

I. Basic Concepts for understanding politics & the state

1. POLITICS

1.1 Practice: human action analyzed in terms of its *transformative effects on the world*.

1.2 General format of discussions of practice

- *Raw material* – the object of transformation
- The *means* of transformation – the instruments, tools, organizations, etc. that are used to accomplish transformation
- The *process* of transformation
- The *product* of transformation

1.2 Political Practice compared to other practices

- *Political practice: human social action that transforms social interactions into social relations.*
- *Economic practice* transforms nature into use-values, and
- *Ideological practice* transforms human lived experience into subjectivity.

1.3 Reproduction as Transformation.

1.4 Type vs Aspect of Practice.

1.5 Multiplicity of Types of Political Practice.

2. POLITICAL POWER

2.1 Power in General = *the capacity to produce the transformations* specific to a type of practice.

2.2 Instrumental & structural power.

2.3 Means & efficacy of Instruments of power.

2.4 Organizations as the “Means” of Politics.

3. DOMINATION

3.1 Power vs Domination as concepts.

3.2 The Multiple faces of Domination.

3.3 System-logic notions of power/domination

<i>Level of power</i>	<i>Objective of power</i>	<i>Nature of politics</i>
Systemic power	power over <i>what game</i> is to be played	revolutionary v counterrevolutionary politics
Institutional power	power over the <i>rules</i> of the game	reformist v reactionary politics
Situational power	power over <i>plays</i> within a given set of rules	Liberal vs conservative politics.

4. THE STATE

4.1 General definition: (1) *the most superordinate*, (2) *territorially centralized* (3) *institution of domination society*.

4.2 Contrast with Weberian definitions and some Marxist definitions.

4.3 Variability in the degree of stateness.

5. STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

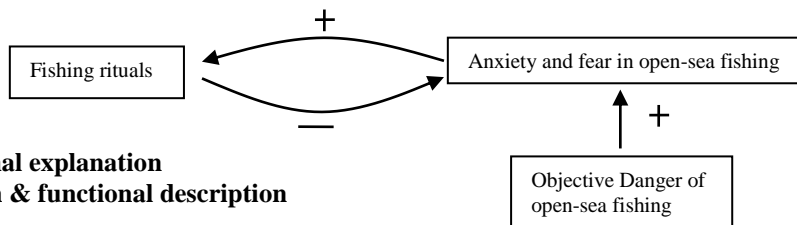
II. The Classical Marxist theory of the state: the Base & Superstructure model

1. BASE/SUPERSTRUCTURE

2. FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATIONS

2.1 The structure of functional explanations: the beneficial effects of a structure help explain the structure.

An example (from Mallinowski)



2.2 functional vs intentional explanation

2.3 functional explanation & functional description

3. What is problematic with the superstructural view of the state?

4. Modifying the Functional Image.

- (1) State as arena of struggle → *contested functionality*.
- (2) the State in a complex system → *contradictory functionality*.
- (3) The state as an historically specific structure: *contingent contradictory functionality*.