

READING INTERROGATIONS #7
SOCIOLOGY 929: ENVISIONING REAL UTOPIAS
MARCH 27, 2008
CHAPTER 7 ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF TRANSFORMATION

1. Ricardo Donaire

When referring to the theory of transformative strategies in the conclusion of chapter 7, three outlined strategies are described: ruptural, interstitial and symbiotic. All three seem to be defined focusing on the means of transformation which each of them implies (respectively, by revolutionary change of institutions, by building new institutions in niches of the current regime, by deepening democracy in current institutions).

But if a strategy is defined not only by means but mainly by goals, which is the goal of these strategies? **[There is always a problem in specifying goals and their relationship to means because of the distinction between “ultimate goals” and “immediate goals”. So, in these terms, I would say that all of these strategies share the same ultimate goal – the goal of going beyond capitalism to socialism, understood as social empowerment or the radical democratic egalitarian organization of the economy. The “ultimate goals” could also be specified in terms of my normative foundations – rather than the more institutional ones – of social justice and political justice. So, it might seem that the goals of Ruptural transformation and interstitial transformation are different, but this need not be the case: they could both envision an economy beyond capitalism rooted in social empowerment; they could both imagine such an alternative in terms of hybrids in which markets and capitalist elements still play a role but in which social power is dominant; etc.]**

Classically goals of social movement have been seen as related to the theoretical direction of workers' struggle (“theoretical” as distinguished from the “economic” and the “political” directions). In general terms, while economic struggle confronts workers versus capitalists, and political struggle, people versus political regime, what is at stake at the theoretical direction is the confrontation between reformist and revolutionary alternatives which attempt to lead social movement. That is, between the alternative which attempts to enter the bourgeois institutional system and the other one which seeks to transcend it. **[The contrast you have just specified – (1) “the alternative which attempts to enter the bourgeois institutional system” and (2) “the other one which seeks to transcend it” are not necessarily so neatly distinguishable, for there is a third possibility (3) “the alternative which attempts to enter the bourgeois institutional system in order to transcend it through a process of metamorphosis”. That is what in the 1970s was called “nonreformist reforms”.]** These alternatives express themselves in several concrete ways, and, for instance, within them utopian socialist forms may be found, that is, alternatives which attempt to build a brand new society from the beginning by starting from a previously sketched design. Thus, revolution and social reform (including socialist utopias) are seen as different goals and, therefore, different strategies.

However, in the proposed scheme these alternatives (revolution, social utopia and reform) seem to be understood as three “modes” of transformation (respectively, ruptural, interstitial

and symbiotic). So, it seems like goals are turned into means. **[It is not so much that goals are turned into means but rather that intermediate goals are seen as creating the conditions for more fundamental transformations. “Setting the conditions for” can be viewed as a means for the ultimate ends.]**

Then, are these three modes related to one unique and same goal? If so, why are they named as different strategies? Would not it be more accurate to name them as “tactics” (emphasizing this way its partial nature)? If not, are they linked to different goals and that is why they express different strategies? **[Tactics are more short term of context dependent than what I have described here. Tactics concerns the problem of coalition formation, particular proposals in particular times and places, etc.]**

2. Wes Markofski

This chapter is so dense with interesting and contested concepts and theoretical mechanisms of social reproduction and transformation that trying to think through them all at one time feels like drinking from the proverbial fire hydrant. There are a lot of things to talk about here. I'll focus on just two. The discussion of social reproduction defined as the reproduction of social structures of power, inequality and privilege described in contrast to the Hobbesian problem of social order is fantastic although perhaps also somewhat problematic. The emancipatory theory of social reproduction described here is based on a radically different conception of human capacities and motivations (4) than other theories of social reproduction, and legitimate a functionalist argument about the need for “*social structures and institutions that systematically impose harms on people require vigorous mechanisms of active social reproduction...*” (4). The assumption that “*when people experience things that are harmful to their lives, they will try to do something about it*” directly leads to thinking about social reproduction in a functionalist mode (if “people will naturally try to change the social conditions” (4) of socially-generated harms “in the absence of countervailing forces”, it must be the case that existing institutions and other social forces accomplish the function of constraining and limiting people’s capacities and motivations to challenge harmful institutions.) **[I agree that there is a functionalist form of theorizing here, although this need not imply – in the technical sense – a full-fledged functional explanation in the manner debated by Jon Elster and G.A. Cohen. And my arguments do not imply that intentionality/agency isn’t central to the creation and protection of these institutions of social reproduction. I think that without repression, systems of slavery would virtually always collapse – in 19th century US as well as ancient Mesopotamia -- but I also feel that the repression is consciously maintained by slave masters.]**

While I am somewhat sympathetic to this argument, the functionalist logic and anthropology underlying this theory of social reproduction seems to make some pretty strong assumptions about “natural” human capacities and motivations. **[I certainly do make assumptions about human intelligence and capacities, but I am not so sure that they are so very strong. Think of it this way: these are statements about what I would find surprising: I would find it surprising to observe a structure of oppression that imposes significant harms on people’s lives that was not backed up with fairly powerful, active mechanisms that**

blocked struggles against those harms.] While it is no doubt the case that people experiencing harms *usually* “try to something about it”, to assume that “when the source of those harms is social” they will seek *social* solutions (4) seems to me to be a very strong and essentially ahistorical claim about the rationality of human actors. It seems to me more likely that when people experience socially-generated harms, they just as typically tend to take the existing social structure for granted and seek *individual* strategies to ameliorate those harms. **[An individual strategy IS a social strategy since it involves transforming the social relations within which the individual lives. I didn’t say that people will always try to overthrow the existing social structures as such, just that when they identify a social source of harm they will try to transform the social reality which they confront unless they are prevented from doing so. An individual slave running away from a plantation seeks a social solution in this sense.]** At least this is the common pattern in the United States, where an ideology of meritocratic individualism and democratic equality makes social structures of inequality less visible and encourages individualistic solutions and attributions of blame for harms. **[But note: you have invoked a mechanism of social reproduction here that explains individual strategies – the meritocratic ideology and blame-the-victim individualism.]** In other socio-historical contexts, people seek individualistic or family-based solutions to social problems (rather than seeking **broader** social change) for other reasons, such as the practical need for daily survival or despair about the possibility of accomplishing change given a perceived (and often real) lack of power. **[Again, if it is the case that the strategies people adopt are the result of “despair” generated by lack of power, this conforms to my arguments about the “naturalness” of resistance in the absence of a mechanism of social reproduction which blocks the resistance.]** Of course, “achievement” ideologies and pressing material needs are exactly the kind of “counteracting forces” (4) an emancipatory theory of social reproduction seeks to illuminate and explain. **[My previous comment was written before I read this sentence!]** However, I wonder whether the information and social conditions under which the assumption that “people seek social solutions to socially generated problems” is historically realistic and theoretically useful. Is the argument, “*The problem of social reproduction is grounded in the latent potential for people to collectively challenge structures of domination, oppression, and exploitation*” (5) a robust and useful anthropological assumption about human capacities and motivations under “neutral” conditions that justifies thinking about social reproduction the way it is conceptualized in this chapter, or does it essentialize and elevate one aspect of human behavior (capacity for collective action to challenge unjust institutions) in an ahistorical and ultimately misleading way? **[I agree that I am making claims about what can be considered “essential” properties of human beings. To say that something is a “harm” or something obstructs “human flourishing” is to say that these are intrinsically damaging to people. And to say that people will have an inherent tendency to resist harms is also to make a claim about a general property of people. But why is this necessarily undesirable?]** (And, does it really matter? I’m still trying to muddle through how important this claim about human capacity is for the overall argument about social reproduction and transformation. I think my general intuition is “social ‘inertia’ is more important than you think” in terms of explaining people’s behaviors, and that there are a lot of reasons people aren’t constantly collectively challenging social institutions that generate harms (they are busy, the world is imperfect, **things are good enough for them**, etc) that don’t require strong theories and assumptions about active institutional and social mechanisms of social reproduction that repress them...but I’m not even sure I believe what I just wrote, either.) **[I agree that all of these things could be explanations for particular**

instances of passivity. Still the fact that one seeks such explanations suggests that there is some kind of expectation that people will not be passive – unless they are too busy or things are good enough for them, etc.]

I'll make my second point very brief: the chapter contains some idiosyncratic conceptualizations of *social reproduction* and *culture* that I'm not sure about. *Active social reproduction* is explained in institutional terms, while *passive reproduction* is explained in individual terms (mundane daily activities and interactions among individuals). To associate *active* with only *institutional* reproduction and *passive* with *individual/interpersonal* reproduction processes seems problematic; don't both institutional and individual mechanisms of reproduction contain active and passive elements? Similarly, conceptualizing ideology as the conscious aspects of subjectivity and culture as nonconscious aspects of subjectivity is problematic (9). Not all "beliefs, ideas, values, doctrines, and theories" (eg *ideologies*) are conscious, and not all "dispositions, habits, tastes and skills" (eg *culture*) is nonconscious.

[When I say that ideology taps the conscious aspects of subjectivity I do not mean that all of the elements of ideology are always actively in ones consciousness, but rather that they are discursively accessible to consciousness. In concrete settings this seems pretty clear: the belief that men should be aggressive is different from the disposition to be aggressive even if the two of these have a connection. A masculine culture cultivates those dispositions; masculinist ideology creates a set of ideas that support those dispositions.]

3. Rodrigo Salgado

My question refers to the link –or the differentiation- between the passive and the active aspects (processes) of social reproduction. According to your definition passive aspects refers to “those aspects of social reproduction that are anchored in the mundane routines and activities of everyday life (...) This **passive** aspect of social reproduction is not the result of specialized effort and consciously constructed institutions designed for the purpose of social reproduction. Passive social reproduction is simply a by-product of the ways in which the daily activities of people mesh in a kind of self-sustaining equilibrium in which the dispositions and choices of actors generate a set of interactions that reinforces those dispositions and choices”. And the **active** aspect “in contrast, is the result of specific institutions and structures which at least in part are designed to serve the purpose of social reproduction. This includes a wide variety of institutions: the police, the courts, state administration, education, the media, churches, and so on”. You also compare the aspects of passive reproduction to the Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. Then you recognize that “active and passive reproduction interacts in important ways. Passive reproduction is aided by various institutions which help stabilize the mundane routines of everyday life”. So I can recognize two dimensions involved in the definition of both processes/aspects. One refers to de dimension of unconscious/conscious dispositions; the other to the specific resulting of institutional / non-institutional devices. I don’t see why the institutional dimension is relevant to define both processes. Is it possible to understand the passive unconscious aspects without taking account of the institutions involved in the creations of those unconscious dispositions and choices? **[I think my exposition is not entirely clear on these issues. Wes Markofski’s last comment also reflects this. I think institutions are connected to both passive and active reproduction. My**

point about active reproduction is that the institutions are directly designed for this purpose – their “function” – to use a term that may cause other problems – is social reproduction. Passive reproduction is a by product on institutions and the associated practices of individuals that are designed for other purposes. To use a classic Marxist example, commodity production is not designed to generate commodity fetishism; that is not the purpose of the production relations and exchange relations that constitute “commodity production.” Commodity fetishism is a by-product which may contribute to social reproduction. Both passive and active reproduction are rooted in institutions and relations.]

I’m thinking for example in Foulcaut’s work when he claims that the construction of a “docile body” implied a huge social institutional engineering to “create” that disciplined body (working power for example). You can think also that the educational institutions have the direct effect of create dispositions, choices and behaviors. **[Sometimes these are indeed “active” processes, as when education is designed to socialize students and teach them discipline of various sorts. What gets taught may be internalized as dispositions, and so you are right that active reproduction may generate dispositions. I think in Bourdieu’s analysis the pivotal aspects of *habitus* become embedded in mundane routines and daily life in ways that make this a kind of self-enforcing social equilibrium of social reproduction without the conscious purposes of people playing a consistent role.**

The other question refers to the mechanisms that shape the subjectivities of actors: ideology and culture. The former refers to the *conscious* aspects of subjectivity: beliefs, ideas, values, doctrines, theories. The latter refers to the *nonconscious* aspects of subjectivity: dispositions, habits, tastes, skills. How can this fit with the passive and active processes? Did the ideology refer to the active processes of social reproduction (result of specific institutions) and the culture to the passive ones (not result of specific institutions)? If it is, we may ignore that the importance of the ideology (and the reason to exist of the specific institutions involved in the spread of ideologies), is precisely to create behavior dispositions (a culture). **[I do generally associate ideology with the deliberate spreading and inculcation of specific matrices of ideas, and culture with the less deliberate effects of social practices and relations, but this is not a strict correspondence. My contrast is with the nature of the effects and not the process. So, consider the problem of competitive individualism. People develop the dispositions needed to be effective competitive individualists through a long term process of sanctions and affirmations – they get rewarded for being good competitors, they get negative sanctions for being ineffective. Living in a competitive culture means repeatedly encountering such sanctions and affirmations in ways that mold such dispositions. Competitive individualism is also an ideology, a set of beliefs that this is a good thing, that it contributes to human fulfillment and to economic development, and so on. Many people believe in these ideas but are not particularly competitive or individualistic themselves, so the dispositions and skills needed to compete are not the same as the beliefs in competition. That is the contrast I am drawing. But the culture can be reinforced through active mechanisms – fathers deliberately trying to inculcate a competitive ethos in their children – as well as passive processes.]**

4. Pablo

Focusing on the micro-processes that reproduce the structure and social relations of capitalism, specifically in cultural institutions that play a central role on the formation of beliefs and dispositions, the text mentions both the school and the family. I would like to discuss the

contradictions/oppositions/ between those institutions and the gaps they leave to construct an emancipatory society. In our country, during the first half of twentieth century education contributed to **reduce the reproduction of inequality**. **[I wonder if education really reduced the “reproduction of inequality” or, instead, simply reduced the intergenerational transmission of unequal positions. Schools may have changed the world view of working class children enabling them to gain the cultural capital needed for “middle class” jobs, and yet this might have done little to reduce the reproduction of the resulting inequalities as such.]** For people from working class children the values, beliefs and knowledge learned on schools contradict in more sense their “own view of the world”. The challenge is how to transform this institution in a key tool to transform social relations.

The other question I have is related to the “Frankenstein problem”. Capitalism could not function without institutions that regulate the market and the pernicious effects of the capital accumulation. Those institutions have the specific aim to **create equality** while the dynamic of capitalism makes inequality (This is Polanyi theory). **[The institutions needed to stabilize capitalism and prevent it from destroying itself need not have “the specific aim to create equality”. All that is needed is for them to counteract the extreme inegalitarian impact of capitalism, especially in terms of risks. Mostly the regulatory institutions are risk-sharing institutions of one sort or another.]** The extension and deepening of the interventionist capacity of the state creates a space for social empowerment. My question is: how to strengthen or transform the welfare institutions so that they work towards an emancipatory radical democratic society instead of helping to reproduce capitalist structures and institutions? **[This is something we will talk about more, especially in the week on symbiotic transformations, and maybe some on interstitial transformations. I would pose the problem in a slightly different way: it is not so much a question of working towards emancipatory alternatives “instead of helping to reproduce capitalist structures and institutions,” but rather how to combine reproducing capitalism with also expanding the space of social empowerment. The idea here is that social empowerment will take root and be more robust if it occurs under conditions in which it also solves problems for capitalism – thus the symbiotic idea – and therefore helps consolidate a hybrid within which social power is stronger. In terms of the welfare state I think this requires programs that are more universalistic rather than targeted, and risk-reducing policies that expand the capacity of people to build alternative institutions.]**

I like the theoretical position where you inscribe your theory of social reproduction. Could be seen it as a Marxist perspective of social reproduction? I agree to the autonomy of the superstructural processes and also reject the view of an automatic logic. Nevertheless, I think that it would be necessary to emphasize the dialectical connections between economic structures and the processes of institutional building. In that sense, it is important to analyze the core economic relations and fundamental classes rooted in them. I think that the democratic emancipatory institutions have to direct its transformation to them and protagonists of this collective process might be the most exploited and dominated people.

5. Ruth Sautu

You mention on page 8 mechanisms that are systematically biased in favor of the capitalist class. In a Real Utopia Project how to prevent the reproduction of state mechanisms that eventually operate against aims of the project itself? For example big corruption practices are knitted into state top and power elites. How to undo these knots that are crucial in the reproduction of the capitalist economy? **[I don't have any special proposal for countering the practices of corruption other than the usual calls for transparency. The experience of Porto Alegre and the participatory budget, however, might be instructive here: urban level corruption in Porto Alegre virtually disappeared under the conditions of the PB because the books were open and so many people were watching how funds were being spent. This reduction in corruption helped expand the potentials for the participatory budget, since there was less "leakage" of city revenues. This reduction of corruption was also good for capitalism – even though some capitalists benefit from corruption and the tight instrumental dependencies of state elites, corruption is not necessarily optimal for capitalism.]**

Among a variety of institution for active social reproduction you include education. Beyond education it seems to me that control over knowledge and reproduction is crucial for the active social of inequality. Science and technology constitute the real basis of a capitalist economy, how do you think this issue is to be dealt in the transformation program? **[I think that control over knowledge is crucial, but I think it is a real vulnerability for capitalism, for intellectual property rights are inherently more fragile than physical property rights, especially in the Internet Age. The idea of a "Creative Commons" and the challenge to private property in knowledge has gained quite a bit of traction in recent years. The Open Source movement and other challenges to intellectual property are making increasingly convincing arguments that patents fetter the development of the forces of production rather than enhance it.]**

As regards processes which generate trajectories of social change, do you not think that capitalism (particular) in developed societies is like the Roman Catholic Church? It survived twenty centuries because it was able to accept from processes which generated social change. For example, the incorporation of American Indian beliefs into Catholic Church practices side by side with Inquisition (or Priest of the third world side by side with church conservative establishment. As far as I know the church has never excommunicated anybody. **[This is a nice analogy and quite central to the idea of transformative hybrids. Syncretic religions absorb challenging elements, but they always attempt to do so in a way that preserves the central symbolic and theological configuration. That is the trick: to absorb alien elements in a way that fully subordinates them to the dominant principle. Chantal Mouffe has defined ideological hegemony in precisely this way: a hegemonic ideology is one that can add new elements that appear to contradict its core principles, but do so in such a way – with appropriate "principles of articulation" – that the challenging aspects of those elements are neutralized. The inclusion of "democracy" within bourgeois ideology is the classic example. In these terms capitalism has been so robust and adaptable to a significant extent because of its capacity to absorb new elements and structures. The result is what I have called a hybrid. The question is whether this hybridization also**

holds the potential for metamorphosis – whether it can be a contradictory hybrid rather than a permanently hegemonic one.]

6. Santiago Rodríguez

As you explain emancipatory social science may produce diagnosis and critique of existing social structures and institutions. My question is how to make known to the public the nature and causes of harms. How to induce the capitalist media to cooperate in such a process? Are you thinking in alternative means of communication? Which ones? **[I do not have any particularly novel ideas about the problem of communication and dissemination of critical ideas. The problem that critical voices have faced is not mainly the difficulty in getting ideas published or made available. Especially with the internet, the access to critical ideas is not a major obstacle. The problem is more the absence of organized social forces and communities who want to engage these media. The labor movement and the communist and socialist (and sometimes anarchist) movements of the past generated the audiences for these ideas.]**

The culture and ideology are a substantial part of the social reproduction of capitalism. Which is the special role of the state in creating ideology? How does the state create political ideology besides schools and mass media? Althusser analyses the ideological apparatus of the state. Which is your opinion about his theory? **[Althusser considered every apparatus that produced ideology to be an ISA – ideological state apparatus. Thus, for example, he included the church and the family as ideological state apparatuses because they produce ideology. I don't find that very useful. He also doesn't make the distinction between ideology and culture and collapses the cognitive aspects of subjectivity with subjectivity as a whole. I much prefer Goran Therborn's analysis of ideology in his wonderful book *The Power of ideology and the Ideology of Power.*]** Which are the main spaces and mechanisms where the state creates ideology nowadays? I am thinking in the case of our country where the trade unions were organized by the peronist movement and they become the vertebral column of the political and social power of the State every time the peronism is in power. **[Therborn argues nicely that ideology answers three questions: what exists, what is good, and what is possible. The third of these is, in many ways, the pivot for the ideological reproduction of capitalism: the beliefs that alternatives are not possible. These beliefs are in significant ways reinforced indirectly rather than simply through overt messages. By indirectly I mean that the belief that there is no alternatives is shaped by the failure of grand promises by politicians, the difficulties people experience whenever an alternative is attempted, the absence of any collective agency that could pose an alternative, urgency of day-to-day concerns which make alternatives seem pointless, etc.**

Now, the state plays a big role in perpetuating the sense of there not being alternatives by the way in which the state breeds cynicism and a broad sense that nothing much can be done. That may be more important than the role of the state in propagating more positive beliefs about what is good and what exists.

7. Catherine Willis

While this selection deals with the necessity of “conscious projects of social change” (18), I feel that it inadequately addresses the “who” of organizing. The examples given with regards to the Women’s movement and the civil rights movement illustrate the importance of organizing but don’t specifically address the question of who, and this is important. While the Women’s movement can be celebrated for many reasons, it was largely middle-class white women who organized to change the gender order and the outcomes reflect this. Who will be organizing for broad emancipatory and egalitarian change? Who will be laying the groundwork unconsciously through their day to day actions? Will it be easier to mobilize for a broad change or specific institutional innovations? I think that the “who” of organizing will greatly influence both the strategies chosen and the outcomes. **[I don’t know if it is possible to give a general answer to the question of “who” are the agents of change, since this is so context-dependent. The simple answer goes something like this: for emancipatory social change to happen, the people harmed by existing structures of power, domination, oppression, exploitation (or whatever harm-specification you choose) will need to be the core of the collective agency of struggle for transformation. This is a central intuition of most critical theories which emphasize the importance of the self-emancipation of the oppressed. But this is also way too simplistic, since to be successful a transformative project requires coalitions, alliances, and leadership, not to mention political parties and other collective organization of struggle and action. I don’t see a generic transcontextual answer to how these elements of agency get formed]**

I feel that the elements of a theory of transformation outlined serve two purposes: they help understand transformation, and non-transformation. As such, they inform a way to evaluate the institutional designs which will follow the transformation. For example, if we look at “3. Institutional rigidities and **class** [This should be “path dependency”] dependency” (pp16-17) in social reproduction, we can see that while this may limit social reproduction of a system that we are trying to oppose, it does so as well for systems that we want to support. Even in the case of real utopian designs, how do we help the new institutions to escape from the stamp of their initial designs (this is especially true assuming that these policies will not be made in an already egalitarian context)? **[I agree that institutional rigidity and path dependency affect alternatives as well as existing structures. My point here was to help us understand what fundamental transformation is possible – why existing structures are not likely to be highly integrated functionally regulated systems. But you are right: these same factors limit the character of the alternatives we might want to create – these cannot be built on a *tabula rasa*. I don’t know if there is a general answer to the question of how this is dealt with – it is a bit like the general agency issue you raised above. This will always be a highly context-dependent problem – some path dependencies are highly restrictive, others turn out to be more malleable. Democracy and open deliberation is one part of the general answer to the problem insofar as deep democracy should make it possible to escape at least some historical traps, but this is rather facile since path dependency may be one of the things which block or weaken deep democracy.]**

There are also two issues raised in the chapter that I have a hard time understanding:

The first issue is with regards to symbiotic transformations. In the example given, aren't the wider range of problems solved by liberal democracy more representative of unintended products of social change? For it to be symbiotic wouldn't it necessitate that the change be seen as beneficial to both groups from the start?

The second issue is the role of the state in regulating economic relations (p14). I don't understand how the state decides how it wants its economy to function. Isn't it rather a balancing of interest groups with other interests groups and the more diffuse needs of society as a whole? How does the state distinguish between the "particular interests of specific capitalists" and "the functioning of the capitalist system" that is preferred? **[There is a wide-ranging discussion in theories of the state over the problem of how the state forges a "general interest of capital" out of the conflicting particularities of specific capitalist interests. Part of this is bound up with the importance of technocratic decision-making within the state and the relative autonomy of the state, and part of it is linked to the capacity of leading sectors of capital to provide some coherent leadership to the class as a whole. This is what Poulantzas called the problem of the "hegemonic block" within the capitalist class. My main point here is that this distillation of a general interest in the functioning of the capitalist system out of the particular interests of capitalists is never simple and thus there is never a guarantee that a coherent functionality will be achieved.]**

8. Rodolfo Elbert

The chapter begins with the assertion that the full implementation of all the institutions previously discussed would constitute a fundamental transformation of the class relations of capitalism. This might be true, however, I would like to discuss if such a social system would be sustainable, and what characteristics it would have. Even if this is not a central part of the argument of this chapter, it is the first time that Wright poses the idea so sharply (I am not sure if this is actually the first time): let's develop all these institutions, and we will be closer to socialism. So far, we have discussed the pros and cons of each institutional transformation: in my opinion, there were some institutions that were plausible and would indeed mean a democratic and socially just transformation of society (universal child care subsidized by the state would be the paradigmatic case); there were other that even plausible didn't seem to be very effective in achieving transformation (participatory budgeting, the random assembly), and finally those that didn't seem plausible or progressive (market share socialism, the democracy card). Taking into account the difference in achievability and desirability within these institutions, a fundamental topic of the book should be to discuss how the future society would look like if all of these were achieved. Wouldn't some of these contradict each other? How would the state function in this kind of society? What would the role of the market? Would there be political parties? Maybe this discussion is out of focus for this chapter, but I think that at some point we should discuss the real utopias with a holistic perspective of societal transformation (and the first paragraph made me think of it). **[I don't think I could accomplish this kind of analysis in an analytically coherent way. To do this would imply having a broad integrative blueprint, a comprehensive redesign of society – and that is what I cannot do with any credibility. The premise of the socialist compass and the journey of discovery metaphor is that the precise configuration of institutions and their**

interconnections is something to be worked through experimentally – thus democratic experimentalism as a central feature of the process of building real utopias. I agree that not all of the examples I have given in the previous two chapters have the same degree of plausibility or democratic-egalitarian potential. And, of course, there are many other examples not discussed there – co-operatives; worker run venture capital funds; stakeholder councils; etc. etc.]

I have two more focused issues that I would like to raise:

1. I really enjoyed the discussion of social reproduction. It gives a very interesting schema to think about the reproduction of the social system. I have a minor question: Is it accurate to talk about passive and active reproduction? There has been a long discussion in sociology about the “active” character of social reproduction (or production) in everyday life (I am thinking on ethnomethodology, Symbolic Interactionism, Goffman). How to deal with these assertions? There should be a discussion with these traditions? **[I am trying to distinguish processes/mechanisms/institutions of social reproduction in which this is the deliberate or conscious purpose of the practices in question from those processes of reproduction that are not deliberately designed for this purpose. The contrast is between social reproduction and an intended or unintended effect of practices. Both are “active” in the sense that they involve the expenditure of human effort and human action (action = active). But some are simply by-products of action rather than the purpose of action. Is that clear?]**

2. In the chapter, as well as in previous discussions, we get a detailed description of the evils within capitalism: it is a system based in domination, oppression and exploitation; in which there is a class of actors (capitalists, corporations) with an active interest in maintaining the status quo. In the discussion about the limits and contradictions of the system, there is no mention of class struggle as a way in which these contradictions have been historically expressed, or could be channeled in the future. If there is certainly a class of oppressors with an interest in maintaining the status quo, why not discussing about the oppressed classes, that would take advantage of these contradictions, and would be main actors in the strategic transformations. **[I certainly intend there to be class struggles and class agents opposed to capitalism, so if it appears from the chapter that the only agency is on the part of dominant classes then this is something I need to correct. In the discussion of strategic logics of transformation there is at least implicitly class-based collective actors who adopt these strategies. I also meant for class struggles by oppressed classes to figure in the analysis of contradictions of reproduction itself. In looking back through the chapter I see that this is mostly implicit (as in the discussion strategic intentionality in the contexts of balances of social forces and the incompleteness of “functional designs”). In any case, I agree with you, and this should be made more explicit.]**

9. Edo Navot

“Its tough to make predictions, especially about the future” -- Yogi Berra

The third part of this chapter – on the trajectory of social change – explains that the first two parts of the chapter do not “give any specific prognosis about the long-term prospects for emancipatory change,” (18). We don’t know from the first two parts whether the opportunities for intentional social change in the direction of a more radical egalitarian society will increase or diminish in the future. For this, we need a theory of the trajectory of social change.

This portion of the chapter describes how social change is a result of both intentional/strategic and unintentional collective action, that strategic action is necessary for social change and must take advantage of “ripe” conditions or opportunities for change. The chapter cites the confluence of such events in the 20th century, like the transformation of gender relations and the civil rights movement.

The problem is that any “plausible” theory of emancipatory social change – I suppose change of a more fundamental kind than the feminist revolution or civil rights in that it actually transforms capitalism and not only a subset of social relations within capitalism – must look so far forward into the future that it cannot anticipate the strategic conditions that will be in place then. Since we form strategies for social change under conditions that will change when those strategies must be put into place, we are at a daunting disadvantage. Historical materialism as a theory of capitalism’s future tried to provide this, but as we discussed before, we have not observed a secular tendency for the intensification of crisis tendencies in capitalism. It appears then that the theory of the falling rate of profit was a sort of lynch-pin for socialist aspirations. Without it, we find ourselves facing a dilemma in that a necessary feature of our theory of social reproduction is missing: we don’t have a theory of the future trajectory of capitalism. And in the absence of a complete theory, we are left to make strategic decisions under conditions of profound uncertainty; we are left groping in the dark (and not in the fun way).

The absence of a theory of the future of capitalism places a greater burden on strategies of transformation (22), which will be the overarching topic of the next few chapters. But it seems to me that such strategies of transformation are undermined by the short time horizons with which we must deal. That is, it seems so far that these strategies of social transformation don’t transcend the critical limitations laid out in part three of the chapter. Strategies of transformation must either be general enough to retain relevance to an unknown future with unknown conditions and parameters for social change, in which case they risk being too general to be genuinely helpful. Or, strategies of change become over-specified and risk being irrelevant because they articulate strategies under current conditions that may not hold in the future. I don’t see a way out of this dilemma. **[You very nicely frame the problem. Here is one way of thinking through a solution: 1. Even though we have no theory of the long term trajectory of capitalism, we do have a theory which anticipates episodes of crisis and disruption which create windows of opportunity for transformation. These windows may not have a tendency to become bigger and longer over time – we don’t know that – but we do know that there will be opportunities for egalitarian-democratic struggles for social transformation. 2. The implication of the first point is that we need strategies that we can develop which enable us to “seize the time” when times are ripe. This is a kind of**

long-run as perpetual short run preparedness strategy. 3. We can imagine institutional changes which take advantages of those windows of opportunity in ways which increase the capacity for transformation in the future – this is the idea of nonreformist reforms which ratchet up social power when these possibilities occur.]

Of course, sometimes a partial theory is better than no theory at all. But we have no way of knowing which would be better. It seems like we are left the precarious position of being swept up by the currents of unintentional change (including the unintended consequences of strategic action). This is not a very hopeful state of affairs for aspiring socialists; it seems that we don't have a theory sufficiently robust to transcend the pessimism of our age, but we also should not forget that the pessimism of our age may be undermining our ability to produce a robust theory of capitalist transformation.

10. Sung Ik Cho

What is confusing in explanations of social reproduction is the analytical separation of passive and active social reproduction. It seems that passive social reproduction is involved in mundane everyday practices with which individuals unconsciously get along, whereas active social reproduction refers to structural and institutional dimensions. **[I may have said things which draw the distinction this way, but I meant the contrast to be anchored more in the distinction between reproduction-as-by-product versus reproduction-by-design.]** Thus, this distinction between passive and active social reproduction appears to be based on the divide of micro dimension and macro dimension of social reproduction. However, in addition to the question why passive social reproduction is confined in the micro dimension of social mechanism and active social reproduction *vice versa*, I don't understand how useful this analytical distinction is for explaining social reproduction. This seems different from the sociological view of the mechanism of social reproduction based on the interplay between micro-level actions and macro-level actions, whether passive or not. For example, do everyday routines and activities express only passive social reproduction? **[Everyday action have all sorts of unintended consequences or by-products, and certainly not all of these need to be reproductive of existing social relations; some can undermine them. The erosion of patriarchal gender norms is partially an unintended by product of everyday life, for example.]** As an extreme example, what about the everyday life of social movement activists? Also, I do not think that routines of most people are the unconscious by-product of individuals. Furthermore, why should we think that structural and institutional dimensions have only active mechanisms of social reproduction? Of course, active social reproduction does not necessarily involve only structural and institutional dimensions. But the analysis of social reproduction does not discuss active everyday practices of individuals nor passive social reproduction in structural and institutional dimensions. **[I think these points reflect some weaknesses in my exposition. I think the passive reproduction of social inequality is deeply implicated in mundane, everyday actions – going to work, going shopping, watching TV, etc. This is very closely linked to Bourdieu's notion of habitus – as the taken for granted dispositions that are built into the roles we occupy. These tend to be self-reinforcing whenever there is some kind of social equilibrium in place. But I agree with you that the passive aspect of reproduction is not restricted to mundane activities, nor is micro-activity always passive**

in the sense: when a boss disciplines a worker the boss is consciously trying to reproduce the structure of subordination.] Are institutional rigidity and path dependency evidence of not only the status-quo of power relation but also the passive dimension of social reproduction consisting of passive individual activities? If social reproduction is understood as complex mechanism of intentional and unintentional interplay of individuals and collectives based on coercion, material interests, rules and ideology, I do not see any use of such a way of dividing between active institutional reproduction and passive individual practices.

Of another confusion are four components of social reproduction. Considering that despotism and hegemony are constituted by different combinations among these four elements, it seems to me that despotism has the only strong element of coercion. If we define institutional rules as “rules of the game,” I think that despotism has the lowest level of institutional rules because of its lack of consent shored up by ideology. Also, the element of material interests itself is a concept created from the presumption of a certain type of social structure, i.e. capitalism. Thus, it does not seem that the concept of material interests can actually apply to other social structures. **[I don’t see why material interests is a purely capitalist idea: in a socialist society or statist society people still consume things, have leisure time, have to perform some unpleasant tasks, etc. Why don’t they have interests around these things? Maybe I am not understanding your point here.]**

With respect to limits of social reproduction, institutions are understood as a status-quo of power relations or compromises of class struggles. Thus, existing institutions and ideologies are conducive to the maintenance of current social system, people in power benefiting from the social system. However, does an institution have a transcendent attribute beyond individual or collective interests? In other words, like a Durkheimian view, social institutions may have universal and integrating attributes. How about the constitutions? Constitutional rights are building blocks for existing social reproduction, but they can be also a stepping stone for transforming the current system. This characteristic of institutions, I think, cannot be boiled down to unintentional consequences of institutional designs or results from the balance of power. **[This is a good point. I agree with you that existing social institutions are not merely forms of domination or oppression, but contain mechanisms of social order and stability which are universalistic in equality. In my discussion I draw the contrast between the Hobbesian problem of order vs chaos and the Marxist problem of reproduction vs transformation. The problem of order, however, is a real problem, and institutions solve that too. The problem of course is that a given institution may provide for social order – a universal value – in which a way as to reproduce oppression. And the fear of chaos/disorder may be one of the pivotal processes that block transformation.]**

11. Molly Noble

In your discussion on social reproduction you make a logical distinction between social reproduction and social order but I had a harder time distinguishing social control from your conception of social reproduction. **[Social control, I think, is one of the means for social reproduction. Social reproduction refers to the reproduction of a particular structure of relations. In the case we are considering the issue is the reproduction of a structure of relations of oppression/domination/exploitation. Social control refers to the control over**

the behavior of people in ways that enforces conformity to a set of rules or norms.] Also- in the section on the second claim that supports the proposition on page 4 you say that people have basic capacities and motivations. But aren't these capacities and motivations, to some degree, determined by the same institutions that perpetuate social reproduction and legitimate the social organization of society? Is there anyway to predict what people would do "in the absence of counteracting forces" if it is the same counteracting forces that contribute in shaping individual capacity and motivation and constitute the framework of society? **[I am making the claim that there are things we can call *human* capacities and motivations, so these are not simply the result of institutions. This means I am willing to predict that certain kinds of harms will provoke resistance *universally* unless there is some institution which blocks the resistance. You are right that the institution which generates the harm might also do the blocking, so where there is a one-to-one relationship between these two elements then my claim could not be tested. But I think one can still make the logical point. My illustration is that universally slaves will run away if they can. They might not run away if they *thought* that they couldn't do so even if they could, but I don't think that undermines my point.]**

On page 20 you argue that success of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s can in part be attributed to the space created by "the underlying dynamics and trajectory of unintended social change." While I agree that it is undeniable that some progress has been made on the civil rights front it is unclear to me what the changes of that period mean for the future of the Civil Rights Movement. In light of current racial inequalities I think the success of the movement is often over exaggerated to the disadvantage of the continuation of the movement. **[I think I disagree with you here: the destruction of racial Apartheid in the US was a huge transformation of the conditions of racial domination. I think it is hard to exaggerate the magnitude of *that* change. Even if this does not mean that racism disappeared, one fundamental aspect of racial domination was destroyed, and that set in motion a very different subsequent trajectory. In any case, my point is that this was possible in the 1960s rather than the 1920s because of the trajectory of unintended social change.]** Could the concessions made by the state in the passage of civil rights legislation effectively have closed spaces for social change in the long run (either as an intentional strategy or an unintended consequence...although my cynicism would lead me to believe it was the former)? **[I don't think so: If the 1960s civil rights movement had failed and the legal segregation of blacks had continued, I do not think that this would have opened up a space for more radical transformations now. Why do you think this might be the case?]** To make this a broader point and relate it to the general timeframe problem of long term and large scale social change, how do you measure the success/impacts of smaller battles along the road to the much larger goal radical egalitarian democracy? What's to distinguish real change from token change? Also, what is the mechanism for maintaining the momentum of change and social movements? (This is obviously no new problem for social movements but I think that maintenance of momentum should be a central aspect of any theory of transformation.) **[There is a long tradition on the left that argues that any reform in a liberal direction – equal rights, equal treatment, universalism, etc. – acts an impediment to more radical transformations. By creating an ideological-political space of "equal rights" struggles are individualized and the more communal basis of transformation undermined. This argument was made about the universal franchise – workers would be less likely to struggle to overthrow the capitalist state if they were denied the vote. I do not think that**

this is a credible argument. Partially this is because I believe that equal rights is also part of socialism. Socialism is not some kind of radical anti-individualism, but a movement beyond liberal individualism. But also this is because I believe that the capacity to struggle is enhanced by the winning of liberal political rights. I don't think that class unity within the working class to struggle against corporate capitalism would be enhanced if black and white workers had different legal rights. The victory of the Civil Rights Movement for equal rights makes such unity more rather than less likely in the future.]

12. María Ana González.

I would like to address to the mechanisms of the social reproduction, the distinction that is done in this chapter about passive and active reproduction and ask about the role of education seen as a way of active reproduction and the possibility of thinking it in a transformative way with the potential for people to collectively challenge structures of oppression, in this case the institution of formal education, the school. **[Education is a good example of an institution that is a terrain of struggle over the balance between its reproductive and transformative practices. I think that this is true in general for the state: states are structures of contradictory reproduction rather than functionalist reproduction. Just as I don't know the limits of the hybridization of capitalism, I don't know what the limits of that contradictory functionality might be for education.]**

I am also interested in asking about the trajectory of unintended social change. How it works exactly? Which directions can it take? Which is its relation with conscious projects of social change?

13. Charity Schmidt

My first point for discussion relates to the concepts of passive and active social reproduction. As EOW describes it, these concepts interact and constitute “a system of variable coherence and effectiveness” (p. 3). This points to an underlying contradiction for those of us **interested in promoting social reproduction** in a manner that advances the transformation towards emancipatory change; even as we actively and consciously participate in mechanisms towards social emancipation, we are, in our daily lives, passively reinforcing capitalist institutions and social relations. **[I am not quite sure what you mean when you refer to those of us “interested in promoting social reproduction” even if you add to this “in a manner that advances transformation.” It may be that we cannot avoid social reproduction, but why are we interested in social reproduction, at least as I have defined this concept. Social reproduction means the reproduction of the basic structure of social relations, which in this case are relations of domination and oppression. I think it is better to say that although we are not interested in social reproduction, our practices necessarily contribute to the reproduction of social relations even as we try to transform them.]** This takes place through lifestyle choices (what/where we eat, where we live), educational processes of our children and ourselves (school programs, research priorities and course requirements), and our interaction with our communities (how we treat strangers as well as

colleagues, family and friends). How do we, as conscious actors, resolve such contradictions? How do we begin to bridge the gap between our active and passive activities? What are some of the strategies for generating mechanisms of social reproduction that allow people to disrupt or weaken capitalist institutions and relations, even in our more passive decisions and activities? **[To varying degrees people engaged in emancipatory projects of transformation try to constrain their actions in ways that minimize the social reproduction effects. One of the reasons I made a big deal of my Marxism as a student and young academic was the belief – for better or worse – that this would partially neutralize the social reproductive effects of my pursuing an academic career in an American university. As an academic I am subject to all sorts of pressures, subtle signals and sanctions, which push towards an acceptable, accommodating sociology. Identifying with Marxism blunted those pressures in certain ways by making me more accountable to other kinds of social forces. So part of the issue here is to create new kinds of institutional pressures which can somewhat counteract the passive reproduction processes that surround ones life.]**

If we can identify the mechanisms for capitalist social reproduction, as this chapter does (coercion, institutional rules, ideology and material interests), we can also devise strategies for emancipatory social reproduction using those mechanisms (except, perhaps, that of coercion). **[Probably some coercion can be part of an reproduction of emancipatory possibilities too.]** As we have seen historically, however, genuine social change requires combined change in institutional rules, ideology and material interests. EOW's discussion of the civil rights struggle reminded me of how difficult social change can be when it doesn't infiltrate all three of the aforementioned mechanisms. In the U.S., the civil rights movement made strides toward racial/ethnic equality in regards to institutional changes and generating shared material interests. However, racism still plagues this country in the ideological realm. The struggle for equality is thus challenged by underlying beliefs and passive social reproduction. The danger is this: piecemeal change often allows us to believe there is sufficient change and thus decreases our active mechanisms of equitable reproduction. It is this condition that allows some people to believe race is not an issue, even when they are aware of the extreme inequality of, for example, incarceration rates. In developing a theory of emancipatory transformation, we must build strategies that permeate institutional rules, ideology and material interests simultaneously and effectively.

My last comment is specifically for the author, not for class discussion. I apologize in advance, since it is confessedly obnoxious. Normally, when you discuss the U.S. in this manuscript, you do use the term 'United States.' However, on page 6 in this chapter, you discuss the "American" labor movement. As you know the inaccuracy of the term 'America,' can we not use it? I believe the term reflects the egocentrism of the U.S. and is especially inappropriate in academic literature (especially literature with a global, not to mention south American, audience). Do you have any specific thoughts on that? Thanks! **[You are right, of course, in some general way. But of course, language always has context-specific meanings. If one strictly dropped the use of the term "American" as an adjective to refer to the United States then one would have to drop expressions like African-American, since this could just as easily refer to a Venezuelan of African decent. My general view on this is that one should not use the noun as a substitute for the United States of**

America, but that it is OK to use the adjective, as in American citizen or American imperialism, since the meaning is contextually clear.

14. Guillaume Neault

For this week's interrogation, I would like to raise three, brief questions related to 'forms of subordination,' 'state coercion,' and 'adaptability.'

In our last two discussions, we talked not only about social empowerment, but have also about the limits of each emancipatory proposal (ie. it is not likely that the social economy will be the dominant form of economic organization, the citizens' assembly in BC. was an ephemeral project). I agree with you that, in the **near future**, 'capitalism might remain a component,' but is the current scope of emancipatory proposals sufficient to subordinate capitalism, as you indicate early in the chapter? **[Two comments: 1. In the "near" future I think I would make a stronger claim than in the quotation: in the near future capitalism will remain a component, and almost certainly the dominant component. In the distant future capitalism might remain only component. 2. The array of proposals I suggest in chapters 5 and 6, if they were all fully in place (including the ones in the as yet unwritten sections), would I think subordinate capitalism. What is much less clear is whether or not this would be a stable configuration. It might have self-destructive or self-eroding dynamics.]**

My second question relates to the section on 'Coercion: Mechanisms...' I understand that the purpose of the section is to demonstrate that the state employs various methods to repress organizing. In this section, you draw evidence from the American Labour Movement, and also add an example about 'rules which prevent people handing out leaflets in shopping malls.' I am slightly skeptical of the 'leaflet' example: is the shopping mall intolerant only of left-wing documentation or all forms of advertisement that is not pursuing its interests. **[My point here was simply to note that repression is not simply directly handed out by the state; private actors may be authorized to use coercion in certain contexts. I am sure that Mall owners use their power to coercively restrict speech to control all sorts of speech that they see as disruptive to their business interests. I am not sure what you are skeptical about here.]** If the state is too weak to legislate against certain types of opinion then coercive rules might be the only alternative.

In your discussion of possible trajectories of social change in the section 'dynamics and trajectory of unintended social change' you focused on two issues immanent to social change. I was wondering if it would be valid to examine how capitalist or state institutions adapt to social change brought by civil society. For instance, more women in the workforce might mean firms can employ 'better workers' or smaller families might facilitate consumption. The point is that a theory of transformation ought to take into account a multiplicity of interests.

15. Julian Rebon

I have two questions.

One, about the relation between the dominant mechanism of reproduction (despotic and hegemonic mechanisms) and the strategies of transformation. Are independent variables? Or have an important correlation? **[Good issue to think about. Generally one thinks that ruptural strategies are likely to be necessary against a system of social reproduction that relies primarily on coercion – a despotic configuration – whereas symbiotic and interstitial strategies are more appropriate for hegemonic systems of reproduction. Indeed, one might say that this is part of the very idea of hegemony: it is a way of organizing rule in such a way that it is not vulnerable to the frontal attack of a ruptural strategy. This is in keeping with Gramsci's ideas of the war of position vs war of manoeuvre.]**

The other, it is about your balance of the emancipatory strategies and unintended effects in the XX Century. The revolutions changed its societies and the world, but not in the sense of the revolutionaries hope. How different would be the capitalism today without this process? Were the revolutionaries, without want it, in his interaction with other collective actors and unintended process, participating in the open the new ways the transition to the capitalism and creation of forms hybrid capitalism? **[You are absolutely right that the hybrid forms of capitalism that we call “social democracy” might not have occurred in the absence of the Russian Revolution. That is possible: reformism became tolerable to the bourgeoisie out of fear of more ruptural anti-capitalism. It is also the case that the Russian Revolution patently demonstrated that “another world is possible” even if there were lots of problems and oppressions in that particular alternative. So it is possible that the unintended effect of revolutionary ruptures was humanizing reformism within some capitalist states.]**

16. Roxana Telechea

I send you my doubts.

I liked this chapter. I think the social reproduction are the key to understand the problem of changes the world. There is a phrase of Kafka that show the problem: The animal wrests the whip from its master and whips itself. What we have to do is discuss about the causes of this. And we should think about the ways to change it too.

I think The chapter needs an answer to this. I think it is nearer of an answer with this parter: “In any case, emancipatory theory should not simply map the mechanisms of social reproduction, but also identify the processes that generate cracks and openings in the system of reproduction”. But an emancipatory theory must fight against the ideology. Because I think they are the ideas of the dominant class.

I don't think that hegemony is an ideal-type. We live in an hegemony all time. Because it hasn't got just consensus. Hegemony has got coercion too. Despotic system has got consensus too. The difference between these are the amount. Hegemony is based on consensus and despotic is based on coercion. But none of these could exist with some grade of consensus and

coercion. For example, None despotic system could exist if some part of the people don't agree with the system. **[I agree with you here – but I thought this is what I also said in my discussion of despotic vs hegemonic reproduction. That is, I regard these two forms as involving different configurations of the four mechanisms of social reproduction, so that coercion is primary or foregrounded in despotic systems and in the background in hegemonic ones. I think I would not so much emphasize the *amount* of coercion – although undoubtedly there is more coercion in despotic systems than in hegemonic ones – but rather the articulation of coercion and consent, the configurations of these elements.]**

17. Tod Van Gunten

I have a few comments about the latter half of the chapter, regarding the dynamics and trajectory of change. First of all, I wonder if the real issue is not the difference between “intended” and “unintended” social change but rather the degree of organization and mobilization of the concerned actors. In both cases, actors have intentions which they act upon, and I'm not sure that saying that in one case they have the objective of “changing the world” whereas in the other they do not is all that helpful. If a worker joins a union because they want to improve their own wages and workplace autonomy they may not be trying to “change the world” but nevertheless the union is may make broader demands, have a political program, etc. It seems that the important difference here is that there is an organized institution to which the individual worker may contribute her efforts, rather than intentionality per se. This may seem like a minor point but if we are trying to understand the “dynamics and trajectory of social change,” organization and mobilization for collective action would seem to be important considerations. **[I agree, of course, that organization and mobilization are crucial, but I still think that there is a fundamental difference between trajectories of social change that are the cumulative unintended effect of all sorts of causal processes, and trajectories which are the result of deliberate strategies. Those deliberate strategies will, of course, also have unintended effects, and these can be part of the trajectory of unintended change along with everything else. In your union case, the union is a collective actor with intentional change as part of its objective. The union member may or may not share in that, but I don't think this undermines the basic contrast.]** This leads to my second point, which is that I thought that a lot more could be said about: 1) the conditions which enable social movements to successfully generate social change and 2) the conditions for “ripeness” for change. I don't know exactly *what* needs to be said on this point because I'm not completely on top of the relevant literatures but it seems like these are actually two areas where existing social science would be useful. The chapter seems relatively pessimistic about our ability to know much of anything about how social change happens. I agree that it is probably impossible to predict the *direction* of change, but I hope that more can be said about what organizational forms and strategies are effective and under what conditions. **[I don't think that the existing social movement literature is actually all that helpful. Most of the conditions which make things possible are obvious: when movements have lots of political resources they are more likely to be successful than when they don't;**

when they can reframe issues in ways that create unity they are more successful than when they fail to do this; etc. It would be an interesting task for someone to assemble an inventory of all of the robust findings about when a social movement is likely to be able to take off and make important changes, but I suspect it would not be all that insightful. Maybe I am being too grumpy about this....]
