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# Interview with Bob Jessop conducted by Mürekkep (Ink), Ankara

## Bob Jessop

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> 1. Your books, *Capitalist State* (1982) and *State Theory* (1990), are great contributions to the ongoing debate on the state. In these books, you successfully deal with various theoretical sources and approaches, while overcoming their shortcomings by relating them to each other within your own framework. Theoretically, your 'strategic relational approach' to the state theory is based on the dual criticism of both state-centred and societal explanations of state, underlining the complex mutual interrelations between 'state' and 'society'. We would like to ask about the theoretical and political factors that motivated you as an intellectual and made you focus particularly on this topic, the state; about the theoretical-intellectual roots of your interest in the capitalist state? In short, what are the 'conditions of possibility' of your works on the state?

I come from a conservative (socially and politically) artisan family that comprised several generations of blacksmiths, farriers, and wheelwrights in rural Essex and rural Kent (eastern counties located north and south of the Thames). Whilst still studying at the local grammar school, I also worked for my father and two uncles in the family business at a number of semi-skilled manual jobs using antique machines and hand-made tools. My interest in the labour process and class relations can be traced back to these early years. At Exeter University, where I took my first degree, I majored in sociology with politics as my minor. At that time

Marxism was scarcely taught (at least in my department in a rather conservative, largely middle-class university). Indeed, American functionalism and behavioralism were the dominant contemporary theoretical approaches. Only when I became a graduate student in economics and politics at Cambridge did I develop an interest in Marxism and become involved in leftwing politics. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, this was during 1967-68 -- at a time of the Vietnam War protests, the events of May 1968, and the general upsurge in working class militancy. My doctoral research reflected my personal background as much as broader theoretical interests. It was in the broad field of political sociology and was particularly concerned with the nature of working class conservatism, middle class radicalism, and the relative stability of English political culture.

Whilst engaged in the empirical research for my doctorate, I was also involved in a staff-student study group concerned with theories of revolution and actual examples of revolution -- from the English Civil War up to Vietnam -- as well as in informal educational counter-movements, such as the Free University of Cambridge and the Communist University of London. It was in these latter contexts that I was inspired two rather different figures from Western Marxism: Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. Gramsci taught me the significance of an extended view of the state (lo stato integrale) and the importance of political, moral, and intellectual hegemony to the stability of democratic states. Althusser taught me the significance of rigorous theorization in the movement from abstract to concrete, from simple to complex, as well as providing some insights into the nature of capitalism as a mode of production and of the need for conjunctural analyses. These two figures in turn came together in the work of Nicos Poulantzas, the Greek theorist who wrote on political power and social classes in bourgeois democratic states organized around the struggle for hegemony. The convergence of these different interests together with my own social origins in a thoroughly hegemonized, petty bourgeois family led me to think increasingly about the nature of the state and political power.

Since then I have dedicated most of my academic life to this topic and its links to other aspects of class domination. Naturally my theoretical influences and particular empirical interests have changed with the years but I have never abandoned the overall commitment to Marxist theorising that I acquired in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition, an important guiding thread through all of my academic work has been the attempt to understand the specificities of postwar British political economy in terms of the interrelation between the distinctive features of the British economy and the British state. The arrival of Thatcherism added a particular urgency to these interests during the 1980s.

With the benefit of hindsight, I would now say that my strategic-relational approach to the state stems from my exposure to three different intellectual influences. Lenin once claimed that there are three sources of Marxism as developed by Marx himself: German philosophy, French politics, and English economics. I have claimed that Nicos Poulantzas, the last great Marxist state theorist, was influenced by French - not German - philosophy, Italian - not French - politics, and, not English economics, not, indeed, any economics, but Romano-German law. In turn, I would suggest that my own three sources have been: German - not French or Italian - politics, French - not English - economics, and, not German philosophy, not French philosophy, not any type of philosophy, but ... Chilean biology! The German influence is clear in my early concern with the changing forms and functions of the capitalist state. It was much later that I discovered French economics in the guise of the Parisian regulation school. This offers specific institutional answers to the old Marxist question of how, despite its structural contradictions and class conflicts, capitalism can continue to expand for relatively long periods. It stresses that economic activities are socially embedded and socially regularized and that stable economic expansion depends on specific social modes of economic regulation that complement the role of market forces in guiding capitalist development.

Finally, from Chilean biology, if not directly, at least by way of Niklas Luhmann (a German sociologist), Gunther Teubner (a German legal theorist), and Helmut Willke (a German political scientist), I took the notion of 'autopoiesis'. Transposed (some would say illegitimately) from cell biology to sociology, the autopoieticist approach suggests that all (major) societal sub-systems (such as law, politics, the economy, and science) can be studied

as self-referential, self-reproducing, and self-regulating. In brief, these systems discursively constitute their own boundaries, re-create themselves the conditions for their internal operations, and develop in terms of their own modus operandi rather than being subordinate to some external (functional or input-output) logic. This was especially helpful for thinking through the old problem of the state's 'relative autonomy' vis-à-vis the market economy. For it suggests this problem can be addressed in terms of the path-dependent 'structural coupling' between two *operationally autonomous* but *ecologically interdependent* subsystems. There were several other lessons that I derived from theories of autopoiesis but the link to relative autonomy was the most important initially.

It has also been claimed that Marx's ability to produce a creative synthesis from German philosophy, French politics, and English economics involved more than his capacity to develop boils on the backside by sitting for hours in the British Museum Library. It was due to his identification with the class struggle of the proletariat. Likewise it can be claimed that Nicos Poulantzas could produce his own synthesis, a strategic and relational approach to the state, because of his identification with popular-democratic struggle and new social movements. And, if I have been able to produce a synthesis of German politics, French economics, and Chilean biology, it is because I have been involved in a small way in the ideological and political contestation of Thatcherism. Indeed, much of my work has been shaped by an ever-renewed attempt to understand the specificity of the crisis of postwar British political economy and the significance of the Thatcherite response. It is this often subterranean political dimension to my work that provides the lodestone of the intellectual project I have pursued for so many years.

> 2. In the above-mentioned books, concepts like "strategic selectivity," "hegemony", "hegemonic project" and "accumulation strategies", among others, take centre stage and there was almost no reference to the issue of globalisation and regionalisation. However, recently, your concern seems to have switched to the analysis of new social, economic and political transformations that are brought about by economic globalisation. In a world which is economically and politically more integrated than previous ages, is there any need to modify your approach and to revise your central concepts? In other words, can concepts and analytical tools employed in your previous studies be used to understand and examine the new world-historic conditions? How can old concepts and categories help build a "new" theoretical stand without wholly discarding historical accumulation of the socialist tradition?

There are four separate issues here. First, you are right that my earlier books on state theory did not refer to globalisation or regionalisation. In part this reflected their status as commentaries on the existing postwar literature, which was heavily oriented to the national state rather than to imperialism or the local state. But even in these you will find discussion of the world market, international state monopoly capitalism, the functions of the state in promoting internationalization, the statist approach to geo-politics and militarism, and so on. My book on Poulantzas (1985) naturally involved quite extensive discussion of the contradictions in the current stage of imperialism and, indeed, Poulantzas has strongly influenced my more recent discussions of globalization. More significantly, some of my other earlier work had already addressed these issues empirically -- as one would expect from someone with a deep interest in the British state, which has a quite distinctive imperial past and a strong involvement in internationalization and globalization. Thatcherism is particularly interesting in this regard. I have also engaged in empirical research on regional restructuring in the post-socialist economies and on globalization in relation to economic and social policies and in relation to state restructuring. So I did not come to the increasing importance of globalisation and regionalisation wholly unprepared theoretically.

Second, regarding the changes brought about by economic globalization, I have always argued that globalization is, in Marxist terms, a 'chaotic conception'. It is often treated in both theoretical and empirical studies as if it were a distinctive and singular causal process in its own right. But such accounts typically fail to grasp the quite varied forms in which this process occurs and the different understandings that motivate key actors in their approach to globalization. They ignore the extent to which globalization is the complex resultant of many different forces and processes -- processes occurring on various spatial and temporal scales

and originating in widely dispersed places and/or networks of places. They neglect the extent to which globalization involves complex and tangled causal hierarchies rather than a simple, unilinear, bottom-up or top-down movement as well as the extent to which globalization is always a contingent product of tendencies and counter-tendencies. And they overlook the extent to which globalization typically involves an eccentric 'interpenetration' of different scales of social organization rather than their simple 'nesting' in the manner of Russian dolls. In this sense, then, I do not accept that economic globalization as such causes anything. To argue otherwise is to reify globalization, to become complicit with the demands of the currently hegemonic forces behind neo-liberal globalization, and to fail to see the contradictions and limits in all forms of globalization.

Third, in approaching globalization in this way, I have drawn on many of the key concepts that I developed in my earlier work. Thus I analyse globalization from both a structural and strategic viewpoint and I see it as transforming the structurally-inscribed strategic context within which economic and political forces operate. It is likewise associated with new accumulation strategies and hegemonic projects, with the transformation of power blocs and the construction of new historic blocs. In this sense the heuristic value of many of the earlier concepts is still there. At the same time I recognise that the trends associated with globalisation pose new problems that may also lead us to see the past in a new light. This is just another version of the Hegelian principle that the owl of Minerva takes flight at dusk. I can illustrate this with three quick points.

The multi-scalar, multi-centric nature of globalization has revealed more clearly than before the historical specificity of the primacy of the national state as the spatio-temporal matrix within which capital accumulation occurred in the postwar Atlantic Fordist economies. This requires us to reconsider how the national scale came to have this primacy, how it has lost it, and what this implies for the future of the national state. I now discuss this last issue in terms of the relativisation of scale, i.e., the declining primacy of the national scale and the continuing failure to find another scale -- above or below the national level -- on which capital is being re-regularised. Another issue that globalization puts on the agenda more forcefully than before is time and space. I analyse globalization in terms of time-space distantiation (the stretching of social relations in time and space) and in terms of time-space compression (the intensification of 'discrete' events in real time and/or the increased velocity of material and immaterial flows over a given distance). The most powerful forces in the emerging neo-liberal global order are those that combine the capacities for time-space distantiation and time-space compression -- which means, above all, hypermobile financial capital able to make economic decisions at high speed. But the same concepts can then be applied to earlier periods to reveal aspects of the operation of the economic and the political orders that were perhaps less evident. My third example is the way in which the increased importance of transnational economic relations is transforming the boundaries between the economic and the extra-economic. In the period of Atlantic Fordism, international competitiveness was understood mainly in terms of relative unit labour costs and the terms of trade. Now it is understood in terms of the competitiveness of wider economic, political, and social institutions: industry-university relations, the need for a competition state, the promotion of an enterprise culture, and so forth. But this in turn leads us to re-think the social construction of the economy as an object of economic management in different periods, to reflect on the changeability of the boundaries between the economic and extra-economic, and to examine how these different spheres were articulated under different accumulation regimes and modes of regulation.

Fourth, regarding the socialist tradition, I find that the new tendencies associated with globalization have certainly forced me to rethink the socialist project but not to abandon the socialist tradition. It seems to me that the principal contradictions of Atlantic Fordism were different from those that characterize the emerging post-Fordist period. Whereas the former was structured around the management of the contradictions in the wage as a cost of production and as a source of demand and around the nature of money as an international currency and as a national money, the emerging period is dominated by two other contradictions inherent in the capital relation. These are the *forms of competition* (notably the growing importance of the extra-economic conditions of competitiveness and hence their colonisation by the value form and, tied to this, the emergence of the networked firm as the dominant organisational paradigm) and the *forms of the state* (notably its restructuring in the

light of the relativisation of scale and of the incapacity of traditional state forms to govern the new economy). In turn this makes it hard to organize any socialist struggle around defence of the Keynesian welfare national state that was developed in response to the contradictions of Atlantic Fordism and helped to consolidate that accumulation regime. Instead the new struggles must be oriented to issues of innovation and competitiveness; to questions of labour market flexibility, basic income, and the social economy; to the post-national nature of political institutions; and to the search for alternatives to the market and the state to govern the new, knowledge-driven (but still essentially capitalist) economy. Again, whilst the stakes may be different, this continues a familiar pattern. For each new stage of capitalism is associated with the need to redefine socialism as well as to contest new forms of revisionism.

> 3. Your theoretical approach is questioning several clear cut distinctions that have had a great impact on social and political theory like state vs. society, the economic vs. the political, and agency vs. structure, the logic of capital vs. class struggle etc. As your analytical problems changed with the before-mentioned shift to the topic of globalisation, you kept expanding your theoretical framework by articulating new things in it. But this did not lead you to exclude your first conceptual tools like the Gramscian concepts of 'hegemony' and 'historical bloc'. But, as the ideas of "the social embeddedness of economy" that you draw from Polanyi that is eminent in your later works shows, in a way you are still dealing with the same old issue of complexity of ‘social totality’ or of the social formation. In this sense one can argue that the critique of holistic and individualistic approaches to the process of social formation and transformation are still the main theoretical bases of your works on globalisation and the state. How do you think the ‘old’ problem of social formation and agency-structure in relation to your later works on globalisation?

Your overall assessment of my concern to transcend traditional dichotomies through a more complex dialetical re-interpretation of such dichotomies is right. Another dichotomy that I have tried to address is that between methodological individualism and methodological holism through what Bourdieu might call methodological relationalism. This has important implications for how one thinks of totalities. I draw a distinction between competing principles of totalization in relation to social formations (i.e., competing principles of societalization or Vergesellschaftung) and the idea that there could ever be fully constituted, closed totalities. For me totalization is never complete -- there are always social relations and structures (as well as natural phenomena) that resist complete integration into any totalizing project and there are always competing attempts at totalization on many different scales and from many different potential centres of totalization. This is why the agency-structure relation is so important for my work. In this context globalization involves a whole series of attempts at totalization on the level of a potentially global social formation. But, as I noted earlier, globalization must be seen as a multi-scalar, multi-centric, and multi-temporal process. There are many competing versions of globalization as an economic, political, and socio-cultural project and they are just as open to analysis in terms of the 'old' problem of social formation and agency-structure. Among the new concepts that I have found useful in this regard are spatio-temporal fix, time-space distantiation, and time-space compression. These provide more sophisticated ways of thinking about societalization and about the problems of power and domination involved in structure-agency dialectics.

> 4. In your later works, you draw on Polanyi's 'market-society' distinction. You seem to be arguing that the complex network of relationships is constructed despite and/or through the tension and conflicts between these distinct or autonomous systems. The process of transformation of a society into a market society can be given as an example of this complex process of interaction between different systems. Could you please explain the source of this tension between the market and society? Under what conditions does a society become a market society and the socialisation of capitalism become possible? In relation to this, I would like to ask if there is any possibility of having a social market or a free market within a socialist system?

Before addressing Polanyi, I want to make three basic points. First, from a Marxist viewpoint, the reproduction of the capital relation cannot be secured purely in and through exchange relations mediated through the market. There is always an extra-economic dimension to

capital accumulation that is reflected in the role of institutions such as the state, business networks, self-help organizations, and so forth. Second, there is always a tension between the economic and extra-economic moments of the reproduction of the capital relation because their institutional separation is both necessary to capitalism and yet problematic for capitalism -- precisely because, in my terms, form problematizes function. This is another area where one needs to introduce the structure-agency and/or strategic-relational approaches. Third, given this in principle unresolvable tension, we can only ever expect second-best solutions. It is in this context that I have written about the inherent biases and selectivity involved in any accumulation strategy, state project, or principle of societalization. Now, as to the source of the tension between market and society, we can say that, when market exchange becomes the dominant principle of societalization, as it does when commodification extends into all social spheres, it is necessary that its extra-economic environment (comprising a whole range of other institutions as well as non-economic identities, social relations, and organizations in civil society) be adapted to secure its conditions of existence. This is why Polanyi refers to the disembedding of the market economy from the pre-capitalist institutions in which economic relations had previously been embedded and, a fortiori, had previously been subordinated to non-economic values and norms (such as just prices, fair wages, social solidarity, or reasons of state). But this poses the risk that exchange relations come to dominate all spheres of social life -- leading, as Polanyi notes, to the domination of exchange relations also in relation to wage-labour, money, and land (or, more generally, nature). Yet all three are actually fictitious commodities and cannot be reproduced in the medium-term through market relations alone without damaging capital itself -- let alone the wider social formation. Hence Polanyi argues that capitalist market relations need to be re-embedded -- not back into pre-capitalist social relations and institutions but into a market-friendly but nonetheless market-restraining institutional order. In short, into a market society. This provides another interesting example of the limits of any attempt at totalization and the importance of the contradictions and dilemmas involved in reproducing the capital relation. My current solution to thinking through these problems, as indicated above, is in terms of spatio-temporal fixes. It is these that provide a relatively stable framework within which contradictions and dilemmas can be displaced and deferred -- albeit at the expense of marginal groups within the relevant spatio-temporal matrix and, even more, beyond it. Finally, regarding the possibility of market relations within socialism, I fully anticipate that these will exist. The problem is not how to eliminate exchange relations but how to limit their extension into the realm of fictitious commodities and how to prevent the subordination of all social relations to commodification. In this regard a social economy subject to other principles of societalization, especially those of solidarity and deliberative democracy, would be an essential feature of socialism. As yet unresolved, to my mind, is the question of the scale on which the dominant spatio-temporal fix for socialism will be established.

> 5. It seems that your theoretical standpoint owes much to the regulation school. The regulation school is mainly concerned with socio-political systems, institutions and mechanisms through which capitalism is regulated or is regulating itself. Along this line, you employ concepts like 'mode of regulation' and 'regime of accumulation'. The regulation approach also analyses the capitalist economy at the world scale and focuses various questions related to the regulation of global capitalism. In this context, we would like to know what you think about dynamics of global capitalism and its impact on changes to the international division of labour? While analysing the process of globalisation and changing patterns of international relations, do you draw also on theories other than regulation theory like dependency theory or world system theory; do you use classifications that they would also use like the First world-Third World distinction, developed-underdeveloped distinction etc.?

I have recently written extensively on globalization from a regulationist as well as a state-theoretical perspective. Some indications of this have already been given in earlier answers. Since I do not believe that there is a single logic to globalization but that it is the complex resultant of many different processes on many different scales, there is no simple answer to the issue of its impact on the international division of labour. In my earlier work I have suggested that what is conventionally discussed under the rubric of globalization includes a

wide range of processes involving complex forms of inter-scalar articulation of the different circuits of capital and attempts by various competing social forces to organize corresponding institutional architectures to these different economic processes. In my own work I have not yet drawn on dependency theory or world systems theory -- although I am more favourably inclined to the former than the latter. I am quite convinced that there are relations of dependent development but I would want to analyse these in strategic-relational terms. My problem with world systems theory is that it tends to interpret capitalist development in terms of the top-down 'capital logic' of the world system -- even if that is one which recognizes a division between a global market and a pluralistic nation-state system. There are some interesting arguments advanced from within world systems theory and I am happy to integrate them into my own approach. Classifications such as First World-Third World and developed-underdeveloped seem to me more important in terms of their discursive constitution and implications rather than as distinctions that correspond in some sense to actual divisions within the global economy. I have argued elsewhere that, within the ensemble of economic relations, divisions into specific economic spaces (such as a national economy) are the product of specific discursive and material practices that then have specific effects on the subsequent development of the overall ensemble. I would make the same argument about the distinctions you make. In one sense they could be seen as arbitrary products of specific economic and political imaginaries. In another sense, of course, some distinctions are more organic than others, i.e., better reflect or capture (in a critical realist sense) the actual divisions that exist in the economy. In both respects it is also important to consider their political implications and how they either facilitate or constrain political mobilization against the changing forms of capitalist exploitation and domination.

> 6. What would you like to say about the political consequences of globalisation? Could you please further explain structural discrepancies and political conflicts that this process might be causing? You are talking about the state within the context of the globalisation process and arguing that the erosion of the state is not a necessary outcome of this process, since it can reorganise itself even within the context of globalisation or in response to the globalisation process. How does the state adopt itself to this process or reorganise itself within the context of globalisation? Furthermore, we would also like to know whether it is possible to differentiate impacts of globalisation over states, along the lines of the distinction between centre and periphery of global capitalism. Do you think that the categories of the 'third world' and third world states are still appropriate and can be used? If so, how are these states influenced by the process of globalisation?

I have no doubt that there is a major disjunction between the organization of economic and political relations and that this has always existed to a greater or lesser extent in the development of capitalism. Its current form (at least in the advanced capitalist economies) is between a globalizing economy and the survival of a system of national states. But I would add three further points. First, we must not confuse the institutional architecture of the state system with the organization of power relations. There are important questions to be explored about the organization of hegemony within the international political system that could never be captured in terms of treating each national state as a self-contained entity and in terms of assuming that there is no interpenetration or networking of class powers in and across states. It would be quite impossible, for example, to understand the development of Atlantic Fordism without regard to the hegemony of the American state in defining the international framework within which Fordism came to be stabilized -- not only within the Atlantic Fordist economies but also, for example, in relation to the oil-producing economies elsewhere in the world. Second, it is not the state as such that adapts to globalization. The state as such does not exercise power nor does it have the power to reorganize itself. Rather it is specific forces operating on the terrain of the state and/or at a distance from the state that are the agents of reorganization. In this sense, in response to the institutional crisis of a particular state form, there are efforts to modify policies, state apparatuses, the overall institutional architecture of the state, its scales of operation, and the interconnections between the state system and other sites of economic, political, and social power. This is an experimental, evolutionary process rather than one whose outcome is already pre-figured and pre-scripted within a pre-given logic of capital accumulation. Quite clearly, in terms of my earlier arguments, it is

essential not only to differentiate the impact of so-called globalization processes (which actually operate on many different scales and from many different sites) on states. Their impact on the USA, Germany, Britain, Denmark, Turkey, Taiwan, Singapore, Turkmenestan, or Haiti, to give just a few examples, will be quite different. But the same point could be made, for example, about other scales: New York and Detroit, Berlin and Leipzig, London and Sheffield, Copenhagen and Aarhus, Istanbul and Izmir, Taiwan and Taichung, Singapore and Riau, and so on. There is no need to fetishize the national level when analysing the impact (or the agents) of globalization. For the same reasons I don't think it is helpful analytically or politically to divide the world by theoretical fiat into a First and Third World. It is more important to analyze the impacts of globalization on different scales and to assess in strategic-relational terms the viability over different time horizons of different types of coalition strategy. These may not best be organized in terms of blocs of nation-states. There is also enormous scope for other bases of global organization including transnational class and social movements.

> 7. There have been important changes since the rise of Thatcherism in the 1970s and the 1980s. In the same General Election as the Tory party fell from government in 1997, New Labour achieved a great national success. Since then, politics in England has been and still is governed by the Labour government and its, so called, *Third Way* strategy. What was the political reaction of the Labour Party to the failure of the Thatcherite political project? And how was the transition from this project to the *Third Way* of Blair achieved? How do you compare Thatcherism(+Majorism) and Blair's project in terms of their responses to the new global conjuncture of England in general and in terms of their strategies in approaching the EU in particular? Are there many similarities and differences, continuities and discontinuities between them?

New Labour's electoral victory certainly represented a massive shift in the political scene, i.e., the visible world of everyday politics as acted out before the general public through the open and declared action of more or less well organized social forces. But it did not involve an equally radical shift in the power bloc or in its overall strategic line. The resignation of Mrs Thatcher did not represent a defeat for the neo-liberal accumulation strategy or the general authoritarian-populist project with which her party was associated. It was much more a reaction to her increasing isolation within her own party and the problems that she faced in handling the issue of European integration. Major's government can be seen as 'Thatcherism with a grey face', concerned to consolidate Thatcherism but to re-create in addition the conditions for social cohesion that had begun to disintegrate. New Labour in turn can be seen as a calculated electoral response to the apparent hegemony of Thatcherism as well as a more general accommodation to the structural changes in the economy and the state effected through eighteen years of increasingly strident neo-liberalism. Elsewhere I have described New Labour (or, better, since Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has a different stance, Blairism) as 'Thatcherism with a Christian Socialist face'. If anything, Blair is attempting to take neo-liberalism even further than Mrs Thatcher or Major. In part this is a response to the continuing global consolidation of neo-liberalism under Reagan, Bush, and Clinton and the structural changes that this has been producing. But it is also a response to the increased globalization of the British economy under the hegemony of the City of London (now fully internationalized) and the leading multinational companies (many of which have major transatlantic as well as European operations); and to the increased centrality of so-called 'Middle England' in New Labour's electoral calculations. Regarding Europe, Blair is probably more positively inclined to increasing European integration -- on condition that it takes a primarily neo-liberal form. His problem in this regard is more short-term and political than long-term and economic. In short, he knows that public opinion, mobilized by the little Englandist and/or pro-American rightwing press, is hostile to Europe (and, especially, to the loss of the pound and its implications for sovereignty). Curiously, whereas he was prepared to attack the trade unions, defenders of Clause Four (which symbolically entrenched the commitment to nationalization in the Labour Party's constitution), and those who resisted his plans for modernizing the Labour Party's organization, Blair is reluctant to seize the initiative in leading public opinion in favour of Europe and the Euro. The reason for this is his fear of the rightwing press in the forthcoming election. But the more he delays in putting these issues onto the political agenda in Britain, the harder it will be for him to win the battle for hegemony

in this field. More generally, in terms of the continuities and discontinuities between the Thatcher-Major years and New Labour, it is important to adopt a periodization of New Labour just as much as it is to consider Thatcherism in terms of its distinctive periodization. Before the 1997 election, Blair was mainly concerned to establish the conditions for a Labour Party victory: his principle solution was twofold -- an organizational fix and a floating signifier. The organizational fix was to 'modernize' the Labour Party by turning it into a modern authoritarian mass party (to use Poulantzas's terminology); and the floating signifier was the very term 'New Labour', which could be given various meanings in different contexts. After the election victory, there was a period that Blair himself described as the 'post-euphoria, pre-delivery stage', i.e., the period when the election celebrations were over, New Labour was working within tight fisco-financial constraints determined by the outgoing Conservative government, and a new set of distinctively New Labour policies had not yet been formulated. In the last year we have begun to see a somewhat more social democratic turn to New Labour's policies in the field of welfare reform -- the stealthy redistribution of limited budget resources to focus on relieving the poverty and social exclusion of highly targeted social groups. Nonetheless even here there is a clear division between the more neo-liberal, pro-American inflection that Blair would give to these reforms; and the more traditional social democratic inflection, adapted to the so-called realities of globalization, that Gordon Brown would prefer. This is likely to be the main axis of conflict in the post-election period.

In terms of overall continuities and discontinuities, I would suggest that these can largely be divided into three interrelated groups: those concerned to maintain the main lines of the neo-liberal economic approach pioneered under Thatcherism; those which are intended to provide necessary flanking measures to improve the efficiency of flexible labour markets as well as to temper the social costs of labour market reforms and other neo-liberal economic measures; and those concerned with the more general modernization of the constitution and state apparatus so that they provide a more effective institutional framework for creating a globally competitive but socially inclusive economy. A second election victory for New Labour, which is highly likely, although its magnitude is still uncertain and depends crucially on the extent of the turnout of the 'heartland' Labour voters, will consolidate some of the discontinuties. But this will still be within a predominantly neo-liberal framework.

> 8. There are various counter political-alliances and movements resisting globalisation or aiming to change its direction to their own benefit. For instance, a conservative alliance at a national scale might manipulate and channel social reactions against this process with the aim of conserving the state/military power over society through a radical nationalist political project and discourse. This is the case in many countries where radical nationalism or racism has expanded in line with dominant authoritarian-conservative regimes. Another example, might be a social-reformist project still seeking to keep the free market economy sustainable and trying to adapt the national economy to the process of globalisation. The *Third Way* of the Labour Party in Britain (which emerged as an alternative to the conservative–authoritarian Thatcherite project) is an example of the second sort. Are there certain principles which, you think, an alternative socialist project should follow in relation to the issue of globalisation? Can we talk about certain strategies that enable an alternative socialist project resisting global capitalism, leading the country in a direction which will end neither with its marginalisation, nor with its fall into the hands of conservative-authoritarian or reformist regimes? In short, how is it possible for a socialist movement to approach this process strategically, while challenging this complex, multi-scaled and expanding global capitalism?

See the answer to question 9. If this is inadequate, e-mail me and I will try to formulate a specific response to this question. I think the two questions overlap to some extent.

9. In your work on governance, you formulate the concept of governance as an ensemble of spatio-temporal practices and forms. For you, social practices and institutions involve structurally inscribed temporal and spatial forms. They are oriented to distinctive spatial and temporal horizons of action. You also talk about the problem of strategy and tactics, drawing on de Certeau and Debray. Could you please elaborate more on the problem of strategy within the context of possible strategies of the socialist-left in approaching the problem of

globalisation? Do think we might need to differentiate them along the line of the centre and the periphery distinction? What does this spatio-temporal dimension and the strategy-tactic distinction of de Certeau imply for the left today? Do you think that radical movements against globalisation, like the Seattle and Zapatista Movement, employ a genuine strategy appropriate for the global capitalism?

At the risk of becoming repetitive, I would just like to state again that globalization does not just occur on a global scale. It is a multi-scalar process. Thus the problem facing socialist-left strategy is not to find the one, decisive scale on which to organize -- as if everything else would then fall into place. The real problem is how to respond to the relativization of scale that has been generated by globalization, i.e., the loss of primacy of any scale (as compared to that enjoyed by the national level in postwar capitalism) as the crucial scale of political action around which other actions could be co-ordinated. In this sense, then, we need to think about how best to provide the conditions for organizing action on many different scales, at many different centres, and with many different social forces. I reject fundamentally the idea that there will be a single co-ordinating centre. Instead we must think about this in terms of what I have elsewhere called meta-governance, i.e., organizing the conditions for self-organization. For some problems, thinking globally, acting locally will be the best solution (e.g., the environment); for others, thinking locally, but organizing globally could be important (e.g., the threat to indigenous communities must be handled locally but with support from national, regional, and global scales). But there are also other permutations of scales, co-ordinating centres, and temporal horizons that need to be considered. Tactics in de Certeau's sense may be important in some conditions, especially in response to immediate local threats; but they must be linked to broader sets of struggles. In this context we can also learn something from Gramsci's distinction between wars of manoeuvre and wars of position. Regarding Seattle and the Zapatistas, I see both as making important and original contributions to the overall development of the struggle against the dominant neo-liberal forms of globalization. The real problem is how to encourage such initiatives from the bottom-up and to lend them trans-national support whilst helping to give them some overall coherence in terms of resisting and transforming the illogic of capitalist globalization. This leads us on to more general problems of institutional design and the creation of democratic subjects able to think and act on different scales.

10. There has been an important transformation of the European left in the last 30 years both at the ideological-political level and theoretical levels. We can call it the 'New Left'. The main common characteristic defining all the different movements of this so-called 'New Left' is their emphasis on the problem of democracy or on the question of how to expand democracy. The need for democracy was claimed in opposition to both the 'really existing socialism', the welfare capitalism of 1960s, and the neo-liberalism of the 1980s. The New Left has been a very active force both in democratic struggles and the intellectual movements. How do you evaluate this transformation of the European left and its theoretical and political position as the New Left? What is your opinion of the issues that are addressed by the New Left, such as democracy, civil society, the public sphere and radical democracy?

I am basically very sympathetic to this shift of emphasis but it runs the risk of becoming a defense of liberal democracy unless it is articulated to an analysis of the underlying realities and actual tendencies within capitalism. What I find especially appealing in the New Left is its rejection of economism and class reductionism and its recognition of the importance of other sites and forms of struggle against exploitation and domination. This in turn radically expands the scope for struggles, as your question indicates. I am also sympathetic to its emphasis on civil society. In my earlier work I have not used this concept very much, except in my commentaries on Gramsci; this is largely due to my then held view that 'civil society' was a bourgeois ideological construct. I have since changed my mind on this. I would now see civil society in terms analogous to Habermas's concept of 'lifeworld'. In these terms I now regard civil society (or the 'lifeworld') as comprising various social relations, identities, interests, and values that stand outside and/or cut across specific systems rather than being anchored in them. It includes social relations such as gender, generation, ethnicity, national identity, generation, associational memberships, new social movements, and so forth. These influence the economy by shaping opportunities for profit as well as influencing struggles over commodification, de-commodification, and re-commodification of the wider society. This can

be illustrated through such phenomena as the gendered division of labour; dual labour markets structured around generational and ethnic divisions; the development of markets oriented to the 'pink pound'; concerns about regional, urban, and national competitiveness; or the impact of green movements on strategies for ecological modernization. The lifeworld also acts as a reservoir of social relations, identities, interests, and values that can be mobilised against the logic of accumulation (or any other systemic principle of societalization) and that, in addition, as Gramsci (and, in certain respects, Laclau and Mouffe) suggest, as a field of struggle for articulating new hegemonic principles. In this sense I regard it as important to defend this sphere from colonization by the capital relation or, indeed, any other systemic principle of societalization (such as militarism or national security). But it is also important to create the conditions in which there is mutual tolerance among different forces within civil society subject to general respect for basic democratic values. This requires not only the building of democratic institutions (whose character will differ according to the particular spheres in which they will be instituted) but also the formation of subjects who are committed to democratic practices and to deliberation. It is only within this framework that one can then begin to discuss issues about the appropriate balance between the politics of identity and the politics of equality, the politics of production and the politics of distribution, the appropriate spatio-temporal scales and horizons of democratic politics, and so forth.