Call for Papers

The Contemporary Capitalist State and Social Classes

Theoretical inquiries, social transformations and new research approaches

Organised by the Nicos Poulantzas Institute (NPI)

Academic conference (first half of December 2027) and special scholarly publication

1. Scope of the call

Some fifty years after Nicos Poulantzas developed his analyses of the capitalist state, political power and social classes, the questions raised by Marxist state theory have taken on a range of new dimensions. Transformations in contemporary capitalism, the internationalisation of economic and political relations, the restructuring of production, financialisation, digitalisation, new forms of labour and exploitation, the ecological crisis, shifts in the structure of social classes and changes in the institutions of political power and representation have reshaped the field of theoretical and empirical inquiry.

How is the capitalist state changing under contemporary conditions? How are relations between economic and political power being reorganised? What changes can be observed in the formation, composition and political representation of social classes? How are relations among fractions of capital evolving? How do new forms of capitalist accumulation affect the functioning of the state and political institutions? How do new divisions of labour affect the ability of social classes and of the state to respond to capitalist crises? Above all, to what extent can classical and more recent theoretical approaches account for these transformations and crises, and where are new concepts, research hypotheses and methodological tools needed?

To mark the thirtieth anniversary of its founding in 1997, the Nicos Poulantzas Institute (NPI) is organising an academic conference and a special scholarly publication on the contemporary capitalist state and social classes.

The initiative aims to create an open forum for scholarly exchange, theoretical inquiry and dialogue among researchers.

The call is addressed in particular to early-career researchers, doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers and early-career academics. Established scholars and theorists, as well as independent researchers, are also welcome to submit proposals.

We seek to bring to light new theoretical developments, original research and empirical findings that contribute to our understanding of contemporary forms of capitalist organisation, state power and social stratification.

2. Suggested themes

The themes below are intended as a guide.

The first concerns Poulantzas's own work and its international reception. The others invite contributions that critically examine and extend the questions he raised, as well as independent studies of contemporary issues concerning the state and social classes.

A. The work of Nicos Poulantzas and its international reception

- *Political Power and Social Classes*. The development of the theory of the capitalist state, the power bloc and the relative autonomy of the state.

- *Fascism and Dictatorship*. The analysis of exceptional regimes and the possibilities and limits of applying it to the study of the contemporary far right and authoritarianism.
- *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* and *The Crisis of the Dictatorships*. The internationalisation of capital, class transformations and transitions from dictatorship to democracy.
- *State, Power, Socialism*. The state as the material condensation of a balance of forces, authoritarian statism and the democratic road to socialism.
- The theoretical debates of Poulantzas's time and the subsequent international reception of his work, with particular attention to readings and theoretical developments in the United States and Latin America.

B. Theories of the capitalist state – continuities, ruptures and new approaches

- Marxist state theory in its classical and contemporary forms.
- The state as an 'instrument', a social relation and a site of class antagonisms.
- Althusser and the theory of the state as a 'machine'.
- Jessop and the strategic-relational approach to the state.
- The 'logic of capital' school and the distinctive debate in Germany.
- The state, hegemony, ideology and political power.
- The concept of the 'relative autonomy of the state' and its relevance to the neoliberal state.
- The neoliberal transformation of the state, authoritarianism and post-democracy.
- Critical approaches to the contemporary state beyond the classical Marxist tradition.

C. Social classes and contemporary capitalism

- New forms of class structure and social stratification.
- The contemporary working class and changes in its composition and forms of labour.
- The new petty bourgeoisie and intermediate social categories.
- The social and political formation of the ruling classes.
- Class inequality, social mobility and social reproduction.
- Precarity, platform work and new forms of exploitation.
- Gender, migration, race and class relations.
- Contemporary forms of class consciousness and collective action.

D. The state, capital and economic power

- The state and new forms of capitalist accumulation.
- Financialisation and the transformation of state power.
- The state as a mechanism for reproducing capitalist relations.
- Public goods, privatisation and commodification.
- Fiscal discipline, technocratic governance and independent authorities.
- The state, digital infrastructures and technological power.
- Public ownership, social control of investment and economic democracy.
- Social policy, redistribution and class inequalities.

E. The state, democracy and political representation

- Transformations of representative democracy.
- The state, political parties and social classes.
- Trade unions, workers' power and class organisation – historical changes, contemporary forms and prospects for rebuilding collective organisation.
- The crisis of political representation of the working classes.
- The state, social movements and political participation.
- Authoritarianism, the far right, securitisation and new forms of political coercion.
- Changing relations between the state and civil society.

- Social conflicts and possibilities for democratic transformation.

F. International and supranational dimensions of state power

- The nation-state, globalisation and the internationalisation of capital.
- Supranational institutions and the transformation of state sovereignty.
- The European Union, economic governance and class relations.
- Imperialism, geopolitical rivalries and the contemporary state.
- State power and uneven development.
- Comparative approaches to contemporary capitalist states.
- Prospects for the Global South.

G. The ecological crisis, social classes and the state

- The ecological crisis and capitalist accumulation.
- The state and green transition policies.
- Class inequalities and the distribution of environmental burdens.
- Climate governance and social conflicts.
- Energy transition, public goods and social justice.
- Possibilities for ecological and democratic transformation.

H. Authoritarian projects of governance and the corporate state

- Corporate models of governance. The corporation as a model of governance and projects to 'replace' the state with corporate forms of managerial power.
- Special economic zones and corporate-style regimes of governance (Dubai, the Philippines, Honduras, the City of London).
- The reconfiguration of state sovereignty, labour rights and democratic accountability under corporate-style regimes of governance.

I. The state, logistics and the circulation of capital

- The role of state apparatuses in organising the circulation of capital and the impact of logistics networks on the structure and functions of the state.
- Ports, railways, warehouses and freight corridors. The ownership, control and governance of infrastructure.
- Global supply chains, the organisation of labour and collective action at logistics hubs.
- Relations between logistics hubs and platform capitalism.

J. Post-capitalist approaches to public power

- Theories and historical and contemporary experiences of organising public power democratically from a post-capitalist perspective.
- Social ownership, the commons, self-government and democratic planning. Institutions for collective decision-making and social control.
- Social and political conditions for transforming public powers.

3. Theoretical and methodological orientation

The call welcomes diverse theoretical and methodological approaches that contribute to a critical analysis of the contemporary capitalist state and social classes.

We particularly encourage papers that do any of the following.

- Develop new theoretical concepts or critically reassess established frameworks.
- Combine theoretical analysis with original empirical research.
- Draw on comparative, historical or interdisciplinary approaches.

- Examine emerging social and political contradictions that have received insufficient attention.
- Foster dialogue between Marxist theory and other traditions of critical social science.

The conference aims to generate new theoretical and empirical knowledge and to advance critical discussion of the existing literature.

4. Submission and review of proposals

The deadline for submitting initial proposals is 20 February 2027.

Applicants are invited to submit an abstract of 400–600 words outlining their proposed paper. The proposal should state the central research question, the theoretical framework, the methodological approach where applicable, and the expected scholarly contribution.

Proposals will be examined by a Scientific Committee composed of academics and researchers with expertise in the relevant fields.

Proposals will be assessed on the basis of scholarly originality, theoretical coherence, methodological rigour and relevance to the call.

Papers will be selected through a scholarly review process that includes anonymous assessment of abstracts.

Proposals may be submitted in Greek, English or French. All proposals should be sent to: **poulantzascof2027@gmail.com**

5. Academic conference and special publication

Selected papers will be presented at an academic conference organised by the Nicos Poulantzas Institute in the first half of December 2027.

The conference will be organised into thematic sessions with speakers and discussants to foster substantive scholarly discussion.

Conference papers may be presented in Greek, English or French.

After the conference, participants will be invited to submit their full papers for consideration for a special scholarly publication.

Texts will be selected for publication through a separate academic review process based on their quality, originality and contribution to the subject of the publication.

Participation in the conference does not automatically lead to publication.

Scientific Committee

Dimitris Anastasiou — Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Charalambos Anthopoulos — Hellenic Open University

Ilias Georgantas — University of Crete

Dionysis Gravaris — Panteion University

Marios Emmanouilidis — Independent researcher

Giorgos Katsambekis — School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Thomas Noutsopoulos - Panteion University

Iris Lykourioti — University of Thessaly

Michalis Bartsidis — Hellenic Open University

Giorgos Papanikolaou — Northumbria Law School, Northumbria University, United Kingdom

Eleni Rethymiotaki — School of Law, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Nikolas Sevastakis — School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Thomas Siomos — Department of Political Science and Public Administration, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Athina Skoulariki — University of Crete

Yannis Stavrakakis — School of Political Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Vassilis Tsianos — University of Kiel, Germany

Yannis Tsirbas — Department of Political Science, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Marica Frangakis — European Economists Network (EuroMemo Group)

Filippa Chatzistavrou — Department of Political Science and Public Administration, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Nikos Christofis — University of Thessaly

Conference Secretariat

The Conference Secretariat supports the Scientific Committee.

Katerina Pseniskof — PhD in Political Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Sofia Kazlari — MSc in Political Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

6. An initiative to renew critical social theory

The 2027 conference is part of the Institute's broader effort to strengthen scholarly research, develop collaborative relationships and create new spaces for exchange and dialogue.

Thirty years after its founding, the NPI seeks to preserve and deepen Poulantzas's theoretical legacy and to develop new ways of addressing the questions it continues to raise.

Our particular aim is to bring forward new generations of researchers and theorists, build lasting scholarly networks and support the production of original knowledge in critical social science.

We hope the conference and the special publication will mark the beginning of this effort.

NICOS POULANTZAS INSTITUTE

Scholarly research – Critical theory – Public debate