

**READING INTERROGATIONS #4**  
**SOCIOLOGY 929: ENVISIONING REAL UTOPIAS**  
**FEBRUARY 28, 2008**  
**SESSION 5. THE SOCIALIST COMPASS**

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**1. Catherine Willis**

This chapter presents the state as one of three domains of power. I am particularly interested in discussing this conceptualisation of the state and state power.

I find that the power of the state is particularly hard for me to pin down. There are many good reasons for seeing it as its own entity: the mass of government does give it independence from elected officials. Nonetheless, it seems to me that the state depends on other powers for its existence (economic elite, military, society) etc. Ideas are also important in creating power: intellectual expertise and ideology can undermine or reinforce the power of the state. Brute force and fear also plays a role in establishing states. How are these powers influencing the state and using the state to perpetuate their powers? I wonder if, rather than considering the state in and of itself a source of power, it is not better conceptualised as a tool created by civil society, or certain subgroups of civil society (class, race, intellectual, business groups etc.) that reflects their interests or a specific balance of interests. **[This is, needless to say, a classic thorny problem in social theory – how to define power in general and how to think of the state in relation to power. One view is that the state has no power of its own; it is simply an instrument in the hands of actors whose base of power lies elsewhere. I don't think that is satisfactory: the state is a source of power even if it is also manipulated by actors with other bases of power. The capacity to enforce rules over territory is a real capacity: there are weak states and strong states precisely because this capacity varies. Now, saying this leaves open the question: "in whose interests is the power of the state used?" The analysis of the capitalist character of the state – the theory of the *capitalist state* – attempts to explain how it comes to pass that in spite of constituting an autonomous form of power, nevertheless this power is functionally subordinated to the interests of the capitalist class (or more generally: to the requirements of reproducing capitalism). In my analysis I am distinguishing between those aspects of the state that are functionally subordinated in that way – the aspects of the state that are traditionally called "the superstructure" in Marxism – and those aspects of the state that are directly engaged in economic activity, in controlling and allocating resources for the production of goods and services. This is what I am calling a statist form of economic organization.]**

The need for mechanisms to translate the potential power of civil society into effective influence over state and economy is discussed in the conclusion. It is stated that "Social mobilization without institutional consolidation is unlikely to have durable effects on the on the overall configurations of power" (16). For me, **these institutional consolidations are the state**, yet these consolidations are inadequate when a small sector of civil society, rather than society as a whole, influences their creation. By seeing the state as an entity rather than a tool does not help us: a) think of reformulating a tool that helps civil society exert influence over the economy; and, b) look at the power relations that have resulted in a tool (the actual state) which does not serves

society's interests as a whole. **[Your formulation is very nice here. I like "these institutional consolidations are the state." This is very close to the formulation of Nicos Poulantzas where he sees the state as the *crystallization* of class struggle.]**

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## 2. Charity Schmidt

1. In thinking about alternative configurations of civil society, the state and the economy, how do we conceptualize the state? Can we formulate alternative ideas about the state, or do we base our conceptions on the current systems of nation-states?

- Philosophically: Do we think about the state as an entity above and beyond people, apart from civil society (an "authoritarian means of making and enforcing binding rules", p. 10) or one that is of the people and the direct representation of civil society? **[Note that I use the word "authoritative means" not "authoritarian": what I mean here is that the state has the legitimate authority to make and enforce binding rules. This does not mean that it is authoritarian in the sense of not democratically accountable.]**
- Sociopolitically: if a socialist society does in fact need a state, how do we view the role of nation-states, since they were created through colonialism and the establishment of arbitrary boundaries? **[In a way it doesn't matter so much, necessarily, how arbitrary was the process by which boundaries are created. If they endure long enough they demarcate critical aspects of shared fate and solidarity, and thus they become meaningful to people. If the pivot of the state is legitimate authority to create and enforce binding rules over territory, then the effectiveness of the state – under capitalist or socialist conditions for that matter – depends upon the nature of the identities and solidarities linked to that authority. There was the hope in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that since workers were oppressed by the states in which they lived that they would have no loyalties or identifications with the nation states of which they were a part. This is why the communist movement thought that workers of the world could unite and national states could be quickly abandoned. For all sorts of reasons that was an illusion.]** They are contemporarily being rendered arbitrary again through globalization, the power of international capital, migration etc. Do such patterns change the significance of the nation-state? How so? What form of 'state' would be most conducive to generating social empowerment? What scale is useful in thinking about social empowerment; local, national, international? **[I think all of these scales are needed. The trick is to think through their articulation – to think about the appropriate scale for the authoritative rule making and enforcing for different sorts of problems and activities. There is a certain sense in which a radical egalitarian democratic view of justice and emancipation sees the local as a particularly salient site for political action and problem-solving, because this is the level at which most people can be most directly engaged, but I don't think a socialist project is plausible unless there are effective state mechanisms at more**

**macro-levels as well. Global warming cannot be solved by a system of locally empowered states.]**

2. What are our options for non-capitalist markets? What form of a non-capitalist market would be most conducive to generating social empowerment? (Or more generally speaking, what is the role for markets in a real utopian socialism?) **[I think that markets – understood as decentralized systems of exchange with meaningful prices -- would play an essential role in solving certain coordination problems and information problems. The distinction between capitalist and socialist markets is mainly about (a) the nature of the entities that engage in market exchanges (privately owned firms vs various kinds of public and social entities), (b) the extent to which the market operates under constraints that are imposed by democratic processes and priorities, and (c) the extent to which the domain of nonmarket provision of needs expands and limits the scope of the market.]**

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### 3. Wes Markofski

In redefining socialism as “social empowerment” or the “subordination of economic power to social power” (page 8) in contrast to more traditional and Marxist definitions that typically include the abolishment of private ownership and exploitative capital-labor relations of production, EOW constructs a more open-ended view of the multiple possibilities of socialist alternatives to capitalism. Socialism is thus “*not equivalent to the working class controlling the means of production through its collective associations...[but rather] social empowerment over the economy means broad-based encompassing economic democracy*” (page 9). Erik’s approach places the associational or social power of civil society, rather than the working class more narrowly, at the center of the struggle against capitalist organization of the economy. I am curious about what people think about this shift in the notion of socialism and social empowerment from a more narrowly worker-centered to more broad civil society centered analysis of alternatives to capitalism. **[You have correctly identified the shift in my conceptualization of socialism: it is not an economy owned and run by workers but owned and run by “society”. Now, some definitions of the working class – all wage earners – make nearly the entire labor force part of the working class. And if we then include all members of their families and retired workers as also working class, then the distinction in terms of people between an economy subordinated to civil society and an economy subordinated to the working class is not great.]**

Also, given that civil society and social power are given a such a central place in Erik’s definition of socialism, are the alternative paths to socialism discussed here only really viable and achievable under conditions of advanced liberal democratic capitalism? Are some of the proposed pathways to social empowerment more likely to be viable and achievable under certain conditions than others (eg how do realistic pathways of social empowerment look in China versus Sweden; Afghanistan versus the United States)? That is, does the heavy emphasis on role of social power and civil society in this chapter effectively circumscribe the conditions under which socialism (as defined here) is possible to relatively advanced and stable liberal democracies? **[I don’t think it is the case that unless you have an advanced liberal democracy you cannot move along any of the pathways. What is true is that in different**

**countries, in different times and places, different pathways will be the most promising, and perhaps in some places none of them would be very available. In the USA, social economy and social capitalism are probably more open and available pathways than statist socialism or social democratic regulation, for example. In Sweden, clearly, social democratic regulation and associational democracy are pretty developed, but social capitalism is not.]**

Finally, how effective is Erik's definition of social power as "*the capacity to mobilize people for voluntary collective actions of various sorts*" (page 2) and of socialism as "*an economic structure in which social power plays the dominant role in organizing economic activity*" (page 16)? I think that disaggregating the notion of "power to" from "power over" (although recognizing that the former often requires the latter) and defining power in terms of capacity to accomplish goals as Erik does here—rather than conceptualizing power as *necessarily* involving domination and zero-sum assumptions about its application and distribution—is indeed a good way to think about power in social contexts. But this is a highly contested conceptualization of power, particularly among critical scholars. How does Erik's definition of social power, and of power more generally, compare (favorably or unfavorably) to Marx or other conceptualizations of power or social power? And what does this imply for thinking about pathways to socialism?

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#### 4. Sung Ik Cho

My question about this chapter is broadly focused on the role of political parties in achieving egalitarian democratic goals. Beginning with probable trajectories toward social empowerment, it seems to me that the role of political parties has not been clearly explained. **[This chapter is not about the process of achieving new institutional designs, but about the nature of the designs that parties and other collective actors seek to achieve. The discussion of political parties, social movements, and other strategies for transformation occur in part III of the book).** Perhaps, although political parties are taken into account as an example of civil society in this chapter in the sense that they share some features and functions with other civil associations, I think they also have significantly different roles they play contributing to the egalitarian democratization. In the figure of diverse paths of social empowerment, the political party seemingly represents the link between civil society and the state, even if it is not the only one for this link. The real capitalist democracy tends to respond more to the needs of the power of capital rather than needs from the power of civil society. Thus, one alternative suggested is associative democracy shown in the figure 4.6, having no link between civil society and the state. However, does this 4.6 figure of pathway for social empowerment not include political parties? **[I think the figure for associational democracy might be misleading since clearly the examples I give do involve connections between civil society and the state. What I wanted to emphasize here was the centrality of the joint effects of the state and civil society associations on economic power – as in corporatism].** Looking at this figure, it is not clear where the political party can be located in this pathway of associate democracy. Also, it make me lean toward the idea that civil societies consist of various kinds of associations in terms of not only their interest areas but also their different political and social roles in democratization. Furthermore, it casts a question whether political parties can be included in the same category of civil society, or whether they can be regarded as the extension of the state power. Otherwise, how can we locate political parties in the task of the egalitarian democracy? **[Political parties figure in these pathways whenever there is a connection between civil society and the state. That is why I**

**mention political parties for both statist socialism and social democratic statist regulation: in these pathways parties are the empowerment mechanism that subordinates state power to social power. ]**

It seems to me that the importance of political parties is clearly revealed in the two plausible challenges against the idea of associative democracy: its heterogeneity and bad associations. Based upon principles of associative democracy, it is inevitable to have such problems undermining the capacity and goal of egalitarian democratization. As explained in this chapter, there is no guarantee that associative democracy will overcome completely those challenges. But I am not sure how social empowerment strategies will resolve these problems. I think that the problem of heterogeneity of associative democracy and its 'bad associations' can be understood in relation to the role of political parties. I think that one of the most important roles political parties play is the 'prioritizing of various social interests and issues' and (or 'with) 'publicizing and legitimating' of them, which civil associations without political parties does not produce. **[But isn't there just as much a problem of "bad" political parties? How do political parties solve the problem of heterogeneity when they are often reflections of special interests themselves?]** In this aspect, I think political parties, even though traditional forms of political parties have exposed many problems against the egalitarian democratic principles, still have potentials of consolidating social empowerment by prioritizing diverse interests and marginalizing bad associations by their political effects of publicness and legitimacy. I have seen that increasing tendencies emphasizing associative democracy and social empowerment from civil society without re-considering the relationship to political parties have revealed that new local governance was not only captured by local elites but also undermined even local political institutions like the local congress and the state. **[I think you are making a valid point here about the special role that political parties play in formulating publicness and seeking legitimacy through some kind of appeal to universalism**

Furthermore, the emphasis upon associative democracy might have another normative problem. That is, associative democracy based upon voluntarism toward universal egalitarian goals might have a normative implication of self-fulfillment of egalitarian democratic principles. Thus, as E. E. Schattschneider was once concerned, this normative argument of associative democracy can be understood that people are made for democracy, not democracy for people. I think this problem can be also related to the role of political parties. **[I didn't quite understand this point. Perhaps you can elaborate it in class.]**

All these possible problems seem to shed light on the re-consideration of political parties in terms of not only an instrumental source for political power but also a potential for social empowerment.

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## 5. Molly Noble

### *Power and Empowerment*

At the beginning of the chapter you provide a clear conception of what you mean by power and distinguish between different types of power within the state, the economy and civil society. However, in your description of the socialist compass, you use "degree and forms of social empowerment" to gauge if and to what extent an economy is socialist. You seem to make a leap between power and empowerment; presupposing empowerment without describing the mechanism through which power is realized. I think that it is important to distinguish between power and empowerment and between conscious/realized power vs. unconscious/unrealized power for the implications that these distinctions have on the capacity of groups to act and on the dynamics between different groups. The simplest example I can think of is unions. Factory workers have the power to influence owners but often that power isn't realized, isn't translated into action and thus is ineffectual until workers organized into unions and exert their power in the form of strikes. This process of organization and action exerts two types of power. The strike is the physical and direct manifestation of workers' power. Arguably a more potent form of power is the union itself, which through the strike has shown the workers' capacity to organize and thus is able to exert a threat of power which has the ability to change dynamics between workers and owners without direct action. A more detailed analysis of power could allow for a greater ability to show how power is exerted, the dynamics of power between the state, economy and civil society and thus can help us pinpoint where power should be exerted to move in the direction of a "radical democratic egalitarian alternative to capitalism." **[Your comments here are quite suggestive. Are you using the term "empowerment" to mean "power realized in action"? I am not sure that this is how I would demarcate the two terms. I think of power as a capacity to do things. You can have power but not use it. A threat is a claim that you have that capacity and will use it; a bluff is a claim that is not actually backed by capacity. Now empowerment a way of talking about the development or conferral of power on some entity, but it is still about the capacity to do things. Social empowerment means conferring the capacity to control economic activities on the associations of civil society. Do you see the contrast differently? I would also make a distinction between the potential power of a group and the actual power of that group. Rather than saying, as you do, that workers "have the power" to influence owners even when they are not organized into a union, I would say that workers have this power only when they are so organized. Disorganized workers might have potential power, but they only "have" power when they are organized – i.e. collective organization is a necessary condition for their capacity to act against owners. A strike, then, is one of the ways that power is exercised.]**

### *Third Objection to skepticism about civil society and social power*

In addition to problems of heterogeneity of associations and nasty associations I would include the problem that some groups may fail to organize into associations. This could result in the failure to account for the interests and needs of these groups. There is also the problem of inequality between groups in terms of access to resources, levels of involvement, organizational capacities, etc. **[You are absolutely correct that some categories of people – groups – fail to organize associations and thus their interests and needs may not be translated into social power even in conditions of high social empowerment. This is a chronic problem in democracy: political parties are associations and they may fail to engage certain categories**

**of citizens for one reason or another. To the extent that this happens it violates the conditions of political justice and would be an object of transformative concern.]**

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## 6. Ricardo Donaire

Where is to be found the socialist north of the proposed compass?

Since “socialism” is defined as “an economic structure within which the allocation and use of resources for different social purposes is accomplished through the exercise of ‘social power’, defined as power rooted in civil society” (p. 9), and “civil society” as “the sphere of social interaction in which people voluntarily form associations of different sorts for various purposes” (p. 7), and as there are no other analyzed determinations, then we can presume that civil society includes all kind of interests, from those of the exploited to those of the exploiters, from those of the oppressed to those of the oppressors. And therefore, this socialism may be understood as the exercise of social power by any of these subjects. If so, these interventions could not necessarily be in a progressive direction but also in a reactionary one. **[This is certainly a potential problem, as it is in any democratic project: democracy opens the possibility of rule by various kinds of minorities or coalitions that are opposed to democratic equality.]**

It does not seem a good answer just to rely on a possible future institutional devise which would foster a radical democratic egalitarian conception of emancipation, since a socialist compass itself would have to be able to distinguish between progressive and non-progressive interests. **[Remember that the movement in the socialist compass is marked by the subordination of capital (economic power) and the state (democratic subordination of state power to social power). So even if the problems you identify are real problems – and they are – the advance along the socialist (social power) direction weakens capitalist power. But you are correct that I am not building into the very definition of socialism that it succeed in the egalitarian democratic goals of social and political justice in creating a socialism in the interests of the masses of the people. A nasty socialism is possible given my definition]**

Then, it seems that it is not enough to think about civil society as a whole but it is needed to determine more precisely the different subjects which compose this large domain. In this sense, why are the more accurately defined subjects proposed by classical Marxism (such as exploited classes or oppressed people) abandoned? **[I don’t think I have abandoned the social subjects in whose interests the emancipatory project is pursued – the oppressed, the people, the masses, the exploited (take your pick). My claim is that the struggle for a democratic egalitarian society – one that moves towards the normative ideals of emancipation – is better waged under conditions of social empowerment than under conditions of capitalist empowerment or statist empowerment. Another way to state this, which is I think equivalent, is that moving in the direction of democratizing the economy enhances the capacity to struggle for egalitarian forms of democracy and society.]**

In a classical sense, social society is the sphere of concrete particular interests and implies as a counterpart the state as the sphere of abstract general citizenship. As far as particular and different interests continue to be existing, there will be the need for this general sphere of equal

citizens. **[I agree that the state is the potential site for universalizing interests, and this is one of the reasons why my position is NOT an anarchist one: I argue for the subordination of state power to social power, not for the abandonment of state power. Democracy is the subordination of state power to social power via the associational activities of political parties. That process remain integral to my general conception of social-ism.]** That is the reason why the dissolution of the state implies at the same time the dissolution of the split between the state and civil society, and in this very sense, the dissolution of civil society itself. If civil society will continue to be existing, so will differences based on exploitation and oppression within it. **[I don't see why this last point follows from what you have said already. Civil society is inherently a sight of a plurality of interests and associations linked to those interests, but I don't see why it is inherently based on exploitation and oppression. I agree that so long as there is oppression and exploitation it will be reflected in the character of civil society – just as it is reflected in every sphere of social interaction. But I do not see the stronger point that civil society only exists where there is oppression and exploitation (as I think you are saying).]**

Then, since “feasible, sustainable forms of large-scale social organization [even socialism], therefore, always involve some kind of reciprocal relations among these three domains [that is, the state, the economy and civil society] of social interaction power” (p. 10), does this imply that in a socialist structure differences based on exploitation and oppression will persist? If so, what about the equalitarian nature of socialism understood like that? Is it a kind of equalitarianism in a formal and democratic-bourgeois way rather than in a radical way? Therefore, is this not a formal democratic compass rather than a socialist compass? **[Even in Marx socialism was a society within which some forms of exploitation and unjust inequality (oppression) continued to exist. It was only in communism that classes disappeared. I have no idea if it would ever be possible to have a society within which all forms of oppression and exploitation were eliminated, but I do not want to make my concept of socialism contingent on the credibility of the fully just society. Socialism is the name for a hybrid social form within which social power is dominant. Socialism is a society within which those forms of oppression and exploitation rooted in economic power and state power are contained and subordinated; their domains of operation are circumscribed, and the power on which they are based is subordinated to social power. I do not think that makes socialism an illusion or just a formal reality.]**

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## 7. Edo Navot

I have relatively little to comment on in this chapter because, more than anything else, it stimulated my thinking about the strategic implications of the different “routes” of social empowerment. Since we’ll be covering exactly those topics in the next few chapters, I didn’t want to jump the gun (though of course I will).

This chapter evoked in me a sense of pessimism about the possibility of socialist reform. In this framing all the social empowerment routes that lead to a more egalitarian final distribution of goods and services in society rise and fall with the efficacy and coherence of “civil society.” **[Not quite, since some of the routes work through the state. Statist socialism – which is the classical model – is still one of the five pathways. The possibility and effectiveness of that**



**route depends a lot on the efficacy of the state itself – on state capacity – and the effectiveness of its democratization, but this could be possible without a highly coherent civil society. Or perhaps a better way of saying it is that political parties, struggle over universalistic visions, could provide enough coherence for this path to work.]** I think that I have two problems with this framing of civil society, one, which simply needs to be acknowledged and considered strategically, and a second that begs for a slight reframing of the problem.

1. The exigencies of capitalism militate strongly against an empowered civil society. The inherent tendencies of capitalism (and other social systems) tend to create atomization among people at many levels, from cultural norms to the structure of work, wages, and advancement. At the same time, we face considerable collective action problems – information and coordination problems, free rider problems, prisoners’ dilemmas, etc. – that make sustained coherent organizing systemically difficult. Meanwhile, the state depends on healthy capitalist accumulation for its own ability to function and also faces systematic pressure and structural constraints to act in the interests of capital (though obviously this is a highly complex dynamic). When these factors have come up in our class before, they were cited as rationales for ruptural transformation. I think these are also strategic rationales for “social democratic statist economic regulation” in that the legal structure of state is such that, if through struggle we can pass laws in our favor, these laws can act like the pawl of a ratchet gear and temporarily stabilize a balance of power, or at least slow down a counter-revolution. On the other hand, we have also seen countless times when bureaucratization of social movements has killed them. Without anticipating the upcoming chapters too much, can we think through some of the strategic implications of the different routes of social empowerment? **[I think what the atomization problem shows, along with the coordination problems within civil society, is that anarchism is not a plausible model for social empowerment. Political parties and the state have to play a central role precisely to try to transcend such atomization. When that happens then a space could be opened up for the more direct routes of social empowerment. In any case, the argument is that these multiple pathways complement each other and all need to be pursued in one way or another.]**

2. My sense of pessimism after reading this chapter has, in part, also to do with the use the idea of civil society. I’m skeptical of the term because it implies a coherence of civil associations that doesn’t really exist. “Civil Society” is a bourgeois notion of which Marx was scathingly critical but which is used very broadly in sociology. Can reframe civil society as a disparate composite containing significant antagonism, and also differentiate between bourgeois and socialist (or rather, potentially socialist) elements within civil society? That may help our strategic thinking while also informing our conception of possibilities and pitfalls of social change that depends entirely on civil empowerment (given no long-term crisis tendency in capitalism). **[I have toyed at various times with talking about bourgeois civil society and popular civil society, or something like that, but it didn’t seem to work. I now like to think of the problem in a way parallel to the way I think of the state: The state in capitalist society is a “capitalist state” in the sense that its structures and apparatuses are designed in such a way as to facilitate the reproduction of capitalist economic power. But the state is not merely a capitalist state: it is also a “state in capitalist society” filled with internal contradictions, statist economic organizations and arenas of popular democratic contestation. The same is true for civil society: it is an arena of struggle and organization, of social movements and popular power**

and solidarities as well as atomization and particularism. The project of empowering civil society and subordinating both state power (democratization) and economic power to social power is therefore a project that involves a kind of double contestation: (1) there is a struggle for social empowerment, and (2) there is a struggle over the character of social empowerment, its class bases, its universalism and egalitarianism. So the idea here is not that we rely on civil society *as it is* and more than we rely on the state *as it is* but that the struggle for social empowerment is also a struggle for the transformation of civil society.

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## 8. Julian Rebon

It's very interesting the chapter. I send you two questions and one doubt.

What is the "indicator" or proxy variable in order to characterize an enterprise like "social ownership"? If a worker coop is democratic and equal between his members but doesn't share nothing with the population (Neighbors, other workers), It is a social ownership or collective private ownership? Nowadays some recovery enterprises in Argentina are equally between his members but employees other workers with worst conditions and without voice in the coop.

**[This is an excellent question. I think a coop of the sort you described is a mixed form: it combines within the social organization of the production unit itself capitalist and socialist elements. When I talk about the notion of economic "hybrids" combining capitalism, socialism and statism, this does not mean simply that there are capitalist, statist and socialist sectors or domains, but that within any given economic organization there could be all three forms articulated in some complex way. What I call social capitalism is another way in which capitalist and socialist elements are combined.]**

How do you analyses with your schema ("social", "private", "state" ownership) the "achievements" or successes in the different process emancipatory in the last century? In your opinion, What was the country (and period) nearest the socialism in the ruptural strategy or in the "real socialism"? What was the country nearest the socialism in the symbiotic strategy or in the social democracy"? Was nearest socialism the "Statism-socialism" hybrid process or the Capitalism-Socialism hybrid process? **[Your question mixes two different dimensions of the problem – (1) what countries/periods moved furthest along specific pathways, and (2) what countries represent the best example of strategies for movement. Ruptural strategies are associated with statist-socialism, symbiotic strategies with social democracy, and interstitial strategies with the social economy, but this is only a loose association. In any case, I think Northern European social democracy probably went the furthest in the direction of the social democratic statist pathway. Statist socialism in the context of ruptural strategies everywhere quickly became authoritarian statism rather than statist socialism (because of the disempowerment of civil society and popular social forces).]**

In the chapter you said "In capitalist societies the primary way that production in the social economy is financed is through charitable donations." I don't sure that this is true in Argentine. In my term paper you will find example that others fonts.

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## 9. Tod Van Gunten

I have a few questions oriented around the notion of rights, which is important in relation to the concept of ownership. While power and ownership are carefully defined, “rights” are only briefly defined as “effective powers” – but does this imply a distinction between “effective” and “ineffective powers?” It seems to me that “effectiveness” is built into the definition of power offered here. Thus, I wonder if there is a meaningful distinction between rights and powers in this context. Are property “rights” really just powers to appropriate and dispose of means of production (I assume that here we are primarily referring to ownership of productive assets rather than other forms of property)? This seems to matter both for a critique of existing forms of property and the development of alternative conceptions of property. The term “right” obviously has a normative dimension to it; liberal theorists of capitalism emphasize this sense of “right.” Is there a socialist way to think about property *rights* in a normative sense as opposed to mere powers? **[I think the distinction between rights and powers is this: a power is a capacity to do things. You have power over the means of production when you have the capacity to deploy them. Rights refer to the legitimate exercise of power, and this usually means that the powers in question are enforced by the state. In a stable system rights and powers coincide, but they may not perfectly overlap. Actors may have de facto powers in excess of their rights, for example. States can formally reassign rights without the powers effectively changing.]** In particular, I am thinking of the following: property rights under capitalism are individual rights; they divide up powers over means of production and other assets among individuals (or perhaps households). But “social power” is defined here as the power that flows from voluntary association and collective action. This (as the term “collective action” suggests) has an inherently group-oriented dimension to it. So if there is such a thing as “socialist property rights” are these individual rights, or are they some form of group rights – in which case, which groups? **[I am not sure how best to think about Socialist property rights. They might be rights attached to collectivities, or they might refer to the individual’s rights to participate in the exercise of social power over economic resources.]** This raises another issue that seems important to consider in this regard – that of the *distribution* of powers/rights. Isn’t one of the defining features of capitalism that property rights over the most important sources of social wealth are relatively concentrated (stock ownership notwithstanding)? And shouldn’t socialism seek to replace this concentrated form of distribution with a more even one? It seems to me that this is an important aspect of socialism that is relatively neglected here; the emphasis on the relative balance of power among different spheres underplays the important question of how power is distributed within these spheres.

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## 10. María Ana González.

Something that it has been a constant interrogation while reading this chapter was the concept of Civil Society. As it is described in the text, “it is the sphere of social interaction in which people voluntarily form associations of different sorts for various purposes. (...) The idea of a “community”, when it means something more than simply the aggregation of individual living in a place, can also be viewed as a kind of informal association within civil society”.

So some other concepts of civil society came into my mind while reading. For example, Gramsci’s proposal in which he describes Civil Society as the institutional arena where the

ideological and political clash between classes takes place. Examples of it could be the school, church, media, etc. as extension of the State. And he also describes the cultural, political and ideological disputes that take place in it. **[I have never fully understood Gramsci's concept of civil society when it includes things like state-run schools. I agree that civil society – in my definition – is an arena within which ideological and political clashes take place, not only between classes but between a variety of different social interests that become associationally organized. I am not quite sure how best to map out these different concepts and link them together.]**

And this idea also drives me to think about the concept of the State itself. The conceptualization in this chapter proposes no place for this possibility of understanding it as an arena of negotiations, contradictions, heterogeneous functioning logics. **[I certainly agree with you that the state should be treated in just the way you describe here: as an arena of contestation, contradiction, struggles. Remember in this analysis I am speaking about *statism* as a form of economic structure, not about the state per se. I am concerned with state power as the basis for controlling economic activities, production, distribution, rather than with the state as such. There are also the ideological and political apparatuses of the state – which classically Marxists referred to as the superstructure. In any case, there is nothing in the concept I am using which implies it is a homogeneous, unitary, functional machine. Just as capitalist firms are filled with contradictions and contestation, so is the state.]**

Going back to the role of civil society described in this paper, and thinking about the skeptical notes in regard of *Civil society and social power* which are stated in the conclusions, I wonder not also about the benign character of the associations consistent with socialist ideals of democratic egalitarianism but also about the apathy and alienation. **[Apathy and alienation – like atomization mentioned by Edo – are certainly problems in civil society that can undercut the potential for social empowerment. This is why transforming civil society and engaging in strategies which revitalize the public sphere is part of the process of social empowerment.]**

I don't want to sound totally skeptical, instead I would like to give importance to the role of popular education or collective empowerment in this point.

## 11. Rodolfo Elbert

In chapter 4, the *state* is defined as “the organization with an administrative capacity to impose binding rules and regulations over territories”; the economy “is the sphere of social activity in which people interact to produce and distribute goods and services” and civil society “is the sphere of social interaction in which people voluntarily form associations of different sorts for various purposes”. I would like to discuss the relationship between these definitions of state, economy and civil society and classical marxists notions of *class structure* and *class struggle*. In other words: what is the role of a structural definition of class relations in this conceptual map? We have already discussed in quite detail the notions of state and the economy, so I would like to focus now the discussion on the relationship between class struggle and civil society. A classical idea is to understand civil society as a site of class struggle. Has this idea a place on Wright's definition?**[All three of these arenas/domains are sites of class struggle insofar as collective**

actions organized around class can have objects of struggle aspects of economic structures, states and civil society.] If we understand the civil society the way Wright poses it, how to explain that powerful classes in the economic domain has greater means for associative power than the rest of the social groups? [I don't quite see why there is an explanatory problem here. Powerful groups in the economic domain – i.e. groups with wealth and income derived from their economic powers – are advantaged in creating associational power because even if participation is based on voluntary action, associations also need financial resources, media exposure, buildings in which to meet, etc, etc., and having access to money enhances these aspects of associational activity. This is part of what makes civil society have a distinctive character in a society with a largely capitalist economy: capitalism through various mechanisms penetrates and shapes civil society and the associations within it. This is analogous to the way capitalism penetrates and shapes the state as well.] And even more, that most of the time there is a clash between groups supporting and representing different class interests (political parties, trade unions). How these class dynamics of civil society affect Wright's definition? If we don't take into account structural contradictions within civil society, then *social power* can be understood as a positive source for social change. But what if some kinds of social power are counterbalanced by other *kinds* of social power? (let's say that social power expressing the associative power of the working class is counterbalanced by the employer's associative power). How these affect Wright's emphasis on social power as the source of social change? [The idea of economic power being subordinated to social power – of the economy being subordinated to power in civil society – does not imply that social power is itself organized in an egalitarian manner. This is one of the things people will struggle over in moving along the pathways of social empowerment: struggles over the character of civil society itself and the distribution of social power within it. But there is another issue here which should be stressed: The example you gave, of power based in the economy being translated into social power implies an arrow in my diagrams from economic power to civil society. In such an instance civil society becomes route through which economic power is exercised. This is parallel to some of the pathways to social empowerment that work through the state: what I call statist socialism, for example, is a pathway of social empowerment because power which originates in civil society through voluntary association affects economic activity through the ways it affects state power. This, I argued, was statist socialism not pure statism because of this subordination of state power to social power. In your example there is a kind of subordination of social power to economic power, and therefore to the extent that the economy/civil society had this kind of process this would cease to be a form of social empowerment. This is somewhat like my point about social democratic statist economic regulation degenerating to capitalist statist economic regulation depending upon the way sources of power control the exercise of state power.] An addition to this interrogation would then be the discussion of the notion of power presented in chapter 2. Wright says: “the simple idea of power as the *capacity* of actors to accomplish things in the world, to generate effects in the world” (p.2) In which ways can we specify the notion of “things” and the notion of “effects”. In relation to my previous discussion, Wright includes the idea that power usually involves domination, or that “power *to* often depends upon power *over*”. How this definition includes power *against*, or what could be understood as power to *resist* domination. This kind of power would be inherent to groups seeking social change, and could be related to power *over* (the current dominant groups), but I don't think these two could be equated. [The power to resist is a form of “power over”: that is,

**if workers can resist capitalists then they have power over the capitalists' ability to force workers to do certain things. The idea of power over is relational power – the power to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do. A strike accomplishes this when it forces a wage raise, for example.]**

I would also like to include some unrelated, but relevant conceptual and empirical discussions:

1. Social ownership of the means of production means that “income-generating property is owned in common by everyone in a “society”, and thus everyone has the collective right to the net income generated by the use of those means of production and the collective right to dispose of the property which generates this income” (p.4) I find troubling the emphasis that this notion puts on the individuals. Let’s take the example of key natural resources, like oil production [bracketing the ecological implications of this activity]. In the case of most Latin American countries, oil extraction and production has been privatized and is conducted by multinational companies. Let’s assume that the state nationalizes these resources. What should be done next? According to the *social ownership* ideal, each citizen of the country should receive part of the income generated by the activity. **[No, this is not the implication. They have a *collective right to the income*. One choice when exercising that collective right would be to give everyone their per capita portion of the income. Another choice would be to use it for collective investment. The collective right means that the decision must be made through a deeply democratic-egalitarian process, but there is no a priori reason to believe that individualizing the benefits would be the preferred choice. This is parallel to the idea that having an individual right to income does not prejudice the question of whether you use the income to satisfy person needs or to help others.]** According to the state-centered ideal, the resources would be state-managed and then could, ideally, be allocated to education, health, etc. **[But if they are state-managed *without their being a strong collective right on the basis of social ownership*, then the state bureaucracy could allocate all of the revenues to the military or to the consumption of state elites.]** So, if the goal is to achieve social justice, which way would we prefer to the management and distribution of oil revenues?
  2. When discussing the spatial metaphors for the domains of social interactions Bourdieu’s notion of field is missing. Shouldn’t it be included in the discussion? (footnote 5, page 6) **[Sure – field is another spatial metaphor, no better or worse than others.]**
  3. When discussing the difference between “residual claimancy and surplus” in p. 4. What is the role of appropriation of surplus labor. How to differentiate from neoclassical economics without this notion? We have already discussed this, but the absence of a “surplus labor” concept appears again when reading about distribution of “surplus”. **[For these purposes I think surplus is a better concept than just surplus labor, since we are not just concerned about the allocation and control of surplus by the laboring persons who generated the surplus. We are concerned about the social control over the surplus, and social power is exercised by people who do not perform surplus labor (retired people, students, people in unproductive decommodified activities, etc.). ]**
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## 12. Santiago Rodriguez

The objective of this chapter is to explore the institutional design for a radical democratic egalitarian alternative to capitalism and discuss principles of institutional innovation for social empowerment. It aims in the description and the analysis of three ways of organizing power over the economy: capitalism, statism, and socialism.

I really enjoyed the chapter and your proposals are very interesting. I send my comments.

The first, when you describe forms of power and distinguish: economic power (based on the control economic resources), state power (based on control over rule making enforcing capacity over territory) and social power (based on the capacity to mobilize people for voluntary collective actions), does not appear the inter-connections between different power forms and social class in the capitalism. Could you please comment? **[Social classes within capitalism are formed through the way economic power is organized – or what we call the social relations of production. Actors whose power is formed within capitalism, then, try to use power based in other spheres to advance their interests. Workers try to mobilize power within civil society through association-building, especially political parties and unions, but also other forms of social movements and associations. They also try to translate such social power into influence on state power. Capitalists more directly try to use state power to pursue their interests, and insofar as the state is well designed for this purpose, they have all sorts of advantages in doing so. In any case both the state and civil society are arenas within which classes whose power and positions are rooted in the economic structure attempt to augment their power for various purposes.]**

The second, in capitalist society exists different ideological and political postures. I would like to discuss the effectiveness of social empowerment, because it depends on the institutional mechanisms with facilitate mobilization and deployment of social power. Is possible a confluence of different ideological and political postures in the social institutions? How to converge different ideological orientations in the social empowerment? This comment is skeptical, but is very difficult to envision this idea in Argentina. **[I am not 100% sure I understand the question here. There is no presumption that the voluntary associations formed within civil society converge ideologically or politically. Indeed, an irreducible pluralism of identities and associations is one of the desirable properties of civil society in terms of its value as an arena of voluntary association. The question, then, is whether social power can be rendered coherent in spite of this heterogeneity. This is one of the central tasks for political parties, a special kind of association within civil society]**

The last question is about social economy. In the chapter you say “The social economy” constitutes an alternative way of directly organizing economic activity that is distinct from capitalist market production, state organized production, and household production. Its hallmark is production organized by collectivities directly to satisfy human needs not subject to the discipline of profit-maximization or state-technocratic rationality”. The capitalism way of organize production produces exploitation and surplus-value, in the social economic what’s happened? **[In a pure social economy there is no surplus produced: it is production for needs, not production for accumulation. The activities may be remunerated, but only sufficiently to reproduce the conditions of production. In a social economy that involves some market production there may be a surplus produced, but the surplus would take the**

**form of a collective surplus to be allocated for collective purposes. The precise mechanisms for this could be quite variable.]** In a democratic process of social empowerment, which are the institutional mechanisms for eliminating exploitation and surplus-value? **[In a fully developed democratic process of social empowerment the surplus is collectively controlled and allocated through democratic processes. There is surplus produced – and surplus value if you measure this in terms of the labor theory of value – but it is collectively appropriated rather than privately appropriated, and it is allocated on the basis of democratic priorities.]**

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### 13. Pablo Dalle

The objective of chapter “*socialist compass*” is to analyse socialism as a social system differentiated from capitalism as well as socialism. The chapter starts discussing that the meaning of social in socialism exceeded the simple idea of public ownership of the means of production in opposition to capitalism. A wider definition of socialism is related to the ways that power is rooted in the economy, the state and civil society. Then it analyses five pathways that social power can be translated into effective control over economic production and distribution.

The first topic I would like to discuss is the relations between class locations in the class structure and the participation in social empowerment. It is suggested that the distinction between “ownership” and “control” in contemporary societies open spaces for social innovation. However, the directors and managers gets privilege rents which are indeed mechanism of exploitation. So, is there a relation between the objective location that people have in the social class structure and their participation in an emancipatory social project? In which sense the distinction between ownership and control of the means of production could be understood as an opportunity to social change? **[I think some of what I said in response to Rodolfo’s interrogation applies here as well: class-based power within capitalism can shape the development and use of social power. Actors with privileged positions within capitalism can often translate their economic power into social power – by funding associations, for example, or through organizing NGOs through rich corporate sponsored foundations which penetrate civil society. To the extent that they do this, this almost always undercuts the role of social power for an emancipatory social project. I say almost always rather than always: Engels provided funds for Marx, after all, and wealthy capitalists have contributed to socialist parties, social movements, progressive civil associations, and so on.]**

Referring to the definition to the state, it is a key apparatus to produce and reproduce a social system by several mechanisms: imposing rules, regulating social relations, constructing ideology and coercion. I would like to discuss the potentiality of the concept of relative autonomy of the state from capital and in which sense the state has a special role in constructing a new radical democratic society. **[Here is how I like to think of this problem: It is an achievement of a dominant class to be able to shape the institutional structure of states in such a way that power exercised by the state remains within limits that serve their class interests. In capitalism when this occurs we can refer to the state as a “capitalist state” not merely a “state in capitalist society.” The same can be said about civil society: to the extent that capitalist power shapes the contours of civil society then you have a bourgeois civil society rather than just a civil society in capitalism. Both the capitalist state and bourgeois**



**civil society are obstacles to social empowerment. One way of thinking of the idea of “hegemonic capitalism” is that this is a situation in which capitalism has successfully – if not permanently – shaped by state and civil society in ways which have this functional-reproductive quality. A counter-hegemonic struggle is one that tries to fracture this coherence. This is possible because the capitalist state is never a fully unitary functionalized system of apparatuses – it is also always a state in capitalist society in which there are openings for other kinds of political effects. The same for civil society: there are always possibilities for voluntary association unsubordinated to power derived from capitalist power. This is the space opened by social movements, community networks, and so on.]** As it says in the chapter the state could restrict certain powers of owners of capital and this becomes a pathway to social empowerment if the process is subordinated to social power. In that sense the associative democracy is relevant in the decision making process. But it seems that the capacity of the state to construct a new social order is evaluated for its procedures not by its results.

Civil society is defined as a dimension of “social interaction in which people voluntary form associations of different sorts of various purposes”. What are consequences for social empowerment the fact that some of these associations are invaded by capitalistic logic? I am thinking in clubs such as big soccer teams or basketball. In their trajectories they begin as voluntary associations and become capitalist enterprises. **[This is an inherent problem in civil society: because of the distribution of wealth in capitalism, associations in civil society are easily seduced into subordination to corporate power. But note: this is not necessarily a bad thing relative to the realistic alternatives. “Selling out” may actually improve the efficacy of an association given the constraints it faces. The Ford Foundation provided substantial funds for the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. It would not have happened at anywhere near the scale it did – and perhaps not at all – without this foundation support. The Ford Foundation gets its resources from capitalist investments in its endowments. It is a “powerful” foundation because of its economic power. Its support is inherently ambiguous, but on balance a good thing I think.]**

The last issue I would like to discuss concerns the definition of socialism. In this definition it is said that social power does not preclude the possibility that market could play a substantial role in coordinating the activities of socially owned and controlled enterprises. Could the logic of the market drive process of concentration and accumulation like in capitalism? **[The idea of a strong role for the market within socialism presupposes that the basic control over the allocation of investments and organization of production and distribution is governed by social power. What this means is that the surplus generated through production coordinated by market activities would be largely appropriated by socially controlled entities and then used for socially-determined purposes. If there was a collective decision that concentration of production was a good thing for some aspect of the economy, then this could generate concentration, but not because of the autonomous workings of the market as such, but because of the democratic mechanisms through which social power is used in conjunction with those market processes.]** Does exploitation disappear in socialism? How can we analyse the differences in the benefits of everyone who participate in the production?

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#### 14. Ruth Sautu

Relating to the state as a pathway of social empowerment, it has its limitations. Power is the capacity to induce other subjects' decision by the simple act of retires oneself. For example corporations have power to induce countries to accept their contractual decisions by otherwise refusing to invest in their territories or by refusing to sell or buy their commodities. Could you please comment on the capacity of capitalist corporations to induce (and force) the acceptance of their rules of game? **[Capitalist corporations clearly have enormous power to enforce specific rules of the game, and this is why it is always difficult to expand the arenas for bottom up, autonomous social power within a society dominated by capitalism. Capitalist power fundamentally subverts deep democracy. That being said, I think corporations have an interest in making people believe that their power is greater than it really is, that there is less room to manoeuvre that actually exist, and that they can more or less unilaterally dictate rules of the game. Globalization has enhanced this ideological vision of capitalist omnipotence. I think there is much more space for counter-hegemonic strategies and institutional development – or at least, (to be honest) I like to think the contradictions and possibilities are real. In any case, the prospects for emancipatory social change depends upon the rules of the game not being rigidly set by the interests of corporations.]**

In relation to the main characteristics of each system of production, capitalism assumes achievement and competition as a key psychological feature of successful human beings. What are, or should be, the key psychological features of humans who engage in voluntary collective actions? **[I don't think it is realistic to imagine human beings without achievement aspirations of one sort or another, and probably some degree of competitive motivation is also unavoidable. The issue is more how these motivations are linked to others, and how powerfully they drive action. Thus human beings are also motivated by the search for meaning and community, and meaning can be found in the capacity to help others and enlarge the social spaces for human flourishing. An economy organized around social empowerment would be one anchored in these sorts of motivations, but of course articulated to achievement, competition, personal gratification and the conventional motivations of market economies as well.]**

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#### 15. Guillaume Neault

I find that 'The Socialist Compass' is a challenging and conceptually rich chapter. I read it over a few times, but I am not convinced I fully grasp the nuance of your arguments, especially when it comes to 'ownership' and the dyad economy/civil society. I propose to discuss these two points and I want to say a few words about the social economy. I'll use an imaginary scenario to illustrate my ignorance. Let us imagine that you and I go into business next summer – E&G LawnCare. We invest five dollars each to buy the means of production, and for three successive months, we work together mowing lawns in Madison. Let's also say that we collectively have the right to the net income and the means of production. Is it fair to say that the institutional design of our enterprise satisfies the definition of private ownership and social ownership? (Footnote: Here is the definition you proposed for private ownership and social ownership. *Private ownership* means that individuals and groups of individuals have legally enforceable rights to buy and sell income-generating property. *Social ownership* of the means of production

means that income-generating property is owned in common by everyone in a society, and thus everyone has the collective right to the net income generated by the use of those means of production and the collective right to dispose of the property which generates this income.)**[I would describe this as private ownership where we are co-equal partners in a private enterprise. No one has claims on our revenue stream besides us. But note here: if we introduce democratically generated taxation into process, and those taxes are used for social purposes, then one already has a limited element of social ownership in the process. This is why libertarians regard taxation as theft!]**

But, would it not be more appropriate to label it 'social ownership' because economic power is subordinated to social power? **[I assume here that you are saying it is subordinated because we are voluntarily cooperating and because we did not really have wealth to bring to the enterprise. This could be the case if we didn't invest anything other than our time – suppose you didn't need your initial \$5 each.]** My objective is to explore the difference between private ownership and social ownership – I think it would be useful to discuss further what is implied by 'dominant form' (page 6). Leaving state ownership aside (parks, lakes, and other natural resources) it seems to me that any enterprise is, in the first instance, private – even 'socially owned' enterprises usually restrict entry for a number of reasons. **[I think you have identified a theoretical issue in this conceptual space. Some people in fact regard capitalism as an economic system based entirely on voluntary association of freely cooperating people. A corporation is a voluntary association – no one is forced to be a member. In your example of a partnership – which is the limiting case of a co-operative – there are no employees, so the case of it being a voluntary association is stronger. And note the name we give to such enterprises: co-operatives. So there definitely is a social power component to co-operatives. The ownership of the enterprise, however, remains private rather than social because only the insiders have claims on the income. I guess the way to think of this is in terms of the hybrid notion: there are social and private dimensions to the ownership relations within a cooperative.]**

Keeping in mind our example of LawnCare business, I want to go over the economy/civil society dyad. Here again, I have some difficulty to classify our enterprise. As I already stated, we are collectively making decisions about how to dispose of the net income, so does it mean that we fit the category of social capitalism? (Footnote: Social capitalism: social empowerment over the way the economic power of capital is exercised over the economy.) In your definition of social capitalism, you refer to "control over allocation, organization, and use of capital," but it doesn't say anything explicit about 'production.' Since we are a profit-driven business, is it better to think of our enterprise as a capitalist institution? **[I think you are making an interesting proposal here: Thinking about cooperatives more generally, not just our mini-coop partnership of LawnCare, it might make more sense to see a market oriented cooperative as a form of social capitalism rather than social economy. There is a social power element which controls the capital invested, but the capital is still organized as private market-oriented production and exchange. So, in addition to treating things like union controlled pension funds as examples of social capitalism, a cooperative would also be a different kind of example. Have to think about this more.]**

One minor critical point: on page 11 you state that 'Socialism can be contrasted to capitalism and statism in terms of the form of power that shapes economic activity – the production and

distribution of goods and services. Specifically, the greater the degree and forms of social empowerment over *ownership, use* and *control* of economic resources and activities, the more we can describe an economy as socialist'. If you adhere to this definition, I don't think that CPE (childcare coops in Québec) is compatible with the category of the social economy because each ingredient (heavy tax subsidies and policy-making) is a *necessary* conditions for the existence of CPE – it is not a matter of degree and form over use and control of capital. In fact, CPE has little control over its budget. **[But this budget is determined through a state that is reasonably democratic, so there is a strong social empowerment component over the allocation of resources for the childcare coops. This is a statist socialist component of the social economy activity. It is the combination of these two that makes the system work, and I think counts as a movement in the direction of a more socialist economy.]**

One major critical point: Erik, you omitted é to Québec! This is of utmost importance to me!

## 16. Rodrigo Salgado

Two points I want to mark.

First, you wrote that socialism, “is thus not equivalent to the working class controlling the means of production through its collective associations. Rather social empowerment over the economy means broad-based encompassing economic democracy.” If capitalism is a firstly is an economic structure within which the means of production are privately owned, what is the role of the working class “taking control”, or “taking property” of the means of production in an egalitarian an democratic project? It is possible to think an alternative to capitalism without the working class controlling the means of production? Is this a necessary condition but not sufficient, or is not necessary at all? **[I think it is almost certainly a necessary condition for the full development of socialism – that is, for moving along the pathways I have chartered sufficiently that capitalism becomes subordinated to social power – that the working class be empowered within production, and that collective associations of workers play a central role in economic governance, especially through associative democracy mechanisms. Workers occupy a privileged place within the project of economic democracy – or democratizing the economy – because they do the work of the economy, they are interior to its processes. But I do not think it is correct, as Marxists used to say (at least rhetorically) that socialism consists only of workers being in power over the economy as a whole. Being worker does not give anyone a privileged position with respect to questions of long-term investments, overall social priorities for different uses of the surplus, the dilemmas and priorities for meeting human needs, and so on. (side note here: This argument depends, of course, on what one means by “worker”. If everyone who is not a capitalist is a worker – if this means 90% of the population – then worker and citizen become almost equivalent. I am assuming here that the working class does not include virtually everyone.) These broad social choices should be made by all people affected by the decisions on the basis of the egalitarian principles of political justice discussed in chapter 1.]**

Second, I'm not sure that worker cooperatives can constitute examples of social ownership, even if there is an equal organization on the right of the property coop between his member, or

there is an equal distribution of power and decisions, or equal distribution of the incomes. **[see my comments on Guillaume's interrogation.]**

Even if these principles could be found in a cooperative, the income-generating property is not owned in common by everyone in a "society", but just by the labor collective-power. They express mostly private collective ownership than a social one. There could be an equalitarianism inside the cooperative between the workers, but not necessary any relationship with the rest of the "society". It is possible to think that there are private collective forms of ownership, not necessary capitalists, not completely socialist, and personified by workers that can generate social innovations? If it is, what's the link between that collective ownership and the social/private one?

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### 17. Hanif Nu'Man

In Chapter 4 you discuss 'The Social Economy,' particularly an alternative for the state, through its capacity to tax, to provide funding for a wide range of socially-organized non-market production. How do you propose creating this type of structure when the program is in conflict with federal laws and statutes? Using your health care example, the Canadian health care system operates under the Canada Health Act - a national statute (i.e., regulatory device) that sets forth the mandate that all citizens be insured. By contrast, the US uses the same type of regulatory device to create the Health Maintenance Act of 1973 to provide grants and loans to health maintenance organizations. Because the use of state power, through laws and regulatory statutes, has a significant impact on the feasibility of associational democracy at the state and local level, how can social empowerment be effective when it conflicts with the parameters set forth in the law? It seems that both the US and Canada set out to address the health care issue: Canada decided to pay for its citizens' health care, the US decided to pay HMOs to manage it - both within the confines of their respective laws. **[If it is the case that an existing legal structure blocks the possibility of a specific form of social empowerment over the economy – in this case, a specific type of social economy institution – then what you have to do is to struggle to change the laws. After all, there was a time in Canada when it was also true that the laws did not provide for these sorts of arrangements. Some kinds of innovations can work in the spaces allowed by existing legal rules, but others cannot.]**

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### 18. Eduardo Cavieres

I find extremely interesting the distinction between state and civil society on one hand, and the difference between Statism and socialism on the other. The reason why I find it so useful is that historically, in many cases these concepts seemed to have been totally intertwined. From example, the very notion of representative democracy seems to imply that State represents the interest of the majority of the people, which clearly has not been the case. Erik also explains very clearly how statism and socialism have been combined in the particular history of the Soviet Union and become intrinsically linked.

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Having those distinctions in mind, I think it becomes much clearer to understand the socialist compass. Now, how can these elements be historically reconfigured or rearticulated? Does Erik see the process in which the civil society gains more power through a sequence that is similar to the order he has used to present them? (Civil society gains power over state, then over the regulation of economy; then assumes a leading role over the economy, etc). Would such process (if it is possible to be imagined in such a way) still depend on the expansion of crisis in capitalism? Or do we have to think only in terms of small gains in civil society and rely on the unpredicted turns of history? **[I don't think of the sequence of my presentation of the pathways as a temporal sequence of actual institutional innovation. The sequence was meant more to move from the more familiar to the less familiar forms. I do not think that there is any "natural" sequencing along these pathways, although I suppose that in general the pathways through the state have a pivotal role to play in opening up the spaces for the other pathways, since legal rules and state policies can block off or open up other possibilities. Capitalist crisis certainly will continue to play a role, since crisis creates opportunities for institution building and innovation. But it is a mistake, I think, to imagine that instability is always favorable to advances and experimentation.]**

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