

READING INTERROGATIONS #10
SOCIOLOGY 929: ENVISIONING REAL UTOPIAS
APRIL 17, 2008
CHAPTER 10. SYMBIOTIC TRANSFORMATION

1. Tod Van Gunten

Two questions: first, do symbiotic strategies inherently create an aristocracy of labor? Another way of asking this is: how general are the gains to be made across productive sectors and regions of the world economy? Perhaps capitalist “concessions” to workers in developed countries and/or in privileged sectors of the economy are only possible because of worker “concessions” to capitalists elsewhere. Even if it is theoretically possible to bring all workers under the umbrella of a global class compromise, this in itself seems to pose an intractable transition problem which itself needs to be theorized.

[This is a very good question, and one that relates to nearly any strategy that in some way is consistent with the interests of capital: strategies that are consistent with the interests of capitalist firms generally make those firms more competitive; making them more competitive means that they have advantages relative to less competitive firms; having such differential competitiveness means that workers in the more competitive firms will, in general be better off, especially when the source of the increased competitiveness is the sorts of things facilitated by symbiotic strategies. This issue applies to class compromises that improve the efficiency of capitalism within specific firms or within countries or regions: since capitalism is a competitive system, when workers stably work out a way of enhancing productivity and competitiveness, then this has the potential of generating or reinforcing cleavages among workers nationally and globally. The one feature of symbiotic strategies that may mitigate this is that these strategies do involve enhancing social power – that is their distinctive feature – and this at least opens the possibility that this power gets linked to broader solidarities.]

Second question: when is a strategy not a strategy? In previous chapters we have seen a distinction between “activities” and “strategies” where the criterion for demarcation between them is a cognitive one. In what sense are things like watershed councils “strategies” if they are not explicitly aimed at improving social or political justice? **[But things like watershed councils do involve forging new kinds of solidarities and organizations – and are understood by the actors as such. As with the interstitial strategy discussion I think we can think of social movements and political parties having symbiotic strategies within which they can promote and integrate symbiotic activities, even if the participants in those activities do not share a strategic vision.]** I had the same question about things like file sharing last week. I find it hard to believe that, in spite of the challenge to some aspects of the existing intellectual property regime, that file sharing is really likely to expand social justice in a meaningful way. I don’t doubt that some of the proponents of these sorts of things justify their activities using utopian language, which suggests that perhaps some “strategy” is in play, but I tend to think that in this case it is just that – utopian, not real utopian. In the late 90’s, there was

all kinds of talk about how the internet was “revolutionary” and how “e-commerce” was somehow going to make the world a fundamentally better place. Does that fact that such rhetoric exists require us to think that the development of the internet was a real utopian strategy? I think that saying yes begins to rob the concept of “real utopia” of any specificity. This comment isn’t meant to debate again whether “deliberateness” is the correct way to distinguish activity and strategy but rather to ask where we draw the line in terms of what we do and do not consider a real utopian institution or strategy.

[Remember the *pathways to social empowerment* idea: the real utopian vision of fundamental transformations beyond capitalism operates along five pathways, none of which are likely by themselves to constitute a sufficient basis for system-transformation. The *proposals* on each pathway constitute the institutional designs. The *strategies* constitute the ways of creating those designs. Interstitial strategies are particularly geared to movement on the social capitalism and social economy pathways; symbiotic strategies are geared to the social capitalism, associational democracy, social democratic regulation and (maybe) statist socialism; and ruptural strategies to statist socialism (and maybe associational democracy). I think a real utopia institutional design is any configuration which can be located as a movement along these pathways and, when institutionalized contributes to some enhancement of social power; and real utopian strategies are the strategies that move in that direction.

2. Catherine Willis

From the chapter we would conclude that symbiotic transformations work best in situations where the working class is already quite strong. Given that this is not the majority of countries in the world, what promise does this strategy hold for these countries? Under what circumstances would changing the institutional possibilities seem like a strategy worth pursuing? **[The Porto Alegre participatory budget was a symbiotic strategy: social power was increased in ways that solved system problems and satisfied at least some of the interests of elites. This is a sense in which it is counter-hegemonic: “hegemony” involves satisfying some of the interests of a subordinated group under conditions that strengthen the power of the dominant group; counter-hegemony involves satisfying some of the interests of dominant groups in ways that strengthens the power of subordinate groups (=social power). Of course, the more powerful a working class is the easier it is for it to pursue symbiotic strategies; but its power is also a result of pursuing such strategies.**

We also need to think about how these strategies fit into the larger agenda of social transformation. If ruptural transformation is ultimately needed, will the achievement of a social democratic utopia help or hinder final transformations. Most importantly, does the achievement of a social democratic utopia lessen the gains to be made by, and thus the need for, ruptural transformation? Maybe this would make ruptural change no longer seem necessary, given the gains that have been made and the transition trough which could be socially as well as economically unsettling. **[There is an ols idea in anticapitalist politics that things have to get worse before they get better: only in a**

severe crisis that pushes people to the “you have nothing to lose but your chains” condition will they be willing to struggle for the “you have a world to win” solution. It is one thing for this to be a prediction about what the future holds because of the inner dynamics of capitalism; it is another to make this the core of a strategy: our strategy should avoid making things better for people because they have to be miserable to overthrow capitalism. Now, I don’t think this is an absurd position: if you were very very confident that (a) as a result of this people would in fact opt for a rupture with capitalism, b) the ruptural strategy had a good probability of overthrowing capitalism, and c) the consolidated socioeconomic system on the other side of the rupture was most likely to be a democratic egalitarian socialism, then it might be reasonable to oppose social democracy on the grounds that it would delay or block something even better. I don’t think we have grounds for such optimism about rupture. Of course, someone could reply: we don’t have grounds for such optimism in the world today for the prospects of symbiotic and interstitial strategies either. That may be true, but at least those can be pursued in an experimentalist way, learning-by-doing, and the failures are less likely to be catastrophic. In any case, if social democracy pushed to its limits mitigates the harms of capitalism sufficiently and makes capitalism sufficiently tolerable for the masses of people that they no longer would consider a ruptural strategy worthwhile, then this wouldn’t be such a terrible thing given the risks and uncertainties of revolutionary ruptures, and the apparent unwillingness of workers to opt for revolutionary strategies in developed capitalism even in the absence of social democracy.]

Lastly, because of my belief, raised in the previous reading response, that it is not a one shot transformation, but that creating and preserving a real utopian world requires constant learning, adaptation and overthrowing of power, I am partial to the Sabel and Dorf proposal. While I appreciate that it is seen as a positive sum outcomes, the abdication of power by capital that must occur for this to be successful seems huge. While the experimentation that both this and the interstitial strategies allow is very interesting and important, it seems that it would be more difficult to create the conditions for experimental symbiotic strategies than for experimental ruptural strategies. [My arguments for symbiotic strategies is more like Sable and Dorf than would be the idea of experimentalist ruptural strategies. Sable and Dorf don’t even think you have to win political victories to create the conditions for positive compromise – they think this can all be done through joint problem solving with elites that leaves their power intact. My symbiotic strategies do involve struggles that close off options for capital.]

Two sentences on the book as a whole. While chapter 2 clearly explains why we would want to **overthrow capital** to obtain real utopian society, I still have some reservations about the way in which overthrowing capital is envisioned as such a ruptural moment. [Chapter 2 does not presuppose rupture. It simply provides reasons for wanting to go beyond capitalism, but it does not imply that this must take the form of rupture. It could be metamorphosis, gradual transformation through hybridization.] While I agree that think that capitalism is the dominant method through which privilege and exploitation occur in current society, there are two reasons to doubt the possibility of “an” overthrow of capital. First, I don’t think that we will get institutions just right in the first place, therefore ensuring that they can continue to learn and adapt is an integral part

of real utopian designs. Second, capital can be replaced by other equally detrimental forms of power. Just as capitalism followed other means of exploitation, I don't think that the overthrow of capital is a one shot deal, and other forms of privilege, exploitation and accumulation will develop. Institutions need to be able to continually adjust and guard against this. I definitely believe that transformation is possible, but I think that the institutions developed need to have the ability to continue to adapt as society changes and new threats to egalitarian social democracy emerge. **[I agree 100% with this, that is why my model is one of social empowerment which creates the conditions for democratic experimentalism. If I gave the impression that I supported a binary overthrow of capitalism in chapter 2, then this is a mistake.]**

3. Sung Ik Cho

In this chapter, the first issue I like to raise is the absence of the state theory in symbiotic transformation. Compared to the other two transformation strategies, ruptural and interstitial strategies, whose aims are to “smash the state” and “by-pass the state” respectively, it seems that symbiotic transformation strategy does not have a clear explanation about the role of the state. The state is simply perceived to be a political arena where class compromises take place. Unlike the meaning of the “symbiotic transformation” that the social empower transformation can be achieved through the state, symbiosis is more likely to be based upon a positive class compromise between capitalists and the working class, and the state seems to be disembodied into a political space for class compromises. Does the state play a significant role in transforming negative-sum class relations into positive-sum class relations? **[I think you are right that I have not explicitly laid out a theory of the state here – a theory of what the state must be like in order for a positive class compromise to be forged through the state. My assumptions about the state are the following: 1) the state is a capitalist state – it has certain structural features which enable it to reproduce capitalism – but 2) it is not monolithically capitalist, but contains a variety of internally contradictory elements, which 3) make it possible for noncapitalist class forces to express some power through those apparatuses in uneven and incomplete ways. This makes it possible for the state to play a role in cementing positive class compromises, but this cannot be viewed as a stable, self-enforcing equilibrium: it is always potentially contested.]** Considering the economic structure of capitalism in which antagonistic class relations are forged on the basis of exploitation, the class relation does not tend to be easily transformed into a positive-sum relation. In order to find a way to develop negative-sum class compromises into positive-sum ones, the dimension of **social integration representing general interests** should be accounted for in the class compromises. In this aspect, I think the state comes into an important play in changing itself as an arena of class compromises into as socio-political arena for a positive class relation. **[I am always a little uncomfortable in describing the process here as a move from negative-sum class interests to a positive-sum general interest, since in a positive class compromise the antagonism does not disappear; it is merely contained within limits. The interests of workers and capitalists are represented by the entire curve in my graphs, not simply by the historically accessible regions where the positive sum relation exists.]** Furthermore, the pragmatic approach of the

‘democratic experimentalism’ can be also understood in the sense that problem-solving should contribute to the integration of antagonistic class relations. I am not sure how just emphasizing problem-solving approach without considering its actual outcomes can neutralize negative class relations because it can create a further inequality of power distributions.

The second question relates to the underlying view of the symbiotic transformation strategy: that is, the pragmatic approach on problem-solving. Although this symbiotic transformation does not ignore the importance of power struggles between capitalists and the working class, it seems doubtful whether this pragmatic approach can be compatible with the egalitarian view on the social empowerment which **prioritizes challenges** against structural conditions of capitalism. **[The egalitarian view of social empowerment embeds specific reforms and actions within a larger challenge against capitalism – that is the vision – but it need not prioritize that challenge interior to any give reform of compromise. I think there is a tension between the pathways to social empowerment socialist compass and the pragmatist approach to problem-solving, but this is a tension that can be juggled.]** For pragmatism seems to avoid asking a question about the inequality of power, i.e. to by-pass power questions. Thus, I think that this pragmatic approach puts an emphasis upon enlightenment over power. However, taking into account the negative nature of power relations, it is inconceivable to think of the ways in which capitalists do not recognize the ultimate limit of “win-win solutions” allowing for the increase of the working class power. Symbiotic transformation can succeed in tipping the balance of power toward the working class only if capitalists are disenchanted. **[Well, that would be the case if we began in a context of low working class power and they were given the entire spectrum of possibilities and told – how about picking this spot on the supward sloping curve. Capitalists would refuse. But the positive class compromise occurs in the context of struggles in which part of the curve has been rendered strategically inaccessible to capitalists as well as part of it being inaccessible to workers. That is the result of victories and defeats in political struggles. Given those constraints, an enlightened capitalist can opt for positive class compromise over intensified class struggle to dismantle the constraints.]**

In this sense, I think what this symbiotic transformation strategy really explains is not ways of transforming fundamental characters of capitalist structural conditions but ways of mobilizing working class powers under democratic capitalism without severe resistances or repressions of the capitalist state, even if working class powers may not be sufficient to overwhelm capitalists’. **[Your diagnosis is half correct here: it is true that symbiotic strategies reflect the inability of workers to engineer a frontal assault on capitalism capable of generating a rupture. But it is more than just using power to get concessions within capitalism because – the claim is – it forges a more socialistic hybrid by virtue of the institutionalized forms of social power it helps to stabilize.]**

4. Edo Navot

The logic of symbiotic strategies is that social empowerment is more stable, durable, and likely to occur when it is aimed at some ‘vertical’ social cooperation that simultaneously improves the lives of working people and serves the interests of ‘elites.’ As I understand

it, the argument for symbiotic strategies is as follows: The revolutionary ideal of symbiotic strategies (not all of them aim for total, long-term social transformation in a revolutionary sense) is that their implementation will reduce the frictions of social transformation by structuring transformation such that its outcomes are mutually beneficial to the otherwise antagonistic social actors involved. The argument in this chapter is not – as in some interstitial strategies – that symbiotic strategies ripen the conditions and increase the probability for democratic egalitarian post-capitalist society, but that they increase the probability of actually attaining the post-capitalist society. (Obviously, symbiotic strategies can also have this former effect, but that wasn't the thrust of their rationale as expressed in the chapter.)

However, what if, in stabilizing class relations and social reproduction, symbiotic strategies diminish or close off transformation towards socialism even while they significantly improve capitalism in a socially empowered direction? This could happen for several reasons. You wrote that corporatist strategies tend to encourage and work best when there is also intra-elite cooperation. Perhaps these strategies face a hard institutional exclusion because they actually increase the class-consciousness of capitalists to realize their long-term interests. Isn't this pretty much what happened in Sweden's failure to pass slow worker buy-out of capital? There is also the more obvious objection that symbiotic strategies simply reinforce the conditions for capitalist reproduction in a way that gives no indication that it moves capitalism closer to socialist transformation, as opposed to just capitalism with a longer life span. **[What you pose here is an interesting problem in system-stability. If we accept the hybridization idea as a way of thinking about economic systems, then we can ask of any system how socialistic and capitalistic (and statist) is the hybrid? A socialist economy is one in which the socialist component is dominant (where, I admit, dominance is not an entirely clear idea). Your critique of symbiotic strategies is that increasing the socialist component of the hybrid may create a more stable equilibrium than refraining from such strategies, and thus foreclose the possibility of ever reaching the socialism-dominant configuration. The symbiotic strategy argues:**

The more socialistic is a capitalist system – i.e. the more we move to a capitalism with institutionalized forms of social empowerment – the easier in the long term will it be to further increase the weight of social power when historical conditions create windows of opportunity for further advance.

The counter argument is:

The more socialistic is a capitalist system the less likely it that there will be historical conditions that create windows of opportunity for further advances in social power.

I don't know how one could adjudicate these rival view.]

As far as I can tell, if we have rejected Marx's theory of the tendency of a falling rate of profit occurring as a result of increasing organic composition of capital – or something like it – then we have no reason to think that symbiotic strategies that increase the productivity of capitalism will immanently increase the necessary conditions for a transition to socialism. **[That is too strong a requirement for the strategy. All that it needs to do is enhance the capacity for further advances in social power contingent**

on the opportunities for such advances occurring.] All we have left are matters of action and intentionality. Even if symbiotic strategies tend to increase the bargaining position of labor within capitalism, I can't think of a historical example that leads me to believe that the social empowerment of symbiotic strategies increases the likelihood of socialism. All we can say definitively is that they improve living conditions under capitalism (not that this is trivial).

One more note: I know that the outcome of the solution of the "Keynesian problem" appears to be symbiotic but I'm not sure it should properly be defined as such. From what I know (speaking of the U.S. case only) the deep crisis of the Great Depression increased the autonomy of the state in such a way that empowered it to act simultaneously in the interests of disparate social actors, labor, capitalists, more specific interests. The post-war symbiotic regime was conditioned by the actions of FDR during the depression, as opposed to actions initiated and carried out by workers. **[I think it was both: the CIO labor upsurge, sit down strikes, massive rapid expansion of unions, etc. all shifted the balance of power within which all of these policies were formulated and evaluated.]** Is it still a socially empowered symbiotic transformation if the impetus and follow-through was on the part of the state?

Finally, can we see such transformations happening today? The problem of underconsumption seemed to be systemic to early-20th-century capitalism. Contemporary American capitalism has taken care of the problem with robust credit markets and pervasive consumer debt rather than steady wage increases and full employment. Different historical epochs within capitalism tend to face broadly different systemic challenges to successful economic reproduction. What other threats to the exigencies of reproduction can we think of that would be susceptible to symbiotic problem-solving in the sphere of exchange? **[I think of a wide range of proposals for democratic deepening and popular empowered participation as a way of solving certain kinds of problems as reflecting symbiotic strategy. Porto Alegre is a case, for example. It doesn't have to take the form of centralized corporatism and the like.]**

5. Julian Rebon

I find very interested this chapter.

Is it possible to extend your model to the undeveloped countries? Is it possible to make a positive class compromise without an important level of accumulation of capital? **[Two comments on this: 1) the basic idea of a symbiotic strategy is a bit broader than positive class compromise. It applies to any situation in which there is a connection between increasing social power and satisfying at least some of the interests of elites (dominant classes, dominant groups). I think of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre as an instance of this – the enhanced social power within the city made the city work better from the point of view of elites as well as masses. 2) In terms of the specific issue of positive class compromise, given the internal uneven development within developing countries, this may be possible in some sectors. The risk is that positive class compromise within a sector or segment of the working class leads to rent-seeking and something more like a privileged stratum of workers than a real**

positive class compromise, but still such things may be possible. Some forms of populism may have this character, I am not sure.]

Can we think the welfare state and wealth in some developed countries without the expropriation and exploitation in third world? In other words, is it possible advanced welfare state without imperialism? **[I do not think that the successful positive class compromise in Sweden was rooted in Swedish imperialism, or in the spillover effects of U.S. imperialism for Swedish capitalism. Perhaps there are times when an aristocracy of labor in the developed world is paid for primarily by transfers of surplus from the third world, but I don't think this is the general case today. The Global corporate capitalist class exploits workers around the world through a range of different mechanisms. Workers in Wisconsin are exploited by multinational/transnational capital as are workers in South America. Most of the income difference between these workers reflects differences in national productivity, infrastructure, and things like that, not (I would argue) redistributions of surplus from the third world to workers in Wisconsin via positive class compromise.]**

Another item: Historically, in many countries of Latin America, the Achievement of democratic rights suppose strong fights and civil wars. Sometimes, were the socialist revolutionaries who with his struggle - not intentionally - constructed the conditions for of the liberal democracy. The bourgeois democracy was constructed against the bourgeoisie. This supposes whole stage of ruptures... While is in your opinion the role of rupture strategies in breaking the institutional exclusions "previous" at stage of "social democratic" period? **[Very nice point: In our class discussions I have been arguing that symbiotic and interstitial strategies may set the stage for an eventual ruptural strategy. Here you are correctly pointing out that historically there are cases where ruptural strategies were needed to set the stage for possible symbiotic strategies – i.e. class compromises worked out through liberal democracy. My analysis has been elaborated in the context of take-for-granted stable liberal/bourgeois democracy and the “rule of law,” but of course historically this is an unusual situation – really only a common condition in the developed zones of the capitalist world since the middle of the 20th century, and still not very secure in many places with liberal democracies in the less developed world.]**

You predict the possibility of transforming "social democratic" capitalism into "democratic socialism". If the capitalists predict the same and they face strongly to the social democracy could undermine the welfare state. Why the workers with good conditions of life would risk entering in this situation of political and social instability. Paraphrasing Marx the workpeople it would have very much for winning but also very much for losing. **[This, of course, is the claim I make as well in my commentaries on the difficulty of ruptural strategies. The question, then, is the extent to which these apply also to interstitial and symbiotic strategies? The idea is that slowly, over a long time, interstitial and symbiotic strategies erode capitalist power, enhancing the scope and depth of social power within the capitalist hybrid. That is moving along the pathways of the socialist compass. I don't exactly positively predict in advance**

how far we can go in this process through these types of strategies. What I say is that I cannot predict where the limits of this process lie and what conditions this metamorphosis will encounter. The limits may be insurmountable within a system in which capitalism is dominant; capitalism may not be erodible. I don't know the answer to this because I do not have confidence in the kind of theory of history (a theory of the history of the future) which would give me confidence in any prediction. So the question becomes: what strategies now create the most open possibilities for advances in the future, for taking advantage of windows of opportunity that may arise under unpredictable (but still somehow expected) crisis conditions. What is the best we can do.]

Finally, I have the same question that you, "Why is a symbiotic strategy any more plausible than ruptural strategies or interstitial strategies as a strategy not simply for improvement of life within capitalism but for the transcendence of capitalism?" **[It is may not be plausible for a full blown transcendence of capitalism, but these strategies are plausible for reducing the capitalisticness of capitalism – i.e. for forging a hybrid system within which the socialist element (social empowerment) has greater weight. This is not just improvement of life within capitalism – although that is not such a bad outcome – but a specific way of anchoring those improvements: anchoring them in strengthening the socialism within capitalism. This presupposes the coherence of the idea of hybrid – which not everyone would accept. What I would say is that an improvement in the quality of life that comes through deepening democracy within capitalism is different from an improvement that comes simply as a by product of capitalist development: the former involves social power and infusing capitalism with more socialist elements, the latter does not. Whether or not this hybrid can reach some tipping point, some mixture in which there is a “phase shift” to a new configuration, I just don't know.]**

6. Ricardo Donaire

My doubts revolve around the boundaries between the different strategies, particularly between the symbiotic one and the interstitial and ruptural ones.

Symbiotic transformations involve two elements: a) strategies in which extending and deepening the institutional forms of popular social empowerment that b) simultaneously helps solve certain practical problems faced by dominant classes and elites.

On one hand, which of these two is the defining element?

For example, in the case of unions, even when they are restricted in their strategic vision to ordinary collective bargaining, they are part of an interstitial strategy by transforming capitalist relations of power (which also means that they are helping to resolve some practical problems of the ruling class). But collective bargaining is also part of symbiotic strategies as they are related to the forms of class compromise. Which is the central element in defining one or the other strategy? Is it the intervention of the state? Is it the effective resolution (or not) of certain problems of the ruling class? What are the boundaries between interstitial and symbiotic strategies? **[I see the ambiguity you are addressing here. Of course, a given social action need not have only one strategic**

logic. Here is how I would frame the contrast:” in an interstitial strategy, social actors build new institutions that embody principles of social power in the spaces possible within capitalist society. They do so to solve problems for the participants. In symbiotic strategies the effort is to link solving problems that bear on the interests of elites with deepening and stabilizing forms of social power. An interstitial strategy which served some interests for elites would therefore also be a symbiotic strategy. In this formulation the state as such didn’t appear. So, in a way, I have two distinct typologies/criteria for my three strategies, one expressed in class terms, one in state terms:

<i>Strategic logic of Transformation</i>	<i>Formulation #1</i>	<i>Formulation #2</i>
1. Ruptural	Smash the state	Smash the bourgeoisie
2. Interstitial	Ignore the state	Ignore the bourgeoisie
3. Symbiotic	Use the state	Cooperate with the bourgeoisie

I think, perhaps, that the class formulation is the one which more accurately maps the theoretical arguments, although perhaps both are needed since these strategies do not simply relate to class agents.]

On the other hand, what happens when one of these two elements is missing?

What happens when a democratic reform does not solve problems of the ruling classes but creates them? For example, cases in which democratic reforms that allow an advance of people's interests come into conflict with the more concentrated bourgeoisie but without reaching a radical transformation of the social structure (I am thinking for example in the current cases of Venezuela and Bolivia)? What kind of strategy does this type of processes fit in? **[The argument is that a strategy which consistently harms the dominant class, erodes or challenges its interests and does not use these challenges to establish positive class compromise, will be very vulnerable and unstable. This will not be sustainable hybrid, a reproducible equilibrium. So, maybe the way to think of this is that it is a ruptural strategy without yet a rupture. If the gains made are to be consolidated – and not simply set the stage for a massive reversal – then a positive class compromise needs to be forged or a full rupture accomplished. Given that the latter is unlikely to be successful for all sorts of reasons, the perpetual confrontation is mostly likely ultimately to unravel.]**

The other way around: what happens if class compromise and formal democratic reforms solves problems of the ruling class in a manner that prevents from advances or deepening of popular democratization processes? I am thinking, for example in cases in Latin America in the second half of the twentieth century where transitions from military to democratic governments settled on the defeat of popular democratic and even revolutionary movements. **[There is nothing in the argument for symbiotic reforms that says that they are always successful or stable. In my model a pivotal issue is the problem of “zones of accessibility” – the parts of the curve which are strategically**

accessible. The exclusions from these zones depend upon stable institutions that block strategy. Those can be weak and lead to disempowerment (movement to the left of the graph).]

7. Rodrigo Salgado

The first question refers to the class compromise. In the second chapter we discussed about how capitalism perpetuates eliminable forms of human suffering. From this perspective you can think that the relation between capital and labor is antagonist. The development of the latter implies the suffering of the former. This antagonist aspect implies understand this relation in terms of struggle, in specific class struggle. So, how to conciliate this antagonist class struggle with the class compromise?

In my perspective the class compromise could refer to a more broad view that understood the class harmony or class conciliation as the more perfect and possible social situation, rather than a specific and historic manifestation of class struggle. The peronism for example has ideological elements that understand the relation between capital and labor in terms of class harmony, where the class compromise can be reflected. In fact, the unions played a central role in the peronist political schema, not resolving capitalist problems, but peronist government problems with some capitalists sectors. The question here is if this class compromise is thought as a moment of the class struggle or is it thought as the solution for it. **[I make the contrast between negative and positive class compromise. Both of these are premised on class struggle and balances of class power. In a negative class compromise this balance of class power takes the form of direct confrontation in which concessions are made by virtue of the power to impose sanctions on the opponent. This is the ordinary sense of a capitalist firm giving in after a bitter strike and some kind of compromise being agreed to by the contending parties. A positive class compromise also depends upon struggles, but here the struggles set constraints on strategies and counterstrategies (the institutionalized zones of exclusion) which enable a certain level of popular power to be stably in play. Under these conditions certain kinds of positive-sum cooperation can occur. This is not harmony – there is no identity of interests. This is not a resolution of class antagonism. It is pragmatic cooperation to solve problems given the balance of power in the background conditions.]**

Second, I think that the elements involved in the exchange and productive spheres analyzed in this chapter about the mechanisms to forge positive class compromise could not mean necessary positive empowerment of the working class. It is necessary to taking in consideration the form assumed by the associational structures or corporations that “represent” this class. In this perspective this positive compromise could be “positive” for the working class if the association is indeed egalitarian and democratic. There are historical examples where unions had positive class compromise attitudes that implied more bureaucratic growth of these unions at expenses of a democratic and egalitarian empowerment of the working class. The question here is the empowerment of what. **[Forms of positive compromise that involve the disempowerment of workers and the formation of a bureaucratically empowered union is probably a form of statist**

compromise – i.e. it helps forge a hybrid of statism and capitalism, not socialism and capitalism, since such bureaucratic associations are often closely tied to the state].

Third, related with the last question. Even with egalitarian and democratic unions, why should we think that resolving capitalist problems the working class would grow in empowerment? You can think that to participate in the resolutions of capitalist problems could have positive effects on the immediate conditions of living of the working class, but it could have negative effect on a radical transformation in an egalitarian and socialist sense in the long term slowing or stopping the possibility of capitalist crisis. **[Solving capitalist problems as such does not empower the working class. It is only when the mechanism for solving it involves strengthening working class associational power. Of course there are other ways of solving these problems. My point here is a simpler one: in order to stabilize working class associational power within capitalism it is helpful for the use of that power to also solve certain problems for capitalists. If this happens, then capitalists will be less uniformly opposed to that associational power.]**

8. Eduardo Cavieres

Trying to picture the notion of symbiotic strategy, I was left wondering if these strategies aren't actually at the very core of any capitalist society if we conceived it as holding within itself a set of contradictory purposes for its own stability. Even interstitial strategies if they want to become relevant at one point or another will eventually become symbiotic strategies. Obviously I don't think this is at all new. Actually I do think that part of a utopian project is to continue thinking harder on how to overcome the ambiguous and contradictory effects of symbiotic strategies, that on one hand seem to be unavoidable in order to access more social power to solve needs, but on the other hand, it involves a negotiation that can (will) eventually turn against the achievements that have been reached. **[This contradiction – solving problems that eventually undermine the achievements – is precisely what it means for a capitalist system to be hegemonic: all challenges to a hegemonic system tend to undermine their own conditions of challenge. They face inescapable dilemmas of this sort – refuse to cooperate with ruling institutions and you risk marginalization; cooperate with ruling institutions and your risk absorption and erosion. This is why it is necessary to envision counter-hegemonic strategies – strategies that try as best as possible to shift the terms of this dilemma.]**

My question refers to one aspect of the definition of symbiotic strategies and connects to the notion of collaboration. I don't think you are necessarily thinking in something subjective (internal), but I do sense, that you are claiming that there should be a certain "willingness" to reach a compromise. I personally think that a lot of compromises are not necessarily made because people are committed to them due to their inherent value but because they are the condition to achieve something else. So, if groups decide to serve certain needs of the dominant system it will not be a compromise in terms of the commitment to the system, as much as a way these groups can commit themselves with their own goal (although these things are always kind of open). So for example, in Chile teacher's put pressure to get their wages raised. This resulted in the government sitting down to negotiate and saying, "Ok, we will give you more money, but we need to assess

how well you will be doing with the reform we are implementing”. And to that the teachers said yes (very simplistically put). So, what I am saying is that the teachers received bigger economic benefits while agreeing to help the reform. However, it is unlikely that teachers like the reform and that they are really interested in seeing it succeed. Every time they can, they oppose it, while in general terms keeping a compromise with it. But as I say, it is not something that is done willingly, but as something that is fundamental if other gains want to be reached. Will this be still a symbiotic strategy? **[This is a kind of half-hearted symbiotic strategy – in some ways more like a negative class compromise of mutual concessions under conditions of a balance of power. In a positive class compromise the collective power of the teachers would itself positively contribute to problem solving, which doesn’t seem to be the case here. In terms of the issue of internal states of the actors you are correct that a positive class compromise does not imply that all of the actors endorse the system. Workers and popular associations can still envision socialist alternatives and regret their inability to achieve them. But in a symbiotic strategy they would still generally see this socially empower positive compromise as a positive step.]**

So, this is a very subtle question I want to make, and I am just trying to understand if the “state of the dispositions” are included or not within the definition of symbiotic changes.

9. Molly Noble

Since you said it was ok to make this week’s response a more general reflection on the entire manuscript and in light of the bourdieuan voice burawoy has brought to the department the past couple weeks, I would like to focus this interrogation on the idea of passive transformation. Much of the introductory chapter on transformation focused on reproduction, specifically on distinguishing passive and active forms of reproduction (which I agree is an important distinction to make). However, the strategies described in the three subsequent chapters on transformation, all seemed to be geared toward challenging active reproduction. I saw little space in the different modes of transformation to challenge passive reproduction. **[I think the interstitial strategy revolves quite a bit around the issue of undermining passive reproduction both through the demonstration-project effects of successful interstitial strategies and by the impact on subjectivity of people living within these interstitial designs: building a co-op both creates new rules which then impact the lives of people countering the “dull compulsion of everyday life” of passive reproduction, and shows the world that an alternative is possible.]** I wonder if passive reproduction or the effects of passive reproduction could be understood in bourdieu’s conception of habitus in which social structures are embedded in a person’s dispositions as he/she socializes into society. **[Habitus/internalized dispositions is one of the ways that passive reproduction can work, but it can also work through consciousness – making some categories of thought invisible and others “obvious.” But habits are certainly part of passive reproduction. TYhis does not imply a commitment to Bourdieu’s view of the “deep” intractable quality of habits, however.]** If so, I would argue that challenging passive reproduction should be of fundamental importance for any theory of transformation. All notions of habitus aside, I think that people take our current system as a given and will fit any exhibition of an alternative – no matter how dramatically different – within the

framework of a capitalist structure. I think this could also be viewed as an effect of hegemony which legitimates the notion that all change must happen within the framework of structures already established. If this is the case then any type of social transformation necessitates a change of mind/shift of **attitude/disposition**/habitus that would allow people to reframe their conceptions of social change to include radical transformation. **[You have grouped together something which are part of habitus and some which are part of consciousness. I think both are transformable. Also, I should add, that the solidarity-experience of struggles within each of these strategies is itself transformative of dispositions. This is an old Marxian insight – that people transform themselves through struggles against oppression. Then there is also the “schools of democracy” view of various forms of empowered participation, which also transforms dispositions and creates real skills (which are another type of disposition).]**

I think the notion of empowerment in the book gets at what is needed to challenge passive reproduction and gain popular support for a transformation to a radical egalitarian democracy however I don't have a clear understanding of how empowerment is generated. There seems to be an assumption that empowerment will be achieved by employing the strategies presented in each of the theories of transformation. However I am unconvinced without a conception of how empowerment is generated which would seem to entail an understanding of an individual's relation to society and of the tendencies of society that dissuade empowerment/generate disempowerment – that effectively act as a control. I need a conception of domination and process of domination so as to be able to conceive of reversing that process. I think that Bourdieu, Mills and possibly even some social psychologists could fill the gaps of understanding the generation of dis/empowerment from which we can uncover the mechanisms that garner or hinder such generation and start to conceive of strategies based on the manipulation of such mechanisms. Challenging passive reproduction thus generates social empowerment which is needed for radical transformation. **[The key to empowerment in the framework I have adopted is not so much “inner” empowerment, but creating sites where real decisions are made by ordinary people acting together. Empowerment is not so much a feeling but a capacity to allocate resources, establish priorities, execute plans, etc. The practice of participating in that kind of process – in a association, in a co-op, in a budget assembly – may also both enhance the skills one has to participate in these things and one's selfconfidence. But the real utopia institutional design problem focuses on settings more than on the dispositions.]**

Bringing my interrogation back to the focus in chapter ten, I want to bring up the civil rights movement again which as I understand it predominately relied on symbiotic strategies (however I don't think the story fits completely in any of the three images invoked in the concept of class compromise). I know I've dwelled on this before but I think that in light of a distinction between active and passive reproduction it can be argued that while strategies of the civil rights movement successfully challenged active reproduction, it did so at the cost of maintaining a threat to passive reproduction. If black Americans and the state can replace workers and capitalists respectively in t-curve charts, I would argue that although both sides improved their positions, the “compromise”

resulted in negative externalities for the future of the civil rights movement. Here would be my vulgarized account: the state wasn't always involved in the civil rights movement, and for a while a prominent role of the state worked against the movement. Possibly recognizing the mass support and empowerment generated by the civil rights movement the potential threat is posed to state control, the state entered the scene as an advocate for the movement and effectively divided the movement framing the sides as those who were willing to cooperate and those who were unwilling to cooperate. They siphoned off those who were unwilling to cooperate and enlisted the support of those who were by passing the civil rights legislation. After the passage of the legislation popular support for the movement, especially the radical elements of it, dissipated. The passage of this legislation formalized and effectively co-opted the movement, bringing it under control of the state. Now strategies of racial equality movements are oriented around a legal framework which is a framework very much in control of the state. By creating space for the civil rights movement within the state, the state was thus able to control and guide future forms of protest. Spaces were closed for further elaboration of the movement. The passage of civil rights legislation was framed as the solution to the problems of racial inequality – thus the state attempted to legitimate itself as fulfilling its duty toward black Americans. Racial discourse lost its spot in the lime light. Further problems of “race problems” were not the state’s responsibility. By covering its ass in terms of actively reproducing racial hierarchies the state evaded accountability for the continuation of passive reproduction of racial inequality. **[Nicely told story of the absorption and disintegration of the civil rights movement. This may be a case in which a problem of system-functioning was solved in ways that facilitated the interests of national elites, but in a way that also ultimately eroded the associational power of the movement itself. There is an interesting episode in the war on poverty that embodies some of these contradictions. One of the initial institutional devices of the war on poverty was something called “maximum feasible participation” as part of “Community Action Plans”– the idea that community boards should be established in which people directly participated in organizing and governing antipoverty programs. This was a response to the radicalization of the civil rights movement and an attempt to tame it through incorporation. This had the opposite effect – it provides resources and organizational focus for mobilization of grass roots movements involving intense participation of poor people and activists. Nixon killed it, needless to say.]**

10. RODOLFO ELBERT

I would like to discuss in class the following ideas about the chapter:

1. Do the theoretical models of class compromise presented in the chapter consider that history is contingent? What kinds of assumptions are made in the model that make some historical variables “fix”, omitting the fact that sometimes the same process may lead to different outcomes? For example, is it possible that worker’s associational power in production can lead to two opposing historical results?: a. workers councils that question capitalist direction in the site of production and appropriation of the final product; b. A collaborative collective of workers that internalize the goals and strategies of managers. How can we determine in advance what will be the result of the German strategy? Isn’t it

a deterministic approach? I don't know if my question is clear, but I did my best to specify my general concern with the way in which theoretical abstract models like the ones presented can be applied to the analysis of historical societies. **[Of course the same institutional device could have very different effects depending upon contexts. What is called "contingent" usually means "interactions with a variety of different contextual processes". But if things are completely contingent, if we cannot say anything about the expected effects of given institutional arrangements, I think it would be very difficult to formulate coherent strategies. In your example, I agree that works councils can be more or less radical, more or less oriented to social power beyond capitalism, but even in the more limited forms in which managerial goals are adopted, they still constitute a form of worker power and worker action (if they are democratically constituted) and therefore are a potential site for struggles over greater social power.]**

2. I would like to discuss in class the possible development of the final section of the chapter (where does this lead?) In particular the idea that symbiotic transformations can transform the system as a whole. Wright says in the introduction that the basic idea of symbiotic transformation is this: advances in bottom-up social empowerment within a capitalist society will be most stable and defensible when such social empowerment also helps solve certain real problems faced by capitalists and other elites. I would ask: how this transformation can lead to a democratic socialist society if it **reinforces the power of capitalists?** **[I didn't say that it reinforced the power of capitalists; I said it solved certain problems which at least partially satisfied their interests. Just as satisfying interests of workers does not inherently mean increasing their power, the same is true for capitalists. My point here is fairly simple: if every gain in workers power (or popular power) is a pure threat to the interests of elites/capitalists, then whenever possible they will counterattack and undermine that power; where associational power helps solve problems, they may be more willing to accept an accommodation.]** I think that the chapter does a good job developing an analytical model of capitalist-workers interactions in a stable capitalist society. However, this does not necessarily lead to the normative and strategic idea of systemic transformation. It might be the case that at a certain historical period in a capitalist society, the interest of workers and capitalists coincide. However, why we would take this as an example of feasible and desirable strategies of systemic transformation? **[If one has a clear idea of an alternative strategy for system-transformation that is clearly and convincingly feasible, then there would be good reason to argue for it against symbiotic strategies. But in the absence of a convincing alternative, I think the better stance is to say something like this: at least in developed capitalist contexts, there is no strategy for system-transformation which is especially convincing. They all seem infeasible for different reasons. What we need, then, is a strategic menu that enables us to move forward along the pathways of social empowerment and at least try to shift the hybrid.]**

3. I am not sure about the clear-cut distinction between the spheres of exchange, production and politics. In the Havens seminar, Burawoy explained his idea of an internal state in the factory (with labor markets, coercion, hegemonic strategies, etc). Is this

account compatible with the analytical distinction developed in the Real Utopias book? **[I think so. He calls that the politics of production. All of these forms of positive class compromise are political in that they involve power and relations contesting interests. The internal state is just a way of talking about the forms of organized power and regulation within firms.]** Why are we separating politics, exchange and production, as three different spheres of action? **[They are separated because they are different, even if they interact and affect each other. Struggling over the regulatory powers of the state is different from struggling for workers councils within a factory. The separate things is not to deny their interconnection.]** Aren't they related in the class struggle and the strategies of class compromise? For example, one might say that in a moment of systemic transformation the politics of production are more visible, and workers would more likely question the domination in production if they are part of a political movement that questions capitalist domination as a whole.

4. Finally, I would like to discuss the unequal weight that is given to class structure and class struggle in the different chapters. When we discussed both ruptural and interstitial transformations, the class character of the transformation was not the main focus of the discussion. On the other hand, symbiotic transformations seems to be mainly about class struggle (or compromise). Why is this? I don't think that Wright would say that the two first strategies are mainly non-class strategies, so, how can we solve this difference in the presentation of the strategies? **[The main reason the symbiotic chapter is about class struggle and class compromise is that it is based on an article I published on that theme and I have not yet reconstructed that piece into a proper chapter....]**

11. Guillaume Neault

This chapter is especially interesting because it seems that a lot is at stake within a class compromise. You mostly engage the problem through rational modelling, where gains and losses have already been defined. I think such an exercise is useful to understand what is the potential for collaboration between labour and capital. In your analysis, you bring up Germany and Sweden as successful examples of class compromises. In the case pertaining to Sweden particularly, I believe you identified the organizational links between the labour movement and the social democratic party as critical for the stability of collaboration. It is my understanding that positive class compromise is only possible under very specific institutional arrangements. **[I wouldn't say this, exactly. Positive class compromises which are as compromise as they are in Sweden needs special conditions, but there are all sorts of partial positive class compromises in play in the US and elsewhere, both operating through the state and within workplaces. Positive class compromises are an important part of hegemonic – rather than purely despotic – capitalist systems.]** As for the case of Sweden, I would be interested to find out what were the capital-labour relations since WWII. The argument usually put forward in comparative political economy is that Sweden (and most other Scandinavian countries) implemented 'very open' trade policies, which fostered capital investment. Consequently, the Swedish state compensated labour (and others, I suppose) with generous social policies. If the Swedish symbiotic transformation largely rested on steady capitalist growth, are we less likely to witness symbiotic strategies, on this scale, in the future?

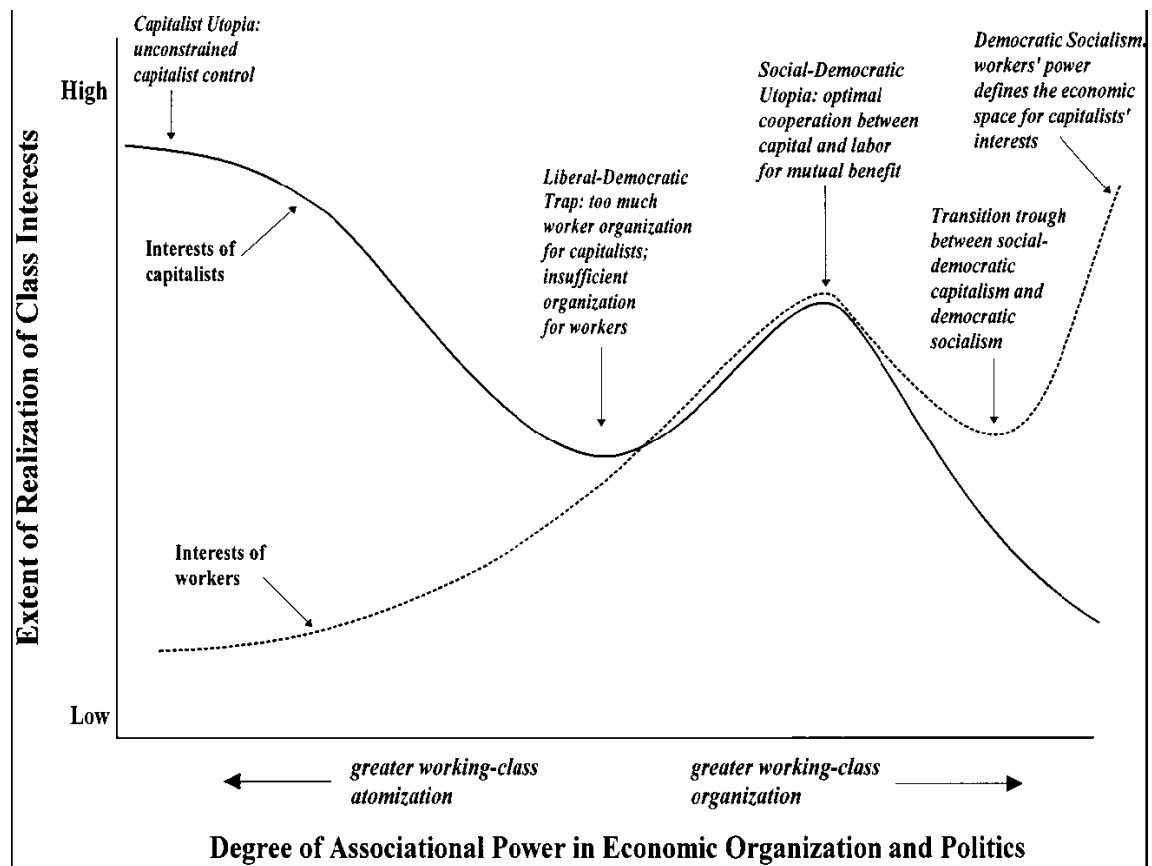
Should we look at Sweden as a ‘possible’ model to emulate or should we see it as an exception? **[Many people have argued that the era of Swedish-style positive class compromise is over – that we cannot retrieve it given globalization, etc. I am not so sure about this. Capitalist growth helps, of course, but the logic of positive compromise doesn’t require high rates of growth. It just requires significant problem-solving capacities from popular collective actors that enhance system integration and system functioning, and thereby serve some interests of elites.]**

To compromise, or not to compromise: that is the question for the working class? I think Przeworski approaches a similar set of problems in *Capitalism and Social Democracy*. What are the costs of compromise? I think this is a very difficult question to answer. On the one hand, I believe that unions and labour movements are quite fractured ideologically. The radical elements of the working class will probably never adhere to proposals of class compromise while other might find class compromise an innovative solution. It seems to me that labour might be hesitant to strike a compromise where the benefits are uncertain, or adamant to strike a compromise where past compromises have been failures.

Unions and labour movement had to negotiate, in the past, with unfavourable ‘rules of the game’, an often intolerant state, and unsympathetic capitalists, why would you ‘want to solve a problem for capitalists?’ **[You would want to solve a problem for capitalists if that problem weakens capitalist firms, threatens jobs, increases risks for workers, etc. This is the situation that workers face when they live in a hegemonic capitalist system in which the realization of some core interests of capitalists – above all capital accumulation – is in the interests of everyone. This is really the pivot of the whole problem: in my graphs, the right hand region of the curve is strategically inaccessible to workers: they cannot devise a plausible strategy to get there, That is the region in which they could transcend capitalism. So given that solving problems for capitalists enhances the stability of their location on the upward sloping part of the curve, which is the part that enables them to improve their conditions within capitalism.]** A capital-labour compromise, I believe, could erode the vigour of unions and labour movement. **[But a state of continual capital-labor confrontation with occasional stalemates – negative class compromises – could also erode the vigor of unions and labor movements.]** However, a capital-labour compromise under the auspices of a social-democratic state, where ‘rules of the game’ are well laid out and where gains reinforce labour movement, might be something to consider. As you can see, I am somewhat ambivalent and would not make any decisions unless I had more information about the economic conjuncture. What is certain, though, whether or not there is a compromise, the power-relations between capitalists and workers will continue to exist, relations of exploitation will continue to exist, and property relations will continue to exist.

12. Charity Schmidt

From what I understand, you said last week that chapter 10 is mostly composed of a section from a different paper. That becomes quite apparent, as the bulk of it doesn't resonate with the rest of the manuscript. The whole chapter, with the exception of the new intro and conclusion, gives more weight to the interests of the capitalist class than to that of workers. If it is really the point of the manuscript to search for alternatives that benefit the majority of people in a society, and stresses the necessity for change especially among worker's living standards, why should we spend so much time thinking of strategies that will serve the capitalists? **[In the original paper there was another graph that laid out the relationship of working class associational power and the interests of workers. I should probably have included this in the paper. Here it is for the record:**



The key in this picture is that the region of the curve of positive class compromise is the one in which both curves move in the same direction. Still, why talk about interests of capitalists and the conditions for realizing at least some of their interests? As I indicated in some other comments, I think this is needed for two reasons: (a) it defines a condition in which power that benefits workers can be consolidated and more easily reproduced over time. The area to the left of the joint

upward sloping region of the curve is the region in which workers power is continually under assault and whenever conditions undermine workers strengthen they face counterattack; the region to the right of the joint upward sloping region is the transition trough encountered in ruptural strategies. (b) securing and strengthening workers power while satisfying important interests of elites is part of a counter-hegemonic process – a process that makes the realization of elite interests dependent on the reproduction of workers power (the counterpoint to the hegemonic capitalism in which the satisfaction of some workers interests is dependent on the reproduction of capitalist power.). If this counterhegemony really triumphed, this would mean that the hybridization process had crossed a tipping point in which capitalism had to adopt to a dominant socialist logic. As I have said, I have no confidence that symbiotic strategies could ever accomplish this; but I also am not certain that they could not.

And, if I understood correctly, Erik is rejecting the view that class-compromise can be a positive-sum collaboration that empowers the working class. **[No -- this is what I am saying: under the constraints of a balance of class power that keeps class struggle on the relevant part of the curve, then collaboration is a positive-sum game in the sense that cooperation is good for workers and capitalists *relative to refusing such cooperation*. What I deny is that the game overall is positive sum since capitalists prefer to be on the left hand “capitalist utopia,” and getting to the upward sloping part of the curve requires struggles, not just enlightenment.]** Therefore the chapter shouldn't spend so much time on it. Even if we do want to discuss what is in the true interests of capitalists, we shouldn't translate that into a pro-capitalist argument, that is, it should be framed from the perspective that the interests of workers really reflect the interests of society as a whole, and it is in the interest of capitalists to participate in social transformation (i.e. a conscientization process).

Regarding general themes from the rest of the manuscript, I think we could further explore the tension between negativist and positivist views of the state (both as space and as social actor).

Also, particularly significant to symbiotic transformations, we could discuss the mechanisms for improving the inclusiveness of such strategies.

13. Wes Markofski

I would like to raise the million-dollar question for symbiotic transformations: Granted the possibility of symbiotic strategies that increase social empowerment and solve problems faced by capitalists and elites, how does one think about the possibilities of symbiotic strategies for “transcending capitalism” (15)? Let's help Erik finish the chapter! On the one hand symbiotic strategies can produce more durable gains than interstitial strategies because they often (but not necessarily) include some element of state collaboration and because they can become institutionalized more readily given that they solve real problems for power holders. On the other hand, they are limited in that they imply cooperation and collaboration with capital (who will only concede so much.)

Erik rejects democratic experimentalism's "benign" view of class struggle that sees antagonistic class interests as more constructed than real (14). Does this view of class relations imply that symbiotic strategies have upper bound limits in terms of their capacity to accomplish system-wide transformation given the limits of how much "positive class compromise" capitalists will agree to? And that therefore a more ruptural type of transformation will become necessary at some point (which could be during a 'final transition' beyond capitalism, or alternatively at various points along the way in particular sectors)? **[Perhaps what durable symbiotic strategies do is reduce the transition trough so that ruptural strategies become more sustainable. In the picture above from the original paper there is a transition trough of empowerment that corresponds to the temporal trough in the ruptural chapter.]**

I think the democratic experimentalism ideas are interesting as well. One question I have is: When do we know whether to pursue collaborative "positive class compromise" strategies of social empowerment versus pursuing confrontational class-based conflict strategies? I think Dorf and Sabel (and Rogers and Wright) are correct to argue that "positive class compromises" comprising win-win situations for capital and labor are possible and an important part of transformation strategies. This seems to be particularly the case when transformation is being pursued through the standard working of representative democracy, where building broad-based coalitions of working, middle, and even upper class actors (perhaps motivated by normative values a la Engels) for democratic egalitarian transformation is essential. The more, and more powerful, groups of actors can be brought into coalitions and compromises that increase social empowerment, the more legitimacy and influence a movement will have and the more the "rules of the game" will shift towards democratic egalitarian outcomes. The prospect of increasing institutionalization of positive class compromises can thus change the conditions of struggle through progressive victories (sometimes more collaborative, sometimes more conflictual) that increase the legitimacy of such groups to "articulate the general interest" (1) and thus expand the political influence of labor through democracy. At various points along the way however, elites will refuse compromises and thus force more confrontational (through mass mobilization, political pressure, etc) strategies on the part of workers, but the trick would seem to be to do so in such a way that it doesn't destroy the possibilities of further positive class compromises in the future (which is difficult: once you enter into outright political 'wars' of any type, it is hard to re-establish trust and openness to collaboration between the antagonists. Not impossible though.)

[As I have noted for a number of these interrogations, I do not have a coherent account of the strategic possibilities of pushing beyond the tipping point of the "phase shift" from a capitalism-dominant to a socialism-dominant hybrid system, and I do not know how to formulate such an account. All accounts of strategies at the beginning of the 21st century that I know of for transcending capitalism in the developed capitalist world and creating a socialism-dominant hybrid (or socialism for short), lack credibility. The institutional designs of socialist destinations -- the pathways on the socialist compass -- do not lack credibility, but the strategies do. So, in that context, what do we do? How should we think about strategy? I don't think we can recreate the confidence of the earlier forms of Marxism, for they rested on a theory of history and its trajectory that has too many weaknesses to generate a

convincing strategic theory. I doubt if a new, reconstructed version of the dynamic trajectory theory is likely, although I would of course welcome it. So, formulating the underlying strategic logics of movement in the right direction is, I think, the way to pose the problem even if none of them seem feasible. That is where the predictably unexpected possibilities of the future will matter.]

14. Pablo Dalle

I have doubts about the potentialities of the symbiotic strategy. On the one hand, I agree with the idea that increasing processes of social empowerment orientated to win-win solutions is an opportunity to empower popular participation. Moreover, this strategy could open possibilities to challenge institutional imposed limits for the wealthy and improve social condition of working class, ethnic minorities, women, gays, lesbians, and so on. On the other hand, this strategy **could** block a radical process of transformation, for instance, by the participation in an election. This **could** retreat a revolutionary process expressed in concrete actions such as taking over factories, strikes, decision making by workers' assemblies, formation of a class party, and so on. **[The word "could" is crucial in your statement. Yes, this could be the result. If we were in a revolutionary situation in which all of the things listed here were in process and appeared to be gathering force towards a more fundamental challenge to capitalism, then there would be a difficult strategic discussion over how far those processes could go and whether they could consolidate through a strictly confrontational/ruptural strategy. But in a context where this is not the case, then symbiotic strategies do not seem to block more radical possibilities, since the latter remain on paper whereas the symbiotic possibilities appear in practice. In Argentina it is possible that a ruptural-confrontational moment is a plausible scenario for creating durable social empowerment, but I suspect that even in Argentina, such a confrontation moment is unlikely to result in robust, sustainable social empowerment unless it becomes crystallized in institutions of a positive class compromise. But if that is wrong, that a symbiotic strategy would not be preferable.]**

In my opinion, this strategy could function as a means but it should not be seen as a goal to construct a radical democratic egalitarian society. In that sense, my question is if class compromise is a means to reach a democratic egalitarian society but the second transcends the former, how will be the problem-solving process in that kind of society? I think that this answer implies a reflection about the form would take social structure and class relations. Will class compromise proceed in a democratic egalitarian society? **[A democratic egalitarian socialism will still be a hybrid form – at least for the foreseeable future. It is a hybrid within which the space for capitalist relations is circumscribed by popular power, democratic institutions, and egalitarian distribution. But, as I like to say, capitalism between consenting adults would almost certainly be allowed because this is almost certainly what a democratic collective would decide. Capitalism will occupy a space under the hegemonic rule of workers and socialism, and this means that positive class compromise would still have a role to play with respect to that space of activity. But of course, in a socialist economy – a hybrid structure within which socialism is dominant – social power organizes the basic patterns of allocation of investments and control over production, and that**

means a variety of forms of democratic social empowerment of economic activities (as mapped in the five pathways argument).]

I have enjoyed the course, I think it has been a very interesting opportunity to discuss the potentialities of constructing a different social system where people could collectively and individually enflowish their lives. It mobilizes me a lot of ideas and hopes about how we could change the capitalism. Thank you for that!

15. Santiago Rodriguez

I must say that I enjoy the chapter. I send my comments. In chapter 10, you emphasize in the concept of “class compromise” in order to understand the underlying logic of symbiotic transformation. When you analyze class compromise, What would be the roll of the middle class in the compromise? **[Good question. The annoying reality of the middle class was largely ignored in this chapter. A key issue for the stability of class compromise is the extent to which the “middle class” – meaning wage earners with privileged positions of various sorts, or what I call contradictory locations within class relations -- supports the compromise, and especially whether the support the institutional zones of exclusion. The Middle class are often especially interested in the problem-solving outcomes of compromises because things work better. This seems to have been the case in Porto Alegre, for example, which I consider an instance of symbiotic strategy. Since a positive compromise requires protecting these zones of exclusion, and these are often the result of state action, the political coalition around institutionalizing compromises is important, and this is probably where the middle class plays the most critical role. I suppose Middle class acceptance is also important because the glue of positive class compromise is usually some form of redistribution through taxation, and affluent wage earners need to at least go along with this to avoid redistribution itself undermining capitalist interests. This is a lot of what happened in Sweden: taxes on capital are low, but on high wage earners – the middle class loosely defined – taxes are high. The Middle class historically accepted this because such “solidarity” redistribution made for a less conflictual, less risky society.]**

My second question is about the relations between state, trade unions and crisis of representation. How to get to a compromise if the social actors involved do not feel represented by their leaders?

16. Ruth Sautu

With reference to Rogers and Sheeck’ s statement could you mention historical examples of democratic left party in power being to contest the monopolies? And service?

Is it possible to think that growing wages are compatible only in well developed rich countries? That is the real actual workers empowerment is only possible in that type of society? You always say developed capitalist societies, how to get these? What happened to underdeveloped economies in the mean time? **[I agree that my formulations are mainly oriented to the developed capitalist world, since I understand them better**

and the dilemmas of socialist strategy seem especially acute and difficult there. But position class compromise is not something restricted to developed capitalism, or at least symbiotic strategies are not so restricted. Porto Alegre illustrates this kind of symbiotic process – associational power in neighborhoods solving system problems that help stabilize increased social power.

My feeling is that the feebleness of financial systems will deeply disturb capitalist society. Perhaps that will be the time for socialist reform and real utopias. It seems to me that the large international movements of capitalist from terrorism and war trade will force the capitalist society to change.

17. Roxana Telechea

I send you my doubts

- 1) I think that symbiotic strategy seems like an tactics, in the sense of Clausewitz. I am thinking it is a step inside a deeper goal. I agree with social power was increased in ways that solved system problems. But I think we can't forget that we are looking forward a revolutionary change. And we shouldn't mix a step with a goal.
 - 2) What about informal workers? I think that symbiotic strategy requires strong workers. But in Latin America most of the workers works on informal jobs.
 - 3) The capitalist would agree with a social compromise if this compromise don't affect their profits. What about in the times in which capitalists are not and will not become willing to compromise?
-