

INTERROGATIONS #4 with EOW comments
SOCIOLOGY 924
Session 5: Przeworski – social democracy and electoral politics
October 2, 2002

[1] 924: Memo No. 4 (Adam Przeworski)
Brad Brewster

1. “*The Dilemma.*” Methodical without being meticulous, Przeworski writes clearly, coherently, and articulately about “the dilemma.” And he really makes a fantastic case for it. In a way this is a question about what I will call ‘organic constituency’ (in the same vein as Gramsci’s ‘organic intellectuals’). I’d like to offer a possible solution by noting Malcolm X’s creative solution to the problem of organic constituency and leadership. Malcolm’s original position was for movement purity:

Whites can’t join us. Everything that whites join that Negroes have they end up out-joining the Negroes. The whites control all Negro organizations that they can join – they end up in control of those organizations. If whites want to help financially we will accept their financial help, but we will never let them join us (from *By Any Means Necessary*, p. 7).

Note here that the problem with inorganic constituency is that it can result in inorganic leadership. So the problem of whether party constituency should be pure is especially prudent, beyond Przeworski’s explicitly stated reasons. The only way to keep leadership pure (i.e., “absolutely black leadership”) was to keep constituency pure. **[But note a pivotal difference between the class-context and the race-context of this dilemma: blacks are 12% of the population, whereas workers – depending upon how you define the “organic” core, would be 40-50%. This makes a difference.]** However, Malcolm engineered a partial way around “the dilemma”: he created two separate organizations, both with the same goal, but differing in their constituency requirements. One accepted all people, including whites, and one which was reserved strictly for blacks themselves. This allowed ‘breadth’ while preserving ‘concentration.’ I’m sure objections abound why this can’t be carried over into class-based movements, but even for those with objections, it shows that movements can find creative ways of managing “the dilemma” – or any perceived or historical dilemma. That there are *only* two strategies and workers are “unable to win either way” (p. 106) seems much too unrealistic. There is a much forgotten resource: ingenuity. While I love Przeworski’s historical analysis of “the dilemma”, I don’t think anyone need be captive to Przeworskian pessimism regarding the future. **[I don’t see how this actually deals with the real substance of the dilemma: the dilemma occurs because there are real differences in the interests of the two potential constituencies, so that whe the party does what needs to be done to attract the middle class it must dilute its program in certain pivotal ways. In the racial liberation case, what is the parallel issue? If there are indeed “white interests” of whites who support black liberation which are nevertheless at odds with black interests, then how does creating two organizations actually solve the problem?]**

2. “*Class Identity.*” Erik helped to clarify to me that greater transparency of elite class solidarity and cooperation in spite of differences of religion, nationality, etc., doesn’t necessarily provoke a like response of solidarity and cooperation among workers with such differences, though increasingly sharing the same economic lot. **[Since people in the class didn’t read my memo to you on this: the question at hand is whether or not increasing global subordination of workers to a common capitalist class – because of globalization – would be expected to lead to stronger class identity among workers. What I challenged here is the idea that the working class globally is in any real sense becoming more homogeneous in class terms – i.e. whether it is true the workers “increasingly share the same economic lot.” The class-homogenization thesis has been a mainstay of Marxism from the start, but unfortunately the data do not support it. This is not a question of cultural/ethnic/religious heterogeneity, but of class-determined heterogeneity – what I call the proliferation of contradictory locations within class relations and other forms of within-class relational complexity.]** This was indeed my hypothesis. And while I still don’t discard it entirely, I do find myself agreeing with Erik and with Przeworski’s point: “similarity of class position does not necessarily result in solidarity” (p. 20) and “Even similarity need not breed solidarity” (p. 100).

However, the critical question of identity still remains unclear. Are an individual's various identifications in competition with each other, or not? And do nonclass identifications detract from class identification?

At first, I asserted that class and nonclass identities were likely competitors. This is evident when I wrote that "Right now, many people are not 'Proletarian first!'; they are 'Christian first!' or 'American first!' or (in action) 'Consumer first!'" And, indeed, Przeworski seems to concur in seeing other, nonclass forms of self-identification as problematic to identification as workers:

As class identification becomes less salient, socialist parties lose their unique appeal to workers. Social democratic parties are no longer qualitatively different from other parties; class loyalty is no longer the strongest base of self-identification. Workers see society as composed of individuals; they view themselves as members of collectivities other than class; they behave politically on the basis of religious, ethnic, regional, or some other affinity. They become Catholics, Southerners, Francophones, or simply "citizens" (p. 28).

Przeworski is even more clear when he writes:

When political parties do not mobilize individuals as workers, but as the masses, the people, the nation, the poor, or simply as citizens, the people who are men or women, young or old, believers or not religious, city- or country-dwellers, in addition to being workers, as less likely to see the society as composed of classes, less likely to identify themselves as class members, and eventually less likely to vote as workers. Class identity ceases to be the only conceivable source of workers' political commitments: one can no longer recall, as Vivian Gornick did recently, that "before I knew I was a woman and I was Jewish, I knew I belonged to the working class" (Gornick, 1977:1). As socialists appeal to voters in supraclass terms, they weaken the salience of class and either reinforce the universalistic ideology of individuals-citizens or leave room open for competing particularistic appeals of confessional, ethnic, or linguistic identities (p. 105).

So here we sense a clear competitive struggle to get people to identify with class over their other identities. Indeed, while "class position structures the daily experience of individuals," nevertheless "this experience does not become spontaneously collectivized as one of class" (p. 100). Even when class is [deliberately] collectivized, even so, "the experience of class" is not "the only one which is objective" (p. 100): "being a Catholic today in Italy is an objective experience, as is being a Black in the United States, or a woman in France" (p. 100). So, not only must workers identify with class above competing identities, but class identity has no inherent 'edge' (by being more "objective") than these competing nonclass identities.

The idea one might get, then, is that various identities are serious competitors to class identity.

Yet, some Marxist movements for economic equality take a different approach: instead of competing with other group identities – groups which "forge collective identities, instill commitments, define the interests on behalf of which collective actions become possible, offer choices to individuals, and deny them" (p. 101) – they appropriate them to their own ends or merge with them. For example, liberation theology.

[You need to focus here on the character of the identity-formation process and its ramifications. One of the consequences of a worker developing a strong ethnic identity is that this worker then shares a strong identity with the middle class and bourgeoisie of the same identity; and this is further strengthened when this identity is not merely one of cultural taste, but of opposition to other identities. To have a Serbian identity is to be anti-Croatian. This provides the subjective foundation for cross-class solidarities within ethnic groups, and that competes with class solidarity. The "liberation theology" identity is a different story because it is a religious identity with a specific anti-capitalist content to it and thus this identity blocks cross-class solidarity.]

One dilemma not explicitly raised by Przeworski, then, is the choice between competing with noneconomic identities or merging with noneconomic identities. This dilemma, though, does parallel the one with which Przeworski concerns himself, albeit at a different level of analysis – that between "class purity" on the one hand and "broad support" on the other (p. 28). Is the best strategy to keep class identity 'pure' of nonclass

identity? (This might result in homogenization of the proletarian movement.) Or is the best strategy to seek ‘broad support’ of class identity among the each individual’s other significant identities? (This might result in forms like liberation theology, where one’s Marxism interprets and supports one’s Christianity and one’s Christianity interprets and supports one’s Marxism.)

Perhaps the dilemma between whether other identities are competitors to class identity or whether they can facilitate class identities is something of a false dicotomy. Perhaps. Indeed, I’ve found a possible answer in Przeworski that, note carefully, would make this dilemma irrelevant:

Unless workers are organized as a class, they are likely to vote on the basis of other sources of collective identification, as Catholics, Bavarians, women, Francophones, consumers, and so forth. Once elections were organized and workers obtained the right to vote, they had to be organized to vote as workers (p. 12).

First, note that disparate identities are still present in this class. That is, no homogenization of class is necessary for class solidarity. Also:

Class shapes political behavior of individuals only as long as people who are workers are organized politically as workers. If political parties do not mobilize people qua workers . . . , then workers are less likely to identify themselves as class members and, eventually, less likely to vote as workers (p. 27).

The critical variable lying quiet in the above two quotes is *organization*. What is critical for an individual to act on one identity over another is organization. Disparate identities are not inherently problematic. Organization on the basis of class and in such a manner as to “mobilize people qua workers” is key for individuals acting on their class identities (instead of their other identities).

[But: these other identities form the basis for competing organizations and strategies, and this is the problem. If workers are already organized as Poles, the task of a class-based party is more difficult for it has to reorganize workers, not just organize an atomized collection of individuals, and those efforts of reorganization will be resisted by the organizational entrepreneurs of the Polish community.]

Of course, individuals need to recognize their class membership in the first place.

Class relations are not spontaneously transparent . . . The spontaneous experience may be one of poverty, of compulsion, of inequality, of oppression. It may be one of similarity. But it is not an experience of class (p. 100).

Perhaps the domain of false consciousness is what lies prior to this adequate recognition.

So why organization? Because organization means discipline. Class identity is not entirely useful to class parties without organizational discipline: “workers . . . have powerful incentives to pursue their particularistic claims at the cost of other workers . . . unless some organization . . . has the means of enforcing collective discipline” (p. 105).

3. Interestingly enough, a broad view of Przeworski’s work, *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, is reminiscent of Margaret Levi’s notion of ‘quasi-voluntary compliance.’ Recall that QVC is neither ‘ideological compliance,’ nor a result of ‘coercion.’ Przeworski writes:

Neither “ideological domination” nor repression is sufficient to account for the manner in which workers organize and act under capitalism. The working class has been neither a perpetual dupe nor a passive victim (p. 3).

As I suggested before: Perhaps even our methods and manner of political protest are QVC or at least QVC-esque. In any case, there is likely a good deal of normative and compliant behavior in much political

protest. **[Przeworski does not, actually, ever talk about why individuals participate at all in collective action – his question is, rather, why they participate in collective action of type X or type Y given that they are going to participate. QVC is about motivations to participate rather than free ride – it is basically an Assurance Game within game theory, or “conditional altruism” in Jon Elster’s terminology. This is a solution of the problem of individual rationality and temptations to free ride on other people’s sacrifices. Przeworski is raising a different problem, one that more or less assumes away the individualistic question of rational-participation: for what purpose will you participate if you participate.]**

4. Before transferring to UW-Madison, I had the opportunity to study community action. One of the things I learned – from books as well as community activists – is the value of small, early successes for increasing morale, getting good press, building confidence for larger, future projects, and attracting new participants. And so on. Thus, I really think Przeworski is a political realist when he stresses the impossibility for a movement to neglect short run successes.

Electoral abstention has never been a feasible option for political parties of workers. Nor could participation remain merely symbolic. As long as democratic competition offers to various groups an opportunity to advance some of their interests in the short run, any political party that seeks to mobilize workers must avail itself of this opportunity (pp. 10-11).

And quoting Schumpeter: “No party can live without a program that holds out the promise of immediate benefits” (p. 12). Also, quoting Von Vollmar: “For me, the achievement of the most immediate demands is the main thing . . . because they are of great propaganda value and serve to enlist the masses . . .” (pp. 30-31).

Yet, “working for today and working toward tomorrow appear as horns of a dilemma” (p. 13). That is, the necessity for early, achievable benefits paradoxically undermined ultimate long-range objectives for the working class. So, whereas groups working for change find early, small successes vital for later, larger projects, it is not so for working class movements. Perhaps it may be useful to identify, specifically, the various possible factors that seem to make it so and, constructively, think of creative ways around the possible obstacles. **[The point is not exactly that this is “not so” for working class movements – it is still true for these movements that they need immediate gains. The problem is that this can contradict long-term revolutionary challenge – but it doesn’t mean that long-term revolutionary challenge would actually be aided by refusing short-term gains. In my view this is precisely what it means to say that the bourgeoisie is hegemonic: A hegemonic class is one that can impose time-horizon dilemmas on potential challengers.]**

(Chapter One is full of political paradoxes: immediate benefits vs. long term objectives, constituent and ideological purity vs. wide appeal and allies, dictatorial means for democratic ends, political democracy and economic elitism, political participation constrained and impacted by the system that the action is meant to change, and so on. Interesting stuff.)

5. The expectation of people regarding the state is that the state will be effective in maintaining *order* (Hobbes) and do so *justly* – i.e., not overstep its bounds in relation to its monopoly on violence (Barzel) or in its management of revenue (Levi). If the state loses order (the thing people expect from it), it is delegitimized in the eyes of its citizens, who then may feel the need to resort to violence themselves. With the state’s monopoly on violence broken, the state is indeed threatened. The state, therefore, has a vested interest in order, for it is key to *maintaining power* (which we identified last time as the main aim of any “ruler”). The established order of the society is a capitalistic order. The capitalist class, then, by structuring the ‘order’ of productive relations, gets the state to ‘serve and protect’ this order, because *any* state’s first task and justification is to maintain order. The established order of capitalist societies is exploitive relations. To act against the capitalists by worker violence and protest, while in aim a localized strike against capitalist interests, is simultaneously a serious threat to the state for different reasons. Mobilization of workers against the capitalists is perceived as a possible threat to not just a particular class, but to the whole social order – and this perception is not just the perception from the vantage point of the state, but even a shared perception of people among the working class. Social order is a general interest par

excellence; class interests are particularistic. The only way class interests supercede order interests is when people are convinced that the disorder their methods will cause now aims to establish a better (more fair, etc.) order in the future. This line of thinking represents my current effort at showing how the state, in carrying out its own interests, can function to reproduce the class relations of production, thus supporting the interests of the capitalist class. For this issue seemed to be raised by Przeworski: “the state is seen as autonomous from particularistic interests of the capitalists,” “yet somehow this state still manages to repress, to organize ideological domination, and to intervene where and when needed in ways designed to and having the effect of maintaining capitalism in the face of conflict” (p. 201). **[You are absolutely right that people have a deep interest in social order – even slaves have an interest in order instead of anarchic chaos. And another way of defining a hegemonic class is one whose fundamental interests are protected when social order is protected, for this means that the society as a whole will back its interests over others when social order is at stake.]**

[2] Matt Vidal

Thoughts on Przeworski's *Capitalism and Social Democracy*

- 1) “[Political] Participation is hence necessary for the realization of interests of workers. . . . And even if the opportunity is limited, it is the only one that is institutionalized” (pp. 11-12).

He makes a distinction between individuals and individuals qua workers (p. 97, *passim*). Is political participation *necessary* for the realization of the interests of workers *or* of individuals? That is, does it follow from the structure of production in capitalist democracies that political participation is necessary for the realization of workers' interests, as he seems to suggest, or is this a contingent historical process that he observes? Is it correct to consider trade unions as an indirect means to realize worker's interests? By participation he seems to suggest organizing into parties. What implications does this have for the US case, which presently seems to have effectively excluded workers' parties? I would argue, e.g., that the US two-party system and all its institutional supports have effectively institutionalized the exclusion of individuals qua workers from the “political system.” (See also 5 below, for more on this.) **[It is true that we do not have a self-consciously formed workers party in the US with any political relevance, but does this mean that workers interests are completely marginalized from the process of political compromise? Is there no class compromise in the US at all, so that the workers confront capital simply as isolated individuals?]**

- 2) He is considering the working class here to be industrial factory workers. But if we understand class as defined primarily by access to and control over productive resources, then the proletariat would be much broader than simply factory workers. Does this affect how we should understand “this objective condition” of minority status? Even if this follows from the subjective understanding of the labor parties as parties of “manual workers,” his results are meant to apply to objective material interests, and indeed in later parts of the book he treats all wage earners as having identical material interests vis -à-vis economic and political conditions. Are there really competing conceptions of class structure/interests here, and what is the implication? **[I think Prz is deeply ambivalent on this. On the one hand he wants to insist that class is an effect of struggle not prior to struggle, and in this way he rejects objectivist definitions of class structure. This is why he is pretty disparaging of my efforts at constructing “class maps.” On the other hand, he does want to treat the dilemmas of class formation as objectively encountered by parties, not simply as something in their imaginations (although it is also that), and this seems to suggest some core idea of an objective class situation. I think the way I would put it is that he sees the objective quality of class as shaped by social relations of production + lived experiences of actors within those relations, and the reason for identifying manual factory labor as the core working class is that this category has a specific combination of these two dimensions which makes them *the most easily organizable* into a class party. Their material interests become the core of that party because they are the most easily organized into the party, and this then generates the texture of the trade-off constraints for subsequent recruitment.]**

3) "The very principle of class conflict becomes compromised as parties of workers become parties of the masses" (p. 28).

He clearly shows how this principle can be corrupted. But is this best explained as a result of workers having to find class allies? Would it be merely semantical to say that what he has observed is fractions of the working class rather than different classes? An alternative: class fractions have identical long-term interests, but varying and competing short-term interests; capitalist industrialization has produced enough stuff, combined with some successful anti-capitalist struggles over distribution, to make enough of the proletariat (broadly understood) to be *comfortably myopic*? Even if you, your propertyless comrades and the society would be better off under socialism, you are comfortable enough to be preoccupied with short-term interests (where to eat, what movie to see, which friendships to pursue, etc.). This is quite different than his understanding of short term interests, i think. **[I think your reconstruction may work and provide a clearer way of formulating the Przeworski problem. I am not sure, ultimately, if it really matters whether these categories are called fractions or classes. The issue is to define social groupings with respect to a) the benefits of a transition to socialism, and b) the costs of a transition, and c) the trajectory of the interests of the relevant group within capitalism relative to a & b. We can thus define a social grouping as the pure anticapitalist fraction of the working class as those people for whom it is true that a) they have large benefits from a transition, b) would bear only modest costs, and c) face a deterioration of life prospects within capitalism. Your description states that this category is likely to be small while the category of people for whom c) involves a comfortable life and thus something to lose in b) the transition, is likely to be large.]**

One other note here: Prz wrote at a time when the left still generally consider "democratic socialism" an unproblematic long-run goal. The premise of the Prz formulation is that socialism is a feasible future and that the welfare of all workers would be higher in socialism than in capitalism. He simply assumes that (a) is large and positive, and thus the crucial issue is (b) the transition between the two – both in terms of transition costs and in terms of the coalition needed to make the transition a collective project, since the unequivocal beneficiaries – the core working class – is not a large majority. One (a) becomes ambiguous – once the destination is no longer taken as unambiguous and well understood – then the problem of transition costs becomes much more pressing (since these can be viewed as tolerable "costs" only when the benefits of the destination are roughly known), and therefore the attraction of a comfortable (c) become more powerful.

4) "These [questions of voting patterns] are not questions about individuals. . . . Reduction does not suffice as an explanation because the causal path from individual traits to individual acts passes through the totality of social relations. . . . The relation between places occupied by individuals in society and their acts is a contingent historical product of conflicts that confront interests and images, that involve preferences and strategies, that bring victories or defeats. . . . The organization of politics in terms of class is not inevitable" (p. 99).

These statements do not seem to coincide with his call for methodological individualism Does not his argument that "the totality of social relations" are part of the causal path mean that, even if "choice" is invoked in the last instance, that the starting point has to be conditions, social structure? Reduction does not suffice because non-reducible social relations (rather than ends, as Becker would have it), durable across time, space and people, structure both "objectives and resources" (p. 95) which make (particular types of) choice possible. One can analyze strategies, but only within a *causal framework* of social relations. Choice sets depend on objectives and resources, which are systematically structured by social relations. This suggests to me that the social relations that structure objectives and resources are more important causal forces than the choices made within those structured sets. **[The call for meth individualism need not imply a call for individualist reductionism – it can just be a call for micro-foundations and against disembodied holism. Przeworski does give explanatory standing to social structures, but he also believes that those social structures have their effects because they work through individual strategies and actions. His call for MI is just a call for specifying these pathways, I think.]**

5) "Hegemony becomes constituted when struggles over the realization of material interests become institutionalized in a manner rendering their outcomes to some extent indeterminate with regard to

positions which groups occupy within the system of production. It is this kind of organization of social relations which constitutes 'democracy.' Capitalist democracy is a particular form of organization of political relations in which outcomes of conflicts are within limits uncertain, and in particular, in which these outcomes are not uniquely determined by class positions" (p. 140).

He seems to assume here that the base/superstructure understanding of material relations: the economic is the form of material organization upon which the political/ideological hegemony must rest ("This organization of the capitalist system of production provides the basis for the organization of ideological and political hegemony"). Thus, the demand constraint (Cohen and Rogers) is the material basis, and there must be some other mechanisms (which could be concessions) for the subaltern interests to find realization. He then defines hegemony as the institutionalization of indeterminacy of outcomes vis -a-vis struggles over material interests, noting that this is the definition of democracy, which is also the key mechanism of concrete coordination. I find this all a bit confusing.

First, if economic concessions do work, then there can be a purely material (in his understanding, non-ideological, non-political) hegemony: the demand constraint cum concessions. Should we understand this as hegemony, and does it work with his understanding? **[I think the material concessions are a necessary condition for hegemony, but that hegemony also depends upon how the strategic interactions are institutionalized to generate those concessions. That is: a class becomes hegemonic when the rules of the game are organized in such a manner that the strategies of subaltern groups become oriented to the realization of their interests in a way which secures the interests of the hegemonic class. This is not just about outcomes but about the process.]** Does he have a coherent understanding of material versus non-material here, and if so is it used consistently? **[I don't think Prz includes anything really about nonmaterial interests: there are political mechanisms for the hegemonic integration of material interests through class compromise]** Second, his working empirical understanding of hegemony, then, is the demand constraint cum democracy, or, capitalist democracy. I find these two mechanisms to be useful and correct starting points, though i'm still confused about whether the demand constraint should be understood as part of hegemony, or the base on which it is organized. **[I think it is the latter: it is only insofar as this constraint gets translated into compromise-generating strategy that hegemony occurs]** Thus, the formulation says that democracy *is* hegemony; hegemony is democracy. This is an extremely high level of abstraction. Does it tell us anything about the constitution of individual subjectivities, beyond the fact that workers experience dependence on continued accumulation?

Again, i think it's an essential starting place, but i'm not sure how far the focus on the abstract properties of democracy will take us. Moreover, there are many concrete situations, e.g., for those in extreme poverty (and many other functionally similar places) in which outcomes are quite determinate (no access, no representation, no immediate payoff; limited resources to achieve episodes of acute ends) and the organization of political institutions matters little individuals (his methodological focus), for various reasons. **[I think Prz's point is that if capitalism was really like this for the majority of workers then it would not be able to function hegemonically.]**

Here again we have the problem of too high a level of abstraction. Is this outcome (institutional access) so for disenfranchised minorities or women, or in the American two-party system (with all its institutional supports)? Moreover, he invokes a notion of multiple subjectivities here (citizen, worker). But how does he propose to link the social mechanisms (demand constraint, democracy) to the psychological mechanisms: that is, how do the social mechanisms select and encourage one subjectivity (citizen) over another (worker). Presumably, a theory of hegemony would have to say something about this.

[3] Jing Sun Weekly Interrogation – Week Five

Is social democracy genuinely progressive towards a socialist transformation? Adam Przeworski seemed to be pessimistic about this prospect by pointing out that working-class-based political parties were confronted with a fundamental dilemma of either reaching out to non-working-class to form allies or

insisting on their original revolutionary goals but being marginalized by the bourgeoisie political and economic systems.

Rational political actors would take the former option. Yet participation in electoral politics has a price tag attached for proletariat parties: they have to give up their revolutionary and transformative goals in order to attract enough votes from non-working classes or white-collared workers. By doing so, these working-class-based parties are actually being co-opted into the capitalist electoral system; once these parties do win the elections, they will have further vested interests in maintaining the overarching system that brings them to power. Driven by the promise of delivering economic betterment not only for blue-collared workers but also for white-collared workers, working-class-based political parties have to sacrifice their fundamental goal of making a socialist transformation. In a sense, they work to guarantee that the current capitalist system will be functioning well.

I am convinced by Przeworski's argument on how socialist parties, by making the rational and strategic choice of participating in and contriving to win electoral politics, become institutionally co-opted into the "establishment" and thus fail to carry through transition to socialism. And my question is whether Tony Blair's "The Third Way" and Gerhard Schröder's "Die Neue Mitte" can be analyzed along the same line. Furthermore, are such compromises necessarily bad for socialist parties? Przeworski seemed to be somewhat vague on this issue: he suggests that it was not the best unconditionally, but the best they could achieve under the existing arrangements. Faced with the uncertain prospect that transforming the current system may lead to economic crises, socialist parties have become increasingly ambivalent and reluctant on sticking to its old revolutionary ideology. **[The issue here, I think, is how much "room to maneuver" there is within these "limits of possibility". Tony Blair's "Third Way" is not – I think – anywhere near a maximally possible progressive-egalitarian project. I think it has really abandoned a class project of normative anti-capitalism, and that this abandonment is not determined by the configuration of class alliance possibilities (a la Przeworski), but by the victory within the Labor party of a particular ideological faction]**

I am not quite sure if Przeworski has somewhat exaggerated the costs of such political co-optation/subjugation of socialist parties into the capitalist system: indeed, these socialist parties need to attract nonworking classes' votes. But at the same time, it is not a one-sided love affair: nonworking classes are not necessarily anti-transformative. In fact, even socialist candidates' electoral opponents may have to incorporate some socialist ideas into their own electoral campaigns in order to attract as many votes as possible. In other words, it is not only left-leaning political parties that are stepping towards the middle of the way, so are their right-leaning counterparts. Major political parties have become more risk-averse and election campaigns less ideologically stimulating. Increasingly, the difference is not over delivering different promises to electorates, but how one candidate or party is better than the other at delivering the same promises: efficiency, equality, and employment. **[You make a very good point that the Prz process operates on the Right as well as the left – but I think that this has very different implications, since the right is committed to the reproduction of capitalism in the first place and what it "learns" from historical experience is how to accomplish this in a more benign manner, whereas the Left has to "learn" to abandon its anticapitalism altogether. Also: Is "equality" really part of this formula? It seems to me that this has pretty much been abandoned]** Do these goals neatly fall into the traditional realm of capitalism? I doubt it. It is more of a mixed product, thanks to the socialist engagement in capitalist politics.

In addition, cumulative reforms may still eventually lead to an "inside-out" transformation of capitalist system. As Esping-Andersen points out, for a considerable part of the postwar period, social democrats in Scandinavian countries believed they could do so eventually. Even as of today, Scandinavian countries are operating on a model which is remarkably different from the Anglo-Saxon model of capitalism. Thus, what we might need is a more inclusive and broader definition of social transformation.

**[4] James Benson interrogation #4
Przeworski and material bases for social democracy**

What I find interesting about Przeworski, and what I feel bears some discussion, is his construction of a material basis for social democracy. This construction differs from that of Marx, who saw in the arrangement of capitalist productive relations an un-resolvable material conflict between workers and capitalists. Przeworski advances the notion that there is a wage rate at which workers consent to capitalism. For Marx, such a compromise seemed unlikely, given the un-avoidable conflict between workers and capitalists: “Even the most favourable situation for the working class...however much it may improve the material existence of the worker, does not remove the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the bourgeoisie” (134). While Przeworski does not discard the concept that workers and capitalists have fundamentally different interests, he presents a model (Chapter 4 and 5) in which the interests of workers become coordinated with those of capitalists. In this model, the interests of workers are “to some extent realized,” (137) while the legitimacy and realization of (private) profits are maintained. Product, wages and profit become a function of worker militancy, ‘r’, with Przeworski distinguishing between workers who are non-militant, moderately militant, and highly militant. His prediction that the wages of non-militant workers will, in the long run, exceed those of the moderately militant worker (chart, 152) warrants discussion. **[This, of course, assumes certain behavior by capitalists, and it refers to the category nonmilitant workers, not to the specific people. That is the category “nonmilitant workers” 100 years from now may be better off than the category “moderately militant” if everyone is nonmilitant today compared to a situation in which everyone is moderately militant today, and yet it could also be true that the people who are moderately militant today may improve their position more rapidly than people who are nonmilitants. The reason is that capitalism will grow more rapidly if everyone is nonmilitant, and in the long run the sustainable prosperity of all workers depends upon growth.]** Also, his prediction that profits will tend to decrease over time when workers are moderately militant warrants discussion. **[really this is just decrease over time relative to what it would be under nonmilitancy – i.e. this just assumes that there is some net redistribution under moderate militancy]** Acceptance of one or both of these predictions seems to undermine the possibility for a stable social democratic state. **[I don’t see why this contradicts a stable SD state – there can be trade-offs and still there can be stability. An SD state does not require maximum growth and maximum profits, just acceptable growth]**

**[5] Matt Dimick
Sociology 924
Theories of the State
Weekly Interrogation 4**

(1) I have several questions to raise about ch. 3. One question I have is why do manual workers react negatively to appeals to other wage earners. If class (and voting behavior in terms of class) is a process, or an effect, of political party appeals or organization, what prevents such a party from “constituting” both manual and other wage earners as a single class? I agree with Przeworski that it is difficult to organize workers within a single firm, let alone a sector, industry or class: there are particularistic interests at each level of these divisions. But we do have evidence that these kinds of divisions can be overcome—at least when it comes to voting. What explains the persistent resistance to the inclusion of white-collar workers? One reply would be to say that the experience of manual workers is materially different from those of white-collar workers (I am assuming that “experience” would include the variations in the conditions of work that would come from different levels of autonomy, skill, compensation, etc.). But Przeworski seems intent on removing the level of “lived experience” from the explanation of class (he says such experience may be one of oppression or similarity, but not class). The only possible resolution I can come up with within Przeworski’s framework is a difference in the time the party attempted to organize each section of the class. It seems possible that if a new working class party appealed to strictly manual workers at an earlier time in history, thus forging a class for voting purposes, then a problem could be posed when the party attempted to reconstitute a broader class later in time, in an effort to expand the party’s voting base. **[You make superb points on this issue. There does seem to be a tension between Prz’s constructivism – that the social categories are strictly constructed through struggle – and the bottom-line claim about trade-**

offs over alliance formation. Your solution may be correct: this is a strictly a dilemma imposed by the character of historical sequencing, not by anything in the objective conditions of manual vs white collar workers. But it might also be that the lived experience component has some weight here, in spite of Prz's disavowals.]

Another question regards the dilution of the working class vote. Pzeworski's language at times suggests that the dilution is inescapable. But it is not obvious to me that a party that appeals to strictly class interests (say a collective bargaining law, call it A) necessarily dilutes its working class appeal when it broadens its platform to include other interests (say public transportation, call it B). If the working class party is the only party on the scene that includes A in its platform, then why should the presence of B affect its working-class vote? Workers should respond to whoever appeals to their interests, regardless of what other interests are appealed to. I certainly agree that workers do not think of themselves only as workers, but also as husbands, wives, races, religions, hunters, etc. and also that such competing identities may cause workers to vote against the working class party. But it seems that this effect would be present regardless of whether the working class party appeals to other class interests. For example, suppose a party appeals only to class interests and another party supports a non-class issue that appeals to broad swath of workers (say an anti-gun control measure). In this case workers may vote against the working class party whether or not that party is "pure" or "diluted" in its class appeal. Finally, in the case where two working class parties are competing and one dilutes its class platform, the fact that workers choose the more sectarian party suggests that the issue of class is still quite salient (I think Pzeworski concedes this on p. 111). Thus, I am not convinced that appeals to other class (or non-class) interests necessarily mean that working-class parties will lose working class support. It makes sense to say that diluting one's class platform creates opportunities for other parties to "pull" workers away, but not that dilution "pushes" workers away by itself. **[Another very acute set of comments. I think the issue of coalition only poses this dilemma when one or both of two conditions are present: a) in order to broaden the appeal to white collars, the language of "class" must be dropped in favor – for example – of "good government". Here the mechanism is that the weakening of the class-language identity opens the door for other identities to steal workers from the socialist party (or – more precisely – to reduce the efficiency of recruiting new cohorts of workers); b) the policies that appeal to workers interests and white collar employees interests are not just different, but involve trade-offs. The example you gave does not have this feature, but school funding might: increase funding for vocational schools vs universities; or strengthen the class character of unions vs the sectional character of unions (in Sweden this is the problem of whether white collar employees have a separate union or are part of the main industrial union).]**

Another issue from ch. 3 I would like to raise concerns the relationship between class and universal interests. Pzeworski contends that "class is important in a society if, when, and only to the extent to which, it is important to some political parties, which organize workers as a class." I think this is a too narrow standard for the relationship between class and the activities of political parties (Pzeworski states his claim even more strongly, e.g., when he says "class is important in a society," not just for political behavior). It seems to me entirely possible that competing parties may put forth competing "universals" about the kind of society that ought to be established and that class can still be a quite salient category to talk about the outcomes and effects of this competition. Pzeworski says that when universal claims are made, the class image of society drops out of the "political discourse" (my emphasis). But this seems to be much different than saying class no longer is an important determinant of political behavior when parties put forth different universal claims. The simple fact that *different* conceptions of the universal can be put forth suggests that someone's *particular* interests are being left out of at least one of these competing universal views. Precisely because the satisfaction of different interests are at stake in this competition of universals, it seems reasonable that parties that put forth different universal claims may receive different support from different categories of society, including importantly, different classes. Moreover, they may also actively seek out the support of particular classes because they believe their universal vision of society will more adequately secure those class interests. Pzeworski's suggestion seems to be that once any universal claims are made then the danger of dilution looms large and the absorption into bourgeoisie universalism is imminent. But when different conceptions of the universal are being fought over, I'm not sure that this is the case. Finally, if such a relationship between universal claims and class were not true, then I don't think it would make any sense to talk about universalistic "ideologies of the bourgeoisie." Presumably, bourgeoisie parties that put forth a universal view of society can expect significant support from the bourgeoisie. There must be something then which links these universal claims

to class interests and, more importantly, voting behavior of classes. **[I think Prz is assuming that when a universal claim is put forward it does so in the form: This policy/declaration is in everyone's interests, it serves the interests of everyone as common members of this society, we are all in the same boat and this policy helps the boat, etc. What all of these do is obscure the sharpness of the antagonistic cleavages within the category "everyone", and downplays the identity of workers as members of a distinct, oppositional social category within capitalism. It may be true that there are different universals, and some are proletarian and some bourgeois in character, but if the ideology and program formulates these as universals, then it downplays the conflict and division, and it is that that erodes class formation.]**

(2) From ch. 4, I thought the discussion on capitalism, hegemony, and democracy and on the breakdown of consent and force was brilliant.

(3) Another discussion topic concerns the institutions of class compromise. In particular, I'm interested in what forms these institutions might take, particularly between capital and labor. This is not so much a criticism as it is of exploring the idea further. For example, there is a question about how much autonomy managers of corporations have and also whether the amount of this autonomy has narrowed in the past few decades. I'm wondering how this autonomy would affect the capital-labor compromise.

For instance, managers might be more interested in raising productivity, rather than strictly profits, because this would best insure the long-term survival of the corporation. Because managerial positions are tied to the particular firm in which they exercise authority, their interests are more closely tied with those of the "firm" itself. On this point, I think there is a quite a bit of evidence that unions raise productivity but lower profits. Under such conditions a compromise seems much more likely. On the other hand, shareholders are more interested in short-term profit because they can move their wealth around between corporate shares extremely rapidly. Thus, it might be interesting to see what has happened over the last decades as managers have come under increasing pressure to "maximize shareholder value." This change has come from several sources, one being the increasing ability of shareholders to engage in "hostile takeovers" and another being simply a shift in political attitudes. Do such changes make it more difficult for managers to sustain a class compromise? **[My guess is that anything that shortens time horizons makes class compromise less stable, since the premise of constructive class compromise is creating "win-win" growth cooperation over purely distributional conflict.]**

From the other side of the relationship, we may ask about variations in the institutional forms of trade unions. When unions are more bureaucratic, union leaders may find it easier to sustain class compromises because they form a layer of insulation between the capitalists and the potentially destabilizing (for the class compromise) effects of militant members. It seems that they have greater capacity to both control such militancy and deflect it when it arises. On the other hand, bureaucratic unions may find it harder to sustain the membership mobilization that is required on occasion to discipline the boundaries of the compromise. **[You should read Offe & Weisenthal's "Two Logics of Collective Action" on just this point]**

(4) I just have a final broad question about where the idea of the structural dependence upon capital stands today. Pzeworski and Wallerstein, in their essay on popular sovereignty and private property, say that "the question of structural dependence of the society upon capital remains open." I guess I was expecting a slam dunk in favor of the idea, but didn't get one. It seems that Pzeworski and Wallerstein want a strict rational choice solution to the problem. Is it too strong for me to say that? Can the idea be given sufficient clarity without a strictly rational choice solution? The idea is strong and compelling enough to warrant its salvaging if necessary.

[6] From: Pablo

To: Everyone in Sociology 924.

1. Militancy has costs. One important conclusion of the model developed by Pzeworski in "Material Bases of Consent" is that moderate militancy dominates both a more militant posture over any period of time longer than a few years, and a non-militant posture over a medium run. The second part of the claim, however, is based on the assumption that militancy has no cost whatsoever. If we accept that militancy

does have costs, sometimes even overwhelming ones (e.g., today's U.S.), his conclusion does not follow anymore – a non-militant posture might be the dominant strategy. This seems to have far reaching consequence in the model. For instance, look at equation (2), which defines the levels of wages necessary to reproduce consent at any time t . If r (level of militancy) is close to zero because rational workers maximize by not risking militancy, then legitimacy only requires that the level of wages does not go down! In a situation like this, it seems we should not expect legitimacy-induced distributional crises. Rather than an objection, however, this may be a strength of the model – if my reasoning is correct, the model would illuminate how much is at stake in making unionization and labor organization at any level as difficult as possible = imposing the highest possible costs. **[Another way of framing these issues would be to note that under the rubric “militancy” there is a range of strategies, not just “more” or “less”. Thus there may be a range of forms of resistance on the shop floor that induce class compromises of the moderate militancy variety but which are not especially costly to workers, even where more collective forms of action are costly. The whole discussion of “efficiency wages”, for example, might be of this sort.]**

2. Microfoundations of the relation between investment and profits. The key argument presented in pp. 53-58 of Przeworski and Wallerstein's “Popular Sovereignty. . .” assumes certain functional relations between investment and profits (see figure 3). I understand these curves represent causal relations between investment in $t \rightarrow$ profits in $t+1$, under different circumstances – capitalists select levels of investment based on the anticipated profits that they would generate. However, it is not clear to me why the curves have the forms they have, nor why it is assumed that capitalists would be able to invest at the level that maximizes aggregate profits. First, regarding the form of the curves, one can perhaps make the following Keynesian argument: investment opportunities are selected in descending order in terms of their rate of profit, and the part of the curves where marginal profit is negative (right part of the curves) is due to investment opportunities with negative profits. This would entail that profits increase but at a decreasing rate, and that they decrease from certain level of investment on. This explanation doesn't fit completely with the form of two of the curves, however – the marginal rate of profit not only is positive but increasingly positive in one case and constant in the other **[actually, in the $P=S(I)$ curve there are diminishing returns in the region just before the maximum, since the curve is smooth, with a kink. I agree that the $P = D(I)$ curve has increasing returns to scale in a region, but I suspect this is not something they intended – it is just a sloppy curve. There is no reason in a structurally dependent state that profit rates should initially increase with additional levels of investment, but not in the other two cases – as far as I can tell]**, until the curves reach their maxima. Second, the maximum level of investment in t depends of the profits obtained in $t-1$. This constrains the maximum level of investment that is possible in any time, and then there is no reason to assume that the whole curves are relevant for the decision that capitalists make – they may not be able to reach the maximum of any of the three curves.

3. The main result of the model just referred is that a tax applied only to consumption out of profits does not affect the rate of investment. This is a result of utmost importance – indeed, it seems to open the door to as much governmental redistribution as desired, as long as governments are able to contain militancy and wages (see pp. 56-58). However, this does not take into account the possibility of inter-national competence **[I assume you mean “competition” here]** for investments. Even under the conditions just mentioned, capital flight seems to be the unavoidable result if there are other countries offering significantly lower tax rates, and a race to the bottom (in terms of taxation levels) among countries would seem to follow directly from this – as it is often argued, the international liberalization of capital flows tends to restrict national governments' policy options. **[You are correct that P&W do not consider capital flight in this analysis. The neoliberal argument, however, is not mainly about capital flight – is about the disincentives to invest generated by taxation, and this is what they are encountering. The neoliberal arguments would argue against taxes even if there was no international trade.]**

[7] 924memo#4-Keedon

1. Though extremely brilliant, is Przeworski's materialist reconstruction of Gramsci really convincing, judging from *Prison Notebooks* itself? He asserts that cultural interpretation of G such as Anderson's makes his insights trivial. Yet his focus on superstructure was not trivial but rather revolutionary in Marxist theoretical tradition at the time. Isn't it that cultural interpretation of G makes him trivial because cultural approach has been taken for granted and trivialized thanks to him. Consider G's words P himself quotes: Civil society "has become a very complex structure and one which resistant to the catastrophic 'incurSION' of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc)." Though P uses the passage to discuss the relationship between consent and coercion, it seems to point to G's genuine idea of hegemony and consent. P says such an economic crisis is a moment when the material base of consent collapses, consent is withdrawn and coercion comes in sight. Here is where what I think G really bears in mind here differs from P's version of G. G's consent comes into play exactly when P's consent is withdrawn and coercion may be mobilized. If G's concept of hegemony is not to be interpreted as implying more than material interest, we could not understand why G so ardently argues for the war of 'position' in the advanced capitalist countries which involves ideological counter-hegemonic struggles. I think P's material reconstruction captures only one aspect of G's concept of hegemony. Let me talk this way. The answers may vary to the question, Why people consent to their exploitation?

Wildly thought answer list

1. They don't know it is exploitation
2. In case they do know,
 1. The degree of exploitation is low so that collective or individual cost for struggle is greater than the benefit.
 2. They simply perceive the degree of exploitation is bearable.
 3. They hope exploitation go away in the predictable future and just sit and wait.
 4. They make such an arrangement as Przeworski describes.
 5. In case they perceive the degree of exploitation to be severe,
 1. They think it is just a fate.
 2. The individual cost is actually greater than the benefit or they perceive so.
 3. They perceive any possibility of collective struggle does not exist.

Now I think P's argument captures only 2-1 and 2-4 or some more, whereas G's hegemony includes most of the above cases. **[This is an interesting inventory of possibilities, and I think you are mostly right that Przeworski mainly argues for 2-1 and 2-4. The place where P does make a different sort of argument is in the electoral politics analysis, where he allows for motivations other than material interests to govern the formation of collective actors – workers can be organized as Catholics or Bavarians, etc. Insofar as he regards identity as malleable in this way, then the material-basis of consent can be replaced with an identity-basis of consent. Most of the other elements on your list constitute aspects of "false consciousness" – eg #1 = people don't know something which actually does exist. I don't think this is really Gramsci's idea of "hegemony" – even cultural and ideological hegemony -- which is not so much about false beliefs, but about the ways people become subordinated to the leadership of a dominant class. The ideological/cultural component of this is what he calls "moral and intellectual leadership". Chantal Mouffe discusses this at length. Here the issue is the incorporation of oppositional ideological elements – like democracy – into the ideological matrix of the dominant class. But not straight-out "false" beliefs.]**

2. Przeworski argues for the kind of socialist struggle that is not confined to material interest. If the current conditions are the outcomes of the past class struggles and if now we do the struggle not confined to narrow material interest, why must he argue that capitalist democracy reduces any struggle to one about immediate short-term material interests? **[I think his point here is all about dilemmas and traps: capitalist democracy reduces struggle to material struggle because of the gains possible through such struggle, but in buying into that "reduction" socialist forces undercut the possibility of challenging capitalism, which would require challenging people's calculations about costs and benefits of struggle, by changing what people struggle for. But – and here is the trap – to avoid the struggle over material gains through using democratic machinery is to risk marginalization.]**

[8] Shamus Khan

Response #4 – Przeworski

- 1.) Point of clarification: When thinking about h , “the horizon with which workers consider the future” is a , “the rate at which workers discount the future on grounds of uncertainty” understood as constant? That is, if $h=12$, and a applies through the period h , ($t=0$ through $t=12$) is a presumed to be constant across all levels of t ? If so, this doesn’t make sense to me. That is, the discount rate should increase over the time period h , and, as $t=h$, should equal 1 (that is, there is such uncertainty that actors do not think beyond this period). I guess the real question is about the concept “ a ”. If it moves from being a constant to variable, does anything change in Przeworski’s models? I suspect that things do. That is, if a increases as t increases, reaching a level of complete uncertainty at $t=h+1$, that is, the time period after h , then the workers’ and capitalists’ best reply theorem changes (see pp. 185). Unfortunately my skills at this kind of formal theory are not sufficient to predict if we could expect different strategies from capitalists and workers, give a variable a . **[I don’t remember the specifics of the idea of a discount rate well enough to answer this. The general assumption is that the future is valued less than the present and the distant future less than the far future, so if I offer you \$1 today and ask you how much will I have to offer you a year from today for you to be indifferent, you might say \$2, and two years from now \$4, three years from now \$8, etc. There can surely be all sorts of functional forms for this, but the one above is a constant % increase over time: 100%/year. I am not sure this matters a lot for the claims about the implications of different levels of militancy.]**
- 2.) One question I had was how the default outcome of political contention supports bourgeois ideology. Przeworski’s argument is as follows: 1.) Workers compete with one another, so “similarity of class position does not necessarily result in solidarity”. 2.) Class interest only comes in when workers become a collectivity (not as a collection of individuals). 3.) It is the project of political parties to construct such a collectivity and, with the help of ideology, form class solidarity. 4.) Workers are never in the majority. 5.) Parties must recruit from other groups. 6.) Solidarity erodes. My question is, why can’t the working class build successful coalitions? **[They can build successful coalitions in the sense of effective coalitions, but not without some erosion of internal solidarity. If there was no erosion at all and the coalition was itself durable and solidaristic, then the question would be: why not just absorb the coalition into a grander collectivity of solidarity? The Przeworskian answer is: because there is something in this coalition that contradicts the identity-of-organization of the initial solidarity.]** Przeworski argues that “In any capitalist society, the principle competing visions of society are one of class and one of universalism... the claims of workers as a class are particularistic, and when workers organize as a class they seek to impose upon the entire society the image of a society divided by classes, each endowed with particularistic interests... Ideologies of the bourgeoisie do not emphasize its specific interests, but propose a universalistic classless image of society, composed of individuals – citizens, whose interests are basically in harmony” (101). So, as we get to step (5) above, bourgeois ideology is supported. Since working class parties never constitute a majority, they must branch out. As they branch out, particularistic class interests must be dropped. The vision of a class society is lost. **[I think what gets dropped is the insistence on the working class as the basis of identity of the party. The socialist party cannot say: we are the party of the working class, a class that is exploited by capitalists and in a long-term struggle against its class enemies, AND we are the party of all citizens serving everyone’s interests. The usual device of worker’s parties is to become populist rather than universal: we are the party of the ordinary people against the rich, but not the party of everyone because universalism is phony. So the party stops short of true universalism. The bourgeoisie can then say: see, the populists are divisive, they are fomenting destructive conflict, pitting rich against poor; we are for everyone.]** Bourgeois ideology wins. ENTER THE SHMOO. If I remember a lecture of Erik’s correctly, the shmoo (a wonderful little being who provides the basic needs of all humans) reveals something about the interests of workers and capitalists (or, workers and exploiters). If workers and capitalists were given the choice of how to distribute the shmoo, we find that workers – strictly following their interests – would choose to distribute the shmoos in ways that are

consistent with a norm of social justice. That is, they first would want to give them to everyone, next themselves, next the capitalists, and worst of all, destroy them. Capitalists, on the other hand, would first want them for themselves, then want them destroyed, then to all actors, and finally, as the worst option, given to just the workers. If this is the case – that is, if workers interests conform to a norm of social justice, and, in both the long and short run are more in-line with other actors (add more than two classes to our shmoo model) – how is it that they are unable to build political coalitions? The point here is that particular interests (those of workers/social justice) can be articulated by a party that better represent the interests of several groups across the class structure. Why won't a norm of social justice – one that is equivalent to the interests of the workers, better suits the interests of non-capitalists in the class structure – serve as an effective basis for coalition building. **[You make an excellent point here – “Why won't a norm of social justice serve as an effective basis for coalition building”. Marxists, of course, have traditionally argued that socialism is not to be pursued for moral reasons or justice reasons, but because of the interests it serves: it is in the interests of the working class against the interests of capitalists. “Justice”, Marxists argued in part, is a distraction. But we know from history that moral appeals sometimes do motivate political action for broad groups of people and thus coalitions may be constructed on grounds of social justice. I guess Przeworski's argument is that where social justice coalitions contradict material interests, such coalitions will be constantly vulnerable to erosion]**

[9] # 4 – TERESA MELGAR

PRZEWORSKI: CAPITALISM AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

1. Przeworski's discussion on the dilemmas (i.e. whether to pursue a pure class approach oriented on worker's interests, or attempt to draw the support of other classes and sectors in society) faced by socialist parties who contested elections in Europe, the actions and strategies they took, and the consequences of those decisions bears a lot of potential lessons for socialist and other progressive parties who seek to utilize electoral struggles as a means of advancing certain desired reforms and envisioned alternatives.

a) how much of these dilemmas were rooted in the particular conception of these parties about class and the roles it supposedly plays in shaping one's electoral choices and political behavior, at a particular point in time? In other words, if these parties had realized then what history seems to have demonstrated over the years, i.e. that our identities are not only shaped by class, but by other dimensions as well (gender, ethnicity, etc.), and that their intersection, among other things, may help shape our political and electoral behavior, would these parties still find themselves agonizing over which of these two types of strategies (i.e. pure class or multi-class approach) would serve their electoral goals better? Would they, in the first place, even frame their approach to electoral struggles as a choice between these two poles? **[This is a very interesting general issue: to what extent are apparent strategic dilemmas really constructions of the theories under which strategies are formed rather than rooted in the material relations those strategies confront. I think Prz's position is that these dilemmas are real, they are discovered by the parties through trial and error, and that if they understood all of this clearly then they would have moved even more rapidly to the nonrevolution, coalition, accommodationist position. That is, I think his view would be that ideological commitment acted as a brake on the slide to the full accommodation to capitalism, but that historical learning eventually overcame that obstacle. But I don't think he would feel the dilemmas themselves could be escaped].**

b) While I find P.'s analysis of the dilemmas faced by socialist parties and the consequences of their respective strategies in the post-war period extremely interesting, I have some reservations about the conclusions he draws from these analysis. He says, “in a society in which there exist real divisions, no political party will be able to win elections overwhelmingly, in a way that could be taken as a clear mandate. Elections are just not an instrument for radical transformation. They are inherently conservative precisely because they are representative, representative of interests on a heterogenous society.” (p. 129)

This conclusion seems largely unwarranted and somewhat of a letdown, especially in light of his earlier analyses of electoral outcomes. According to P., in some countries, workers support for socialist and other left-wing did not erode, even if the latter reduced their appeal to class interests and attempted draw the support of other sections of society, precisely because there were strong trade unions that took much of the burden of organizing workers along class lines. **[But even in the most advantageous cases – like Sweden – the parties did become reformist because of the third strategic dilemma, the dilemma of socialist policies within capitalism undermining accumulation. As a result, even in the most progressive instances the politics end up being moderate reformist rather than radical revolutionary.]** In other countries, the opposite happened because class organizing was heavily dependent still on these parties. If this is indeed the case, then one plausible conclusion that could arise from this analysis, is the importance of vigorous trade unions and other movements that could serve as vehicles for popular classes to pursue their interests and seek resolutions for their grievances, specially in between elections. Certainly, these interests would be heterogenous, precisely because of the immense diversity of conditions and problems in any society, and the presence of competing interests as well. The challenge facing a socialist or progressive political party contesting elections, thus, is not to mechanically reflect these interests, but to aggregate and transform them into a coherent platform of governance and public policy, which would bring society closer to its envisioned alternative social and economic arrangements. Unfortunately, P.'s conclusion, to my mind, does not address some of these important organizational and strategic issues – i.e. issues which have to do with party strategy under different conditions, the potential relationship of electoral outcomes with the existence of vibrant trade unions and other social movement organizations, and many others --- which his own data and analysis seem to call attention to. Instead, he tends to lapse into what seems like a largely “essentialist” critique of elections when his own data could have led him to explore more substantially, under what conditions elections and particular electoral strategies might serve broader transformative goals, and under what conditions, they may not. **[I like your point about the importance of solidaristic trade unions and how the presence of such organization might impact on the strategic space of socialist parties. Prz's account sees parties as largely facing workers-as-individuals and organizing them into a class, but you are suggesting that there are two organizations organizing them into a class in different ways – unions and parties. P's response would be two-fold, I think: 1) trade-unions almost everywhere organize workers along industrial and sectional lines, with confederations of unions providing some kind of overarching integration. the result is that unions generally do not really generate class-wide understandings of interests, but more partial interests. 2) Even in the cases where socialist parties were linked to very coherent solidaristic unions – like Sweden again – the reformist direction of accommodating to capitalism and strengthening the functioning of capitalism did triumph. While it is the case that this occurred in ways that made capitalism much more progressive and egalitarian, it still fell far short of any kind of challenge to capitalism as such.]**

2. In Chap. 4 “Material Bases of Consent,” P. argues that “wage earners consent to capitalist organization of society when they act as if they could improve their material conditions within the confines of capitalism (p. 146)...Futher, “the consent to capitalism is permanently conditional: there exist material limits beyond which it will not be granted, and beyond these limits there may be crises. (p. 146). Finally, “reproduction of consent of wage earners requires that their material interests be to some extent satisfied within capitalist society (p.147)”

Some comments:

1) I agree that wage earners at some level, “consent” to the reproduction of capitalist organization of society if they see that their material interests will be satisfied by this society, and that, to some extent, is what may account, for the resilience of the capitalist system.

But I think it might be fruitful if we disaggregate what is meant by “consenting:” when workers seek to realize their interests (e.g. obtain a decent wage) in a capitalist setting, does this mean they are consenting to the “capitalist organization” as a whole? Is it not also conceivable that in some instances, workers are simply attempting to extend the boundaries of the possible, to tame the system’s most exploitative aspects, because that, perhaps, is all they could afford to do for the moment? If they anchor these “intermediate” goals within a broader agenda of substantially transforming this system of economic and social organization as they seek to accumulate political power, can this still be considered “consenting” to the

capitalist organization of society? [**You raise a very interesting issue: to what are workers really “consenting” when they “consent to capitalism”? I am not sure that Prz is claiming that they have the cognitive category “the capitalist organization of society” in their heads when they “consent”, but rather that they exhibit a practical consent in the sense of actively – not just passively -- cooperating with the reproduction of capitalism. Michael Burawoy has some very interesting things to say about this when he talks about workers consenting to exploitation on the shop floor. He does not mean that they have the concept of exploitation in their heads and consciously say: exploitation is OK. Rather, what Burawoy means is that in a hegemonic factory workers actively, voluntarily agree to expend more effort within production than they are forced to expend. Their effort level is above that which is generated simply by coercion or fear, and thus effort embodies active “consent”. I think this is the sense Prz means when he talks about consent to capitalism: in practical ways workers contribute to the reproduction of capitalism in ways that they are not simply coerced into doing.]**

2) The word “consent” seems to be laden with a sense of active “agency,” i.e. a sense that an individual has in fact some choices available, and the space or opportunity to make meaningful decisions (“they consent when they choose particular choices of action and when they follow these choices in their practice”. p. 146). But do workers/ wage earners, (specially those at the lowest rung, in contrast to their more privileged counterparts in some sections of a capitalist society) in reality, often have these spaces? If that is not the case, i.e. when conditions do not really offer any meaningful choices, e.g. when conditions are just so bad that seeking some level of improvement, within a capitalist system, seems the only decent (though not necessarily easy) thing to do, can we still call this condition as “consenting” in the way P. uses this? **[If in fact workers have virtually no choice and their actions are pretty much driven by necessity, then this would not count as active consent in the Przeworski/Gramsci/Burawoy sense; this might be resignation, but not consent. Struggling for some improvement might also not imply consent if it does not involve the kind of compromise and extra-contribution to capitalist reproduction that consent suggests. The pivot, here, is that consent implies some kind of compliance beyond that which is strictly generated by force.]**

c) In some interesting studies of peasant and workers communities in the Third World, (Kerkvliet, Scott, etc.) authors have argued that what may seem like modes of “consenting” to a particular social or economic arrangement may actually be accompanied by instances of “everyday resistance.” In contrast to more organized forms of resistance “everyday resistance” consists of subtle, surreptitious acts by which people show their disapproval over certain conditions or social arrangements (e.g. stealing grains from a landlord, sabotaging certain work implements, dragging of feet, etc.). Surreptitious, unorganized and often fleeting as they may be, at the core of these actions and demeanors, according to these studies, are contending views on what constitutes a better social arrangement, and the values underpinning these views. Interestingly, these acts of everyday resistance may co-exist with what Przeworski may view as “consent” to a particular social arrangement . That is, people may still have alternative views on how certain social or economic arrangements should be organized, and these views may occasionally simmer out through these surreptitious acts, even as they seek to realize certain material improvements within the very system that they abhor. **[Just to reiterate my previous point: the evidence for consent is not seeking to realize material improvements, but rather agreeing to support capitalism – to give it that extra compliance – in exchange for those improvements. Not all capitalisms are hegemonic in this sense.]** Given the insights from these studies, I wonder thus: would these have their counterparts in the capitalist arrangements that Przeworski studied. Could “consent” as P. defined it, co-exist with some subtle acts of “resistance” as well? Can we find seeds of discontent, in the interstices of collaboration and consent? **[Przeworski’s consent is definitely combined with struggle: there is no implications that workers just declare their allegiance to capitalism and then don’t also fight it. The Gramscian “consent” is based on a class compromise and this implies some sort of quid pro quo typically generated through struggle.]**

4. I agree with P. that “reforms do not necessarily cumulate even if they are not reversed.” (p. 242) I also agree that “not all reforms are conducive to new reforms” (p. 242). But I tend to think that some reforms could lay the ground, in a more fundamental way, to further reforms, than others. Some level of redistributive reforms, for instance, would, in most instances, be important to stimulate growth in an economy where access to resources is highly inequitable. In other words, some reforms, can increase the

chances for substantial transformation of social and economic relations, more than others. It is in these types of struggles, in laying the building blocks of further reforms, where progressive parties cannot abdicate. The challenge for socialist, social democratic and other progressive parties, perhaps, is not so much to hinge the accomplishment of these reforms on elections, but to examine the appropriate role of electoral struggles, among a potentially diverse set of strategies, in advancing these reforms.

[10] César A. Rodríguez
Sociology 924
Memo #4

1. Przeworski's model of the dilemma faced by socialist parties in democracies is a powerful tool to understand the resilience of capitalism in the face of crises of accumulation and the defeat of bourgeois parties in democratic elections. However, I was not entirely convinced by Przeworski's view on the improbable rise of successful popular, anti-capitalist coalitions that, while appealing to social groups other than workers (e.g., the unemployed, informal workers, impoverished small landowners, the young, etc.) would not necessarily lose support among the working class as defined by the author. **[Just a technical note: the loss of support is on the margin. What Przeworski claims is that the rate at which workers are attracted to the party will decline as other groups become important in the party and are attracted to it. This need not imply actual defections of existing socialist workers, but a slower renewal through recruitment of new cohorts].**

It seems to me that a different way of looking at the stakes people have in supporting capitalism would be to do it in relative rather than in absolute terms. In other words, instead of asking whose objective interests are hurt by capitalism, and thus seeing manual workers as the prime constituency of an anti-capitalist party, we could ask how much of a stake different groups have in the continuation of the status quo in particular conjunctures. For instance, in situations of general deprivation (which may be the result of chronic underdevelopment or cyclical crises), groups other than manual workers, albeit not having an objective antagonism vis-à-vis capital, would not have much to lose if an economic crisis hits as the result of the transition to socialism. Think, for example, of the mass of the unemployed or the underemployed in many countries of the South (which actually make up the majority of the population in urban areas) or impoverished peasants who are better off not producing for the market in the face of deteriorating commodity prices. In such circumstances, an anti-capitalist coalition may arise, and indeed arises periodically in some countries of Latin America under the form of populism –although populism, of course, is not necessarily anti-capitalist. **[Isn't this partially the point here: Populism is only contingently anticapitalist, and the coalition it embodies is likely to have an unstable relationship to anticapitalism – and even more to revolutionary socialism – precisely because of the character of the class forces that unit under the banner?]** Whether such coalitions manage to enact socialist policies once in power is a different matter, one that Przeworski is not concerned with. But at least in principle it does not seem implausible to think that in situations like the one described above an anti-capitalist coalition could at least win elections periodically.

2. I found Przeworski's analysis of the economic crisis that would ensue from an attempt at making the transition to socialism quite compelling. I would only add that the phenomena associated with globalization have created opportunities for capital to provoke what could be called "preemptive crises", i.e., crises of confidence in a country's currency or credit rating that have immediate deleterious effects on a country's economy and that could thus effectively thwart the chances of a worker party's winning the elections. In other words, capital has not only the power to punish anti-capitalist coalitions by withdrawing or withholding investment once such coalitions are in power, but –especially when financial capital can move fast and freely around the world—it can provoke a mini-crisis that is a harbinger of things to come and thus prevent the ascent to power of such coalitions. The current presidential election in Brazil is a case in point. Although Lula's candidacy –the Workers Party's candidate—has not been derailed by threats of capital flight and the ensuing economic crisis, the latter have indeed forced him to take a much more centrist position than he would have taken otherwise even before the beginning of his term as president. **[Just one amendment to your comments: Przeworski acknowledges that a capital strike is also a possibility – i.e. the withdrawal of capital being a strategic political weapon, and this would include pre-emptive strikes. The point of his argument is that the threat to a socialist project and the imposition of high**

transition costs does not require that sort of conscious, collective intervention by capitalists. The spontaneous, unorganized, individual investment decisions will generate the same kind of transition costs even without concerted action. Some of this could be triggered even before a socialist wins an election, of course.]

3. Although Przeworski explicitly focuses on the material bases of hegemony and thus puts aside other basis of consent, I think that it may be worth exploring what the effect of the latter (e.g., religion, nationalism, etc.) would be on the material bases of hegemony. In other words, how would the level of wages necessary to reproduce consent at a given time be affected by nationalist propaganda or religious creed in a given society? Would non-material bases of consent make an important difference in such level of wages, so that they could explain different patterns of reproduction of capitalism in different societies?

[11] Amy Lang

Reading Interrogation - Week 4 - Przeworski

1. A definitional question. What exactly does Przeworski mean when he uses the term “institution”? At times he refers to norms, for example “workers consent to profit as an institution” (*Capitalism and Social Democracy*, p. 182)) and at times he refers to bureaucracies, electoral systems, the organization of legislatures and the relationships among them (“Popular Sovereignty...” p. 46). Are institutions organizations, relationships, or norms, or some combination thereof? **[I think institutions are probably all bases of stable/durable social interaction – thus all of the things you list would count as an institution in Przeworski’s analysis. I don’t think he means anything special in his use of the term.]**

2. In Ch. 1 of *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, Przeworski introduces us to the argument that the development of Keynesian economics facilitated the entry of Socialist parties into electoral politics, since it gave them a clear platform or ideology upon which to justify their governmental role. **[I think the pivot here is that Keynesianism enables the left to simultaneously serve the class interests of workers and pursue policies that could be framed as in the universal interest: increasing aggregate demand was in everyone’s interest, and supporting higher wages and unions was a way of accomplishing this. Keynesianism rendered credible a unity of working class particularistic interests and common interests of the society as a whole via the mechanism of raising aggregate demand]** But in his study of electoral trade-offs (Ch. 3), Przeworski concentrates on comparing the electoral strategies of Socialist and Social Democratic parties in terms of whether or not they tried to appeal to working-class interests. First, what does he mean specifically when he characterizes a strategy as appealing to “class interests”? Is the emphasis on group identity or on material benefits to workers if the party is elected? **[I think he means material interests that are defended in terms of class identities: but the actual class interests are material interests]** Conversely, when parties choose non-class electoral strategies, what are they appealing to? **[The appeals could be either to interests of a nonclass character – eg housing for the Irish, jobs for women – or could be for nonmaterial interests – freedom for religious practices. The issue would be that the appeal to these interests of either sort would be based on nonclass identities]** It seems to me that the sheer existence and popular viability (a general belief that it will work) of particular platforms or ideologies might complicate the process both of choosing a class-oriented or universalist electoral strategy, and our ability to measure whether the strategy “worked.” If a viable economic program didn’t exist for a particular election context (for example, a left party may still assert a “welfare state” platform in a time when the welfare state has been discredited and/or dismantled), then no matter how much they appeal to workers as a group, they may not achieve the kind of success that a viable/popular platform and an appeal to group identity/interests would achieve. **[You are correct here, I think: the strategy of class formation requires both the existence of policy proposals that advance material interests and the organization of those policies along class lines and their defense in class terms.]**

Over the past couple of years I have watched the NDP (the center-left party in Canada) struggle with exactly these issues. At present they are debating who to elect as party leader, and the debate centres on whether to elect someone who would shift the party to the “left” (who might appeal to workers - although what shifting to the left really means is also up for grabs), or whether to elect someone who will appeal to a broader mix of people. At the same time, they face a credibility issue - I think a major reason they have lost

ground is that they do not present themselves as being capable of governing. They do not have a coherent economic strategy that would be both leftist and viable, since the belief in Keynesian welfare state policies has been eroded over the past couple decades. Thus the issues of platform and voter-strategy appear to be related, but ultimately distinct issues to me. **[This seems like an interesting case study – maybe you'd like to do a Przeworskian analysis of this for a term paper? – The unraveling of the mutually supportive relationship on the left between class interests and universalism.]**

2. What logic underlies Przeworski's typology of state characteristics? He argues that states differ in the degree to which they have the right/responsibility to any leftover costs or benefits from state activities, they differ in who has the authority to determine state activities, they differ on whether state apparatuses produce goods and services themselves. Thus states differ on who can legitimately produce, appropriate and distribute goods [broadly defined]. Przeworski introduces a dichotomy between state/ruler and "citizen" as the two possibilities for who can legitimately control goods. But what about bodies that....**[opps...."here the manuscript breaks off" (to quote Engels comment about the end of volume III of Capital)]**

[12] #4 Robyn Autry

In Przeworski's analysis political parties encounter a trade-off between organizing workers into a class, thereby creating a workers' party, or broadening their support base by pursuing alliances with non-workers, with the intention to boost their electoral success. It seems that there are organizing strategies and issues with cross-class appeal. For example, because the impact of increased international competition or globalization affect most workers in any given country, though to various degrees, party leaders could generate broad support by speaking to individuals' concerns about job security, (re)training, etc. Further, appeals about corporate responsibility cut across class boundaries as various workers' investments, retirement plans, and jobs are threatened. It seems that there are potentials to unite a heterogeneous support base to challenge or demand social reforms of capitalist societies, as long as they represent the short-term economic interests of individuals, rather than classes. In the political realm, the ability of or likelihood that individuals will act or vote as collectivity is conditioned on the campaign strategies and platforms of the political leaders.

This leads to the question of why party leaders in capitalist societies may or may not select to endorse or campaign around principles appealing to both the working and middle class. The contradictions of capitalism create crisis conditions that are, to various degrees, felt by all members of capitalist society; it is these contradictions that signal which issues would appeal to a broad group, consisting of multiple classes.

[I agree that the existence of capitalist contradictions and the impact of those contradictions on the lives of both working class and middle class creates a potential for coalitions, but the problem – in part – is that the nature of the optimal remedy may be very different for workers and for the middle class, and party platforms revolve around solutions as much as around problems. In particular the issue of unions and empowerment of workers is not one that easily unites workers and the middle class (if by the middle class one includes managers and the like)] Party leaders operating within capitalist societies are more likely to pursue modest reforms to address these conditions, rather than highlight their existence and use them as an organizing principle, as this would undermine the legitimacy and perceived universality of the capitalist system.

[13] Week#4 Landy Sanchez

1. When Przeworski discusses the dilemma between mass party and class party, he claims that there is a trade-off between the support by non-workers and the capacity of a given party to mobilize and maintain the support of the working class members. To him, there are two reasons for this trade-off: a) to attract the support of non-workers, the party dilutes his class ideology, and therefore, tempers the ability of class to

shape individuals behavior. In his words “class identity ceases to be the only conceivable source of worker’s political commitments” (p.105). b) By appealing to non-workers voters, socialist parties cease to represent the particularistic interest of workers, since they have to represent those interests that are shared for all their possible voters (workers and non workers). **[Just for the record: this is an absolutely precise, on-target summary of Przeworski’s argument – not everyone specified it quite correctly.]** I have four comments about this idea of trade-off.

a. The first refers to the problem of class as “only” or “prime” force in shaping individual voting. To what extent class could be isolated from other elements as gender, race, religion, etc. in voting? Is the appeal to “non-class” elements by socialist parties always an attempt to attract non-workers votes, or could it be also a way to hold workers’ support? **[excellent point: it is far from obvious that a pure working class content to a political program is the one that appeals most to workers.]**

b. A second point: Is it always necessary to “give-up” workers’ interests to attract non-workers support? One possibility is the one suggested by Erik, in words of Przeworski, that socialist parties can appeal to non-class demands; another one is that in certain situations the workers’ interests coincide with, for example, middle class interests, for example about health services or social benefits which can be seen as “universalistic”, but are also part of workers agenda. **[I think the issue here is not that one has to give up workers interests to attract nonworkers, but that if one frames policies as serving everyone’s interests, as being good for society, etc. you imply that “we are all in the same boat” and thus you underplay the class model of social solidarities. Even if universal health care is in the interests of both the working class and the middle class, organizing your politics around it in universalistic terms undermines the collective organization of politics around class cleavage, and that is what undermines – in the long term – the class character of the party in Przeworski’s view]**

c. A third comment about the trade-off idea. I wonder if instead of a linear model it is possible to think of a non-linear model. We can think that until certain point there is a trade-off, workers stop voting for a given party as a result of non-workers vote; but after certain point (critical mass) workers can decide to vote for that party precisely because of the non-workers votes (bandwagon effect). Thus, the carrying capacity of the party depends on that critical point. The bandwagon effect can be reinforced by the “universalistic” or non-class party’s claims that could attract not just non-workers, but also workers as individuals. **[fantastic point! – really an important observation. There is a very interesting MA thesis on the Milwaukee Socialist Party by Ruy Teixeira written around 1982 here which makes just this argue: working class votes for the socialists increased as the party attracted more middle class voters because workers then saw the party as more viable and thus worth supporting!]**

d. I’m not convinced by his decision to separate manual workers from other salaried workers, since he can’t show that there is a trade-off between those two categories. He claims that the trade-off is smaller in countries where large and centralized union confederations are dominant, since they “discipline” voters. He seems to forget that salaried workers, especially state workers, are a really important part of those organizations (now, in fact, the biggest one).

2. Regarding the issue of the material bases of consent. When Przeworski analyze wage-earners and capitalist strategies, he claims that the decision is between militant and not militant strategies (for workers). **[There is really a three level choice: hyper-militant, moderately militant and nonmilitant]** I wonder if it would be a more realistic model to differentiate among groups of workers, for example, industrial sector, or agricultural vs. industrial, etc. To me, the consent of workers can be achieved also by “selective” negotiations with well organized workers; meanwhile other groups of workers may receive a lower level of “satisfaction” of interest. **[Another good point – in these models P really does not consider the problem of privileged fractions of the working class, the aristocracy of labor, etc.]**

[14] Christine Overdeest Przeworski, Capitalism and Social Democracy

Przeworski in CSD develop a compelling account of a systematic relationship between party electoral organizing strategies, electoral outcomes, and the low/no probabilities for state socialism. Second, he also offers a nice elaboration of how the kind of state which then emerges ends up redistributing proceeds in

such a way as to ameliorate workers (which workers want), thus softening their conceptions of themselves as a class for itself, further reducing the probability of social change through democratic politics.

I thought his analysis is compelling and clean, but here are a few questions:

Are there any examples in history of workers representing almost half the population in political democracies and which might invalidate his argument? i.e., if workers nearing 50 percent still did not gain more worker adherents, or seek more radical political platforms aren't there other things going on that prevent a transition to state socialism. **[50% would still not be near enough for a smooth transition to socialism since one could never imagine 100% of workers voting for the socialist party, and one would really need a supermajority to push through and sustain such radical policies democratically. Also: the transition costs argument – which is the crucial obstacle to legislating socialism – does not depend upon the size of the working class, but on the powers of capital]**

This raises the question of whether it is appropriate to consider the power of workers the same as the power of capital, which P.'s individualist methodology tends to do.. **[He doesn't really equate these: workers power comes from mobilizing capacity whereas capitalist power comes from spontaneous decisions over investments made by individuals, not through their collective action. These are quite distinct forms of power.]**

Does Przeworski's work also provide a way to think about why Marx's basic prediction of radical revolution also does not occur once under political democracy, because the extreme exploitation of workers does not tend to occur? **[the absence of extreme exploitation could occur and still revolution might not under Przeworski's model, if a) the material conditions of workers were improving with growth (which is consistent with extreme exploitation) and b) the transition costs to socialism were high (starvation is worse than extreme exploitation)]**

[15] Matt Nichter #4 interrogation

1. Przeworski argues that workers are a minority of the population in capitalist society. But his definition of 'worker' is quite strict, including only manual workers. His choice of this restricted definition appears to flow from two sources. a) He identifies the working class with 'productive laborers' and identifies the latter with manual workers. Both identifications are problematic. b) He says that white collar workers and blue collar workers do not *see themselves* as part of a common class. Of course the standard response is to distinguish between 'class-in-itself' and 'class-for-itself.' But Przeworski rejects the distinction; he seems to think that by employing it, one is thereby committed to a deterministic account of the development of class consciousness and organization. I don't follow him here. One could concede the point that political struggle may transform the class structure (creating new 'middle class' positions and so forth), as Przeworski argues in Ch. 2, without being forced to deny that the resulting class structure is still defined in terms of objective economic relations. **[I agree with you that P seems to wanting to have it both ways – to both see the boundaries of class as a result of struggle, not something given a priori in the world, and also to see the core manual working class as having a sufficiently objective existence that appealing to it implies a trade off with appeals to white collar workers. There are ways one might make sense out of this – perhaps by adding lived experience to the objective conditions that party strategists face, or by introducing something like contradictory class locations. In a way I think his intuition is correct even if his terminology is slippery]**

[A Marxological note: Przeworski says Marx's economic analysis provides no basis for explaining the growth of the 'new middle class.' But Marx argued in the *Grundrisse* that the growing concentration and centralization of capital would necessitate hiring armies of managers and bureaucrats to coordinate the functions of the resulting enlarged enterprises. Personally I've always interpreted Marx's argument about the tendential 'disappearance of the middle class' as referring first and foremost to the traditional petty bourgeoisie.] **[Even if Marx did say that there would be "armies of managers" he did not envision these armies amounting to 30-40% of the labor force. I think there is little doubt that he saw capitalist trajectory as one of overall proletarianization – that the working class would follow a**

trajectory of monotonic increase, whereas in fact the array of contradictory class locations have grown more rapidly than the working class, and the working class somewhat declined in the last few decades. One can rehabilitate the proletarianization thesis, perhaps, by globalizing it, but that moves quite a bit beyond Marx's own analysis.]

2. Przeworski says that efforts to unite workers with other groups necessarily involves watering down the appeal to workers. (He is talking about electoral campaigns, but the argument has more general implications for class mobilization.) I don't see why this is necessarily so. Unless the various groups actually have antagonistic interests, what prevents a political organization from appealing to the distinct interests of both groups, as opposed to some lowest common denominator that they have in common? In direct response to Erik, Przeworski argues that campaigning around 'clean government' (to appeal to middle class voters) involves the abandonment of a distinctively working class agenda in favor of appeals to a vaguely-defined citizenry. I don't see why. **[What you have to think through here is whether a political strategy that emphasizes class division and class antagonism can also attract middle class voters by advocating policies that would benefit them as well, or whether to get the middle class voters on board one has to drop the class-antagonism ideological frame in favor of a more universalizing frame – we are all in the same boat, etc. I think that historically it is correct that the middle class is less likely to vote socialist when the party frames its agenda in worker vs capitalist terms than when the same policies are framed in universal terms. Such universalistic language does not inherently reduce support of workers to the socialists; what it does is reduce their class identity as the foundation of that support and thus makes them more vulnerable to recruitment away from the party – or more precisely, it makes it more likely that future cohorts of workers will be recruited by nonworker parties]**

3) Przeworski's argument that class compromise is in the long-term economic interest of workers abstracts from the effects of wars and major economic crises, both of which tend to convert positive-sum economic bargains into zero-sum games. [He does refer to economic crises generated by excessive wage demands, but these are crises workers could choose to avert and are not germane here.] No surprise then that his stylized historical narrative, which purports to explain the endurance of capitalism primarily in terms of its ability to serve the material interests of workers, dances lightly over the period 1914-45. Was the leadership of the German Social Democrats (SPD) really acting in the interests of its worker constituents by agreeing to send millions of them off to die in WWI? Or by assisting in the crushing of insurrections involving hundreds of thousands of workers during the years immediately following the war? Was the 'transition trough' between capitalism and socialism in Germany in 1933 really so deep that the decision by the SPD (and Communist Party) not to launch mass strikes against Hitler represented self-interested behavior? **[I think your criticism here is quite interesting and raises the issue of the relevance of wars and the like for these sorts of abstract models. Przeworski is trying to explain the incorporation of workers under the pure logic of capital accumulation under democratic conditions, and thus he abstracts from lots of historically important facts. Thus, for example, he abstracts from violent counterrevolution as part of the transition costs to socialism. It is not that he denies that this is historically relevant, but just that even without such violent repression – he feels – workers would face significant costs. In effect he is making the most optimistic case possible for socialism and still shows that there are powerful endogenous forces that work against it. I am not sure the abstraction from war has quite the same status. He would certainly agree if it is the case that one of the effects of the search for class compromise is the willingness of socialists to embark on massively destructive imperialist wars, that this would not be in the "interests" of the working class (although, to be fair in the 1914 case, the SPD thought this would be a short affair and that it would massively increase their post-war bargaining power. That was probably stupid and opportunistic, but it also reflected being caught in a vice facing a terrible dilemma of what to do)]**

Przeworski does admit that socialist parties have not always behaved optimally. But the cases just mentioned would seem to involve more than simple miscalculation; the ideological commitment to reformism (or sectarianism in the case of the Communists during the 1930s) was an independent causal factor.

I think Przeworski is right that when capitalism is growing and stable, class compromise is possible and indeed likely (at least to the extent that pursuit of material interests is the primary motivation of workers). But explaining the historical persistence of capitalism also requires explaining why, during periods in which capitalism was *not* stable, it nevertheless persisted. **[I don't think he would deny that brutality and repression also play a role in the persistence of capitalism in some historical circumstances. He is not offering a transhistorical theory of capitalist stability, but a theory of stability in capitalist democracies.]**