upchurch, Taylor and Mathers (2009) state that the condition of the AOTS in social democratic regimes allows that the capital and labor influence public policies according to their interests, while the state is immersed in class struggles. In Europe, such regimes provide unique contexts for the analysis of the AOTS and its implications for development. They combine elements that comprise the sociopolitical and institutional production of the AOTS: interests, struggles and distinct power resources of the classes (partisan and associative organizations), class balance, neocorporatist institutional arrangement of interest intermediation, class compromise and state capacities. The impact of these elements on the state power and public policies results in Keynesianism and welfare. This occurred especially after the World War II, having been somehow counteracted by the neo-liberalism since the 1980s.

With specific national variations, social democratic governments, in advanced industrial societies, forward the structural dependency of the state in relation to the capital through a class compromise between capital and labor. Even supporting different theoretical perspectives, some of them systemic and others based on the actors and their choices, several authors see alliances between capital and labor in the social democratic experiences of welfare state (e.g., Korpi, 1989; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Swenson, 1991).

The main formulation of the class compromise is in Przeworski (1985), whose analytical Marxism resorts both to a historical look at the organizations (political parties and unions) and social democratic governments as to formal theoretical models set in rational choice premises. The historical analysis notes the implications of the option of the social democratic organizations in participating at the representative institutions to obtain support from workers and not falling into isolation. The participatory demands of the masses in union and partisan organizations induce to delegation and representation mechanisms, requiring wages and bureau-

cratic apparatus. Somehow, participation in unions and parties demobilizes workers, for not acting directly within their organizations. Representative institutions turned socialist leaders, led them to a petty bourgeois lifestyle and there was also an attenuation of the extra-parliamentary actions of the masses. Moreover, the socialist parties, as a rule, did not reach enough votes to ensure parliamentary majority to their governments. They formed minority governments or needed to participate in coalitions with other parties to govern. The electoral boundaries impacted on the programs of these parties. To expand themselves, they migrated from revolution to reform.

The main occurrence in programmatic strategy of reformist social democratic parties first emerged in Sweden, Norway and France in response to unemployment in the *Great Depression*: the Keynesian counter-cyclical policies. The Keynesian revolution enabled social democratic reform. Conceptually, the social democratic welfare state is related to the adoption and development of Keynes's ideas. "Hence, the structure of the capitalist systems built by social democrats turned out to be the following: (1) the state operates those activities which are unprofitable for private firms but necessary for the economy as a whole; (2) the state regulates, particularly by pursuing anti-cyclical policies, the operation of the private sector; and (3) the state mitigates, through welfare measures, the distributional effects of the operation of the market" (Przeworski, 1985, p. 40). This economic arrangement is the material base of a class compromise and coalition between workers and capitalists and expresses the public power of capital, structured by the private ownership of the means of production. Once abandoned the strategy of revolution, a cooperative relation takes place: the wages of the workers and the future investments depend on the generation of profits by capitalists. Przeworski admits that crises can shake the commitment, but doubts the disposition of workers' organizations to elect the socialist transformation, due to the costs that it entails.¹⁹ On the other hand, his formal models seek to explore the trends of strategic choices of the actors noted in the historical analysis.

The class compromise and coalition unfold in certain relationships of classes between themselves and with the state and in certain institutions and public policies. This model derives from a particular class balance in the democratic capitalism. While it lasts, the role of the state is crucial. It organizes the class compromise and acts to maintain the coalition of classes, the cooperation with the fulfillment of the decisions agreed on a tripartite mode. Barrow (1993) says that, in the structuralist conception of the welfare state, the AOTS allows it to mediate the social conflict, adjust the balance between the classes in fights, absorb the demands of workers and produce public policies compatible with capitalism. Although not exclusively, the mediating function of the state between the classes occurs in the *concertation* instituted in the democratic corporate structures, which are a form of interest in-

¹⁹ It will not be possible here criticize the exaggerated functionalism present at the Przeworski analysis of the class compromise.

termediation and public policy formulation and a typical institutional arrangement of the class compromise. Neo-corporatist arrangements are observed in numerous European countries. When, in the 1980s, it was believed that the neo-corporatism was on the wane, it gained momentum, in the following decade, in countries that did not have such a strong tradition in practicing it (Schmitter and Grote, 1997).

It was seen that the marriage between AOTS and partnership propels the development. Limited marriages link only state and entrepreneurs, as those established in the East Asian developmental states, during the *Cold War*, in authoritarian regimes. And there are broader marriages, as in 1970s in Austria, where capital and labor relations join a certain balance of power, with tradition in neo-corporatism and welfare state. There, the state, with relative autonomy, exerts a powerful mediating function. “The state’s independent influence depends on a balance of forces in civil society, but the balance is actively constructed rather than the result of exogenous stalemate” (Evans, 1995, p. 242). The partnership between state and society is a key element of the social-developmental capacities of the state. Seen in various dimensions, the state capacities of European states notable in welfare policies are among the highest in the world (Hanson and Sigmam, 2013).

The AOTS in social democratic regimes, as well as some of its recent trends in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, anchors in the balance of classes, which the proper state action helps to conform. And these RAOTS manifestations not necessarily produce or prevent crisis of hegemony.

When approaching the AOTS in Latin American dependent capitalism, Hamilton (1981) distinguishes two of its types: instrumental and structural. The *instrumental autonomy of the state* occurs when it is an instrument of the general interests of capitalism. Given the structural dependency of the state in relation to capital, any autonomy is relative, or, according to Hamilton, instrumental. The state would be an autonomous instrument of the general interest of capitalists, and not of any of its particular groups (Miliband, 1983). On the other hand, in the case of the structural autonomy, the autonomous state, inserted in the class struggles, is not linked strictly to the structural limits placed by the relations of classes and property.

This second autonomy would occur in three hypotheses: the state controls a large volume of means of production and thus leverage structural changes; the structures of social formation have indeterminate nature and therefore are weak, including impacting on weakness of fractions of the bourgeoisie; or when the state makes alliances with the subordinate classes. The author argues that only in decades of 1930 and 1940, after the *Great Depression* and during the populist period, the states of Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and Chile approached the acquisition of structural autonomy, which provided them lead the change in the capitalism model, from agro-export to manufacturing production directed to domestic market, with import substitution policies. In Mexico, for example, structural reforms covered land reform and nationalization of the exporting sector. But, despite the importance of this change in capitalist model, structural autonomy of the state was limited, particularly for the maintenance or re-articulation of economic links of the local elites

with the central countries, even with the outbreak of industrialization, and for the preservation of the structure of land ownership in most countries.

If a window of opportunities limited but impactful, opened for Latin America in the populism of the 1930s, amid the *Great Depression*, the crisis of the neoliberal policies of the 1990s, followed by the electoral victory of center-left or left forces in several countries of the Southern Cone, and the international crisis of 2008, demarcate, at the beginning of the 21st century, a new inflection point. The current situation has two political bases: the rearrangement of class relations, composing a better balance of the relative positions of capital and labor, and a redefinition of coalitions with the entry in field of alliances that, to some extent, but with impact, implement developmental and social policies, opposing the neoliberal block, which previously had captured several states. In this context, a double trend is set, one of most RAOTS, based on the balance of classes, and the other of increased state capacities to carry out the social-developmental historical inflection. The state is presented to the Latin Americans as a key institution in promoting development (Diniz, 2010).

There are, since the late 1990s, in Venezuela, and, from 2003, 2005 and 2007, respectively, also in Brazil, Bolivia and Ecuador, among other countries, like Argentina, movements that rearrange relations of forces, produce greater balance in class relations and construct new political coalitions. In this subcontinental conjuncture of political and economic change, there are signs of a new national feeling, key point to the development. The national states have been leading the execution of counter-neoliberal policies. They are intended to broad social bases, being the poor people and the productive capitalism more included in their goals. Aim the growth, poverty reduction, political inclusion and, in foreign policy, regional integration in the Southern Cone and multilateralism. In these countries, the current state, in relation to the period of the 1990s, presents itself less captured by rentiers and financial institutions, more accountable to the nation as a whole, and with greater relative autonomy (Tapia, 2009; Andara, 2011; Gallegos, 2012; Bresser-Pereira & Theuer, 2012).

In Brazil, the crisis outbroken in the early 1980s destroyed the national-developmental pact of domination. The neoliberal reconstruction of the state power occurred through the *Real Plan*, a monetary stabilization that was the flagship of the neoliberal reforms (Ianoni, 2009). The north of the changes was the accumulation regime financialized, then a hegemonic perspective, interesting to rentiers and financial institutions. They occurred in the 1990s until 2002, some also after 2003. Neoliberal reforms led to the election and re-election of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and the construction of the neoliberal pact of domination, in which the RAOTS is greatly reduced and increases its capture, through macroeconomic policy and other actions (Bresser-Pereira, 2007b).

The Lula electoral victory in 2002 is due to the wear of neoliberal policies. He heads a government with a political project opposed to the withdrawal of the state. Neither soon nor completely over time, he unlinks from the neoliberal policies, for the *liberal interest party* is an organized force present in democratic politics, with

social and partisan bases and also in agencies of the state apparatus, besides external support. But, between the neoliberal and social-developmental projects, Lula's two presidential mandates, and even more, Dilma's distanced themselves from the first and gave some firm steps towards the second. The inflection is not yet completed. The appreciation of the Brazilian currency undermines the competitiveness of industry and there are limits on advances in social equity.

At the beginning of the government, Lula establishes the *Economic and Social Development Council* (CDES), bringing together business representatives, workers, social movements and other associations of civil society. This neo-corporatist initiative, along with others, aimed at the consultation among various sectors of society on it represented, to propose policies and guidelines of the social-developmental project. As soon as it was created, the CDES suggested enlarging the insulated National Monetary Council, signaling a developmentalist desire for change in macroeconomic policy.²⁰

The new state actions implied the real interest rate decrease, without runaway inflation, a highest average GDP growth, the encouraging to job creation, the reduction of public debt, the debt settlement with the IMF, the country's conquest of the investment-grade by global agencies of credit risk, the significant increase of foreign exchange reserves, the rise of bank credit, the counter-cyclical credit orientation of the public federal banks to stand up effects of the international crisis and increase public and private investment.

In 2011, the Dilma government follows in the transformations. Effectively reduces the prime rate. The monetary policy loses the primacy and ceases to operate separate from other macroeconomic policy areas. Brazilian Central Bank becomes more clearly an agency government, working in conjunction with the Ministries of Finance and Planning and with the President of the Republic. Monetary, fiscal, and exchange policies, articulately, seek growth. It is outlined a development model "based on the internal market expansion and with a strong state presence to reduce the income distribution inequality" (Barbosa, 2013). The new income redistribution policies are based on the main mainstay of the socio-political bases of the Lula and Dilma federal governments, the old and the new working class, the poor peasants, the landless etc. Changes in the balance of classes have relation with the representativeness of Workers' Party (PT) and of its governments into these emerging social bases in the post-neoliberal period.

Changes rebuild the state as pact of domination, regime and bureaucratic apparatus. The neoliberal pact of domination is counteracted and it is built from the state to society and *vice versa*, a social-developmental pact of domination, gathering, particularly, productive capital, labor, and independent producers (micro-entrepreneurs, petty bourgeoisie, and peasantry). The new state establishes, democratically, in several areas, commitments and partnerships with organized interests and with the poor. It is more national, more rooted in all of the civil society, it has more

²⁰ See Presidência da República (2006).

legitimacy. It is a state that conquers spaces of relative political autonomy, negotiates, in a tripartite mode, with capital and labor (Boito, 2012). It handles the power relations to promote better balance between social classes and fractions. While the neoliberal pact of domination entailed a high level of state capture by a coalition of rentiers and financiers, the new social-developmental pact displaces the financial hegemony to build, not without resisters, a developmentalist model with social inclusion, income redistribution and increase of the popular consumption.

The greater autonomy democratically embedded impacts the state capacities in several areas, such as social and economic. Important state agencies increase their resources to meet the challenges of development, such as the Ministry of Finance, the *National Bank for Economic and Social Development*, rebuilt as a developmentalist foundation and financial lever of the industrial policy, the Civil House (*Casa Civil*), midwife of the *Growth Acceleration Program*, several Presidency of the Republic offices, the Ministry of Science and Technology, through the innovation policy, public companies and public federal banks, such as Petrobras, Banco do Brasil and Caixa Econômica Federal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Famine (Diniz and Boschi, 2011). These agencies not only coursed previous paths, but were re-equipped for leveraging the social-developmental. There were also breakthroughs in the infrastructural power of the state.

The main institutional leadership of this inflection was the PT. Lula's victory came after he suffered three successive election defeats. In the presidential election campaign of 2002, a capital flight triggers the change in the position of the party on macroeconomic policy. Lula's candidacy is committed to keeping the inflation targeting, the collection of primary surplus and floating exchange. This pragmatic stance deepens over time and can be seized with the arguments that Prezworski mobilizes to explain the social democracy trajectory. The decision to effectively participate in the representative system in the democratic capitalism, and not just to register presence, implies substantive changes in the program of the socialists. Singer (2012) says that a second soul is born in the PT. Put simply, the first soul, anti-capitalist, arises in 1980 and prevails until 2002, when a new soul emerges, the soul compromised with market stability. The two souls coexist contradictorily, one that is attracted to ensure the interests of the capital, especially productive, and another who wants socialism. The synthesis of these two trends that constrain the PT and its coalition government with conservative parties helps explain the institutional bases that increment both the RAOTS as the productive and redistributive state capacities of the social-developmentalism. But one and another, the RAOTS and the state capacities, also have roots in the balance of classes and in its impact on the construction of the contradictory coalition between capital and labor in an emerging Latin American country. The impact of this coalition in the state institutions and *vice versa* creates and develops the new pact of domination, with social-developmental content, and that oppose the liberal block. The AOTS resulting of the convergence of these social and institutional factors have a strong sense and its intensity can increase or decrease by conjunctural or structural reasons. The

Brazilian state, exercising the mediate function, targeting development, challenges the right, the center and the left. But it is not the end of the history, the alliances and conflicts of classes and fractions go on.

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