Towards an Alternative to Neo-Liberalism: Class, Institutional and Organizational Analysis of the Role of Public, Nonprofit and Market Mechanisms for Achieving Social Justice

Michael A. Dover, MSW, Ph.D.

Abstract: Over-reliance upon class analysis has obscured analysis of more universal human concerns related to human needs and rights as well as the natural environment. Marxism and social democracy’s reliance upon state socialism has not proven to be a viable alternative, nor has class struggle been a sufficient force producing social change. A viable alternative should counterpoise human rationality and democratic processes against unrestrained market forces. A more sophisticated form of policy analysis is needed which can rely upon class, organizational, and institutional analysis as well as analysis of inequalities based upon gender, race and ethnicity in order to ascertain the best mix of public, nonprofit and for-profit social production needed within each policy domain in order to meet universal human needs in a culturally informed manner and in a way consistent with universal human rights.
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Alternatives to Neoliberalism

This paper seeks to contribute to a growing literature which is devoted to developing alternatives to neo-liberalism. This literature has tended to focused on various policy domains such as health, education, and social welfare, as well as on various areas of the world, in particular Latin America (Petras 1997). However, there have also been some efforts to address the overall question of an ideological alternative to neoliberalism.

For instance, in Neo-Liberalism or Democracy: Economic Strategy, Markets and Alternatives for the 21st Century (MacEwan 1999), Arthur MacEwan, an economist who was prominent in debates about NAFTA (MacEwan 1996), developed a full-length treatment which stresses that the only real alternative to neoliberalism’s reliance upon the rule of “unregulated, private decision-making” (MacEwan 1999: 4) is to develop an alternative democratic economic development strategy.

His main point was that “there are alternatives to the current orthodoxy” (MacEwan 1999: 3). He re-emphasized, “The neo-liberals maintain not simply that their favoured development policies are best. They claim that there is no alternative” (1999: 6). He concluded, “Contrary to the claims of its proponents, there are alternatives to the neo-liberal course, and these alternatives are far preferable both in terms of immediate and long-term consequences” (1999: 8). (Emphases in the original.) There are, in other words, progressive and humanistic alternatives on the left to the orthodoxy on the right.

Relying upon Andre Gorz’s advocacy of revolutionary reforms (Gorz 1966), his goal is to conceive of “alternatives that are practical in the sense that they could actually be implemented within the existing socio-economic framework and that are significant in the sense that they would bring about, or at least have the potential to bring about, substantial changes in the social organization and power” (1966: 14). Politically, MacEwan’s alternatives are consistent with the ideological approach typologized in this paper as the “revolutionary democratic” approach, as opposed to revolutionary Marxism, orthodox Marxism, or social democracy. This typology is presented further below. As I will demonstrate with this typology, the prevailing strategies being relied upon to oppose neoliberalism are rooted in an orthodoxy of the left.

The new thinking represented by strategists such as Nicos Poulantzas, Andrew Gorz and others has never consolidated itself within any distinct political trend on the left. The result is over-reliance upon strategies which are unable to mount a significant challenge to neo-liberalism overall. Furthermore, within the academy and within the left, there has not evolved any significant new form of policy analysis which can be relied upon to develop specific alternatives to neo-liberalism as it manifests itself within various policy domains and regions.

This paper seeks to present an outline of an overall political and ideological alternative to neoliberalism, based upon an approach labeled the “revolutionary democratic” approach. In addition, it suggests a particular form of policy analysis consistent with that approach. I argue that whether we are analyzing a social cleavage or ascertaining which kind of legislation and
regulation we need in a particular policy domain, we need to use class, organizational and institutional analysis as well as equity analysis linked to understanding the role of gender, race and class in order to ascertain within each policy realm (health care, employment, housing, international cooperation for each and security, etc.) what is the best mix of funding sources (public, private-for-profit, nonprofit) and delivery vehicles (public, private-for-profit, nonprofit) to create culturally-specific ways of ensuring universal human needs are met, consistent with human rights.

**Definition of neoliberalism:**

Although neo-liberalism is one of the most widely used concepts in modern political discourse, there are few good definitions available. As Daniel Levy has pointed out (1998: 413: “One of the reasons it is difficult to specify what is neoliberal policy is, clearly, that there is no exact, consensual definition of neoliberalism.”

In his Monthly Review article, “Noam Chomsky and the Struggle against Neo-Liberalism,” Robert McChesney defined neoliberalism in the following manner (McChesney 1999: 40):

> Neoliberalism is the defining political economic paradigm of our time—it refers to the policies and processes whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit. Associated initially with Reagan and Thatcher, neoliberalism has for the past two decades been the dominant global political economic trend adopted by political parties of the center, much of the traditional left, and the right. These parties and the policies they enact represent the immediate interests of extremely wealthy investors and less than one thousand large corporations.

Although this was his definition, McChesney argued that in common usage in the United State in particular (McChesney 1999): “neoliberal initiatives are characterized as free market policies that encourage private enterprise and consumer choice, reward personal responsibility and entrepreneurial initiative, and undermine the dead hand of the incompetent, bureaucratic, and parasitic government.”

Before proceeding, it is important to relate definitions of neo-liberalism to those of related concepts such as neo-conservatism and liberal internationalism. In his deconstructive and foundational critique of liberal internationalism and neoconservatism, James Thuo Gathii helped place definitions of neoliberalism within a broader context. Gathii argued (2000: 2002): “The neoconservative tradition is specific to the United States and is embedded in American exports such as neoliberalism and democracy-promotion programs......Neoconservatism in the post-Second World War period arose as a counterpoint to New Deal liberalism.” Gathii defines liberal internationalism as a belief in a “universal culture of liberal democracy and free markets” and neoconservatism as a belief in maintaining “the integrity of sovereign states that have effective control of their populations be restricting intervention in their internal affairs.” (2000: 1997). Seen in this light, democracy-promotion and the prevention of genocide or ethnic cleansing is the essence of liberal internationalism and in its interventive variety is referred to as
liberal interventionism or international interventionism in its U.N. variety. Neo-conservatism is in theory less interventionist in its orientation and is indeed quite willing to tolerate dictatorships if they are otherwise friendly to U.S. policy. But neo-conservatism is quite willing to engage in interventionism when states either fail to control their population or cross certain boundaries of behavior that are acceptable to the U.S. (Panama, Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq, most recently).

According to such definitions, both liberal internationalism and neo-conservatism should be seen within the broader context of neo-liberalism. Gathii provided a more precise explanation of neoliberalism and its institutional foundations. Stressing its Euro-American-centric nature, he pointed out that neo-liberalism relies upon “otherwise neutral-sounding economic justifications in favor of free markets” (2000: 1999). Neoliberalism found its roots in the Bretton Woods institutions founded following the Second World War. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) was designed to provide member countries with long term development project loans. The International Monetary Fund was formed to lend member countries funds for a shorter period in order to enable currency transactions and ameliorate short-term deficits in foreign exchange. Both institutions engaged in what Gathii refers to as “policy-based lending” rooted in “conditionality” (2000:1999): “These conditionalties include: national economic integration into the international economic through liberalization and deregulation; currency devaluation to spark export-oriented growth; and a reduction of government spending, particularly to control fiscal deficits, among other reforms.” It is these reforms and these policies which constitute Gathii’s definition of neo-liberalism, and he points out they have also been referred to as the Washington Consensus.

These definitions are adequate for our present purposes and I won’t seek to thoroughly examine the many approaches to defining neoliberalism, but there is one well considered discussion which merges the concepts of neoliberalism and globalization by using the term neoliberal globalizations (NLG). Ian Robinson, a political scientist currently teaching sociology and labor studies at the University of Michigan, developed a typology of ideological responses to NLG. In his unpublished paper (Robinson 2002), Ian did a within and between region analysis of economic inequality over the past 20 years. He found that the North-South gap remained huge but there were some divergent trends, including faster growth amongst Asian nations. Ian developed a typology of approaches to economic globalization. He distinguished between two regulatory models, the Keynesian model and the Neoliberal model. And then he presented a typology of five main political responses to economic globalization. I will discuss his typology, and another typology presented by Manning Marable. I will discuss and critique two grassroots responses to neoliberalism, the new social movements and some disturbing reactions to neoliberalism. Next, I will present my own typology ideological responses to neo-liberalism, namely Revolutionary Marxism, Orthodox Marxism, Social Democracy and Revolutionary Democracy. Finally, I will present an incipient analytic approach based upon a synthesis of class, organizational and institutional analysis of the best mix of public, nonprofit and private sector - within any particular domain - to meet human needs in a cultural specific manner. I believe that this kind of approach is the best way in which we can counterpoise human rationality and caring to unrestrained market forces.
In continuing his discussion of Chomsky, McChesney laid out the problem being addressed by this paper (1999: 41): “The ultimate trump card for the defenders of neoliberalism, however, is that there is no alternative. Communist societies, social democracies, and even modest social welfare states like the United States have all failed, the neoliberals proclaim, and their citizens have accepted neoliberalism as the only feasible course. It may well be imperfect, but it is the only economic system possible.” He also points out (1999: 46): “Neoliberalism's loudest message is that there is no alternative to the status quo, and that humanity has reached its highest level.”

McChesney discussed Noam Chomsky’s anarchist and libertarian socialist outlook, pointing out that Chomsky saw little new about neoliberalism, characterizing it in his book Profit Over People as merely “merely the current version of the battle for the wealthy few to circumscribe the political rights and civic powers of the many” (1999: 44). He stressed his view that neoliberalism is not merely the globalization of market forces but the global imposition by dominant states of that market process.

Does McChesney identify in Chomsky’s massive literature an actual alternative to neo-liberalism? Arguably, no. The closest he comes is to state (1999: 46):

> The notion that no superior alternative to the status quo exists is more farfetched today than ever, in this era when there are mind-boggling technologies for bettering the human condition. It is true that it remains unclear how we might establish a viable, free, and humane post-capitalist order; the very notion has a utopian air about it. But every advance in history, from ending slavery and establishing democracy to ending formal colonialism, has at some point had to conquer the notion that it was impossible to do because it had never been done before. (My emphasis)

Now, to be frank, give me utopian thinking any day, especially in these days of despair. In fact, there has been a refreshing recent resurgence of utopian thinking from important intellectuals. For instance, see David Harvey utopian concluding chapter in his book *Spaces of Hope*. Robin Kelley has also penned a recent pieces which asserts the primary of utopian urges. And consult the energetic and thoroughly considered theories of Human Need by Ian Gough and Len Doyal (1991), as well as Gough’s recent empirical research on human needs satisfaction within the framework of his juxtaposition of the needs of people and the needs of capital (Gough 2000). In addition to conceptualizing universal human needs in the context of universal human rights and the culturally specific ways they are met, Doyal and Gough also grafted to their theory a utopian path beyond minoptimal philosophical goals and towards a more liberatory level of human emancipation which they terms “critical autonomy.” In fact, I’d like to keep this utopian theme alive as this analysis proceeds.

**Reactions to Neo-Liberalism**

First I discuss reactions to neo-liberalism. These aren’t really alternatives to neoliberal globalization. They are types of reactions to it, although some may point to alternatives which arise out of struggles. Alternatives to neo-liberalism will be discussed in the next section. I
include Ian Robinson’s typology of five responses; Manning Marables typology of two responses, and Peter Marcus’s discussion of the potential of the Social Forum movements. I end this section with a critique of three retrogressive responses, totalitarian theocratic terrorist movements, ultra-leftist movements with anti-Semitic tendencies, and the rise of Anti-Americanism on the left in the U.S. and internationally.

Robinson’s typology of five responses to neoliberal globalization

Ian Robinson developed a typology of five responses, which includes the response of neo-liberals themselves!

1. Neo-liberals: The first element of his typology was the neoliberal response to globalization. Neoliberals tend to argue that globalization is not the cause of inequality, but that even if it were, the primary issue is poverty reduction not the reduction of inequality. The goal should be further neoliberal globalization and the subordination of national governments to this policy. Within the neoliberals he distinguished between economic interventionists and economic noninterventionists, with respect to global response to nation-state economic failures.

2. Techno-determinists: Techno-determinists are that globalization increase inequality in labor market outcomes and they admit that this is bad, but they feel that there is no alternative and that national governments should upgrade their education systems and use progressive taxation to address inequality. He placed Clinton, Reisch and Tom Friedman in this camp. Earlier, McChesney argued that neoliberalism is the policy of Reagan and Thatcher. If that is true, then what was the policy of Clinton and Blair? Interestingly enough, both Bill Clinton and Tony Blair are advocates of something they claim differs from neoliberalism. They claim to be adherents of a Third Way between capitalism and socialism. Although Robinson argued that they can be classified as techno-determinists, in my view such a categorization fails to fully appreciate the extent to which they consciously strove to articulate the Third Way. The Third Way is not gibberish, as long as class analysis is retained. In fact, as will be seen, the alternative I present further below is a form of Third Way thinking. A more developed version of this paper would more fully explore Anthony Gidden’s approach to the Third Way; examine the debates over “convergence” during the Cold war, etc..

3. Global Reformists: Global reformists, Ian argued, recognize that neoliberal globalization causes increased inequality, and again realize this is bad. But their approach to this problem is to reform international organizations. Global reformists differ in their approach in three ways: 1. Some focus on methods for restricting capital mobility (for instance, Paul Krugman and the Brookings Institution. 2. Some like Stiglitz would like to create new international institutions, with a previous example being the Bretton Woods agreement. 3. And the third group are what Ian calls Global Fordists. They want to “remake global market institutions to create the global equivalent of Fordist regulation”, in other words international worker rights and labor standards, trade sanctions if necessary, debt relief, etc.. The AFL-CIO, Economic Policy Institute, and Institute for Policy Studies tend to be in this group.
4. Anti-Globalizers: The anti-globalizers seek to somehow hold back globalization by abolishing many global institutions and exchanges, since they are beyond reform. By this he means establishment isolationist forces, not the grassroots new social movements I discuss below.

5. Economic nationalists. Finally, economic nationalists seek to turn globalization to national advantage in some way by trading bi-lateral agreements for global agreements that subordinate national sovereignty. Examples are Pat Buchanan.

Based upon a decision making process in which he made empirical judgements about how economies can and do work; ethical judgements about domestic and global justice and fairness, and strategic judgements about realistic political possibilities, Ian concluded that the Global Fordist approach is the most realistic. He concluded that we are “not yet in a position to build global Fordism (or, for that matter, to dismantle IMF, WB and WTO).” But he said,“Global Fordism is not utopian and we should work toward it through public education and organizing within and across nations. Meanwhile, we should stop efforts to intensify the neoliberal model (e.g., FAA, new round of WHO).” I found Robinson’s approach to be a valuable one, but an argument could be made that all the models are defensive and are reactions to neoliberalism or neoliberal globalization rather than representing an articulated alternative approach.

Marables’s typology: The multicultural liberal democratic impulse and the radical egalitarian global anti-racist tendency

Manning Marable (2004) has contended that just as the problem of the 20th century was the color line, the problem of the 21st century is the rise of what he refers to as global apartheid. He distinguished two responses to these developments. The first is the multicultural liberal democratic impulse. This tries to solve conflict over inequality through discourse, conflict resolution techniques, and civil society initiatives. It doesn’t really reject what he calls “neoliberal economic globalization.” It seeks instead to rely upon enhancing democratic institutions within societies that it accepts will continue to be market-based for the foreseeable future. His second response he refers to as the radical egalitarian tendency of global anti-racists. The discourse arising out of this trend is a discourse about inequality and power, one which favors the “abolition of poverty, the realization of universal housing, health care and educational guarantees across the non-Western world.” Manning said that this approach focuses not on rights in the abstract but on concrete results. Manning argues that both of these tendencies are important responses to neoliberal globalization, but that they are divergent, and that it is important to find a way to bring them into new social protest movements. But he stresses as he has for some time that it is also important to develop “new social theory” about racism and the state.

Marcuse’s discussion of the potential of the Social Forum movement

So far we have seen two excellent analyses of anti-globalization trends. There is still a third trend, the Social Forum Movement, which was recently discussed by Peter Marcus, in his article Are Social Forums the Future of Social Movements? (Marcus 2004). The growing social forum movement is modeled on the World Social Forums, such as the two which took place in Porto.
Marcus said, “The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Mankind and between it and the Earth.” He discussed one of the ensuing regional social forums, the Boston Social Forum, attended by just over 1000 persons, and addressed by Walden Bello, Jim Hightower, Maude Barlow, Angela Davis, and Robert Reich. He situated these movements within the historical context of the shift from primary reliance upon class analysis and class struggles prior to World War II to the dominance of anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist struggles after World War II, with the implication that these movements represent the rise of a third major form of social struggle. However, Marcuse’s goal was not to extol such a form uncritically. He pointed out: “When all is said and done, basic social change requires a shift in power, on at least a national if not international level. That can only be achieved by government. Changes in government can be accomplished by a variety of means, of which the electoral is only one; but in the end the power of government needs to be moved from its present holders to the dispossessed. Yet the social forums are almost intuitively anti-governmental, focused on direct grass-roots efforts, protest movements rather than movements seeking power.” He addressed organizational problems, and he addressed ideological problems.

Retrogressive Responses to Neoliberalism: Totalitarian Theocracy, Ultra-Leftism and Anti-Semitism, and Anti-Americanism

There is one other observation which must be made about reactions to neoliberal globalization. The tragic impact of 19th and 20th century slavery, colonialism and imperialism has given rise to three reactions which may appear to be progressive but are in fact reactionary.

Totalitarian Theocracy

First and foremost, of course, there is the rise of Totalitarian Theocracy in many forms, most prominently of course pseudo-Islamic terrorist movements which seek state power and seek to kill and maim those who do not adhere to its strictures. Improperly terms “Islamic fascism”, these are properly considered totalitarian theocratic terrorism of the Islamic variety. Unfortunately, there is a decided tendency on the left to view such forces as “anti-imperialist”. Yet Totalitarian Theocracy also includes right-wing extremist movements, including some within both Christianity and Judaism. The impulse to give state power to religious entities who aim to expel non-believers is a reaction, perhaps, to globalization and modernization, but not a progressive one.

Ultraleftism and Anti-Semitism

Second, among the reactions to globalization has been the growth of a mass base for ultra-leftist ideologies, including disturbing forms of anti-Semitism. One need only look outside the doors of my Conservative synagogue in Ann Arbor every Saturday beginning with Rosh Hashanah in
2003 to see a dozen long-time supposedly left-wing activists who have so lost their grip on political reality that they think picketing a synagogue led by a Rabbi who is a sympathizer with Brit Tzedek v’Shalom, the Jewish peace group, is how you fight for peace and justice in the Middle East. **Third,** there is the growth, in addition to Anti-Israeli sentiment, of a vehement and non-progressive form of Anti-Americanism. I would like to discuss this in some length.

**Anti-Americanism**

There is one form of opposition to neo-liberalism which requires some discussion. It is a diversion from effective struggles against neo-liberalism and it is properly referred to as Anti-Americanism. Both on the right and on the left and within the ranks of recent immigrants of many nationalities throughout U.S. history, there have been strong strands of Anti-Americanism. It would help to understand the forces behind such thinking, including the structural influence on it. Understanding anti-Americanism will require careful study by students of American culture. Such an understanding needs to be linked as well to understanding anti-Americanism in an entirely different form; that held by persons of other nations. The influence of such anti-Americanism on recent immigrants to the United States must be understood in a different, contextualized as well as an historical nature. Being critical of American policies is not what is at issue; what is at issue is a blanket Anti-American set of attitudes divorced from reason and from a goal of effective social criticism. Jeffrey Goldfarb addresses what he calls “Intelligent Anti-Americanism” in the online journal Logos (Goldfarb 2002).

The sociologist Todd Gittlin has made an important contribution to understanding Anti-Americanism, both within the U.S. on the left and right, and around the world (Gittlin 2002). Gittlin has grasped the essence of a phenomena which needs to be better understood: left Anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism is, essentially, the opposite of the My Country Right or Wrong variety of patriotism. My Country wrong, says Anti-Americanism. On the U.S. Left, a growing Anti-Americanism has arisen in recent years. Despite vehement dissent in earlier decades, left Anti-Americanism as a system of thought did not develop until after the end of the Cold War. It first manifested itself during the first Gulf War. Anti-Americanism is akin to Anti-Intellectualism in American thought, in the sense that it is an identifiable system of thought, not merely a political stance.

Gittlin is not the only person writing from the left to identify such a trend. Sam Webb of the C.P.U.S.A. made a report in October 2002 which stated: “Anti-Americanism has too long been an ideological strain......It is not a revolutionary concept nor has it anything to do with fighting imperialism. Sometimes it may sound good, and it may even make some people feel self-satisfied. But we're not immersed in the class struggle to make ourselves feel good. Our aim is to change the world........Anti-American feelings and slogans may momentarily mobilize some people to take to the streets, but their potential to move beyond narrowly circumscribed limits and to capture the imagination of millions is problematic, to put it mildly. It is a major and unnecessary concession to the Bush administration. It weakens the fight against imperialism and international terrorism and for a sane policy of peace and justice. It turns people off. Perhaps in the 1960s, when many of us were young radicals, it was understandable, but in the present circumstances anti-American feeling and slogans are harmful.....But we will convince few
people of the harmfulness of national arrogance if we betray in our words and deeds an anti-
American attitude.”

Several years ago the left realized that there had developed a flourishing left-wing and right-
wing set of conspiracy theorists, and concluded that this was not a truly progressive position on
the left. I would argue that we should draw a similar conclusion about the growth of rigid anti-
Americanism on the left. Such a system of thought is not an effective form of dissent; it is more
like a mind set. It is not a product of the kind of dialectical analysis which should be the basis
for progressive analysis.

Activists need to consider how to effectively work to oppose both Anti-Americanism, anti-
Semitism, totalitarian theocratic terrorism, and ultra-leftist extremism in all their forms. What
Marx meant by a “ruthless criticism of all existing reality” was not a vehement and often
demagogic criticism of a particular nation-state nor a highly intellectual but entirely partisan and
selective effort to direct all possible intellectual ammunition to attacking one particular nation-
state. Rather, such a criticism must linked to the creation of effective social movements. Marx
himself tried to take a dialectical, not a simplistic view, of each question. He was not Anti-
Britain, Anti-France, or Anti-Germany, he was for the cause of the proletariat. He was certainly
not Anti-American, as his Civil War dispatches show. Marx argued that at the time capitalism
was a progressive historical force because of its role in gradually superseding feudalism.
Whether capitalism remains a progressive historical force today or has become a retrogressive
force is a question which requires active empirical investigation and political analysis.
Substituting for this kind of analysis a blanket condemnations of the policies of a single nation-
state is the essence of Anti-Americanism. Such an approach ultimately tends to underestimate
both the people of the United States and the potential for change within US constitutional
democracy and within democratic institutions internationally.

These three objectively non-progressive responses to neoliberal globalization and modernization,
to the extent that they draw in people who were previously involved in progressive movements,
represents an ideological retreat away from some important realizations about the nature of the
state in recent decades, which I will discuss next. Perhaps is the absence of developed
alternatives to neoliberalism which have resulted in the tragic tendency on the left discussed in
this section. All the more reason to develop alternatives to neoliberalism.

Unsuccessful Alternatives to Neo-Liberalism

To return to my discursive strand on utopianism, it should be pointed out that the entire history
of Marxist thought has eschewed utopian thinking, from Marx’s lecturing of utopian socialists to
Lenin’s insistence that the party of a new type not commit to any recipes for the rewards of
revolution, less the vanguard’s hands be tied. Arguably, a platform of revolutionary change
without a roadmap to the future is not one which tends to inspire anyone but the most oppressed
of the oppressed, those with literally nothing to lose but their chains. From the Third Period of
U.S. communism described in Robin Kelley’s study of Alabama Communists in *Hammer and
Hoe* to the new communist movements of the 1970s discussed by Max Elbaum’s *Revolution in
the Air* to the present theoretical propositions of the League of Revolutionaries for a New
America, there has always been a view on the left and strongly present within Marxist sociology that the only real alternative to neoliberalism or to state monopoly capitalism or to imperialism - however the system of power is defined - is agitation and organization and the producing of a spark which will ignite a revolutionary flame. Revolutionary Marxism of this kind is one alternative to neoliberalism.

And it is the first of three broad tendencies within anti-capitalist thought which I will discuss: (1) Revolutionary Marxism, (2) Orthodox Marxism, (3) Social Democracy.

**Revolutionary Marxism**

(1) Revolutionary Marxism lives on in several forms, including the continued existence of various sects of Trotskyist organizations, and varieties of anarchism, as well as the continued appeal of Maoism in various part of the world. But the healthiest example, perhaps, and one now at least officially shorn of dogmatic Marxism is the work of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America. With its thoroughly interracial membership, extensive ties within the labor movement, and its decades long practice of organizing the homeless, the unemployed and the disabled through a variety of grassroots formations and links to international nongovernmental organizations, the LRNA has been having a consistent and important impact on public discourse about poverty and human rights. What is most surprisingly and refreshing about their work - which includes an alliance with an organization I work with, the Social Welfare Action Alliance - is its embracing of the value of Economic Human Rights as a key mobilizing framework. This adoption of universal human rights is partially a theoretical recognition of the fact that the most oppressed of the oppressed are increasingly outside the organized proletariat itself. However, a regular reading of the People’s Tribune, their newspaper, and of various pamphlets issued by the group, leads to the conclusion that to an extent this focus on human rights is more polemical and tactical than strategic. Furthermore, it would still be fair to say that this approach remains well within this topological category of revolutionary Marxism.

Equally influential have been two other alternative perspectives, (2) Orthodox Marxism, and (3) Social Democracy.

**Orthodox Marxism**

(2) Orthodox Marxism is how I refer to the popular front perspectives on the need to build new forms of anti-monopoly coalitions that can usher in people’s democracies, or the strategy still held by those Communist Parties which have survived the fall of Communist-governed forms of state socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This approach had its roots in the original united front against fascism outlook (Dimitrov 1935) which succeeded the Third Period of the Communist International (which, arguably, the Revolutionary Marxist tendency still adheres to, to some extent, or did until recently).
Social Democracy

(3) Social Democracy, of course, is the social democratic perspective of the Third or Socialist International. Rather than spending a great deal of time critiquing these three perspectives, I would like to assert that none of these three perspectives have provided a viable alternative to neo-liberalism. And the reason I assert this is that all three have failed to move beyond their absolute dependence upon class analysis as their primary analytic outlook. While such outlooks have the potential to continue to mount some effective critiques of capitalism, they miss out on even more effective critiques which use class, organizational and institutional analysis concurrently. I contend that even were one of these tendencies to gain state power, they wouldn’t know what to do with it. The rapid loss of power by the New Democratic Party in Ontario is one good example of this. In the absence of well-developed alternatives to neoliberalism, the electorate will often turn back to neoliberals, who will be perceived as better able to operate the government within what is seen by most as a market economy.

Another Ideological Alternative: The Revolutionary Democratic Tendency

However, in recent years, there have been new forms of social movements, new forms of analysis, and new theoretical perspectives which I feel have the potential for being inspiring a more effective critique of neo-liberalism. I identify three such outlooks which I feel have strong potential as part of the development of an alternative to neoliberalism: (1) The Left Eurocommunism of Nicos Poulantzas and others, (2) The rejection of armed struggle and the decision to demand democracy on the part of a number of Third World liberation movements in the 1980s, (3) the ascendance of a democratic trend within the communist parties of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe prior to and during the Gorbachev era. While these three trends may seem to have developed independently, there were strong international ties and exchanges between the activists in these three movements, forged within the international peace and solidarity movements. While each came to their own set of conclusions somewhat independently, a comparing of notes showed a common core concern with the need to embrace peace, democracy and human rights and by doing so remove from the imperialist powers their strongest claim to moral authority.

I conceive of these three trends as part of what I refer to as the Revolutionary Democratic trend within the world left. In my view, this trend is distinct from (1) Revolutionary Marxism, (2) Orthodox Marxism, and (3) Social Democracy. I define the tendency as a recognition of the revolutionary potential of the adherence to democratic norms, the embracing of universal human values, the tolerance and even practice of religion, the promotion of civil society, etc. It is a tendency which recognizes that the elimination of the privileging of class struggle over other forms of struggle against exploitation, oppression and dehumanization have the potential for building a majoritarian social and electoral movement capable of transforming state institutions in both incremental and fundamental manners.

This tendency recognized that our economies are already mixed economies to a larger extent than is commonly recognized, and that there is revolutionary potential in harnessing this recognition and promoting a vital mixed economy with healthy state, market, nonprofit and
religious sectors. Via the gradual socialization of private capital pools via stock holdings of the state, private and public insurance and pension funds, and the progressive taxation of individual wealth, the domination of even market sector enterprises by a capitalist class per se would wither away, without the necessity of smashing the state. Such a realization could only be reached by relying upon not only class analysis, but also upon organizational analysis and institutional analysis. Hence, this tendency was fundamentally different, theoretically and politically, from Revolutionary Marxism, Orthodox Marxism, and Social Democracy. I trace this tendency to the three sources above, which are discussed briefly next.

Euro-Communism arose, arguably, in Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s but was repressed and began to arise anew from the left wing of the Euro-Communist movements in Spain, Greece and Italy in the 1970s and 1980s. These movements were best represented theoretically by the later (and not very well known) work of Nicos Poulantzas, such his 1979 book *State, Power and Socialism*. Poulantzas’s best-known work, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, set off an historic debate within Western neo-Marxism, the Miliband-Poulantzas debate. Following this sharp exchange, however, the work of Poulantzas and Miliband converged in ways which may not be immediately apparent. In his *Marxism and Politics* in 1977, Miliband outlined the range of fundamental differences between my typology of Revolutionary Marxism, Orthodox Marxism, and Social Democracy. He noted, “But the crucial theoretical difference consists in the acceptance on the one hand of the notion that the existing bourgeois state must be ’smashed' and replaced by an altogether different type of state [e.g. Rosa Luxemburg's notion of ‘class organs’] and expressing the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat'; and on the other hand, the more or less explicit rejection of any such notion. It might seem as if the difference stemmed from a perspective of peaceful and constitutional transition on the basis of a left-wing victory at the polls and the second on the basis of a seizure of power made possible by a regime's defeat in war, or extreme economic crisis and dislocation, or political breakdown, or some combination of any of these possibilities. But this is not in fact where the opposition necessarily lies: a constitutional accession to power might by followed by a wholesale recasting of state institutions; and a seizure of power need not involve such a recasting at all. Indeed, in so far as the intention is to extend popular power, a peaceful transition might be more favourable to such a project than a violent one.”

At the same time as Miliband was coming to these realizations, and even beginning to introduce various forms of organizational analysis into his previously instrumental Marxist version of class analysis, Poulantzas was drawing the logical political conclusions from his earlier recognition that the state was a material condensation of social forces, a set of organizations within various so-called regions of the state, not a monolithic entity controlled by one class. Poulantzas, in his 1979 book, was coming to came to similar conclusions as Miliband (1977) about the nature of the bourgeois democratic state (Poulantzas 1978). Poulantzas and other more recent Marxian analyses saw the state as encompassing actually existing rights (Reuten and Williams 1993-4), not merely illusory ones.

Within the context of such a state, citizens are not merely confined by bourgeois hegemony, but are enabled to achieve actual gains within the context of capitalism. Their consent is not merely manufactured. It may be strategic, as suggested by the concept of strategic consent developed by
Wright and Burawoy (1994). Indeed, it may be part of a purposive historical compromise, as suggested by Przeworski (1980). Przeworski demonstrated the economic reasons why, assuming a transition to socialism is not possible in a particular period, a moderate level of economic militancy achieves (over the medium term) higher wage returns to workers than a more militant posture. A more militant posture would achieve higher returns only in the short term, and risks the provocation of an economic crisis which would not necessarily lead to socialism. Such a provocation might risk not only the gains of previous class struggles, but also the stock of organizational resources that had advanced the rationalization of production and the achievement of meritocratic systems, as well as well as the various human inventions (institutions) discussed by Karl Polanyi. Important among those institutions given priority attention by workers involved in class struggle were electoral democracy and the accumulated practices of organized religion, which Rappaport has identified as a universal human endeavor (Rappaport 1999). In other words, the very bases of human civilization were at risk in the case of either a disastrous defeat or, to use an apparent Bushism, a “catastrophic success.”

With respect to his differentiation between Revolutionary Marxism, Orthodox Marxism, and Social Democracy, one could argue Poulantzas split hairs. But Poulantzas was strongly opposed to putschism, and polemicized against coup-plotting and maximilism (as opposed to gradualism) in general. Thus, he rejected alternative Revolutionary Marxism. But Poulantzas was equally opposed to social democratic approaches, which have historically represented a fundamental willingness to co-exist with capital and even support capital’s international adventures. Poulantzas saw a middle ground of peaceful and democratic transition to socialism between Revolutionary Marxism and Social Democracy. And he rejected the implicit compromises of the popular front as well, which was seen as fundamentally linked to Soviet strategic interests more than to fundamental transformation. Poulantzas and many other advocates of democratic socialism remained within the communist tradition, despite being forced in some cases to create separate organizations (Greece, Britain), in others to retain control of the parties but witness hard-line defections (Spain), and in others to remain in power-sharing relationships with hard-liners (France, South Africa, the U.S.A. until 1991). They rejected official Orthodox Marxism and had basic strategic differences with the standard popular front approach. Poulantzas’ perspective and that of the left wing of the Euro-Communist movement (the right-wing was essentially social democratic) represented an entirely new tendency which I refer to as the “revolutionary democratic tendency” on the world left.

This Revolutionary Democratic tendency of the 1970s and 1980s found two other expressions. It was adopted in the early 1980s by a significant portion of the leaders of liberation movements in Central America and Africa, as they concluded that trading guerilla wars with U.S. imperialism was a failed strategy. We win, they overthrow us, we fight back, and no one wins, they concluded. The only choice, they concluded, was the democratic choice, and they made plans to settle the armed struggle and enter civil society and seek to transform society. As Nelson Mandela later pointed out, “Once you have made the democratic choice, you have to accept the fact that you may lose [the election].” It is my understanding, for instance, that it was in 1981 that the leadership of the revolutionary movement in El Salvador decided to transition away from the armed struggle, although it took many years and much more loss of life before this became possible, given the existence of determined death squads and a reactionary military
with strong U.S. support. The failure of the Cuban international volunteers to assure a military solution lead to similar conclusions in Africa. And the South African movement also made a strategic decision to rely upon international public opinion and economic pressures to topple apartheid. These were not merely tactical and strategic shifts. They were informed by a growing recognition of fundamental weaknesses in the system of command administrative forms of socialism. This critique did not arise overnight, but was perhaps given the best expression in comments made by Joe Slovo of the South African Communist Party.

In 1991, at the International Conference on the Future of Socialism, a packed weekend conference held at Hunter College, speakers from Europe, Africa, Latin America and the U.S. analyzed the developments in Eastern Europe and the Third World from a wide variety of political perspectives. After a scathing self-criticism of un-democratic tendencies within the Communist movement, Joe Slovo, General Secretary of the Communist Party of South Africa, and member of the Executive Committee of the African National Congress, stated: “I remain an unrehabilitated utopian. I believe that the human soul is quite capable of reaching a form of society in which one person does not live off the labor of another. And that kind of idea is not only that which is an expression of the basic normative values of all radicals both before and after Marx, but is that which will in the end be capable of realization. It will come about through the organization and struggle of the wretched of the Earth - the 90% or more of humanity for whom if socialism is not an answer, there is no answer at all. And that is not how human society works.....” One can hear reflections of Revolutionary Marxism in this statement, as well as of utopianism. But the Revolutionary Democratic tendency was in fact revolutionary, and it was in fact idealistic and explicitly utopian. At the same time, however, it was democratic and it was realistic.

Tragically, Poulantzas did not live to see the consolidation of many of his positions within the world left. The consolidation of what I the “revolutionary democratic tendency in the world left” lead in the early 1980's to a consensus that dogmatic, Cold War approaches were creating conditions which were fertile for victories by imperialism in the various regional and local conflicts. Such approaches fueled anti-Communism in a way which hindered Communist-socialist-social democratic unity in the advanced capitalist world, and which were fatal for socialist economic and political development in the Soviet bloc. The rise of Gorbachev was the result of this growing consensus. It is ironic that the very putschism by dogmatic/bureaucratic hard-liners which Poulantzas condemned was ultimately responsible for the August 1991 coup attempt against Gorbachev which lead to the collapse of the democratic socialist experiment Gorbachev initiated.

The exiting promise of “new thinking” on the left was broken. The theoretical leap beyond class struggle in order to recognize the revolutionary potential of appeals to universal human values was not accomplished. Ironically, however, it was changed social conditions in the various nations where this tendency was arising that resulted in a decline of this tendency. The realistic, democratic strategy behind the Revolutionary Democratic approach lead to the actual ascendance of the ANC in South African, the actual achievement of peaceful settlements to one guerilla struggle after another, the achievement of democracy in Greece, Spain, and Portugal, and finally the actual dissolution of the command administrative state in the Soviet bloc, if not
the final achievement of a democratic market socialist experiment in the Soviet Union. In all three cases, what had been a suspended history was accelerated beyond the ability of those with such Revolutionary Democratic views to respond. It was one thing to revise one’s strategy of liberation, arguably successfully (after all, the introduction of democratic institutions in Eastern Europe with little or no violence was one of the most remarkable and revolutionary transformations in history, even if it brought with it something which was not originally intended: a largely market economy). The Revolutionary Democratic movements had a strategy for fighting the command-administrative state, for opposing apartheid and neo-colonialism, and for settling armed struggles, but once freed from the role as the subaltern they had evolved little theory for how to govern. The lack of viable alternatives to neoliberalism reared its ugly head quite soon. A revamped set of tactics and strategies, even one tied to an emergent ideology, was not enough. Ideology wasn’t enough. Theory and method were needed.

As the 1990s ensued, this Revolutionary Democratic tendency on the world left receded. Individuals and organizations both were preoccupied with the demands of operating within the framework of civil society and democratic states. Individual aging and that of entire political generations resulted in the loss of the development of a coherent framework within which to develop further the “new thinking” which was represented by this trend. Opportunism of the left and right variety resulted in people making “realistic” choices contrary to revolutionary directions. And the strength of neoliberal globalization proved overwhelming even where Revolutionary Democratic movements were strongest.

For instance, despite growing resistance to neo-liberalism in the later 1990s and early 2000s, what has been referred to as the “increasingly hegemonic nature of neo-liberal thought and practice” has even infiltrated liberated South Africa (McDonald and Smith 2004), which is governed by a state whose controlling political forces are rooted in and continue to be strongly influence by an historic alliance between the African National Congress, the South African Trade Union Congress and the South African Community Party. The authors argue that non-neoliberal policy alternatives were shut out of the discourse, which is something activists and social sciences complain about quite a bit. A common theme of this growing resistance to neoliberal globalization is the articulation of relationships between local struggles related the relationships of culture and place within the larger context of the impact of globalization (Gatrell and Reid 2002). As Ann Tickamyer of Ohio University has asked (2000): “How do global processes affect local places? How does the local constrain or encourage globalization and its agents?”

But we need to ask, just what are these non-neoliberal policy alternatives referred to by McDonald and Smith? Opposition to neo-liberalism may be common, but it is arguable that less common are actual alternatives to neo-liberalism.

In the new social movements resisting globalization, such as those represented in the Social Forums, there have evolved a wide variety of new tactics and forms of analysis. But by and large we have been forced to rely upon well-worn varieties of class analysis (orthodox Marxism, social democracy, etc.) supplemented with some equity analysis related to the conditions of oppressed people.
The move beyond class-based movements, which Peter Marcus pointed out is characteristic of the world social forums, has the danger of becoming something eclectic and without an adequate focus. We’ve not yet learned that the unfocused blaming on globalization (with a strong doess of blaming of Israel and the United States) for all the world’s ills serves to blind us to the what a more dialectical outlook would recognize. And that is that at the same time as there is a growth of neoliberal globalization, there is also a growth of what was called “humanistic globalism” (Gill-Chin Lim).

This is partially recognized by Ian Robinson in his analysis, but I believe that it goes much further than his analysis admits. For instance, it involves a huge and growing nonprofit sector involved in humanistic globalization activity. It involves the massive growth of information exchanges which make person to person communication across national boundaries much more common and possible. Even some of the trends, such as capital and labor mobility, which appear to be entirely negative may be having counter-intuitive impacts that advance cross-cultural communication and undermine archaic forms of social relations and social production.

When it comes down to it, given the danger of nuclear and environmental annihilation, and the clear role played by unrestrained market forces, human greed, and the continuing appeal of totalitarian ideologies (most recently totalitarian theocracy), some of the ideas which were beginning to be developed by the revolutionary democratic tendency in the world left during the 1980s, which were not further developed following the collapse of Communist-governed forms of state socialism in Eastern Europe, deserve to be further developed at this time.

The direction in which this “new new thinking” should move is towards better understanding the relationship between the class struggle and universal human values. It is absolutely essential that we demonstrate that there is no contradiction between the two. This discussion, which was growing by leaps and bounds until approximately 1990, fell victim to assertions there is no such thing as universal values (despite much social science research to the contrary), or universal needs (despite the advent of new theories such as those of Ian Gough and Len Doyal) or universal cultural tendencies (despite the work of anthropologists such as Roy Rappaport (1999), Donald Brown (1991) and Neil Roughley (2000). This will require a resolute struggle against rigid cultural relativism, which were progressive and anti-racist in the early 20th century when they responded to efforts to declare the “other” inferior, but which can ultimately dehumanize the very same “other” when reflectively relied upon in a world where capital seeks to turn everything into either a mass market or a niche market. This is of course part of a struggle against postmodernism of the variety which ends up as essentially idealist and anti-materialist in its world view and which denies any objective truth or standard of rationality which can be mobilized against the very real objective facts of neoliberal global capital and its semi-subservient state apparatuses. This said, however, it will take more than Revolutionary Democratic ideology, or even renovated forms of Revolutionary Marxism, Orthodox Marxism, and Social Democracy (which are after all not such distant cousins of Revolutionary Democracy that there couldn’t be a reunion of sorts). In fact the very essence of the realization of Revolutionary Democracy of the centrality of the democratic choice is that ideology can not be imposed upon society, and that ultimately that indigenous and relatively revolutionary philosophy, Pragmatism, will play a key role in guiding social solutions to social problems. This
will require more than ideology, it will require a theory and a method capable of identifying actual alternative social policies that contradict the policies that stem from neoliberal assumptions.

**An Alternative to Neoliberalism**

In developing alternatives to neoliberalism from the standpoint of the intellectual heritage of sociology and the left, there are three primary forms of analysis which may be relied upon, class analysis, institutional analysis and organizational analysis. But are there competing or complementary perspectives? How are they based upon classical sociological theory? What are their modern roots? And what are some of their prototypical examples?

In order to answer such questions, it is valuable to rely upon the work of Baron and Bielby (1980: 738). They argued that social inequality may be studied at several levels of social organization (societal, institutional, organizational, role, individual) and corresponding units of analysis (economy, industry, firm, job and worker). I argued that class analysis and institutional analysis examine overlapping levels (dimensions). Class and organizational analysis overlap. Organizational and institutional analysis overlap only at the interorganizational level. This observation, and the need to address both the societal and organizational levels, justified including and distinguishing organizational and institutional analysis, as opposed to treating them as the same thing under “institutional or organizational” part of the question.

Class, organizational and institutional analysis can be traced back to their classical origins in the work of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, respectively. They can be traced to their modern roots in the work of Mills, Dahrendorf and Karl Polanyi, respectively. More recent prototypes of each can be found in the work of Wright, Stinchcombe, and DiMaggio/Powell.

**Class analysis** is seen as using concepts such as domination and exploitation by a dominant class to help explain the various dimensions of inequality. Class analysts see organizations as tools of class domination, sites of class struggle or organizational bearers of class relations. Key questions are: How do common class interests stemming from relations of production at the economic “base” shape the behavior of class actors and influence superstructural institutions and organizations? How do class forces produced by economic relations influence the nature of institutions and organizations? How do classes impose their will? Wright argued that the dynamics of exploitation was the key element of class analysis. However, with respect to organizational analysis, Wright argued that control of organizational assets was part and parcel of the mechanism of exploitation, not just ownership of the means of production. And with respect to institutional analysis, Wright also argued that class analysis needed to use conjunctural analysis to examine “concrete institutional details,” since both “class and non-class relations and practices usually occurred” (1986: 11-13). With respect to whether they are competing or complementary perspectives, Burawoy (1990) criticized the tendency to assimilate non-Marxist science into Marxism. However, Quadagno identified world-historically located class actors and their representatives. Quadagno (1988) sought to use a class-oriented analysis mainly concerned with systemic/matrix shifts. Four key factors were examined: (1) the structure of the labor movement (the industrial/craft division), (2) changing state capacity for action, (3) the structure
of the economy, and (4) the structure of the state/polity (particularly the Congressional committee system’s affect on Southern strength). Thus, both class-related and institutional processes figured into her analysis.

**Organizational analysis** is defined in a way which excludes new institutionalist forms of organizational analysis which incorporate both organizational analysis and institutional analysis. Organizational analysis examines status and power from the distinctive standpoint of organizationally-centered structures and processes. While these structures and processes may intermediate between individuals and larger social structures such as social institutions (Scott 1995: 142), the focus of organizational analysis is primarily on organizations and their immediate environments, units and internal actors. Key questions are: How do structures of organizations and networks of organizations shape the nature of individual and institutional behavior? What is the intra-organizational structure of power (Pfeffer 1981)? How do organizations ensure the predictable and dependent flow of resources from other organizations (Pfeffer 1987)? Are organizations’ tools in the hands of managers (Perrow 1979)? Stinchcombe also applied organizational analysis to issues of concern to class analysts, such as the internal labor market and external labor market segmentation. Regarding organizational analysis, Stinchcombe argued that different concrete rationalities compete with each other to form a hierarchy determined by success in reducing the total environmental uncertainty to which organizational information systems (OISs) respond. Regarding institutional analysis, Stinchcombe (1990) relied upon a postulate of organizational rationality rather than an institutional analysis of the societal and cultural contexts of organizational behavior. Specific mechanisms of information processing found in organizational units were stressed, not the rules and belief systems which Scott (1995) saw as incorporating institutional influences. With respect to whether they are competing or complementary perspectives, Pfeffer (1987) distinguished clearly between the tenets of the intra-class and resource dependence perspectives, although he also noted there were many similarities. Laumann/Knoke (1987) stressed networks of organizational actors. They explicitly rejected both pluralistic-individualist and Marxist class approaches. They identified a mid-level structure - organizations - as the key to understanding a state whose public/private boundaries were blurred. Tightly knit, nonideological business and labor-led interest group coalitions deployed resources to influence policy events. Their managerial elite approach focused on networks of organizational elites (state managers and interest group managers) rather class or mass-based elites.

**Institutional analysis** is narrowly defined here as a form of analysis which accounts for the influence of social institutions on classes, organizations, and individuals. Institutional analysis identifies a variety of regulative (including coercive), normative and cognitive processes that convey the resource requirements, standards, values, and schema embedded in institutional logics, mechanisms and bases of legitimacy and compliance. Key questions are: How do institutions shape economic relations and organizational and individual behavior? How do innovative actors and interventive organizational collectivities shape institutions (Scott 1995)? DiMaggio and Powell argued their approach improved on previous forms of elite-control analysis, which is a form of class analysis. As for organizational analysis, for them numerous variables at the organizational level and field level influence the extent to which isomorphic processes affect organizations. These variables account for factors which are both endogenous and exogenous to organizations and fields. For DiMaggio and Powell (1983), individuals continue to rationally respond to uncertainty, but within institutional arenas, the maturation of organizational fields from diversity to relative uniformity is accompanied by a process of
institutional definition which brings normative factors into play along with the degree of rationality associated with competition. Within such fields, competitive and institutional isomorphic processes tend to produce organizational homogeneity. Institutional isomorphic processes can include coercive, mimetic/emulative and normative forms of isomorphism (or their combination). Michael Polanyi (1958, cited by Burawoy 1990), viewed Marxism as the anti-thesis of science. Skocpol was concerned with path-dependent historical events within institutions; Skocpol examined situationally influential individual and associational actors. Skocpol (1992) rejected determinist views that socioeconomic transformations directly influence the agenda of state policy and rejected structuralist models that the state accommodates itself to capitalism. Instead, she argued that prior institutional characteristics of state formation and previously implemented social policies shape the nature of a structured polity of courts, parties and voluntary associations. In turn, the polity constrains and empowers politicians to implement new characteristics and policies in a rather path-dependent manner.

Table 1: Class, Organizational and Institutional Analysis: Classical Origins, Modern Roots, and Prototypical Representation.

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The above chart suggests an approach to whether or not they are competing accounts. But to look at this question from another angle, are they complementary? If class analysis and organizational or institutional analysis are complementary, they ought to be amenable to synthesis. Learning whether the three forms of analysis are compatible enough to be synthesized successfully will tell us something more about the relationship between them. To what extent has this been accomplished? Baron and Bielby (1980) recognized the potentially complementary nature of organizational, class, and institutional analysis. They proposed one early form of synthesis. Mizruchi’s synthesis (Mizruchi 1992), a structural model of corporate political behavior, was called the interorganizational model of class cohesion. Using a relational approach to structural sociology, Mizruchi synthesized the resource dependence and social class models of intercorporate relations. The resource dependence model stressed the role of organizations rather than individuals. It stressed the ways organizations cope with uncertainty by connecting with stable resource acquisition networks and by using interlocks to neutralize or constrain potential resource competitors. The social class model had a wing which stressed individual/family roots of the dominant class (Zeitlin 1974; Domhoff 1967), and an institutional
wing stressing the role of key corporate and financial institution positions (Mintz and Schwartz 1985; Useem 1984).

The potential for competition was seen in their classical theoretical roots. For while Marx, Weber and Durkheim concentrated primarily on different aspects of social organization, and therefore made complementary contributions to social science, they also developed competing accounts of such structures as class, workplace organizations, and public institutions. The early modern social theorists began the process of synthesis by linking different aspects of social organization. The modern prototypical examples remained distinctive representatives of each form of analysis. The definitions of each form of analysis and the questions posed by each were clearly different. But each form of analysis also expanded its analytic scope to examine additional levels of social organization, where a potential for competitive accounts arose. In one case (Pfeffer/Hodson), the forms of analysis were shown to be competitive, when carefully matched with the modified Baron/Bielby criteria. But in another case (Mizruchi 1992) they were shown to be complementary forms of analysis, amenable to synthesis.

The relationship between the three forms of analysis is one in which these approaches to social science root themselves in and transcend classical and early modern theoretical roots; typify and defy the distinctions drawn between the prototypical examples; conform to and outstrip the definitions crafted for the purposes of this analysis; ask the questions identified and ask myriad more as well; stress a central level of social organization and explore the relations between levels; have both unique and common units of analysis; compete with each other and combine with each other. The relationship, in other words, is both complex and upon occasion elegant and simple. As social science advances, the answers to the questions asked here would require frequent re-appraisal. But the continued existence of competitive, complementary and synthetic uses of class, organizational, and institutional analysis seems assured given the long histories traced in this answer.

Frank Parkin (1979) pointed out that Nicos Poulantzas identified an important boundary problem for Marxism and sociology. The boundary problem consists of the need to identify “the location of politically relevant lines of cleavage under conditions of monopoly capitalism” (Parkin 1979: 16). Although the cleavage in question was the shrinking industrial working class and the increasing middle class, there are clearly other cleavages as well. The cleavage, pointed out by the LRNA, between the lumpen proletariat and the rest of the working class, for instance, is another example. The cleavage, pointed out by the radical organizational analysis of Charles Perrow (1991; 1995; 2002), between large organizations and employees of large organizations and the small organizations and their employees, is still another example. That cleavage, his organizational analysis tells us, involves the systematic externalization of costs from large organizations onto the rest of society. It involves the progressive intrusion of the power of large organizations onto society, such that the remaining autonomous niches of social life are progressively invaded, in ways which are tangential to market processes and would take place in quite similar ways (as Parkin would argue) within state socialist societies. And that cleavage is also represented by institutional forms which divide the populace, for instance, into married persons with heterosexual and legal privileges and ready access to family caregiving and single people with few rights to social care; segregated elderly and segregated children with little
contact with the other generation despite their relative dependence upon working adults; the city
dweller and the suburbanite; homeowners and renters, etc.. Social cleavages, in other words, are
produced not merely by class exploitation but also by other forms of exploitation, oppression,
and dehumanization as well. For instance, Parkin’s concept, “social closure”, is valuable in
understanding the actual mechanisms of group oppression by gender, physical characteristics,
sexual orientation, and race, not to mention by class.

Example of the Use of Class, Institutional and Organizational Analysis: Social Security

As the debate over how to save Social Security commences, there is renewed discourse on the
left about the importance of doing away with what is seen as a regressive payroll tax. For
instance, in a recent posting to Portside, a list distributed to approximately 10,000 social activists
daily, Bill Carroll’s suggested doing away with the “payroll tax” for Social Security and
replacing it with a progressive income tax.

It is true that a cursory class analysis might suggest that the payrolls tax is regressive. The same
rate is charged regardless of income. However, further class analysis would also reveal the
strong re-distributive mechanisms which exist within the benefit structure of the overall Social
Security System. Finally, such an analysis would show that a 50% employer contribution is not
an insignificant economic transfer. In fact, giving declining corporate profits tax rates, it is an
essential component of the manner in which the overall system of taxation makes a transfer from
profits to people.

Furthermore, an institutional analysis would suggest the importance of protecting the integrity of
established institutions like the social insurance payment structure. An institutional analysis
would recognize that the Social Security system is an important example of the kind of “human
invention” discussed by Polanyi. It is one which enjoys a great deal of public support. The Social
Security system is now strongly path dependent. The level of social capital bonds of trust which
have become embedded within this system shouldn’t be easily dismissed. It is easy to destroy
social capital, but it is very hard to build it up. Institutional analysis would argue that no
fundamental change should be made in the basic financing mechanism and system of
distribution. Rather, incremental improvements should continue to be made in this largely
universal system, such as increasing the covered income, expanding Medicare to cover children
and the uninsured, providing prescription, dental and vision benefits, improving disability
coverage to include Medicare from point of first eligibility, not two years from date of onset,
implementing a national short-term disability benfit (which currently exists in six states), etc.

What would an organizational analysis suggest? Any organizational analysis of the policy
domains (income maintenance, health, disability) that are related to the Social Security system
would immediately confront a penultimate example of the types of externalization of costs by
large organizations onto society that are discussed by Charles Perrow (Perrow 1991, 2002). The
reliance on employee benefit systems financed by corporate and individual tax deductions meant
that the owners, managers and employees of large organizations enjoy benefits the cost of which
are born in higher taxes and reduced benefits enjoyed by owners, managers and employees of
small organizations and those not affiliated with employing organizations. This has created an
aversion to “big government,” “big labor” and even “big business” which has historically been exploited by the right. The left, however, has been coopted by tacit labor support for this arrangement since the post-World War II period. As a result, no serious drive for an alternative to employee-benefit systems has arisen.

When corporate profit tax rates were high in the 1940s, corporations (and unions as well) decided to take pre-tax profits (half of which today go into employee health benefits) and sink them into occupational social welfare coverage for just the unionized section of the working class. Today it is in the interests of both capital and labor to reject the postwar social compact and devise another one that is based upon universal social insurance. That is because corporate profits taxes are low today and it is not in the interests of corporations to use pre-tax profits the way they do now. It inhibits their adding and shedding workers in a way which maximizes efficiency and competitiveness. The basis is there for a new social compact that protects all the workers and those unable to work rather than just a portion of workers and their families.

In other words, a combination of class, institutional and organizational analysis suggests that we should be demanding more universal and more effective social insurance. To do what many have demanded historically from left, i.e. funding S.S. with a progressive income tax (as class analysis alone would suggest), would end up turning S.S. into a means-tested welfare program rather than a form of social insurance which can help provide a sense of universal security for everyone. This in one policy example of the limitations of reliance upon class analysis, in the absence of institutional analysis and organizational analysis.

**Class, organizational and institutional analysis of the best mix of public, private, nonprofit sector funding and delivery**

I would conclude that whether we are analyzing a social cleavage or ascertaining which kind of legislation and regulation we need in a particular policy domain, we need to use class, organizational and institutional analysis as well as equity analysis linked to understanding the role of gender, race and class in order to ascertain within each policy realm (health care, employment, housing, international cooperation for peace and security, etc.) what is the best mix of sectors (public, private, nonprofit) to create culturally-specific ways of ensuring universal human needs are met, consistent with human rights.

After all, as any fair analysis of modern economies shows, no modern economy has been dominated entirely by one sector. Even the example of the U.S. economy shows huge property ownership by public, nonprofit and religious entities, not only today but all along (Dover 2003). The analysis of property forms in my dissertation showed the growth of what I call hybrid property forms, where the land and buildings may be owned by various types of owners, something which is complicated still further by long-term lease arrangements. In other words, any materialist analysis would conclude that no pure single-sector economic alternative has ever existed, nor should it. This is also suggested by Tom Weisskopf’s conceptualization of democratic market socialism.
I can't recall the origin of the saying, “Today, we are all welfare pluralists,” but the fact is that a mixed economy shouldn't be viewed as some kind of bane to our desired socialist existence, but rather as an opportunity. In fact, recognition that we live in a mixed economy, not a pure capitalist economy, is an important part of undermining neo-liberal ideology, which contends we must let the “market” speak for us, unrestrained and if regulated, regulated in the interests of capital.

Just what are these sectors in our mixed economy? These sectors include:

Public sector (international, national, state, local)
Nonprofit sector (charitable, educational and religious)
Private-for-profit (publicly held corporations with various degrees of stock ownership by those with clear fiduciary and/or ethical responsibilities such as government, pension plan, foundation and religious ownership; privately held corporations with various degrees of state regulation; small unincorporated businesses: (individual contractors)

In addition to these sectors, the family and the individual are the primary additional sources for the funding of and delivery of social welfare broadly conceived.

In the following table, I outline the manner in which both the funding source and the delivery vehicle for various social welfare policies can be examined:

**Table 2: Sources of Funding and Delivery Vehicle by Sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources Of Funding By Sector</th>
<th>Public: Federal, State, County, Local, Schools</th>
<th>Nonprofit Organizations: Charitable, Religious, Cooperative</th>
<th>Private-for-Profit Organizations</th>
<th>Family/Individual direct payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sources Of Delivery By Sector</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Non-profit</td>
<td>Private-for-Profit</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The application of such a policy analysis method to social policy questions says that what should be considered first and foremost is not the needs of capital but the needs of people. And that human need satisfaction even takes primacy over allegiance to a particular political model for the nature of the state. This is a radical departure from traditional forms of radical analysis, which took as a starting point a belief in the centrality of state institutions in all social solutions to social problems. But it is also a radically different approach from that proposed by
neoliberalism. And that is what makes it worthy of consideration by those traditionally on the left as we debate alternatives to neoliberalism.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, the struggle is between neo-liberal and other market-driven ideologies and practices on the one hand, and human rationality and caring on the other. In other words, the struggle is not between capitalism and socialism, or between a capitalist class and a working class, it is between practices which threaten human existence and those which promise human survival. It seems to me that we need to find forums and ways of bringing back the potential of the “new thinking” of the Revolutionary Democratic movements of the 1980s, when socialism once and for all began to embrace democracy and the primacy of universal human values came to the fore.

Many would condemn this approach I have suggested as hopelessly naive. Appeal to universal human values in an era when it is clear that a new world order is seeking to impose its will upon the most oppressed of the oppressed? Naive, foolish, and utopian, it might be argued. Certainly, however, Joe Slovo was not naive and it was the strategy of the A.N.C. and S.A.C.P and S.A.C.T.U which brought about one of the most remarkable revolutionary democratic transformations of the 20th century.

Despite efforts to beat down the persistent of utopianism within the left, this utopian streak was clearly responsible for some of the disunity on the left (Dover 1991a). Arguably, while 20th century Marxists criticized utopian approaches as a form of historical idealism (by which is meant not the adherence to positive values but the ignoring or materialist phenomena), we may have also succumbed to a form of utopianism ourselves. Each wing of the left had its own vision of utopia, whether anarchist or communist or democratic socialist. Unfortunately, our vision clouded our sight! We saw “really existing reality” differently. These differences then manifested themselves in tactical and strategic differences in day to day struggles. Our sectarianism and dogmatism may have been rooted in an unconscious utopianism which affected analysis, organizational form and style, and activism. This is what I now call “sectarian utopianism.”

But the recent resurgence of utopian thinking on the left is perhaps to be applauded if it can move towards what might be called “universal utopianism.”

Universal utopianism would also help imbue concepts such as universal human rights and universal human needs with something that is more important than mere international law. They would rise such concepts to the level of more fervent adoption by advocates for revolutionary changes in our societies. Such changes would preserve the organizational and institutional elements we wish to retain but alter those which we don’t.

Actually, after hearing Slovos’s comments, I realized that the influence of utopianism within a reputedly scientific socialist left was due to the persistent influence of the utopian socialist and other utopian ideologies of the 19th century. I wrote an article for Crossroads in which I contended that this utopian streak was responsible for some of the disunity on the left (Dover
But while 20th century Marxists criticized utopian approaches as a form of historical idealism (by which is meant not the adherence to positive values but the ignoring of materialist phenomena), we may have also succumbed to a form of utopianism ourselves. Each wing of the left had its own vision of utopia, whether anarchist or communist or democratic socialist. Unfortunately, our vision clouded our sight! We saw “really existing reality” differently. These differences then manifested themselves in tactical and strategic differences in day to day struggles. Our sectarianism and dogmatism may have been rooted in an unconscious utopianism which affected analysis, organizational form and style, and activism. This is what I now call “sectarian utopianism.” But the recent resurgence of utopian thinking on the left is perhaps to be applauded if it can move towards what might be called “universal utopianism.” Universal utopianism would also help imbue concepts such as universal human rights and universal human needs with something that is more important than mere international law. They would rise such concepts to the level of more fervent adoption by advocates for revolutionary changes in our societies. Changes which preserve the organizational and institutional elements we wish to retain but alter those which we don’t; which preserve most small scale property rights but don’t leave us at the mercy of predatory lenders.

True, the roots of utopianism are in the most dearly held universal values of human kind. As Slovo said, radicals before and after Marx shared such values. And we should be proud of them. In fact, without idealism of the kind that embraces such values, social struggle is not possible without leading to burnout, surrender and ultimately betrayal.

This paper begins and ends with such an optimistic proclamation of hope for humanity, but it does so at a time when optimism is not exactly the dominant mood amongst social movement activists. It seems to me that sociologists and social workers and other social scientists as well as the left in general need to engage in an explicit and purposive attempt to develop alternatives to neoliberalism. I have presented here just one such supposed alternatives, rooted in my own reading and in perhaps my own brand of utopianism, but I hope also in one which relies upon forms of analysis which are fundamental to sociology and which if used in tandem with each other can help us create a more promising future.
References


Chomsky.


