



Challenging (and Maybe Transcending) Capitalism Through Real Utopias

Erik Olin Wright

Seminar presented by the School of Social Sciences and
Psychology and the Institute for Culture and Society

Abstract

We live in an era of diminished expectations: Many people see a future within capitalism as a bleak and unpromising world, and yet continue to accept Margaret Thatcher's gleeful declaration "There is No Alternative". The equally shallow appeals to a Third Way in the 1990s and early 2000s have only fuelled the sense of cynicism about prospects of change. So, once again, progressives committed to emancipatory ideals face the question, "What is to be done?". Social democratic hopes of *taming capitalism* by neutralising its harmful effects through decisive state regulations have been undermined by the globalisation and financialisation of capital. Revolutionary ambitions of *smashing capitalism* through a ruptural seizure of state power, a coercive dissolution of capitalist institutions and their replacement by an emancipatory alternative, lack any credibility. Are these the only logics of transformation? There may be a different route that points beyond capitalism: *eroding capitalism* by building emancipatory alternatives to capitalism in the spaces and cracks within capitalist economies and struggling to defend and expand those spaces. Real utopias are alternatives that can be built in the world as it is that also embody emancipatory ideals in the world as it could be and which move us towards that destination.

Speaker

Erik Olin Wright is a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. For publications and information on the Real Utopias project see his [profile webpage](#).

Date

Thursday 30 July

Time

4.30 – 6.30pm

Venue

EE.G.02 Parramatta
(South) Campus

Light refreshments will be provided.

RSVP to Kate Huppertz:

k.huppertz@uws.edu.au