International Journal of Innovative Inventions in Social Science and Humanities

ISSN(print): 3050-6921, ISSN(online): 3050-693X

Volume 03 Issue 11 November 2026

DOI: 10.58806/ijiissh.2026.v3i11n01

Page No: 1472-1484

What Do You Understand by the Concept of 'State'? A Study of the State as Conceived Under Socialist and Capitalist Social Formations

Aroyewun Abimbola Tirmidhi

University of Abuja Faculty of Social Sciences Department of Political Science Political Economy and Development Studies

ABSTRACT

The concept of the state is among the most contested in political science and sociology. This paper examines how the state is conceived within capitalist and socialist social formations, tracing differences in their theoretical foundations, institutional mechanisms and political purposes. It reviews liberal, pluralist and neoliberal accounts of the capitalist state alongside Marxist critiques from Gramsci, Althusser, Miliband and Poulantzas, and then considers socialist state theory and practice through the Soviet, Yugoslav, Cuban and Vietnamese experiences and reformist, anarchist and market socialist alternatives. A comparative analysis addresses economic relations, democracy and participation, social rights, ideological legitimation, and the question of reform versus revolution. The paper further considers how globalization, technological change and ecological crisis challenge both traditions. It argues that neither capitalist nor actually existing socialist states have fully realized their theoretical ideals, and that the enduring value of the comparison lies in showing how political forms relate to economic structures and in opening possibilities for more democratic, egalitarian and sustainable arrangements.

ARTICLE DETAILS

Published On:
02 November 2026

Available on:
https://ijiissh.com/

INTRODUCION

The concept of the 'state' represents one of the most contested and theoretically rich areas in political science and sociology. Far from being a neutral administrative apparatus, the state embodies complex relationships of power, authority, legitimacy, and social organization that vary dramatically across different social formations. This examination explores how the state is conceptualized within socialist and capitalist social formations, revealing fundamental differences in their theoretical foundations, operational mechanisms, and ultimate purposes.

Understanding the state requires moving beyond simplistic definitions to engage with deeper questions about the relationship between economic structures, political power, and social organization. The state is not merely a collection of institutions but represents a crystallization of social relations, a terrain of struggle, and a mechanism through which societies reproduce themselves across generations (Jessop, 2016). The analytical frameworks we employ to understand the state shape not only our theoretical comprehension but also practical possibilities for political transformation and social change.

The historical development of state forms has been intimately connected with broader transformations in economic and social organization. From ancient empires to feudal kingdoms, from absolutist monarchies to modern nation-states, the forms and functions of political authority have evolved in relationship to changing modes of production and class structures (Anderson, 1974). The emergence of capitalism and later socialism as distinct social formations generated fundamentally different conceptions of what the state is, what purposes it serves, and whose interests it represents.

This paper examines these divergent conceptions through multiple analytical lenses, drawing on classical and contemporary political theory, empirical historical analysis, and critical engagement with debates that continue to shape political discourse. By exploring both theoretical frameworks and practical manifestations of state power under capitalism and socialism, we can better understand the possibilities and limitations of different forms of political organization in addressing contemporary challenges.

DEFINING THE STATE: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

At its most basic level, the state can be understood as a set of institutions that claim legitimate authority over a defined territory and population. Max Weber's classical definition identifies the state as possessing a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force

within a given territory (Weber, 1946). However, this definition, while useful as a starting point, barely scratches the surface of the state's complexity and the multiple dimensions through which state power operates in modern societies.

Contemporary political theory recognizes the state as encompassing executive, legislative, and judicial branches; bureaucratic apparatus; military and police forces; and various regulatory and administrative bodies. Yet beyond these institutional components, the state also involves ideological apparatuses including education systems, media frameworks, and cultural institutions that shape consciousness and maintain social order (Althusser, 2014). The state is simultaneously a set of institutions, a configuration of power relations, an ideological formation, and a contested terrain of political struggle.

The state performs multiple functions across all social formations: it maintains internal order, defends against external threats, regulates economic activity, provides public goods, and mediates social conflicts. However, the manner in which these functions are performed, the interests they serve, and the theoretical justifications provided differ fundamentally between capitalist and socialist conceptions (Miliband, 1969). Understanding these differences requires examining not only formal institutional structures but also the underlying social relations that shape how state power is exercised and experienced.

Different theoretical traditions conceptualize state power in contrasting ways. Pluralist approaches emphasize the state as an arena where diverse interests compete and compromise (Dahl, 1961). Elite theories focus on the concentration of power in relatively small ruling groups (Mills, 1956). Marxist perspectives analyze the state in relation to class structures and economic power (Marx & Engels, 1848/1967). Feminist scholars have highlighted how states are gendered institutions that reproduce patriarchal relations alongside other forms of domination (MacKinnon, 1989). Each perspective illuminates different dimensions of state power while also reflecting particular normative commitments about how political authority should be organized and exercised.

THE CAPITALIST STATE: LIBERAL AND MARXIST PERSPECTIVES

Liberal Conceptions of the Capitalist State

Within capitalist social formations, liberal political theory presents the state as a neutral arbiter standing above society, protecting individual rights and mediating between competing interests. The liberal state emerges from social contract theory, tracing its intellectual lineage through Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau to contemporary democratic theory (Locke, 1689/1980; Rousseau, 1762/1997). This tradition has profoundly shaped Western political thought and institutional development over several centuries.

In this view, individuals voluntarily surrender certain freedoms to the state in exchange for protection of their fundamental rights particularly property rights, personal security, and civil liberties. The state's legitimacy derives from popular consent, typically expressed through democratic electoral processes. The liberal state is conceived as limited in scope, constrained by constitutional frameworks, checks and balances, and the rule of law (Rawls, 1971). This conception emphasizes procedural fairness, formal equality before the law, and protection of individual autonomy against both state overreach and private interference.

Contemporary pluralist theory, building on liberal foundations, portrays the capitalist state as a neutral arena where various interest groups compete for influence (Dahl, 1961). Policy outcomes represent compromises among these competing groups, with no single group capable of permanently dominating the state apparatus. This perspective emphasizes the autonomy of the state from any particular class or economic interest, viewing democratic competition as ensuring responsiveness to diverse social preferences. Pluralists argue that power is dispersed across multiple sites and that even economically disadvantaged groups can exercise political influence through organization and mobilization.

The liberal conception also emphasizes the rule of law as fundamental to legitimate state authority. Laws must be general, public, prospective, clear, and applied impartially (Fuller, 1964). Judicial independence serves as a check on executive and legislative power. Constitutional rights limit what majorities can legitimately impose on minorities. These procedural safeguards purportedly protect individual liberty against arbitrary power, whether exercised by state officials or private actors.

Neoliberal variants of liberal theory emerged in the late twentieth century, emphasizing minimal state intervention in economic affairs and maximum scope for market mechanisms (Hayek, 1944; Friedman, 1962). Neoliberalism views state regulation as inherently inefficient and potentially tyrannical, advocating privatization of public services, deregulation of markets, and reduction of welfare provision. Despite claims of limiting state power, neoliberalism actually involves extensive state activity in constructing and maintaining market conditions (Harvey, 2005). The neoliberal state actively enforces property rights, contracts, and market discipline while withdrawing from social provision and collective risk management.

Marxist Critique of the Capitalist State

Marxist analysis fundamentally challenges liberal conceptions, arguing that the capitalist state cannot be understood apart from capitalist relations of production. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels (1848/1967) famously declared that "the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (p. 82). This instrumental view sees the state as directly controlled by the capitalist class to serve its interests through personnel overlap, lobbying, campaign finance, and structural economic power.

However, Marxist state theory has evolved considerably beyond this simple instrumentalism. Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony recognizes that the capitalist state maintains dominance not merely through coercion but through cultural and ideological leadership (Gramsci, 1971). The state secures consent from subordinate classes by incorporating some of their interests and presenting bourgeois ideology as universal common sense. Hegemony operates through civil society institutions, schools, churches, media, cultural organizations that shape consciousness and naturalize existing power relations. The state thus appears as embodying universal interests rather than particular class domination.

Louis Althusser (2014) distinguished between Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) such as police and military, and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) including education, religion, and media. While RSAs function primarily through violence, ISAs operate through ideology, shaping subjectivities and naturalizing capitalist social relations. The capitalist state thus reproduces itself not only through force but through the continuous production of subjects who accept their position within capitalist society. Education systems teach not only technical skills but also discipline, hierarchy, and acceptance of authority. Media naturalize consumption, competition, and individualism as normal features of human life.

Nicos Poulantzas (1978) advanced a relational theory of the capitalist state, rejecting both instrumentalism and the notion of complete state autonomy. For Poulantzas, the state represents a condensation of class forces, embodying the balance of power among classes at any given moment. The capitalist state possesses "relative autonomy" from particular capitalist interests, enabling it to organize the bourgeoisie as a class and disorganize the working class, thus ensuring long-term capitalist reproduction even when specific policies may disadvantage individual capitalists. This relative autonomy allows the state to make concessions to subordinate classes when necessary to maintain legitimacy and social stability.

Ralph Miliband (1969) engaged in extensive empirical research demonstrating the class character of capitalist states through analysis of political elites, demonstrating consistent overrepresentation of business interests in government and systematic bias in policy outcomes favouring capital accumulation. Even social democratic governments constrained by capitalist economic structures find their reform agendas limited by business confidence, capital flight threats, and international financial discipline.

The debate between Miliband and Poulantzas in the 1970s illuminated central tensions in Marxist state theory (Miliband, 1970; Poulantzas, 1969). Miliband emphasized empirical demonstration of how capitalist class backgrounds and interests shape state personnel and policy. Poulantzas insisted on structural analysis of how capitalist relations of production necessarily shape state functions regardless of individual officials' backgrounds or intentions. This debate continues to inform contemporary Marxist analysis of state power.

Structural Features of the Capitalist State

The capitalist state exhibits several distinctive structural features that distinguish it from both pre-capitalist and socialist state forms. First, it maintains a separation between the political and economic spheres. While the state regulates economic activity, direct production and distribution occur through ostensibly private market mechanisms (Wood, 1981). This separation obscures how state power fundamentally supports capitalist accumulation through property law, contract enforcement, market infrastructure, monetary systems, and selective intervention to preserve conditions for private profit-making.

This institutional separation between "politics" and "economics" represents a historically specific feature of capitalism. In pre-capitalist societies, economic exploitation was typically secured through direct political and legal coercion peasants rendered surplus to feudal lords through juridically enforced obligations. Under capitalism, economic exploitation occurs through formally free market exchanges, with workers selling labour power to capitalists who appropriate surplus value (Marx, 1867/1976). The state secures background conditions for this exploitation property rights, contract enforcement, labour discipline while the extraction of surplus appears as purely economic rather than political.

Second, the capitalist state is characterized by formal equality and substantive inequality. Citizens possess equal political rights regardless of economic position, yet vast disparities in wealth translate into enormous differences in actual political influence (Crouch, 2004). Elections occur within parameters that rarely threaten fundamental capitalist relations. Campaign finance systems, media ownership, lobbying access, and think tank influence ensure that business interests exercise disproportionate political power. Formal democracy coexists with substantive plutocracy, as economic inequality translates into political inequality through multiple mechanisms.

Third, the capitalist state exhibits what Claus Offe (1984) identified as contradictory imperatives: it must simultaneously facilitate capital accumulation while maintaining its own legitimacy through democratic processes and welfare provisions. This generates endemic fiscal crises as the state struggles to fund both accumulation and legitimation functions. Economic crises trigger legitimation crises as the state proves unable to maintain prosperity, while legitimation measures (welfare spending, regulation, taxation) can undermine accumulation by reducing profitability and business confidence. This structural contradiction makes capitalist states inherently unstable and crisis-prone.

Fourth, the capitalist state is increasingly internationalized. Globalization has created supranational institutions like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization that constrain national state autonomy while extending capitalist

disciplinary mechanisms globally (Strange, 1996). These institutions enforce neoliberal policies through conditionality requirements, structural adjustment programs, and investor-state dispute mechanisms. National governments find their policy autonomy limited by international financial markets, credit rating agencies, and trade agreements that prioritize capital mobility and investor rights over democratic accountability.

The territorial organization of capitalist states also reflects and reproduces capital accumulation processes. States compete to attract investment through tax reductions, regulatory rollbacks, and labour market flexibility, engaging in "race to the bottom" dynamics that undermine social protections and democratic governance (Peck & Theodore, 2007). Simultaneously, states cooperate in managing global capitalism through forums like the G7, G20, and various international regulatory bodies. This combination of competition and cooperation creates complex multi-scalar governance arrangements serving transnational capital accumulation.

The Capitalist State and Class Struggle

Marxist analysis emphasizes that the capitalist state is not simply an instrument of class domination but also a terrain of class struggle. Working-class movements have won significant concessions through the capitalist state Labour rights, welfare provisions, democratic reforms even while the state's fundamental character remains oriented toward capitalist reproduction (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The welfare state represents both a victory for working-class mobilization and a mechanism for stabilizing capitalism by managing its social costs and legitimating its inequalities.

The balance of class forces shapes what form the capitalist state takes in particular contexts. Social democratic welfare states in Scandinavia reflected strong labour movements and leftist political power, resulting in comprehensive social provision and labour protections (Korpi, 1983). Liberal welfare states in Anglo-American contexts reflected weaker labour movements and more powerful business interests, producing minimal, means-tested provision. Conservative corporatist welfare states in Continental Europe reflected different configurations of class and political forces, with occupationally segmented social insurance systems.

However, even the most extensive welfare states remain capitalist states, dependent on private capital accumulation for tax revenues and constrained by business confidence requirements. Neoliberal globalization since the 1980s has undermined social democratic compromises, as capital mobility enables businesses to threaten exit if governments maintain high taxes and strong regulations (Glyn, 2006). The structural power of capitalist ability to withhold investment constrains democratic politics even in contexts of formal political equality.

Contemporary capitalism also involves what David Harvey (2003) terms "accumulation by dispossession" ongoing processes of privatization, financialization, and commodification that extend market relations into previously non-commodified spheres. The state actively facilitates these processes through privatization of public assets, enclosure of commons, intellectual property rights, and debt enforcement. Neoliberal restructuring involves not state withdrawal but rather state transformation toward actively constructing market conditions and managing populations through market disciplines.

THE SOCIALIST STATE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Marxist Theory of the Socialist State

Socialist theory envisions the state fundamentally differently from liberal and even critical Marxist perspectives on capitalism, though with significant internal debates and variations. Classical Marxism predicts that socialist revolution will establish a "dictatorship of the proletariat “not dictatorship in the contemporary authoritarian sense, but rather working-class political dominance over the former ruling class (Marx, 1875/1970). This transitional state would gradually "wither away" as class antagonisms dissolve, replaced by "the administration of things" rather than "the government of persons" (Engels, 1878/1987).

Lenin's *The State and Revolution* (1917/1992) elaborated this vision, arguing that the bourgeois state apparatus cannot simply be taken over but must be smashed and replaced with a fundamentally different type of state based on workers' councils or soviets. The Paris Commune of 1871 served as Lenin's model: officials would be elected, subject to recall, paid workers' wages, and the separation between legislative and executive functions would be abolished. This represented a vision of radical democracy far beyond liberal representative institutions.

The socialist state, in this conception, represents not class neutrality but open class rule by the working majority. Its purpose is explicitly partisan: suppressing bourgeois attempts at counter-revolution, organizing economic production according to social need rather than profit, and creating conditions for eventual statelessness by eliminating class divisions (Lenin, 1917/1992). The socialist state would abolish private ownership of means of production, replacing capitalist property relations with collective ownership and democratic planning.

Marx's vision of the "withering away" of the state reflected his view that states exist fundamentally to manage class conflict. Once classes are abolished through socialization of production, the state as an instrument of class domination becomes unnecessary. What remains would be administrative coordination of production and distribution, not political rule in the traditional sense. This vision reflected anarchist influences in socialist thought while distinguishing Marxism from anarchism's immediate rejection of all state authority.

However, Marx and Engels provided limited detail about how socialist states would actually function. Their primary focus was on criticizing capitalism and theorizing revolutionary transformation rather than designing post-revolutionary institutions. This theoretical gap created space for divergent interpretations and practices when socialists actually gained state power in the twentieth century.

Socialist State in Practice: The Soviet Model

The actual development of socialist states diverged significantly from classical theory. The Soviet state that emerged after 1917 faced challenges Marx never anticipated: constructing socialism in a relatively backward country, surrounded by hostile capitalist powers, devastated by war and civil conflict (Carr, 1950). These circumstances profoundly shaped Soviet state development in directions unanticipated by classical Marxist theory.

The Soviet state developed as a highly centralized apparatus with the Communist Party exercising monopoly political control. Rather than withering away, the state expanded dramatically, absorbing economic management functions that remain private under capitalism. Central planning replaced market mechanisms, with state agencies determining production targets, resource allocation, and distribution through five-year plans coordinated by Gosplan and other central bureaucracies (Gregory & Stuart, 2001).

This generated distinctive features: abolition of private ownership of means of production, comprehensive economic planning, provision of universal social services, and political organization through a single-party system. The Soviet constitution proclaimed worker power, yet actual decision-making remained concentrated in party hierarchies rather than democratic workers' councils (Lane, 1985). The initial vision of soviet democracy gave way to bureaucratic centralism, particularly following Stalin's consolidation of power.

Critics, including from socialist perspectives, identified significant problems: bureaucratic ossification, suppression of dissent, emergence of a privileged nomenklatura class, inefficiencies in central planning, and the gap between democratic rhetoric and authoritarian reality (Deutscher, 1967; Cliff, 1974). Trotsky's analysis of bureaucratic degeneration argued that the Soviet state became dominated by a parasitic bureaucratic caste that appropriated political power while maintaining formal allegiance to socialism (Trotsky, 1937/1972).

Defenders emphasized achievements in industrialization, education, healthcare, and social security, while acknowledging deviations from democratic ideals as products of specific historical circumstances backward starting conditions, civil war, capitalist encirclement rather than inherent socialist failures (Hobsbawm, 1994). The Soviet Union transformed from agrarian backwardness to industrial superpower, achieving rapid literacy expansion, scientific advancement, and military power capable of defeating Nazi Germany. Full employment, guaranteed housing, and comprehensive social services represented achievements contrasting sharply with capitalist instability and inequality.

The Stalinist system that emerged in the 1930s represented both continuity and rupture with earlier Soviet development. Forced collectivization, breakneck industrialization, and massive repression killed millions while achieving rapid economic transformation (Conquest, 1986). Whether Stalinism represented inevitable socialist logic, betrayal of genuine socialism, or response to specific circumstances remains intensely debated. The experience profoundly shaped both socialist practice and Western perceptions of socialism throughout the twentieth century.

Alternative Socialist State Conceptions

Not all socialist state theory followed Soviet orthodoxy. Democratic socialist and social democratic traditions envision gradual transformation of the capitalist state through electoral politics and reform. Rather than revolutionary rupture, these approaches seek to progressively expand state intervention in the economy, strengthen labour rights, and develop comprehensive welfare states (Przeworski, 1985). This reformist strategy emphasizes working within existing democratic institutions while pushing their boundaries.

The Scandinavian social democratic model exemplifies this approach, featuring extensive public services, strong labour unions, progressive taxation, and significant state economic regulation while maintaining formal democratic institutions and mixed economies (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Whether such arrangements constitute genuine socialism or merely reformed capitalism remains contested. Revolutionary socialists argue social democracy leaves capitalist power fundamentally intact, rendering gains vulnerable to reversal. Social democrats counter that gradual transformation proves more sustainable and humane than revolutionary rupture.

Anarchist and libertarian socialist traditions reject concentrated state power entirely, advocating decentralized federations of workers' councils, communes, or cooperatives (Bakunin, 1873/1990; Kropotkin, 1892/1995). These perspectives see any state as inherently oppressive, arguing for bottom-up self-organization rather than top-down direction. The Spanish anarchist collectives during the Civil War represented practical experiments in stateless socialism, though they ultimately fell to fascist and Stalinist opposition (Dolgoff, 1974).

Guild socialism, prominent in early twentieth-century Britain, advocated industrial democracy through worker-controlled guilds operating within a broader state framework (Cole, 1920). Market socialism proposes combining social ownership with market

coordination, seeking efficiency benefits of markets while eliminating capitalist exploitation (Nove, 1983; Schweickart, 2002). Participatory economics envisions democratic planning through nested councils with balanced job complexes and participatory decision-making (Albert & Hahnel, 1991).

Contemporary socialist theory grapples with challenges including ecological crisis, technological change, globalization, and the need to theorize democratic socialist alternatives beyond both Soviet-style central planning and social democratic compromise with capitalism (Wright, 2010). Digital technology creates new possibilities for democratic planning through distributed information processing, potentially overcoming calculation problems that plagued Soviet planning (Cockshott & Cottrell, 1993). Eco socialism integrates ecological sustainability with socialist transformation, arguing that capitalism's growth imperatives are incompatible with planetary boundaries (Foster, 2009).

The Yugoslav Self-Management Model

Yugoslavia developed a distinctive socialist model emphasizing workers' self-management rather than central planning (Horvat, 1982). Following its break with Stalin in 1948, Yugoslavia implemented reforms devolving economic decision-making to enterprise-level workers' councils. Firms competed in markets while remaining socially owned, with workers electing management and sharing profits. This represented an attempt to combine socialism's egalitarian goals with market efficiency and democratic participation.

The Yugoslav model generated significant scholarly attention as a potential "third way" between Soviet central planning and capitalism (Vanek, 1970). Proponents highlighted its participatory features and superior economic performance compared to other socialist states. Critics noted persistent problems including regional inequalities, unemployment, and eventual descent into nationalist conflict. The model's collapse alongside Yugoslavia's disintegration in the 1990s demonstrated the fragility of socialist experiments in hostile international environments.

Cuban and Vietnamese Models

Cuba developed yet another socialist state variant following its 1959 revolution. While maintaining single-party Communist rule and comprehensive central planning, Cuba emphasized internationalism, supporting anti-imperialist movements globally (Kapcia, 2008). Despite severe resource constraints from U.S. embargo and Soviet collapse, Cuba maintained impressive achievements in healthcare, education, and social equality. Recent market-oriented reforms reflect adaptations to post-Soviet circumstances while maintaining formal commitment to socialism.

Vietnam pursued market-oriented reforms ("doi moi") from 1986 while maintaining Communist Party-political monopoly (Fforde & de Vylder, 1996). This created a distinctive model combining authoritarian political control with increasingly capitalist economic relations, raising questions about whether Vietnam remains meaningfully socialist beyond rhetorical commitment. Similar tensions characterize contemporary China's "socialism with Chinese characteristics," which combines Communist Party rule with extensive private capital accumulation and market relations (Harvey, 2005).

These variations demonstrate that socialist states have taken multiple forms reflecting different historical circumstances, theoretical orientations, and practical constraints. No single model exhausts socialist possibilities, and the relationship between socialism and democracy remains a crucial unresolved question requiring ongoing theoretical and practical engagement.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: SOCIALIST VS. CAPITALIST STATES

Economic Relations and State Power

The most fundamental difference between socialist and capitalist states concerns the relationship between economic and political power. Under capitalism, formal political equality coexists with substantive economic inequality, with the state ostensibly separate from but ultimately supportive of private accumulation. Under socialism, the state directly controls economic production, abolishing private ownership of major means of production and subordinating economic activity to political direction (Mandel, 1968).

This generates contrasting dynamics. Capitalist states face pressure to maintain business confidence, limiting their policy autonomy. Capital flight, investment strikes, and market discipline constrain even democratically elected governments (Block, 1977). Socialist states, controlling investment and production directly, theoretically possess greater policy autonomy but face different constraints: planning inefficiencies, information problems, and bureaucratic resistance (Kornai, 1992).

The question of economic calculation and efficiency has generated extensive debate. Austrian economists argued socialist planning is impossible without market price signals conveying dispersed knowledge (Hayek, 1944). Socialist economists countered that planned coordination can overcome anarchic market waste and crisis tendencies (Dobb, 1955). Contemporary debates explore whether information technology enables effective democratic planning previously impossible (Phillips & Rozworski, 2019).

Capitalist states regulate but do not directly control production, creating recurring tensions between democratic politics and private economic power. Governments dependent on tax revenues from private profits cannot fundamentally challenge capitalist interests without triggering economic crisis. This structural dependence limits democratic policy options, as elected governments must maintain "business confidence" regardless of popular preferences (Przeworski & Wallerstein, 1988).

Socialist states face different economic constraints. Central planning creates information and incentive problems as planners lack detailed knowledge of production possibilities and consumer preferences (Kornai, 1992). Bureaucratic allocation replaces price signals, potentially generating inefficiency and misallocation. However, socialist planning also enables long-term investment in public goods, full employment policies, and production for need rather than profit. The relative efficiency of markets versus planning remains contested, with performance varying across specific contexts and institutional arrangements.

Democracy and Political Participation

Liberal capitalist democracy emphasizes procedural mechanisms: regular elections, competitive parties, constitutional protections, and individual rights. Political participation primarily means voting, with governance delegated to elected representatives operating within constitutional constraints (Schumpeter, 1942). This minimalist conception treats democracy as method for selecting leaders rather than substantive popular rule.

Socialist state theory critiques this as merely formal democracy masking substantive class rule. True democracy, from this perspective, requires economic democracy collective control over production and distribution not just political voting rights (Macpherson, 1973). However, actually existing socialist states often exhibited severe democratic deficits, with political participation channelled through party-controlled organizations and dissent suppressed (Bahro, 1978). The gap between socialist democratic theory and authoritarian practice created profound legitimacy problems.

Contemporary debate centres on whether socialism necessarily requires authoritarian centralization or whether democratic socialist alternatives can combine economic socialization with robust political pluralism and civil liberties (Nove, 1983). This remains perhaps the central unresolved question in socialist state theory. Can socialism dispense with vanguard parties and single-party rule? Can economic planning coexist with political pluralism? Can workers' control prove compatible with expertise and coordination? These questions demand serious theoretical and practical engagement.

Participatory democracy theories emphasize direct citizen engagement in decision-making beyond merely voting for representatives (Pateman, 1970). Workers' councils, neighbourhood assemblies, and participatory budgeting represent attempts to deepen democracy beyond periodic elections. Socialist states could theoretically institutionalize such participatory mechanisms more extensively than capitalist states constrained by private economic power. However, historical socialist states largely failed to realize participatory potential, instead concentrating power in party bureaucracies.

Feminist critiques highlight how both capitalist and socialist states have marginalized women and reproduced patriarchal relations (Eisenstein, 1979). Socialist states achieved significant gender equality in education and employment but often maintained traditional gender divisions in domestic labour and political power. State feminists argue that genuinely democratic states require not only class equality but also gender justice, racial justice, and ecological sustainability multi-dimensional democratization beyond economic transformation alone (Fraser, 2009).

Social Rights and Welfare

Socialist states typically guaranteed comprehensive social rights: employment, housing, healthcare, education, and social security as fundamental entitlements rather than market commodities (Deacon, 1983). The state assumed responsibility for ensuring material security for all citizens. Full employment was guaranteed not only through economic planning but as constitutional right. Housing, healthcare, and education were provided publicly and universally, de-commodified from market relations.

Capitalist welfare states vary enormously, from minimal "residual" systems providing only safety nets for the destitute to comprehensive "social democratic" arrangements approximating socialist universalism while maintaining capitalist economic structures (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The degree and character of welfare provision reflects the balance of class forces and political struggle within particular capitalist societies. Strong labour movements achieved extensive welfare states; weak labour movements resulted in minimal provision.

Neoliberal capitalism since the 1980s has pressured welfare retrenchment, marketizing previously public services and emphasizing individual responsibility over collective provision (Harvey, 2005). Socialist critics see this as revealing capitalism's inherent tendency toward commodification and inequality. Even extensive welfare states remain vulnerable to business pressure and fiscal constraint, as capital mobility enables threats of exit if taxation and regulation become "excessive."

The socialist approach treats social provision as de-commodified right rather than market service or charitable assistance. This reflects fundamentally different conceptions of social obligation and human dignity. Capitalist welfare represents either charity for the unfortunate or insurance against risks, maintaining market logic. Socialist provision treats human needs as collective responsibility, rejecting market allocation of essential goods and services.

However, socialist provision also generated problems. Guaranteed employment sometimes meant inefficiency and lack of innovation. Universal housing often meant poor quality and long waiting lists. Healthcare, while accessible, sometimes lacked advanced technology and pharmaceutical options. These limitations reflected resource constraints, planning inefficiencies, and bureaucratic rigidities rather than necessarily inherent socialist failures, but they nonetheless created dissatisfaction and contributed to socialist states' legitimacy problems.

Ideological Legitimation

Both capitalist and socialist states require ideological legitimation beyond mere coercion. Capitalist states present themselves as neutral, democratic, and protective of freedom, portraying market capitalism as natural, efficient, and compatible with liberty (Hayek, 1944). Education systems, media, and cultural production reinforce these messages while obscuring class power and exploitation (Althusser, 2014). The ideology of meritocracy legitimates inequality by attributing success and failure to individual effort rather than structural position.

Socialist states developed alternative legitimating ideologies emphasizing collective progress, scientific planning, workers' power, and historical inevitability (Lane, 1981). Official culture celebrated labour, collective achievement, and socialist construction. Marxism-Leninism provided comprehensive worldview explaining social development and justifying party leadership. However, the gap between ideology and lived experience, particularly regarding democracy and material abundance, created legitimacy problems that contributed to Soviet-bloc collapse.

Capitalist ideology increasingly faces legitimacy challenges as inequality widens, economic instability persists, and ecological crisis intensifies. Promises of universal prosperity through growth and meritocracy ring hollow amid stagnant wages and concentrated wealth. Neoliberal ideology's dominance has weakened as financial crisis, austerity, and precarity undermine faith in market efficiency and self-regulation (Streeck, 2016). Contemporary capitalism exhibits legitimation deficits comparable to those that undermined state socialism.

Socialist states' ideological apparatuses included comprehensive education in Marxist theory, party-controlled media, and cultural production emphasizing socialist realism. While sometimes creating genuine enthusiasm and commitment, this also generated cynicism when official ideology contradicted experience. The joke in late Soviet society “we pretend to work and they pretend to pay us “reflected ideological exhaustion and loss of legitimacy. Rebuilding socialist legitimacy requires confronting these historical failures honestly while articulating compelling alternatives to capitalism's ecological and social crises.

State and Revolution

A crucial difference concerns how states originate and transform. Liberal theory emphasizes gradual evolution, constitutional development, and reform. Revolutionary rupture is seen as dangerous and destabilizing, threatening established rights and potentially leading to authoritarianism (Popper, 1945). This conservative bias toward existing institutions reflects both genuine concern for social stability and defense of established privilege.

Classical Marxist theory insists that fundamental transition from capitalism to socialism requires revolutionary transformation the existing state apparatus must be dismantled and replaced rather than merely reformed (Lenin, 1917/1992). However, social democratic practice suggests possibilities for gradual transformation through electoral politics, though revolutionary critics argue this inevitably leads to incorporation and compromise (Miliband, 1969).

The historical record shows both revolutionary and reformist paths, with mixed results. Revolutionary socialist states achieved rapid transformation but often at enormous human cost and with problematic authoritarian outcomes. Social democratic reform achieved significant welfare gains but arguably left capitalist power fundamentally intact, vulnerable to reversal during neoliberal ascendancy. Neither approach has unambiguously succeeded in creating democratic, egalitarian, and sustainable societies.

Contemporary revolutionary theory must grapple with questions of violence, democracy, and internationalism. Can revolutionary transformation occur through democratic means, or does capitalist resistance necessitate extra-legal action? How can revolutionary movements avoid vanguardism and authoritarianism? What forms of popular power can prevent bureaucratic degeneration? These questions require engagement with historical socialist failures while maintaining commitment to fundamental transformation beyond capitalism's constraints.

The relationship between reform and revolution remains contested. Some argue reforms can accumulate toward qualitative transformation, gradually expanding democratic control over economy and society (Wright, 2010). Others insist capitalism's structural power requires revolutionary rupture to overcome (Blackledge, 2012). Synthesizing these positions might involve combining immediate reforms improving working-class conditions with longer-term revolutionary horizons maintaining vision of fundamental transformation. Such "non-reformist reforms" strengthen popular power and expose capitalism's limits while avoiding both revolutionary adventurism and reformist incorporation (Gorz, 1967).

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Globalization and State Power

Both capitalist and socialist state theory developed primarily in contexts of nationally bounded economies and politics. Globalization challenges these assumptions fundamentally. Capital mobility constrains individual capitalist states through competitive pressure to reduce taxes, regulation, and labour costs. International institutions impose neoliberal discipline transcending national democratic processes (Strange, 1996). This creates what some term "post-democratic" conditions where formal democracy persists but economic policy decisions migrate to unaccountable international institutions (Crouch, 2004).

For socialist states or projects, globalization poses even greater challenges. Autarkic national socialism becomes increasingly difficult in integrated global economies. International solidarity and coordination seem necessary, yet remain elusive. Whether socialism can be constructed in one country or requires international transformation remains contested (Trotsky, 1937/1972). Global supply chains, international financial flows, and transnational corporations create complex interdependencies that constrain national policy autonomy.

However, globalization also creates possibilities for transnational solidarity and coordination. International labour networks, global justice movements, and climate activism demonstrate potential for cross-border organization (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Digital communication enables coordination previously impossible. Socialist internationalism could potentially operate at scales matching global capital, though this requires overcoming nationalist divisions and building effective transnational institutions.

The European Union represents an ambiguous case supranational institution combining elements of democratic governance with neoliberal economic constitutionalism. The EU constrains member-state social democracy through fiscal rules and competition policy while potentially offering scale for resisting global capital. Whether the EU could become a vehicle for democratic socialist transformation or necessarily serves neoliberal interests remains debated (Streeck, 2014).

Technological Change

Digital technology, artificial intelligence, and automation raise profound questions for state theory. Platform capitalism concentrates enormous economic power in technology corporations operating globally with minimal state regulation (Srnicek, 2017). Surveillance capabilities available to both states and private actors transform possibilities for social control (Zuboff, 2019). Algorithmic management enables new forms of labour discipline and exploitation (Kellogg et al., 2020).

For socialist theory, automation potentially enables abundance and leisure, making planning more feasible through big data and algorithmic coordination (Mason, 2015). Yet it also raises questions about democratic control over powerful technologies and how to prevent technocratic domination. Who controls algorithms determining production and distribution? How can artificial intelligence serve collective flourishing rather than narrow interests? These questions require updating socialist theory for digital conditions.

Cybernetic socialism, proposed by Chilean economist Stafford Beer in the Allende government's Project Cybersyn, explored using computer networks for democratic planning (Medina, 2011). Contemporary proposals for "fully automated luxury communism" envision technology enabling post-scarcity abundance and minimal work (Bastani, 2019). Critics question whether technology alone can resolve political questions about power and distribution, warning against technological determinism (Morozov, 2013).

The platform cooperativism movement proposes democratizing digital platforms through worker and user ownership (Scholz & Schneider, 2016). This suggests possibilities for socializing technology corporations rather than merely regulating them. States could facilitate platform cooperatives through supportive regulation, procurement policies, and public investment. Digital commons collectively owned and governed information resources represent alternatives to both private property and state control (Bollier & Helfrich, 2015).

Ecological Crisis

Climate change and ecological breakdown require fundamental rethinking of state-economy relations under both capitalism and socialism. Capitalist states struggle to impose necessary constraints on accumulation and consumption given growth imperatives (Foster et al., 2010). Actually existing socialist states historically prioritized industrial development with significant environmental damage, suggesting that state ownership alone doesn't ensure ecological sustainability (Shapiro, 2001).

Ecosocialist theory argues that ecological sustainability requires transcending capitalist growth imperatives through democratic planning and degrowth (Löwy, 2015). Whether this requires state-centered coordination or more decentralized approaches remains debated. Some advocate "green states" with enhanced planning capacity for managing ecological transformation (Eckersley, 2004). Others emphasize local autonomy and bioregionalism, skeptical of centralized solutions (Kovel, 2007).

The scale and urgency of climate crisis arguably requires strong state capacity for rapid decarbonization through renewable energy development, infrastructure transformation, and consumption reduction. Market mechanisms and voluntary action prove inadequate for transformation at necessary speed and scale. Socialist planning could theoretically coordinate such transformation more effectively than capitalist markets driven by profit rather than ecological necessity (Malm, 2020).

However, ecological transformation also requires democratic participation and social justice. Top-down technocratic solutions risk creating new forms of domination and failing to address underlying drivers of ecological crisis. Eco socialism must combine planning capacity with participatory democracy, ensuring that affected communities shape ecological transition rather than having it imposed by experts or bureaucrats (Pepper, 1993).

Indigenous perspectives offer crucial insights for ecological socialism. Indigenous governance systems often embody sustainable relationships with nature through collective stewardship and long-term thinking (Whyte, 2017). Socialist ecology must incorporate indigenous knowledge and rights rather than reproducing colonial patterns of dispossession and technocratic management.

Authoritarian Capitalism and Democratic Socialism

Recent decades challenge simple capitalism-equals-democracy equations. China demonstrates that capitalist development can occur under authoritarian single-party rule, complicating liberal assumptions (Huang, 2008). Meanwhile, growing inequality and corporate power in Western democracies raise questions about the depth of democratic control under capitalism (Gilens & Page, 2014). The rise of authoritarian populism in established democracies suggests that capitalism's relationship with democracy is contingent rather than necessary.

For socialist theory, the challenge remains articulating and constructing genuinely democratic alternatives avoiding both capitalist inequality and bureaucratic authoritarianism. This requires rethinking state forms, possibly incorporating elements of participatory democracy, workers' control, digital coordination, and decentralized planning (Hahnel, 2005). Democratic socialist theory must learn from both social democratic achievements and revolutionary socialist failures to chart paths toward economic democracy compatible with political pluralism.

Contemporary experiments like participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and worker cooperatives in Mondragon, Spain, demonstrate possibilities for economic democratization (Baiocchi, 2005; Cheney, 1999). These exist within capitalist societies but point toward alternative organizational principles. Scaling such experiments to societal level requires supportive state frameworks while avoiding bureaucratic capture. States can facilitate economic democracy through legal frameworks recognizing cooperative ownership, public banking supporting democratic enterprises, and procurement policies favouring worker-owned firms.

The relationship between markets and planning also requires rethinking. Market socialism proposals suggest combining social ownership with market coordination (Schweickart, 2002). Participatory planning models emphasize democratic deliberation replacing both markets and central planning (Albert & Hahnel, 1991). Hybrid approaches might combine democratic planning for major investment and strategic sectors with market coordination for consumption goods and local production. No single model necessarily applies universally; different sectors and scales might benefit from different coordination mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

The concept of the state differs fundamentally between socialist and capitalist social formations, reflecting divergent understandings of the relationship between political power, economic organization, and human emancipation. The capitalist state maintains formal political equality while protecting substantive economic inequality rooted in private property relations. It presents itself as neutral arbiter while systematically supporting capital accumulation and class domination, operating through both coercive and ideological mechanisms.

The socialist state, theoretically, represents working-class political power directed toward abolishing class divisions and eventually transcending the state itself. In practice, socialist states achieved significant social protections and economic coordination but often through authoritarian centralization inconsistent with genuine democratic control. The tension between socialist democratic aspirations and bureaucratic authoritarian reality remains the central problem requiring resolution for any viable socialist future.

Neither capitalist nor actually existing socialist states fully realized their theoretical ideals. Capitalist democracy remains constrained by economic power, with formal political equality undermined by substantive inequality in resources, influence, and life chances. Elections occur within parameters that rarely challenge fundamental property relations. Business interests exercise disproportionate political influence through campaign finance, lobbying, media ownership, and structural economic power.

Socialist states struggled to maintain democratic accountability alongside economic planning. Vanguard party rule, bureaucratic centralization, and repression of dissent contradicted socialist commitments to popular power and human liberation. Whether these problems reflect inherent socialist failures or specific historical circumstances remains debated. However, any credible socialist theory must honestly confront these failures and articulate compelling alternatives avoiding past mistakes.

Contemporary challenges globalization, technological change, ecological crisis require rethinking state theory beyond inherited frameworks. Globalization undermines national state autonomy while creating needs for transnational coordination. Digital technology enables both enhanced surveillance and potentially more democratic planning. Climate crisis demands rapid transformation beyond what capitalist markets or bureaucratic planning have achieved.

The enduring relevance of this comparative analysis lies not in vindicating one model over another, but in illuminating how political forms relate to economic structures and in identifying possibilities for more democratic, egalitarian, and ecologically sustainable futures. Whether through transformed capitalist states, renewed democratic socialism, or entirely new formations, understanding the state under different social formations provides essential groundwork for imagining and constructing alternatives to current arrangements.

The state will likely remain central to human political organization for the foreseeable future. The crucial question is not whether states exist but what purposes they serve, whose interests they represent, and how they can be made genuinely accountable to popular democratic control while addressing pressing social and ecological challenges. Answering these questions requires drawing on both

capitalist and socialist state theory while moving beyond their limitations toward more adequate frameworks for twenty-first century conditions.

Future socialist theory must integrate insights from feminism, anti-racism, post-colonialism, and ecology alongside class analysis (Fraser, 2009). States are simultaneously gendered, racialized, and ecological institutions, not merely class institutions. Democratic socialism must address multiple forms of domination and recognize diverse forms of oppression intersecting with class exploitation.

The question of scale also requires attention. Neither national autarky nor total globalization seems adequate. Some functions require global coordination climate action, pandemic response, financial regulation. Others benefit from local control land use, community services, cultural expression. Subsidiarity principles suggest decision-making at the lowest effective level while ensuring coordination across scales. Socialist states might involve nested democratic institutions operating from local to global levels.

Technology offers new possibilities but also new dangers. Digital platforms could facilitate democratic participation and transparent planning, or enable totalizing surveillance and algorithmic control. The difference depends on ownership, governance, and values embedded in technological systems. Socializing technology corporations and developing democratic governance over algorithms represents crucial challenges for contemporary socialism.

Ultimately, the socialist project must demonstrate practical superiority over capitalism in delivering human flourishing, ecological sustainability, and democratic participation. This requires not only theoretical articulation but also practical experimentation with alternative institutions. States can facilitate such experimentation through supportive frameworks while avoiding bureaucratic control. The challenge is enabling diverse initiatives to emerge, learn from each other, and scale up successful models while maintaining democratic accountability.

The comparative study of capitalist and socialist states reveals both the malleability of political forms and the constraints imposed by economic structures. States are neither infinitely plastic nor rigidly determined. They represent terrains of struggle where different social forces contest power and direction. Understanding these dynamics provides resources for imagining and constructing more just, democratic, and sustainable futures the ultimate purpose of political theory and practice.

REFERENCES

1) Albert, M., & Hahnel, R. (1991). *The political economy of participatory economics*. Princeton University Press.
2) Althusser, L. (2014). *On the reproduction of capitalism: Ideology and ideological state apparatuses* (G. M. Goshgarian, Trans.). Verso. (Original work published 1970)
3) Anderson, P. (1974). *Lineages of the absolutist state*. Verso.
4) Bahro, R. (1978). *The alternative in Eastern Europe*. New Left Books.
5) Baiocchi, G. (2005). *Militants and citizens: The politics of participatory democracy in Porto Alegre*. Stanford University Press.
6) Bakunin, M. (1990). *Statism and anarchy* (M. S. Shatz, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1873)
7) Bastani, A. (2019). *Fully automated luxury communism*. Verso.
8) Blackledge, P. (2012). *Marxism and ethics: Freedom, desire, and revolution*. State University of New York Press.
9) Block, F. (1977). The ruling class does not rule: Notes on the Marxist theory of the state. *Socialist Revolution*, 7(3), 6-28.
10) Bollier, D., & Helfrich, S. (Eds.). (2015). *Patterns of communing*. Common Strategies Group and Off the Common Press.
11) Carr, E. H. (1950). *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923* (Vol. 1). Macmillan.
12) Cheney, G. (1999). *Values at work: Employee participation meets market pressure at Mondragon*. Cornell University Press.
13) Cliff, T. (1974). *State capitalism in Russia*. Pluto Press.
14) Cockshott, W. P., & Cottrell, A. (1993). *Towards a new socialism*. Spokesman Books.
15) Cole, G. D. H. (1920). *Guild socialism restated*. Leonard Parsons.
16) Conquest, R. (1986). *The harvest of sorrow: Soviet collectivization and the terror-famine*. Oxford University Press.
17) Crouch, C. (2004). *Post-democracy*. Polity Press.
18) Dahl, R. A. (1961). *Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city*. Yale University Press.
19) Deacon, B. (1983). *Social policy and socialism: The struggle for socialist relations of welfare*. Pluto Press.
20) Deutscher, I. (1967). *The unfinished revolution: Russia 1917-1967*. Oxford University Press.
21) Dobb, M. (1955). *On economic theory and socialism*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
22) Dolgoff, S. (Ed.). (1974). *The anarchist collectives: Workers' self-management in the Spanish Revolution, 1936-1939*. Free Life Editions.
23) Eckersley, R. (2004). *The green state: Rethinking democracy and sovereignty*. MIT Press.
24) Eisenstein, Z. (1979). *Capitalist patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism*. Monthly Review Press.

25) Engels, F. (1987). *Anti-Dühring*. In K. Marx & F. Engels, *Collected works* (Vol. 25, pp. 5-309). International Publishers. (Original work published 1878)
26) Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton University Press.
27) Fforde, A., & de Vylder, S. (1996). *From plan to market: The economic transition in Vietnam*. Westview Press.
28) Foster, J. B. (2009). *The ecological revolution: Making peace with the planet*. Monthly Review Press.
29) Foster, J. B., Clark, B., & York, R. (2010). *The ecological rift: Capitalism's war on the earth*. Monthly Review Press.
30) Fraser, N. (2009). Feminism, capitalism, and the cunning of history. *New Left Review*, 56, 97-117.
31) Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago Press.
32) Fuller, L. L. (1964). *The morality of law*. Yale University Press.
33) Gilens, M., & Page, B. I. (2014). Testing theories of American politics: Elites, interest groups, and average citizens. *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(3), 564-581.
34) Glyn, A. (2006). *Capitalism unleashed: Finance, globalization, and welfare*. Oxford University Press.
35) Gorz, A. (1967). *Strategy for labour: A radical proposal* (M. Nicolaus & V. Ortiz, Trans.). Beacon Press.
36) Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, Eds. & Trans.). International Publishers.
37) Gregory, P. R., & Stuart, R. C. (2001). *Russian and Soviet economic performance and structure* (7th ed.). Addison-Wesley.
38) Hahnel, R. (2005). *Economic justice and democracy: From competition to cooperation*. Routledge.
39) Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Harvard University Press.
40) Harvey, D. (2003). *The new imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
41) Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
42) Hayek, F. A. (1944). *The road to serfdom*. University of Chicago Press.
43) Hobsbawm, E. (1994). *Age of extremes: The short twentieth century, 1914-1991*. Michael Joseph.
44) Horvat, B. (1982). *The political economy of socialism: A Marxist social theory*. M. E. Sharpe.
45) Huang, Y. (2008). *Capitalism with Chinese characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the state*. Cambridge University Press.
46) Jessop, B. (2016). *The state: Past, present, future*. Polity Press.
47) Kapcia, A. (2008). *Cuba in revolution: A history since the fifties*. Reaktion Books.
48) Kellogg, K. C., Valentine, M. A., & Christin, A. (2020). Algorithms at work: The new contested terrain of control. *Academy of Management Annals*, 14(1), 366-410.
49) Kornai, J. (1992). *The socialist system: The political economy of communism*. Princeton University Press.
50) Korpi, W. (1983). *The democratic class struggle*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
51) Kovel, J. (2007). *The enemy of nature: The end of capitalism or the end of the world?* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
52) Kropotkin, P. (1995). *The conquest of bread and other writings* (M. S. Shatz, Ed.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1892)
53) Lane, D. (1981). *Leninism: A sociological interpretation*. Cambridge University Press.
54) Lane, D. (1985). *Soviet economy and society*. New York University Press.
55) Lenin, V. I. (1992). *The state and revolution*. Penguin Books. (Original work published 1917)
56) Locke, J. (1980). *Second treatise of government* (C. B. Macpherson, Ed.). Hackett Publishing. (Original work published 1689)
57) Löwy, M. (2015). *Ecosocialism: A radical alternative to capitalist catastrophe*. Haymarket Books.
58) MacKinnon, C. A. (1989). *Toward a feminist theory of the state*. Harvard University Press.
59) Macpherson, C. B. (1973). *Democratic theory: Essays in retrieval*. Clarendon Press.
60) Malm, A. (2020). *Corona, climate, chronic emergency: War communism in the twenty-first century*. Verso.
61) Mandel, E. (1968). *Marxist economic theory* (B. Pearce, Trans.). Merlin Press.
62) Marx, K. (1970). *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In K. Marx & F. Engels, *Selected works* (Vol. 3, pp. 13-30). Progress Publishers. (Original work published 1875)
63) Marx, K. (1976). *Capital: Volume I* (B. Fowkes, Trans.). Penguin Books. (Original work published 1867)
64) Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1967). *The Communist Manifesto*. Penguin Books. (Original work published 1848)
65) Mason, P. (2015). *Postcapitalism: A guide to our future*. Allen Lane.
66) Medina, E. (2011). *Cybernetic revolutionaries: Technology and politics in Allende's Chile*. MIT Press.
67) Miliband, R. (1969). *The state in capitalist society*. Basic Books.
68) Miliband, R. (1970). The capitalist state: Reply to Nicos Poulantzas. *New Left Review*, I/59, 53-60.
69) Mills, C. W. (1956). *The power elite*. Oxford University Press.
70) Morozov, E. (2013). *To save everything, click here: The folly of technological solutionism*. PublicAffairs.

71) Nove, A. (1983). *The economics of feasible socialism*. George Allen & Unwin.
72) Offe, C. (1984). *Contradictions of the welfare state* (J. Keane, Ed.). MIT Press.
73) Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and democratic theory*. Cambridge University Press.
74) Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2007). Variegated capitalism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(6), 731-772.
75) Pepper, D. (1993). *Eco-socialism: From deep ecology to social justice*. Routledge.
76) Phillips, L., & Rozworski, M. (2019). *The people's republic of Walmart: How the world's biggest corporations are laying the foundation for socialism*. Verso.
77) Popper, K. (1945). *The open society and its enemies* (2 vols.). Routledge.
78) Poulantzas, N. (1969). The problem of the capitalist state. *New Left Review*, I/58, 67-78.
79) Poulantzas, N. (1978). *State, power, socialism* (P. Camiller, Trans.). New Left Books.
80) Przeworski, A. (1985). *Capitalism and social democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
81) Przeworski, A., & Wallerstein, M. (1988). Structural dependence of the state on capital. *American Political Science Review*, 82(1), 11-29.
82) Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.
83) Rousseau, J.-J. (1997). *The social contract and other later political writings* (V. Gourevitch, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1762)
84) Scholz, T., & Schneider, N. (Eds.). (2016). *Ours to hack and to own: The rise of platform cooperativism, a new vision for the future of work and a fairer internet*. OR Books.
85) Schumpeter, J. A. (1942). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. Harper & Brothers.
86) Schweickart, D. (2002). *After capitalism*. Rowman & Littlefield.
87) Shapiro, J. (2001). *Mao's war against nature: Politics and the environment in revolutionary China*. Cambridge University Press.
88) Srnicek, N. (2017). *Platform capitalism*. Polity Press.
89) Strange, S. (1996). *The retreat of the state: The diffusion of power in the world economy*. Cambridge University Press.
90) Streeck, W. (2014). *Buying time: The delayed crisis of democratic capitalism* (P. Camiller & D. Fernbach, Trans.). Verso.
91) Streeck, W. (2016). *How will capitalism end? Essays on a failing system*. Verso.
92) Trotsky, L. (1972). *The revolution betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and where is it going?* (M. Eastman, Trans.). Pathfinder Press. (Original work published 1937)
93) Vanek, J. (1970). *The general theory of labour-managed market economies*. Cornell University Press.
94) Weber, M. (1946). Politics as a vocation. In H. H. Gerth & C. W. Mills (Eds. & Trans.), *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology* (pp. 77-128). Oxford University Press.
95) Whyte, K. (2017). Indigenous climate change studies: Indigenizing futures, decolonizing the Anthropocene. *English Language Notes*, 55(1-2), 153-162.
96) Wood, E. M. (1981). The separation of the economic and the political in capitalism. *New Left Review*, I/127, 66-95.
97) Wright, E. O. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. Verso.
98) Zuboff, S. (2019). *The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*. PublicAffairs.