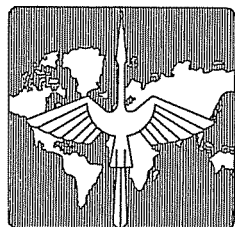


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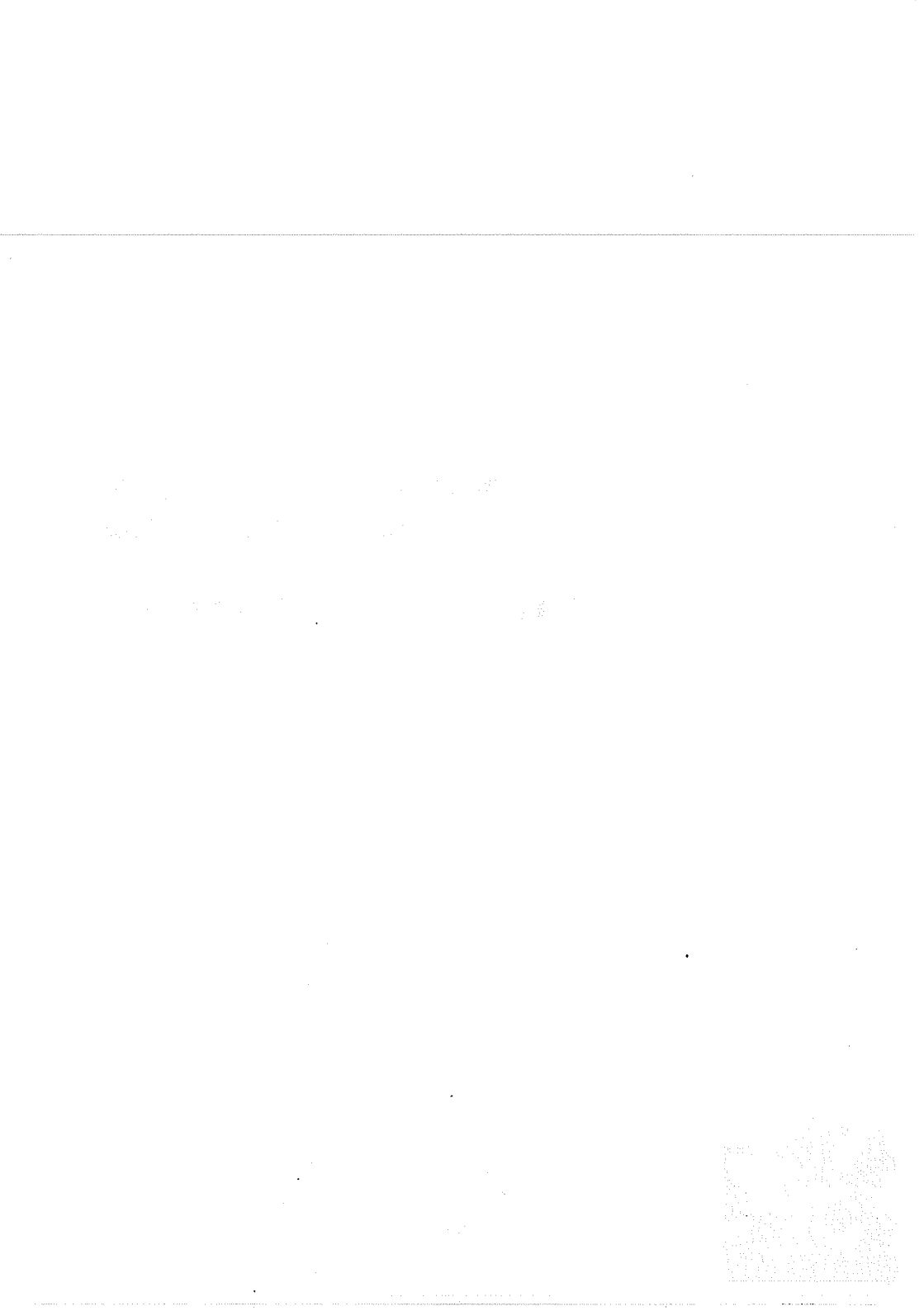
**On the Dynamics of Development
of Contemporary States:
an approach to comparative politics**

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We have all become democrats in theory at a historical stage in which it has become virtually impossible to organize our social life in a democratic fashion any longer.

John Dunn

1. POLITICAL CYCLES

Short-term fluctuations and long-term trends

If we examine the political development of contemporary states, over say the past thirty years, we see a rapid succession of political regimes and/or government policies. Though these changes - in terms of coups d'état and revolutions, the emergence of military regimes, the downfall of dictatorships, the declaration of states of emergency or martial law - may have been most apparent in the Third World, they could also be observed in communist states (such as de-Stalinisation in the Soviet Union or the spectacular political upheavals in China) and in the West (the New Left or 'democratisation' movement in the late 1960s, and the more recent new Conservatism). Such political changes are often unexpected and not easily explained in terms of the theoretical perspectives which we have available for understanding politics and the development of the state. The prevailing theories of political development, whether Marxist or not, tend to analyse the functioning and structure of different political systems or the role of the state. If they take account of political changes they tend to interpret them in terms of the transformation from one type of political 'system' into another. If, for example, a trend towards corporate representation of political interests is observed, there is a strong inclination to project such a tendency into the development of a new type of political system, 'corporatism' (in Latin America) or 'neo-corporatism' (in Western Europe).¹

But if we want to orient ourselves better in the contemporary world, it may be more useful to identify the pattern, the particular longer-term structure underlying

the relatively short-term fluctuations of political regimes and government policies (or 'strategies') which can be observed. Are there political cycles, which in some respects are similar to the business cycle, that is to say, fluctuations which have a pattern which can be explained and foreseen, even though the precise timespan of specific fluctuations - the duration of movements in 'upward' or 'downward' directions - cannot be predicted?

To look at fluctuations in this manner implies that one sees them as connected to longer-term trends in a particular direction. Short-term fluctuations as movements 'forward' or 'backward' (or when graphically represented, 'upward' and 'downward') are parts of such a longer-term trend.

One way to describe changes from one regime to another is to see them as a movement from more 'harsh' to more 'soft' regimes and vice versa. The degrees of 'harshness' or 'softness', however, can vary widely between different states and between different phases in their development.² 'Harshness' and 'softness', then, are shorthand for the degree of political repression as well as the type of economic policy or development strategy which a government follows. Harsh regimes tend not only to repress opposition but also to favour the interests of the more privileged parts of the population, and to pay more attention to creating favourable conditions for capital accumulation than to take the needs and demands of the less privileged parts of the population into account.

Harsh and soft are metaphors which nevertheless indicate real differences. The question is whether these differences between political regimes can be made more specific, and whether it is possible to connect political fluctuations to a longer-term perspective on the development of contemporary states.

When we speak about 'contemporary' states, that notion implies firstly that these states are supposed to coincide with nations, no matter how these may be precisely defined; and secondly, that their governments as well as public opinion are preoccupied with economic development and industrialisation. The starting point of this paper is that state formation and industrialisation are two interconnected but relatively autonomous aspects of an overall transformation of society. Industrialisation implies an increase in differentiation of social functions (i.e. specialisation and the development of a more complex division of labour), whereas state formation can be expressed as increasing integration of social functions, i.e. growth and extension of the coordinating and regulating functions of central institutions based on relatively stable monopolies of violence, taxation and the conduct of foreign relations. Formulated on the highest level of abstraction, industrialisation and state formation are respectively the differentiation and integration aspect of the development of contemporary human societies.

Movements from harsh to soft regimes and vice versa can be observed in practically all contemporary states, whether they are classified as capitalist or as centrally-planned or socialist, or again, as post-colonial or 'intermediate' states. In this paper, I shall be concerned primarily with the similarities between the developmental patterns of all contemporary states, despite the fact that they are usually considered to be so completely different that they are classified as belonging to altogether different 'worlds' - First, Second or Third.

I shall first discuss the differences between dynastic states such as China and contemporary industrialising nation-states. In dynastic states before the development of 'capitalism', a cyclical pattern could be observed, especially clearly in the so-called 'dynastic cycle' in

China. The difference between that dynastic cycle and political fluctuations in contemporary states is that in the latter short-term political fluctuations are connected to a longer-term trend, whereas in China political cycles were a repetitive pattern within a society that changed very little in its structure of social stratification. The longer-term trends which first manifested themselves in Western Europe can be described, on the one hand, as industrialisation (the differentiation aspect) and, on the other hand, as nation-formation (the integration aspect). In both cases the long-term trends have contradictory aspects which give rise to fluctuations between political regimes. In all industrialising nation-states we see a long-term contradictory trend between, on the one hand, functional democratisation and, on the other hand, oligarchisation, connected but not identical with tension between what James O'Connor has called the accumulation and legitimation functions of the state.

After discussing functional democratisation and oligarchisation in more detail, the paper continues with an analysis of the similarities of the structure of political fluctuations in what are commonly conceptualised as 'capitalist' and 'socialist' and post-colonial or 'intermediate' regimes.

In the conclusion of the paper I shall return to the question of how short-term fluctuations from 'harsh' to 'soft' regimes may be connected to the longer-term contradictory trends to be observed in the dynamics of development of contemporary states.

2. THE DYNASTIC CYCLE

The notion of a political cycle is a familiar tool for students of Chinese history. Political change in the Chinese empire has been conceptualised by many historians in terms of a dynastic cycle. To cite a classic description of this dynastic cycle:

All the great dynasties have an initial period of prosperity. The group that has seized the throne is relatively small and closely knit. The wars that have brought it to power have eliminated most of its rivals, and therefore the wealth of the nation pours largely into its coffers. The country prospers in its newly established peace, the population seems to increase rapidly, and the treasuries and granaries of the central government overflow.

But an excess of *yang* leads to the rise of *yin*. The affluent central government builds great palaces, roads, canals and walls. The imperial clan, the nobility, and the high bureaucracy grow in numbers and become accustomed to an ever more luxurious mode of life. The very military successes of the empire have established far-flung defence lines that are costly to maintain. More and more lands and their peasant-cultivators are used for the personal support of the ruling classes and fewer and fewer tax-paying contributors remain to the central administration. Because of constantly increasing expenditures and often a slight decline in income, each dynasty begins to experience serious financial difficulties within a century of its founding.

Economic and administrative reforms are then carried out and may halt the financial decline for a while. The downward trend, however, eventually reasserts itself. Economic and administrative difficulties accumulate. Official self-seeking and corruption become worse, leading to a decline in administrative efficiency and an intensification of factional quarrels at court. The potential rivals of the imperial family become politically and economically more independent of the central government and challenge it with greater impunity. To meet government deficits, the burden on the tax-paying peasant is increased to the breaking point. Because of the governments' financial difficulties, canals and dikes are allowed to fall into disrepair, making floods and droughts more probable. Crop failures that once could have been offset by stores from the government granaries now result in famines, and these lead to banditry and eventually to

peasant uprisings. Inadequately maintained frontier defences begin to crumble. Provincial officials and their armies begin to defect, and the central government starts to go to pieces. Then follow the wars that liquidate the old regime and clear the slate for a new dynastic beginning.³

This is no doubt a much simplified scheme, which as the authors themselves say best fits the development of the early Han dynasty. Nevertheless, the combination of internal weakening of the government, strengthening of centrifugal forces (warlords), peasant revolts and invasions by nomadic peoples from the North - though in different forms and with differing weight of the four elements involved - has occurred time and time again. But each time the basic form of the bureaucratic political organisation of the Chinese empire was restored again. China remained a dynastic state, dependent upon the production and efficient extraction of an agricultural surplus and for a long time also on different forms of corvée, i.e. forced labour. The development of productive forces and differentiation of social functions was relatively slow and discontinuous.⁴ China basically remained what Elias has called a two-tier society, in which the power differentials between a small upper crust of rulers - courtiers, bureaucrats, scholars and warriors - and the ruled, the vast majority of which were peasants, are very great.⁵ Though the number of merchants and artisans increased considerably in certain periods (particularly during the Sung and Ming dynasties),⁶ they never acquired a sufficiently large measure of power of their own - Chinese cities did not acquire autonomy, but remained centres of bureaucratic control - to affect the basic characteristics of the two-tier power balance.

The latent conflict in such a two-tier society, which comes into the open in recurrent peasant revolts

and banditry, has been succinctly expressed by the first Tang emperor Li Shih Min:

The emperor likes to have a palace built, but the people do not like building it. The emperor craves the flesh-pots, but the people hate doing labour service. It is dangerous to burden the people with excessive labour service....An emperor collecting too heavy taxes is like a man eating his own flesh. When the flesh is gone, the man dies.⁷

This indicates that emperors could learn from the decline of former dynasties how to better maintain their control. In this way, for example, the so-called 'equal field system', which was first used in the Northern Wei state, was further developed in the early phases of later dynasties. The system involved the distribution of waste land and public lands among peasants, so that each adult would have a small area of land for himself and another larger piece for arable farming, out of which the grain tax had to be paid.⁸ In the Sung dynasty, however, developed what Mark Elvin has called 'manorialism without feudalism...., a new and distinctive social order based on the enserfment of much the peasant population.'⁹ This change was made possible by an 'economic and technological revolution (which reduced the burden of the imperial administrative superstructure, increased the efficiency of the Chinese war machine, and created enough economic integration to be a real obstacle to renewed political fragmentation.'¹⁰

Elvin's study may demonstrate that the 'dynastic cycle' is too simple an interpretation of the 'pattern of the Chinese past', but, it also shows that China remained a two-tier society, in the sense that although there were at times spurts in the development of productive forces, there was no long-term tendency in the direction of a reduction of the power differentials between social classes and between rulers and ruled. On

the contrary, it appears that the power balances may have become even more uneven after the economic and technological revolution of the Sung period. Although serfdom disappeared again in the course of the 18th century, 'the landlord and the pawnbroker took the place of the manorial lord'.¹¹ And if William Hinton's description of Long Bow Village is a representative description of rural life before the Chinese revolution, the power balances remained extremely uneven and found clear expression in widely diverging living conditions.¹² The examples of cruelty and complete lack of compassion of the landlords vis-à-vis the peasants, which Hinton describes, show that there was little or no identification between the gentry and the peasants in the Chinese countryside.

The Chinese dynastic state was, in Elvin's words, 'the world's largest enduring state'. Though dynastic China went through regular political upheavals and even through an 'economic and technological revolution', it remained the same in one very important respect: in the enduring very high degree of unevenness of the power balances between rulers and ruled and between social classes. Before the impact of Western penetration began to affect the development of China, there were no signs that the Chinese dynastic state was beginning the process of transformation from dynastic into nation-state. Dynastic states in Western Europe, on the contrary, did not go through a dynastic circle similar to that of the Chinese empire. Compared to China, dynastic states and court society in Western Europe represented a relatively short phase in a continuing longer-term process of social transformation in the direction of nation-states. After dynastic states in Western Europe had reached the culmination of their development in the period of 'absolutism', they rather quickly became 'ancient régimes', considered as obsolete even by many of its contemporaries.

3. TWO MEANINGS OF THE TERM 'NATION'

What are the distinguishing characteristics of nation-states? What is the relation between the two components of the concept: 'nation' and 'state'? What kind of entities does the term 'nation' refer to?

The term 'nation' is rather confusing. In common parlance it refers to the social unit which demarcates a people, which rightfully and legitimately should have its own state - as expressed in the claim that a right to national self-determination exists.¹³ Because it has proven impossible to find one or more objective criteria (such as language, ethnicity, religion, culture etc.) with which to determine what group of people forms a nation, every nation in this sense has, to a greater or lesser degree, to be invented.¹⁴ In many cases, particularly in Western Europe, the emergency of 'nations' followed the development of (dynastic) states. Because 'nations' have to be invented and 'national' solidarity is not a natural or innate property of human beings, there is a tendency to develop national ideologies, in which the specific 'nation' which is the subject of the ideology, is projected as far back into the past as possible.¹⁵ Presenting nations as eternal, as always having been there, also makes them form the 'natural' units into which mankind is divided. The further back in history one can trace one's own nation and find national heroes and other symbols of national unity, the more easy it is to develop a strong and self-evident we-image as the basis of identification with and loyalty to the 'nation'.¹⁶

This strong tendency in national ideologies to present the nation as a timeless, natural given, is a continuous source of confusion in both political and social-scientific discussions about nationalism and the characteristics of nations. Renan's question of 'what

is a nation?' still has not received a satisfactory, unequivocal answer.¹⁷ This is due not only to the doctrine of nationalism, but also to the fact that it is really not one question, but two:

-Why is it that particular territorial units have come to be identified as 'nations' and not others, and why have some 'nations' thus identified been successful in obtaining their own state and others not (such as, Armenians, Kurds, Ibo's, etc.)?

-What is the nature of the process of transformation of dynastic or other types of states (such as colonial empires and colonial states) into nation-states?

To ask the latter question implies not only that 'nations' are a relatively recent phenomenon, but also that the term 'nation' can be regarded as a short-hand expression for a development in a particular direction.¹⁸ That process can be described in different ways.

In dynastic states people are treated and see themselves as subjects of the King or Emperor, not as fellow citizens of a nation. In dynastic states the centre of political activity is the King's court. King and state are one: there is no distinction between the private household of the King and the public household of the State. That the term 'household' has been replaced by the more impersonal term 'budget' is itself an indication of the nature of the change. In dynastic states there are no political parties, but parties form the centre of political activity in nation-states. In dynastic states, there is as yet no need for such an institutionalised relationship between rulers and ruled through which demands and grievances of the ruled can be expressed and filtered and within which political leaders are recruited and selected. In dynastic states, in other words, rulers have less need to take the interests and demands of the ruled into account - even though rulers can pay dearly

if they neglect the interests of their subjects too much, as the dynastic cycle in China demonstrates. Because this need is much less apparent in dynastic states than in most contemporary nation-states - for reasons which I shall analyse in greater detail - the degree of identification between rulers and ruled and between social classes as members of a single polity (which later became the 'nation') was very low. For aristocrats 'the people' were a very different - and often expendable - kind of people than members of their own class. They could only identify with and feel compassion for those belonging to 'the people' who were their personal servants or sub-ordinates - and even then very differently to the way in which they would identify with members of their own class across state borders. This lack of identification with a 'nation' also applies to the lower classes. At the time the Communist Manifesto was written, Marx and Engels were surely right in stating 'The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got!' But the more the proletariat began to transform its latent strength into organised power through trade unions and political parties, the more these organisations acquired a stake in the state and the more 'working men' began to identify with the 'nation'. The clearest manifestation of that development was the conduct of social-democratic parties in August 1914, when the vast majority of their parliamentarians voted for granting war credits to their respective national governments, and working men - at first, at least - joyfully went to war. During the First World War, socialists also for the first time took part in coalition governments with 'bourgeois' parties. The development of the 'welfare state' strengthened these tendencies even further. The latest phase in this development is the so-called Eurocommunism, especially the attempt of the Italian communist party to establish an 'historical

compromise' with the Christian-Democrats and to join the government. That identification with the 'nation' proceeded very slowly - even in the most highly centralised European state - as is shown in Eugen Weber's study of rural development in France between 1870 and 1914, which he has called Peasants into Frenchmen.¹⁹

This description of some of the differences between dynastic and nation-states should not be misunderstood. They should be seen as different aspects of a long-term development in a particular direction, not as differences between two static 'systems'. There is no clear caesura, no distinct boundary line in the process. It is not the abolition of monarchy and court aristocracy which marks the emergence of the nation-state. The French revolution undoubtedly marked a strong spurt in the development towards nation-states in Western Europe, particularly because of the creation of a popular army through the 'levée en masse' (1793) and the emergence of Jacobin nationalism, both contributing to the superior strength of the French 'national' armies.²⁰ French conquests, in turn, kindled national feelings in other parts of Europe, especially in Germany, which led to strong emphasis being placed on the importance of national culture and language in history writing, philosophy and the arts.²¹ It also contributed to the earliest formulation of the need for 'self-reliance' in industrial development, as expressed in the writings of the German economist, Friedrich List.

But the rise of Napoleon shows how slowly the underlying power balances changed. Whether a dynastic state is transformed through revolution as in France, or through forcing the monarchy to become 'constitutional' and thus gradually moving the centre of power and political activity from the King and his Court to government and parliament, formed through the electoral struggle between political parties, has not made all that much

difference in the longer run. In a developmental sense, all contemporary nations are still - and probably will remain - in the process of becoming: they nowhere correspond to the idealized image contained in national ideologies of the 'nation' as an harmonious, well-integrated whole in which all members are guided by the same values and can participate and share equally.²²

4. A FIGURATIONAL INSTEAD OF A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

The preceding arguments may also demonstrate that for an explanation of why these differences between the 17th and 18th century dynastic states and contemporary nation-states have emerged, a structuralist or systems perspective is of little help. Such a perspective often leads to reifying the state, for example by looking at it as a particular set of institutions or apparatuses which fulfills functions for an abstractly conceived mode of production. The difficulties encountered when starting out from such a reified perspective on the state, are then often met by simultaneously personifying the state, by endowing it with a will and capacity to plan of its own, which make it possible for 'the state' to fulfill the role which theory attributes to it. This tendency of simultaneous reification and personification can be observed in most Marxist attempts to theorise about the state.²³ It is due primarily to the vogue in Marxism to regard 'modes of production' as 'systems' or 'structures', which in their essential features remain the same until transformed by a revolution (or at least a period of 'transition') into another system, and which in the last instance determine structure and functions of the state.²⁴

If we want to avoid such reification and personification of the state, it is preferable to see states as

changing figurations of people, who are dependent upon each other in specific ways and who strive to better or maintain their own position in terms of their own scheme of orientation and values.²⁵ That also makes it possible to go beyond the conceptual distinction between 'state' and 'society' which gives rise to unnecessarily difficult problems of boundary demarcation. The state-society distinction reinforces the tendency to reify and personify the state, and to see it in instrumental terms, as the frequent use of the term 'state apparatus' illustrates. It is therefore better to speak of state-societies, and then to specify the development of their institutional make-up, patterns of interdependencies, and power balances.

In order to understand the dynamics of development of contemporary states, a figurational perspective makes us see states in terms of a long-term development; the usefulness of this has recently been demonstrated by the analysis of the developmental patterns of what political anthropologists have called 'early states'.²⁶ A figurational perspective in state formation focuses attention on the interdependencies between rulers and ruled, as they are affected by developments internal to the state unit, by the competition between states and by transnational interdependencies of various kinds (economic, communications, technological, military, etc.). To examine the position of rulers implies the need to analyse the power rivalries within a ruling establishment - between cliques, clans, factions and so on - and the way in which these rivalries influence the relations between the rulers and ruled. Although the importance of class formation processes for the power balances within the state - particularly in later phases of the development of human societies - cannot be denied, comparative analysis of early states has demonstrated that it is necessary to make an analytical distinction between class relations

and those between rulers and ruled.²⁷ Important indications of the changing nature of state figurations are the degree of identification between rulers and ruled and between social classes, and the degree to which rulers are forced to take into account the interests and grievances of the ruled. The analysis of state formation processes requires that one does not confine oneself to class formation as the primary source of political conflict, but should take into account the relations between established and outsider groups (whether ethnic, religious, caste, regional, or based on certain despised professions) as these influence the balance between centrifugal forces within the state.²⁸ When strong centrifugal forces in the form of nationalist or separatist movements threaten the integrity of a state, such established outsider relationships, for example, may constitute a separate and distinct contribution to the emergence of 'harsh' political regimes.²⁹

These remarks are meant only to clarify the theoretical perspective on the development of states, used in this paper. As I shall use this perspective to compare the political cycles or fluctuations occurring in all contemporary states, whether under-developed or advanced capitalist or communist, I shall make a few preliminary remarks about what one could call the uneven character of the state and nation formation process.

5. THE UNEVEN CHARACTER OF STATE AND NATION FORMATION PROCESSES IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The development in the direction of nation-states began in Western Europe. This is not the place to discuss why it occurred in Western Europe and not in other parts of the world, although that question must be posed if one does not want to rely on an ethnocentric explanation of the process.³⁰ Suffice it to point to two important differences: in early Medieval Europe there

was only a very meagre supply of prisoners-of-war, made into slaves, as a source of cheap labour power. Secondly, in Western Europe, politically autonomous fortified towns could emerge within which large groups of people were able to engage in commercial and productive activities on their own behalf, without being subjected to the specific commands and needs of a Court and/or a state bureaucracy, as was the case in dynastic states or empires in other parts of the world, such as Byzantium, China or Siam.³¹ Even though the development of productive forces reached a relatively high level in some earlier states, their structure of rule and distribution of power was probably the major reason why it did not continue in the dynastic states, in which towns remained centres of bureaucratic control and/or in which slavery fulfilled important productive functions.

In Western Europe, however, during what we have come to call the Middle Ages, the nature of interdependencies between rulers and ruled and between social classes began to change in a specific long-term direction - in hindsight perhaps best summarised as a development in the direction of the formation of industrial nation-states.³² The dynamic of the early phases of this process is most clearly analysed in Norbert Elias's The Civilizing Process, though that study centres on the inter-connection between state formation processes and 'civilizing', the observable changes in the personality structures of people as individuals. Elias has given little attention to the specific structure of development of 'economic' interdependencies.³³ He does recognize the crucial importance for state formation of 'economic' developments - increasing agricultural production and surplus, growing division of labour, expansion of trade and improvement of transport, development of technology, increasing use of money, inflow of bullion (contributing, for example,

to the impoverishment of the landed aristocracy) - but uses and describes economic processes as a kind of general background condition. Wilterdink has formulated this observation as economic processes give the appearance of a massive, slowly moving background that is indispensable for understanding what is going on in the foreground, but which themselves are hardly investigated nor explained. And he adds: 'In this way, paradoxically, the Marxist assumption that the economy is the conditioning base may receive unintended support.'³⁴ It should be added that Elias's own research as published in The Civilizing Process and Die Höfische Gesellschaft (Court Society) does not take us beyond the French revolution. For that reason the interconnection between state formation and industrialisation processes is not dealt with in his work. The nature and implications of that relationship have only recently become much clearer, with the break-up of the colonial empires of Western Europe into newly independent states, claiming to be 'nations' in the ideological sense of forming a people which should legitimately acquire its own state. The problem of 'development' - as a process held to be susceptible to conscious planning - of the countries belonging to the Third World, has clarified the increasing importance for late industrialising countries of strong state institutions, able to create the necessary conditions for industrial and scientific-technological development and increasing differentiation of social functions.³⁵ In 19th century Western Europe, on the contrary, industrialisation may be said to have been in advance of the development of regulative and coordinating institutions the central level of the state.³⁶

The problems of 'development' and 'dependency' of the Third World have starkly illuminated the consequences of the uneven character of the development of productive and destructive forces (weaponry) of means of organisation and communication,

and of state-institutions in different parts of the world.³⁷ There are therefore a number of very important differences between state formation processes in different parts of the contemporary world. These are connected firstly with the period and the manner in which countries were incorporated into the international division of labour - with its core in the Atlantic seaboard countries of Western Europe, afterwards including the United States - and into different colonial empires.³⁸ Secondly, they are connected with the character of the state and culture formation processes of different societies, before direct colonial or indirect economic, political and cultural penetration by the West occurred.³⁹

With the advent of industrialisation, however, and the increasingly worldwide character of the network of interdependencies - where we need to consider both the international division of labour and the international balance of power, especially the increasingly strong influences on Third World states of the conflict between the great powers - important similarities can also be observed between patterns of state formation processes in different parts of the world. Though they may be in different phases (the development in the direction of 'nations' has gone furthest in the smaller countries of Western Europe, much further than in either the United States or the Soviet Union, and also much further than in the countries of the Third World), we can nevertheless observe a similar long-term trend in processes of state formation. Such similarities - with which this paper primarily is concerned - are related to the homogenising influences of industrialisation (which have brought some analysts to the mistaken inference of 'convergence' between East and West); to modeling influences emanating from the Western European states, sometimes leading to conscious imitation of state institutions; and to the coercive character of competition between states, which also has homogenising effects.⁴⁰

It may be helpful to make use of the distinction between 'pristine' and 'secondary' states, which has been developed for the analysis of early states.⁴¹

Dynastic and nation-states, as they have emerged in Western Europe, can be seen as pristine states, in the sense that the influences of more highly developed states on their own development were minimal and negligible for the explanation of the structure of their development (though the development of the French absolutist state was in a sense the model for other states on the European continent, especially Prussia). But the states which have emerged out of European colonial empires, can only be understood as 'secondary' states in the sense that the pattern of their development is heavily influenced by 'earlier' states. A little noticed example of this influence may be mentioned here. The claim that colonised territories form 'nations', and the use of symbolic referents for nationalist ideologies derived from European historical experience, force ruling groups in the Third World to give more attention to the needs and demands of 'the people' or 'the poor' - be it often only in terms of lip-service - than the greatly uneven power differentials between rulers and ruled may require. This is expressed in the use of populist rhetoric, even by highly repressive and conservative military regimes. The pressure of the ruled on the rulers in secondary states is reinforced by the availability of political ideologies - such as Marxism - which have been developed in the pristine states of Western Europe, accompanying the changes in power balance between rulers and ruled and between social classes as they first occurred there.

The political consequences of industrialisation are certainly very important, but industrialisation should not be seen as the prime mover to which all other developments 'in the last instance' can be referred back. What should be analysed more adequately are the

interconnections between industrialisation as a world-wide process, interstate competition and the inherent (or 'relatively autonomous') characteristics of state formation processes themselves.⁴²

6. THE LONG-TERM TREND: THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN DEMOCRATISATION AND OLIGARCHISATION

This takes us back to the nature of the long-term trend in state-formation processes, as it began to manifest itself in the 'great transformation' from dynastic agricultural to industrial nation states, first in Western Europe, but gradually acquiring a worldwide character as the result of European expansion.⁴³ The long-term trend is best expressed as a contradictory tendency in the direction of both functional democratisation and oligarchisation.⁴⁴

The earlier dynastic-agricultural states were predominantly two-tier societies, in which 'the balance of power in favour of the upper tier [was] very disproportionate, inelastic and stable', even though the interdependence of the two levels imposes some limitations on the conduct of the people belonging to the small upper crust of society.⁴⁵ If the rulers did not respect these limitations, they were not able to maintain their position, thus, for example, causing the 'dynastic cycle' to run its course.

The transformation of dynastic into nation-states is one aspect of a changing pattern of interdependencies, which gives rise to less uneven, more elastic and less stable power balances. What can be observed is 'on the one hand a change in the distribution of power between social strata as well as in the nature of social stratification itself [and] on the other hand a change in the distribution of power between governments and governed'.⁴⁶

In connection with the growing division of labour and the increasing differentiation of the functions which people fulfill for each other - which gradually also makes social stratification much more complex, for example in the sense of internal differentiation within social classes, as these are circumscribed on the basis of a Marxian perspective - the power differentials between social classes or strata and between rulers and ruled became smaller. 'Democratisation' in this sense is thus related to the functions which people fulfill for each other - and in that manner to 'industrialisation'. Elias has made the very useful distinction between 'functional' and 'political' democratisation. It can take a long time before functional democratisation results in the kind of parliamentary multi-party political systems, based on civil rights such as the right to freedom of expression and assembly, which we have come to associate with 'democracy'.

But political democratisation - limiting the power of the monarch by binding it to a constitution; increasing the competences and power of parliaments; the extension of suffrage; the recognition of trade unions and the right to strike, and so on - cannot be understood without taking functional democratisation into account. A sign of increasing latent strength of lower strata in a society is a tightening of 'the never-ending vigilance.... and the closely-woven net of precautions' which the ruling power establishment employs to keep them under control.⁴⁷ One of these precautions can be to prevent the forming of any type of political organisation apart from the organisations officially recognised by the state and the ruling monopolistic party.⁴⁸ Because such precautions may remain effective for a long period of time, functional democratisation does not automatically lead to political

democratisation, as the development of the Soviet Union and other industrialising communist states has demonstrated. But it does imply that the ruling establishments of states within which functional democratisation occurs, are forced to pay more attention - in words and in deeds - to the needs, demands and grievances of the ruled, of 'the people', than in more stable dynastic states, such as China or Siam. Rulers begin to find it increasing difficult to rely only on violent repression.

The previous remarks already point to the second long-term tendency, which can be observed in the development of contemporary states: oligarchistion. The process of functional democratisation itself implies the development from two-tier state societies to societies in which many more levels can be distinguished, between and within organisations (including state institutions) and between social strata.⁴⁹ Apart from the metaphoric distinction between 'high' and 'low' social classes, tiers or levels in this sense have a territorial aspect - such as the central, provincial, district and communal levels of government - and a functional aspect - the distribution of competences and functions between organisational levels as such, whether these are government bureaucracies, corporations, political parties, trade unions or universities. In two-tier societies, being relatively undifferentiated, the different kinds of levels (stratification, territorial and functional) tend to coalesce. In more differentiated societies not only do the number of levels increase, but 'levels' themselves become more differentiated. This increasing complexity and density of the network of functional interdependencies within states - and at present also across national boundaries - increasingly requires coordination and regulation at different levels, but particularly at the central level of the state.⁵⁰ The power of central coordinating and regulating institutions

increases as the dependence of the ruled upon these institutions becomes greater. For that reason a continuing tendency towards centralisation and bureaucratisation of rule has accompanied the transformation from dynastic-agricultural to industrial-nation states. These processes in turn give rise to oligarchisation, to the concentration of power chances in the hands of small groups of top leaders of the different organisations which together form the institutional network of contemporary state societies.⁵¹ A symptom of oligarchisation at the central level is the declining power of parliaments in the most advanced nation-states. But oligarchisation processes can be observed not only at the central level of the state, but also within organisations such as corporations, trade unions or Michels' classic example, socialist parties.⁵² At the same time, state institutions expanded - most markedly during wars and in periods of economic crisis - and increased their power.

If the complexity of the power balances in contemporary nation-states is to be properly taken into account, the concept of a 'ruling class' becomes more and more inadequate - even apart from the argument that has already been brought forward that it is necessary to make a distinction between rulers-ruled and class relations. It is no longer an exaggeration to say that bourgeoisie and proletariat, the entrepreneurial and working classes - or the two 'industrial' classes, as Elias calls them - have jointly become the 'ruling' classes at the central level of some of the most highly industrialised nation-states.⁵³ Power relations between members of the two industrial classes are much less uneven at the central level of the state than at the factory level. For this reason, more differentiated concepts are necessary. Rather than of ruling class or elite, it is therefore better to speak of the ruling establishment of

a state-society, not as a homogeneous monolithic power bloc, but as an antagonistic alliance (or coalition of less durable character). In that manner it becomes possible to take both cooperation and rivalries between ruling groups, the different parts of such a ruling establishment, into account.

Oligarchisation arises not only from the growing need for coordination and regulation in increasingly differentiated societies; it is also connected with the monopolisation processes which result from the coercive dynamic of competition, as expressed in Fichte's dictum 'whose power does not increase, while that of others does, declines'.⁵⁴ Elias has demonstrated that the 'monopoly mechanism' has been the underlying dynamic of the formation of dynastic states and still continues today in the competition between states. On the basis of such a criterion, contemporary states can be distinguished between great powers that participate in the competitive struggle, and middle and small powers that have successively been eliminated from the struggle and have become to a greater or lesser degree dependent upon one (or more) of the great powers, be it as formal or as informal allies. Such dependence may be reduced if it is possible to play off great powers against each other.⁵⁵ The increasing importance of interstate rivalries and of transnational interdependencies, makes it likely that the power balance between rulers and ruled within states will be tilted in favour of the first.⁵⁶ Interstate competition and especially war thus also helps to strengthen the central institutions of the state, particularly of the military.

Power balances within industrialising states - and the process of industrialisation itself - are also strongly influenced by monopolisation processes in the sphere of production (including commerce, banking, transport and

other services). The monopolisation of means of production results not only in class formation: in the division and asymmetrical interdependence between those who control means of production and those who do not and are therefore forced to sell their labour-power on the market; it also leads to the emergence of a few oligopolistic corporations, whose activities increasingly become global or transnational and show less and less respect - unless forced to do so - for the priorities of national economic policies.⁵⁷ Leaving the power balance between governments and multinational corporations aside, it is surely the case that the monopolisation of control over means of production contributes to oligarchisation within nation-states. But it is useful once again to point to the counter-tendency: the more that certain chances are monopolised, the more dependent the monopolist becomes on his dependents for administering and preserving those chances. In this way, functional democratisation also manifests itself within large corporations and is expressed in the present drive towards participation and self-management. De Swaan has conceptualised the continuing consequences of functional democratisation as the transition from 'command' to 'negotiation' figurations and has analysed its implications not only for the development of the state and organisations within states, but also for the personality structures of individuals.⁵⁸

It seems tempting for politicians and social scientists to focus selectively on one aspect of the overall process of development of industrialising nation-states and to project that into the future as a single trend. But it may be more realistic to perceive the contradictory nature of the process and the continuing tensions and problems to which it gives rise. Neither oligarchy nor democracy are possible as 'systems', one could say.

To identify the contradiction between democratisation and oligarchisation as a long-term tendency shared by all industrialising nation-states, does not imply that the similarities between them are more important than the differences. For people living in contemporary states, the differences are probably more important than the similarities.

How should the differences be analysed? We can make a distinction between different kinds of power resources, the distribution of which largely determines the degree of unevenness of the power balance between rulers and ruled and between social classes or strata. For the purpose of analysing state formation processes the most important power resources are: means of violence, means of taxation, means of production, means of organisation, and means of orientation.⁵⁹ The differences between contemporary states can be clarified first by looking at the degree to which these power resources are monopolized or fragmented and, secondly, if they are monopolised, by asking how many of these monopolies are controlled by the ruling establishment of the state. In most communist states all five major power resources are to a very great extent monopolised and controlled by that ruling establishment. In most capitalist states the means of organisation and orientation are less monopolised, the means of production are controlled primarily by oligopolistic corporations, and only the means of violence and taxation are monopolised centrally by the state. Such differences become clear if the position of 'dissidents' in the Soviet Union is compared with that of the 'left' opposition in Western Europe. 'State institutions' and 'capitalist class' may form such strong coalitions, however, that states with more dispersed power resources can become highly authoritarian and repressive. Examples are not difficult to find - we have only to think of Chile, South Africa or El Salvador.

But such coalitions - if they do not receive external support - are likely to be less stable than the combination of five central monopolies in communist states as justified by the doctrine of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.⁶⁰ The differences between one-party and multi-party states, or between 'hegemonies' and 'polyarchies' in Dahl's terminology, are enormously important for the people living in them.⁶¹ But the similarities between these types should not be obscured.

To compare is to look for similarities as well as differences. The purpose of making comparisons is often misunderstood as a search for identical cases. Thus people will say: 'But you cannot compare x with y', when what they really mean is: 'I consider the differences to be much more important than the similarities'. Such weighing is a matter of judgement and judgements are usually made on the basis of ideological preferences and guided by the question 'who or what is to blame?'.⁶² If political or ideological judgements did not interfere with attempts to describe and explain the development of human societies, it would not be necessary to object. But, all too often they do, in the sense that they make people focus selectively on certain interconnections and events and make them blind to others.⁶³

That in what follows I shall focus on similarities between the developments of different kinds of state societies, therefore, does not imply that I consider them to be 'comparable' in the sense that in my own judgement the similarities are more important than the differences.⁶⁴

7. SHORT-TERM FLUCTUATIONS AND
POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS

If we want to understand the short-term fluctuations in the development of contemporary states - the coming and going of political regimes and the shifts in government policies or 'development strategies' - they should be seen against the backdrop of the long-term contradiction between democratisation and oligarchisation. To explain specific fluctuations, it is also indispensable to examine the relation between regime change, the international economic situation and/or position of the country concerned, and its international political position. Such connections may be quite direct, as for example in the recent case of Afghanistan or the 1970 coup of Lon Nol et al against Shihanouk in Cambodia. Specific fluctuations may also be connected with long-term trends in the world economy, which might make it possible to discover movements in the same direction in a number of states at the same time. But I am not able here to analyse the interconnections between long-term trends and short-term fluctuations in the development of the world economy - the research of which is also at a very early stage - and similar movements in state formation processes.⁶⁵ That there are such connections is likely, but our knowledge about long-term development processes is probably not yet sufficient to enable us to make reasonably grounded conjectures about them. In what follows I shall therefore be concerned primarily with the immanent, relatively autonomous, dynamic of the development of contemporary states.

To clarify the similarities in the long-term dynamic of state formation processes, as it manifests itself in short-term fluctuations between 'harsher' and 'softer' regimes and policies, I shall discuss the work of three authors, concerned in turn with capitalist industrial states, in

particular the United States; communist states, in particular the Soviet Union; and 'underdeveloped' or 'peripheral capitalist' states.⁶⁶

One more preliminary remark should be made. None of the theories that I shall discuss deals with the more drastic discontinuities in state formation processes, which are commonly conceptualised as 'revolutions'.⁶⁷ However, even though successful revolutions imply a radical change in the recruitment of the ruling establishment and the nature of the political regime of the state in question, they have so far not resulted in a reversal of long-term tendencies in state formation processes. On the contrary, revolutions as well as the threat of revolution, have resulted in strengthening and expansion of state institutions, and in strong spurts of centralisation and bureaucratisation.⁶⁸ For that reason, some social scientists speak of the 'etatisation' of revolutions. That term explains little, however, it only indicates the conflict between the professed aims of revolutionaries and the effects of revolutions.⁶⁹ That state institutions are strengthened after a revolution has to do with the need for consolidation of political control of the new ruling establishment; with the need felt by the new rulers - and which they use to justify their rule - to stimulate and expand productive forces and increase the relative power position of their own state vis-à-vis other states.⁷⁰

8. SHORT-TERM FLUCTUATIONS: THE TENSION BETWEEN 'ACCUMULATION' AND 'LEGITIMATION'

The study of revolutions belongs to the analysis of long-term contradictions in the development of contemporary states and to the uneven character of industrialisation and state formation processes in the world as a whole, rather

than to the study of short-term fluctuations. But it is a question of degree - and there are revolutions and revolutions, so the boundary lines are again difficult to draw.

In what follows I shall show that a pattern of short-term political fluctuations can be observed in all contemporary states, whether 'capitalist', 'socialist' or 'postcolonial'. The works of three authors will be used in illustrations and analysing these patterns; James O'Connor's The Fiscal Crisis of the State; Alain Besancon's The Soviet Syndrome; and Michael Kalecki's work on 'intermediate regimes'.

The analysis of political fluctuations short of revolutions can benefit from the analysis of the 'fiscal crisis of the state' as undertaken by the American Marxist economist James O'Connor.⁷¹ O'Connor himself is primarily concerned with improving the Marxist theory of the capitalist state, but his model provides a useful starting-point for understanding the dynamic of political fluctuations in the most highly industrialised nation-states in Western Europe and the United States.⁷² O'Connor's empirical material is derived from the development of the United States from the 1950s to the early 1970s. Though he does not say so explicitly, his model can be interpreted as indicating that the collapse of capitalism will not arise out of 'capital logic' or directly out of the struggle between classes, but out of the breakdown of the state, which may result from the combined effects of the 'fiscal crisis' and of the political struggle directed primarily against the state.⁷³

O'Connor's model is based on a functional assumption.⁷⁴

In his own words:

Our first premise is that the capitalistic state must try to fulfil two basic and often mutually contradictory functions - accumulation and legitimization. This means that the state must try to maintain or create the conditions

in which profitable capital accumulation is possible. However, the state also must try to maintain or create the conditions for social harmony. A capitalist state that openly uses its coercive forces to help one class accumulate capital at the expense of other classes loses its legitimacy and hence undermines the basis of its loyalty and support. But a state that ignores the necessity of assisting the process of capital accumulation risks drying up the source of its own power, the economy's surplus production capacity and the taxes drawn from this surplus (and other forms of capital).⁷⁵

The two main state functions both involve increasing government expenditures. Though it is often difficult to allocate specific expenditures (such as education, transport, preventive medicine, etc.) to either accumulation or legitimation, it is possible to say that expenditures fulfill one function more than the other, and on that basis to make a rough assessment of the bias contained in public budgets as a whole - as this is expressed in the popular slogan 'guns or butter'. The accumulation function is served, for example, by expenditures on research and development; on the military, especially weapons production; on the infrastructure of roads, airports, harbours, etc.; on maintaining the natural environment in reasonably good condition; on more specialised kinds of education, and so on. According to O'Connor, the primary beneficiaries of accumulation expenditures are the large corporations ('monopoly capital') and the more privileged parts of the population. Legitimation is served by expenditures for the extension of what has come to be called the welfare or service state: social security, old-age pensions, health services, remedial and recurrent education, and so on. O'Connor's argument is that in capitalist states both kinds of expenditures are necessary and that they condition each other's increase because of the inherent dynamic of the capitalist mode of production: 'successful accumulation' is always uneven, unbalanced, filled with contradictions,

creating poles of wealth and poverty, regional underdevelopment, decline of small business, environmental costs, etc.⁷⁶ On the other hand, 'the growth of the state sector is indispensable to the expansion of private industry; particularly monopolistic industries'.⁷⁷ There are thus cumulative pressures which make both kinds of expenditures increase continuously. State expenditures tend to rise more rapidly than the means of financing them. It could be added that the interaction of the two functions contributes to the expansion of state institutions, which advance their own interests and thus also contribute to increased expenditure.

As profits continue to be appropriated privately, however, and the tax capacity of the population is limited - tax revolts and 'black circuits' develop - a 'fiscal crisis of the state' is the result. Though the recent world-wide recession and economic crisis has clearly intensified the fiscal crisis, O'Connor has based his analysis on what has occurred during the economic boom period of the 1950s and 1960s. He has therefore recently again emphasized 'that the fiscal [social] crisis retains its own specificity and has its own independent relationship to the general crisis'.⁷⁸

What O'Connor hints at, but does not fully take into account, is the relative autonomy of the dynamic of state formation processes vis-à-vis economic development or 'capital logic'. But he remains tied to a conception of the state as developing and functioning primarily for 'capital':

The first basic thesis presented here is that the growth of the state sector and state spending is functioning increasingly as the basis for the growth of the monopoly sector and total production. Conversely, it is argued that the growth of state spending and state programs is the result of the growth of the monopoly industries'.

For that reason his model is based on the assumption that the capitalist state must try to fulfill the two basic and contradictory functions of accumulation and legitimation - an assumption which is not linked in any way to a theory about the longer-term development of the state. That the 'legitimation' function of the state becomes more and more important, for example, is not only due to the increasing need of 'socialisation' ('statisation' would be a better term, if it did not sound so awkward) of costs and the destabilising effects of 'successful accumulation', but also to the consequences of 'functional democratisation'. What O'Connor's model lacks is a clearer perspective on the development of state functions in relation to changing power balances in 'capitalist' states. It also suffers from the disadvantage that it is based on the development of the United States, which is not only a capitalist state but also a great power, involved in military-strategic competition.⁷⁹ Comparative analysis would, for example, have shown that not all capitalist states can be described as 'warfare-welfare states', in which the 'structural determinants of both military spending and welfare outlays are broadly the same'.⁸⁰ O'Connor uses the term 'state' as a synonym for the composite whole of government, bureaucracy and other state institutions, without further specifying its structure and development.

Nevertheless, O'Connor's analysis of the tension between the accumulation and legitimation functions of 'capitalist' states is an important contribution to the analysis of political development (and a considerable improvement on most Marxist theories of the capitalist state). It can fulfill an orienting function, in the sense that it is possible to regard 'accumulation' and 'legitimation' as shorthand expressions for two more or less contradictory foci of government policy. In that manner political regimes and the fluctuations between regimes can be characterised in terms of whether they primarily stress the accumulation or the legitimation function.

If a 'fiscal crisis' is indeed either a long-term problem or a continuing trend (O'Connor's position in this respect is not quite clear), the way in which a regime deals with it (the manner in which cuts in government expenditures and price increases are distributed among different groups of the population) will be an additional criterion to assess the nature of political fluctuations. It provides a possibility to define the left-right spectrum in terms of the degree in which priority is given to either accumulation or legitimation, rather than in terms of a progressive-conservative distinction, with its unavoidably normative or teleological connotations. An analysis of party programmes could show the differences in this respect. It would even be possible to observe shifts in priorities over time within different political parties. The social-democratic parties in Western Europe, for example, have in recent years shown increasing awareness of the fact that too much stress on 'legitimation' may begin to endanger the international competitive position of their national economies, so that state expenditures for accumulation - in terms of industrial restructuring, stimulation of 'innovation', etc - need to be emphasized more than before. This shows again that political fluctuations have to be connected with changes in international interdependencies - though it will be far from easy to assess their relative weight in specific cases. For that reason, political fluctuations are very difficult to predict, being connected not only with the development of the domestic political and economic situation, but also with the development of interstate competition, the world economy, and the relative position of a particular state or 'national economy' within it.

Short-term political fluctuations, however, have their own, relatively autonomous dynamic. If a regime comes into power which stresses accumulation expenditures to the detriment of legitimation expenditures, it will encounter increasing

resistance. Voters will rally to an opposition programme which promises to pay more attention to legitimization expenses. The process also operates conversely. When legitimization expenditures and the accompanying institutional developments (such as the rise of a welfare and more recently of a 'well-being' establishment) are given too much weight, a movement in the contrary direction may be observed. There is, of course, a relationship with class struggle, in the sense that the entrepreneurial class is likely to stress accumulation expenditures and the working class legitimization expenditures; but stratification and institutional differentiation (increase in number of levels) have become so complex that the model of a bipolar class struggle is of only limited use. A complicating factor is that political parties are still tied to political ideologies that have emerged from nineteenth century problems and conditions.⁸¹

For the moment, I do not want to take my analysis further than the argument that political Auctuslians are emerging from the combination of the long-term contradictory trend towards both oligarchisation and democratisation, and the continuous tension between the accumulation and legitimization functions, which can both be observed in contemporary industrial parliamentary democracies (or advanced capitalist states). To analyse the development of contemporary states on the basis of such a perspective will also help to further clarify the distinction between rulers-ruled and class relations. In terms of observable interdependencies, the relations between rulers and ruled at different levels become more and more important, while the importance of class relations declines. 'Rulers' more and more assume the character of impersonal, complex organisations, with 'staff' and 'line' functions, with sub-organisations with a reasonable degree of autonomy, and so on. Organisations (whether state institutions or corporations) have employees and clients; often the employees are more privileged than the clients, whether the latter are

consumers of products or of services. The more the welfare or service state expands, the more the ruled will become 'clients' of state institutions. And at the level of the factory or other organisational units, the internal levels of the organisational hierarchy have become major determinants of the distribution of income as well as of power chances. The increase in levels in the organisation hierarchy accounts for increasing differentiation within the working class. Class in the dichotomous sense is still important at the central level of the state: wage negotiations are held between representatives of the organised working class and the organised employees, with state institutions playing a role which can stretch from mediation to command. But the representatives of the organised working class have themselves become part of the ruling establishment. Within trade unions there is also oligarchisation - and a pattern of relations between rulers and ruled. We also see attempts to break the trade unions' monopoly (or oligopoly) by the development of 'wild' labour movements and organisations.

For these reasons models of contemporary state-societies cannot be developed on the basis of class interdependencies only. The tension between 'accumulation' and 'legitimation', which apparently becomes greater as functional democratisation proceeds, is a better starting point from which to examine the connection between power balances at different levels of contemporary 'capitalist' states.

8. SHORT-TERM FLUCTUATIONS: WAR COMMUNISM AND NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

Can we observe similar short-term fluctuations - related to the long-term contradictory trend towards democratisation and oligarchisation and to the tension between the accumulation and legitimation functions of the state - in industrialising communist states, such as the Soviet Union?

I would submit that our understanding of the Soviet Union - or for that matter of all other states in which communist ideology fulfills important functions - could benefit from an analysis in such terms. It is too often hampered by that ideology: either because the course of development of the Soviet Union is attributed to the evil inherent in communist (Marxist-Leninist) ideology, or because the purpose of the analysis is to explain (or excuse) the gap between the professed aims and expected outcomes of the ideology and what has in fact happened. That makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to take the real significance of such a monopolistic state ideology into account, and to acquire a more adequate perspective on the differences and similarities between states in which the ruling establishment controls a greater or smaller number of monopolised power resources.

Much energy has recently been devoted to examining whether the Soviet Union can still be labelled 'socialist', even if it is admitted that it is a bureaucratically or otherwise 'deformed' socialism.⁸² To designate the Soviet Union a 'real' or 'actual' socialism implies that it is still in a period of 'transition', first towards socialism proper, and ultimately to the final stage when history will be transcended and a classless society will be re-established. The most recent trend, however, is to break the link between the Soviet Union and socialism by asserting that it has become a new type of class society, a society of the Soviet-type, based on the 'Soviet mode of production', which is not moving towards 'socialism' but tends either to reproduce itself or to succumb through crisis and revolution.⁸³ In that manner one can unreservedly criticize the Soviet Union but remain a Marxist, use the Marxian class concept to analyse the Soviet Union and other communist states, and reserve the term 'socialism' for something that does not yet exist ('a socialism that still has to be invented'),

but remains 'necessary'.⁸⁴ But even then, the influence of the capitalist-socialist dichotomy and the conceptual apparatus that goes with it, tends to determine the setting and limits of the analysis. It is still difficult to come to grips with the peculiarities of the Soviet Union, because the same distinction and the same conceptual apparatus is used for self definition and self-justification by the ruling establishment in that country.⁸⁵ As the French political scientist Alain Besancon, whose model of the cyclical character of the development of the Soviet Union I shall discuss in this paragraph, has remarked: '[the] main difficulty of [comprehension of the Soviet Union] consists in remaining mentally within a universe whose coordinates bear no relationship to our own. This sensation of passing through the looking-glass is disagreeable and psychologically difficult to tolerate for very long.'⁸⁶ For that reason, there is, as Besancon says, the danger of naiveté, of accepting the ideological self-definition and self-justification of the ruling establishment at face value: 'granting a universal value to notions that assume their authentic meaning only in the sphere defined by ideology'. Accordingly,

'The naive man, for example, will call a regime where sovereignty belongs to all citizens a democracy, although the latter term should designate a regime where sovereignty belongs to the Communist Party alone; will call an equitable sharing of property among citizens social justice, when the term should mean putting all property at the disposal of the Communist Party alone; will call the autonomy of citizens liberty, when the latter should really refer to the free will of the Communist Party.'⁸⁷

For those of us who do not live in a country in which the ruling establishment monopolises the means of orientation (implying in practice that all official discourse, newspapers and other mass media are conducted in the

'wooden language' of the monopolistic state ideology), some measure of naiveté is difficult to avoid. In an interview with the Russian writer Georgy Vladimov, Chairman of the Moscow group of Amnesty International, I asked whether there was any relation between the way the Soviet Union in its foreign policy increasingly talked about 'peace' and the domestic political situation. Vladimov answered:

All that talk about 'peace' is just for the foreign market. That is Soviet language. A friend of mine has been obsessed for a long time with a plan to make a dictionary of official Soviet language. If Soviet newspapers begin to discuss the further extension of democracy, it means that a new wave of repression is to be expected. If they talk about further development of international contacts, it means less people will be allowed to travel abroad, apart from KGB employees. That is the interesting thing about it: if you read the newspapers consciously and understand that language, you'll see that they tell the truth, only in words which express exactly the opposite of what they normally mean. The meaning of the words contains the lie. Most people here know the real meaning and see through the lies, but they don't mind so terribly because they know that such language is intended for the use of foreigners.⁸⁸

For these reasons it seems better to speak of 'communist' rather than of 'socialist' states as 'communism' most adequately designates the monopolistic character and content of the ideology of the ruling establishment.⁸⁹ Important goals that derive from the ideology include industrialisation, be it of a special character, and, to a large extent, 'catching up with the West' (which may mean two things: catching up with American military-strategic power or catching up with the living standards of the OECD countries), although this is heard less frequently since the disappearance of Khrushchev from the political scene. The most suitable label, therefore, is probably that of 'communist industrialising states' as a distinct category, even though internal

differences within that category are considerable.

The purpose of these remarks is to indicate briefly the difference in context within which short-term fluctuations occur, a context in which ideology and the totalitarian aspirations of 'Party and State' are the most important durable elements. In his stimulating long essay, The Soviet Syndrome, Alain Besancon has suggested that the development of the Soviet Union is best understood in terms of 'very pronounced oscillations from one model of Soviet policy to another: War Communism and NEP, or New Economic Policy.'⁹⁰ Besancon is aware of 'the drawbacks in naming two political models, or two ideal types, after two unique and unreproducible historical situations.' But, he says:

these names also designate two political lines of the Party which have been employed since the very first years of the regime, and which I believe will be revived in future contexts. These models do not exist in their pure state: they are analytical tools for interpreting concrete situations.⁹¹

To Besancon, the Soviet Union is 'a state unlike any other', 'having been born of a theory'.⁹² The basic difference with other states is that the Soviet Union has emerged from, and is based on, an ideology which seeks to transform society to its own image. Movements from the one policy line to the other result from the recalcitrance of 'civil society', from the fact that people are not easily moulded according to a preconceived design. This could also be formulated in terms of the relations between central planning and unplanned processes having a dynamic and direction of their own.

Besancon describes the movement as follows:

By 'War Communism' I mean the Communist Party's efforts to force civil society to become a part of the plan predetermined by the ideology. In 1917 the Communist Party had a clear vision of the form that society spontaneously would assume, once 'bourgeois' power was overthrown and 'proletarian' power, as represented by the Bolshevik Party, was established. Things did not go as expected. Social groups, individuals and economic developments followed a course that was entirely different from the one predicted. War Communism, therefore, was a violent effort to force things and men into the sphere in which the Party thought and acted.

By 'NEP' I mean a certain relaxation of ideological power, and a certain latitude given to civil society to organize as it saw fit. The NEP was born of the failure of War Communism. Those in power had come to realize that, as they gradually extended their violent control over civil society, the latter was being killed, while the new institutions projected for civil society remained stillborn. If they persisted in this direction, power itself risked collapsing because, as it extended its coercive force to the totality of men and things, the wellsprings of that force ran dry.⁹³

The first movement from the 'harsh' policy line of war communism, directed to implementation of the ideology and to the primacy of 'accumulation', towards the 'soft' line of NEP, in which first the peasants and later the population as a whole gained 'breathing space' and more opportunity to organize their lives in accordance with their own priorities and values, was quite clear. But the interconnections were complex: the introduction of the first NEP in March 1921 coincided with a successful attempt to prevent 'fractionalism' within the Party, which resulted in 'the vesting of what was in effect a monopoly of power in the central organisation of the party'.⁹⁴ In the Soviet Union short-term fluctuations may have combined with a long-term trend, in which oligarchisation was more pronounced than functional democratisation. But the recurrence and longer duration of NEP phases demonstrates that functional democratisation is nevertheless present. However, the tendency to interpret NEP phases, such as the long one that started

after the death of Stalin, as a sign of continuing 'liberalisation' - the hope cherished during the 1960s - proved to be mistaken. As Wallerstein has remarked,

Times that have been socially defined as 'good' seem to correlate with the flourishing of assumptions of steady-state progress. Times that have been socially defined as 'bad' or 'troubling' seem to give renewed impetus to varieties of cyclical theories, which after all offer reassurance that the 'bad' is only temporary. 95

But it is more realistic - as Wallerstein himself suggests - to start from the assumption of a combination of 'cycles' and 'trends'. Such an analysis has not yet been made for the Soviet Union; Besancon's model of cycles within a 'system' (or what I would prefer to describe as the durable context of the five monopolies controlled by Party and State institutions) is therefore a step forward. His description of the short-term fluctuations - War Communism I; NEP I; Stalin's War Communism II; the collectivisation of agriculture through terror; NEP II during World War II; War Communism III immediately after 1945; NEP III after Stalin's death in 1953 - 'which could only be of long duration', show that the accumulation-legitimation tension is also quite important in the Soviet Union. The political effects of the tension between these two state functions are different from those in capitalist welfare states, however, if only because of the impact of ideology. For that reason, according to Besancon, neither further 'liberalisation' nor transformation into an authoritarian state is possible: 'the ideological regime cannot be transformed into a tyrannical regime without losing its reason for existence, which is to impose pseudo-reality by force and to obtain a declaration of allegiance from everyone'.

Becancon mentions the kolkhoz as an example:

To the eyes of the uninitiated it is a sort of slave plantation, directed by an external bureaucracy and under the surveillance of a system of repression. The serfs receive their food from harvests over which they have no say. They work when ordered to do so: someone else decides what will be sown, what will be plowed or mowed, and so forth. These are not the first plantations in history. They existed under the Roman Empire, in colonial Brazil, in antebellum Virginia. They existed in Russia from the sixteenth century to 1861. But it is very easy to see why an ideological regime - a regime whose ideology is the sort of socialism that took shape in Western Europe during the nineteenth century - cannot recognize a kolkhoz for what it is. To do so would involve a contradiction that would destroy the legitimacy of that ideology. ⁹⁶

In other words, there are strong reasons for preserving the party and the state monopoly over the means of orientation, and for not letting the regime 'deteriorate' into a more simple form of authoritarianism. Ideology may not be the prime mover to the extent that Besancon claims. But it cannot be neglected. That there are similarities between the short-term fluctuations in all contemporary states does not imply that the Soviet Union is a state like any other - to be analysed in exactly the same manner as states in which the ruling establishment does not control the five major power monopolies. The most important question to be raised with respect to the development of the Soviet Union still remains: what will be the long-term consequences of continuing functional democratisation? Can the long duration of the post-Stalin NEP be explained as a consequence of the increasing latent strength of the ruled? ⁹⁷

9. SHORT-TERM FLUCTUATIONS:
INTERMEDIATE REGIMES

The third model that I want to discuss is devoted explicitly to the emergence of a specific type of political regime, and was first introduced by the Polish economist Kalecki.⁹⁸ A further development of his model by Skouras led to an interesting discussion between him and Post and Wright on the question of whether the rise and fall of political regimes can be studied without taking long-term development processes into account.⁹⁹

The notion of an 'intermediate regime' has been developed to account for 'a new historical phenomenon', which does not fit traditional analytic categories. Intermediate regimes have emerged in Third World states which at the time of achieving independence had not developed an indigenous capitalist class and in which the 'feudal' class was insignificant or politically divided and ineffectual. The shortest description of the intermediate regime is 'the rule of the lower middle class through state-capitalism'.¹⁰⁰ One could also define an intermediate regime as an antagonistic alliance between military men and bureaucrats, who seek support from the mass of the population and therefore tend to use populist and nationalist rhetoric.

Why does Kalecki speak of intermediate regimes? First, they are intermediate between capitalism and socialism, in the sense that the state aims at owning a large part of the means of production and control a large part of investment, though there remains a significant role for private ownership, in particular of industrial means of production, and the institution of private property remains respected. In the second place they are intermediate because they tend to represent the interests of the lower middle class in the towns and the rich or

medium-rich peasants, which can be considered as intermediate strata between the upper (landed) classes as the main owners of the means of production and the lower classes, the poor peasants, the urban workers and the urban poor. In the third place they tend to be intermediate between the Western and the Soviet bloc by following a neutral or non-aligned foreign policy.

Intermediate regimes tend to have a similar programme: they attempt in the first place to achieve through nationalisations some degree of economic emancipation for foreign capital. Secondly, they try to carry out land reforms in order to eliminate the traditional landed oligarchy. Thirdly, they try to assure continuous economic growth, which is necessary if they are to keep the support of the urban population in particular. Examples of intermediate regimes, which Kalecki first discussed, were India and Turkey and later Bolivia. Other examples would be Egypt under Nasser, or Peru under Velasco.

On the basis of this model Skouras has tried to assess the prospects for industrialisation of such regimes, but without giving empirical references to the development processes of specific Third World countries.

In their comments on Skouras's article Post and Wright therefore raise the question:

Should scholars be concerned with discerning categories of regime and then refining each of these in order to facilitate the labelling of specific countries at specific points in time? Or should we try to identify fundamental processes which underly all regimes and thus permit comparisons to be made but which take different concrete forms in different places and times? We would take the latter position, and suggest that the two basic processes involved are those of class and state formation, themselves of course very closely related.¹⁰¹

In their brief reply they are not able to indicate further what they consider to be the nature and dynamic of these 'fundamental processes' and how they are in fact

interconnected. They do point out, however, that Skouras does not make any mention of the military which have been the main instigators of these kinds of regimes. One could include Japan after the Meiji restoration; the young Turks in the 1920s; and similar groups within the military in Egypt, in Peru, in Algeria, in Lybia and so on. Clearly, it is quite insufficient to simply speak of 'lower middle class'. To take the role of the military into account also points to the fact that the development of such political regimes cannot be divorced from the international context. Many 'intermediate regimes' could also be called 'military nationalist' in the sense that such regimes tend to be very concerned with the international power position of their state, with a possible loss of independence or autonomy, or a threatening decline of its international power position.

Though the rise and fall of political regimes should indeed, as Post and Wright argue, be connected to longer-term processes, their fate cannot be understood or explained without taking the dynamic of short-term fluctuations into account. 'Intermediate regimes' have not been very durable. They were certainly not intermediate in between capitalism and socialism in the sense that they moved their societies in the direction of socialism. They were short-term fluctuations in the direction of 'soft' regimes, which could not last, because of the tension between the combined emphasis on 'accumulation' and 'legitimation' that such regimes attempted to realize. The combined force of international interdependencies, especially the influence of Great Powers and of the internationalisation of capital, and the large degree of unevenness between rulers and ruled within Third World countries, has changed many intermediate regimes into some form of more 'harsh' and often more authoritarian regimes, stressing accumulation through foreign capital rather than legitimation.

Many harsh regimes in the Third World, however, after a period in which capital accumulation and economic growth have been stressed to the detriment of redistribution and legitimation, appear to find it necessary to liberalise or democratise to some extent, and in any case to take more account of the needs and demands of the less privileged groups of the population.

The development of contemporary Third World states is more difficult to analyse than that of either the advanced capitalist or the communist industrial states. They are more dependent upon Great Power competition and upon the development of the international economy, within which their power resources are severely limited. Nevertheless, it is more fruitful to analyse their development in terms of a combination between longer-term developmental tendencies and short-term fluctuations than to search for the structure and functioning of different statically-conceived types of regimes or political systems. The great variety that can be observed among the political regimes in the contemporary Third World is due to the fact that the patterns of their short-term fluctuations are not synchronous, do not run parallel. The 'soft' regime of Allende in Chili coincided with developments toward very 'harsh' regimes in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. Now the pattern is reversed, the Pinochet regime in Chili coincides with a movement towards a much 'softer' regime in Brazil.

It will be clear that these are simply examples that indicate that the kind of approach I advocate can be quite fruitful. A better-grounded model can only be advanced by tracing the developmental patterns of a large number of Third World countries. Nevertheless, the contradictory long-term trends towards oligarchisation and democratisation combined with tension between the accumulation and legitimation functions of states also appear to be a useful starting

point for more adequate analysis of the development of contemporary Third World states.

10. CONCLUSION

'HARSH' AND 'SOFT' REGIMES

The most difficult problem in comparative analysis is the relationship between similarities and differences. Even if it is possible to show certain similarities in the state formation processes in different parts of the contemporary world, the question remains whether the differences between them do not also condition the form in which similarities occur. If one speaks, for example, of 'harsh' and 'soft' regimes, the differences between contemporary states affect the precise meaning of what 'harshness' and 'softness' in fact constitute. In my discussion of short-term fluctuations in advanced capitalist states I have not spoken about movements from 'harsh' to 'soft' regimes, because in parliamentary multi-party democracies, changes in government make but very marginal differences in that sense. One may say that the process of functional democratisation combined with secularisation, the progressive 'disenchantment of the world' (Weber), leads to the undermining of the traditional ways in which ruling establishments justified themselves and were considered to be 'legitimate' by the population. At all levels of society, rulers now have to justify themselves more and more through their actual performance. But certain fluctuations can be observed, though they do not run quite parallel with regime changes. In the late 1960s a democratisation movement consisting mainly of students, intellectuals, social workers and so on, emerged in the United States and Western Europe. This

produced a shock reaction among the ruling establishment and a certain loss of nerve. The most visible results were the events of May 1968 in France. The unintended result of this democratisation movement, however, has been increased centralisation and oligarchisation, particularly in the field of higher education. When the ruling establishment discovered that the threat was less serious than it had at first believed, a swing backwards occurred: the ruling establishment reasserted itself and became less easily intimidated. We also see the development of a 'new conservative' ideology, particularly in the United States. But it is difficult to say that the political regimes in the United States and Western Europe have become 'harsh'.

The extent of short-term fluctuations, the intensity and distance of swings from one direction to the other from 'soft' to 'harsh' and vice versa, appear to have been much stronger, both in certain communist countries (Czechoslovakia is a case in point, though the swings of the pendulum in China have also been considerable) and the Third World. One may perhaps say that the more stable and advanced is the development of political democratisation, the less drastic will be the swings between political regimes. Such a generalisation can be connected to the pejorative meaning which the term 'regime' has in ordinary language, as it refers to a form of government which is rather authoritarian and arbitrary, in the sense of not being bound and controlled through legal and constitutional procedures.

Fluctuations between political regimes may also be connected to other developments - long and short-term - which I have not discussed. The conflict between generations, for example, may be quite important. If the ruling establishment does not take into consideration the need to provide sufficient chances for members of the younger

generation to rise in the institutional hierarchy, whether of political parties, the bureaucracy or the military, swings may be more drastic. The struggle for succession of leadership may be a relatively autonomous source of political fluctuation. But again, only empirical analysis can help to assess the relative weight of different longer and short-term processes.

For all these reasons a general description of the nature of short-term political fluctuations would be premature. To speak of movements between 'harsh' to 'soft' regimes or 'harsher' or 'softer' regimes has no more than a sensitising and orienting function. These metaphors can acquire a more precise meaning only on the basis of an analysis of the longer-term development processes of specific societies. To complicate matters even further, a 'harsh' regime can be a weak regime in the sense that its capacity to rule and to affect the development of its society may be very limited, whereas a 'soft' regime can be a 'strong' regime able to mobilise large parts of the population and with considerable capacity to steer the development of its society in a desired direction. The need for more nuanced concepts, with which gradual differences can be indicated, remains very great.

If we provisionally sum up the results of this inquiry, we can say that the most important differences between contemporary states in terms of degrees of 'harshness' or 'softness' are related, first, to whether they are pristine or secondary nation-states. In both respects the time of entry of a state into the 'contemporary world' may have important consequences for the question whether the five major power resources are monopolised or fragmented and, if they are monopolised, whether or not these monopolies are controlled by a single political party in conjunction with the state-apparatus.

These differences also determine the specific patterns in which similarities in the development of contemporary states work themselves out. The tension between functional democratisation and oligarchisation on the one hand, and between accumulation and legitimation on the other hand, are shared by all contemporary states. We can explain the underlying pattern of short-term political fluctuations with reference to such an orienting model, but the specific patterns of different states are neither identical nor synchronous in time. We can also postulate a relationship between the two long-term trends: the more functional the progress of democratisation, the greater the tension between the demands of 'accumulation' and 'legitimation' will become. For that reason, if the constitutional and political party structure of a contemporary state does not provide sufficient means and possibilities to accommodate these tensions, its political system will become more unstable in the sense that a quick succession of regimes or policies is likely. Such a situation will be experienced as 'crisis', as is currently the case in most contemporary states. The improvement of 'political democracy', as the institutional framework to contain the tensions inherent in the development of contemporary state-societies, therefore remains very important.

NOTES

1. The first issue of the new journal of the International Political Science Association, the International Political Science Review (vol. 1, no. 1, 1980) happens to be devoted to 'Studies in Systems-Transformation'.
On corporatism in general, see f.e. Philippe Schmitter "Still the Century of Corporatism?" "The Review of Politics, XXXVI, 1974, pp. 85-131; in Latin America James M. Malloy ed. Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America, Pittsburgh, 1977, and in Western Europe Leon de Wolff, Sociaal democratie en Neo-Corporatisme in Jan Bank, Martin Ros en Bart Tromp ed. Het Eerste Jaarboek voor het Democratisch Socialisme, Amsterdam 1979, pp. 41-71.
2. In his Asian Drama. An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations (New York, 1968) Gunnar Myrdal has introduced the term 'soft states' to indicate the limited capacity for social transformation due to the lack of social discipline of most Asian states, which he observed in the time during which he made his study. But Myrdal's ink was hardly dry, when a number of the same states began showing tendencies of becoming 'harsh' states, with authoritarian governments attempting to discipline the population and to create more favourable conditions for capitalist accumulation, as Jan Breman has tried to demonstrate in his "Het nieuwe regime in Azië: de overgang van de weke naar de harde staat" Internationale Spectator (XIII, 3, March 1977, pp. 137-152). But Breman rightly remarks that such a harsh regime does not have to be a strong regime in the sense of being effective in the realisation of its aims. There are two polarities to be distinguished: 'weak' versus 'strong' and 'soft' versus 'harsh'. Both have to be made more precise if they are to be more than suggestive metaphors. See also Koen Koch, Terrorisme en de ontwikkeling naar een 'sterke' staat. Transactie, j.97, no. 1, 1978, pp. 41-49.
3. Edwin G. Reischauer and John K. Fairbank. East Asia: The Great Tradition, Boston, 1960, pp. 117-118.
4. See Mark Elvin, The Pattern of the Chinese Past, London, 1973.
5. Norbert Elias, What is Sociology? English translation by Stephen Menzell and Grace Morissey of Was ist Soziologie? München, 1970. London, 1978, esp. Ch. 2, Game Models, pp. 71-104.
6. See Elvin, op.cit., ch. 12 and Hilda Hookham. A Short History of China, London, 1969. ch. 9 and 12. During the Ming period there were even urban revolts: textile workers rose against tax collectors (p. 162).
7. Hookham, op.cit., p. 83.
8. Idem, p. 81-84.
9. Elvin, op.cit., p. 69.
10. Ibidem
11. Elvin, op.cit., p. 235.
12. William Hinton, Fanshen, Harmondsworth, 1972 (1966), esp. ch. 2-4, pp. 29-66.

13. For an analysis of the problematic character of this claim see Rupert Emerson. Self-determination Revisited in the Era of Decolonization. Occasional Paper no. 9. Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University, December 1964.
14. ^{See} Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples, Boston, 1960, esp. part Two. The autonomy of the nation, pp. 89-213. Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication, Cambridge, Mass. 1953, esp. ch. 1 and Eugen Lemberg Nationalismus (2 vol.) Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1964, esp. Vol. II, ch. III,B, pp. 29-52. For a sharp critical analysis of the doctrine of nationalism Elie Kedourie Nationalism, London, 1960. The intellectual origins of nationalism are discussed extensively in Hans Kohn The Idea of Nationalism, New York, 1944.
15. See Norbert Elias. Processes of State Formation and Nation Building. Transactions of the Seventh World Congress of Sociology Sofia, 1972, vol. III, pp. 274-284.
16. "(Vietnam) possesses more than twenty centuries of recorded history, and Vietnamese nationalists would claim much more: Ho Chi Minh wrote a polemical history of Vietnam in 1942, which dated its origins to 2879 B.C. The depth of the Vietnamese people's consciousness of their own history would astonish the far less imaginative nationalists and relic-worshippers of North America and of Western Europe. In 1964, Hanoi children were shown animated film cartoons which attempted to depict life in the legendary Vietnamese kingdom of Van-Lang, a kingdom which was supposed to have come to an end, after being ruled by eighteen glorious sovereigns, in the third century B.C. The purpose of these cartoons was to show that in this kingdom even a heroic child had once managed to defeat a seemingly unvincible invader king...." Alexander Woodside Community and Revolution in Vietnam, Boston 1976, p. 1-2. The fact that Vietnam has been a dynastic state for more than twenty centuries is a neglected element in the explanation of why the Vietnamese have been able to first defeat France and later so successfully resist the American intervention, that the American government felt forced to withdraw its troops and negotiate an end to the war.
17. Ernest Renan Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? Paris, 1882. His own answer: "Une nation, c'est pour nous une âme, un esprit, une famille spirituelle, résultant dans le passé, de souvenirs, de sacrifices, de gloires, souvent de deuils et de regret communs; dans le présent, du désir de continuer à vivre ensemble".
18. See Elias, op.cit., esp. par. 4.
19. Eugen Weber, Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914. Stanford, 1976.
20. See Alfred Vagts. A History of Militarism. Civilian and Military. Rev.ed., New York, 1959, ch. 4, pp. 104-129.
21. "..... all the national movements of the nineteenth century have been decisively though unintentionally stimulated by revolutionary France and Napoleon. Both Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism

have their roots in these traditions". Frederick Hertz. Nationality in History and Politics. London, 1944, p.164.

22. In the new introduction (1968) to The Civilising Process Norbert Elias has shown that in Talcott Parsons' concept of the "social system" "the image of the nation as community can be discerned.... in the twentieth century sociological models of a normally unchanging "social system" the desired ideal of a harmonious integration of all parts of the nation is presented (mingled with realistic observations) as something that exists, a fact.... the nation-state existing here and now is idealized". Norbert Elias The Civilizing Process, vol. I, New York and Oxford, 1978, p. 243.
23. See K. Koch. De nieuwe marxistische staatstheorie : (her)ontdekking van de grenzen van een structureel functionalistisch paradigma. Acta Politica, XIV, January 1979, pp. 3-70; G. van Benthem van den Bergh. Is a Marxist theory of the State possible? in J. Goudsblom e.a. Human Figurations, Amsterdam, 1977, pp. 157-179; E.P. Thompson The Poverty of Theory, London, 1979, esp. the title essay, pp. 193-359, a scathing critique of Althusserian a-historical, structuralist Marxism.
24. For a more extended discussion of the specific character of 'state' interdependencies see G. van Benthem van den Bergh. The Interconnections between State and Class Formation. Acta Politica, XI, July 1976, pp. 289-312.
25. Not only in Marxism, though. Elias has used game models as a didactic devise in order to show that as the course of the game is relatively autonomous from the intentions of individual players, yet does not exist apart from and does not consist of anything but the moves of the players, so it is with the development of human societies. But, as he says, this is difficult to grasp: "Metaphors are used which oscillate constantly between the idea that the course of the game can be reduced to the actions of individual players and the other idea that it is of a supra-personal nature", Norbert Elias What is Sociology? p.91.
26. See H.J.M. Claessen and Peter Skalnik ed. The Early State, The Hague, 1978; René Hagestein Ed. Stoerien met Staten, Leiden, 1980. In most of the anthropological literature the term 'state formation' is used as synonymous with state origins. But it may be better not to think in terms of such discontinuities, but to see state formation as an ongoing process of transformation of the attack and defense units, in which men have always lived and which still form the primary unit of identification and solidarity for most people. The discussion about state origins often degenerates into chicken and egg questions such as: 'did stratification (class formation) produce the state?' or 'is stratification the consequence of the formation of the state'. The development of 'early states' rather raises the question: why and how did a greater degree of specialisation and institutionalisation of functions of rule emerge? But the problem of demarcating chiefdoms from early states (see the chapter by Ronald Cohen in The Early State) shows that there is no clear caesura between a 'non-state' and a 'state-society' - as there is no clear caesura between dynastic and nation-states.

27. See Claessen and Skalnik, op.cit. In their definition of the early state they speak explicitly of rulers and ruled, but do not use the term class.
28. In the introduction to the Dutch translation of The Established and the Outsiders (London, 1965) Norbert Elias begins to develop a general model of established-outsider relations of which he considers the relations between social classes to be but one form. Though he has not worked out this model very extensively, it makes more sense than the attempt made by some Marxists to reduce all ethnic, religious, caste or 'national' conflicts to class relations or deny that such conflicts are really 'real'.
29. That has, for example, been the case in Malaysia. The political development of Malaysia is dominated by the ethnic (in Malaysia itself it is often seen as 'racial') conflict between the two majority groups of the population, the Chinese and the Malays. Both can be seen as established and outsider groups at the same time: the Chinese control most economic power resources, the Malays most 'political' power resources (bureaucracy and military). The Malays as the originally indigenous people - Bumiputra's - also claim the 'nation' for themselves, a claim strengthened by the fact that the Head of State is in turn one of the Sultans, the former rulers in what became the British colony of Malaya. After fighting between Chinese and Malaysians in 1969 a 'harsh regime' emerged. The development of Malaysia is one of the many illustrations of the fact that 'ethnicity' and ethnic conflict are a function of state formation. Most of what we now call ethnic groups or, significantly 'national minorities' became incorporated in a state not their own, having had at a prior stage of their history if not a state, at least a form of rule or of regularised relations among their constituent parts.
30. Immanuel Wallerstein (The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century New York, etc. 1974) pays some attention to the question why 'as of 1950, the stage was set in Europe but not elsewhere for the creation of a capitalist world economy' (p.63). He analyses the differences between Western-Europe and China, i.e. 'between a feudal system and a world empire based on a prebendal bureaucracy', having also a different 'agronomic thrusts, of Europe towards cattle and wheat, and of China towards rice'. But Wallerstein compares only the differences in initial conditions. Once his 'world-system' has come into being, its development is supposed to account fully for the development of each of its different parts. As the 'world-system' is a European world-economy, his analysis had to become heavily ethnocentric - in the same way as dependency theory in general, despite the intentions of its original proponents. The weight and importance of cultural and political continuities in Third World societies is thus neglected. For critical analyses of world-system and dependency approaches see Tony Smith: The Underdevelopment World Politics, vol. 31, no. 2, January 1979, pp. 247-288; Jan de Vries, Het Wereldmodel van Wallerstein, Theoretische Geschiedenis, Vol. III, 3, 1976, pp. 105-122; L. Blussé, H.L. Wesseling, G.D. Winius, ed. History and Underdevelopment, Essays on Underdevelopment and European Expansion in Asia and Africa. Leiden and Paris, 1980.

31. Cf. Norbert Elias, Über den Prozess der Zivilisation, Bern und München, 1969, vol. II, pp. 69-72. "The absence of slave imports and slave labour gives the working people also as a low stratum a considerable social strength.... And the technical development of Western Europe, including the development of money to the specific form of 'Capital' which is characteristic for Western Europe, has the absence of slave labour and the development of free labour as a precondition" (p. 72, my translation).
32. The long-term direction of that development can also be summarised as 'increasing interdependencies', in the sense that more and more people become dependent on each other for a greater number and variety of specialised functions. The extent, density and geographical scope of functional interdependencies between people has become ever greater since the late Middle Ages, until it has become a world society, with fewer and fewer people - only a tiny number of forest peoples - living outside of its web of interdependencies.
33. To speak of 'economic' interdependencies is better than to speak of 'capitalism', because the term 'capitalism' suggests not only a prime mover, but also the development of a new unchanging 'system' instead of an ongoing process of figurational change. Here we find one of the central problems in Marxism. The ideological and conceptual consistency of a 'Marxist' analytical framework is dependent on the assumption that the 'fundamental' or 'essential' characteristics of 'capitalism' remain the same through all of its earlier or later phases. 'Late' capitalism is still capitalism: underlying changes in form, there remains an unchanging essence. When further queried about this assumption Marxists either end up in tautology: capitalism is capitalism because it is based on the contradiction between labour and capital (q.e.d.) or else they shout or stammer: exploitation and oppression.
34. Nico Wilterdink. The Figurational Analysis of Economic Processes. Paper for the Conference The Civilising Process and Figurational Sociology. Balliol College, Oxford, 5-6 January 1980.
35. The pioneering work of Alexander Gerschenkron. Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective. Cambridge 1962 and Continuity in History and Other Essays, Cambridge, 1968 should be mentioned here. See also Ellen Kay Trimberger, Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt and Peru, New Brunswick, 1978 and Theda Skokpol, States and Social Revolutions, Cambridge, 1979.
36. See Norbert Elias, What is Sociology?, op.cit., p. 141.
37. For a first attempt at synthesis on the basis of such a perspective - be it rather ethnocentric (see note 30) - see Daniel Chirot, Social Change in the Twentieth Century, New York 1977. Also Ralph Pettmann, State and Class, A Sociology of International Affairs, London 1979.

38. Wallerstein's 'world-system' analysis tends to neglect the differences between incorporation into the 'world-economy' of 'external arenas' and the creation of colonial empires, leading to the development of colonial states at the end of the 19th century. On the concept of 'colonial state' see J. van Baal 'Tussen kolonie en nationale staat: de koloniale staat' in H.J.M. Claessen, J. Kaayk and R.J.A. Lambregts ed. Dekolonisatie en Vrijheid, Assen-Amsterdam, 1976, pp. 92-105.
39. On this point see Tony Smith, op.cit.
40. See also Charles Tilly. Western State-Making and Theories of Political Transformation, the concluding chapter of Charles Tilly ed. The Formation of National States in Western Europe. Princeton 1975 (pp. 601-629). Tilly stresses the differences between state formation in Western Europe and the Third World.
41. See H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik, op.cit.
42. This point is further elaborated in my 'Is a Marxist theory of the state possible', op.cit. See also Karl Krarup. Acta Sociologica, vol.
43. Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time. Boston, 1944. See also Rodney Hilton a.o. The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism. London 1976; David Landes The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present. In these and most other studies on this subject, however, it is either 'capitalism' or the 'industrial revolution' which is seen as the decisive discontinuity. Only Norbert Elias places state formation processes in the center of attention, and justifiably so, because the development of relatively stable monopolies of violence and taxation was an important precondition for the rapid acceleration of 'productive' processes, culminating in the first and second industrial revolutions.
44. I have taken my clue from remarks made by Norbert Elias on various occasions during his lectures on state formation processes at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, between 1970 and 1977. See also Robert Michels Political Parties, New York, 1959 (reprint of the first English ed. 1915) and Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition New Haven and London 1971, who both stress the oligarchic tendencies within 'democratic' organisations or polities.

45. See Elias. What is Sociology, op.cit., p. 86-89. Members of the ruling establishment of two-tier societies 'imagine that the course of the game, as (they see) it unfold before (them), is more or less transparent..... Members of pre-industrial oligarchic elites - for example courtiers, men like the Duc de Saint Simon, memoir writer in the time of Louis XIV - usually felt that they had a precise knowledge of the unwritten rules governing the game at the hub of the state society The game played by the group on the upper level will be viewed by the players not as a game process but as an accumulation of actions of individuals."(p.87). That is the reason why historiography in dynastic states pays only attention to King and Court because it is assumed that King and Court control and determine the fate of society as a whole. The subjected classes (serfs, slaves, peasants) are presumed to be objects, not subjects of history. For an Asian example see Charavit Kasetsiri Thai Historiography mimeo, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thamassat University, Bangkok, 1980, and The Rise of Ayudhya: A History of Siam in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Kuala Lumpur, 1976.
46. Norbert Elias. Processes of State Formation and Nation Building, op.cit., p. 8. This implies also a change in the nature of social stratification, i.e. from a figuraton formed by estates to one formed by social classes.
47. Idem, What is Sociology? op.cit. p. 89.
48. See further G. van Benthem van den Bergh. On the Development of the Monopoly of Violence of the State. Paper for IPSA Conference, Moscow, August 1979. (Dutch version in Symposion, vol. 1, no. 3, 1980.)
49. See Norbert Elias. What is Sociology? op.cit., esp. ch. 3, Game Models, pp. 71-104.
50. An indication of the increasing need for coordination - and the role of state institutions in this respect - is the growing importance and precision of 'timing' and time schedules in the form of standardized calendars and clocks. See Norbert Elias, Essay on Time, published in the Dutch translation by G. van Benthem van den Bergh in De Gids, 1974, no. 9-10; pp. 600-608; 1975, no. 1-2; 5-6 and 9; pp. 50-59; 367-377 and 587-600.
51. See H.M. Helmers, R.J. Mokken, R.C. Plijter and F.N. Stokman, Graven naar Macht, Amsterdam, 1975. Also R. Michels, op.cit.
52. Though Michels speaks of an 'iron law of oligarchy' what he in fact shows is the strong tendency towards oligarchisation within all formal organisations with more than one level of decision-making.
53. See Norbert Elias. Processes of State Formation and Nation Building, op.cit. To avoid a misunderstanding to which Marxists in particular are prone, as they attach much value to their conception of an unchanging essence of capitalism the power balance between organised employers and trade unions remains uneven - but less uneven than in former times and less uneven at the central level of the state than at the factory and shop-floor levels.

54. "Wer nicht zunimmt, der nimmt, wenn Andere zunehmen, ab". Cited in R.F. Beerling, 'Hydra Macht', Wijsgerig Perspectief, vol. II, no. 5, May 1971.
55. In that manner 'non-aligned' states can turn weakness into strength.
56. From the earliest phases of state formation processes interstate competition has been a crucial aspect of the development of relatively stable control monopolies of violence and taxation. The French monarchs first acquired an institutionalised monopoly of taxation in the course of the hundred years war with England. See Norbert Elias, The Civilising Process, vol. II, English translation, forthcoming, 1980.
57. There is, however, currently a tendency to overestimate the power of transnational corporations, because they are seen as the embodiment of 'capitalism'. This tendency has less to do with realistic analysis than with attributing blame to the transnationals for most of the evils of the present world. The problem with large corporations - as Marx already noted - is not so much their power or their 'profit-motive', but the coercive character of competition, as it occurs both between states and between corporations. Competition between weak states often makes it possible for transnational corporations to play off different national governments against each other. The other problem is the worldwide uniformity of their technology and production methods, which do not provide sufficient employment chances in late industrialising countries and hinder the development of more autonomous and 'appropriate' forms of technology in the latest industrialising societies.
58. A. de Swaan. Uitgaansbeperkingen en Uitgaansangst: over de verschuiving van Bevelshuishouding naar Onderhandelingshuishouding, De Gids, 1979, no. 8, pp. 483-510.
59. It is, however, impossible to make a general classification of power resources, which would be valid for all human societies and all the phases of their development. Both power resources themselves and their relative weight and interconnections change in the course of development of human societies. It may nevertheless be useful to identify some constants, derived from a typology of (biosocial?) bonds between people. People fulfill functions for each other and derive power resources from these functions. What these functions are is determined not only by 'basic' human needs, but also by what people value and enjoy in life. For that reason symbolic functions, especially orientation and identification, may in some cases be more important power resources than productive functions, based on 'material' needs. In What is Sociology? Elias distinguished between affective, economic and political bonds, and points out that affective bonds are not confined to personal relations: "People's attachment to such large units (tribes or nation-states) is often as intense as their attachment to a person they love. The

individual who has formed such a bond will be as deeply affected when the social unit to which he is devoted is conquered or destroyed, debased or humiliated, as when a beloved person dies" (p. 137). A recent example is given by the development of the relations between Iran and the United States.

60. Cf. George Urban. A Conversation with Milovan Djilas. Encounter, Vol. LIII, nr. 6, 1979, pp. 10-42.
61. See Robert A. Dahl, op.cit., esp. ch. 2. 'Does Polyarchy matter?' pp. 17-32. It does, as Dahl convincingly argues.
62. See G. van Benthem van den Bergh. Attribution of Blame and the Social Sciences. Mimeo 1977. Dutch version published in De Staat van Geweld, Amsterdam, 1980.
63. For examples see G. van Benthem van den Bergh, op.cit., and Is a Marxist theory of the state possible?, op.cit.
64. If we recognize a number of relatively autonomous aspects - of the development of human societies - such as state and nation formation; the development of modes of production; the development of knowledge, both as technology and means of orientation; 'civilising' or the development of personality structures - we can formulate the hypothesis that it is the specific way in which these processes are interconnected, which can explain the differences and similarities between the development of different 'civilisations' and societies.
65. See the special issue on 'Cyclical Rhythms and Secular Trends in the World Economy', Review, vol. II, no. 4, Spring 1979, and especially Immanuel Wallerstein 'Kondratieff up or Kondratieff down?', pp. 663-675.
66. See Juan J. Linz, 'Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes' in Fred. I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby. Macropolitical Theory, Vol. 3, Handbook of Political Science, Reading 1977. pp. 175-411. Also Bart Tromp, 'Theorie en Totalitarisme' Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift, vol. 6, no. 2, October 1979, pp. 322-340.
67. For a cogent argument that they are not see Peter Singer 'On your Marx'. New York Review of Books, December 20, 1979. Singer criticises G.A. Cohen's Karl Marx Theory of History: A Defense, Oxford, 1978, who states that Marx offers a functional explanation of history (correct, according to Singer) and that functional explanations are scientifically valid (wrong, as Singer argues). I share Singer's views on both counts.

68. The use of particular labels for naming societies may already steer analysis in a particular direction, witness the ongoing discussion about the question whether the Soviet Union and its dependents should be called 'socialist' ('really existing' or 'actual') or not. I consider it more adequate to speak of communist states, because that label designates both their ruling ideology and ruling political party. 'Capitalist' states, in the same sense, do not exist. On the debate about 'really existing socialism' see R. Bahro, Die Alternative: Zur Kritik des real existierenden Sozialismus, Köln-Frankfurt am Main, 1977; Special Issue on Actual Socialisms of Theory and Society, Vol. 91, no. 2, March 1980 and Siep Stuurman, Het Reëele en het Noodzakelijke Socialisme, Amsterdam 1980. See also G. van Benthem van den Bergh, 'Leve het niet-reëele socialisme!' NRC-Handelsblad, June 7, 1980, a review of Stuurman.
69. The most adequate definition of revolution is the one proposed by Roderick Aya: "By 'revolution' I mean simply a situation in which effective sovereignty is fragmented into two or more competing power clusters in a territory where only one such violence monopoly had previously existed. The revolution lasts as long as the situation of contested sovereignty". (The Missed Revolution. The fate of rural rebels in Sicily and Southern Spain, 1840-1950. Papers on European and Mediterranean Societies ASC, Amsterdam 1975, p. 129). Aya also rightly emphasises that 'models of state-formation imply theories of revolution': "Once the state has become the main agency and object of political purpose, and politics itself means striving to share or influence the distribution of power among states or among groups within a state, revolution arrives as the last resort in political conflict". ('Popular Intervention in Revolutionary Situations: a Research Agenda. Symposion vol. 1, no. 1-2, 1979, p. 124-125).
70. See Alvin Gouldner, 'Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism.' Telos, no. 34, Winter 1977-78, pp. 5-49; Theda Skocpol States and Social Revolutions, Cambridge, 1979.
71. See Egbert K. Jahn. Das Problem der Identifizierung von Interessen im internationale System. Politisches Viertel-jahres Schrift, vol. 14, 1973. Sonderheft 5, pp. 347-384. "All emancipatory movements with universalist claims in modern history 'etatisierten' after having grasped state power, socialism as well as liberalism or protestantism" (p. 379).
72. Though there may indeed be rational reasons for a certain degree of authoritarianism of rule after a successful revolution, these should not be used as an apology - and rationalisation - for the kind of crude and cruel repression or terror, that has but all too often occurred after revolutions in the name of universal ideals, such as socialism. There can never be an 'objective' need for concentration camps or terror. On such 'rationalisations' see Alexander Zinoviev. The Yawning Heights. London, 1979.

73. James O'Connor. The Fiscal Crisis of the State, New York, 1973.
74. O'Connor describes his own work with modesty: "... I don't develop a state theory in FCS; merely a method for grasping on the basis of class analysis the relationship between capital accumulation, social struggles and the state budget". 'Some Reflective Criticisms on Mosley's "Critical Reflections of the Fiscal Crisis of the State"'. Review of Radical Political Economy, vol. 11, no. 3, Fall 1979, p. 60.
75. The dedication of O'Connor's study reads: "For the workers, the unemployed, the poor, the students, and others whose struggles against the state have made this work possible".
76. Though O'Connor argues against Marxist structural-functionalism (deducing everything from 'capital logic' supposedly inherent in the capitalist mode of production): "... it is question begging to simply deduce state functions from the requirements of accumulation based on Marx's theory of the conditions of capital accumulation", his own analysis is also functionalist. He simply assumes accumulation and legitimation as the two main state functions, without any attempt to explain their genesis in the context of a process theory of the interconnections between the development of capitalism and state formation. See Koen Koch, 'De nieuwe marxistische staatstheorie: (her)ontdekking van de grenzen van een structureel functionalistisch paradigma'. Acta Politica, XIV, January 1979, pp.3-71.
77. O'Connor, Fiscal Crisis of the State, op.cit., p. 6.
78. Idem, Reflective Criticisms, op.cit., p. 64.
79. Idem, Fiscal Crisis, op.cit., p. 9.
80. Idem, Reflective Criticisms, op.cit., p. 65.
81. See Benjamin Cohen, The Question of Imperialism, the Political Economy of Dominance and Dependence, New York, 1973; George Lichtheim, Imperialism, London, 1971; Bart Tromp, De Samenleving als Oplichterij, Amsterdam, 1977, esp. ch. 2. pp. 35-65.
82. O'Connor, Fiscal Crisis, op.cit., p. 152.
83. On this problem see John Dunn, Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future, Cambridge, 1979. See also Johan Goudsblom, Sociology in the Balance, Oxford, 1977, esp. ch. 5, which deals with the interconnections between the development of sociology and conservative, liberal and marxist ideologies respectively.
84. For a critique of 'deformation theory' as represented particularly by the writings of Ernest Mandel see Siep Stuurman, op.cit., ch. III.

85. See Rudolf Bahro, op.cit. and Stuurman, idem.
86. Ibidem, p. 180.
87. For that reason Gouldner's attempt (op.cit.) to remove the analysis of Stalinism out of the context of the capitalism-socialism dichotomy into the category of 'internal colonialism' is a very useful step in the right direction.
88. Alain Besançon, The Soviet Syndrome, (translation by Patricia Ranum of Court Traité de Soviétologie, Paris, 1976) New York and London, 1978.
89. Idem, p. 18-19. Besançon adds: "It must be pointed out, that, in its deepest core, Lenin's party was still steeped in naiveté". The opposite sin of naiveté is cynicism: "The cynic, who is aware of the power of ideological language, manipulates it irreproachably, but in private seeks the same pleasures as everyone else: security, wealth, comfort, domination. The right party line consists of being neither naive or cynical, but devoted to abstraction just as Lenin was, who did not imagine he had anything in common with those who were not Bolsheviks, and who at the same time was totally disinterested, to the point of not even imagining that for him personal interest existed".
90. NRC-Handelsblad, 25 August 1979. On the changing meaning of lies see also Besançon, op.cit., ch. 4, The True Lie and the False Lie.
91. This is not to say that ideology is not important in the West. It is, however, much less explicit, not as much expressed in wooden language' and much more penetrable by arguments and references to contradicting information. Also, though there is an implicit consensus among members of the ruling establishment (on the basic assumptions of foreign policy and on the desirability of a welfare or service state, based on an economy leaving the autonomy of business corporations intact) there is at the same time sufficient plurality of political ideologies to make public debate and contest between political parties meaningful.
92. op.cit., ch. 1. 'The Two Faces of the System', pp. 1-41. For historical descriptions and analysis of their dynamics see E.H. Carr's History of Soviet Russia (11 volumes) and his own lucid compendium of that major work of historiography the Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin 1917-1929. Also Alec Nove, An Economic History of the U.S.S.R., Harmondworth 1969, esp. ch. 3-6, pp. 46-160.
93. op.cit., pp. 7-8.
94. op.cit., p. 89 and ch. 2.
95. op.cit., pp. 6-7.

96. E.H. Carr, op.cit., p. 34.
97. Immanuel Wallerstein 'Kondratieff up or Kondratieff down?' Review, vol. II, no. 4, Spring 1977, p. 663.
98. op.cit., pp. 11-12.
99. And perhaps: Can the present policy of the Soviet Union's ruling establishment - stress on foreign expansion, war economy, repression of all opposition - be explained as an attempt to slow down the tempo of functional democratisation and to divert its consequences?
100. M. Kalecki, Observations on Social and Economic Aspects of 'Intermediate Regimes' in Essays on Developing Economies, London, 1976.
101. Thanos Skouras. The 'Intermediate Regime' and 'Industrialisation Prospects', and Ken Post and Phil Wright. Some Comments on Skouras, Development and Change, vol. 9, no. 4, October 1978, pp. 631-649 and 649-655.
102. Skouras, op.cit., p. 632.
103. Post and Wright, op.cit., p. 649.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS - November 1980

- K. Post: 'On "Peasantisation" and Rural Class Differentiation in Western Africa' pp. 20
- C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'The Sociology of Development: Per Aspera ad Astra?'
- A.J.M. van de Laar: 'Recent Economic Developments in Nigeria' pp. 10
- D.M. Dunham: 'Spatial Implications in the Competition between Natural and Synthetic Products: with special reference to the case of rubber' pp. 53
- M.R. Doornbos: 'What Determines Receptivity to Political Change?' pp. 19
- M.R. Doornbos & M.F. Lofchie: 'Ranching and Scheming: a case study of the Ankole Ranching Scheme'
11. G. Huizer: 'The Ujamaa Village Programme in Tanzania: new forms of rural development' pp. 29
12. G. Huizer: 'The Role of Peasant Organisations in the Japanese Land Reform' pp. 29
13. G. van Benthem van den Bergh: 'The Structure of Development: an invitation to the sociology of Norbert Elias' pp. 29
14. M.R. Doornbos: 'Regalia Galore: the Decline of Ankole Kingship' pp. 66
15. E.V.W. Vercrujisse et al: 'Composition of Households in some Fante Communities. A Study of the Framework of Social Integration' pp. 21
16. D. Chatty: 'Structural Forces of Pastoral Nomadism: with special reference to camel pastoral nomadism' pp. 76
17. G. Huizer: 'Agrarian Unrest and Peasant Organisations in the Philippines' pp. 26
18. G. Huizer: 'Peasant Mobilisation and Land Reform in Indonesia' pp. 54
19. F.C.M. Wils: 'Agricultural and Industrial Development in Peru: some observations on their interrelationship' pp. 28
20. E.V.W. Vercrujisse: 'The Dynamics of Fante Domestic Organisation: a comparison with Fortes' Ashanti survey' pp. 32

21. B. de Gaay Fortman: 'Rural Development in an Age of Survival' pp. 15
22. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'Recent Developments in Development Studies: some reflections on the message of futuribles, social accounting and social indicators' pp. 40
23. H.T.M. Wagenbuur: 'Labour and Development. An analysis of the time-budget and of the production and productivity of lime farmers in Southern Ghana' pp. 44
24. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'Public Administration: Comparative Administration, Development Administration: concepts and theory in their struggle for relevance' pp. 12.
25. K.J. Rothwell: 'The Scope of Management and Administration Problems in Development' pp. 60
26. P.P. van der Wel: 'The Development of the Ghana Sugar Industry 1966-70. An exercise in ex-post evaluation' pp. 31
27. A.M.M. Hoogvelt & D. Child: 'Rhodesia - Economic Blockade and Long-term Development Strategy' pp. 20
28. F.B. Gillie: 'Comparative Comments on Small Towns in Ireland, Norway and France' pp. 109
29. Terrefe Woldetsadik: 'Tanzania: the theoretical framework of development: self-reliance and socialism' pp. 11
30. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Community Development Theory' pp. 10
31. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Societal Processes and Policies: some reflections on their nature and direction' pp. 12
32. A. Mafeje: 'Agrarian Revolution and the Land Question in Buganda' pp. 27
33. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'On the Practice and Theory of Affluence and Poverty: some reflections' pp. 26
34. G. Huizer: 'A Research on Social Practice: some ethical considerations on research in the Third World' pp. 10
35. J.F. Glastra van Loon: 'Facts are not Facts' pp. 11
36. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'The Function of Social Mobilization in the Process towards a New Society in Peru' pp. 80
37. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'On the Concept and Process of Marginalization' pp. 12

38. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Growth and Equality in India and China: a historical comparative analysis' pp. 42
39. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Growth and Equality in India and China: processes, policies and theory formation' pp. 61
40. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'On Social Stratification and Societal Articulation' pp. 19
41. P. Waterman: 'Communist Theory in the Nigerian Trade Union Movement' pp. 26
42. S. Sideri: 'Analysis and Overall Evaluation of Latin American Trade Policies' pp. 20
43. A. Bendavid: 'Developed and Underdeveloped: a radical view of constructive relationships' pp. 10
44. H.G.T. van Raay: 'Fulana Pastoralists and Cattle' pp. 37
45. H.G.T. van Raay & P.N. de Leeuw: 'Fodder Resources and Grazing Management in a Savanna Environment: an ecosystem approach' pp. 26
46. J. Kuitenbrouwer, 'Some Reflections on the Necessity and Feasibility of a Unified Approach' pp. 43
47. D.M. Dunham: 'Marketing in Southern Ghana: towards a planning typology' pp. 29
48. P. Waterman: 'Conservatism amongst Nigerian Workers' pp. 43
49. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Science and Technology: for or against the people' pp. 30
50. E. Amonoo: 'Internal Marketing Systems for Basic Foodstuffs and Government Involvement in the Central Region of Ghana (1970-1973)' pp. 35
51. G. Irvin: 'Employment Creation, Technological Efficiency and Distributional Judgements; a case study in road construction' pp. 31
52. G. van Benthem van den Bergh: 'The Interconnection between Processes of State and Class Formation: problems of conceptualisation' pp. 23
53. Devendra Raj Upadhyia: 'Transit Trade of Land-Locked States' pp. 16
54. Folayan Ojo: 'Economic Integration: The Nigerian experience since Independence' pp. 22

55. J. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Towards Self-reliant Integrated Development' pp. 44
56. A. van de Laar: 'The International Development Association' pp. 32
57. K. Jansen: 'Educational Planning: the Asian Experience' pp. 31
58. A. van de Laar: 'The World Bank and the World's Poor' pp. 26
59. Patrick Ollawa: 'Rural Development Policies and Performance in Zambia: a critical inventory' pp. 43
60. Olanrewaju Fapohunda: 'Employment and Unemployment in Lagos' pp. 18
61. G. van Benthem van den Bergh: 'Is a Marxist Theory of the State possible?' pp. 36
62. Terisa Turner: 'Two Refineries: a comparative study of technology transfer to the Nigerian refining industry' pp. 40
63. Peter O'Brien: 'Trademarks, the International Pharmaceutical Industry, and the Developing Countries' pp. 36
64. J.P. Pérez Sáinz: 'Peripheral Accumulation, Labour Power Absorption and Relative Surplus-Population: some basic remarks' pp. 30
65. R. Brown: 'The Theory of Unequal Exchange: the end of the debates?' pp. 36
66. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'Changing Perspectives of Education for Development' pp. 27
67. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'The Study of Development and the Alleged Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach' pp. 19
68. J.B.W. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Rural Transformation in China' pp. 54
69. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'Social Development - Supplement or Corrective to Economic Development?' pp. 44
70. A.J.M. van de Laar: 'The World Bank and The Poor' pp. 25
71. Jacob Songso: 'Structural Crisis, Dependent Capitalist Development and Regional Inequality in Ghana' pp. 25
72. J.B.W. Kuitenbrouwer: 'Some Reflections on the Uses of Science and Technology in Indonesia' pp. 27
73. Rachel Kurian: 'Income Distribution, Poverty and Employment' pp. 55

74. J.B.W. Kuitenbrouwer: 'A Farewell to Welfare' pp. 45
75. R. Apthorpe & D. Gasper: 'Public Policy Evaluation, Meta-Evaluation, and Essentialism: The Case of Rural Cooperatives' pp. 45
76. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze: 'On Social Development: The Social Welfare Approach' pp. 31
77. Maria Mies: 'Towards a Methodology of Women's Studies' pp. 23
78. Jan van Heemst: 'Some Issues in connection with the Improvement of the Social Accounting Systems of Developing Countries' pp. 27
79. Peter Peek: 'Urban Poverty, Migration and Land Reform in Ecuador' pp. 28
80. Don Townsend: 'Economic Integration, Opportunity Structure and Migration in Papua New Guinea' pp. 39
81. J.G.M. Hilhorst: 'On Unresolved Issues in Regional Development Thinking' pp. 51
82. Gerrit Huizer: 'Peasant Participation in Latin America and its Obstacles: an overview of conflict-resolution strategies' pp. 44
83. J.G.M. Hilhorst: 'Regional Planning in Peru 1962-77: Top-Down or Bottom-Up?' pp. 31

1	1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country.
2	2. The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country.
3	3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country.
4	4. The fourth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country.
5	5. The fifth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country.
6	6. The sixth part of the report deals with the international situation of the country.
7	7. The seventh part of the report deals with the future prospects of the country.
8	8. The eighth part of the report deals with the conclusions of the report.
9	9. The ninth part of the report deals with the appendixes of the report.
10	10. The tenth part of the report deals with the bibliography of the report.