Lecture 4

Logics of Emancipatory Transformation: ruptural, interstitial, symbiotic

Erik Olin Wright
Department of Sociology
University of Wisconsin
The Three Tasks of Emancipatory Social Science

1. Diagnosis & Critique
2. Alternatives
3. Transformation
ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF TRANSFORMATION

1. A Theory of Social Reproduction: obstacles to emancipatory change

2. A theory of gaps, limits and contradictions of reproduction: possibilities of change

3. A theory of trajectories of social change: time horizons for obstacles and possibilities

4. A theory of strategy: what is to be done?
STRATEGIES:
THREE MODES OF TRANSFORMATION

I. Ruptural Transformation
II. Interstitial transformation
III. Symbiotic Transformation
I.
RUPTURAL
TRANSFORMATION
Figure 1
Possible Trajectory of Material Interests into a Capitalist Future
Beginning of ruptural transition to socialism

Material welfare of median person

Capitalism

Socialism: fantasy path

Observable trajectory

Hypothetical trajectories

The future

Figure 2
Socialist Rupture and Trajectories of Material Interests
Socialist Rupture and Trajectories of Material Interests

Figure 2
Socialist Rupture and Trajectories of Material Interests
Socialism: pessimistic path

Figure 2
Socialist Rupture and Trajectories of Material Interests
Figure 3
Projections into the future from part-way through a transition

- Observable trajectory
- Hypothetical trajectory: view of pro-socialists
- Hypothetical trajectories: view of anti-socialists
- The future

Material welfare of median person

Beginning of ruptural transition to socialism

past future
Figure 3
Projections into the future from part-way through a transition

- Observable trajectory
- Hypothetical trajectory: view of pro-socialists
- Hypothetical trajectories: view of anti-socialists
- The future
Figure 3
Projections into the future from part-way through a transition

- Observable trajectory
- Hypothetical trajectory: view of pro-socialists
- Hypothetical trajectories: view of anti-socialists
- The future

Socialist future: View of pro-socialists
Beginning of ruptural transition to socialism
Material welfare of median person
Continuing socialist path: View of anti-socialists
Figure 3
Projections into the future from part-way through a transition
Beginning of transition to socialism

Material welfare of middle class and workers

Middle class

Working class

Class-specific transition troughs

Historical time

Middle class
under capitalism

Middle class
under socialism

Working class
Under Capitalism

Working class
under socialism

Figure 4
Class Variations in Trajectories of Material Interests
Socialist Rupture and Trajectories of Material Interests under assumption of long term intensification of capitalist crisis
II. INTERSTITIAL TRANSFORMATION
Figure 6
Interstitial transformations paving the way to rupture
Figure 7
Interstitial transformations eroding the binding limits of capitalism
III.
SYMBIOTIC
TRANSFORMATION
Figure 8. Conventional view of the relationship between working class power and capitalist class interests
Figure 9. Curvilinear relationship between working class power and capitalist class interests
Figure 10. Workers power and capitalist interests
Figure 11. Zones of Excluded Possibilities

Excluded regions because of institutionally enforced rules of the game

Limits of accessible possibilities under existing rules
Figure 12. Zones of excluded possibilities: United States and Sweden
The full text of book-in-progress, *Envisioning Real Utopias* can be found at:

www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright

Detailed summaries of discussions at these Lectures can be found at: