

Workshop: Mit Poulantzas arbeiten

Abstract: Simone Claar, Goethe Universität Frankfurt, clar@soz.uni-frankfurt.de

Paper Working Title: Reconstruction of South Africa's class relations in the field of trade policy

This paper draws on my dissertation project, which focuses on social dynamics and balance of forces within South Africa. The starting point of this project is the fact that South Africa joined the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations with the European Union in the beginning of 2007, but rejected to sign the agreement in the same year. Like in other circumstances the government act not in the way they talked. But why is this so? This is the starting point for looking beyond those processes and to find out blockades and contradictions. In doing so Poulantzas assumption on the state, fraction and state apparatus are used for analysing those processes and class relations in the field of trade policy. Nevertheless, this approach is limited in terms of providing a complete explanation of the contradictory behaviour of South Africa. To fill this gap it is necessary to take the historical development of South Africa into account. Although Apartheid is officially overruled race is still dominant in the social relations and esp. in the economic sphere in South Africa. Poulantzas class approach will be complemented therefore with the category of race to explain better the internal dynamics. Within this paper I will demonstrate my first findings in the reconstruction of the class relations in the context of trade policy in South Africa. Through analysing the role of class fractions, the projects aims to provide a more fruitful understanding of the manner in which structural changes in the global political economy are both correlated with and a consequence of shifts in the balance of forces between and among fractions operating in national political economies, in this case South Africa.

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